

























## A NEW VENUE FOR THE SISTERS OF THE CHURCH

## INVOLVEMENT IN THE WORLD

BY A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE SISTERS OF THE CHURCH

AT THIS present time of renewal and change within the Church, Religious Communities are called to look at the Gospel and the ideals of their founders and re-express them in terms relevant to the modern world.

The aim and purpose of our community is "to promote the honour and glory of almighty God, the sustainer of all life kingdom upon earth". This allows for wide scope and has been carried out in a variety of ways: from educating street children of the London slums to providing meals for unemployed in Toronto, Canada.

Today the Community has nine schools (three in England, two in Canada and four in Australia), and three Homes for children in England.

The large well-equipped buildings which are necessary for our work, give an impression of opulence which is hard for some people to reconcile with the religious vow of poverty.

Although as individuals we have no possessions, yet as members of the community which owns our schools and buildings, we acquire a certain status that makes us less approachable for some people.

In Australia, where our schools are free-paying because of the lack of Government aid for private enterprise in education, our contact is almost entirely with the more affluent of society. This has given a distorted image of our community, making it appear to have no interest in ordinary working people.

## AT GLEBE

Last year the sisters in Australia considered re-building S. Gabriel's School, Sydney, in a more suitable area, but it proved impracticable because of the shortage of "school" grounds available to cope with the task of a larger school.

After much thought and prayer, the community was guided by the Holy Spirit to enter a different field of work — among the "wage-earners".

Our new home has been purchased at Glebe in the heart of Sydney where four sisters will live, putting themselves at God's disposal to serve their neighbours who are just being present among them: a presence of the Church, the Body of Christ, "welcomed and intended as a witness of the love of God". This is the basic stage of any missionary undertaking, but one which is overlooked.

By choosing to live in the middle class, under the same conditions, going out to the same mission, we shall be participating as far as possible in the lives of those around us whom we may come to belong to their milieu.

In Liverpool, England, we have recently sold our children's home which was no longer required in that area, and have moved to a smaller house in the village where the sisters will lead a similar life to that envisaged at Sydney, but with two of the sisters continuing to teach in our nearby secondary school.

## SHARED FRIENDSHIP

Jesus chose to spend a greater part of his life on earth as a workman in the rather desolate village of Nazareth. During this time he engaged in no direct teaching or preaching, but instead exposed those among whom he lived to God's love in his daily occupations and encounters.

Some sisters in our community feel a strong impelling call to imitate in a definite and real way this part of Our Lord's life. But for us it is a call within the call to the ordinary life and not apart from it. It must therefore be expressed within the framework of our community and its common "family" life.

In this family we are strengthened and integrated both individually and corporately by

our mutual exchange of love, help and consideration for one another.

Only in so far as we are faithful our subsidiary vocation to the religious life, will we be able to fulfill our subsidiary vocation to this apostolate with its stress on "being rather than doing".

At Sydney and Liverpool, we shall try to show our love for others as Jesus does in a way which will be acceptable to them: not expecting that ourselves be handed out to those less fortunate than ourselves, but as a real deep shared friendship which "either presupposes equality or brings it about."

We want at all times to make ourselves available to all, but especially to those with whom we live and work, and the misfits and inadequacies of life who always seem to need another on whom to lean.

All people have their dignity as human beings and deserve to be treated with love and respect at all times and in all circumstances. They are of God, created in His image and destined for life with him.

By giving to them their due and really caring about them, we help them to develop to their full stature and to realise

the whole potentiality of God's purpose for them.

Through Jesus' love and friendship, Matthew the tax-gatherer became Matthew the disciple and apostle of Christ.

The Church is her true self only when she exists "for humanity," wrote Bonhoeffer. As members of the Church we are called to be yeast in the dough of the world, yet which must be buried and hidden in the dough so that it can permeate it and give its life to enable the whole loaf to rise.

If we are to bury ourselves in the noisy "hurry-burry" life of a city and be used by God to influence others, our times of prayer must be jealously guarded. "There is no apostolic activity more important than prayer," also there can be no effective apostolic activity without prayer.

Prayer is that vital union — communion — with God from which our active work flows, which work in its turn feeds and nourishes our prayer. Our jobs will be regarded "not as time taken from, but as time given to prayer."

Set then devoted wholly to coming apart and being with God are necessary to bring us to a complete union with our

friends and neighbours as any Christian.

Social work, and Sunday school teaching are, we think, formidable with our desire to approach others on an equal footing, and to attain a certain status, but only with a friendship in which we can both freely give and receive.

The Roman Catholic congregations of the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus, have always tried to practice this new approach to the apostolate. We owe much to them and to the inspiration of their founder, Charles de Foucauld, who gave his life for the most forsaken people he saw, the Touaregs of the Sahara, among whom he chose to live.

An increasing number of Anglican priests and Religious who are aware of this need for greater involvement with people in the world, are being drawn to these ideas and the adopting of them to fit the particular fields which they work.

## PIONEERING

Religious Communities ought to be pioneers for the Church to live in every age. Our founders, Mother Emily was a great pioneer. She took little children into the Homes of the community in the face of fierce opposition, of encouraging immorality.

When the poor needed food and clothing, Mother Emily quickly organised such schemes as half-penny fares and second-hand clothes depots to provide relief.

Her wisdom was apparent when the usefulness of any project had come to an end and she closed down a house, or having pioneered an undertaking she withdrew from it to leave it to be carried on by the State.

By identifying ourselves as far as possible with the ordinary working people and being genuine in contact with them, we shall be expressing Mother Emily's ideals in a way we believe to be acceptable and suited to today's world.

To many, our approach will seem strange, unorthodox and unwise. Yet it is in accordance with the very heart of the Gospel, love one another.

It gives a true expression to our religious vows and is compatible with the aim and purpose of our community.

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—A.J.K.

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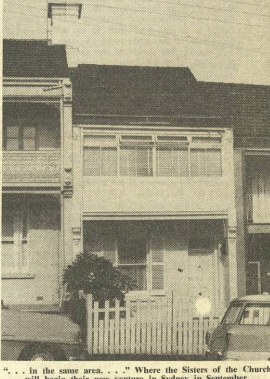
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## AFTER COCKROW

*Hot July tears ran down my face.*

*I couldn't stand there any more:*

*My God, that look!*

*I sat and ran and wept.*

*And 'til the sun was fully in the sky*

*I howled ... just like a kid.*

*I couldn't love him any more,*

*I can't stand that very young innocent*

*Face to face we looked.*

*Love? So strong*

*And yet we took*

*What called for "yes",*

*Not answered "no"*

*How shall I forget that moment,*

*Those eyes,*

*Those sad and loving eyes.*

*Now, possessed by love unbroken*

*I can stand*

*As though I held him.*

*Full of confidence: bold!*

*No longer taught by fear,*

*No longer trembling me*

*No courage, new hope;*

*Indeed, new love.*

*No strong that at his word*

*I throw all that ...*

*How shall I love him call me,*

*"Peter".*



















