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Dear Friends,

A strange year, a year of joys and sorrow, and very much a community year as I have had very little time away. At the beginning of January I had a lovely week's holiday at the convent in Wantage, with the CSMV. I came back and a few days later fell and damaged my back. That is now recovered but at the end of January something upset my gut and I have been burping ever since, thousands a day – and night. Just recently that is reducing – I expect it will be better by the time a referral comes up. This has meant my prayer time happens in the night, and no trip to Germany to see Mair's house and garden. Hopefully in 2018.

Meanwhile Mair has had heaps of visitors, and grown a garden, AND been to Zimbabwe and Canberra. (via Singapore). She went to Canberra primarily to see Catrin, but stayed with a friend for whom she once house sat in Bradford on Avon! Life for the young family continues its exhausting way as those children have a charmed life (including some of their mother's 30 year old toys!).

In the Summer too, the sorrow of the interment of Pip's ashes, I still miss her so much, and the joy of lunch in her and their garden as if she were there

Here among the joys, the finishing of the Michaelgarth Roof and I have been so moved by the sheer number of people who wanted to help us – we were GIVEN one hundred and twenty thousand pounds. So amazing. We had a lovely party to celebrate and I had the pleasure of fetching two CSMV Sisters (Wantage) and two SLG nuns from Oxford, stopping for a picnic on the Wye. Despite my injury I have been able to drive from quite early on.

A sorrow, in January, my brother died, leaving a distraught wife, Carol Ann;. A joy, which he knew about before he died, the birth of a grandson, to Gemma and Piers in September.

A joy, Katharine's Profession and her life with us, with all she brings including decades of experience of living in Community, only it was L'Arche.

A joy, Sister Lorna Francis back with us, feisty, sharp, intuitive, so much to learn from her. She wrote in September: 'Tymawr couldn't have been kinder or more helpful to me since my return. I really enjoyed the singing and I have loved sitting quietly in the Old Printing House. I am so fortunate to be in such a lovely hallowed place to end my days.'

And a couple of days after that she did end her days, suddenly, from health to death in three hours, lucky her but an awful shock for everyone else. I followed the ambulance to the hospital and came home four hours later without her.

That was 16th September. Sr Veronica Ann was in chapel for Vespers of the Dead, then in the night she got ill. At that point she discovered a breast lump. To cut the rest short, on 2nd November, All Souls', she was in chapel for Mass and Evening Prayer, on the 3rd November she was called to a doctor's appointment and told she had spinal secondaries, and she spent a month in hospital. She came home this week, so very glad to be home, mind perfect but body failing, not so much because of the cancer but because her heart is 94, and there isn't anything we can do about that.

Here she is surrounded by the community and friends and every need catered for. Her busy mind is organizing us as fast as she can, in particular the Companion who does so much of the computer work who left here exhausted today having done the Ordo (year's liturgy guide) for 2018 and ALL the writing, printing, sorting and posting of several hundred Advent Letters. I am doing her correspondence, she just signs it.

Despite appearances, I hardly keep to our routine, I am fully living the life to which I am vowed, which is what I want to do. A life of prayer, part of the non-stopness as well as the quiet in the night. 'On God alone my soul in silence waits' ...

Wishing you all every blessing at Christmas and for 2018

Lizzie/Elizabeth



Proud Hubert mother & grandmother



Pip's garden, after the interment



Novice Guardians, gathered together



Mair and Jan in Zimbabwe



Catrin's kids, at home, at the coast, and with Aunty Mair

