



Dear All,

It seems to get later and later in the year before I get down to this, and now Catrin is a working mother (!) goodness knows if there will be any pictures. The icon above was written by friend Joan.

To explain that, having had a nasty miscarriage earlier, she kept the next pregnancy very quiet and bade me keep very quiet about it too, so not many of my friends or family knew much about the coming birth or indeed about the birth; that was their news and I left them to tell it. Chloe was born on two different days, February 1st, her passport says, but I have an email dated January 31st with a picture of Chloe at five minutes old. Such is the effect of the time difference. I went out to Canberra for two weeks, when she was from five to seven weeks, to help Catrin get some sleep, learn to express, have jabs done, that sort of thing. I was quite happy to be jet lagged and be up in the early hours with a burpy baby over my shoulder. Since then they all came to the UK, and Carole is pictured with Chloe on her knee at exactly the same age Catrin was when **she** first sat on Carole's knee. Carole said it was as though 30 years had just vanished. Now Chloe is on the move, Catrin is working four days a week, Pete has a new job, and the only thing they lack is sleep!

Mair today is emailing me from her new domain, Annecy, lovely spot in the mountains of France, where she has found a place with a family whose daughter wants to speak English. Mair of course wants to speak French and it is quite surprising it doesn't come out as German, which she has been working at very hard for some time, including working for a German. And Spanish is now on the agenda how muddling! And a few days later Mair got herself a job in a ski resort - Courchevel clearly not intending to be bored. Chocolate box photos, and I am told silly prices! However she has plenty of sense.

She still has a room on the Scillies but it is impossible to rent a flat – they all go to tourists at phenomenal prices, and she is getting too old for a room in a shared house. So is unlikely to stay for ever. Anyway for the time being she is in France. I saw her a couple of weeks ago in Oxford where she was staying with her Godmother Helen.

I get about more than most enclosed nuns – because I drive. So I saw Mair, then collected two nuns from a nearby Convent and brought them back here where they were working with us for a few days. I have seen my sister, my nephew and Sarah, and Jean from High School days, on trips to and from Heathrow. And Sr Jane, a friend at All Saints' in Oxford.

This year is our Centenary year, and in early December we all trooped off to Chichester where we were founded. And the parish there have been wonderful, putting us all up in a hotel, feeding us, producing the liturgy, everything. So we went to give thanks and rededicate ourselves for the future. And we did have the future as well as the past in mind, and more links were made. Wonderfully three of our family, two Associates and a Companion, came to Tymawr and kept up the life of prayer and all the services (Offices and Eucharist) while we were away.

But for 14 months Sr Veronica Ann concentrated on a celebration here on 3rd May. By the time we got there most of us had had more than enough, but in the event I was bowled over by all she had done. We entertained 150 and more people, exhibitions, dance, music and poetry, lunch, and a grand Mass. It was wonderful how people enjoyed it, and amazingly organized. (Nearly all the community photos are from that day, the only other one being the Tintern one, 2nd from bottom) Somehow we also fitted in two Life Professions (mine included), Holy Week and Easter. I am not sure

we'd have done any of that if Victoria hadn't been here for six months. Rather an exotic flower for our little community but such a blessing when we were so busy – she was here when I nursed Marion after her broken hip too. She then left, and in October, so did Alison who is continuing with the work she learned to do and love here, market gardening, and Katharine has arrived. (Pictured on May 3rd with me, and her Quaker friend Ann.) Katharine has known Tymawr for 30 years. My last letter stopped suddenly when Wendy died. Katharine was living with her. Now she is here. Having been with L'Arche for decades, she knows about community. The group missing from the Centenary celebration were the 'class of 94' – those women celebrating 20 years of women's ordination – they were at St Paul's.

Pip wrote, in answer to a recent letter, 'I almost laughed out loud as the next instalment of life in a religious community unfolded paragraph by paragraph. You could never say it were boring could you?? But seriously exhausting and engaging and real in so many important ways.' This was a response to an ordinary email as I went through the ups and downs of daily life in community. We are thinking about Formation, and I have said and believe, the difficult thing and special thing about living in a Religious Community is living in community ... but how do you teach that?

For 20 years and more I have 'prayer painted' (which has nothing to do with pictures) and then over a year ago I stopped – just painted one since, quite recently, and I won't be sending that one with this letter! However, the technique, just waiting on God and trying not to get in the way, has spread into everything I do. It requires intense concentration (not one of my best skills!) being in the present, here and now. But only for that time. For the rest of life I am definitely not into 'here and now' (very popular when I was in Lincoln) because the ONLY person always here, now, is me! But in an encounter with someone, yes.

A delightful outing was to Tintern Vespers, an annual event at the glorious Tintern Abbey, nestled in the Wye valley. It was packed this year as Rowan Williams was preaching, and for once it was gloriously sunny. It may be a very well preserved and beautiful ruin, but it has no roof! The choir is 'church' and consequently sings the psalms at a spanking pace, about twice the normal speed of monastics! But a little group from Tymawr sang Mary the Dawn, Christ the Perfect Day. Just over Rosalind's elbow is the forehead of the sound man who made it possible for us to be heard (and always, for Sr Veronica Ann to hear.) Apart from the venue there were several bits for me. At the heart of our little group is Sr Veronica Ann, now 91, and she has difficulty getting out of the low chairs there, but, she did, and sang in the middle of us. (She is also pictured introducing circle dance at our centenary celebration.) Another was that Sr Gillian does not like processing, but someone wanted her to, so she went, with a smile, which is typical of her generosity. She was rewarded with a big hug from Rowan Williams. And I love the martins flying all around.

Meanwhile your news is coming in. Often sad news inevitably included as we get older. I have just had **another** birthday, don't they ever stop?! Deaths and illness but less news of divorce, I suppose also due to the birthdays. And also news of babies and growth. I try to answer those as they arrive, since I can only put our news on here. That way there is the personal as well as the necessarily 'home news'.

So, wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and 2015, with love, Lizzie

