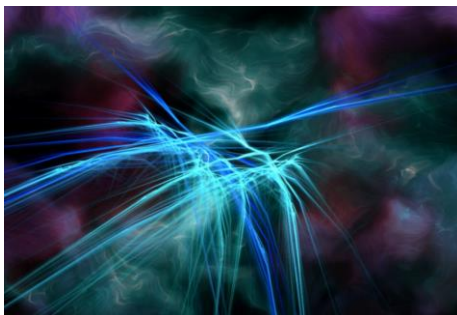


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December 2020

Tymawr Convent
Lydart,
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Dear Ffriends,

I noticed this picture in our files, and it is called archangel wishing you blessings at this strange time. I am starting this mid-November as we are locked down, and the internet is down, and the community is in Retreat, although Katharine and I are not as we are doing the chores, our usual volunteers being unable to come.

Probably as a community of contemplative nuns, our lives have changed less than most. For me the biggest change has come as a result of Health and Safety rules, in particular the new kitchen which makes a huge amount of work. There is a real bonus. Most people my age are getting older. I am getting younger – nothing like hoovering and polishing, mopping and scrubbing day after day for getting fit – and unlike ballet it doesn't damage my knees! Good for my mind also – the equivalent of the Victorian Good Sharp Walk! We have actually been closed since early January and don't expect to open before next Easter at the earliest. Quite how we manage then to do more than we are at present, I don't know but I don't have to know, yet.

Meanwhile we have lived life to the full, Cara has joined us all the way from Melbourne (with help from Catrin), Mo has spent nine weeks here and is going to Scotland and back if she can get through Lockdowns, to have done her quarantine by Christmas. Victoria rejoins us in early February. And we have an energetic new gardener, Vijay, with his wife, son and dog and now hens! The Noviciate and noviciate-to-be do work in the garden, but of course they have big commitments in the community which complicates life for Vijay. Their vocation is to the Religious Life in community, not first to horticulture. The garden is not on Lockdown, and Vijay is a tree expert, and sustainable living expert. One or two people have remained in our 'bubble', and so life goes on.

Our friends and families both personal and SSC are of course unable to come. We have a system for praying our way through them, which is appreciated but definitely not the same. So many peoples' lives have been devastated.

Worship has continued as before, the Offices unchanged except for a couple of books added, books that therefore we are reading together, much as Benedictines do only they do it over meals. I prefer it in chapel. One is in the evening and in order to hear it I have asked to read it – less likely to fall asleep on my feet! I think I fall asleep in chapel almost every day Was it St Therese who pointed out that parents love their children just as much (if not more) when they are asleep. The Eucharist has been more informal, a semi-circle of chairs at the front, and often we use the reserved sacrament. And sing chants which I love. Holy Week and Easter were wonderfully different, using imagination and our grounds. We have taken the opportunity to learn some new music having some lovely singers (I'm not one of them but I can teach – which would surprise my former patients,) and just about enough time!

Fortunately Catrin and family and Mair, and also Cath and Matt all got to my sister's last year, travelling not being on the cards this year. There is no Covid 19 in Canberra but obviously Catrin's firm has struggled, however she is still employed, and able to take her children to the beach and to school. Last year was dominated by these ferocious fires, which resulted in her racing back from the coast in the middle of the night on her birthday; the fire swept down their beach, but you wouldn't know now. One day Chloe saw black and red just over the hill at the bottom of their garden and said 'Look Mummy, a rainbow' and Catrin thought 'He'd better honour that.' Scary. Then hail the size of golf balls. She wouldn't mind being bored for a bit!

Mair has a lovely tent and a trailer and has been to some wonderful places. And she has a big garden. Her band met sometimes, in car parks or sports grounds, all nicely spaced and giving a good deal of pleasure.. The horrors of Brexit are a very real issue for her. I still remember where I was (in Burpham) when the announcement came, and the sinking sadness. And now there is Trump.

But still for me this life is worth living, and I send this with love and hope to all, Lizzie/Elizabeth



So photos,

Tending the Pascal Candle.

Tree in chapel

Eating at Michaelgarth when the kitchen was being built, before Lockdown. Cara next to Katharine.

Catrin's kids, it was raining but who cares, there's the SEA.

Catrin, the dance goes on

Pete, father's day

Mair's village. Mair's portable holiday. Band. (Back to you, black top pink below), Mair working in her garden

Vege garden (Tymawr)

Canberra fires this time last year

