

*Mary Pyle,  
a soul enamoured  
of God and  
Francis of Assisi*

# PERFECT JOY

by bro COSIMO VICEDOMINI

"O Lord do not take away from me a sense of good humour!" With these words and others similar, Mary Pyle would pray to God asking Him to remove from her those feelings of sadness that threatened her peace of mind and those living close to her. Her pure soul had little by little absorbed the teachings of the Father of the Franciscan family that she practised with that simplicity that

characterises those enamoured of God. Since the 1930's, a group of women were living in Mary's home a communal life similar to the Capuchin Friars in the nearby friary. Communal life by monks of past centuries was considered a "maxima poenitentia" and was not easy even for these fervent women who shared the same spiritual goals and faith. Misunderstandings

and arguments were not infrequent but Mary was always ready to restore peace, repeating to the Lord ejaculatory prayers like: "O Lord do not take away from me a sense of good humour!" Mary had understood that peace of heart is a gift from God and needs to be safeguarded. As Francis of Assisi teaches, perfect joy is not found in lavish possessions, worldly glory or in that vulgar elation

Mary Pyle's home situated just below the Capuchin friary.



of the world. True joy, that is perfect joy, hides itself from superficial glances and has no appeal to the proud and hard of heart. It is found in little things and concurs with that peace that the just know how to preserve even in the midst of battle, because they know that God never abandons them, and this was the reason why Mary often prayed: "O Lord do not take away from me a sense of good humour!" Sadness is an emotion contrary to joy and peace and affects us when we are confronted by our limitations. Christians and especially Franciscans should not be sad because they should always trustfully surrender themselves into the merciful arms of the heavenly Father so that their wills are dissolved into that of Our Lord, like a drop of water in an ocean, as this alone leads to true happiness.

Mary Pyle (centre) with two visitors. Most English speaking pilgrims would make a visit to Mary and her home.