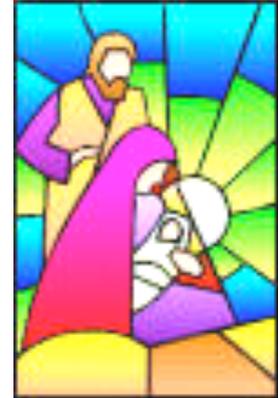


December 2004

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# Christmas Greetings

*Community of  
Our Lady of Walsingham*



**'The angel said to the shepherds, "I bring you news of great joy. Today the Saviour of the world has been born to you".'**

## Dear Friends

As you can see from the format of this newsletter things are developing and in more ways than one!

So much has happened since the last letter was written by Sona at the end of July. It's been a time of change and challenge on many different levels but also a time that's been immensely blessed in ways that we could never have imagined.

Things are going as planned.... by Him! And we can assure you that Our Lord has given us some real surprises along the way. Hence, we

are looking towards the future with real hope and encouraged by His work in our lives and in the lives of the many people we already know and those we are getting to know.

This season of Advent is helping us root everything in the hope that only He can give. By the time you receive the newsletter we'll almost be celebrating the day Our Saviour was born – the birthday of Life! The Life which annihilates the fear of separation, of death and engenders joy, promising, as it does, immortality.

## Move to Abbotswick

The last newsletter ended with Camilla doing the Leadership Course at St Anselm's and Gabi, Sona and Liz arranging the move of everything from St Anne's to our new home near Brentwood.

Following our summer break with family and friends we moved into the Diocesan House of Prayer, Abbotswick. Bishop Thomas McMahon of Brentwood asked us to run it on behalf of the diocese. It is located ideally, just off the M25 between Ongar and Brentwood. The house and outhouses can accommodate anything up to 14 residential guests and welcome day groups of up to 50 people.

We've inherited it from some Franciscan sisters and it is the ideal place for us to live the contemplative, but not enclosed, life we so desire. We hope it'll slowly become the 'praying heart of the diocese'.

Right from the 1<sup>st</sup> September we were blessed with the presence of some of you who helped us with the cleaning and rearranging of the house. So much needed doing!

Thanks especially to those of you who came from as far afield as Italy, Portugal and Nigeria to do some dusting, ironing, creosoting, unpacking of books, gardening, rearranging of furniture, painting etc

## Community of Our Lady of Walsingham

**'The Lord has given,  
the Lord has taken,  
blessed be the  
name of the Lord'**

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But thanks also to those of you from the London/Brentwood area who came to help with the picking of the apples from the orchard and blackberries from around the tennis court (which is now an area for outdoor Masses). Gabi wanted to keep the collecting of the sloes to

herself so as to make sloe gin (we didn't take long to finish the bottles we found 'in house' when we arrived!). Liz made some rose-hip syrup using an overnight draining system learnt from Janie in Walsingham.

### *Changes in the Community*

Sona, who wrote the first two newsletters for us, left the community at the end of July having decided that religious life was not for her. She is doing well and sends her regards to you all. Liz left a few days ago. She feels in tune with the COLW spirituality but needs time out to clarify state of life.

One of the beautiful things about COLW is that the charism is open to people of all states in life ie married, single, priests etc as happens in so many other 'new communities' started around the world.

Another young woman has asked to

join the community and will come to live alongside in the spring. So changes all round!

Maybe some of you will want to share in the charism of COLW wherever you are living by becoming Associate Members in the future. We may even start that branch of COLW sooner than we thought. Interest in this seems to be increasing. But more of that at a later date.

We also feel ready to publicise COLW more as from the spring. If any of you have any ideas about the best way to go about this please do let us know.

### *And finally.....*

As you can see, with Mary we have so many things to ponder in our hearts this season. We look forward to sharing more of this wonderful adventure with you welcoming you here to Abbotswick sometime in the not too distant future.

We are working out some special rates for friends who'd like to stay at the House of Prayer. You can also choose to join one of the events we are organising here especially for the 'Year of the Eucharist'. Details of these you can find on the diocesan website:  
[www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/houseofprayer](http://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/houseofprayer)

Until then we would like to THANK YOU ALL once more for your prayers, your love and friendship and for continuing to support us through all the ups and downs of this first year together.

Fr Herbert Alphonso SJ, who some of you may remember from the COLW celebration at Allen Hall in April, will be spending the New Year with us. He'll be celebrating a Mass for all your intentions during his stay, so rest assured that you are daily in our thoughts and prayers.

On that note, we'll sign off for now, wishing you all the best for a Holy and Blessed Christmas. May the peace and joy which only the Christchild can bring accompany you and your loved ones throughout 2005,

With love,

*Camilla and Gabi*  
**COLW**