

NIL †

**CARIVS
CHRISTO**

HOLY RULE CH.V.



Nothing Dearer than Christ

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DMB series No 48

Oblate Letter 48 Christmas 2020

A Non-Monastic Voice For Christmas

The Path to Happiness and Joy In All Circumstances!

Fr. Ignatius Spencer Passionist

When people come to consult me in their difficulties, I should always wish to have them return to me after 10 days or a fortnight, and to go through what might be called a preparatory course of medicine. If they will comply, the case assumes a much more simple aspect and the cure is comparatively easy. I would have them make a clear statement of themselves of all their troubles, all their doubts, all their scruples, all the troubles they look forward to as likely to come upon them, or possible to arise out of the circumstances they are in; and then suppose that all this possible trouble was sure. Then go on for the 10 days, doing nothing but thank God for it altogether, and every position in detail, till they have brought themselves into a complete and settled state of peace and joy over it all. It is clear how easy a matter it will be after that to bring everything right.

All is right already, and with nothing more wanted. Perhaps it will seem as if this was impossible or against sound sense. It is neither one nor the other for a person who believes what we all believe.

- I. That every event, great and small is over ruled and directed by God.
- I. That all things are for good to those who are God's children who love Him, and
- II. We are of that class if we please.

Now anything to be good according to God's view, must have a bearing on eternity for He does not reckon things to be of any consequence which bear only upon this moment of existence, as we do. If so, the good contained in each, if we please, is infinite, and we strictly owe to God infinite thanks for it. It is true that those who will not love God turn all his blessings into bitterness. There is nothing then which more clearly marks the line between the elect and the reprobate than thanksgiving and complaining.

Thanking God for everything is like an irresistible seizing on the crown of salvation. What can go wrong in time or eternity with one who always does that. People make many excuses against it, particularly this: that the troubles inflicted by the wicked are not God's doing, and that they cannot thank Him for them. It is true they are not God's doing, but can wicked men or devils do anything which God does not permit. He might prevent every tittle of trouble or pain they give you, and so preventing it He makes it His own will that you should endure it, as clearly as what comes directly from Him. Will you reckon he orders it for you out of enmity or out of love? Of course you will say out of love. Then is it enough to be merely patient, merely resigned? That is not the way to accept benefits; and so make it your rule to be not only patient, but thankful for everything which happens to you. And you will be al-

ways happy, you will draw treasures of grace out of everything, and you will become like a sun of gladness, shining upon and brightening up all the clouded mournful hearts which come in your way.

Giving you this advice is the best that I can do for you or your mother at this distance. For if you get well into the practice and spirit of thanksgiving, you will soon be a teacher of it, and put her too in the same way. I remember well the days when she was one of my steady good communicants at Westbromwich. Most happy should I be, to be able now once more to help her on. This practice of thanksgiving has carried me over a great variety of dark hours, and please God will carry me through and over the waves to the end. May we all follow this track, and come by it to a joyful meeting at last.

Letter 8 from Fr. Ignatius Spencer, Pasionist 136, Blessed Paul's Retreat, Harold's Cross, Dublin: To Mary Anne 17th February 1859

FROM THE OBLATEMASTER'S DESK:-

The Advent and Christmas Oblate letter seeks always to point our hearts and minds to the genuine sources of peace, happiness and joy. The Cross of Christ is in a real sense the foundation even of Christmas. The Eastern iconographers remind us of this by always having the stable as a cave, the swaddling bands like Lazarus's bindings and the manger like a little coffin-- and the massacre of the Innocents is not far away nor the flight into Egypt. Theologically this is true of Christmas too-- the incarnation, especially the conception and birth of Christ as St Paul reminds us in Philippians was (and is) a self-emptying, a kenosis which humanly speaking seems to make for the Godhead a kind of equivalence to death in the act of incarnation itself.

Therefore in the midst of perplexity and turmoil and crisis and temptation to give in to the darkness of Winter in every sense it should not come as a spiritual surprise that in the midst of the storm, in its

eye, is joy and peace lurking as it were to be exposed to the light of our heart's warming by hope and faith in every vicissitude. Fr Ignatius Spencer has wonderfully pointed us – in detail, blow by blow(!) to God's Providence hidden behind every pinprick and hammer-blow (and balmy breeze). God's will AND His permissive will TOGETHER comprise His path to happiness and Heaven fitted in detail to each one of us. Fr. Ignatius proved this experimentally and experientially in his own spiritual life through all his sufferings, reverses and challenges. This joy with which Fr. Ignatius glowed was not a joy of denial of the sorts of thing we are going through just now but incredibly (apparently but not incredibly to faith!) *because* of each and every suffering and difficulty in detail and as a whole!

Fr. Ignatius Spencer points us to the true joy of Advent preparation for the reality of joy at Christmas which is not divorced from the joy of Easter. The Humility of God is our joy. He humbles Himself to take us to Heaven-- in detailed stages suited out of love to each one of us.

Happy ***Christmas!***

Books and Media

FATHER IGNATIUS SPENCER ENGLISH NOBLE AND SAINT---
Gerard Skinner----Published:Gracewing:2018

Format:Paperback Pages:446-----ISBN: 978-0-85244-929-5 £12.50

He may have been related to our very own Abbot Alfred Spencer

We thank our Oblate Sister Mary Joseph MacManamon for editing this very inspiring work that brightens our Winter solstice with the luminosity of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ the Sun of Righteousness.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

FOR THOSE AWAITING A CHANCE TO BOOK INTO THE GUESTHOUSES,
THEY HAD RE-OPENED-- WERE TAKING TWO MEN AT A TIME
MAXIMUM AND TWO LADIES MAXIMUM AT ANY ONE TIME.

MEN HAVE TO EAT IN THE GUESTHOUSE NOW IN THE MEANTIME--
FOOD PROVIDED TO MICROWAVE. LADIES AS BEFORE.**NOW** CHECK
WITH GUESTMASTER WITH NEW LOCKDOWN.

THE CHURCH IS STILL CLOSED TO DAILY VISITORS EXCEPT FOR MASS AT
9.00 DURING THE WEEK AND 8.00AM ON SUNDAYS WITH THE LIMITED
DISTANCED PLACES BEING BOOKED THE DAY BEFORE BY EMAILING
FR.GILES (SAME EMAIL AS GUESTMASTER SEE ABOVE)

APART FROM THAT DAY VISITS ARE ONLY TO THE GROUNDS OR SHOP
TWO AT A TIME. IN ALL CASES MASKS ARE TO BE WORN. I THE
OBLATEMASTER CAN MEET WITH OBLATES DISTANCED WITH MASKS
OR IN THE VISITOR CENTRE

IF YOU CAN BOOK IN OR CALL IN THEN POSTULANCIES, NOVICIATES
AND OBLATIONS CAN TAKE PLACE NOW IF WE ARRANGE IT ALL.(MY
EMAIL AS ALWAYS IS AT THE TOP OF THE LETTER AT LEAST IN THE
POSTAL VERSION.--OR SIMPLY REPLY TO THIS OBLATE LETTER MAILING.

Oblate Events 2021guestmaster.pluscarden@gmail.com

Lenten oblate retreat next year 2021 –abandoned—sorry.

guestmaster.pluscarden@gmail.com for bookings for summer!

The Pluscarden website primary source of day to day information:

www.pluscardenabbey.org

summer oblate retreat next year 2021

30th July – 2nd August

Now Canon Luke Smith, oblate.

guestmaster.pluscarden@gmail.com for bookings

PRAYER INTENTIONS Abbot Anselm's intentions. Bishop Hugh's & Bishop Richard Moth's intentions. All virus sufferers living and dead and those supporting them. RIP Charles Harding, Oblate. Oblation: Fr. Ambrose Paul Giustiniani Novices Oblates, Michael Brady & Kenny Stark.

RIP Fr. Luke's father.

For Fr. Stuart Chalmers (Oblate) spiritual director of the Scots College in Spain &. For Prior Bede & For Fr. Ambrose Flavell in charge of the Shetlands.; vocations to St Mary's and St. Scholastica's, Petersham, U.S.A and Kristo Buase Priory, Ghana. esp. Br Louis Solemn profession. Robert Cantafio and his mother Margharita both hospitalised(Aberdeen and Italy),and John McKinlay recovering from a stroke, Jane Coll's granddaughter Natasha Gunn Fr. Francis Wilson(any news still welcomed by oblatemaster), Mrs Anne Morgan, Albert Paterson Janet Boyd Moss-- 100!, Connie Reid, Mary Frances McGregor and her daughter Ruth. Please pray for the health of Fr. Matthew, Br. Cyprian, Br Finbar, Rev. Christopher Mayo, Rev. Angus Macleod, for Gillian Cockwill's Mother, for Gail & Tony Schmitz. For Siobhan Gilmour's husband, for Mrs. Allie Brien, Margaret Johnston's mother, for Gitte Mackay, Martin Farrelly, Leonora Duson, and her daughter, and Margaret Rawcliffe, Joe Barrett, Maureen Woodhead& her sister Doreen, Bob Barr, Brian Milne, Fiona Sellar, Johan(Joy) Baillie, Nick MaCrae. Martin MaCrae, Dr. David Paterson and his wife Angela, Jacqui Heath-Anderson and daughter Sally, Dr. Hester du Plessis, Poppy Sinclair, Ian & Frederick Brodie, for Pat Foster, Pam Woodhead, Carolyn, Marshall & Malcolm Boardman,

and also for Eileen Kerr, Elizabeth MacKay, Peter and Brian Wynne, Susan Stephen, Cindy's husband, Danielle & her son Osyp, Evelyn, Violet and Sheila, Bernadette Harris, Alistair Macdonald and all the friends of the Abbey and for all Oblates, and for ALL the sick and those who care for them--and for our 3 sponsored seminarians. For vocations and all our novice and postulants, monks and Oblates and all our Oblates living and dead. All we have omitted or forgotten, living and dead.

Our Sponsored Seminarians:- If you would like to make a financial contribution (usual amount is £10/£20 standing order per month) please contact: Campbell Murdoch, email: jcmurdoch@yahoo.co.uk or mobile: 07810 350006 (Address: Fircroft, Knockbuckle Road, Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire, PA13 4JT).

ALL THE CHAPTER'S ARE ON HOLD DURING THE LOCKDOWN UNLESS PERHAPS IF UNDER SIX PERSONS SO PLEASE MAKE USE OF THE CONTACT DETAILS BELOW TO FIND OUT HOW THINGS ARE PROGRESSING.>>>>▼▼▼▼Contact me(details at the head of every letter!) I can forward or:-

St Mungo's Chapter, Glasgow:-We meet on the second Saturday of each month at 2 p.m. Contact can be made via Peter Aitken. Tel. 0141 427 2084.

St Margaret's Chapter, Dunfermline meetings as announced. All details contact Deacon Pat Carrigan smcb_oblates@live.co.uk
St. Monica's Chapter for far North -- Thurso. Contact Jane Coll. "Scaraben", Westside, Dunnet, Thurso, Caithness, KY14 8YD. Phone 01847 851467(informal)

St. Peter's Chapter, Aberdeen --next 11th December. 7.00-8.00 pm each second Tuesday of each month, Church Hall, St Joseph's, 2 Tanfield

Walk, Aberdeen &/or contact Mr Robert Ian Johnston, 31, Tay Road, Mastrick, ABERDEEN AB16 5LA

St Mirin's Chapter Paisley meets at 2pm on the 1st Saturday of each month at: Cathedral House, St Mirin's Cathedral, Cathedral Precincts, Inle Street, Paisley, PA1 1HR. Campbell Murdoch, mobile 07810 350006 or email jcmurdoch@yahoo.co.uk (address: Fircroft, Knockbuckle Road, Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire, PA13 4JT).

"St Andrew's Chapter" Pluscarden Abbey St Andrew's Chapter on a Saturday! Saturday 2.00pm - 3.30pm St Benedict's Guest House Men's Breakfast Room (next door on left from Abbey Shop)-Contact Eileen Fitzpatrick.

"St Columba's Chapter" in Dundee -- if interested please contact Mrs. Georgina Quinn 2D, Church Street, Broughty Ferry DUNDEE Fife DD5 1EZ

"Benedictine Prayer Circle"-If interested—John McKinlay

But in process of time and growth of faith, when the heart has once been enlarged, the way of God's commandments is run with unspeakable sweetness of love; so that, never departing from His teaching, but persevering in the Monastery in His doctrine until death, we share now by patience in the sufferings of Christ, that we may deserve afterwards to be partakers of His kingdom. Prologue verse

50 Christmas 2020

Love and Blessings from Fr. Martin PAX

