



KIM PEMBERTON

I became associated with the Franciscan order, when I was twenty six years of age, and living rough in Paris. Through the grace of God I became a fellow worker with a first order friar, who was working in Paris. How our coming together happened is a long story, and can be viewed in my tale of the “journey of a soul”. Enough to say, God led me through a wilderness, in which I tried, without success, to disobey him, for a period of six years, after leaving an Irish Seminary.

When I now look back, after seventy seven years of life, I see plainly that I never did anything that God, in his wisdom and love, had not intended me to do. He has walked beside me, every step of my journey. All the attitudes that he used with me I now try to use for the good of my soul. His love; patience; care; support; warmth; and so much more, has guided me to where I now am, living my life in the manner that I believe he wishes me to do, making myself available to and for others.

After the age of twenty six, I went back to school, or more correctly, universities (the plural use of university being correct, as I attended a number of different ones.) Having not succeeded in my earlier endeavours to become a priest, God had led me along a path of working with young people, whose lives were on the margins of society. This needed much academic study and, over a period of nearly eight years I obtained the necessary qualifications, whilst working with disadvantaged young people, using every spare moment I had. I have never given up the celibacy that I practised when training to be a priest but, due to God’s grace, I have adopted two boys and fostered five others. I can truthfully say that I have had more children than is the lot of most people, because the number I have related to is myriad.

As I have already mentioned, I have been a Franciscan since I was twenty six, fifty one years so far. My desire to visit Assisi, to walk where Francis and Clara walked, brought me into contact with the FMDM’s. They were organising a pilgrimage to Assisi, led by Sister Hazel Buckley. There was humour in our relationship from the outset. At the airport, Sister Hazel had trouble locating a pilgrim called Kim, because, logically, she was looking for a female. What macho man would be called Kim? Well I was so called, and so started what was to become a very close, spiritual, relationship, between myself and the FMDM sisters.

My fellow pilgrims were rather surprised when I told the group that I had come to Assisi to have a row with Saint Francis. However, that was my major reason for being there. I had prayed for some inner strength from Francis and he seemed to be refusing it, so Mohammed went to the mountain. The ‘mountain’ threw me to my knees, on the steep steps outside the church at Greccio. Francis is good at reminding us to be humble. I have made many trips to Assisi, always receiving instruction there, always being given new graces, always being accompanied by brothers and sisters of the Franciscan order. I still manage to come to Ladywell, usually twice a year, despite my being given the gift of a cancer, a cancer through which I receive so much grace. I am no longer able to go to Assisi, but Assisi is always here, deep inside me.

Being an Associate of the FMDM’s has given me much joy. I have become friends there with so many very special and spiritual people. My connection helps me to visualise myself carrying the child Jesus within me, until through my pregnancy I can bring him forth, to all of the world.

Much grace do I receive through Ladywell and much time and space for contemplation and meditation. May it continue so, until my Lord calls me home, and even there, I will still be surrounded by FMDM’s and all the Holy Franciscan Order.