

CA Hospitalité Newsletter

Volume 34

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Winter 2011

A REFLECTION ON THE "OUR FATHER"

Br Ben Foy

Jesus taught us to pray to God as "Our Father" and we continue to do this on a daily basis. But Jesus stands alongside us fully God but fully human. So his teaching us to say "Our Father" reminds us that we are addressing both Jesus' father and ours! Jesus clearly wants us to recognise that although he is at one with the Father that God is the Father of us all - of Jesus himself and of each one of us whom he has created. Jesus, coming as he does from the Father, knows the Father. But by his prayer Jesus also identifies entirely with us as human beings, and so he invites us to join him in praying to "our common Father". We are led to acknowledge together that God is our Father "who is in heaven" but who is also as involved with us, as he is with Jesus, on earth. Jesus invites us to acknowledge that God's name (a word that encapsulates all who God is) is "hallowed" – holy, almighty and unknowable. Jesus reminds us that the God whom we can hardly even dare to begin to identify with, or whose holiness we can hardly begin



to conceive of, can be summed up in the name "Father", the loving, close familiar relationship which he chooses to have with each one of us - just as he has with Jesus.

Jesus knowing the Father and knowing why he has been sent, "to do the will of the Father", invites us to identify with the Father's purposes, that God's "kingdom come", that God's "will be done, on earth as it is in heaven". With these words, Jesus offers us an insight into God's purposes. It is an encouragement for us to enter into and participate in the will of the Father. We are invited to become part of the kingdom of heaven as truly incarnated on earth in Jesus – to be saved; to be as involved in the process of salvation as is Jesus - which is God's will for us as human beings!

In the next phrase of the Our Father, Jesus moves us from a vision of the transcendent but loving God to the

difficulties of our lived human realities with "Give us this day our daily bread". How basic are our needs, enough to survive the day without building up stores or riches for the future? So Jesus invites us to rely on God our loving and unfailing Father.

"And forgive us our trespasses." What a surprising request this is from the mouth of Jesus who, unlike us, did not trespass. What does this tell us about Jesus' entire identification with us as human beings? We remember that Jesus had already undergone the baptism of repentance which John offered in the Jordan not to fulfil his own need, but because, as Jesus said to John, "this is how it should be, because we must do all that God wants us to do." Matt. 3: 15 , So despite surely knowing that he was the only human being in the whole history of the world for whom this request was irrelevant, Jesus in solidarity with the

Continued on Page 2

Inside this issue..

A reflection on the "Our Father"	1 - 2
2011 Reports	3 - 5
Hospitalité 2012 Appeal	5
Treasurer's Report	10
Ask Les	11
Lourdes Revisited	6
Notice Board	8 - 9

For up to date news from our web team go to

<http://catholicassociation.blogspot.com>



Plus...

Bishop Crispin Inspires us with a lesson in Grace and Acceptance **Page 7**



Nell Atkin speaks of her experience returning this year as an Assisted Pilgrim **Page 10**

Catholic Association Hospitalité AGM to be hosted by the Diocese of East Anglia - 11 February 2012, see **page 12** for details.

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A Reflection on the "Our Father" Continued from overleaf



invites us to commit to. Jesus himself forgave the very men who put him to death. But how difficult is it for us to forgive those who comparatively speaking only tread on our toes? And yet not to be forgiving could boomerang back on us if we don't think carefully about what we are invited to pray for here. Thank God that Jesus showed us that being forgiving was a possibility in his own life which again we can take as an example. He reminds us that the grace of the Father is there to help us to rise over every major provocation we might encounter. And like Jesus, we are called to do something for others which we can only do with the grace of our loving Father God, who Jesus again helps us to recognise as we pray this phrase.

"And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil". Jesus knew temptation; before he started his ministry proper, in the desert; and in approaching the culmination of his ministry, in the Garden and on the cross. This petition Jesus invites us to offer to our loving Father is clearly derived not only from his own lived human experiences but from also from his awareness of people throughout his ministry when he was called to deliver people from sickness, evil, possession and even death itself. Yet again, this phrase is a clear reminder of a part of Jesus' - and our - work of salvation which we can undertake with confidence due to our Father's listening to our petitions .

This year the theme of Lourdes is "The Our Father". We see in this prayer of Jesus, which Mary and Bernadette prayed together in the Grotto, an icon of our salvation, a mirror reflecting God's light into our lives, into the lives of all those who come to Lourdes and into the lives of those we meet; an encounter with God's salvation . The "Our Father" continues to be a celebration of our intimate and loving relationships with our God and Father, with Jesus our brother and the continuing power of the Holy Spirit. May God's kingdom come!

with the rest of the human race teaches us to make this request to our Father. What an insight this gives us into Jesus' total self-giving and self-identification with us and an example of his unquestioning obedience to the will of his Father for us to follow!

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."
What a dangerous phrase Jesus now

2011 Reports

Hospitalité Secretary

Nimal Hemelge on behalf of the Hospitalité Council.

We were pleased with how our 2011 annual pilgrimage to Lourdes went. Many of our assisted pilgrims were very happy to be returning to the Accueil Notre Dame, and overall the week went well. In Lourdes we welcomed into our Hospitalité 10 new ordinary members and 8 full members during the Gather mass. Our Hospitalité continues to go from strength to strength.



Matt Betts (Chief Brancardier) and Chris Buller (Hospitalite President) presenting Hospitalite Insignia at our Gathering Mass 2011.

Speaking personally, this year was very moving as we were all taught a lesson in grace by Bishop Crispian Hollis. His anointing was especially moving and his article on page 7 is a must read.

During our Hospitalite Service this year, we reflected on the Our Father and our time spent in Lourdes, as well as our time outside of Lourdes combined with our journey to Lourdes. For my journey, well I started this year, 2011, thinking, I don't want to go to Lourdes this year. It costs too much, we have a new

born, I need a proper holiday – need I go on. But some how, notwithstanding my position as Secretary, Our Lady got me here. Accommodation, presented itself to me, my mother in law Sonia, readily agreed to come and help us, and before I knew it, everything had been booked. A Lourdes miracle in itself. For some of you, I am sure you have the same doubts now and again, however most of you, are blessed, and have already booked next year's Lourdes. I don't have the certainty in my life – but I've come to realise, I don't need that certainty, as I'm here, thankful and glad Our Lady nudged me and those around me in the right direction.

So leaving aside the doubts, the badges and the kudos they bring (he he), I thank Our Lady that I can share my journey with you all. Our journey brings us all closer to gether as a Hospitalite, and a journey that is not only spiritually, physically and mentally demanding. But it is emotional rollercoaster that I choose (with a little help from my friends) to ride again and again and again.

Hospitalité President

Chris Buller

It was good to return to Lourdes again after an absence of few years and to see how things have changed and mostly for the better. As I drove through France suffering with an ever worsening tooth abscess, I wondered if I would be able to cope as the pain throbbled away and kept me awake most of the previous two nights. Whilst I did consider turning around, I decided not too, as I was sure Our Lady would make sure I got there safely and besides I had our excellent medical team to sort me out, which Dr Adam did with a new pain relief regime that worked very quickly and allowed me to enjoy and partake in the remaining part of the pilgrimage. So a special thank you to Adam for his help and also to the Hospitalite Secretary Nimal for standing in at short notice to run the

Hospitalite Service when I was at my worst.

This year Tina Walker, Sue Woodford and Fr Simon Blakesly are all standing down from their respective positions, as leader of the Youth Group, Chief Nurse and Chaplin to the Sick and the Hospitalite. I would like to thank them all for all their hard work and Becky Banfield and Fr Tony Lester who are taking over the best of good fortune going forward and I look forward to seeing how they stamp their personalities on their respective roles in the coming years.

A Trustees announcement over the appointment of the new Chief Nurse, Rachel Easton can be found on page 9. The Hospitalite cannot thank enough Sue for her wonderful contribution to our Pilgrimage.

In addition we say goodbye to Bishop Crispian Hollis who is retiring from the position of patron of the Hospitalite, whilst I am sad to see him retire, I was pleased to hear he intends to return to keep coming to Lourdes. On behalf of the Hospitalite I would wish him the best and our prayers are with him during his treatment and recuperation over the next few months.

I was also pleased to see the HCP move forward and for the older children to become more involved in the Accueil. I know my daughter had a great time during the week, and I hope we can work on a way to make them all feel more of the team going forward.

The next opportunity to meet up will be at the AGM on 11th February in Sawston.

See the back page for details.





**Chief Brancardier / Chief
Handmaid Report
Matt Betts & Anna Jackson**

We enjoyed being based in the Accueil Notre Dame again this year and were delighted that we had so many visitors to the Accueil Notre Dame from the wider pilgrimage, and that so many attended our last night party. We feel that this really helped to contribute to the inclusive community spirit that we try to foster within the CA and reinforced the message that our APs are at the centre of our week.

We were particularly happy with the calm and relaxed manner of working that we observed this year in our volunteer helpers - this inevitably contributed to what we felt was, overall, a smooth and happy week. Our thanks as ever go to the army of faithful volunteers who return year after year for the support they provide to us, both emotionally and practically, and to our team leaders who operate so effectively within the CA structure. We could not do our jobs without them.

We made one notable change to the shift patterns this year. In conjunction with Sue Woodford, our Chief Nurse, we standardised the handmaid/brancardier and nursing shifts in

the Accueil Notre-Dame so that they operated on the same timetable. This was a change brought about in response to feedback that we have received in past years that both handmaids/brancardiers and nurses would welcome better integration with each other, in recognition that we are all serving the same APs. The feedback we have had from this year's pilgrimage suggests that this was a positive change and one that we will seek to repeat next year.

Our excursion was to Gavarnie again this year and all went well. We particularly made sure that there were two team leaders in-charge of the trip and this worked well. Gavarnie is lovely, but we feel it is time for a change after three years. We were impressed to see the extensive renovations that have taken place at Lac de Lourdes recently and consider this to be a strong contender for our excursion venue next year. We will make a decision next year.

We would like to thank Sadie Vile for co-ordinating the hotel side of things this year. This wasn't always an enjoyable role, because of the situation with wheelchairs. Although we had ordered the wheelchairs in May this had been badly coordinated by the HNDL in August and we didn't have enough wheelchairs at the start of the week. All our team leaders and deputies did a great job in managing this problem with Sadie.

The new Ceremonies and Marshaling team worked very well this year. Internal marshals were introduced and helped to make everything run much smoother. We also introduced a brancardier looking after the CA banner, which worked very well. Thanks must go to Michael Hargreaves for always being so smart and punctual. We also had a handmaid looking after the Pilgrimage Candle, which was beautifully decorated by the HCP. It was wonderful to see it at every ceremony, and special thanks must go to Vicki Gale for organising this as part of the team. It

was a shame it was missing at the torchlight, but this will be rectified next year, and some more changes need to be made to this team for 2012. Special thanks to Johan Bergström-Allen and David Ball for leading it this year and working with Matt on various changes.

Thank you to HCP for their hard work in putting on their annual tea party. The tea party is a wholly positive feature of our pilgrimage and is looked forward to by many and we want to ensure it continues. Unfortunately, the room available for it and the short time slot were not ideal this year and we hope to rectify this next year. In addition, we would prefer it if this event could be held on the Sunday afternoon, as it would be a perfect timetable filler in an otherwise rather empty schedule.

This year, flights for our APs and volunteer helpers were again from Stansted and Manchester airports, as well as by coach and with some other independent travel arrangements.

Regarding the flights, we continue to stress the importance of all helpers on the flights arriving at the airports three hours before departure if possible to ensure that we have enough help. The teams were all excellent and worked really hard in making sure that our APs were well looked after. We would like to particularly thank Nicholas Tangney for being so helpful to Matt in his first year, and meeting up in advance - we hope to repeat this next year. We would also like to thank our two Stansted teams under the leadership of Ed Page, and our two nurses: Sister Maureen and Anne Stairs. Finally, we would like to thank the Manchester flight team too.



Hospitalité 2012 Appeal

One of the important commitments we make as Hospitalité members is to try and promote the CA Pilgrimage in our homes and parishes.

For our Pilgrimage next year, the CA Hospitalité is appealing for everyone to invite any friends, family members or fellow parishioners who might want to come to Lourdes as an assisted pilgrim.

We have produced a promotional poster and letter to appeal for new assisted pilgrims and helpers, and we would be grateful if members could place it in their local parish church, local school/university, or wherever they think people would be interested. We would also be grateful if each member could add themselves as a local contact in the space provided, so that people can enquire further; or if you would rather not be the local contact, please add your Diocesan/Group Director as the contact (their details can be found on the CA website).

If people contact you about the CA Pilgrimage, lots of information can be found on the CA website's FAQ pages, or if they contact you to come as:

* an assisted pilgrim, please ask them to contact their Diocesan/Group Director

* a volunteer helper, please ask them to contact us on volunteer@catholicassociation.co.uk

Our poster and letter is included in this newsletter as an insert. If you would like more copies of this poster and letter, please download from the CA website.

Chief Nurse's Report Sue Woodford

All I would like to say is thank you to all the Nurses I have worked with over the years, and that I hope the Catholic Association continues to grow from strength to strength. All the problems that have befallen our Pilgrimage are now a thing of the past.

As Rachel takes over as Chief Nurse, I wish her well, but would particularly like to thank Adam, Anna, Matt and Tina all of whom have supported me during my time as Chief Nurse.

I wish them and the Catholic Association well for the years ahead.

CA Young Helpers Report Tina Walker

“Will you be Liz for a week?” Those words spoken 13 years ago by Tony O'Rourke started my time with the young helpers group. After 4 years assisting with the group (mainly on nights) I took over the running of the YHG in 2003 and have had 9 great years as the leader of the young helpers group.

Tony and Liz introduced some fabulous things to the group – the polo shirt uniform; the van; the positive reputation of the group. These things have allowed me to continue their work and the group has grown with a positive attitude.

I have had the wonderful opportunity to see young people grow and flourish during their time in Lourdes but also in their life journey and am thrilled to see how some have moved into positions of responsibility in the pilgrimage and many have continued to come along each year on pilgrimage and stay in touch all year round.

This year in Lourdes was quite difficult, especially after my knee injury – I'm looking forward to getting back on my feet properly after my knee surgery on January 27th 2012! I would like to thank the medical staff for their help in Lourdes and Sue for my beautiful blue Lourdes crutches!

And now for retirement, well, kind of.... I will still be in Lourdes (especially as next year will be my 25th year) and I look forward to finding out what Our Lady has in store for me!

I would like to thank so many people (too many to name) for their support, encouragement and true friendship over the years – you know who you are! But especially my thanks go to my Mum, Sylvia Walker.

I wish Becky Banfield all the best as she takes over the reins and hope that she has an enjoyable time with the great people who make up the young helpers group on our pilgrimage – I know she'll be fabulous!

Below, Sue Woodford and Tina Walker Walsingham Retreat 2011



Lourdes

Revisited

By Jimmy Burns (with thanks to Fr Nick King SJ)



A week away from one's daily existence seems all that much longer a break when it has been spent in Lourdes and I write this now while the experience is not only still fresh in my mind but also hopefully resistant to old habits settling in again.

Pilgrimage is a journey and a discovery, and how ever many times I return to this holy enclave in the foothills of the Pyrenees, the process endures- each trip providing both renewal and a fresh encounter in most unexpected ways. It is in the pleasant surprises breaking through the pain and heartache and dark clouds of foreboding that Lourdes reaches out and converts. Therein lays its deepest mystery.

To the uninitiated, first encounters can be off-putting. The numerous gift shops with items ranging from cuddly toys making wolf-whistles to luminous virgins with moving eyes, the cafe waiters touting for business as if the *menu de jour* had turned into a bordello, the hotels with their neon lights and piped music- these are all scenes that seem to collectively con-

spire against any sense of mystical experience.

And then there are the crowds, testing one's tolerance of fellow men and women to its limit. Visitors to Lourdes are not an orderly, quiet lot on the whole. The Italians and French make it clear they are the dominant occupying force in a loud acquisitive manner more suited to a busy urban shopping centre than a small town made famous by a shrine.

And yet to survive this –as we all do–without losing one's patience or temper before entering the domain of sanctuaries and holy grotto at its centre is to experience a rite of passage away from the maddening crowd and into another kind of humanity where faith rather than money calls the shots.

It is here, in and around the Grotto where the 14 year old shepherdess Bernadette Subirous saw her 'lady' in the niche in 1858- that Lourdes delivers its most moving engagement between those in need of help and those prepared to give it . Together they contribute to a rich tapestry of interconnected prayer services and cleansing rituals: from masses and torch lights processions, to more intimate candle offerings or washing in the waters. If Lourdes helps you to spend a long week without feeling it necessary to check on emails, phone texts, and keep up with 24 hours TV news it is because it connects you in its own way to a world one can forgotten to see or listen to, where the inner self and that of the 'other' engage in a more positive, uncluttered , and profound dialogue.

Each one of us returns from Lourdes, cherishing those moments of pleasant surprise I referred to earlier which can prove both humbling and inspirational. While these moments can be, by their very nature, intensely personal, they also touch us collectively, and manage in the process to rekindle our faith in a God of love.

Some of my own pleasant surprises



came from experiencing at first-hand the pain of others, along with the self-less dedication of fellow volunteers –old and young–to those in their care, and the sick or disabled's own loving response, however late the hour, however much the suffering that had been gone through or was undoubtedly still to come. But carers also found the space and time to talk to each other in a way that no social network could possibly facilitate. They rediscovered more about their true selves, regardless of social position or job title.

Somehow our souls are nourished by the place just as Bernadette's was. In the late hours we are surprised by Lourdes and come away with an inner joy we feel we should share with others. In the week I switched off my I-Pod, TV, and computer, the grotto late at night shone with a quiet brilliance, the dappled dawn brought its own testament to God's Glory as did the stillness I rediscovered with fellow pilgrims (all of them half my age) at the summit of the *Pic du Jer* with its panoramic view of the beautiful landscape surrounding Lourdes. Not all of us slept through the big thunderstorm the next night but once it was over, the river had regained its strength and clarity. Carers and cared for-pilgrims all-seemed drawn to it. The bend in it, held us in prayer.

Jimmy Burns is an author and journalist. An old boy of Stonyhurst College, he returned this summer with The Catholic Association's Pilgrimage.

www.jimmy-burns.com

A Lesson in Grace

Taken from a note by: Bishop Crispian Hollis

When I set off for Lourdes this year, I was not sure what to expect or, indeed, what to hope and pray for. At that time, I was stepping into a pattern which has been mine at this time of the year for the last 40 or so years.

My first pilgrimage was in 1968 when I went with students from Oxford University, where I was chaplain, and we went as a working group. In addition to my normal priestly responsibilities, I worked with the students at the railway station, the airport and in the baths as a helper and as a brancardier. I continued to go with Oxford in this way until I left the university to take up other work in 1977, though I did continue my pilgrimages after that in a less structured way.

In 1981, I went with the Catholic Association (Clifton diocese) for the first time and this year has represented my 30th pilgrimage with the Association, though, since 1989, I have been a member of the Portsmouth diocesan group. As I am now nearing retirement, this is almost certainly my last pilgrimage for the time being.

As this year's pilgrimage unfolded, I began to realise that everything was

different and that my "pilgrim history" was radically changing. For the first time in 45 years, I was one of the sick of the pilgrimage. Although I seemed quite well, I was aware of my energy levels diminishing and of my increasing dependence on the love and care of others.

For the first time in my life, I received the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick at the hands of Archbishop Peter Smith. It was given publicly at the Mass of the Anointing, which formed part of the pilgrimage programme, and I found myself enfolded and cherished with so many others who were receiving the Sacrament, as well as being one of those also ministering to the sick sacramentally.

This led me to further reflection and prayer. Previously, I had always been able to bring to the pilgrimage my personal fitness and energy to help others and now the tables were turned.

For the first time – and I have really had to struggle in prayer with this – I was bringing a gift from the Lord which was not of my choosing. I was bringing the gift of my cancer and I think that I have really been graced in these days to see that it is a gift and not a burden. Like all the gifts that come from God, it is not always easy to see where they are leading. All I can say – and it's early days yet – I feel that I am being led into a new vision and way of life brought about by retirement and serious illness. I do not know where it will take me but I have been graced enough so far to be able to discern the hand of God in all this and a new phase of my life beckons me forward. For once, God is doing all the choosing and I am finding myself content for that to be so.

I don't know where I will be this time next year – Mells, I hope – or how I will be but I find myself very peaceful about all that may transpire. I am being given the possibility of a much-needed moment of conversion and transformation for my whole life and I am being given the grace of time in

which to achieve what God wants.

This way of thinking – seeing cancer as a moment of grace – which must seem crazy to most of us, began to crystallize in my heart as we celebrated the feast of St Rose of Lima on the Tuesday of the pilgrimage. In particular, I was struck by some words from her writings when she says that there can be no road to heaven without the cross. I cannot know what the Lord has in store for me – and part of me doesn't want to know – but I am being graced with the beginnings of an understanding that I am now going to be led in his path and in his ways – which are not ours!

I have a feeling and the strong hope that what lies ahead will be extraordinary and transforming and not in my control. If this can be the grace of sickness, then blessed be God! My illness is to be gift to me and, although there will clearly be times when it feels much more like burden and weariness, I am being called to live positively, optimistically and with hope and I want nothing more than that. This has got to be the Christian way.

I fancy that the Lord's words to Peter as recorded by John will increasingly be my companions in the days, months and years to come:

"In all truth I tell you, when you were young you put on your own belt and walked where you liked; but when you grow old you will stretch out your hands and somebody else will put a belt round you and take you where you would rather not go...follow me." (John 21:18)

So, even after 43 years of pilgrimages to Lourdes, this one was new and with renewed faith I can hear afresh what Our Lady says: "do whatever he tells you". All I can say is "Amen" to that. Thank you all so much for all your love, your prayers and your care which have enabled me to be where I am and have given me such strength and hope as I have.



Notice Board

THIS IS YOUR NOTICE BOARD, so please send any announcements to the Hospitalité Secretary.

We remember those who have passed away, may they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Jim Dujardin: Jim passed away on 22 September 2011. James had been a great supporter of the CA Pilgrimage over recent years, both as a helper and an Assisted Pilgrim.

Ellen Davis: Ellen passed away on 2 October 2011. Ellen was a great supporter of the Carmelites and Hospitalite. She was Hospitalite prayer member, but sadly she was too unwell to join us this year.

Dr Derek Bedford: Derek passed away on 21 October 2011. Derek understood Lourdes and simply described the bridge linking the Accueil to the Reconciliation Chapels as the "Bridge of Service". How right he was. Derek inspired many on our Pilgrimage, and was a friend to many people. He assisted Sr Maureen for a number of years working closely with the Hotel Assisted Pilgrims. He will be greatly missed.

Denise Philips: Denise passed away in November of this year. Denise was a longstanding member of the Hospitalite, and originally joined our Pilgrimage with the GOBS (Grand Order of Babysitters). She divided her time between the GOBS and our Pilgrimage, more often than not answering Our Lady's call to drink from the spring, quenching our thirst working with the water team.

John Birmingham: John Birmingham passed away 23rd October 2011. John was an AP with the CA in 2011.

STOP THE PRESS

From Tim Bowman: "Please can you ask for prayers for John Bowman, my father, a CA Hospitalite prayer member, and assisted pilgrim for the past 4 years. John is in hospital and has been critically unwell. Today he received the sacrament of the sick, is totally in peace and is eager for heaven!"

Please keep Margaret Fairey in your prayers, as she is still not very well. Margaret is Colette Sharrock's sister and aunt to Matthew, Claire and Helen. Margaret worked on our Pilgrimage for a number of years and recently supported the CA Ball. Please keep her and her family in your prayers.

CONGRATULATIONS TO...

...CA Nurse Tessie North on the arrival of her first grandchild, Isobel, weighing in at 6lbs who was born 11.11.11

...Rupert Bell and Insa on the birth of their daughter Franziska, weighing in at 3.37kg.

...Shane and CA Nurse Mary Edwards (nee Dujardin) on the birth of their son Charlie James Edwards on Tuesday 8th November weighing in at 3.43kg.



Baby Charlie

British Lourdes Nurses Association Conference 2012:

Theresa Mahon and Frances Presgraves attended the recent British Lourdes Nurses Association Conference which was held again at Oscott College. As this was the tenth anniversary of the Association, the main speaker was Dr Alessandro De Franciscis, the Director of the Medical Bureau in Lourdes. He brought with him congratulations from Bishop Jaques Perrier and a gift of a medal / medallion which the doctor presented to the current chairman (Mrs Frances Presgraves—see page 11).



Baby Franziska

...Leslie Rock, our regular columnist for celebrating his 50th birthday last weekend whist in Shepperton Studios, where his latest play on the rise and fall of Michael Parkinson is about to be televised, or maybe not - either way, well done Les.



Above - Our Prayers go up with the CA 2011 Pilgrimage Candle, left - Assisted Pilgrims (inc. John Birmingham RIP) at the Closing Mass.



New for 2012

New Chief Nurse Confirmed:

The CA Trustees write:

We are pleased to announce that Rachel Easton will be taking over as Chief Nursing Officer for the 2012 pilgrimage.



Chief Nurse: Rachel Easton

Those who were present at the Hospitalite AGM last February may remember that Sue announced then that Rachel would be shadowing the role in 2011, ready to take over in 2012. However, Rachel then started a new job, was unable to join the pilgrimage in 2011, and was not sure if she could commit herself. Luckily, she has now confirmed that she is able to book the holiday for next year and spare all the time for preparations as well. The email address chief_nurse@catholicassociation.co.uk is the best way to contact Rachel, and she looks forward to catching up with all the nurses who are members of the Hospitalite. If anyone else can help with recruitment of additional nurses, please do contact Rachel.

Our New Hospitalite Chaplain Fr Tony Lester writes:

I have been asked to write few words to introduce myself as the incoming Chaplain to the Sick and to the CA Hospitality following on from Fr. Simon. I have been a part of the CA Pilgrimage now since 2004 when I

first came to accompany my mother, Mary, who was an assisted pilgrim in the Accueil Notre Dame. My visits to Lourdes began in 1982 when I first came with a group of young adults. Since 2005 I have always worked as a brancardier in the Accueil and it has been a privilege to be alongside our AP's in this way and to work in partnership with our excellent brancs and handmaids. I am a full member of the CA Hospitality. I am also Chaplain to HCPT Group 122 and a member of the HNDL. I hope that my background and formation as a Carmelite Friar will stand me in good stead as I take up this new role in the Pilgrimage as we seek to build on the excellent work already done in recent years to deepen the sense of spirituality throughout the Pilgrimage, always including our young helpers who set us such a great example of service. It would also be a great joy to introduce some of our other pilgrim priests into lending a hand in the Accueil.

Hospitalite Chaplain: Tony Lester



Stage 2012

Reunion of British Stagers, members of HNDL:

Sixteen active members of the Catholic Association Hospitalite were present at the recent annual reunion of British members of the Hospitalite of Our Lady of Lourdes (HNDL), held in York.

This annual event welcomes all those who are Stagers in Lourdes with the HNDL. We were the largest single group from one pilgrimage, excluding those from the hosting Diocese of Middlesborough - but our CA Stage Groups include Fr Tony Lester and Johan Bergstrom-Allen, both York residents, who were able to welcome others to their homes.

About 120 people enjoyed a Mass in the beautiful setting of the "choir" in York Minster, where Fr Tony and Fr Nick King were among those concelebrating with Bishop Terence Draine.

At the meeting later, we were encouraged to return to our pilgrimages, our workplaces, and any other gatherings of our friends to say **"Will you come and follow me"**, and encourage more people to join us "on Stage" another way of experiencing the work of Lourdes. Already we have expressions of interest from several CA helpers considering their first Stage in 2012, and we would encourage all others to think about it. One group of us will be there in late May/early June (around the Bank holiday) and others will be working with HNDL for the week immediately preceding the pilgrimage in August.

For more information, visit our website:

<http://www.catholicassociation.co.uk/stage/stintro.shtml>

Below - Sadie Vile, Helen Carroll and Martine O'Meara pictured at the recent British Stagers, members of HNDL reunion



A first time Assisted Pilgrim in Lourdes

Nell Atkin, a CA Lourdes Pilgrimage stalwart gives us an insight into returning as an AP.

It was with some trepidation that I joined the CA pilgrimage at Stansted wondering what life in the Accueil Notre Dame would be like as an AP. Being ushered into the Fourgon at Tarbes airport was the beginning of reality. It was very hot and not a breath of air until we started moving. However we had time to get acquainted while the Fourgon was being loaded and a kind gentleman collected our passports for safe keeping. That was a shock for me, as I like to keep a grip on my passport at all times in foreign parts! But I can understand that the CA cannot risk any of the APs going AWOL, as has happened in the past. But from the moment of being recognised as an ex-handmaid "You wore a blue dress," I found my new identity.

It has to be said that not many members of the CA Hospitalite who, when ill health overtakes them, come as sick pilgrims. One was always full of admiration for their courage and the faith that brought them back to Lourdes.



I didn't think, then, that it was for me but here I was experiencing the dreaded Fourgon! I am mentioning no names but older workers (hospitaliers) will remember them and particularly the lady with whom I shared a room and who has been

coming as an AP for a several years – and after many, many years of working in Lourdes in very different jobs.

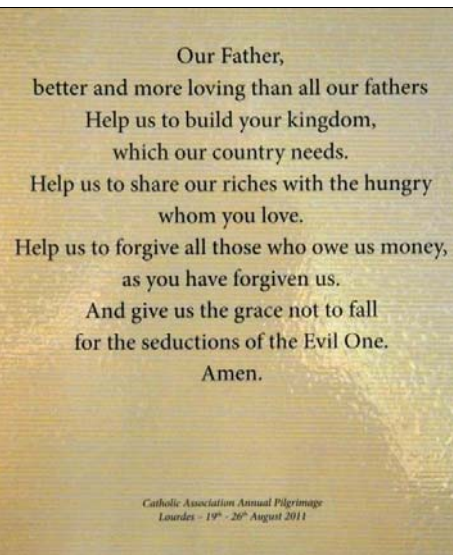
One surprising and unexpected discovery was that the people I had worked with and looked on as friends and workmates suddenly became "carers". Not actually hands on in my case but the attitude seemed different. I had suddenly become an outsider, was I being ultra sensitive? This is probably a truth that many people have had to face when illness or infirmity strikes but it is hard just the same. The time comes when one must accept like Bernadette that one is no longer needed and leave others to carry on. So it was a great joy for Helen and me to join in the Blessed Sacrament Procession behind the Hospitalite NDL banner on the Thursday. We were honoured to be pushed by two hospitaliers who are also chaplains of honour and sporting their CA ties to show the strong link between the pilgrimage and the Hospitalite NDL, such a privilege!

I only have praise for the young who so cheerfully pushed me around in the heat down memory lane, meeting old friends, even to looking for a hat, having left mine at home. I felt for the young man who admitted to never having pushed a wheelchair before – he got the bossiest front seat driver ever! Years of working in Lourdes makes for very strong friendships and everywhere I met with warmth and happy memories, even to the lady at the sandwich shop round the corner from Saint Frai. It was lovely too to meet the third and fourth year helpers who remembered me and such a comfort to see so many making their commitment to the CA Hospitalite.

Returning to Lourdes year after year one realises what a privilege it is to answer Our Lady's call. Just being at the Grotto, whether at the busiest times or at very quiet times, is surely to become aware of the nearness of

the Kingdom of God in our everyday lives.

Picture –Bottom Left, Nell Atkin with Helen Carroll and Matt Betts; Below a reflection on the Our Father given to the Lourdes Sanctuaries by our CA Pilgrimage (on display in St. Pius X Underground Basilica)



Treasurer's Report: by Richard Long-Fox

Readers of previous reports will know that, from a Treasurer's view point, I measure a pilgrimage by two criteria. The first and most important is the number of people we have been able to subsidise (and how well) and the second is how successful the collections have been - to enable us to support people in subsequent years.

I am glad to be able to say that we did well against the first criteria, not a dramatic increase but all in the right direction. The collection at the Hospitalite service was slightly up on last year but, for a variety of reasons, the collections for the Sick Pilgrims Fund on the planes and coaches were somewhat disappointing - except for the coach across Paris which did very well.

Full details of our financial position will be available at the AGM but we are still in a position where we can meet all the agreed requests

Know your Trustees:

Frances Presgraves

IN THIS EDITION: We focus on Frances — the most recent addition to the CA Board of Trustees.

I first came to Lourdes in 1995 – not long ago compared with many of you! I was recruited by the then Hospitalite Chaplain, Fr John Warrington, who was my priest at home. It was the most amazing week, and I knew straight away that, if they'd have me again, I had to come back. It was a bit of a mixture of being in parts daunting yet exquisite. One of the things that struck me was the way that it's a little taste of Heaven in our busy, mad world.

I'd always wanted to be a nurse – there's a picture of me, in my pre-school days, dressed up in a "nurse outfit"! I couldn't wait to be old enough to start my training, and wanted to be a Cadet Nurse to fill in the time but Matron told my mother that it might put me off, as there were restrictions on what we teenagers would be allowed to do. Happily, my local dentist offered me a job at his surgery, working as "nurse", receptionist, wage clerk, you name it, until I was the magic age (eighteen).

I'd applied and been accepted to do my training with the Royal Navy but in the end trained a little nearer to home - my student days were full of fun, but we worked hard too! Once qualified, I married and continued to work as a nurse, only taking a short while out when my daughter and son were small. I still desperately love being a nurse – although it's all changed a great deal. It feels to me to be the most rewarding job in the world, though some aspects can be heartbreaking. That's where my Faith comes in. When it's time to go home, and you've done your best, you have to be able to pass on the load. You handover to the next team what you can, and the rest you hand over to God. This is where I know what a great gift Faith is. I honestly don't know how you could manage to work as a Health Professional if you didn't have Faith. Or how you could do the work and not believe. I thank God for his goodness to me.

I'm delighted that I was invited back to nurse in Lourdes, and deputised at meetings for the then Chief Nurse, Chris Collins. I became a Council Member of the Hospitalite, and then followed Margaret Fielding to be Chief Nurse myself. Last year, I was asked to become Trustee with responsibility for nursing. I hope to continue to provide encouragement and



support for all our pilgrimage nurses in future... alongside all the other things I love to do: I'm currently Chairman of the British Lourdes Nurses Association, and cake lady (to the whole paddock it seems) when my son is racing his F4 car. I'm also the luckiest Granny in the world, having two little grandchildren whom I love to spend with whenever I can.

Like Bishop Paul, I have a cat – this one's called Smudge. Smudge moved in when she saw that there was a vacancy (when our previous one died). She has us all wrapped around her little paw!

Ask Les

Leslie Rock

Q: Samantha Camel from Clifton Diocese wants to know who discovered the Carmelites?

A: Actually it was Brendan Vincent O'Malleybone IV, brother of Elijah.

On his tour of Southern Europe during 1214 AD, he stumbled upon a group of traders from Tatooine whom had formed an ancient religious community known officially as the Broth-

ers of the Camel. So named following the destruction of the Nerfherders, during the great Gungan war, the Carmelite Order developed from a group of Camel-herders in thirteenth-century Palestine; Priests, Jedi Knights, Wookies, Tydarians and lay people with a penchant for Brown, living a contemplative community life of prayer and service.

It wasn't until the proliferation of Camel goods in 1345, when the group of Camel-herders changed their name for legal reasons, and became known as the "Carmelites."

Send in your questions to Les care of the Hospitalité Secretary, and he will try and give a sensible answer to any questions you may have.



AGM 2012

HOSPITALITE AGM SATURDAY 11TH February 2012

The Hospitalité President and Hospitalité Council would like to invite all members to our Annual General Meeting 2011. The AGM is an opportunity for you to put forward your ideas, receive updates from the Council, to meet with your friends, to bring a little bit of Lourdes back into your daily life and much more.

Venue Our Lady of Lourdes SAWSTON
Cambridge : CB22 3HJ



- 10.30 Coffee in Hall (car park available)
- 11.00 Meeting in Hall
- 12.30 Mass in Church (Next to hall)
- 1.30 Lunch in Hall
- 2.30 Coffee/tea /chat

Directions by car:

- Junction 10 (DUXFORD) M11...onto A 505 (towards Newmarket)
- After approx. 200yds go over mini roundabout
- Next Roundabout .. (BP garage & Macdonalds) Take 1st exit left
- Then immediate right hand fork signed Pampisford and SAWSTON
- Past a bollard (Health Centre on right) continue to next bollard which is immediately opposite the entrance to the car park for the Church and Hall.

Trains from Kings Cross to Cambridge (Fast 50 mins) Liverpool Street to Cambridge (Slow 1 hour) Bus from Cambridge Station is C7 to Sawston (1/2 hr). Coach Victoria Coach Station to Cambridge . Bus on to Sawston C7 (stops at War Memorial 50yds from Church)

Lunch choice of CHICKEN & CHIPS OR FISH & CHIPS with veg.... Wine ...Selection of Sweets.

Cost £10 per adult; £5 per child.

NAME (S):

I/WE WILL/WILL NOT* be attending the Hospitalité AGM on the 11 February 2012

I/WE WILL be staying for lunch and I enclose a cheque payable to CA Hospitalité.*

Number of : CHICKEN _____ / FISH _____ Dinner's requested.

I WOULD/WOULD NOT* like to make a donation to the CA Hospitalité.*

(*please delete as appropriate)

If you would like to send this form by post, please send to:

AGM 2012,
Hospitalité Secretary,
25 Windmill Avenue
Wokingham,
Berkshire, RG41 3XA

Or email confirmation to

agm@catholicassociaion.co.uk

RSVP by: 3 February 2012