

LETTERS OF MOTHER MARY POTTER TO MOTHER MARY CECILIA SMITH 1876-1882

No. 1

Decbr. 22nd, 1876.

33 Norfolk Street. (Southsea)

My dear child in Jesus and Mary,

Must not let this happy time pass without writing to wish you every blessing that God loves so to give and your Angel Guardian delights to bring. Christmas time is the grand Feast of the Angels as well as men, for all the Angels left Heaven to adore Jesus born on earth. You must therefore remind your Guardian Angel of what he felt as he adored at Bethlehem the God whom he praised and adored in Heaven. The Angels were lost in wondering admiration at seeing the great God, Whom they adore in such glory in Heaven, become so little, so lowly in the world. It was wondrous, unspeakable condescension of God, and the Angels loved and praised Him for His goodness, though He had not come for the sake of the Angels, but men. Ask your Guardian Angel that you may love with some of His love. You are glad to receive Our Lord. Is not your angel pleased too?

I am so pleased Fr. Selley is better. I feel sure you joined the good prayers that were offered for him. Those who do good to others must

suffer. It is the one way God now works. All good came from the Cross, all must feel the touch of the Cross who would imitate Jesus in saving -working good to souls. You must think of that, dear child, if suffering of body or soul comes to you, and be generous, as I know you will strive to be.

You must tell me when you are consecrated to Our Lady as her very own. It rejoices me, I feel some of Our Lady's joy, when fresh children are brought to her loving Maternal Heart.

Goodbye, dear, and God bless you ever prays yours lovingly in the Precious Blood of Jesus,

Mary, S.M.

Would you, whilst you are at Mass, offer the Precious Blood in the Chalice (always as you must strive to do all your actions, with Mary) to obtain light to understand better True Devotion to her. It would be good to recite the hymn to the Holy Ghost. This picture has touched what has been laid in the Manger, touched Mount Calvary, laid in the Holy Sepulchre. You can give it away if you like.

Without commencement or ending. –

.....one of Mary's own specially loved children, it occurred to me to write a few lines to you. You are setting out on a journey that may tend to be one of the most important acts of your life and very often when we are about to do something of great advantage to our soul the devil tries to tempt and trouble us about it, so it is best to be on your guard and not notice any troublesome thoughts he may raise in your mind.

Another thing you may be a little nervous about your interview with Fr. Selley, but you need not be, he is so have this holy vocation given

to them should daily thank Him for it. Whether you have this grand and happy

call from Our Lord remains to be seen. You could not decide for yourself and neither could I. It will be made known to you by obedience to your Director who, I hope, from this time will be Fr. Selley, as he has a special gift I never met in any Priest before. If you are admitted to the meeting you will then be a Postulant, that is to say, a petitioner or beggar. It will not mean you are really already received

No.2 (without date or address.)

Dear child in Jesus and Mary,

I forward you a copy of His Lordship's letter authorising our work. Our dear Lord shows His Love for this work of His Mother by coming to dwell with us at the very commencement -a great favour for which we must be ever grateful and strive our very best to thank and honour Him all we can.

We are now collecting from friends to furnish the Chapel with Tabernacle and other necessaries. We hope to be ready by Lady Day, 25th March, and our little Chapel will be dedicated to Our Lady's Maternal Heart and all her children, I should think, would be glad to contribute to a work so pleasing to Mary, as to provide a new home for Jesus must surely be.

Begin a Novena, asking Our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph to help, and pray to the Holy Angels to put it into their clients' minds to assist, so that everything may be arranged nicely, to show due respect to Our dear Lord on His coming to us.

Yours in His Sacred Heart, Mary, S.M.

We are only asking help from friends.

No. 4.

Convent of the Maternal Heart 1877

Dear Little Sister

Your Feast does not need me to wish it to be happy, for it will always be a happy one to you poor little one, in the way perhaps God means you to be made happy in this world - by the Cross - to give you by and by what you are so fond of giving me now - the crown.

God bless you, my own dear little one. Be as brave as you can and when you feel inclined to break down, go and break down on Our dear Lady's Breast, and tell her you are only a child so she must not be hard on you or give you too much just yet.

Perhaps you are having a little more to bear just now to purify you more and more before Our Blessed Lord draws you to Himself and makes you His very very Own. Oh, it is happy to be wholly His, but not happy unless we really wholly His, before we say we are, solemnly, in the Presence of the Holy Angels round Our Lord in His Sacrament of Love.

Ever yours lovingly in our dear Mother's Heart,

Sr. Mary Angela.

Poor little Sr. Mary Agnes overwhelmed with work sends love and every kind wish.

No.5

Convent of the Maternal Heart of Mary,

Hyson Green, Nottingham. Novbr. 26th, 1878.

Dear Sr. Mary Cecilia,

Your loving little note has given me more pleasure than I have had from anyone for some time. I am glad you are so happy. Do, there's a good child, try and get on as much as you can, I mean in your own soul, for you may have more to do than you think for. You may have to help others, and it is strange how little imperfections weaken our influence with others. The Noviciate is in progress now and, I tell you that it may perhaps spur you on, if I were ill or wanted anyone to take my place at an~ Noviciate exercises etc. I should ask for you and I should feel safer in the Novices being with you than any other sister, so try and learn all you can and do all you can, and above all, bear all you can, and look to Our dear Lord alone, Who wants you all to Himself, Who thinks of you and loves you as though there were no one else in the world and desires you to think of Him as though you and He were living in the world alone.

When next you have suffering of mind or body, make a distinct offering of it. If you are sad or whatever it is, make a present of it generously. We sometimes say we mean it, but that vague intention is not so good as the distinct one and besides it helps ourselves to bear it without seeking sympathy for it, and in time, we come to love to have little secrets between Our Love and ourselves, that no one knows but He and ourselves , God bless you ever prays yours lovingly in our Mother's Heart,

Sr. Mary Angela.

Please do not say anything about me suffering. I wish I had something to suffer. Pray specially for me every day. Offer Our Lady's Sorrows. It is the most efficacious prayer.

No.6

Novbr. 28th, 1878.

My dear child,

You must come home tomorrow and have a rest. I do hope you are

not overdoing yourself. I have told Miss Doran to ask Bishop about your being in the schools the week Minnie is away. All going well, thank God. I do feel so grateful.

We are commencing Novena tomorrow in honour of the Immaculate Conception. Say the Collect "Concede" for health for the Sisters, in honour of Our Lady's Immaculate Flesh, pure from all disease. That need be only one intention of the Novena. I believe it to be a great grace accorded us to watch in adoration before the Precious Blood between the two Masses. I suppose you heard the Chalice is to remain. I do not say much, even to the Sisters, for fear something might hinder it, but do feel grateful to God. We shall obtain many graces whilst watching. I want you

to be one of the first to watch and recite the Prayer in honour of the Precious Blood present in the Chalice. Why do we not more constantly thank God for being so good to us. Be more and more detached from everyone and everything that Our Lord may draw you closer and closer to Himself.

Your loving mother in the Precious Blood,

Sr. Mary Angela.

No.7

Convent of the Maternal Heart of Mary,

Hyson Green.

June 25th, 1879.

My dear child,

I hear the Bishop is sending or has sent for Catherine as she has been 3 weeks without Holy Communion. In that case I shall be glad to let you have her till you have a Governess. The Bishop asked me who had the responsibility of the school and paying the Governess. I said

Fr. Nolan. I suppose he understands that.

I want Sr. M. Magdalen by the first train tomorrow, Tuesday, for a sick case near here. I cannot bear our own poor people neglected. If it had been a rich case I would have refused it.

Pray much. The Bishop is expecting a writ from Miss Jones, and there are other troubles. Love to you all and may God bless and keep you ever His very own,

Your loving mother,

Sr. Mary Angela.

Have you had the Convent etc. blessed? We are going to have ours St. Michael's day, proper feast for sending out devils. Please tell Fr. Nolan I am so sorry I had not a Sister to send. He will forgive my not answering myself. It is with difficulty I can keep up.

No.8

Decbr., 1879.

My dear child,

By no means go to Midnight Mass at Rasen. Settle yourself quietly at Osgodby and open school as Bishop wishes. You are fortunate many ways at Osgodby. Cannot write all the troubles at the various houses. You are having a calm. Make use of it to prepare for and strengthen yourself for fresh struggles. Be very prudent and do nothing that would disedify in a religious, such as being out late etc.

Sr. M. Josephine is nursing Sr. M. Rose - scarlet fever. Fr. Barron out of his mind, has to be minded.

We are to be consecrated to St. Bernard's Order. The Abbot has given leave. God bless you both and give you spiritual joy to make up for your loneliness. Pray for your loving mother,

Mary.

Very glad you asked about going to the Mass. Always ask when you can, when in doubt.

No.9

Convent of the Maternal Heart,

Hyson Green. (1880)

My very dear child,

No time to say anything but very glad to be able to send you enclosed Order 20s. God bless you. Always ask for what you want. A mother's heart is pleased when she can give. You can fill enclosed yourself.

Be sure to have alterations exactly as Bishop writes. If you do not understand, write to him yourself about it. Kiss Sr. M. Ignatius for her and your loving mother Mary. Could you arrange a day's begging with M. Catherine? She is short of money too. There must be some villages near.

No. 10

Convent of the Maternal Heart of Mary.

Ash Wednesday.

Dear Sr. Mary Cecilia,

.....home news. I cannot see you as [I see] the Sisters[at] home, to say a little word carelessly, as I do purposely to avoid the air of preaching, so [I] write to tell you how anxious I am that by being

greedy over grace, the end of Lent may find you far nearer and dearer to your spouse Jesus than now, and do not think because you may not be able to attend Church you will not have the same graces.

You are on Calvary now, watching and tending Our dear Lord in the person of your patient, thinking of His Wounds and weariness as you endeavour to relieve your sick one. Let every little action, the shaking of the pillows, the drink given when thirsty, the wash which so refreshes the poor sufferer, be

done as though for Jesus Himself, and your Lent will indeed pass well, and He who will reward the cup of cold water given in His Name, will on that glad day of His Glory turn with His Loving smile and holding out His Arms to His little one with those beautiful eyes of His full of love saying, "I was sick and you visited Me." Then will He take the hands that tended the sick for His sake, within His own Hands and take you to visit Him in His Heavenly Home, there to abide with Him forever.

God bless you prays the mother who does not always say how much she loves her children. I wish you were home. Our Lord seems to have made Himself so one with us. I am to sleep with him (in the same room) at 19.

No. 11

Convent of the Maternal Heart of Mary,

June, 1880.

My dear child,

Many thanks for letter etc. So glad to receive your letters. I did not expect you would be able to beg in the Church.

God is beginning now to take you in hand. Think He is making up to you now for your not having a proper Noviciate, and preparing you for whatever work He has for you. "It is by blows that iron grows."

He wants to make you strong, to put into you a certain earnestness and stability you need. Bear as well as you can His Hand. It is put on you in kindness, though apparent severity. You will look back to this time, years to come. It will likewise help you to help others.

God bless you and fill your heart with His pure love and that means pure spirit of sacrifice.

Your loving mother,

Sr. Mary Angela.

No. 12

Convent of the Maternal Heart of Mary, Hyson Green.

June 27th.

My dear child,

Do you think you will be able to be home next Saturday for the profession etc.? I thought Sr. M. Gertrude might manage your case, either for a day or two, or finish it. Tell me by re- turn [mail].

God bless you ever. Your loving mother,

Sr. Mary Angela.

I am so pushed for time. Will try and write, however, to Mrs. Hayes. I should like you to go with me to Quorndon.

No. 13

Gt. Northern Railway.

Septbr. 10th.

My dear child,

Just a few hurried lines. I am on my way to the Convent of the Holy Ghost. I called upon poor Mrs. Hayes, Park Row, nr. the Cathedral. She is dying. Fr. Douglass attends her, but cannot make all right. I believe she has made her confession but holds back from being baptized. She told me, just now, she wanted to be baptized. I could not wait for fear of losing train, but I do feel so uneasy that unless someone could wait until the Priest came, she might (be) influenced by friends when we are gone.

I miss my child, whom I used to be able to send in my place. I do not tell you to go, but if able it would be a charity to run up and see her, and likewise let me know if all is right at the Green. I do not tell you, only felt urged to write and leave it to your discretion. Love to Sr. Magdalen, I hope she is better. Kiss my little Gertrude for her and your loving mother,

Sr. Mary Angela.

Best wishes to Fr. Nolan. Ask his blessing.

No. 14

Convent of the Maternal Heart of Mary.

Octbr. 19th, 1880.

My dear child,

Many thanks for your kind letters. I am glad you have your Father back again.

I have been wishing to write to you. I was anxious at hearing that you had been obliged to use the money paid for the reading room. It has to be put by for the Interest money. I think it is January you will have to pay 9 or II pounds.

I am sorry to tell you that I think I shall have to take you away to go to beg in Ireland. The 100 pounds that was promised has apparently failed and it is wanting for the purchase money to buy the Maternal roof. You can leave your directions with Sr. M. Catherine. You may not have to be away long and I think she would be best in your place. I want M.M. Elizabeth. There may be some great good come out of your going to Ireland, my child, and you will be the good odour of our Lord and His sweet Mother. It will assist yourself likewise pecuniarily [sic].

God bless ever my dear child and purify her more and more. A bright future is before you, my child, a great work for God, but do not anticipate evils, and judging from my words think you will have to suffer as I have. God might see it necessary to send me suffering to keep me down low. It might not be so necessary for you, and yet I might think that as He had treated me He might treat the child who had to follow in my steps and be mistaken. I will write more when definitely settled.

Your loving mother,

Sr. Mary Angela.

No. 15

Convent of the Maternal Heart of Mary,

Novbr. 1st, 1880.

My dear child,

Glad of your note. I have enquired and find the Bishop does not want the Iron Church. I had thought of it myself. Wooden buildings are, I believe, forbidden. I want you to put Sr. M. Michael if she is home, under M.M. Elizabeth and please tell M.M. Elizabeth to be very strict with her. M.M. Agnes has much improved little Angela. I am not blaming you, my child, you have more to do than you could.

You must, however, pray for firmness. Pray for all that you need to make you more and more pleasing in the sight of Our dear Lord. Perfection will not come to us unless we are very earnest about (it). Strive and make a resolution to do always that which is most perfect. Have a great esteem of an act of obedience and practise it from a supernatural motive, because nothing will make you more like Our Lord .

Let me hear how you are going on with Mission work and begging. Gertrude may be with you this week. Love to all. Show this to M. Elizabeth and thank her for her note. Enclose all the altar breads we can spare.

Your loving mother in Jesus and Mary,

Sr. Mary Angela.

Always kind remembrances to Fr. Nolan, ask his blessing.

No. 16

Convent of the Maternal Heart of Mary.

Novbr. 10th, /80.

My dear child,

I begin to feel rather anxious to hear from you. Are you better? How are you going on? You may expect Sr. M. Magdalen any day now, so that you may have two sisters begging. I have been afraid you were not very successful. I thought that two sisters at Derby might spend a week well going regularly through the town from door to door, which is the best way to be, I believe.

Katie is up now and about, the place disinfected, so that we shall soon have them home from Eastwell. I want you to commence a Novena first for the Council. Sr. M. Magdalen has to be brought up in a

month and there are votes too to be given for the two to be clothed, and next for this 100 pounds the Bishop is anxious about, more especially as he is likely to lose money by the Leicester business. Always add to a Novena an act of hope and thanksgiving.

Persevere in your mission work as much as possible. If you have but few to look to, let them be better looked to.

Give my love to Sr. M. Aloysius and Michael. I hope they are both well and working well in our dear Lord's Vineyard and learning the lesson daily (making their particular examen upon it) of humility. Who can be the lowest and last? Who can best wait upon others as upon Our Blessed Lord Himself, and after having worked from morning till night, esteem themselves only worthy of reproaches and thankful and grateful if they get them? I do not think humility consists in an humble exterior, but I do think that interior humility insensibly shows itself. A Novice's one employment is to gain a great stock of humility and a Novice should have an humble modest demeanour, should always have great respect for seniors, as one on trial and not yet admitted.

I feel sorry not to be able to see all oftener. We must continue to meet for Chapter occasionally.

I hope Mrs. Perry is better. Remember me kindly to her. Ask blessing from Fr. Nolan.

Your loving mother in Mary's Heart,

Sr. Mary Angela.

I should think it would be well for Fr. Nolan to take a trip to Lincoln and look about him. It has been so crossed years back our being established there that I think it sure to succeed in the end. You can have a postulant from Eastwell to beg if necessary. If Magdalen does not come, you had perhaps better send for one.
