

## THE ONE WHO RECEIVES THE EXERCISES

I NVITED TO share their impressions of an eight-day directed retreat made three months previously at St Beuno's, a group of men and women whose ages ranged from eighteen to nearly eighty years, wrote of their experiences. Eighty per cent were laypeople, the others Religious or diocesan clergy.

Before the Retreat began several expressed anxiety about what was in store.

'It was my first directed retreat and I was apprehensive, shy and nervous about what would be demanded of me: but all that faded away when I met the director. The other retreatants to whom I've since spoken said they felt the same, and they too would want to repeat the experience. The nervousness evaporates when one realizes that in this retreat one just *is* oneself and is accepted as one is, warts and all' (A religious aged seventy).

'I have to be honest and say I dreaded the thought of going to St Beuno's. I suppose it was because I didn't know what to expect or whether I could just let things happen. When Fr X had suggested it to me I must say I was very apprehensive, but now all that has changed and I can't wait for the next time. It was a marvellous experience' (Woman in her early twenties).

'I was very apprehensive about going to St Beuno's. My family are not religious, and thought I'd taken leave of my senses to want to make the retreat. My grandmother thought I'd come home quite insane! It was very difficult to explain why I needed to go. I tried one day with very poor results' (Boy, aged eighteen, who had just left school).

'Yes, I was worried about what I'd let myself in for. I thought I'd hate the silence and the absence of books, TV and all my usual distractions; but I found myself growing to love the silence, and to realize I needed it if I was going to be able to listen to what was going on within me' (Man in his early twenties).

Reflecting on their experience during the time at St Beuno's, the retreatants comment on their discoveries. 'In that friendly solitude I gradually became able to let go of my superficial preoccupations and sink down to a different level — it was like going into a well' (A woman with many family and professional involvements).

A schoolmaster wrote: 'Two principal observations. Firstly, the personal nature of the direction (dwelling on those bits of scripture which seem to take on significance for oneself, following one's own way) discloses the fact that God working within one is identical with oneself working within one: that one's truest self is God within, and that it is one's own self which must be freed. This seems to me a central and vital insight; conversely, the idea that one's self has to be re-presented if not destroyed to make room for holiness from without seems for some people to stand in the way of spiritual development. Secondly, so much depends on the retreat-giver. I have been so

fortunate in mine. I know of others who have got less from their "directors" — although there seems something in the Exercises which penetrates to some extent in spite of mis-matches!

'The Retreat at St Beuno's gave me more spiritual insight and more certainty of God's love than any previous retreat I had ever done. It is difficult to analyse exactly how it worked, but I think its effectiveness has something to do with the intensely personal note it struck. There was no possibility of hiding behind pious platitudes: I had to face up to myself, my abysmal lack of real faith, in spite of outward appearances to the contrary. It was a painful journey at times but it *was* a journey: there was movement and development. For me the entire experience was rich: abundantly rich in symbolism, and everything in the surrounding countryside struck my heightened awareness. Even the pre-conscious level was affected, as I found in my paintings and poetry. So all the time it was like living through a life of experience. As I write this now I'm aware of how much growth there was. This retreat is still vividly with me. I have only to think back or glance at my notes to evoke the whole spiritual climate again. I can still think or meditate fruitfully with the insights that came to me then' (Principal of a school for educationally sub-normal children).

A woman with many years' experience of preached retreats commented: 'The directed retreat was different. I couldn't sit back and admire Father. I had to *work*. It was confrontation all the way with the truths I'd just previously known distantly. I realized how feeble my understanding of faith had been until then'.

A parish priest who had been ill and depressed before coming to the Retreat wrote: '*Main initial comment*: Sense of a *totally new experience* as soon as the directed retreat is explained by director. Even before starting, felt convinced that the traditional "retreat", with a fellow giving conferences four or five times a day to a bunch of spiritual inepts up to a hundred in number, was a massive mistake the Church should never have fallen into, let alone gone on perpetrating when its minimal results were so obvious, for example, from communities of nuns who had had such retreats twice a year for the last forty years, and never had their self-defensive carapace dented, let alone pierced. Next major comment, underlined by the director, but also *experienced*, the total surprise of the *flexibility* and *non-militaristic* shape of the retreat. The very opposite of the conventional picture of the Jesuit, with rigid and minute organisation of every detail and part of the day. So, a tremendous sense of *freedom*, *relief* and *joy* in one so undisciplined as myself. It is the complete "one-to-one" situation which is *not* pre-structured but allowed to grow from within, day by day, as the Spirit moves. The only fixed-things were meal times, which shows a sensible sacramentalism and strikes the death knell of masochism.

'Point of major importance as one gets into the retreat. *Time is of the essence*. In the best of the grotty [a colloquial adjective from the french

*grotesque*] three-day retreats which the clergy usually make, one begins to feel after a couple of days that something worthwhile might be beginning to "gel", and then, hey presto! the thing is over and one is back to planning for the "Autumn Fayre". Eight days is marvellous, and there's a curious loss of sense of time, especially if one doesn't cheat and listen to tranny [transistor] radios, even for the news, see newspapers or have any other contact with the outside world. One unwinds and begins to be relaxed and at peace — anything less than a week could not achieve this result, I think.

'Within this relaxed and peaceful state of euphoria, one gladly creates one's own discipline of being faithful to the meditation sessions outlined by the director. Mine gave me four, with perhaps a fifth to carry overnight, and it was up to me, convalescing cripple that I was, to decide when, how long, and how to do them. I usually did two in the morning, though the second tended to be curtailed by the Mass before lunch, and the third I spread out over the two hours or more (three and a half one day) when I tramped the lanes round the Vale of Clwyd. At first you may con yourself into thinking you are praying while walking, when you are actually walking while wool-gathering or just mentally switched off. However, after a day or two, and with some help from the director's teaching of relaxation techniques, which I had to cultivate while on the move (otherwise *lying down*, as I couldn't sit, kneel or stand for long), I really did find I could establish a steady rhythm within which I really was doing the praying while I was walking: a bit like the restful mechanism of saying the Rosary while thinking about the Mysteries.

'So then to the real meat. My director has great insight and command of scripture, to fit scripture passages to one's present need, and take one step by step along a wonderful pathway of self-discovery. Sessions of prayer based on the suggested scripture passages were often quite mind-blowing, and the *opening up of scripture as the essential spiritual nourishment was the great experience of the retreat*. But point, often the director's reiterated here, was vital: to *de-cerebrate* it, to come back in full-speed reverse from the theological cul-de-sacs my peculiar mind kept bolting down, and to *feel* the Scripture, get into it with eye and ear and taste and touch and even smell, and let the starved non-intellectual part of the self feed in the green pastures. This was not easy for me, frustrated and self-deluded "intellectual" that I am supposed to be, but I persevered, and it was most rewarding.

'This leads directly to the next major point of the meat of the retreat. Can one be really honest with oneself and the director? Can one bear to be skinned alive and have all the corroded corners of one's knotted psyche turned inside out for *public* inspection: "public" meaning inspection by oneself and the director? Painful question before the scripture starts to work, but a problem that simply evaporates like fog before the warmth of the scripture sun. I found the marvellous daily sessions with the Director times when I could speak from the heart with no holds barred, simply and without-

effort-honestly telling of the emotional reactions to the scripture passages, in the previous day's sessions of prayer. And this leads fruitfully to the next, and so on.

'Next point. The director is a companion on the way, there is no set point to which he has got to get you by the end of day eight (nine in my case because someone couldn't count). But he goes with you day by day: all he has to do, as the time of departure draws near is, as I said to him, to cauterize the wounds before they are exposed to the blasts of the wicked world's winds. But seriously, towards the end one is joyful in a sense of real achievement and progress, although admitting that there is endless progress still to be made: but one leaves with an appetite for more, and a determination to come back for more in due time.

'Afterwards: being what I am, and the pressures building up, there is a certain amount of regression: but even at my lowest since then, I have always felt there is a powerful and wonderfully positive residue of Beuno's which is timelessly permanent. The only lasting benefit I ever got that I can remember from any other retreat was from Ronnie Knox's, which was *sui generis*, but again, Scripture-centred.

'Most surprising, in a way. All this remains "simple" rather than highly refined, *recherché* and only for first-class honours types. As my director says, one comes to speak platitudes, but they vibrate with new life and are clothed in new beauty: they come alive, and are richly nourishing: a thousand times we have heard them, now for the first time they strike a chord of response in the *heart, emotions, total self*.

'You perhaps hardly need me to give you examples, as you have been through the fire yourselves. But just one or two, if it helps to quote: Ps 103: *Bless the Lord, o my soul, let all that is within me bless his holy name. . . . How much do I positively bless the Lord and rejoice in my life, rather than negatively acquiesce in a life that is largely dead? How much do I accept all of myself as material of gratitude, or keep great chunks of myself, the corroded and festering chunks, out of God's influence?*

Ps 139: *marvellous Hound of Heaven stuff: if I take the wings of the morning or whatever else, I can't really run away from God, even in my flight his hand is still guiding me, and holding me: "whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee, Save me, save only me. . . . Is my gloom, after all, Shade of his hand, outstretched caressingly?"*

A Sister with long experience of other forms of Retreat wrote: 'Instead of sitting passively listening to a talk I found myself *working*, meditating and contemplating. I seemed close to God; and even in the night when I woke, my mind quickly reverted to what I'd been given from the passages meditated on. The daily sessions with my director were most helpful because without imposing his ideas and just by putting in the odd word, assent or question he seemed able to help me on my way at my own pace. That was wonderful. I never want to go to anything but a directed retreat in the future'.

This view was echoed by a group of Apostolic Sisters who unanimously endorsed the comment about the directed retreat being of more value than a preached retreat. They spoke of their awareness of having matured and developed in self-knowledge and ability to relate through the experience of being directed: 'One's whole self opens up — it is not merely one's intellect that is affected . . . scripture becomes much more real and personal . . . passages that one has known about for years flash into life and strike one in a new way . . . fears bubble up and can be shared, often for the first time . . . it's as if light is let into the dark places within oneself . . . I'd call it an experience of being healed in mind and body . . . '.

Listen to a woman who described herself as 'just a housewife . . . a very ordinary person, not at all clever or well-read'. She lives in a village. 'I came to St Beuno's with very mixed emotions and for the single reason that I wanted to get my prayer life sorted out. I had felt for too long that I didn't spend enough time on praying or with God in conversation. I always seemed to be too busy and praying became an automatic, neglected thing. At St Beuno's, for the first time in years, I had space to reflect on all my past life, and I realised how much God had given me and all the good things I had seemed to take for granted and given so little in return. So the retreat was a most satisfying, happy experience and I felt I had gained what I had asked for and *more*, namely to communicate with God with much more feeling and understanding and most of all with more time'.

This allusion to the Retreat giving space was echoed in the letters of several other members. Here is another: 'Gradually the pressures I'd brought with me seemed to ease, and I found I had more room to live — that's the only way I can describe the feeling — more space and room. I could stand back, see more clearly, hear, understand — it felt as if I was being created'.

The woman who has described herself as 'just a housewife', until she made the Retreat and then discovered more of who she is, was accompanied to St Beuno's by her daughter, a student, who wrote: 'It is hard to put words to a spiritual experience! I have had one short experience of a preached retreat. The formality and rational structure (lectures again!) of it made little or no impression on me. Despite my initial fears, I now feel that the directed retreat is the only adequate way.

'It seems so obvious that this be so. It deals with human beings as God created them — as unique individuals. Therefore one undergoes a truly personal experience. I think that the major reason people lose their faith is because it fails to become interiorized and remains at a rational level only.

'In my own case at various times in my life I had felt really close to God, for a fleeting moment. But until the retreat, my faith was becoming weary, because it wasn't being illumined by a personal contact with God. I just didn't pray enough.

'On the retreat, I felt that all those past experiences of God coalesced. It was such a refreshing exercise to see God really at work in my life —

*despite* me! I came away from the retreat feeling confident in my faith for the first time since I was a child. It has made me a happier person and in turn has thus affected those around me. My fiancé is "agnostic", but a fortnight ago he asked me to "show him the way to God". My first thoughts were panic-stricken — *me?* do that? I'm not a good enough Christian myself, and so on. It was the surfacing of the pre-retreat "un-self-confident" me. And then I just sat down and prayed — and the confidence that everything was in God's hands and not mine and would therefore be all right returned.

"Thus you see how the retreat-experience continues to work in my life. It was a very valuable long-term investment and I would do one again.

'Excuse me if I am rambling on too much, but one more thing has occurred to me. That is that ignatian spirituality is eminently suited to the laity; with its stress on seeing God in everything. It is something we have all heard before in endless sermons. But the ignatian retreat helps you begin to experience it. This is absolutely essential if the laity are to provide a really positive contribution to the Church and the world, and not feel themselves to be "part-timers" as compared with the professional religious. Similarly many lay people associate prayer and the spiritual life generally as a function of the "religious". This barrier desperately needs breaking down'.

Another student, a young Brother in a teaching congregation, wrote: 'I want to emphasize the importance of direction — it's an indispensable part of the Retreat and acted as a catalyst to prayer. Spiritual discernment was of great importance — this led me where I would never have gone on my own. The director's theological expertise also proved important and was much appreciated.

'Yes, I do want to repeat the experience. I have attended many preached retreats; this was my first directed one. Both are different experiences and both have their place. How can one measure the value of one against the other? Suffice it to say I have never experienced *anything* like the directed retreat. The Lord worked powerfully in those days at St Beuno's — beyond anything I had imagined or hoped for'.

The value of skilled direction was emphasized by many respondents. Here is an extract from another letter: 'I have come to see that the director is a symbol of God. For just as God comes to us where we are, sees us as we are, not simply as we seem to be, the director comes to us regularly, sees us often in disarray — it does not matter if we weep or feel low — and is interested in all aspects of our lives, not just in those usually regarded as the territory of religion. By demonstrating unremitting acceptance, he gradually enables our attitudes to ourselves to change. That's what I found. I somehow became less harsh and self-excusing. I could see more in perspective. My values changed. After the Retreat, I realised I'd come to know the truth that Michael Tippett puts into the mouth of a character in his opera, *A Child of Our Time*:

So I shall know my shadow and my light.

So I shall be whole at last.

The men and women who made this Retreat were a heterogeneous group, diverse in age, education, life, experience: a microcosm of the Church. From the comparative sophistication of the member whose letter has just been quoted, we turn to the report of a woman in her seventies, who would probably be called a simple old soul. She has spent many years in a religious congregation, involved in the domestic work of the house.

'I approached this experience with apprehension. All I knew was that there was a director whom one met daily to receive assignments for the current day, and to give reports on the previous twenty-four hours. That was quite new for me'.

'But did I benefit from being directed? Most certainly I did. I needed some individual help and the director met my needs sympathetically and very effectively. She understood my difficulties and suggested ways that would help me in my daily prayer. It was so helpful to talk like that — to express myself confidentially and freely. Yes, I did derive great benefit, and I will always remember that in meditating on the New Testament particularly, it is necessary as it were to *live* the experience.

'Would I consider repeating this Retreat experience? Yes, I would. It meant much more to me than many I have made in a long time. As you realize, I have made many preached retreats, at least one each year. Recently, they have been mainly, or merely shall I say, a routine duty, producing sometimes a stimulating thought or idea that has lasted a very limited time. But on the whole I felt that the directed retreat had much more to give to me, and on my part I was better able to receive it. It is still a living experience'.

Another person, who described herself as 'very ordinary', spoke of how she came to discover for herself the truth of St Ignatius's insight: 'The goodness of God is the anchor of my hope'. She feels as if the Retreat has given her a new life: 'I lived at home since the end of the war, nursing a sick father, then for twenty years a sick mother'.

'I did not want to make an individually guided retreat. I am shy, reluctant to talk — certainly not a public or private speaker! But I wanted to find God in my life, know and love him the more. I had signed up for a group retreat — then it was the last straw to have to make a private individually directed one.

'I was desperately nervous and frightened — that I would waste my director's time, bore him to death because of my inadequacy — not because of my sins, but because I am so ordinary! Jesuits and individually guided retreats are for clever lecturers and professors, etc., — certainly not the simple little folk.

'But I loved it *all*, very much. I found my director very kind, a patient listener. He gave me a wonderful new confidence, not only in my spiritual life, but in the ordinary everyday comings and goings. Incidentally, one of the fears I had, because I've never had the change or the company, was the fear

of travel, and resentment that my brother could come and go as he pleased and always had. As a result of the retreat, I went off to the Channel Isles, eight hours on a boat! And I am now planning a trip to the Holy Land for the Epiphany feast in 1980'. She said she would never have considered that possible, she would have been too frightened. 'I also experienced a great relief in prayer — relief that I did not have to make all the running, relief that I did not have to make all the effort to overcome my failings — I just brought myself and God did the healing. There was no separate time for prayer and activities. All things I find "are charged with the presence of God"'. It is just a case of doing what I am doing and being present to that. I find it a great help that feelings and emotions are all part of prayer and the spiritual life! I thought those were not so much as even to be mentioned!

'An individually guided retreat is now to be preferred to a group retreat. It is a wonderful way of coming to God, from the very deep depths of one's inner self and really facing God alone, as I am — not as one in a group: the help given to me was just given to me — to help me find God more easily where I am. Yes, I shall certainly go back to St Beuno's and make another retreat. I feel I have only just made a beginning. It was a great journey from panic to peace, small self to being swallowed up in the greatness of love. The Liturgy too was splendid — the simple Masses and the group Service of Penance with Sacramental Confession and Absolution — all so simple and straightforward, unfettered by a great rigmarole'.

This woman subsequently amplified what she had written about being freed from many deeply ingrained fears, offering further examples of the ways her life has been enriched since the directed retreat. She spoke of having become reconciled to much that had previously been a source of resentment and anxiety; the newly released energy and sense of purpose is now enabling her to live with more confidence and happiness than she has ever known. Another retreatant, alluding to her discovery that the 'hidden self' emerges as attention is centred on God, wrote of the understanding that had come to her that 'the presence of God in my life *is* its depth . . . I know now that my spiritual life cannot be isolated from my everyday existence. It has to be integrated. The old childish attitude, based on a sort of magical notion, was changed during those eight days. I cannot have God in a box. He is everywhere. . . . I am coming to see that more clearly each day now'.

But these discoveries did not always come easily. Many people wrote of the phases of desolation which they had experienced during the Retreat, and of how they had been strengthened to explore more deeply by their director's encouragement and awareness of their difficulties. Previously hidden sin came to the surface, and was experienced as life-destructive. With sharpened perception, retreatants recognized and acknowledged ways in which they had blindly resisted love, and had preferred the false securities of self-centred existence: such insight brings pain. Several mentioned having experienced feelings of helplessness, and had come to accept a degree of inner poverty



greater than any previously known. One quoted some lines of Hopkins, alleging that she felt they conveyed her own situation more adequately:

Away grief's grasping, joyless days, dejection.  
 Across my foundering deck shone  
 A beacon, an eternal beam.  
 In a flash, at a trumpet crash,  
 I am all at once what Christ is, since he was what I am, and  
 This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, matchwood, immortal diamond,  
 Is immortal diamond. (*That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the Comfort  
 of the Resurrection*)

There seems to have been a general understanding that the worst pain came from a struggle against letting go of the old ways of seeing, possessing, dominating. Abandonment to God did not come easily to most retreatants. One wrote: 'Once in the restfully prayerful state of mind hesitatingly sketched out above, Beuno's scenery came into its own. Most days I felt a wonderful oneness with creation and instinctive joyful sharing in its beauty: real praise of the Lord, and real acceptance of oneself *as one is*, as part of creation, came naturally, with a great sense of rightness and contentment. On a couple of occasions when the spiritual mood was wrong, and sinfulness was at its ugliest, I felt a strong sense of being out of gear with the whole, not just with God, because it was all his creation and it was very good, and I was trying to fight it, not him. Does that make sense?'

The woman who went on holiday after the retreat wasn't the only one who spoke of having been released from long-standing constraints. Here is a man, who calls himself 'an ordinary cradle Catholic'. He works as a clerk. 'For the past twenty-five years I have suffered from scruples. In my endeavour to overcome this affliction I resorted to weekly confession, a practice I continued for about twelve consecutive years. Looking back on those years, I realise now what a ghastly mistake that was, as more often than not my confession became a torture. . . . Since my visit to St Beuno's I have experienced such peace of mind that I have only been to confession on one occasion. Would this change have come about if I had attended an eight-day preached as opposed to a directed one? I leave that for you all to decide. I might mention that I have already booked to attend the retreat to be held next August. No doubt when the time comes I shall have some personal problems to discuss with my director, but in so far as the subject of scruples is concerned, it won't even be on the agenda. I would like everyone to know the benefits derived from such a Retreat'.

Another testified to having been healed of chronic anxiety, self-hatred and the physical distress of a stomach ulcer through the graces received during a directed retreat. The old frets have been replaced by a sense of repose and an awareness of being loved by God. 'I wish I could explain it better. There was an encounter with Christ such as I'd never had before. The Word became real

for me. I opened up. The tensions dropped away. The effects of that time have not left me. I can do all kinds of things now I could never even consider doing before. . . . ' At the end of her testimony she repeated the words of St Paul: 'For me to live now is Christ . . . '.

The power of a directed retreat to help one to interiorize the truths of faith, and thus to grow in spiritual maturity were mentioned in a number of letters. Here is another view:

'I am still living the experience of that time in Retreat. I found the director most helpful and would not wish now to go back to a preached retreat. In the latter one can get away from oneself as well as from God much more easily; but I feel that in a directed retreat one has to face up to the reality of life as it is *here* and *now*; and then everything is somehow transformed, made new. It is great to be able to talk out one's experience with a director who can listen and respond and, I think, help one become more clear and honest, and become deeper in prayer. It teaches one how to be open; and then one starts to realise that the Holy Spirit is also guiding the director; so it becomes easier, even though what one receives is not always what one would like!'

A convert wrote: 'I understood more clearly than ever before that no way can we pull ourselves out of the pit. Sin is ingrained in the roots. Unless God comes to me where I am, I'm lost, and I simply go spreading my darkness around into others. . . . During those eight days, I saw what Christ has done for me, despite all my opposition and egotism'. The same writer commented on the strong sense of community that developed among retreatants: 'In the silence, we somehow became bonded together . . . a marvellous experience . . . I felt closer to my fellow men and women than I ever do in all the chat and discussion that goes on in the place where I work. This was real communion. People came close. I felt we knew each other even though we never spoke. Are people given to each other by and through God's love?'

The quality of happiness experienced at St Beuno's during that week was commented on in several letters. Here is an eighteen year old boy speaking: 'I will put my true feelings about the Retreat into one sentence: I was as happy and at peace with the world during some precious moments then as I have ever been or will be in my short worldly existence'.

After the Retreat this youth entered university and spends several evenings weekly playing the guitar and singing in clubs. Writing from the busyness of his crowded life, he said: 'My only regret about the Retreat was that I didn't really carry it on. I feel like the early disciples who heard Jesus speak but just continued with their daily lives. I wish I had someone motivating me now, like the marvellous directors at St Beuno's'.

Someone else wrote: 'Despite the interludes of pain when I saw things more clearly, I was so deeply happy at the Retreat. I simply felt *right*. I thought to myself, "I'm real me now. No one can take this away from me, whatever happens".'

A woman who had been through an intense experience of depression and the resolution of it during the Retreat, wrote of her feelings of helplessness and assurance: 'At one point, I felt like Beowulf in his struggle against the monster, Grendel, under the water. . . . I too felt overwhelmed and drowning. It was all desperation and hopelessness. But at the same time and with increasing clarity I knew I was not alone. The director's hand held me up and I came to understand that Christ was with me, there under the water. Then somehow I stopped feeling so afraid. I don't know how I emerged, but I know I did'.

Since the week at St Beuno's at least one member has resolved to give up the comforts of an affluent existence, and to try to live out some of the insights given during the Retreat. She is now working as a volunteer with a frontier apostolate in Canada. Here are some extracts from her letter: 'My director was someone who looked at "the whole person". I found later that through his direction, I could take a clearer look "inwards", free myself from restricting barriers. I was being made a whole person; not a "pious object" for eight days, but a thinking vibrating person, able to study myself and my impulses, good and bad; able to respond and accept whatever demands would be made of me.

'It certainly gave me a freedom I'd never possessed before: a strength both spiritual and somehow physical, and because of that bond I feel with the St Beuno's Community, here I am stuck out in a two-road (with railway crossing!) town, working with Carrier Indian children and the catholic adult community, present temp. -14<sup>0</sup>, walking in padded "moon-boots" over spiked iced grass (won't melt in brilliant sunshine), awaiting the fall of tons of snow, but still ready to accept whatever is in the pipe-line'.

She concludes: 'To me now holiness *is* wholeness. I hope it will be possible to offer more programmes for lay people at St Beuno's and elsewhere. I can see there are many difficulties to solve, but the team of directors is moving in the right direction. I feel the Lord has given me so much from the Retreat I have an intense wish to share it with others, so that they too may have such an experience. God is good'.

*Elizabeth Emery*