

December 2005

Year 3, Issue 1

Christmas Greetings

*Community of Our Lady of
Walsingham*



**'When they saw
the star, they were
overjoyed. On
coming to the
house, they saw
the child and his
mother Mary, and
they bowed down
and worshipped
him.'**

Mt 2, 10-11

December Gifts

**Longing for the
goodness of the
season,
A gift, a present,
curious, fanciful things,
Expecting happiness
from something we
get,
Forgetting that
happiness is something
we give.**

**Giving and receiving
are said to be the
same,
Through giving we
seek only the joy of
another,
True gifts are those we
do not see,
True gifts are acts of
unconditional love.**

Dear Friends,

We hope that this newsletter finds you all in good health. We (Gabi and Camilla) have survived the first year at the House of Prayer!

Three months ago we moved into the cottage which is across the courtyard from the main building. As mentioned in our last newsletter a lot of work was needed on it and these took longer than expected. However, we now have an enclosed area which is for our exclusive use. We have also managed to establish a better routine of prayer, work and community life.

The Summer Months

Gabi and Camilla had a very reaffirming 8 day individually guided retreat at another House of Prayer in Edenbridge, Kent at the beginning of August. Then, having bought a community tent, which can hold up to 6 people comfortably, we went off for a 10 day camping holiday in Bavaria and Holland. We visited family and friends along the way and were joined by some of them for various sections of the holiday. Photos can be seen on the 'photo album' page of our website.

Apart from the time spent relaxing in the mountains or by the sea we also joined the Brentwood Catholic Youth

Johanna, who is from Stratford in East London, joined the community at the end of August and Karen from Woking, is due to join sometime in February. Hence, the community will soon have 'doubled' in numbers so that we will be back to our original size.

With the increasing number of groups and individuals visiting Abbotswick we are confident that the Good Lord will send the necessary man power, or rather, woman power in time!

Service and about 60 young people from the diocese for World Youth Day in Cologne. The time spent there together deepened our friendship and the links already established during the year. They even accepted to take back on the homeward bound coach about 20 very sophisticated flower boxes! These we purchased in Germany hoping to bring a Bavarian 'touch' (um papa, um papa, um papa ah....) to the House of Prayer in the Essex countryside.

The summer break was so special for us and made possible because of some generous house sitters looking after Abbotswick.

Special Events

*"I am so Grateful
for the closeness of
God.*

*Readily receive the
gift of this day,
Look for the beauty
right where you
are,
Acknowledge every
breath of life you
take,
And know that
silence is the way
God speaks."*

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On 24th September the three of us went to Walsingham to celebrate Our Lady's feast day. It was a special and joyous occasion as we were privileged to carry the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham in procession for the solemn Mass at the shrine. On that day we were blessed in so many ways which are still bearing fruit.....

We are particularly grateful that this year we have managed to make good use of the loads of apples, plums, blackberries and pears growing here. We have produced lots of organic, homemade jams and juices, to sell in a fund raising effort for the House of Prayer and to serve to our guests.

Gabi has also had more time for prayer and studies in preparation for her first profession. Both she and Camilla will be taking their first vows on 25th March 2006 in the crypt of Westminster Cathedral. Gabi's family will come across from Poland and will then spend some time with her sightseeing locally or further a field.

In order to prepare well for this important date we have decided not to run a programme of events until then here at the House of Prayer. We

And finally.....

Mary's FIAT was preceded by the Fiat of the Word, to the unbelievable plan conceived by the Divine Persons so that we would become children of the Father and introduced to the intimacy of the Triune God.

What a sense of gratitude we need to cultivate to Jesus who came to us in a mysterious act of obedience and of love to his Father. Before teaching the Apostles the words of the 'Our Father' – 'that your will be done on earth as it is in heaven' – the Incarnate Word was himself the living incarnation of this prayer.

will continue to welcome visitors and guests as usual. We will also be attending several formation courses appropriate to the needs of each one as well as spending more time in solitude and retreat before the vows.

Karen, will join us in time to participate in some of these courses. She, like Gabi, has a background in optics, so will bring some new vision to the community in more ways than one! So, as you can see, we are being blessed in ways that only the Good Lord could have foreseen.

Please do keep us in your prayers as we prepare for this memorable milestone. We are aware of a real inadequacy at this time so close to the profession of vows. We have not had the 'ideal' situation in which to do a novitiate and yet, He has provided for our formation in so many unexpected experiences throughout these first years. As the statutes also remind us we are 'conscious that God came to call not the virtuous but sinners and recognising his merciful love in our own lives, we wish to answer this call to intimacy with Him in the religious life'.

Let us pray that we all likewise have the grace to become living incarnations of this prayer throughout 2006. May the Christchild help us say 'YES' to the Will of the Father as it unfolds in each of our lives this coming year

With love and prayers,

*Sister Camilla,
Sister Gabriela
and Johanna
Community of Our Lady
of Walsingham*