

ENCOURAGEMENT ENCOURAGEMENT

February 2024 – Issue 151

Transient.. Passing through...

I often hear people saying when speaking of places visited that they 'just passed through a place'...often emphasised with an 'I only just passed through'. I think it is rather strange to go through a place that held no memory or affiliation or even remembrance except that you went through it, as if it did not matter or exist. In these days of rapid transport it seems that the places in-between A and B are of no consequence. With air travel and rapid motorways bypassing places too, this is even more significant. I remember asking school children where they had spent their holidays. Sometimes they could give me place names, but often only rather vaguely. When asked what they saw along the way or to describe some things they saw, many could not give any answers.

As a 'traveller' who enjoys the action of passing through and taking it in- I started to reflect on the way we live our lives and how much do we value the present moment. Everything that we do has a present, a past and a future. Whatever action we are involved in has a beginning and an end and mostly a restart. But do we pay attention to all the aspects of it? How often do people say 'oh this is just temporary' – 'I'll move to another house or job soon!' Or even 'I am only doing this for two years or so...' Sometimes this relates to family life, people saying 'when the children get older I can return to work or do something different'. Sometimes this relates to illness suggesting that all will be well then and changes can be made.

Now there is a positive aspect to this and there is forward moving impulse but surely the present moment is just as valuable, just as productive and most importantly a period of growth and refectation.

Not to take this attitude is rather like passing through a beautiful forest but being impatient to reach the garden full of roses...

The forest with its own beauty is to be ignored because we prefer the scent of the roses.

But this garden may not come about and in any case, it may not be what we expect. Meanwhile the trees in the forest with various shades of colours, the broken branches, the prickly nettles, the pinecones and the myriad of birds, not to mention the sunlight peeping through are not enjoyed but ignored... What a waste of opportunity!!!

Life itself is transient. We pass through many phases from infancy to old age. We are always moving to a new phase. But each place or phase has its joys and blessings, its sadness and sorrow. Each bit of the journey is as valuable as the rest.

The truth of it is that in our haste we miss out the crucial bit, the bits that can form and shape us. The bits that are harsh can teach us forbearance and patience. These then can enable us to do the unexpected and lead us to new adventures and pastures. They can also teach us to perhaps rest and recoup and learn new approaches and skills. This is often true in illness.

Having gone through two extensive periods of ill health, both life threatening, I realise that both were crucial to my outlook on many things, and both enabled me to regroup, so to speak, and learn new ways of being, Both produced periods of creativity not to mention growth in faith. We never like these periods because they challenge our views of what is good for us and are underlined with the fear that we may not get better. Occasionally others ask us this too, and so we become restless. But these are all aspects of or lives that require us to face the important spiritual questions, These times have a spirituality and dynamism of their own.

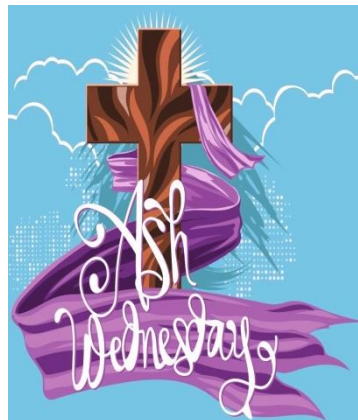
THE HOST APOSTOLATE

WWW.THEHOSTAPOSTOLATE.ORG

14, GOATBECK TERRACE,
LANGLEY MOOR,

COUNTY DURHAM DH7 8JJ

thehostapostolate@gmail.com



'Science can purify religion from error and superstition. Religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes.' St. Pope John Paul II

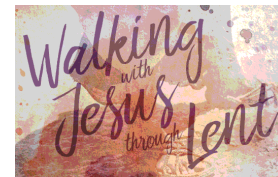
I often reflect on St Thérèse of Lisieux, who went through such darkness prior to her death and yet was graced with return of a fullness of faith. So, too, St Bernadette when asked what she did or could do said with truth and candour 'Not much' and yet how rich her 'not much' was... in her sickness. Her acceptance was 'of being sick' and brought conversions of life for her Sisters and was rooted in complete surrender and acceptance. This may seem like a passivity that many would find unacceptable, but for her it was dealing with the present. As Jean Caussade would say 'A Sacrament of the Present Moment', which is a wonderful gift. This gift is not learnt easily by most, but if it is developed it leads to a joy in all things and an understanding of God's teachings and providence.

Sometimes we are called to a halt for our own good. In the smallest ways a delay can be a prevention of something that would not be good for us no matter what we believe to the contrary. Learning to appreciate the journey is as important as arriving for each part is as important as any other. Even the arrival will probably only be the start to another journey until the door of eternity is open to us.

I often reflect that Jesus used the three years of his ministry so fruitfully before His death at a young age. I also notice how much actual travelling He did with the Apostles. He walked many miles from place to place but each was significant. As He walked with the two disciples to Emmaus, He revealed to them so carefully what had happened, not forcing the issue, till they were ready to 'see Him' He knew that they were perplexed and puzzled not to mention sad... So it is with our own journeys...

Today we have many transient people, not only those who have lost their way, or are troubled or in a hurry to get to what the wish for in life. But we also have those that culture, climate, war and poverty has seen them leaving one place, mostly not by choice to go to another. We have never had so many people on the move. For some it is a price they have to pay for survival. It is a time when hope is the only thing left. But they go with this... however difficult the journey becomes. Their 'passing through' is a reminder for us that nothing is *permanent*, but each move is essential to our survival in hope.

This month we have the start of Lent. Ash Wednesday is on the 14th of February. Lent is a good time to reflect on these things *and* do so willing to have a change of heart. Next time you are passing through any place in every sense of the word ask yourself 'where am I', what do I see, what of the people I see, and pray for the time spent there and the people and places you meet. You could ask why has this been shown to me? Do not pass through unknowing or with a reluctance to make it prayerful. You will gain much by being transient if you remember that each moment has a purpose and to where you are ultimately bound. Halina Holman ©



Pope Francis

"Always remember this: life is a journey. It is a path, a journey to meet Jesus: At the end, and forever. A journey in which we do not encounter Jesus is not a Christian journey. It is for the Christian to continually encounter Jesus, to watch Him, to let himself be watched over by Jesus, because Jesus watches us with love; He loves us so much, He loves us so much, and He is always watching over us. To encounter Jesus also means allowing oneself to be gazed upon by Him. Dec 2013

'Dream that the more you struggle, the more you prove the love that you bear your God, and the more you will rejoice one day with your Beloved, in a happiness and rapture that can never end.' St. Teresa of Avila

Feast Days in February

- 1st St. Brigid
- 2nd Presentation of the Lord, Candlemas
- 3rd St. Blaise
- 4th Fifth Sunday in Ord. Time
- 5th St. Agatha
- 6th Ss. Paul Miki & Companions
- 8th St. Jerome Emiliani
- 10th St. Scholastica
- 14th Ash Wednesday (Fasting & Abstinence)
- 17th The Seven Servite Founders
- 18th First Sunday of Lent
- 21st St. Peter Damian
- 22nd The Chair of St. Peter, Apostle
- 23rd St. Polycarp, Bishop
- 25th Second Sunday of Lent
- 27th St. Gabriel
- 28th St. Oswald