

NEW•DIRECTIONS

Forward in Faith supports The Society in renewing the Church in its historic faith

December 2022/
January 2023

CHRISTMAS & EPIPHANY DOUBLE ISSUE

New Bishop of Oswestry
Bishop of Beverley consecrated
Ascension restoration



Mary in Salvation
Anglican English Lit
1937 Coronation Bible mystery



Christmas recipes
Alnmouth profession
The Magi, Myrrh



◆ THE DIRECTOR'S CUT ◆

Last month we focused on the thirtieth anniversary of the anniversary of the General Synod's vote to allow the ordination of women to the priesthood in the Church of England. This represented a major change to the Sacrament of Orders. We also reproduced the statement from the trustees of Forward in Faith upholding the principle of confidentiality which is inherent in the Sacrament of Confession. This was in the light of IICSA proposing changes to that confidentiality as contained in the seal. There will be more on that next year, no doubt.

There will also be great interest in, and coverage of, the Sacrament of Marriage as it now appears likely that formal proposals will come forward to amend the nature of that sacrament too. Many like to refer to such matters as 'church politics' but I imagine that we would prefer to see them as 'church fundamentals'.

However, now does not seem the right time of year – in this holy season of Advent – to be going through the sacraments one-by-one and setting out which are currently under attack and which might be next. We live in a world riven with conflict and strife, desperately needing to hear the Good News. So as we approach the great feast of the Incarnation of Our Lord, it would be worth stopping to think what our role is in receiving and sharing that Good News.

The Society bishops have had that same thought and just over a year embarked on a mission initiative under the oversight of Bishops Will Hazlewood and Philip North, with Fathers David D'Silva and Chris Brading – both serving parish priests – jointly undertaking the role of National Missioner on behalf of The Society.

The first phase of the initiative culminated in a conference focusing on Catholic mission for 80 or so Society clergy, and also Bishop Ric Thorpe who leads on much of this type of work across the Church of England, which was held at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham and culminated shortly before the beginning of Advent.

The conference was notable for its positivity and for delegates' openness to what might be being suggested as a fruitful next step; whether that be embracing Catholic Alpha, enabling the laity to play their part in evangelisation or supporting outreach to young people.

A report on the conference will appear in a future *New Directions* and setting out the agreed next steps, but strong interest is already apparent in continuing with the regional groups and holding a second conference in a year's time. In the meantime, a portal will be established to share useful material and good practice.

Nobody involved thinks the mission initiative is the final word on the matter but there is wide recognition among participants that the support and encouragement provided by the regional meetings and the national conference represent the right pattern for future work.

Further good news has arrived for The Society in the form of two new shepherds to guide us in that missionary work. On St Andrew's Day, a bustling York Minster witnessed the consecration of Fr Stephen Race as the Bishop of Beverley. It was particularly pleasing that three Society bishops were able to act as the Chief Consecrator and the two Co-Consecrators.

And we now have news that Fr Paul Thomas will be consecrated as the first Bishop of Oswestry on the feast of Candlemas in Canterbury Cathedral. There is scope for confusion as the See was previously inactive and will now care for the former Ebbsfleet parishes, as Ebbsfleet is shortly to become the conservative evangelical See. Suffice to say that the See of Oswestry will cover the western half of the southern province and help to return us to a full complement of PEVs.

We are indeed fortunate that the discernment process has resulted in two such able candidates being raised to the episcopate and we pray for the parishes, clergy and people under their care. Please also remember The Society's Council of Bishops in your prayers at this time of change.

In closing, I am reminded that we would struggle to do better than the words of Eric Milner-White in preparing ourselves to celebrate that great feast:

'Beloved in Christ, be it this Christmastide our care and delight to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger.'

I wish you all a holy and happy Christmas. **ND**

NEW◆DIRECTIONS

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HOLY SEASONING

Our double issue brings together the themes of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany with Bishop Jonathan's message (p7), Piero's *Nativity* (cover and p6), the BVM (pp8-9), Christmas recipes (pp16-17), hymns (pp18-19), poems (p9, p20), church angels (p21), the Holy Innocents (pp40-41), *Magi* (p42), and *Myrrh* (p43)



CHURCH CALLING

The consecration of the new Bishop of Beverley is on pp26-27, Fr Paul Thomas introduced (p5), the Ascension, Lower Broughton, restored (p4), and Br Michael Jacob professed (pp22-23). Yuri Polakiwsky (p50) exhorts our moral duty.



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Piero della Francesca's *Nativity* in the National Gallery (see p6).

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Articles are published in *New Directions* because they are thought likely to be of interest to readers. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or those of *Forward in Faith*.

Phoenix from the Ashes

Paul Hutchins reports on the revival of the Ascension, Lower Broughton, desecrated by fire

Life after death is central to our faith as disciples of the Lord. It is our longed-for hope; we believe in Christ – Christ crucified, risen and ascended. The reconstruction of the Church of the Ascension, Lower Broughton, Salford, in the Diocese of Manchester is a living parable of this tenet of our faith.

Back in 2017 the church suffered an unprovoked arson attack. I recall watching the Manchester news that evening in disbelief that a church I knew very well was burning down. I had regularly celebrated mass there and had taken children from that parish to the Walsingham Youth Pilgrimage. To see it burn seemed unreal and sickening.

The next day was a bleak one. The press interviewed the then Priest-in-Charge, Canon David Wyatt. He stoically proclaimed that the life of the church would not end in death but resurrection. Others had urged him that this was the end. Not so for Canon Wyatt or for the people of the Ascension; this was just the beginning. ‘Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again’ seemed to be very much the motto at the time.

Five million pounds later and the Ascension has indeed risen from its ashes. So much so that it was recently rededicated by Bishop Philip North, had its new altars consecrated and had its new Rector instituted, Canon Falak Sher, who has taken on Canon Wyatt’s mantle.

The Ascension is a blaze of light and space now, with beautifully crafted furniture and radiating a holiness from the prayer-soaked walls of the church, which has served the people of Lower Broughton for over 160 years. It has many modern features whilst maintaining its classic build.

Canon Sher is prolific in the community, as Lower Broughton itself has undergone a huge transformation in terms of its buildings and population. Canon Sher has responded to that need and serves a very mixed congregation of cultures forming the people of God in that place. Once a month he celebrates mass in Urdu for the Christian Pakistani community as well as embracing people from Eritrea and other parts of Africa.

He is also active in the local primary school, which was built just a few years ago and where he serves on the governing body. An assistant curate, Fr Warren Mitchell, assists Canon Sher in the life of the parish, which acts as a beacon of hope in the local area.

Thanks be to God that this historic building continues to offer worship to God and is still a home for the Catholic faith handed down to us by the Apostles. It is not a museum piece; it is a parish church, and it is serving the people of God. May it long continue to grow and be fruitful in the vineyard. ND



Fr Paul Thomas: the first Bishop of Oswestry

After consultation with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Fr Paul Thomas SSC has been appointed as the first Bishop of Oswestry. The Society's Council of Bishops is delighted to hear this news and warmly congratulates Fr Paul.

Fr Paul, once consecrated, will provide sacramental and pastoral oversight to Society parishes in the western half of the southern province of the Church of England; the area will now become known as the See of Oswestry and was formerly the See of Ebbsfleet.

Fr Paul's service to the Church has been rooted in parochial ministry in and around the capital and he has been the parish priest of his current church – St James, Sussex Gardens in Paddington, London which is a parish under the episcopal oversight of the Bishop of Fulham – for the last 11 years.

Fr Paul became well known during lockdown for his innovative use of social media, providing content which was both entertaining and evangelistic. He also spent a couple of years as the acting Archdeacon of Charing Cross in recent years which will provide him with invaluable experience for his new role.

Bishop Tony Robinson commented: 'Fr Paul has served the Church faithfully and with imagination and good humour over the last 20 years. He is a talented communicator and he has much to offer the parishes of the See of Oswestry. We very much look forward to his episcopacy starting in early 2023.'

Fr Paul's consecration will be on Thursday 2 February 2023, the Feast of Candlemas, in Canterbury Cathedral. A novena of prayer is also available for all those who want to link themselves through prayer to the consecration and to Fr Paul's episcopal ministry within the Church. The novena will run from Wednesday 25 January (Feast of the Conversion of St Paul the Apostle) to Thursday 2 February (Feast of Candlemas).

We offer The Society prayer for the parishes, clergy and people of the See of Oswestry:



*Heavenly Father,
bless the bishops, clergy and people of The Society.
Bind us together in love and faith.
Renew us in service and witness.
And by your Holy Spirit
Guide our future and make plain your purposes.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*Saint Wilfrid, pray for us.
Saint Hilda, pray for us.*

+ TONY WAKEFIELD

The Rt Revd Tony Robinson, Bishop of Wakefield,
Chairman of The Society's Council of Bishops

+STEPHEN BEVERLEY

The Rt Revd Stephen Race, Bishop of Beverley

+ PHILIP BURNLEY

The Rt Revd Philip North, Bishop of Burnley

+ MARTIN CICESTR

The Rt Revd Martin Warner, Bishop of Chichester

+ JONATHAN FULHAM

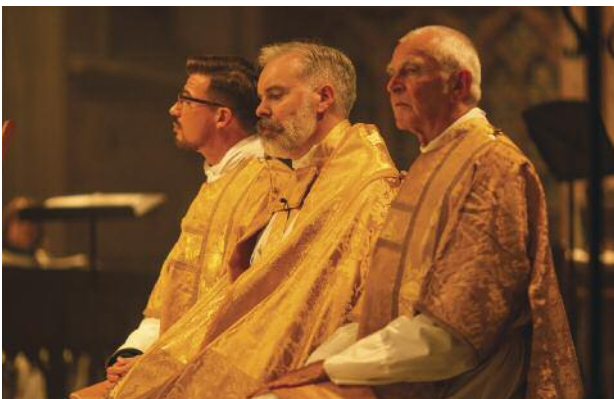
The Rt Revd Jonathan Baker, Bishop of Fulham

+ WILLIAM LEWES

The Rt Revd Will Hazlewood, Bishop of Lewes

+ NORMAN RICHBOROUGH

The Rt Revd Norman Banks, Bishop of Richborough



Piero's Nativity – our cover image this month

In time for Christmas, the National Gallery has put on a special display of its newly restored *Nativity* by Piero Della Francesca. The artist died in 1492 and the work remained with his family until the 1860s. Acquired by the gallery for the nation in 1874, Prime Minister Disraeli described it at the time as ‘a picture of the most rare and interesting character’.

Led by the NG's Senior Restorer Jill Dunkerton and with panel work by Britta New, a number of new revelations about the early 1480s artwork have emerged. It was long thought to be unfinished due to lack of shadows, it is now believed to represent the Nativity through St Bridget of Sweden's vision of Christ's birth. Previously framed and on display as an altarpiece, the new hanging gives the piece its own carved walnut frame, of almost exact dimensions it is likely it dates from the

same time and area. It was most likely a grand, domestic painting and may even have been created by Piero for his own home.

‘It has been a real privilege but also a great responsibility,’ said Jill Dunkerton. ‘Every decision, every tiny brush stroke of retouching, affects our perception of its appearance and meaning, possibly for many generations. I hope that visitors will now be able to experience its quiet magic.’ Gabriele Finaldi, Director of the National Gallery, added: ‘Piero's *Nativity* is a beautiful and profound meditation on the Christmas story. Over five centuries after Piero's lifetime, we can still marvel at his artistic vision, skill and sheer inventiveness.’

Find out more at nationalgallery.org.uk, including a behind the scenes' video. **ND**



The Director of Forward in Faith is pleased to announce the following trustees from January 2023: Bishop Tony Robinson (Chairman), Bishop Jonathan Baker, Bishop-Designate Paul Thomas, Richard Mantle (Treasurer), Fr Paul Benfield, Fr Darren Smith, Fr Paul Hutchins, Fr Kyle McNeil, Fr Mark North, Mary Snape, Christopher Daubney, Christopher Swift.

Christmas Message

*Creator of the stars of night, thy people's everlasting light,
Jesu, Redeemer save us all, and hear Thy servants
when they call.*

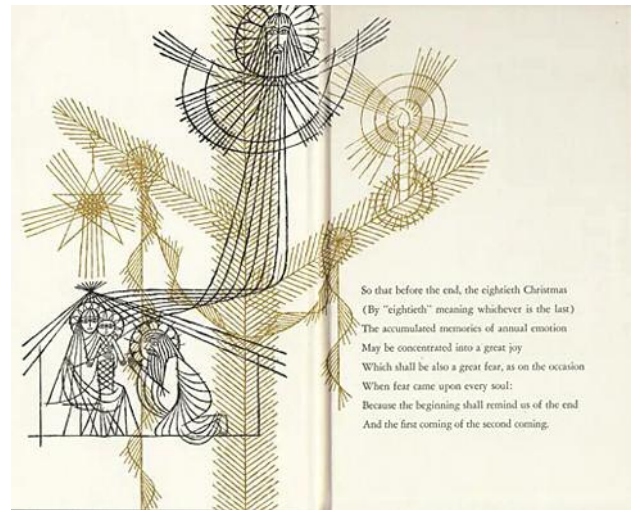
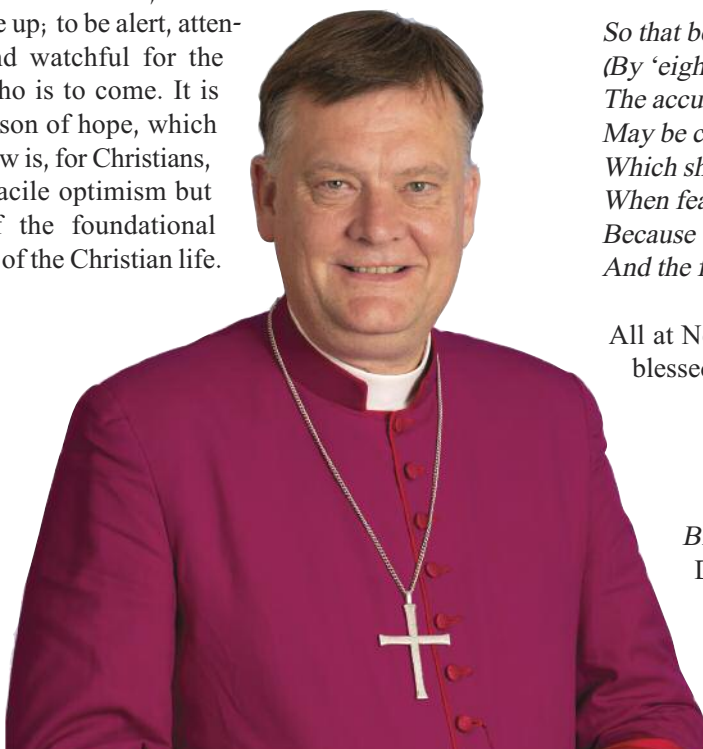
So begins the wonderful seventh-century hymn *Conditor alme siderum*, appointed for Vespers in Advent, in the familiar translation by J.M. Neale. The second verse runs:

*Thou, grieving at the ancient curse should doom to death a universe,
Hast found the medicine, full of grace, to save and heal a ruined race.*

Neale poetically chooses the English word 'ruined' to translate the Latin adjective 'languidum,' from the noun 'languidus.' This can mean faint or weak, or sick, ill or unwell (Neale's translation brings this sense out), but also sluggish, inert, inactive or listless.

Cold days and dark nights can make us sluggish and inactive. Living daily, as we do, in the shadow of instability and conflict abroad and economic uncertainty and hardship at home can also make us retreat into our shells, fearful to look out. The uncertain note sounded by our church in response to cultural pressures, more hesitant than confident (let alone triumphant), and consequent anxiety about the deeper erosion of her sacramental character, provides yet further temptation to look inwards and cover our ears to the gentle but persistent call of Our Lord upon our lives.

Advent, the Scriptures and the liturgical texts tell us, is the time to wake up; to be alert, attentive and watchful for the One who is to come. It is the season of hope, which we know is, for Christians, not a facile optimism but one of the foundational virtues of the Christian life.



At Christmas, we celebrate the Lord's first coming, in weakness and humility, to share every challenge and every limitation of our mortal life. Advent teaches us always to gather round the crib not just in the starlight of a Bethlehem night, but in the far greater light of the Lord's return in glory. Hence we can celebrate the Nativity not just as an exercise in pious sentimentality, but in the assurance of Christ's ultimate victory over all sin, sickness and yes, sluggishness and listlessness too.

T.S. Eliot, in his little known poem *The Cultivation of Christmas Trees*, beautifully makes a personal joy from this calling to celebrate Christmas in the light of the fulfilment of all things in Christ at the end of time. The poem concludes:

*So that before the end, the eightieth Christmas
(By 'eightieth' meaning whichever is last)
The accumulated memories of annual emotion
May be concentrated into a great joy
Which shall also be a great fear, as on the occasion
When fear came upon every soul:
Because the beginning shall remind us of the end
And the first coming of the second coming.*

All at New Directions wish our readers a merry and blessed Christmas, and a hope-filled New Year.

+Jonathan Fulham



Bishop Jonathan is Chairman of the New Directions Editorial Board. February 2023 sees the tenth anniversary of his translation to the See of Fulham — for which we send him many congratulations.

Holy Mary, Mother of Salvation

Mark Woodruff reflects on the saving role of Mary through time and eternity, and for the Church in the world today

I wonder if it strikes you as odd that St Paul first speaks of a Son born of a mother, only to show that we become sons adopted by a Father. Yet in three short verses in Galatians 4 (4-6), we have the whole purpose of God in creating us. He who made us at the outset completed the creation by being born into it. He who ordered the course of it restored its lost equilibrium by taking flesh from it, in return for His Spirit. And he who gives all life made clear that the truth of the nature of The-One-Who-Is is laid open to the eyes of the world in His death, the reclamation of humanity is fulfilled, and the new, eternal life is opened never to be barred again. 'It is accomplished,' he gasps as he breathes out his Spirit; and the heavy veil that had always concealed the Holy of Holies in the Temple was 'rent in twain' as graves broke open, for the resurrection was imminent.

But what do we see once the veil of the Temple is torn? First, our eyes see the sacrificed Lamb enthroned on the Tree, outside the gate, we are told; what remains standing in life is the woman, from whom a Son has been taken, and to whom a new son has been entrusted (John 19.25-27). It can be no surprise, then, that in the Litany of Loreto in the West and the Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God in the East the Blessed Virgin Mary is described as the Gate, out through which the Word was born as our Saviour, and in through which, adopted as divine sons like him, we enter into his Kingdom as the blessed of the Father. The Gate is not only the one at the boundary of an earthly Jerusalem, but of the new Jerusalem as well.

The BVM is described as the Gate, out through which the Word was born as our Saviour, and through which we enter his Kingdom as the blessed

Nor can it be a surprise that Mary is hailed as the Holy of Holies (or House of Gold) in person, in which the Lord came to dwell in the flesh, the Mother who receives the weight of God's glory in this world, out of whom He radiates in light, and the Lady in whose presence we are sanctified by the Spirit of God who overshadows her. Did not the child in Elizabeth's womb leap when she encountered the Mother of the Saviour? Did not the servants at the Wedding Feast at her intercession bring water to the Lord for its consecration as wine? Did not the woman bless the Mother who brought forth the Word of God and kept it in her body, mind and heart? Did not the Mother come to be with her newly given son

St John and the other apostles on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit who had overshadowed her at the incarnation now came to overshadow them too, at the nuptial manifestation of the Bride of Christ, the Church?

Yet in the moments surrounding our redemption, we see her all but alone, standing before the cross, which also stands before her. On the summit above the monastery of the Grande Chartreuse in France is a great cross, and the Carthusian monks who live there say, *Stat Crux stat, dum volvitur orbis*: 'The Cross stands still, while it is the world that turns.' When we visualise this, we cannot fail to see the Mother of God who stands in an axis with it, the two inextricable. There she receives those who have been adopted by the Divine Father and become entitled to the same inheritance as the Divine Son. There she silently insists that we 'Do whatever He tells you', and 'hear the Word of God and keep it'. There she recalls to her Son that we 'have no more wine' and need the His grace and its constant replenishment.

In the offices of the Eastern Orthodox Church, an acclamation strikes Western ears as very bold – 'Most Holy Mother of God, save us'. But how can this be, since Our Lord is our only mediator? In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the apostle is speaking of the priestly mediation of our redemption, Christ's office as the High Priest who enters the Holy of Holies to pour out His blood for our purification from sin and the abolition of all that stands between us and entry to the Kingdom of heaven. But there is another mediation, that of his prayer and intercession into which we are all drawn. In this mediation of intercession, Mary the Mother of God stands in the first rank. This is because she is the first and last to stand at the foot of the cross, pouring out her prayer and love. She is the one left standing after the Son of Man's death, revealed as the Holy of Holies, through into which we may all now make entry into the Kingdom, there to sit with the Lord as those whom the Father has adopted as co-equal inheritors. Mary is in this way inseparable from the work of Christ's work of salvation on the Cross; and she it is who does not leave us who are redeemed outside the Gate but brings us in by the power of her intercession, for his grace and blessing to be ours. Hence, 'Most Holy Mother of God, save us'.

She is indeed the Mother of Mercy, to whom we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. We ask her to end our exile and show us the fruit of her womb, Jesus. She is the Gate that opens to bring us in; she is the Holy of Holies for ever displaying her Son in the glory that is the same in the manger as on the cross, the same in heaven as in his Kingdom coming on earth through and into us.

In this way, then, we see Mary as the Mother of the Church, being the first to house one of its adopted heirs of heaven. Yet she is not above the Church, but part of it, in the community of the redeemed, knowing her need of God and the first to name her son as her Saviour. This is why it is contrary to her work to be part of Christ's saving us in his Church, for us to be living in two, three, or a hundred houses. The word 'ecumenical' refers to a single household, the household of faith that began in the house that became Mary's on that first Good Friday. To the Byzantine Greeks it meant the whole Christian Roman Empire. To us nowadays it means the various churches' efforts for over a hundred years to stand against human tendencies and instead re-compose the single household of faith that Christ its foundation entrusted to the care, intercession, custody and motherhood of Mary. We cannot expect to be heard when we ask the Most Holy Mother of God to save us, or to end our exile, or to show us Jesus, when we insist on living in separate households.

Mary the Mother of God stands in the first rank - the first and last to stand at the foot of the cross, pouring out her prayer and love

For this reason, it is essential that we understand that the unity of Christians in one Church, as one flock with one Shepherd, is as necessary to our salvation today as it was from that moment on the Cross. Yet, to us, after all these years and so many hopes and dawns that have brightened and then faded, with so many seemingly irreconcilable differences, it seems beyond feasibility. That is not how to look at what keeps Christians apart, however, especially in such different understandings of the priestly and episcopal ministry, such varied understandings of theology, questions of life and death from the womb to the grave, and even a common Christian anthropology of the human person and psyche. For one thing, despite these matters preventing our organic and visible communion as things stand, the Churches have already achieved solidarity and friendship as never before, especially in pursuit of goodness, truth, peace and justice in the world. We too must persistently forswear any instinct for rivalry, bitterness or scorn. It sometimes strikes me that Christians reserve their sharpest attacks for their closest kin, those in other traditions from which they are estranged, while to the world that is indifferent to them they are all smiles and constructive engagement. As the Lord said, 'It shall not be so among you'. The world has enough enemies, and what it lacks is enough friends. I am glad that some of my closest-thinking friends and fellow workers in the vineyard are in other Churches, not just my own. Such affinities of friendship and alliance are mutual investments that need to be tended for the yield we are yet to see.

So, for a second thing, we understand one another's mind better than before, and we do not give up on our conversation. The great Orthodox bishop and teacher, Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, who recently died, began

life as an Anglican; but he did not see his Anglicanism negated by becoming Orthodox. Rather, it was fulfilled, he said. What would it be like for us to see the Church as we belong to it at the moment, fulfilled in the manifestation of the Universal Catholic Church that is to yet to come – one in which you as members of the Church of England believing the orthodox Catholic faith saw it achieve its true fulfilment? What it would be like for me as a Latin Catholic priest, also serving in an Eastern Catholic Church, to see my own Church fulfilled in every bearing of its catholicity too, at its moment of unity and fullness of communion with and for all? For us it seems an impossible task; but with God all things are possible, since it will take His miracle to turn our leaking water into his vessel of new wine. In the meantime, it is for us to remove every obstacle to the miracle, so we are ready for when it comes.

On the night before He died, Christ, overheard by St John, spoke of how urgent this was. He said, 'Father, may they all be one, as You and I are one, so that the world may believe it WAS You who sent Me.' May the Mother of Mercy take us from the Cross through the Gate into the one household of the one Holy of Holies, not many, and, credibly for the world, thus 'show us Jesus'. Most Holy Mother of God, save us. **ND**

Fr Mark Woodruff is a priest of the Diocese of Westminster. Having studied at College of the Resurrection at Mirfield, he served in Anglican ministry before being received into the Catholic Church where he was ordained in 1995.

Fr Mark is the English Liturgy Chaplain and Co-Ordinator at the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in London, which serves as the Chairman of the Society of St John Chrysostom which promotes greater appreciation of the spiritual, theological and liturgical traditions of Eastern Christendom, works and prays for the unity of the Churches of East and West, and encourages support for the Eastern Churches.

Break Through

This morning
There was no division,
No schism
Between here and there.
A union was presented.
Nothing prevented the
Twinning.
The veil was not just thin
It was removed –
Proving that there is no divide.
The tide is turning.

Ann Brayton Meek

English Literature and the Church of England

Jeremy Black finds religious inspiration in the work of Jane Austen and Christie

Present-day discontents directed at the ‘canon,’ the set of established texts that dominate the understanding of literature, relate to a radical agenda from which charges of racism shoot in a multi-directional pyrotechnics. That approach ignores a more serious problem with the presentation of the canon, namely its secularisation and, linked to that, the tendency to downplay or misattribute an awareness of evil and a resulting moral conspectus. This tendency is seen both with works in the canon such as the novels of Jane Austen and with those denied by condescension such a positioning such as those of Agatha Christie. This short piece is scarcely the book-length account the subject merits, but is intended to fire up interest in an important topic.

The whys are various, and any list necessarily incomplete, but I see the drawing together of tendencies from the interwar years, not least the assault by the supposed highbrow writers, such as Virginia Woolf, on the older tradition of narrative writing represented by John Galsworthy and Arnold Bennett, a related hostility to popularity and commercial success, as presented by criticism of Christie or, later, Ian Fleming, a scorn for public morality including Christianity, the nuclear family and ‘Victorian values,’ and a wish to be different.

Other factors of significance in recent decades include the repurposing of writers in terms of the supposed values of a later age and, more particularly, the apparent exigencies of cinema and television. Thus, for Austen, we have the 1995 BBC television series of *Pride and Prejudice*, most noted at the time for Colin Firth, who played Mr Darcy, meeting Elizabeth outside Pemberley wearing a wet shirt after a swim in the lake. This television series was closer to the novel than the 2005 film, which was more akin to Romanticism, not least in the characterisation and a scene with Elizabeth Bennet poised precariously on a cliff in the Peak District. The ITV television series *Sanditon* (2019-) is far worse.

So also with Agatha Christie, where television and film have tended to leach both morality and politics out of the context and plots, sometimes, as with the ITV David Suchet version of *The Big Four*, totally reversing the plots.

The failure to understand the moral context and dimension of what is otherwise presented as entertainment and a shimmering style of superficial sensibility, is most apparent in the case of religion. The contribution of Judaeo-Christianity to the culture is not only a matter of the lessons and language of the Bible, but also of the injunctions and the moral struggle Pious herself, as the in-



scription on her gravestone in Winchester Cathedral notes, Austen was a daughter of a rector, and two of her six brothers became clergymen. Three of Austen’s prayers survive and she was to write in 1814 ‘I am very fond of Sherlock’s Sermons, prefer them to almost any,’ a reference to Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London.

Austen’s piety was the background for the judgment of individuals. Jane had scant time for those clerics who did not meet her standards. The fictional Mr Collins was in part based on a clerical cousin, Edward Cooper, an Evangelical who, self-centred, sent letters of little comfort. In *Mansfield Park*, a novel in which there is much Evangelical influence, Edmund Bertram, the young son of Sir Thomas and another positive character, is intended for the Church. He intends to reside in his parish, and provides Jane, in the voice of his father Sir Thomas, with an opportunity to denounce pluralism where one parson held two posts:

‘I should have been deeply mortified, if any son of mine could reconcile himself to doing less ... a parish has wants and claims which can be known only by a clergyman constantly resident, and which no proxy can be capable of satisfying to the same extent. Edmund might, in the common phrase, do the duty of Thornton, that is, he might read prayers and preach, without giving up Mansfield Park; he might ride over, every Sunday, to a house nominally inhabited, and go through divine service; he might be the clergyman of Thornton Lacey every seventh day, for three or four hours, if that would content him. But it will not. He knows that human nature needs more lessons than a weekly sermon can convey, and that if he does not live among his parishioners and prove himself by constant attention their well-wisher and friend, he does very little either for their good or his own.’

Described by Jane as a ‘little harangue,’ this was a deeply serious account. Far from being solely Evangelical, this view reflected the strong Anglican commitment of many clerics and much of the laity both when Jane was writing and over the previous century. High Churchmen, including Robert, 2nd Earl of Liverpool, Prime Minister from 1812 to 1827, disliked pluralism and sought to remedy it within the limited means available to them.

Mary Crawford, who had designs on Edmund, was startled by the views of the Bertrams as she had hoped ‘to shut out the church, sink the clergyman, and see only the respectable, elegant, modernized, and occasional residence of a man of independent fortune.’ Her brother also emerges as flawed, not least through declaring that, if a preacher, he would only wish to preach occasionally. Fanny Price shakes her head.

There are clerical heroes, notably Edmund Bertram, Henry Tilney, or Edward Ferrars. Elinor Dashwood is able to assure Colonel Brandon that ‘Edward’s principles and disposition’ deserved the living of Delaford which he was giving him. Edward indeed shows both good character and humility. Jane condemns characters who are contemptuous of the clergy, for example Robert Ferrars’ attitude toward his elder brother:

‘The idea of Edward’s being a clergyman, and living in a small parsonage house, diverted him beyond measure; - and when to that was added the fanciful imagery of Edward reading prayers in a white surplice, and publishing the banns of marriage between John Smith and Mary Brown, he could conceive nothing more ridiculous.

Elinor, while she waited in silence, and immovable gravity, the conclusion of such folly, could not restrain her eyes from being fixed on him with a look that spoke all the contempt it excited. ... it relieved her own feelings.’



Such anti-clericalism was associated with Whigs and, in Elinor, Jane was very much expressing a Tory clericalism.

Jane expected others to be pious. Her naval brother Francis was very much so and was part of a powerful devout tendency in the Royal Navy. In 1809, she responded to the death of General Sir John Moore in battle at Corunna: ‘I wish Sir John had united something of the Christian with the Hero in his death.’ This response was an aspect of a wider engagement with the providential character of Britain. In September 1814, with reference to the possibility of continued war with the United States, which, on rational grounds, she viewed with much foreboding, Jane wrote to Martha Lloyd: ‘I place my hope of better things on a claim to the protection of Heaven, as a Religious Nation, a Nation in spite of much Evil Improving in Religion, which I cannot believe the Americans to possess.’ There was a higher proportion of Protestant non-Anglicans (Episcopalians) in North America than in England. This was very much a Tory approach, and that did not clash with the Evangelical tendency she endorsed in a letter to her niece Fanny Knight two months later.

Jane has little time for the laity who are wanting in piety or, more particularly, behavior. Some faults are minor. Typically self-centered, Lady Bertram, crying herself to sleep ‘after hearing an affecting sermon,’ achieved little. Vice receives more attention. Jane is critical of the adulterous elopement of Henry Crawford and Maria Rushworth, and, both in *Lady Susan* and in her correspondence, Jane is hostile towards adultery. Mr Price remarks ‘so many fine ladies were going to the devil now-a-days that way, that there was no answering for anybody.’ As an instance of observance of the Sabbath, Anne Elliot is critical of Sunday travelling.

The disagreement at Sotherton Court over chapel attendance reflects Jane’s values. Mary Crawford jokes, when told that the chapel was formerly in constant use, both morning and evening, but that the late Mr Rushworth had stopped this, ‘Every generation has its improvement.’ This leads Fanny to respond:

‘It was a valuable part of former times. There is something in a chapel and chaplain so much in character with a great house, with one’s ideas of what such a household should be! A whole family assembling regularly for the purpose of prayer, is fine!’

The immoral and selfish Mary replies, bringing up social control:

‘It must do the heads of the family a great deal of good to force all the poor housemaids and footmen to leave business and pleasure, and say their prayers here twice a day, while they are inventing excuses themselves for staying away... it is safer to leave people to their own devices on such subjects.’

Edmund Bertram ably answers Mary’s points, as he also later does when discussing his sister’s elopement with

her brother. Edmund also shows a grasp of human flaws in describing Mrs Norris not as cruel, but as having ‘faults of principle ... and a corrupted, vitiated mind.’ Such remarks capture Jane’s insights into personality, insights that drew on experience. Yet, Edmund is able to draw attention to ‘a spirit of improvement abroad,’ both in preaching and among the laity:

‘It is felt that distinctness and energy may have weight in recommending the most solid truths; and, besides, there is more general observation and taste, a more critical knowledge diffused, than formerly; in every congregation, there is a larger proportion who know a little of the matter, and who can judge and criticise.’

In a broader sense, alongside such criticism, Jane’s novels are Anglican works, not least in their faith in human nature and their desire to be positive:

‘Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery. I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can, impatient to restore everybody, not greatly in fault themselves, to tolerable comfort, and to have done with all the rest.’

The discussion of sin is very much restrained, even in the somewhat amoral *Lady Susan*. Nevertheless, according to her brother Henry, Jane objected to what he presented as the low moral standards in the work of Henry Fielding, whose approach was certainly very different, while her favour for Samuel Richardson was a key indicator of preference in style and content. Moreover, Jane makes explicit reference to evil in *Emma* and *Persuasion*, and, more potently so in *Sense and Sensibility*, when Elinor’s response to John Willoughby’s revelations leads her to consider the origins of evil:

‘Her thoughts were silently fixed on the when irreparable injury which too early an independence and its consequent habits of idleness, dissipation, and luxury, had made in the mind, the character, the happiness, of a man who, to every advantage of person and talents, united a disposition naturally open and honest, and a feeling, affectionate temper. The world had made him extravagant and vain—Extravagance and vanity had made him cold-hearted and



selfish. Vanity, while seeking its own guilty triumph at the expense of another, had involved him in a real attachment, which extravagance, or at least its offspring, necessity, had required to be sacrificed. Each faulty propensity in leading him to evil, had led him likewise to punishment.’

The religious theme is brought forward melodramatically soon after by Marianne Dashwood who wishes to have time ‘for atonement to my God.’

The moral quality of Jane’s work fits into a strong tradition of pragmatic Anglican didacticism.

With Christie, there is a murder in a vicarage, but, although present, as in Archdeacon Brabazon, the Reverend Dane Calthrop, and Canon Pennyfather, clerics play only relatively minor roles, and the formal requirements of Christianity and still more the Church of England are not a significant theme. Poirot is Catholic while in *Harley Quin* there is a mystical figure who offers a supernatural assistance.

And yet, religious themes of evil, justice, and judgment are repeatedly present. Evil appears in the title in *Evil Under The Sun* (1941). The citation of both the Bible as in *The Pale Horse* (1961) and Shakespeare are frequent with Christie, and in one of her last novels, *Nemesis* (1971), the former is very much to the fore. Christie’s essential approach is that of a clear moral universe, one established in a and through goodness, but challenged by the evil of a sinful individualism, which in turn, in her ‘political’ novels, such as *Passenger to Frankfurt* (1970), can be exploited by extreme political forces. The latter are both secular and yet offer a pseudo-religion. Christie’s villains fail not only due to the brilliance of her detecting protagonists but also due to the inherent flaws of evil, notably hubris and a desire for control. The cruelty and malice of evil are also abundantly present. Few of the murderers are other than disturbed and disturbing, and the reader achieves fulfilment in the detection. When that rule is broken in *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934), there is a different fulfilment, that of a true justice by a ‘jury’ of twelve. Possibly it is the sense of moral certainty that makes Christie unpopular with some critics, but it was a certainty shared by most of her readers, one based on a conviction of the difference between Good and Evil. These are never abstractions in a Christie novel. ND

A retired academic and historian, Jeremy Black’s many books include *The Importance of Being Poirot and England in the Age of Austen*.

Lost and Found

The Mystery of the Coronation Bible of George VI, unfolded by *Michael Brydon*

Just before Christmas 1937, Bertram Pollock, the elderly Bishop of Norwich, had the impending season of peace and goodwill disturbed when he received a letter from Archbishop Cosmo Gordon Lang, diplomatically enquiring if he had gone off with the Great Bible produced for George VI's Coronation. Since 1689 the presentation of the Bible – 'the most valuable thing that this World affords' – had been part of the ceremony and it had been Pollock's privilege to carry it at the Coronation. Lang had initially wanted the Bishop of Oxford, a senior member of the Royal Ecclesiastical Household, to do so, but his doctor advised him that he was not well enough to carry the Bible and might fall. Lang then turned to the most senior bishop after London, Durham and Winchester, who was Pollock. Privately he had some concerns that 'his health might also make some difficulty' and he was also keen to make it clear to Pollock that he would need to be prepared to wear a cope. The cope was acceptable to Pollock providing it was all right to sit down in it, since although he had 'no difficulty in walking' he couldn't stand for any length of time. Garter King of Arms happily confirmed that once the Bishop of Norwich had processed and placed the Bible on the altar he could sit down for the rest of the Coronation.

Wearing a cope turned out to be the least of Pollock's problems, since shortly before the Coronation he discovered that he couldn't physically carry the magnificent Great Bible produced by Oxford University Press. Sir Humphrey Milford, publisher to the University of Oxford and head of the London operations of Oxford University Press, clearly thought that Pollock was being unduly defeatist, since he had a special sling made for him to carry it in. It was very much a bespoke yoke, since it was made to suit Pollock's height of five feet, ten and three quarter inches. It was all to no avail; Lang subsequently wrote to Milford that even with the aid of the sling, it had not proved possible for Pollock to manage it 'during a long and slow procession' and he regretted that more 'consideration had not been given to the physical infirmities of those needing to carry' the Great Bible. In the end a second smaller Bible had to be rushed through, and it was this smaller one bound in crimson morocco, which was carried by Pollock

It was also lighter, because the Apocrypha was wrongly left out. Prior to this all Coronation Bibles had included the Apocrypha, which made the symbolic point that it was meant to be read 'for example of life and instruction of manners' even if no doctrine was to be based on it. The Bible initially offered for the Coronation of Edward VII, by the British and Foreign Bible Society,

actually had to be regretfully rejected, when it was discovered that their governing statutes would not allow them to include the Apocrypha. Edward VII, having been consulted on the matter, had been adamant that it should be the 'full volume, including the Apocrypha.' Alan Don, then a chaplain to Lang, noted the absence of the Apocrypha in 1937 and commented that this mistake needed to be rectified by the next coronation, which it duly was.

Sir Humphrey was clearly very disappointed that the Great Bible was not to be carried and he not unreasonably pointed out that it was the same size as the Great Bibles produced for Edward VII and George V and that the Press could hardly have produced something 'less magnificent' for George VI. Lang was suitably effusive about the 'expedition' (sic) with which the smaller Bible was produced, but must have caused further disappointment when on the day he also abandoned using the Great Bible for the King's oath, or the formal presentation, in favour of the smaller one. Quite possibly Lang was not feeling physically strong enough to lift it safely either;



Bertram Pollock (1863-1943), Bishop of Norwich 1910-42; photograph taken in 1928 © National Portrait Gallery, London



Cosmo Gordon Lang (1864-1945), Archbishop of York 1908-28 the Canterbury 1928-42; photograph taken in March 1937 by Bassano Ltd © National Portrait Gallery, London

after rehearsals he had commented on the difficulty of conveying the magnificent but ‘very heavy’ book to the King. He may also have felt, in line with the rubrics that the one carried in procession ought to be used for everything, although there was a precedent of two Bibles being used at the coronation of Queen Victoria. In the end, the Great Bible was present on the High Altar for the 1937 Coronation, but was not formally used in any way.

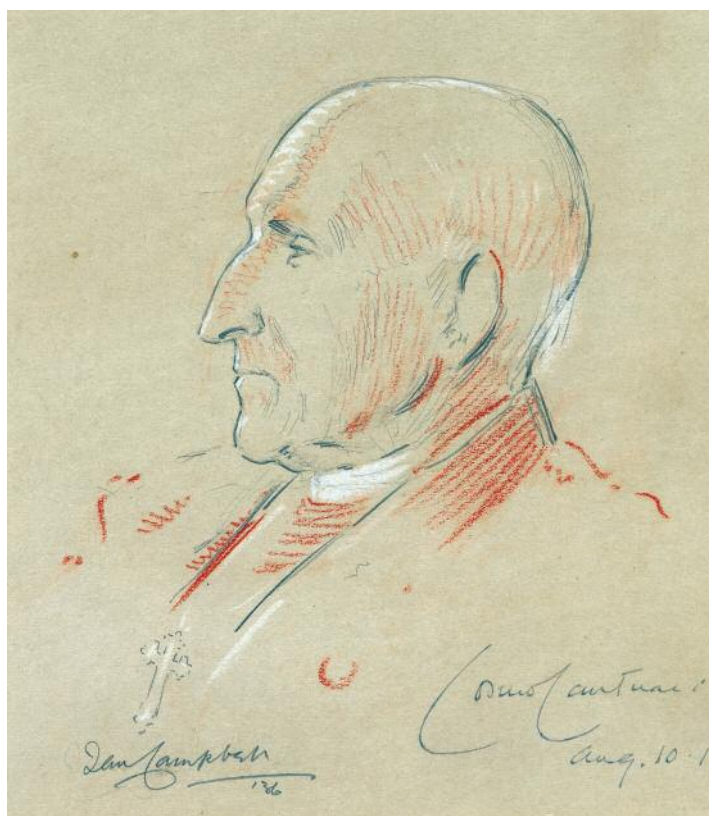
As a way of smoothing ruffled feathers, Lang decided that whilst the small Bible would come to Lambeth Palace the Great Bible would be presented on long-term loan to the Abbey. At coronations prior to that of Edward VII, there had often been something of an unseemly tussle over ownership of the Coronation Bible, but the precedent was then established that any Bible used belonged to the Archbishop. This precedent had been forgotten in the twenty plus years since the coronation of George V. Sir Humphrey, who clearly hoped that it might stay at the Abbey, insisted on consulting the Dean in the run up to the ceremony. The Dean accepted the Bible belonged to the Archbishop, but in a quip retorted that ‘though His Grace was right this time it must not be considered a precedent!’.

The Abbey duly handed over the small Bible, but Lang’s plan to make a Christmas present of the Great Bible to the Abbey swiftly unravelled because it had disappeared. The Sub-Dean, Canon Storr, wrote to say that the Abbey Office thought that the Bishop of Norwich had gone home with

it. Given that Pollock couldn’t carry it in procession it should have seemed unlikely that he had lugged it back to Norfolk, but Lang still wrote on the 20th December to ask if he had removed it under the misapprehension that it was his. The postal service was good in those days, since Pollock wrote back two days later to say that although he had initially believed it would be his perquisite, the Archbishop had subsequently made it clear that it would belong to him. This had disappointed his plan to present it to Norwich Cathedral to be kept alongside one of the Bibles used at the coronation of Queen Victoria. After this preamble Pollock then unambiguously spelt out that ‘I have no idea what happened to this...huge book’. Neither could he shed any light on the ‘sub-dean’s information’, but stressed that it was ‘certainly not founded upon fact’. He then magnanimously wished the Archbishop ‘a happy and holy Christmas’.

Lang waited until the 27th December before writing once more to the Sub-Dean to check again that it was not ‘somewhere about the Abbey’. The Sub-Dean blamed the Head Verger for misinformation about the Bishop of Norwich and suggested that it might be with the Office of Works and would make enquiries. By now, Lang was clearly concerned that the Great Bible was becoming so difficult to track down, since it was hard to believe that so ‘beautiful and so bulky’ a thing should have been lost.

The Office of Works didn’t have the Great Bible, but said that it was at Buckingham Palace, but was unable to say how they thought it had found its way there. Lang, clearly acutely aware that if the Palace possessed it that it might scotch the presentation to the Abbey,



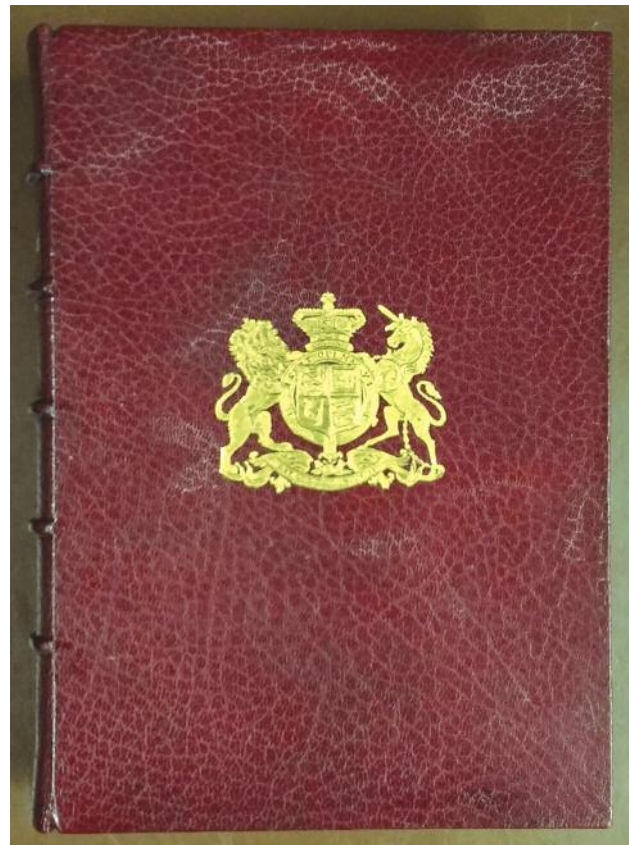
*Etching in pencil and chalk by Ian Campbell, 1936
© National Portrait Gallery, London*

wrote a tactful letter to Sir Alexander Hardinge, the King's Private Secretary. Lang asked if Hardinge would 'kindly make enquiries about this and tell me whether there is any reason why it shall not be given to the Abbey as I proposed to the late Dean?' Hardinge responded that he knew nothing about the whereabouts of the Bible, but would ask The King when he saw him at Sandringham. George VI was duly asked and it was reported back that 'His Majesty says that he has never seen it, and cannot imagine why it should have been sent to Buckingham Palace'. Neither could the King imagine why the Office of Works was claiming that the Palace had possession of it. One has some sympathy for Lang when his frustration finally boiled over. 'If it is neither at the Abbey, not at Buckingham Palace, where on earth is it?'

Just when the Great Bible seemed to have been lost, however, it turned up at Buckingham Palace. Sir Alexander Hardinge apologetically explained how it had come 'in by a back door from the Office of Works' and the Inspector of the Palace had put in under lock and key without anyone knowing 'anything about it'. Furthermore the King approved of the suggestion that it be placed at the Abbey on loan. A duly delighted Lang was subsequently able to present the Great Bible to the Abbey to be used in their services, which is where it remains on permanent loan from the Archbishop of Canterbury.



A scene from the 1937 Coronation in Westminster Abbey



The 1937 Coronation Bible, but which one?

That should have been the end of the saga of the Coronation Bible, but in May 1938 a letter from Bishop Paul de Labillière, the new Dean of Westminster Abbey, arrived announcing that he had just discovered another Coronation Bible in one of the Deanery cupboards. 'It is obviously new' he wrote and is 'most sumptuously bound'. He knew it was a Coronation Bible, because it contained 'a slip of paper on which is written "The Bishop of Norwich"'. One can imagine Lang's chaplains rubbing their eyes with disbelief that a third Bible, which nobody knew anything about had now appeared. They must have also been horrified by the Dean's suggestion that it be passed to the Bishop of Norwich. Thankfully, Lang was able to resolve this mystery rather more swiftly than the initial disappearance of the Great Bible. The Archbishop reassured his staff that this was not a third Coronation Bible; he had seen the book before, since it was 'the one used by the Bishop of Norwich at rehearsals, before the proper book arrived'.

It is to Lang's credit, of course, that he took the celebration of both word and sacrament so very seriously at the Coronation. The service reminded the world that the scriptures contained 'Wisdom', 'the royal law' and were the 'lively Oracles of God'. Therefore it is not surprising that he went to such trouble to ensure that the Holy Bibles present in 1937 were treated with reverence and preserved in places of honour.

Arrangements for Bibles to be used at the Coronation next year – the first for 70 years – are as yet unknown. **ND**

Christmas Cooking

Recipes from Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's new book *River Cottage Good Comfort* – best-loved favourites made better for you'



Kedgeree

This classically comforting rice and fish dish – traditionally enjoyed for breakfast or brunch but also a lovely supper – has always been a big F-W family favourite. I've evolved the recipe over the years, replacing white rice with brown basmati, upping the spice a little, and incorporating peas (and sometimes lentils). This version is, I dare to claim, 'best ever' – both for taste and goodness. If you are wavering about the raisins I urge you to give them a try.

SERVES 4

- 175g brown basmati rice
- 1 tbsp olive or vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, finely sliced
- 4 medium eggs
- 500g sustainably caught smoked pollack or had-dock fillet
- 150g frozen peas or petits pois
- 100g cavolo nero, stalks removed and leaves shredded (optional)
- A knob of butter (about 15g)
- 1 tbsp mild curry powder or paste
- ½–1 small red chilli, finely chopped (deseeded for less heat if you prefer)
- 25g raisins (optional)
- 100g cooked brown, green or Puy lentils, or drained, tinned lentils (optional)
- 2 tbsp chopped coriander or parsley
- 1 tbsp chopped lovage (optional)
- Sea salt and black pepper
- Lemon wedges, to serve

Rinse the brown rice well and leave it to soak in cold water for at least 15 minutes, or up to 2 hours.

Drain the rice, rinse it again, then transfer to a large pan (it needs to be large because you'll be mixing all the other kedgeree ingredients into this before serving).

Cover the rice with plenty of cold water, bring to a simmer, cover and cook for the time suggested on the packet, minus 5 minutes (soaking reduces the cooking time).

While the rice is cooking, heat the oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Add the sliced onion with a pinch of salt and get everything sizzling, then put the lid on the pan and reduce the heat. Let the onion sweat gently for 12–15 minutes, until nicely soft and golden.

This is also a good time to cook the eggs: bring a small saucepan of water to the boil, carefully lower the eggs into the pan and simmer for 7–8 minutes.

Meanwhile, slice the smoked fish off its skin and then cut it into 2–3cm chunks; set aside.

Once cooked, lift the eggs out of the pan and run them under cold water to stop the cooking, then lightly crack and peel the shells (under a gently running cool tap).

Test the rice – it should be tender but still have a slight bite at this point. When it is, stir in the peas, and cavolo if using, bring to a simmer and cook for 4–5 minutes. Drain thoroughly and return the rice and green veg to the hot pan, drop in a knob of butter and stir lightly with a fork. Turn off the heat and cover the pan to keep the rice warm while you cook the fish with the onions. Stir the curry powder or paste into the softened onions, along with the fresh chilli, and the raisins if using, and cook for a minute or so longer.

Add the chunks of raw smoked fish to the spicy onions and cook for about 5 minutes, until just cooked through. Stir in the lentils, if using, and cook for a minute or two, to heat them through. Add the spicy fish mixture to the pan of rice and green veg, along with half the chopped herbs, and toss through gently. Taste and add more salt or pepper if needed.

Halve or quarter the warm boiled eggs and place on top of the rice. Finish with the rest of the chopped herbs and a grinding of black pepper then serve, with lemon wedges.





Hot chocolate pudding

This quick (and utterly delicious!) chocolate pud, which I've been making for years to delight my family, occupies a space somewhere between a brownie, a soufflé and a cake. I think you'll agree that's not a bad place to be. It can be whipped up easily (and on demand!) from store-cupboard ingredients. Briefly baked until set on the outside but still gooey in the middle, it is excellent served with some fruit to cut the richness. It's gluten-free too.

SERVES 4

- 175g brown basmati rice
- 100g dark chocolate, broken into pieces
- 100g butter, cut into pieces, plus extra to grease the dish
- 3 medium eggs
- 50g soft light brown sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 75g ground almonds
- A pinch of salt

TO SERVE

- Raspberries or other berries, or plum compote
- Yoghurt or cream (optional)

Put the chocolate and butter into a saucepan and melt gently over a very low heat, watching all the time and stirring often so that the chocolate doesn't get too hot. Set aside to cool a little.

Preheat the oven to 190°C/170°C Fan/Gas 5 and butter a small oven dish.

In a large bowl, or the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk the eggs, brown sugar and vanilla extract together until pale, thick and mousse-like. Using a stand mixer or hand-held electric whisk on full speed, this should only take a few minutes, but whisking by hand with a rotary or balloon whisk will take a lot longer! The mix should be significantly paler, thicker and increased in volume.

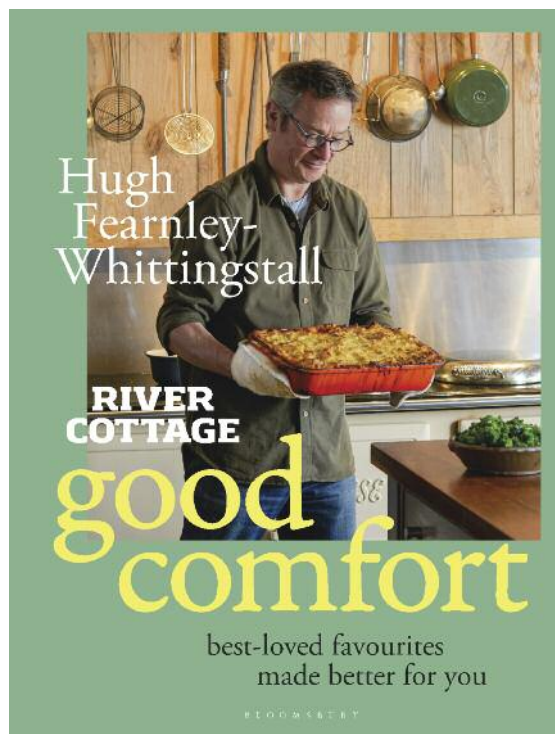
Turn the mixer down to a low speed and, with the motor running, slowly pour in the

tepid melted chocolate and butter mixture (or whisk it gently by hand). Use a rubber spatula to scrape the last drops of chocolate into the mix, and then to fold the mixture fully together.

Combine the ground almonds and salt. Add to the chocolate mixture and fold in carefully, using the spatula.

Turn the mixture into the prepared oven dish and shake the dish a little to spread it out. Bake in the oven for 12–15 minutes until the pudding is set on top and firm at the edges, but still wobbly and gooey in the middle.

Serve straight away, with fresh raspberries or plum compote, and a spoonful of yoghurt or a trickle of cream if you like.



River Cottage Good Comfort by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, published by Bloomsbury on 15 September 2022 (£27.00 RRP, Hardback)

Photography © Simon Wheeler

Stupendous Stranger, stable's secret birth

Martin Draper makes a plea for the hidden gems among Christmas hymns and carols

Everyone has favourite Christmas hymns and carols; indeed, there are so many that it is impossible to sing them all. The fact that Midnight Mass, the Christmas Day sung celebration and one or more 'carol services' may be attended by different congregations who mostly want to sing the same texts makes it difficult to explore a wide repertoire.

There are thirty-nine items in the Christmas section of the *Revised English Hymnal*, and that doesn't include two texts, often sung at Christmas, which appear elsewhere in the book. Churches which normally only sing two or three hymns during the liturgy might consider replacing the psalm with a hymn and/or adding one before the Gospel Acclamation or during the distribution of Holy Communion. Perhaps, one less familiar text could be squeezed in somewhere among the old favourites?

We should make sure to look through lesser-known texts. At the very least, they can be used as a preparation for the feast or for meditation during and after it. Here are two of them.

Bishop Timothy Dudley-Smith's *Child of the stable's secret birth* is one of the best hymn texts written in the late twentieth century. With its unusual and expansive metre (rather like Christina Rossetti's *In the bleak mid-winter* a century earlier), and through the skill of its writer, it avoids anything approaching doggerel. It's amazing that it actually rhymes!

Child of the stable's secret birth,
the Lord by right of the lords of earth,
let angels sing of a King new-born,
the world is weaving a crown of thorn:
a crown of thorn for that infant head
cradled soft in the manger bed.

2 Eyes that shine in the lantern's ray;
a face so small in its nest of hay,
face of a child who is born to scan
the world he made through the eyes of man:
and from that face in the final day
earth and heaven shall flee away.

3 Voice that rang through the courts on high
contracted now to a wordless cry,
a voice to master the wind and wave,
the human heart and the hungry grave:
the voice of God through the cedar trees
rolling forth as the sound of seas.

4 Infant hands in a mother's hand,
for none but Mary may understand
whose are the hands and the fingers curled
but his who fashioned and made our world:
and through these hands in the hour of death
nails shall strike to the wood beneath.

5 Child of the stable's secret birth,
the Father's gift to a wayward earth,
to drain the cup in a few short years
of all our sorrows, our sins and tears;
ours the prize for the road he trod:
risen with Christ; at peace with God.

Timothy Dudley-Smith, born 1926

© Timothy Dudley-Smith. Reproduced by permission
of Oxford University Press.

The text meditates on the manger scene and contrasts it with the future which awaits the one who lies there. It is also suitable for Candlemas: the feast which brings the forty days of Christmas to an end and turns our minds and hearts towards the Cross. Thus, the first verse speaks of the child of the nativity who, by right, is Lord of Lords and King of Kings as the angels sing; but reminds us that, even now, 'the world is weaving a crown of thorn' for the head cradled in the manger.

The intervening verses meditate on some of the child's physical attributes: firstly, his eyes and tiny face, reflected in the light of the lantern, which will soon 'scan the world...through the eyes of man' and come again to judge 'in the final day' from which the whole creation will flee in dread; then his voice, 'a wordless cry' for the moment, but which will be heard later as the voice of God who calms the storm; and finally, his hands, with their fingers curled in the hand of Our Lady. For now, she alone understands that these are the hands of him who made and fashioned the world; and we now know that these are the same hands that will be nailed to the cross.

Anthony Caesar's tune is beautiful but not easy for a Christmas congregation to pick up. But even a church with no choir might get a small group of willing singers together to rehearse it. The melody line alone is enough, or it may be supported by wordless harmony. It could be sung during the distribution of Holy Communion or would add variety to relentless congregational singing during a 'Carol Service'.

Christopher Smart's *Where is this stupendous stranger* is a hymn in a straightforward metre:

Where is this stupendous stranger?
Prophets, shepherds, kings, advise:
Lead me to my Master's manger,
Show me where my Saviour lies.

2 O most mighty, O most holy,
Far beyond the seraph's thought!
Art thou then so mean and lowly
As unheeded prophets taught?

3 O the magnitude of meekness,
Worth from worth immortal sprung!
O the strength of infant weakness,
If eternal is so young!

4 God all-bounteous, all-creative,
Whom no ills from good dissuade,
Is incarnate – and a native
Of the very world he made.

Christopher Smart, 1722-71

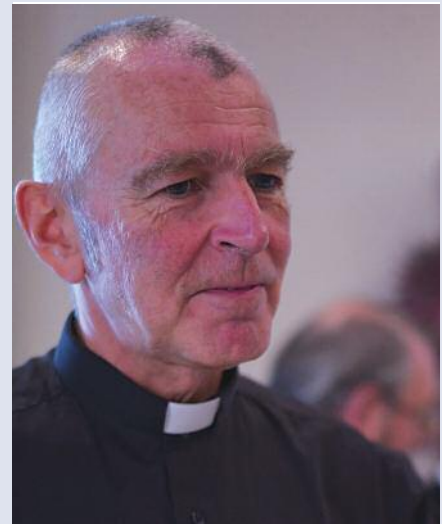
These four verses (with the second line of the first verse altered to remove an obscure reference) come from a nine stanza text included in the writer's *Hymns and Spiritual Songs for the Fasts and Festivals of the Church of England*. They capture the wonder of the incarnation in a way that only poetry can.

Smart calls the Christ-child a 'stupendous stranger' (rather like Dudley-Smiths 'secret birth') and uses paradox in a series of images and expressions to help us enter into the greatest paradox of all which is the Incarnation: God becomes Man. We often fail to grasp the impossibility of the very idea which, of course, only takes flesh because 'with God nothing (is) impossible' (Luke 1. 37). In the original text, it is to the shepherds alone that the poet addresses his request. The hymn starts with the simplicity of the Lukan story and infuses it with Johannine incarnational theology.

Then the paradoxes pile up. The poet's Master lies in a feeding trough. Even the angels cannot grasp the full magnificence of his nature, yet in the manger he is 'mean and lowly'. (Might Deutero-Isaiah, with his servant songs, be one of the 'unheeded' prophets?) Meekness is greatness on an inexpressible scale. Christ's 'worth' springs from (is born of) the immortal (eternal) 'worth' of God. They conclude in the mind-boggling lines, 'O the *strength* of infant *weakness*, if *eternal* is so *young*'. We find a similar expression in the unjustly neglected carol, *The great God of heaven is come down to earth*, in which we read that 'the Ancient of Days is an hour or two old' (NEH 37, a hymn which has its wonderful last verse restored in the revised hymnal).

The final verse is simply a poetic rendering of the paradox itself, 'The Word ('through whom all things were made') was made flesh and dwelt among us' (John 1. 3 and 14). Note the repeated 'all' and the idea that the Incarnation stems from God's infinite goodness, against which no amount of evil can prevail, or persuade him to act otherwise.

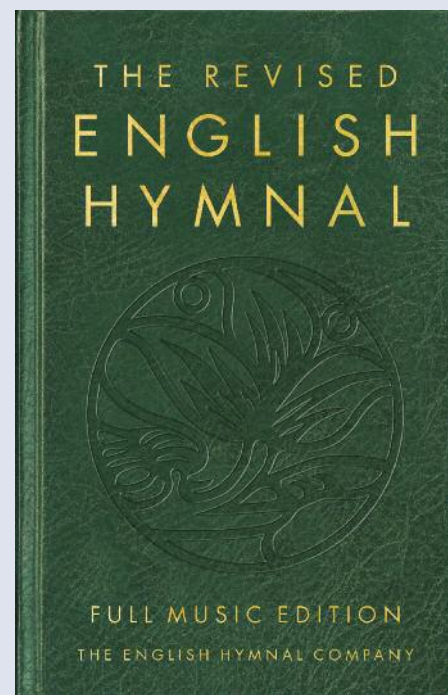
The best tune by far is Ottery St Mary, whose harmonies send shivers down one's spine. It's easy to pick up after a single play-over. I have used it at Midnight Mass (in place of 'While shepherds watched'), in parishes with and without a choir, but it would also be suitable on a Sunday after Christmas or Epiphany. ND



A huge vote of thanks from us all at *New Directions* to Fr Draper for this 'hymn of the month' series throughout 2022

As we embarked upon it, the intention was that the *Revised English Hymnal* would be published by the end of this year, and the aim of these articles was to introduce readers to some of the characteristics of the new volume with Fr Draper's unique and fascinating insight. The publishers now plan for the full music edition to appear in May next year, 117 years after the original *English Hymnal* saw the light on Ascension Day, 1906. The editors are currently in the final proofing and pre-print stages.

Readers can find more information at the website reh.hymnsam.co.uk and use the link there to pre-order a copy of the full-music edition at the special price of £25.



The Word

Unlimited in time and space
The Word
Took Jewish flesh in Bethle'm,
When Quirinius governed Syria,
Took Jewish flesh, despised race,
Proud, exclusive.
Could not nobler race be found?
Roman, Greek or Chinese flesh,
Ghanaian, Inca, Indian?
Each race gave birth to lasting cultures
Mighty empires, art and science,
Dawning, rising, falling, ending,
Waves of peoples flooding, ebbing,
Birth and death.

Unlimited in time and space
The Word
Took Jewish flesh in Bethle'm,
Flesh – the scandal!
No-one could receive the Word
Particularized in time and space in flesh!
He came unto His own, His own received Him not,
Took Jewish flesh and died.

Unlimited in time and space
The Word
Took Jewish flesh in Bethle'm,
When Quirinius governed Syria,
Took Jewish flesh in David's town
Scene of Roman occupation
Witness to the tramp of armies
Warring in the Middle East.
Could place more settled not be found?
Samoan Island, Norway, Sweden
Neutral Switzerland?
So many countries have for generations
Peace enjoyed,
Escaped the threat of war
Developed life and harmony,
Birth and death.

Unlimited in time and space
The Word
Took Jewish flesh in Bethle'm,
Flesh – the scandal!
No-one could receive the Word
Particularized in time and space in flesh!
He held His treasure in an earthen vessel.
Earthen vessel,
Took Jewish flesh and died.

Unlimited in time and space
The Word
Took Jewish flesh in Bethle'm,
When Quirinius governed Syria,

Took Jewish flesh in dirty stable
Cowdung, dust and flies
Source of neonatal tetanus,
Could hygiene not be more respected?
Twentieth century Britain
Offers safeguards in a hospital,
Obstetric skills, epidural block,
Convenience childbirth, ten to five
(except weekends),
And a blood transfusion service,
Perinatal death risks low,
Sanitised birth and death.

Unlimited in time and space
The Word
took Jewish flesh in Bethle'm stable,
Flesh – the scandal!
No-one could receive the Word
Particularized in time and space in flesh!
He shared the risks His own sustain,
He shared their risks,
Took Jewish flesh and died.

Unlimited in time and space
The Word
Took Jewish flesh in Bethle'm,
When Quirinius governed Syria,
Took Jewish flesh, a baby
Born of Galilean maid.
Mother chosen,
Mary.
“This son of yours the chosen light shall be
To all men everywhere and when,
Empires, cultures, countries, lands,
Where the risks are greatest,
Where the conflict sharpest,
Where oppression keenest,
Birth and Death.”
“Be it unto me according to Thy word.”

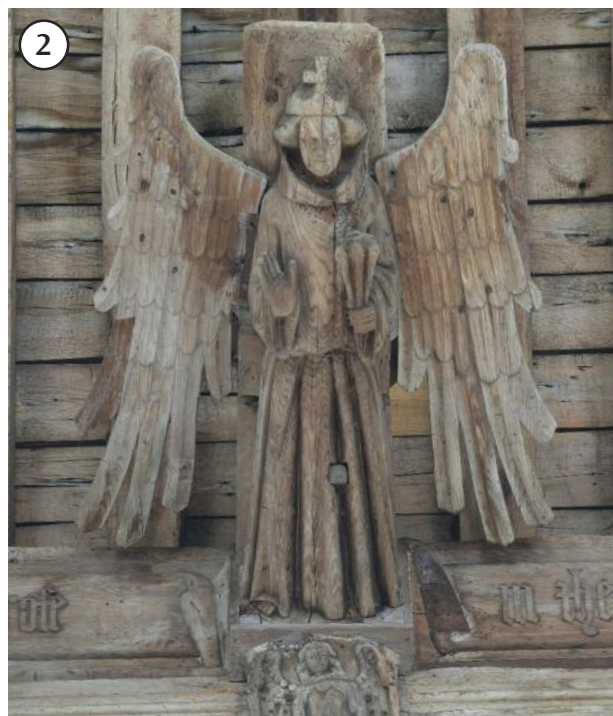
Unlimited in time and space
The Word
took Jewish flesh in Bethlem,
Flesh – the scandal!
No-one could receive the Word
Particularized in time and space in flesh!
Save she who wombed Him
She whose flesh He shared,
Took Jewish flesh and died.

A poem by the late Rev Doctor (Major) John Michael Wilson M.D., M.R.C.P., D.T.M&H, (1916-1999); pioneer of Pastoral Studies and the modern Hospital Chaplaincy movement, from the recent book of his life and works: 50 Little Ducklings (Reardon Publishing, Cheltenham).

ND

ANGELS OVERHEAD – 5

Simon Cotton finds the angelic in Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Somerset



The magnificent roof to the nave of Isleham church (1: Cambs) carries an inscription recording the fact that it was the gift of Christopher Payton in 1495. It features alternating hammerbeams and tiebeams, the former with angels, several of whom are original (2), bearing the Instruments of the Passion.

These roofs would originally have been coloured, and colouring survives in several places, as at Bardwell (3: Suffolk), where one angel holds a shield with the (repainted) date 1421, or Salle (4: Norfolk). At Muchelney (5: Somerset), the painting is early 17th century, with angels clothed in Elizabethan dress. **ND**



Reservoirs of Grace and Prayer

Harri Williams commends the Life Profession of Br Michael Jacob SSF

The prophet Micah challenged the people of Israel to consider what God required of them. The traditional offerings of calves, rams, oil, even one's own firstborn were no longer seen as sufficient. Micah made it clear: one thing, and one thing alone will be necessary – God requires you to give of your very self, to give your life to him. And what was true of the people of God some two and half thousand years ago is true for us today. To be a Christian is a demanding call, it requires your body, heart, and soul, it demands the whole of your life. The exercising of that call, of that vocation, varies as each one of us as a son or daughter of God, plays our part in the Body of Christ; and for some, like Brother Michael Jacob, God has placed upon their heart a vocation to the religious life. A vocation which at its heart is about sacrifice and surrender. For through the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, Br Michael Jacob, like all those called to religious life, is embracing his identity in Christ in a distinct manner, giving himself wholly and utterly to God and His Church.

To have the courage to embrace such a calling is something which should be recognised and affirmed. Because as St Paul reminds us in his second letter to the Church in Corinth, for all those who are servants of God the road will not be easy. For Br Michael Jacob there is unlikely to be beatings, imprisonments, or riots, but there will have been and will continue to be sleepless nights,

hardships, calamities. Embracing this vocation to the religious life is demanding, particularly within the context of a Church which doesn't always understand the purpose and nature of the religious life. So we must also commit ourselves in the months and years ahead to uphold this brother in prayer, to strengthen him with our love and support.

Because by embracing that calling to the religious life, Br Michael Jacob will become a visible sign amongst God's people and the world needs signs of God's love and power in their midst. That is why Jesus performed the miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. He didn't do it for his own sake, to give it a go and see if it worked. The purpose of that first miracle was very clear, to reveal his glory in order that the disciples might believe in him. Br Michael Jacob's life and work will reveal something of the glory of God to those around him. His life and ministry will be about pointing people to Jesus. Of sharing the pearl of great price which he has found through his own life of faith with all people, in word and in action. Prioritising the untouched and those seen as unimportant, healing wounds, and uniting what has fallen apart. Searching out and restoring those who have lost their way. Br Michael Jacob will witness that as Fr Timothy Radcliffe wrote in 'What is the point of the being a Christian?' (2005):





The Church should be a community in which the beauty of ordinariness is disclosed, because in our God, whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere, then no one should feel on the edge.

In order to give himself fully to God, and to be that sign of God's love and power in the world, Br Michael Jacob has discovered that the best place in which he can fulfil his vocation is within the House of God. He has come like the Psalmist to rejoice in the dwelling place of the Lord of Hosts; to live a life constituted in the atmosphere of praise and prayer, enabling the God who loves him and

knows him by name to draw ever closer to him. Living in houses of prayer, such as this, where the summit of worship, the Mass, is offered daily; where opportunities for prayer and contemplation are created enabling him to see the world through the eyes of Christ. Because there cannot be action without prayer. Br Michael Jacob knows that through living a disciplined life of prayer in a religious house he, together with his fellow Franciscans, fills the reservoirs of grace and prayer, which flow into their lives and into the life of the whole Church. The reservoirs which enable the love of God to be shared so generously with all who need it in our broken world.

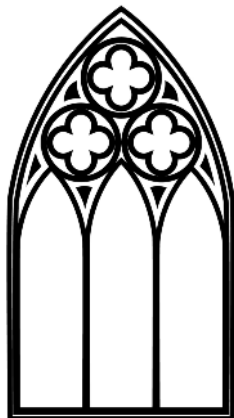
Br Michael Jacob, in this undertaking you are displaying to the world that you can preach the Gospel not through words or meaningless gimmicks or endless strategies, but through the sacrificial offering of your life in the service of God and his Church. Your willingness to embrace that vocation will enable something of the glory of God to be revealed to our world. Your dedication and rule of life will enable powerhouses of prayer such as these to be a resource and a blessing to the Church and to all who strive under the banner of Christ. St Francis wrote: 'remember that when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing that you have received, only what you have given'. For the gift of what you are giving to Christ, His Church, and to us your brothers and sisters, may you be richly blessed. **ND**



The Revd Dr Harri Williams SSC is the Vicar of Walsingham. These words are adapted from his sermon on 5 November at Alnmouth Friary for the Profession of Life Vows of Brother Michael Jacob in the presence of Bishop Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark and SSF Bishop Protector.

◆ WANDERING BISHOP ◆

Glyn Webster



I retired in January this year with two farewell masses in Manchester and York. It was wonderful to see so many people at those services, in spite of the weather and distances. Although I have to admit the Archbishop of York's words about me at the end were so warm I didn't recognise who he was talking about! The very next day after finishing as Bishop of Beverley I was granted Permission to Officiate which was a real boost as I'm the type who likes to keep going. A few funerals quickly came in, including the late, great Dr Francis Jackson, the former Master of Music at York Minster, who had died at the age of 104.

But a few wheels turned to make sure my hands weren't idle. On June 7th I was licensed by the Bishop of Selby as priest-in-charge of the parish of All Saints, North Street, York – a bastion of Anglo-Catholicism and with a fine collection of windows, the oldest one dating back to 1330. Another city-centre parish soon followed for my 'retirement portfolio' – St Mary, Bishophill Junior, the oldest church building within the old walls in York and with a very fine medieval tower. It feels very much like going back to the beginning of my ministry. There's nothing more important than being a parish priest, although Archbishop Stephen also appointed me an honorary assistant bishop so episcopal duties remain for me here and there.

Parish ministry has changed phenomenally. A lot felt easier 50 years ago because there wasn't so much secularisation, and people now have a different idea about leisure time and activities. We do have fewer weddings and funerals,

but pastoral ministry is still so important. It's not all about initiatives and church plants but ordinary parishes where everyday folk are living out their lives in faith. Wherever I minister I find my family. My life is my priesthood, and priesthood is my life. It never feels like work to me.

It's taken some adjustment to being in one place now most of the time. Previously I would be out four or five nights across the Northern Province in different parishes and for various events. I came to York in 1977 to be ordained deacon on the basis I would return after curacy to my sponsoring diocese, Blackburn. But it didn't happen. 45 years on I am still in York, though, where I have certainly taken root. It's a city and people I know and love well. Sometimes I've even been called 'the Vicar of York'!

I do still get out and about, often to London. Recently I was there for the wonderful service at Sussex Gardens with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. Lots of friends help me take time out to relax and life is never dull. I keep on the go all the same. Pandemic curbed so much travel but one country I love especially is Italy, and I hope to go more often.

Being at York Minister for the consecration of Fr Stephen Race

was a very special and multidimensional occasion for me. There were so many strands, not least as I'd been part of the Dean & Chapter there for 19 years. And what a day! It was terrific to see so many familiar faces from Beverley parishes, all adding to such a positive and joyful event. I was touched to be one of the co-consecrators. This doesn't often happen with your successor, but it's very Catholic and underlined very much the continuity of what we're about. Now it is time for Bishop Stephen to take the See forward with his energy and many talents. And it feels a little like when St John the Baptist said 'I must decrease so that he may increase'.

Coming up I have been invited to preach at the mass celebrating the Bishop of Wakefield's 20th anniversary of consecration. I was on the Crown Nominations Commission for eight years and we would 'compare and contrast' the different candidates for each post, so maybe I'll take my cue from the feast and on the day compare Bishop Tony with St Nicholas!

Christmas will of course be different this year, because I'm fully back in parish life and on that very special liturgical journey as we travel together through the weeks and days of Advent. It's a wonderful season and I'm really looking forward to it. My parishes are central and all sorts of people come to our services. After all, that's what it's about – hope and expectation in the Incarnation. I'm thankful to be functioning still and living out my vocation. Despite many frustrations with the CofE (and who among us doesn't have those?) I know that if I had my time over again I'd do it all exactly the same! **ND**

◆DECEMBER/JANUARY DIARY◆

Thurifer

A correspondent writes, without comment: 'Rosemary Hill, *God's Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain* [2008] p. 113: '...with that Welby family talent of which Pugin himself was not devoid, for stating the uncomfortably obvious in the most platitudinous terms...'

A resident in my leafy suburb, reckoned a major scholar and author in his own household, has dining rights in his former Oxbridge/Camford college. He received notification of a change to the booking system and charging when he exercised his rights. What annoyed him was that the email ended with the suggestion that if there were any questions that arose he should 'reach out' to the Bursar. 'What is this 'reaching out' drive!' he asked. 'Why not, 'if you have any questions, please contact, ask, write, email'? If someone 'reached out' to me, I would slap their wrists. Impertinence.' He has not yet come to terms with this brave new world of institutional angst.

To the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham for an autumn retreat. There were modest numbers of pilgrims but there was the usual buzz of conversation over bacon, sausage, hash browns, eggs, mushrooms, toast and coffee at breakfast in the Refectory. By happenstance a friend of some thirty years and his wife were also there and we had last met at the Shrine before the pandemic struck. It felt like a survivors' reunion. *Norton's* was closed in the evenings which signalled that perhaps not all had returned to normal at the Shrine. Numbers were impressive at the Roman Catholic National Shrine and Basilica for the mid-day Masses. Members of the *Walsingham Association* were there on retreat and it was a delight to see one or two members whom I knew from days before the schism. There were two excellent

homilies at the midday masses, one by Fr Michael Rear (sometime Vicar of Walsingham) and the Rector, Rt Rev Mgr Canon Philip Moger. Last year there was a gratifyingly fierce sermon/homily, in content if not delivery, from one of the resident Friars. It had a distinct pre-Vatican II flavour to it. It may be entirely coincidental that Mass in the Extraordinary Form is offered on the second Saturday in the month at 9 a.m. At the Anglican Shrine Wednesday Evening Devotions there was a very fine address by the Administrator before the candle-lit procession around the grounds and back for Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

There are ancillary delights in and around Walsingham. By tradition with my fellow retreatant we paid a visit to South Creake to wallow in the medievalism, both real and *faux*; and on to Binham Abbey for its remarkable survival and architectural oddity. Also to St Nicholas, St Mary, and St Thomas Becket, Blakeney for its spaciousness and elegance, which admirable features are blunted by a great deal of the inevitable clutter of parish life. A former incumbent was Bishop Mowbray Stephen O'Rourke whose effigy, under which his ashes are buried, is in the Walsingham Shrine, as you enter through the west door. It was Bishop (formerly of Accra) O'Rourke, who was enlisted by Fr Patten to consecrate the restored Shrine in 1932.

Blakeney is within the Norfolk Coast area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is recorded in Domesday Book and was a commercial seaport until the early 20th century. Its silted harbour is now a haven for small boats and birds. As we ate our picnic on the quayside on a beautiful sunny autumn day we saw flights of migratory birds swirling, wave after wave, over us in wave after wave. It was once to have been the destination of a rail-

way line but those plans were never implemented. There is, however, a large and excellent hotel where, some years ago, was spent a agreeable and gastronomically satisfying Easter week.

This year with my fellow pilgrim, he is Don Quixote to my Sancho Panza, we sought out the grave of the Rev'd Harold Davidson, sometime Rector of Stiffkey. He made headlines in the Thirties for all the wrong reasons. In 1932, after a Consistory Court, he was defrocked for immorality. While Rector of Stiffley, he spent most of his weeks in London as the self-styled 'Prostitutes' Padre'. His defence was that his aim was to rescue young girls from falling into vice. His previous form did not help him. While a Chaplain in the Royal Navy during the Great War, he had been arrested in a brothel in Cairo. His hapless attempts to rescue his reputation and raise money for an appeal were as absurd as they were tinged with pathos. He revived his former career on stage as an entertainer and appeared in sideshows at Blackpool. However, it was in Skegness that his act of delivering an address before entering a cage with two lions ended the tragi-comedy of his life. His long-suffering and admirable parishioners took him back to be buried. On one of my earlier visits to the church, I spoke to an aged parishioner who was tending the graveyard. He had an early childhood memory of the Rector. Quite a moment. Books by Ronald Blythe and Matthew Parris are recommended.

Interviewee (*Today* Radio 4) 'for me my personal self'.

When the rains came after the summer heatwave, as thunder and lightning rolled across the sky, as rain poured in torrents, Thames Water announced its hosepipe ban. Genius.

ND

The Consecration of the new Bishop of Beverley

Almost a thousand people gathered in York Minster on St Andrew's Day for the consecration of Fr Stephen Race as the new Bishop of Beverley – an encouraging number for any new bishop, and especially those parishes which belong to the See of Beverley. The opening hymn was 'Hills of the North, Rejoice' and truly they seemed to. The Bishop of Chichester preached a memorable, moving and erudite sermon on the itinerant nature of episcopal ministry to which +Stephen has been called, quoting approvingly from the priest-poet Gerald Manley Hopkins who also served in the north during his lifetime.

The Society's trio of consecrating bishops were all from the northern province: Bishop Robinson of Wakefield, assisted by Bishop North of Burnley, and Bishop Webster, previously of Beverley. Many northern Society parishes had made a big effort to be in York, so much so that one local restaurant in the old assembly rooms resembled a Beverley lay congress at lunchtime!

Archbishop Stephen Cottrell and Dean Dominic Barington could not have been warmer in their welcome and were explicit in their commitment to mutual flourishing. Brother Society bishops were in attendance, as were the main diocesans of the Province along with the female bishops of Lancaster, Doncaster and Ripon who all came to offer their support.

Our prayers for +Stephen as he begins this new ministry. **ND**





◆ THE WAY WE LIVE NOW ◆

Christopher Smith

It's nearly Christmas, and, by the time you read this, carol services will be in full swing and we will once again be bellowing those familiar verses. And, whilst we would ideally save all that until Christmastide has actually begun, we probably need to meet the world half way on this one. Here in Holborn, we nowadays schedule our Nine Lessons and Carols for before the end of term, so we shall be singing 'Hail the incarnate Deity' as early as the 13th. It leads to a kind of liturgical bi-polarity, as we continue to sing Advent hymns on Sundays, but, since the second Person of the Trinity is incarnate for evermore, I don't suppose it matters.

But it's worth remembering that two years ago we were barely singing anything at all. Whilst I don't think it was actually against the law to have congregational singing in church, it would have been a brave priest who would have disregarded that particular 'guidance'. The reason for the ban had its origin, we were told, in a place called the Skagit Valley, in the American state of Washington. The Skagit River rises in Canada and flows out into Puget Sound and into the Pacific. It's in the top left-hand corner of the United States, and they have a tulip festival every Spring in the county town, Mount Vernon.

On 10th March 2020, the Skagit Valley Chorale held their normal choir practice in Mount Vernon, then lots of people got Covid. Skagit County public health officials pointed the finger at one person who had attended with Covid-type symptoms, and who, presumably, has lived ever since with the guilt of being the person responsible for 52 cases of Covid and two deaths. The subsequent report, by Hamner and others, was published two months later and thereafter was widely quoted in scientific papers, being used to suggest that communal

singing was simply too risky, and had to be stopped. Churches were told not to reintroduce hymn singing when we were allowed to reopen, and choirs were given pages and pages of advice about how to minimize risk. Limit the numbers, stand yards apart, and maybe even put up Perspex screens, singers were told.

And it wasn't only churches. Rules introduced during the staggered reopening of 2021 forbade singing in pubs, because of a suspicion that people might become over-exuberant when watching the delayed Euro '2020' football tournament. But I think it was particularly painful for us in church. We were effectively banned from congregational singing for some sixteen months, and I recall having to go outside after the children's crib mass on Christmas Eve 2020 so that we could sing a couple of carols in the freezing cold, which was apparently better for us than singing them inside a 70-foot high building with the heating on.

Well, last month, a publication called *Public Health*, which is an international journal published in this country by the Royal Society for Public Health, carried an article which casts doubt on whether the Skagit Valley Chorale incident should ever really have led to a singing ban. It was reported in some national newspapers, and more widely in the church press. As the *Church Times* put it, 'scientists at Nottingham Trent University, Brunel University, and Brighton and Sussex Medical School, have concluded that many of the choristers' symptoms had started too early to have been caused by the rehearsal'.

What lay at the heart of the problem was the assumption that the outbreak had been caused by a single source—a 'super-spreader'—when in fact, says the paper, it was 'vanishingly unlikely that this was a single point source outbreak as has

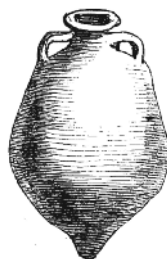
been widely claimed and on which modelling has been based'. Ah, modelling.

The authors concluded that most of the Chorale members who became infected must have been infected before that 10th March choir practice. Their symptoms had simply started too early. Basic stuff? You'd have thought so. But one uncritically accepted presumption led to 'erroneous policy conclusions about the risks of singing, and indoor spaces more generally, and the benefits of increased levels of ventilation'. As one of the researchers said in a subsequent interview, 'All the "mights" got turned into definite findings' by those who drew on the original Skagit study. 'There is also a lack of evidence supporting the view that singing played any particular role over and above other kinds of face-to-face interaction within and beyond the rehearsal venue. It is far more likely that community contacts were the main route of transmission.'

So 'To the extent that this outbreak report has been misused as a template, it is likely that other events have been wrongly characterised as single source, that there has been a misconceived search for super-spreaders, and a rush to excessive investments in ventilation technologies for enclosed spaces based on models that have assumed what their author should have questioned.' Gosh. What other 'taken-for-granted references' changed our lives for all that time because there was no critical re-evaluation of an original hypothesis? I only hope that the poor so-and-so who has carried the worry of being the single person responsible for all that illness and death has been made aware of this new paper. I hope too that we will continue to enjoy our singing this Christmas, and that never again will we be silenced in our worship of Almighty God. **[ND]**

◆ TREASURE IN CLAY JARS ◆

Festus



2022 has been dominated by the Christ Church saga. The millionaire Martyn Percy has left the college, cathedral and Church of England itself but still blogs furiously for anyone willing to read his pearls of wisdom. He also tried to sue the Independent Safeguarding Board for £7,000 of his legal fees. Except the District Judge ruled against him, on the basis the ISB is not a legal entity; it was the wrong process, he said, and ordered Percy to pay £4,500 in costs. Christ Church has also been blasted by the Charity Commission, in the form of an official warning over its expenditure of £6.6 million on legal and PR fees and accusing the trustees of ‘misconduct’. ‘Good governance should be a priority for all trustees,’ the report said. Dr Percy responded to this by describing the college’s ‘relentless, wasteful and unsuccessful campaign’ – and he should know.

Former Diocese of London employee Martin Sargeant was due to be sentenced at Southwark Crown Court on 21 November for his £5.2m swindle. ‘A remarkable layman... who had an eye for development possibilities. His negotiating skills and attention to detail were also crucial in turning ideas into profitable ventures,’ was how Bishop Richard Chartres described him at a Lambeth Palace lecture in September 2015. Sentencing has been adjourned until the week before Christmas. No character witnesses required.

Congratulations to Helen-Ann Hartley who will become the next Bishop of Newcastle. But in her announcement day video speech, she appeared to be keeping a safe distance. There she was, with the Tyne Bridge in the background, but Newcastle is separated from its neighbour by the river and she was standing in Durham diocese. ‘I can’t wait to get started,’ she concluded. Crossing the river first might help.

Winifred Peck’s 1949 novel *Arrest the Bishop?* Deals with ‘the Rev Elder...parish priest from hell’

whose misdemeanours including drunkenness, embezzlement and blackmail bring about his untimely demise through a spiked drink in the Bishop’s Palace one night. But who did it, and was it the bishop himself? A similar mystery surrounds the identity of ‘Anonymous’ who has penned a blog post online about the Rev Matthew Firth entitled ‘Church of England Evangelical Priest Resigns over Bullying and Abuse – Saga has left 39-year-old former astrophysicist unemployed’. In ‘Matthew’s Story’ we have a blow-by-blow account of how the former Priest-in-charge of St Cuthbert’s and Holy Trinity, Darlington, was the victim of a ‘backroom process’ to oust him, apparently over objections to his ‘orthodox teaching’. An evangelical who trained at Wycliffe Hall, relations between both parishes, their PCCs, and diocesan leadership including Bishop Paul Butler, deteriorated to such an extent that he eventually resigned and was serving out his notice period when the pandemic began. The bishop had, it is claimed, been ‘keeping a monitoring file of things that Matthew has said on social media [but] did not tell Matthew about this formal monitoring process’ and insisted he leave when his time was up. Ugly reading, it concludes: ‘Matthew is currently exploring the possibility of a new ministry within a different episcopal family of the Anglican world’.

June Osborne has retired as the Bishop of Llandaff. As is the way nowadays, her farewell service on St Andrew’s Day featured liturgical theatre in the form of a strip tease where she was ‘unclothed’ of her mitre, cope and stole, cassock-alb,

and finally laid down her crozier. She also referred to her ‘commanding leadership style’ to which many attest, not least the previous Dean of Landaff. But perhaps we shall ever be grateful for the media interview she gave when the King went to Wales as part of his loyal tour upon accession and visited her cathedral. ‘By his engagement with the Welsh nation today he’s looking forward in faith – and hope to what lies ahead of him,’ she said. Amen to that.

At the end of last month, a Swatch watch donated by Pope Francis sold at a charity auction in the US for \$56,250. Considering the rate at which the Vatican has been making saints of its former popes, this canny investment could prove to be a second-class relic one day.

The war in Ukraine has thrown up some unlikely beneficiaries. Many thought that rallying to the country’s side in the Eurovision Song Contest was the right thing to do, the Ukraine song won. The usual system where a winning nation hosts the next contest cannot hold, so Britain has found a substitute host city: Liverpool. Except the Christian Resources Exhibition’s booking for the venue in May 2023 has now been usurped as Liverpool City Council requisitions the hall and CRE will shift to Birmingham instead. A silver lining for some clergy who need not change their travel plans after all. Fathers, you know who you are.

A word in for Southwark Cathedral, though. Recitals often take place in churches and cathedrals, and this holy spot between London Bridge and Shakespeare’s Globe has a new outreach: events company Fever is promoting concerts there including ‘Sci-Fi and Fantasy Soundtracks’ (7 Jan-8 Feb) and ‘Candlelight: a tribute to Taylor Swift’ (14 Jan-11 Feb) – the latter billed as ‘a love letter to London’s Swifties’. Who needs Fresh Expressions?

Happy Christmas one and all.



NEXT TO NATURE

A Lifetime in the English Countryside

Ronald Blythe

John Murray 2022

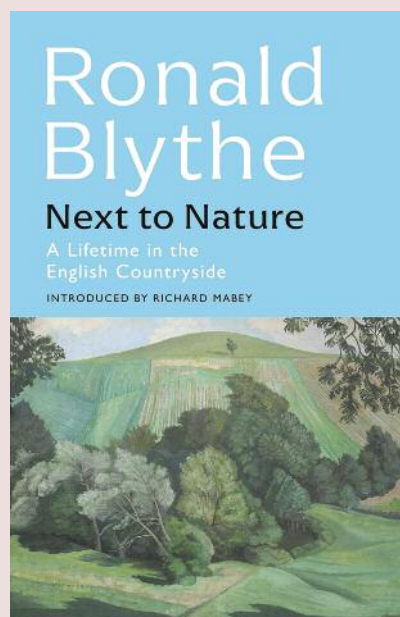
ISBN 9781399804677

Ronald Blythe will need no introduction for readers of the *Church Times*. For more than twenty years he contributed a short weekly article, *Word From Wormingford*, containing his reflections on life in the Suffolk countryside. They are models of clarity and economy, sharply observed and crisply written.

In November Blythe is due to celebrate his hundredth birthday, and this book is a celebratory selection from these articles, and for those who do not know them the volume will provide a convenient introduction to the work of one of our most distinguished and individual authors. Divided into passages for the twelve months, each section has an introduction by a different writer examining features of Blythe's life and work.

What is it which makes Ronald Blythe so fascinating? In the first place, he is a born writer, something unmistakeable when we meet it. Then there is his variety. Although he is acknowledged to be our laureate of landscape, his output includes novels, poetry, social history – *Akenfield* and *The View in Winter* – anthologies and literary criticism. He is a masterly book reviewer, and the range of his reading is extraordinary. So is the list of his friendships, including the like of Martin Shaw, Benjamin Britten, Imogen Holst, E. M. Forster and the artist John Nash, from whom in 1978 he inherited the centuries-old Bottengoms farm where he has lived ever since. In our time of restless population, he remains, like his poet friend George Mackay Brown, who rarely left Stromness, someone who literally 'knows his place.'

To this might be added his elusiveness. Despite the wealth of anecdotes and observations of people and situations which he provides, he is reticent about his own life. If he is a born writer, he is also a born loner, a species little understood or appreciated. And he has an additional occupation. For a long time he has been a Lay Reader, assisting regularly in the churches where he lives.



His contributions to the *Church Times* unite many aspects of Blythe's life, bringing before us the changing seasons with their sights, smells and variable weather. Accompanying them are the changing seasons of the Church year, along with the unchanging procession of births and deaths, the litany of those who live on the earth and finally return to it.

As might be expected, he looks for the company of others who share his devotion to the English landscape, painters like Gainsborough and Constable, and poets such as Traherne, Hardy, John Clare (whose work he has done so much to promote) and R. S. Thomas. Above all, he turns repeatedly to George Herbert, in whom the pastoral (in terms of both the land and of Church ministry) and the devotional enrich each other.

A true countryman, though, Blythe has no sentimentality about rural life. He knows that it is a story of hardship, of relentless drudgery, frequently of poverty and early death, of labourers at the mercy of climate, landlords and politicians. He jolts us by pointing out that many men of the fields enlisted for the Great War not as a matter of patriotism, but as an opportunity to escape from a crippling existence. So many of them went to lie in foreign soil. Country life can be harsh, even brutal. 'As a boy, I witnessed an otter hunt – a disgusting business.'

This realism prevents him from sinking into mere nostalgia for a romanticized past, but he can sound that note of wistfulness which has long been the counterbalance to brisk English practicality. Living in a former farm, once noisy with families and now quiet for the solitary writer, he hears the sounds and cries of past generations. 'But there it is, places of toil fall into idle hands. Children find their way to the village churchyard, farmers' voices become tangled in the trees, beasts cease to be.' Things that were and that are come to meet in him.

He has spoken of 'the pattern which literature, liturgy, the seasons and solitude has made of my existence,' so what of the Church, which he has served so faithfully? He is unquestionably a Church of England man, neither self-consciously Low nor High, but deeply rooted in the Book of Common Prayer and the King James Bible. Their cadences and phrases rise naturally to his mind. He passionately loves church buildings, their stories and architecture, but never forgets that they stand as witnesses to a living Christian faith.

How he treasures those who are steadily dedicated to worship in these country churches. 'While allowing that the Church would most probably die out if it was left to Christians like us, we shrink from

those who disturb its peace. By nature we are Anglican quietists, treading softly through the beautiful words, advancing and not purposely going backwards, at ease in the maze known as liturgy, knowingly finding our ways about, and happy in these patterns of prayer.' It is a stability which the wider C of E is losing. And he will not play the congregation numbers game. His three churches 'are loved and cared for all the year but are only full on great occasions. But who is counting! I am more interested in what is happening.'

Oh, but everywhere statisticians and planners *are* counting, totting up the services and the worshippers, and country churches in particular are vulnerable to their schemes. What matter that churches may house the love and devotion of the two or three gathered together in Christ's name, or that a building is soaked in a thousand years of prayer? Money is needed, not for the essential business of putting priests into parishes, but to pay for an ever-increasing army of area bishops, diocesan administrators and advisors. Cash continues to be poured into fresh expressions of nothing in particular, and into Church 'plants' whose links with historic Anglicanism are almost non-existent.

Blythe is not afraid to be forthright on this. 'The Church of England itself needs to take a critical look at its "worship", for some of what goes on now under this description is beyond belief.' And he writes words which diocesan bishops and other Church managers should have printed above their desks: 'It is often the ecologist, rather than the priest, who these days is able to teach the relevance of a pastoral vision. We shall starve physically and spiritually without it.' He gives us a vital reminder that there is more to the Church's outreach than work in towns and cities.

Whether by intention or not, Ronald Blythe's compact messages from Suffolk preserve for us a rich legacy of country life and its customs, much of which has died or is

being destroyed. (He has some sharp words for urbanites who move to villages seeking a quieter life and immediately begin transforming them into a copy of where they have left). This volume contains pleasures and insights on every page, though they lead to sombre reflection. Will his future readers learn with bewilderment of how Christianity and country life were once woven so closely together, sharing the rhythms of the year, and will they wonder how such a wealth of faith and tradition could be unconcernedly discarded?

Centenarians are still regard with admiration. Blythe comments on this, 'it is not wonderful at all – just the persisting heartbeat and life not knowing when to stop.' Nonetheless, there will be many who rejoice to celebrate such a remarkable writer and man as he reaches his centenary.

Barry A. Orford

MARY'S TITLES

Biblical Reflections on the Titles of Mary in the Litany of Loreto

Elizabeth Grace Bryson
Westbow Press 2022
ISBN 9781664260047

Elizabeth Bryson came upon the Litany of Loreto whilst a parish pilgrim to The Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham. It planted in her the seeds of an idea, which grew into a vocation to write this book. It has three purposes; to explore the Biblical origins of the titles (51 of them), to seek out the connections with the Blessed Virgin Mary and to reflect on what they mean for individual Christians and church communities in their discipleship and ministry.

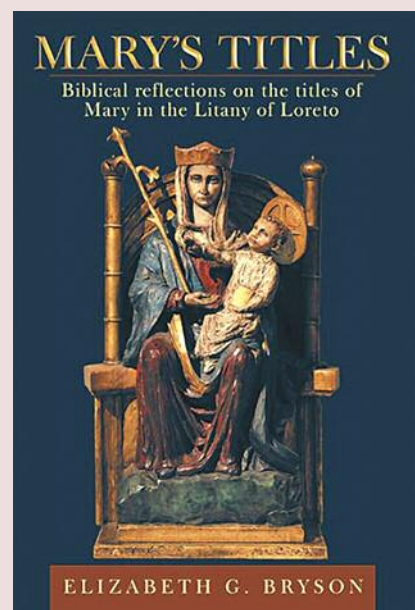
In pursuit of the first task not one page of the Bible is left unturned. From Genesis to Revelation Bryson chases down the references with evident joy at new discoveries and connections. The research is thorough and explores the implications of the Biblical languages. As with every aspect of the book the

footnotes and references are copious and include dictionaries, academic journals, websites, and specialist Biblical Commentaries.

In seeking out the Marian connections to these titles Bryson refers to Mariologists of every generation from the Church Fathers, through the Reformation period, to Saint John Henry Newman and Saint John Paul II. There is reference to agreed ecumenical statements and the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church. The Alpha Course, Nicky Gumbel and Billy Graham all are quoted. There are liturgical references ranging from Orthodox liturgies to the Book of Common Prayer, hymns of every age and style are all brought into play in a total commitment to squeeze out every ounce of meaning.

The more pastoral section of each chapter 'what does this mean for us?' is full of practical advice and pastoral experience of the writer who is both a Licensed Reader and an Anna Chaplain. There is a two dimensional response to each new perception of discipleship each title opens up: the personal and the congregational. Bryson asks questions to further prayer, discussion and action.

This book has a devotional quality, it begins in faith and continues in faith and it succeeds in its aim of strengthening faith. It is a result of enthusiasm without limit. The author's excitement as each horizon of



understanding unfolds is palpable. It is quite something to read at one sitting! It has thirty chapters making it an ideal book for daily reading or dipping into. It is perfect for anyone who would like to know more about, and understand more clearly the place of, and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Bryson leaves the reader in no doubt about how wonderful that can be.

Andrew Hawes

HENRY 'CHIPS' CHANNON: The Diaries 1943-57

Edited by Simon Heffer

Hutchinson, 2022

ISBN 9781529151725

The publication of this third volume of the diaries of Sir Henry Channon brings the series to a triumphant conclusion. Channon, like Pepys and other notables diarists, was not in the first rank of public or political figures but was well-placed in the outer circles to observe and record. Pepys the civil servant, Channon, a junior minister, a Member of Parliament, a denizen of 'high society', married into and divorced from the aristocracy, an American in contented self-exile from his homeland, an outsider who became a dedicated insider. He was perfectly situated to observe and, more importantly, to record the quiddities of his social and political milieux.

He remains unappealing as in previous volumes. Age has not wearied him dining with panthers in the demimonde nor consorting with *le beau monde* of high society and the aristocracy. He is as unsparing on himself as he is with others. He describes himself as 'alone ... and depressed tonight; even lonely: I am dissatisfied with my mode of life and ask myself why I am an MP? In fact, why do I do so much that both bores me and for which I am ill-suited? I only like frivolity, mundanities, society and splendour - or else solitude, writing and sex.' Elsewhere he adds to his list 'duchesses and the lower orders.' Sharp comments are balanced, in

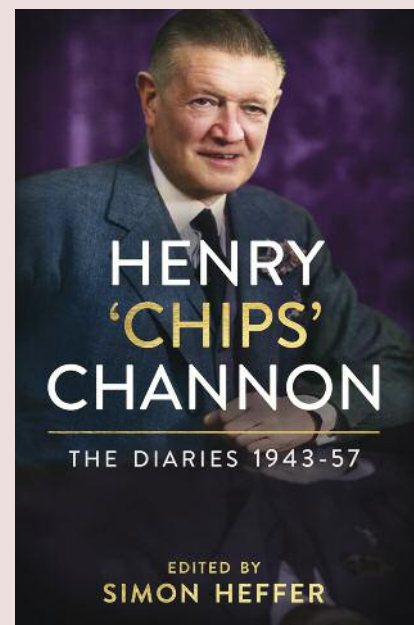
part, by gushing epithets of love and adoration for others. He could be rhapsodic about some. There are few half measures or bromides in these pages.

The years, however, begin to take their toll; ill-health increases and results in an end to his diary entries for the last eighteen months of his life. He was promiscuous, unfaithful on a dizzyingly grand scale to Peter Coats, not least with the young and handsome playwright Terence Rattigan: 'his beauty and charm are stupendous; his character for all its sweetness is unreliable and deplorable.' Channon is portrayed in Rattigan's play *The Deep Blue Sea*. There are many other dalliances (he estimates a minimum of 111) in a sordid litany. He was acutely self-aware that he had 'no sense of sin' and he could not 'understand why people should fuss about it.'

Over several months, almost daily, he gushes and simpers, feels every slight, real or imagined, as knife wounds. His political ambitions, nor his staggering sense of entitlement ('a scandal that nothing had been done') were sated by his brief tenure in minor ministerial office. Nor, perhaps, by the compensatory knighthood. Had he lived a peerage, for which, pathetically, he yearned, may have been offered. But were there too many skeletons, despite his deft navigation of the underworld of nocturnal adventures and (then) illegal rendezvous? He senses that he may have 'paid socially and ... politically' by his liaison with Coats but 'it was worth it.'

However unlikeable he appears in many of these pages, his comments and observations, so many of which turn out to be incorrect, are, nonetheless, rarely less than compelling.

His animus against Winston Churchill remains, until relieved by an occasional note of approval and an invitation to lunch. Channon is not alone among contemporaries intensely to dislike Churchill's son, the boorish Randolph: 'exudes poison and hate and poisons London.' His critical comments do not match those of Evelyn Waugh who, on



learning that Randolph Churchill had undergone surgery which had removed a benign tumour, said that it was one of the wonders of medical science to 'cut out the only part of Randolph that was not malignant.'

His pen portraits, often trenchant and slashing, were honestly held. He had a penetrating eye, if not an unalloyed generous spirit. He remained something of an outsider, pinning his specimens and mounting them in the display case that is the diary. One of Channon's Commons' colleagues killed in a rail crash is described as a 'dull, mild-mannered little man, he will be no loss.' Another is 'an inert mass of ineffectual monied masculinity.' Basil Dufferin's 'death is a mercy.' 'Drunken, diseased, hopeless, feckless, corroded by money, intelligent but no common sense, despicable, revolting appearance' is very different from John Betjeman's poetic saraband, 'Humorous, reckless, loyal - my kind, heavy-lidded companion.' Maurice Macmillan has a 'wildly corrupt face [and] an evil reputation.' General Montgomery is 'the demagogues God.' Robert Bernays MP, killed in an air crash, was 'ludicrously ugly and generally unattractive' who, twice, with consent, beat Channon, 'shan't miss him at all' and had 'long ago unloaded him. I detest Liberals.' He had an equal if not greater detestation of socialists. Of Stafford Crips

he wrote of him as ‘a horrible old Savonarola ... a failure, an anarchist, a bore, a fanatic’ and a vegetarian. His ferocious dislike of Cosmo Gordon Lang is unabated, as strong and caustic as in previous volumes, a ‘horrible, unctuous old fiend.’ He is, on occasion, no less severe on himself, ‘hopelessly frivolous ... a great writer ... having a brilliant brain with which I did nothing.’

The zenith, or nadir, of his venom (take your choice) is a sustained paragraph of denigration, possibly well-deserved, for his grandmother in law on her death. On the limited occasions when he encounters *hoi polloi*, such as rare journeys on London Underground, he is unimpressed by and has little sympathy for ‘people sleeping on bunks, miserable heaps of dirty humanity’ as he makes his way to Belgravia. Even with someone he liked, his brother-in-law, he was unsparing: ‘abnormally large and fat, an appalling bore, stupid yet shrewd, uneducated, unimaginative and indolent and yet he had charm and lazy affection.’

As in previous volumes, he is wrong with many of his predictions and analysis of events. In March 1944 he was sure that ‘even the Labour people half admit that [Churchill] has won the next election already’. Labour won a landslide in 1945. He is less than kind to King George VI, even less so to Queen Elizabeth (later The Queen Mother). He is, however, prescient when he records in early 1952 that the King is ‘reported to be going out duck shooting next week - suicidal.’ A week later the King died. On the succession of Queen Elizabeth II he wrote that she ‘will be a success but not loved’. Prince Philip is more highly regarded but Channon’s great affection is for the Duchess of Kent (Princess Marina). They had lived next door in Belgrave Square until her husband’s tragic death but she is a frequent visitor to Channon and he to her at Coppins. Yet, one of his final comments about her is deeply unpleasant.

If Channon is to be believed some history may need to be re-

written, or a footnote included. Duff Cooper (later Viscount Norwich) did not resign over the Munich Agreement as a matter of principle, he was sacked by Chamberlain for scandals that did not make the press. Channon’s assessment after Cooper’s death was one of the most scathing in the book and among many contenders.

Simon Heffer and his editorial team, with the notable assistance of Hugo Vickers, have displayed again scholarship and diligence in abundance. The footnotes are impeccably informative, correcting errors, never intrusive, with the occasional laconic, waspish aside. The footnote to a paragraph of Channon’s speculation about Cabinet changes reads, ‘none of this happened.’ At some 1.2 million words in three volumes, 3000 pages, accompanied by that vast number of footnotes this is a monumental achievement.

Channon chronicles a dying England, as he saw it. He muses that he is ‘bored by pleasure and society but miserable and unfulfilled without it.’ He speculates ‘of what interest can these painstaking pages be to posterity when they chronicle nonentities?’

Thurifer

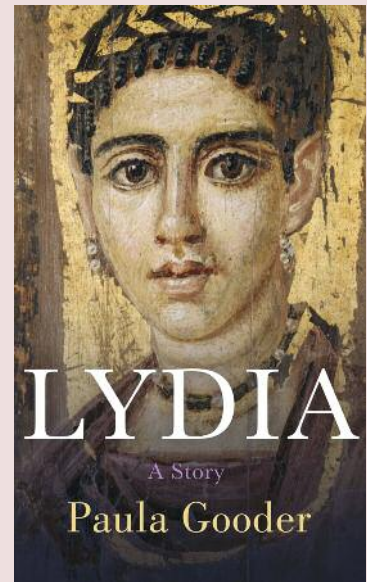
LYDIA. A STORY (with notes)

Paula Gooder

Hodder & Stoughton, 2022

ISBN 978-1444792065

This is not a novel. Paula Gooder is clear about this. *Lydia* is a theological experiment, a companion volume to her previous book *Phoebe. A Story* [2008]. The story of Lydia takes the reader to page 211. Another 102 pages of Notes follow. Gooder’s intention is to bring the scholarship to life, to take us back to Philippi at the time Paul wrote his letter. We are to read anew the Christ Hymn of Philippians 2.5-11, while following the story of Lydia, the seller of purple cloth, one of Paul’s earliest converts. The Notes win. The narrative of *Lydia* in Philippi illustrates the Notes, rather than the other way round.



These forensic notes, where no word or verse is left unturned, do tend to hobble *Lydia*’s narrative; the lecture hall always beckons. This does not leave Gooder the freedom to indulge fully her imagination, thus losing the advantage gained by other practitioners of the genre, such as C.K. Stead in *My Name Was Judas* and Colm Tóibín in *The Testament of Mary*. The brilliance of the historical, cultural and theological explanations in the Notes exposes the poverty of Gooder’s prose style. The text overflows with adverbs struggling to convey the moods of the characters who are always ‘chuckling’ to themselves, as do three irritating boys, Rufus, Marcus and Tertius, who get up to all sorts of japes to distract us from our theology. Eyes narrow, birdsong is exquisite, efforts are faultless, dullness is stultifying.

Characters are hit or miss. Here is Aurelia, a Roman matron who has strayed from *Spartacus*, wife to Decimus Licinius Crassus. Aurelia loathes Philippi. She enters Lydia’s shop. ‘Aurelia sighed dramatically. “It’s all so tawdry. Come.” She clicked her fingers at the four slaves who were pressed against the shelves of the shop lest they be accused of getting in the way. “We won’t waste any more time.” She looked Lydia up and down as she left, no flicker of recognition showing on her face, despite the many hours that Lydia and John together had striven to present her with their best range of purple.’

Yet other characters succeed to great effect. Gooder introduces us to Manius, a Roman centurion with responsibility for crucifixions, who comes to enquire about a Jesus of Nazareth. Slowly, as the suspicions of the Philippi community are allayed, Manius tells them the story of the death of Jesus and the ‘overwhelming bleakness’ of that moment. “‘You were overheard,” said Clement. “Some of the women who followed Jesus were there. They heard you say ‘Truly this man was God’s Son!’” Manius was quiet for a while, the moment clearly playing on his mind. “Yes,” he said, “that is exactly what I said.” “But what we have always wanted to know,” said Alexandra, “is what you meant.”” Manius is later baptised. Such passages, the revelation of forgiveness and the dawning of hope which comes with the delivery of Paul’s Christ Hymn by Epaphroditus, justify Gooder’s brave experiment. Despite the narrative restrictions, the reader of *Lydia* is invited to read the Epistle at a new depth, and to wonder at how dull we have made these early testaments, and how slow we are to be transformed by them today.

Here then is another theme in Gooder’s *Lydia*. Christ’s story became Paul’s story. So Christ’s story is our story. *Lydia*, the book, constructs the stories of four women, Lydia and the slave girl healed by Paul in Acts, Euodia and Syntache known from Philippians. Their different experiences come through to us, in spite of the limitations (recognised by Paula Gooder) of our twenty-first century perspective. *Lydia* declares that in our stories we can cross that bridge of time to Philippi and ‘have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus’ [Philippians 2.5]. ‘As [Lydia] prayed a sense of deep peace fell on her. ... Everything was exactly the same, yet felt completely different. She knew she was held by a great love, and in that love was perfect peace. In that love she could face the future, whatever it held.’

Julian Browning

THE HARDEST PROBLEM: God, Evil and Suffering

Rupert Shortt

Hodder & Stoughton 2022

ISBN 978-1399802710

We often seem to assume that the reason people don’t come to church is primarily to do with the quality of the welcome they receive: if this could just be better then more people would come. This may be the case, but at least as important are some more fundamental reasons that keep people away. Pre-eminent among these is the ‘problem of evil’ – of how a God whom we believe and teach is loving and good can permit suffering and evil not only to exist but sometimes apparently to triumph. This ancient question raises its head in a variety of different guises and is surely one of the two main reasons why people resist the Christian faith. (The other, more modern and surely less serious one is the perception that ‘Science’ has somehow disproved religious belief.)

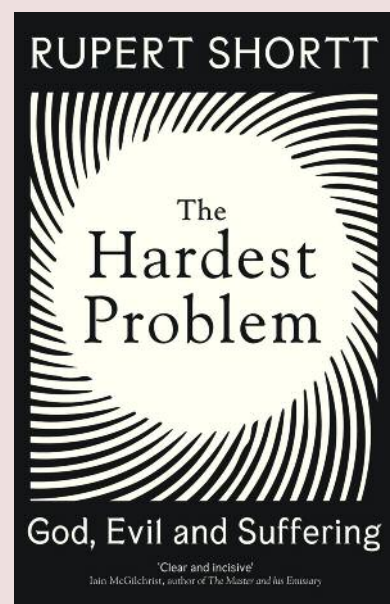
Rupert Shortt, a journalist, theological writer and biographer of Archbishop Rowan Williams, is a sure-footed guide to this terrain. In this short, engagingly written but also challenging book, he ranges widely over the ways in which the phenomena of evil and suffering have been approached, such as the stirring response of Jonathan Sacks to the question of where God was at Auschwitz that God had been there ‘in the words “You shall not murder”. He was there in the words “Do not oppress the stranger”, in the words, “Your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground”.’

Correctly, however, Shortt does not try to provide a simple answer to the problem of evil. Such an answer would necessarily be inhuman in the face of the enormity and mystery of human suffering. As an illustration of this, Shortt describes how experiencing the death of his wife Joy Davidman led C.S. Lewis to repudiate his earlier confident assertions about the problem of suffering. As Shortt describes it,

‘*The Problem of Pain* (1940) sees misfortune in scientific terms as a puzzle to be solved. A *Grief Observed* (written in 1960 in the aftermath of Davidman’s death) sees it as a mystery to be lived with’.

Shortt takes in insights from a wide range of authors, and gives more extended treatment, among others, to Iain McGilchrist, René Girard, Rowan Williams and Vernon White. Indeed, the book could be used as a short and accessible refresher course in the philosophy of religions, covering as it does questions such as the arguments for the existence of God, the way we understand miracles and the efficacy of intercessory prayer. In none of these does he attempt to land some knock-out blow on what Angela Tilby in her commendation of the book describes as ‘the casual atheism of our age’. Certainly he reminds us that it is legitimate to ask questions about theodicy, not least because they are asked in the Scriptures themselves: notably in the book of Job, the psalms and by Jesus himself on the cross. There can be no simple and glib answers in this area, but Shortt demonstrates that the Christian faith can provide not a neat set of bullet points to rebut such questions, but a wealth of resources to engage with them more deeply.

At the heart of our approach to evil and suffering is the understanding of God that we bring – and here Shortt takes up the theme of a for-



mer work, intriguingly entitled *God is No Thing*. Guided by St Thomas Aquinas and indeed the whole mainstream Christian tradition, he reminds us that God is the ground of all being, and not (as is often assumed) another being in the universe who is much larger than the others but unfortunately happens to be invisible. Thus, when it comes to considering the problem of suffering, the Christian tradition does not see Him as 'a capricious wand-waver in the sky' or a 'celestial CEO, jostling for power with other actors. 'At root the Christian claim is that God remakes human nature from within, by defenceless love, rather than by producing a banner in the heavens inscribed "I'M HERE YOU IDIOTS".'

Ultimately, as the final chapter on *Atonement and Providence* reveals, the answer to the problem of suffering is found not in human ideas or verbal formulations, but in Jesus, the living Word of the Father. Christ, crucified and risen from the dead, gives not a simple answer to the ongoing questions about the presence of evil and suffering in the purposes of a loving God – no such answers are ever available. But for his faithful people his death and resurrection none the less provide a unique and living reference point: a wider context within which to view the often inexplicable presence of so much evil and suffering in the world: '... if we are able to look lat-

erally at events that don't have an obvious connection, and then triangulate them with Christ's Passion and conquest of death, a purpose may indeed emerge'.

Edward Dowler

SUPER-INFINITE **The Transformations of John Donne**

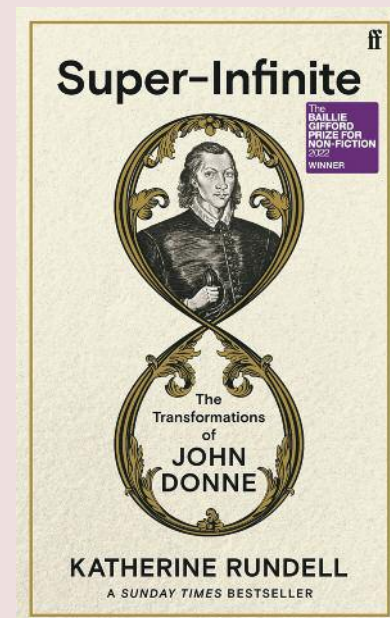
Katherine Rundell

Faber, 2022

ISBN 978-0571345915

This exhilarating study of the poet, priest and sometime Dean of St Paul's is written with vigour and panache. The writer is more than a little in love with her subject, and doesn't mind letting the reader know; but this authorial affair with the long-dead Dean is born of the axiom that the biggest sex organ is the brain. Donne, Katherine Rundell suggests, is someone for whom 'thinking hard and fast' is a sensual joy akin to sex itself, and we suspect that what is true for the subject is true for the biographer as well.

Rundell writes extraordinarily well, with fresh and arresting turns of phrase on every page, so it is not surprising that she has such sympathy with someone who interpreted (and created) his own reality through language. Rundell regards the love poetry (in her words, 'the most celebratory and most lavishly



sexed poetry ever written in English') as composed not in pursuit of conquest, nor in retrospective enjoyment of it: the verse was all, written for Donne's own satisfaction (could he ever be satisfied?) and that of his young lawyer-about-town friends. And she brings out superbly well Donne's utter scorn for the second-best in writing, for tired verse or hackneyed prose. Here was an inventor of forms, a coiner of new words, a man who could pack a few lines so tightly with meaning that you feel on reading that it might at any moment literally burst – an image much too lazy for Donne himself to have written, I know.

At the heart of this book, less a conventional biography than a series of pen-portraits of its subject at successive ages and stages of life, is the thesis that the traditionally bifocal way of seeing Donne – the young Jack and the mature Divine – is much too limiting: he needs to be understood as by way of multiply reimagined personalities and in pluriform roles. For readers unfamiliar with the detail of the life, there are intriguing chapters on Donne as failed adventurer and unsuccessful diplomat. Aspects of his financial dealings with his daughter Constance reveal what the author calls 'thoughtlessness and cruelty.' Donne certainly exemplifies in his own life the observation which, Rundell proposes, was never far from his thinking – that human be-



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ings are 'a catastrophe and a miracle.' The chapter on *Biathanatos* – Donne's treatise on suicide – reminds us that this poet who took such intense joy in the sheer astonishment and miracle of being alive deprecated the merciful act of tugging on the legs of a criminal condemned to death by hanging, because the punishment ought to be as painful and prolonged as possible.

The last third of the book, on Donne as Dean, preacher, and contemplator of mortality, especially his own, draws us deeply into the making of his soul. Donne, says Rundell, is at his most remarkable as a preacher when he speaks about how very hard it is to see God at all. He is, she says, the preacher for those who make their way to God in 'gestures, symbols, flickers, errors.' In the sermons there is plenty of horror: the world is full of things

that kill you, and the human body is little more than decomposing matter, corrupt, decaying, one with the earth which will receive it. But everywhere, joy breaks out, and Donne (Rundell reminds us) directs a lengthy diatribe against St Basil the Great on account of the latter's hostility to laughter. And for all the horror, at the heart of Donne's preaching is a deep sense of the worth of every human life: for Donne, the human animal, Rundell writes, is worth attention, awe, and love.

The final chapter (bar a postscript) on Donne and Death is particularly gripping and Rundell writes superbly well, on the final sermon, 'Death's Duel,' with its haunting sentence, 'There in the womb we are taught cruelty, by being fed with blood.' This startling lens through which to view the life of the unborn child's dependence

for nutrition on its mother takes us right back to the author of *The Flea*, and whose mind is never far away from bodies – needy, hungry, desiring, decaying *and* ultimately destined for glory. Can there ever be a better reflection on mortality and immortality than those extraordinary words from the last sermon: 'There we leave you – suck at Christ's wounds and lie down in peace in his grave, till He vouchsafe you a resurrection.'

This is a wonderful study of Dr Donne, short enough to be devoured at one sitting, but full of insight and genuinely exciting to read. Footnote One: Rundell is very good at lists (see, for example, page 254). Footnote Two: Rundell quotes Donne on marriage, which is 'but a continual fornication sealed with an oath.' LLF, take note.

Jonathan Baker

A VIEW FROM THE GODS

There is some current discussion about what a Christian country is. And whether we (the UK) are any longer a Christian country, as population figures show the numbers attending church or calling themselves Christian continue to decline. Perhaps (in this respect) one little question of relevance might be: in how many families do the kids say their prayers out loud every night?

When I was little and we lived in a Southsea flat, I mean in 1946 and later till May 1951 when we moved out of Portsmouth to Emsworth, my mummy (as I called her) would hear my prayers as I said them out loud. And when we started having in our flat first a French girl called Lydie Ehretsmann from Thann in Alsace in 1947, followed by a succession of Swiss girls mostly from Burgdorf to help my mum not just looking after me (my big sister Jane was

boarding at the Royal Naval School, Haslemere) but also helping cook for us – though not cleaning which Mrs Fosbrook did – they (Dora, Susie, Jacqueline, Marthe) would listen instead.

My prayers always started with the words of a hymn I knew by heart, 'Jesu, tender Shepherd hear me, Bless thy little lamb tonight; Through the darkness be thou near me, Watch my sleep till morning light' The two following verses with their mention of death and heaven I don't think I said. Mary Duncan, its author, died at 26 probably of consumption as they called TB. After which I said a lot of 'God bless daddy', followed in order by other loved relatives (not including grandfathers who were both dead long before I was born and therefore not discussed or referred to as far as God was concerned).

I would kneel by my bed and fold my hands. I think we used to say our prayers by our beds when I first went as a boarder to the Prebendal School, the choir school in Chichester, in May 1952. The idea that God could take responsibility while we were asleep was

very comforting. We did also go from time to time to the dockyard church. Not very often. And opposite us lived the Reverend John Beloe and his family who was a vicar of a church nearby, and who also had a sandpit in his garden. I started having piano lessons when I was six, and a piano arrived in our first floor flat. My musicality and love of music were not in question. But I'm not sure how taken I was with the piano at that stage, though my dad's mother took me to a couple of piano recitals at the South Parade Pier concert hall, I think. Later I had to accompany the hymn at morning assembly at the Preb. We never as far I recall went to the cathedral in Portsmouth, which was where my dad's father Jim (killed at Gallipoli) had sung tenor a lot in the choir when it was just St Thomas's Church. The idea of singing was not something I really considered, obsessed as I was much more with dancing.

My parents had a story they often repeated, that I'd burst into tears when I went with them into Winchester Cathedral aged three – because it was so enormous. I do

not recall this. But in February 1952 I was prepared to sing 'There is a green hill far away' at the voice trials for the Chichester Cathedral choir – to be a probationer there. I also had to pitch notes correctly and demonstrate how well I could read words in the Bible. (As it happened, I was destined to win the Chancellor's reading prize later on at the Preb, as well as the Weston Speech Prize every year I was at Hurstpierpoint College from age 14 to 17.)

Anyway, I was offered a place as a probationer, as was Peter Spence who wrote (much later) the telly series *To the Manor Born* (with Penelope Keith, Angela Thorne and Peter Bowles). He was one of three sons whose father worked in advertising on the Daily Telegraph (I think). His older brother Robin became a don at Cambridge, and his twin Christopher founded the London Light-house. Peter didn't last in the choir. As the organist whom we always called Hawkie (and who had been Charles-Marie Widor's favourite pupil at St Sulpice in Paris before 1914, and was probably the finest organist in the country) told my parents in 1956 when I was head chorister, 'I haven't the time to teach the boys. They either pick it up, or they're out!' Peter never became a chorister – when one got a surplice and joined the 'apostolic' dozen who sang in the choirstalls on either side of the Chancel. But so what! The school itself had good teachers, including its head in 1952-3 who taught Latin and was a sort of part-time priest-vicar – a bit of a beater too, and somewhat interested in checking how well the older boys were sleeping in the medieval Long Dorm, as a result of which he was sacked in August 1953 and replaced within four weeks by a fine French teacher and former Chindit Guy Hepburn whose wife also became matron.

When I was at Chichester, the choir had no countertenors; they had been called up in 1939 and replaced by excellent women. Monica Head had the higher, lighter

voice of the two, and Eve Salwey (who also taught us English extremely well and had been married to a Canon who had died) with a richer more Ferrier-like voice. After I left in July 1956 with a choral scholarship at Hurstpierpoint College, Eve married Canon Powell who had been headmaster of Epsom College. In my day the Close was full of married residential Canons such as Lowther-Clarke who had edited Liturgy and Worship in the mid-1930s. Dean Duncan-Jones's son Andrew had been head of the Preb, married the matron, and then left with her. His dad had during the war doubled being Dean and HM of the school. There was something practical and sensible about Chichester in those days. Walter Hussey, who became Dean in 1955 after Duncan-Jones's death, was a very different cuppa – though a very nice man whose Northampton curates included a man who was my chaplain at Hurst for a couple of years.



Chi was not male-only when I was there. But what about girls singing in cathedral choirs, or forming a girls' choir? The truth is boys benefit from working hard and we worked a lot harder in the 1950s than any cathedral choristers do now – as we had very short holidays and sang for weeks after the school had stopped teaching lessons – during times that we called 'the choir hols' when in fact we were still doing our professional singing work. We sang till January 6 (the Epiphany Procession) when the Dolmetsch family from Haslemere came and played

four different recorders in our procession round the cathedral before we could go home for two weeks' holiday. At the always movable Easter we stayed till Low Sunday a week after it, and then had two to three weeks' break. And in the summer we were there singing till August 6, the Feast of the Transfiguration, and got about five weeks' summer holiday. It was a job and we were professionals. At Westminster Cathedral, where I was the countertenor for nearly four years, we had only three weeks off a year.

Boys' treble or alto voices have a sell-by date. Girls' voices simply continue to mature. Boys need to work. Girls' voices are just a slightly earlier more delicate version of their potential adult voices. It is misleading to think everything chaps do, ladies can too. Different understanding, different social awareness! Equal when it comes to interpretative ability and understanding – though from a different viewpoint.

Church music from European countries including our own, and Catholic as well as Protestant, includes some of the greatest musical masterpieces there are. It matters profoundly. Much of it was intended for boys' voices from the 12th century on. Plainchant – a glory of the church – is wonderfully sung by the sound of boys. No doubt it is also fine in some abbeys with nuns singing. But boys' voices break. What they offer is not for ever. And mixing the efforts of boys and girls does not suit the church music genius. Some traditions are worth preserving. Their loss would matter. From the late 17th-century on, girls' voices have more and more often a great role to play. Wait for the one, but don't abandon the other. If religion ceases to convince, cathedrals will still matter for the genius and vision they present.

Understanding has subtlety; it is complex and varied. As is music. These are great human arts. Do not put them at risk of disappearing. Our hearts need them.

Tom Sutcliffe

CEZANNE

*Tate Modern, London
until 12th March, 2023*

There is no accent on the 'e'. Apparently Paul Cezanne (1839-1906) didn't use one and this is the preferred family spelling. Which gives the curators an opportunity to wallow in self-abasement – we are all wrong! The artist himself proves a hard nut to fit into today's assured public morality. When one of the show's commentators asks 'How do you just see the formal qualities of a painting or the scholarship or the invention [Cezanne's] work evokes without foregrounding [the] history [of slavery]?' the answer for the painter himself is 'Very easily.' Cezanne was a radical painter but politically an anti-Dreyfusard (along with Degas and Renoir). There's not much evidence that he wished to be a Communard of 1871 (he avoided conscription and stayed painting down in the South). And a man who in his latter days attended Mass daily is not likely to have been influenced by progressive nihilism or Barthesian textual deconstruction (had it existed in the nineteenth century). Part of the 'enigmatic' quality of Cezanne is that he is a founding figure of twentieth century Western Modernism. At the same time he was very different from today's progressives who see everything as political. How could a provincial bourgeois Catholic – who to his death recognised God as the one true creative – be such a great and radical painter?

In his own day, perhaps the best place to begin to understand him, Cezanne was considered socially uncouth. He admitted to a shyness which meant he wouldn't paint from live nudes but used photographs of nude figures (the outstanding example in the show

of this practice is New York MOMA's 'Nude Bather' which brings together an almost Grecian purity of form and confident bearing with a very nineteenth century moustache). He wanted to astonish Paris with an apple, but was never really a metropolitan (he saw himself as part of a Provençal tradition which included Pierre Puget and Joseph Léon de Roland de Lestang-Parade [me neither]). And his relationship with women, as suggested by his early paintings and by his occasionally-sometimes marriage, may have been misogynistic. Cezanne was not a charismatic or sociable artist like Manet or Picasso.



*Paul Cezanne: The François Zola Dam
(Mountains in Provence), 1877-8; Amgueddfa Cymru –
National Museum of Wales*

What he was was a painter. One of the strengths of this large and generous show (though it's a much cut-down version of the Chicago original) is the number of paintings once owned by other painters: Pissarro (who was both Jewish and Cezanne's mentor), Monet (who collected more of Cezanne's works than any other artist), Matisse, Picasso, Degas, Gauguin, Renoir, and the later Jasper Johns and Henry Moore.

Painters saw something in Cezanne before the art buying public did (and bought before his work became very expensive). For example, the show has a large number of preliminary drafts of bathers and of the very thickly painted works of Cezanne's early and middle years. These were criticised by contemporaries and critical opinion hasn't yet taken them to its

heart. But his fellow artists bought them. As Pissarro put it, anyone can see the defects in these works, what is more important is their charm.

The charm and decorative quality of Cezanne's work – he liked to paint beautiful scenery – is surely at the heart of his appeal, rather than his formal adventurousness. And this show has a representative selection of the many, many landscapes and still lifes Cezanne painted in Provence. In these works, the use of colour rather than line to provide form, the little slab-like dabs of colour, the wide range of oil finishes from thick to almost the transparency of water colour, the parts of the canvas left untouched, the two dimensional character which shows the paintings are paintings and not reproductions of apples and oranges and trees and boulders, and the sheer number of different versions of the same views and still-life objects make up the familiar Cezanne style.

But there's more to Cezanne than that. In the first posthumous show after his death (Paris 1907) the critic Maurice Denis wrote how Cezanne was part of the great tradition and that he developed that tradition by cutting away at it. An analysis of that cutting away, driven as it was by a strong personal sensibility and a precise eye (even the most loosely painted works have details of, say, a mark on a lead roof), is a good way into Cezanne's method. But that only gets us so far. In the end we're left asking, in the words of Renoir, *how does he do it?* Cezanne himself didn't know. All that repeated subject matter shows he needed to get the painting right, even if he (and we) only knew what that right looked like when he saw it.

This show doesn't solve the 'enigma' of Cezanne, but it gives us a grand opportunity to explore and enjoy that enigma.

Owen Higgs

◆POEM◆

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

by Robert Frost

The American poet Robert Frost (1874–1963) was something of a laureate for the nation. The US Senate passed a resolution honouring his 75th birthday: ‘His poems have helped to guide American thought and humor and wisdom, setting forth to our minds a reliable representation of ourselves and of all men.’ His home state of Vermont, New England, named a mountain after him. And he was the first poet invited to recite a piece at a presidential inauguration, that of John F. Kennedy in 1961. For this wrote ‘Dedication’ but the sunlight dazzled him and he reverted to the president’s original choice, ‘The Gift Outright’, and revised its ending on the spot for the occasion. When, in November 1963, the coffin of JFK was brought to the White House, mere months after Frost’s own death, a broadcaster concluded his bulletin with this poem ‘Stopping by woods’ but broke down. Plenty in Frost points to those who have come after him, particularly Mary Oliver, and his work is rewarding in its celebration of nature, affirmation of life, and quiet, philosophical questions.

This piece is both formal and lyrical. Note the rhyming structure: three lines the same but one different, which becomes the main rhyme in the following stanza, and so on. It’s also in iambic pentameter, as deployed in sonnets, and used by Shakespeare and Dante, and the ‘chain rhyme’ of that one line forming the main next rhyme recalls the Italian’s *terza rima*. This is only broken at the end, with the repeated line to emphasise that recognition of what lies ahead. It is essentially about a lone traveller through the countryside, pausing for a moment with nature in the deep midwinter. But it also holds something for all those who make long journeys at this time of year. Theologically, the Holy Family might be recalled on their own long journey – although with a donkey instead of a horse, and probably without so much snow. But there is a point here about their particular journey with moments of reflection, similar to the way in which T.S. Eliot endows the Magi. And might it even be an allusion to Father Christmas, the Santa Claus gift-giver of legend himself, who has so many ‘promises to keep’? For ‘Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven’ (Mt 18.3). **ND**

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound’s the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.



The Story of the Holy Innocents

John Gayford looks at how innocent children were put to death in the place of Christ by an evil king

The only biblical account we have of the slaughter of the innocents by order of King Herod is in St Matthew's Gospel 2.16. Thus it is important to have some idea about Herod. He is often called 'Herod the Great' who was, with Roman authority, Governor of Judea, but he was a complex, wealthy and violent man who murdered a wife and two sons for fear that his power was being usurped. He provided money to rebuild the Temple but his Jewishness was disputed. He himself was from an Edomite background, a small South Palestinian area forcibly converted to Judaism by John Hyrcanus, a Jewish high priest in the second century BC. Unless the Edomites became Jews they had to leave the kingdom, most obeyed this edict and often married into Jewish families. Thus Herod was not a Jew of the house of David or Aaron. He became a vassal of Imperial Rome with an ambivalent relationship with Jewish authorities as is described in St Matthew (2.1-5). We hear in verse 16 that Herod was angry and had all the male children under the age of two killed in and around Bethlehem.

We cannot be certain how many were killed nor how big a region covered. The estimated number of boys murdered varies considerably. Herod had a reputation for rage especially towards the end of his life. The population of a town like Bethlehem may have been only about 300. Josephus (c37-100AD), and writing well after the event, does not mention it, so perhaps saw it as a minor event. Herod had such a violent reputation that the death of a few children was not worth recording (especially as he had murdered a wife and two sons). If the region was small so may the numbers have been. Most soldiers would be reluctant to murder children, having to tear them away from their mothers to verify their sex before killing them. If Herod the old man was not at the scene to ensure his orders, it was possible to exaggerate official numbers without raising suspicion. There is even a suggestion that the whole story was a legend to parallel Pharaoh's plan to eradicate Moses (Exodus 1.13-22). St John the Baptist would also be a potential victim but the apocryphal Protevangelium of James claims Elizabeth his mother took him away to the hills for safety. If she had knowledge of what was to happen the word may have spread through mother and baby groups of the region and other mothers may have followed her example. The question could be raised if Joseph had warning of what was going to happen he could have shared the information with others who



The Martyrdom of the Holy Innocents by Gustave Doré (1868)

may have followed the example of the Holy Family into exile.

By contrast with our efforts to decrease the number of victims, the Eastern Churches have claimed a very large number of what they call simply *the Holy Children*. The Byzantine liturgy speaks of 14,000 and the Syrian Church of 64,000 but the Coptic Church speaks of 140,000, the same number in Revelation 14.1-5 used as a reading for this feast. There have been attempts to expand these numbers by including children of both sexes who have been murdered in atrocities through history or in Ukraine now. Some include babies lost in miscarriage, stillbirth or abortion; and our neglect of poverty, disease or famine. Perhaps too conveniently, theologians may consider the Innocents as myth with a message.

Since the fifth century the feast has been part of Western liturgy but it appeared in Christian art from the 3rd century. In the Liturgy of Pope Pius V the Mass was celebrated in violet vestments but since 1969 it is celebrated in red vestments. It was the only feast in which the Gloria was omitted but this has now been returned. Cathedral and large church choirs with a musical tradition take a break after their Advent and Christmas activities so the liturgy of the Holy Innocents is more often said than sung on 28 December. Gregorian chant enthusiasts will find that there is a full set of antiphons for the Offices and Propers for Mass in Latin, most translated into English either from Roman or Sarum sources. Gregorian chant Masses and the offices are rarely heard sung in full other than in abbeys that have an association with Solesmes. There was a Tract (sung on weekdays) and an Alleluia (sung when the feast fell on Sundays). The Introit to the Mass *Ex ore infantium* (out of the mouths of babes and

sucklings) taken from Psalm 8 has an element of haunting sacred awe but often sung too slowly outside monastic settings in an attempt to project sadness. The Communion *Vox in Rama* (a voice in Rama) taken from St. Matthew 2.18 is the only other piece that is specific to this feast, the melodies of the Gradual, Alleluia and Offertory being shared with other Masses. At one time there was a special tone used for the Epistle (Revelation 14.1-5) sung by two or three sub-deacons alternating between verses. The Gospel tells the story as recorded in St. Matthew 2.13-18. Before the Council of Trent there was a sequence for this feast (*Celsa pueri concrepent melodia*) often translated as Sound forth O Children your shrill melodies. This like the majority of sequences was abandoned in 1570 after the Council of Trent. The beautiful hymns composed by Prudentius (348-413) *Audit Tyrannus Anxius* (The anxious tyrant hears with dread) and *Salvete, flores martyrum* (All hail, you infant martyr flowers) are retained in the Divine Office of the Roman Rite but now in the Office of Readings and Lauds. In terms of other hymns, Sedulius (c. 450) wrote *Hostis Herodes impie* (Why Impious Herod, should you fear) used at Vespers. The Venerable Bede (672-735) wrote the long *Hymnum canentes martyrum* translated and set to music by John Mason Neale as The hymn for conquering Martyrs, EH 35. There are other musical settings of this feast.

At the office of Readings the second is from a sermon of St. Quodvultdeus (his name means 'what God wants') who became bishop of Carthage in 421 and communicated frequently with St Augustine of Hippo. This reading explains some of the historical theology behind the events. Quodvultdeus is sympathetic to Herod in his rage and ignorance but is more sympathetic to the parents who mourn their children, finally he offers consolation to the children who are helpless to enter the battle but carry off the palms of victory. After this reading a prolonged pause for contemplation is well worth while.

There are a number of famous paintings of the massacre of the Innocents: Pieter Bruegel the elder painted in the 16th century and his son in the 17th century. Rubens and others also painted famous works on this subject. Regretfully some artists painted macabre pictures. There is a surviving 'Coventry Carol' of the 16th century which has a haunting lullaby lament in English of a mother grieving over her murdered son. The author is unknown but the text was written down by Robert Crowe in 1534 and the melody printed in 1591. Now sung as a Christmas carol it was originally sung as one of three songs at a Coventry Mystery play performed by the Guild of Shearmen and Tailors. It tells the Christmas story focusing on St. Matthew chapter two including the massacre of the innocents by King Herod. The plays were suppressed as a result of the Reformation but interest in the Mystery plays started again in the 19th century. In them we see three women with their children immediately after Joseph had been warned by an angel to take his family to Egypt. The text has been modernised, extra verses added and brought to fame in the 1940s after the bombing of Coventry Cathedral.

Holy Innocents day is celebrated on 28th December in the Western Church but has other dates in the Eastern Orthodox Churches. The massacre of the innocents is traditionally a commemoration of the first Christian Martyrs. Liturgy appears in the Leone Sacramentary of 485. Another name for this feast day is Childermas or Children's Mass Day. The feast continued to outrank Sundays within the Octave of Christmas until 1969 when the *motu proprio Mysteriorum Paschalis* removed this privilege except for churches holding this as dedication. The feast continued in the Book of Common Prayer of 1662 with a modified translation of the Sarum Latin Collect.

There are traditions of attempted reparation for children, to gather round the crib with their Christmas presents to have them blessed on this day. This should have some modern appeal. Other traditions are of 'boy bishops' possibly elected on St Nicholas Day (6 December). On Holy Innocents Day there could be non-sacramental parodies acted out such as 'boy bishops' who wear mitres and process with Canons, and may preach and sing where appropriate and might continue until the Feast of the Epiphany. Although there was official disapproval of these activities in the 11th century they continued. In monastic houses role reversal might appear, thus a novice may receive some of the dignity given to the Superior (Abbot or Abbess) while the latter served at table. This reversal of senior and junior roles could be extended into the family or community for the day and fathers were encouraged to bless their children. Rustic involvement developed local custom; as in the Christ-child removed from the crib and placed in safe hiding on Innocents' day. In the middle-ages this day was unkindly called 'All Fools day' or day of pranks with a tradition of children playing tricks on their elders and often rewarded for this. In Bethlehem there was a special veneration of the Innocents led by the Franciscans with solemnity.

So on this fourth day of our Christmas joy we are tempered by feelings of sadness, when we hear the words of the Coventry Carol, *Herod the king in his raging, charged he hath this day, his men of might, young children to slay*, and from an English translation of the Sequence, *Herod with a troubled mind, seeks the King of Light and heaven*.

There is a pathos in Jesus calling little children to him and the Innocents suffering for him. They were martyrs baptised by their own blood into salvation. As Augustine says the *Flores martyrum* were killed by the frost of persecution. ND

Suggested Further Reading: -

- Johnner, D. *The Chant of the Vatican Gradual*. Translated from the German by Monks of St. John's Abbey. Gregorian Institute of America Toledo Ohio 1948
- Jones, K. *The Holy Innocents* in Butlers Lives of the Saints: December (New Full Edition) Burns & Oates the Liturgical Press Collegeville Minnesota 2000.
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What the Magi meant for Matthew

Robin Baker offers a Reflection for Epiphany

Although as Christians we have read St Matthew's account of the magi's adoration of Jesus many times, it is the traditions these exotic figures inspired that shape their image in our minds. The Matthean description is tantalizingly spare. He neither provides their names nor states their number. Their place of origin is vague: 'the east'. Naturally, given the magi's role in the Nativity, contemplative speculation has sought to fill the gaps. Accordingly, they numbered three – or twelve in one tradition – and they were kings. Their names were Caspar, Melchior, and Baltazar. They came from Persia, Babylon/Chaldea, Arabia and/or Ethiopia.



We must infer that the Evangelist's reluctance to supply a fuller background betrays his view that it would be, for one reason or another, superfluous. What apparently mattered to him was that these figures were foreign, Eastern, able to read God's message in the heavens, and faithful to act accordingly. Alternatively, his reticence may indicate that he believed his contemporary readers already possessed the information that his account omits. In favour of this option is the fact that this is how the Evangelist wrote. We see it writ large in the genealogy of Christ with which his book begins. He does not supply the backstories of the ancestors he lists, such as Tamar, Rahab, and Uzziah, since he expected his readers to know them and to reflect on the associations. The initial twelve words of the Gospel, a work rich in number symbolism, referred them to Genesis: Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ. Ἀβραάμ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰσαάκ, 'book [of] genesis [of] Jesus Christ, son [of] David, son [of] Abraham. Abraham begat (the) Isaac.' Specifically, they directed them to Abraham and Isaac, whose story reached its climax in the father's willingness to sacrifice his son at God's command. The episode is recast in the Gospel. But it is now not Abraham's son who will be sacrificed, but God's. And this subject inspires and infuses the entire work.

The Genesis account of Abraham elucidates the magi narrative. The second dream reported in Genesis is seen by a foreign ruler, Abimelech. In it God appears in order to protect Sarah and Abraham's blood-line through Isaac. It results in this foreign luminary offering costly gifts to Abraham (Gen 20.1-21.3). The second dream St Matthew recounts is seen by foreign luminaries, the magi, who offer costly gifts to Abraham's descendant.

As revealingly, the first dream in Genesis – Abraham's – immediately follows an episode in which he remonstrates with Yahweh regarding his childlessness. Yahweh counters his complaint by instructing him to look at and *səpōr* ('count') the stars for such will his progeny be. 'Abraham believed Yahweh and it was as-

cribed to him for righteousness' (15.1-6). Thus, the patriarch's star-gazing results in his being deemed 'righteous' and obtaining the promise of offspring. The star-gazing of the magi, the archetypal scribes (*sōpārīm*) of astral messages, alerts them to the birth of the 'righteous one,' the King of the Jews (Mt 2.2; 27.19), Abraham's descendant through Isaac and the culmination of the promise.

Whichever option is correct, it is striking that St Matthew establishes his case for Jesus' kingship on astrology given the opprobrium it receives in some parts of the Hebrew Bible. His decision to present magi

as positive figures may have been equally controversial since elsewhere in the New Testament (Acts 8.13) *magos* has a negative connotation.

He addresses the astrology issue in two ways. First, he constructs the case that Jesus is the almighty king. The identification of 'star' with 'king' seen in the Palestinian targums and Qumran texts, an identification based on Num 24.17 - 'A star shall come out of Jacob and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel' – is fulfilled in Christ. Second, the Evangelist anchors the beginning of his work in Isaiah 7 where Yahweh commanded Ahaz king of Judah to request an omen 'either in the depths of the underworld or the heavens above.' Ahaz demurred. In response, God promised that a virgin will bear the child Immanuel/Emmanuel. The Evangelist uses its fulfilment as a foundation block of his Gospel. Furthermore, in a brilliant flourish, he also introduces omens that Ahaz refused to request, and with them he structures the Gospel. The omen in the heavens is observed and deciphered by the magi and heralds Emmanuel's birth. The omen of the depths of the underworld – the 'sign of Jonah' – is enacted in His death, burial and resurrection. The message is unequivocal: since celestial and terrestrial omens were offered by God in Isaiah, they are legitimate in the Kingdom of Heaven.

What, then, did the magi represent for St Matthew? His account suggests four things to me. First, in Arthur Patzia's words, the wisdom of the Orient, so prized and famed in Antiquity, 'finds its goal in Christ.' Second, the Gentiles will recognize and worship Jesus as Lord, just as the magi did. Third, 'seeing' presupposes time spent 'watching,' as St Matthew and St Mark repeatedly emphasized. And fourth, epiphany, so profoundly personal in its reception, is potentially universal in its outworking. [ND]

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Ancient Treasure, Gift of the East

Simon Cotton explores the chemistry of myrrh, one of the Magi's presents

Myrrh is referred to in several different parts of the Bible.

At this time in the Church's year, we associate it with the visit of the Magi: *'And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh'* (Matthew 2.11). It also foreshadows Christ's Passion: *'And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not'* (Mark 15.23). So myrrh was esteemed for its analgesic

properties and also for its use among the spices used in embalming the dead body: *'And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight'* (John 19.39).

But myrrh goes back much further than that, its use in perfumery recorded in Esther 2.12: *'so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women'*. Beyond that, even further, to the anointing oil in Exodus: *'Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil'* (Exodus 30.23-25).

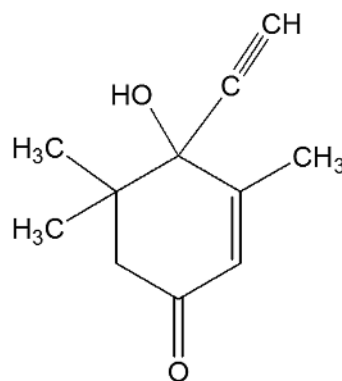
Myrrh comes from *Commiphora* species of the *Burseraceae* family, small trees with short branches found particularly in southern Arabia and northeast Africa, especially Somalia, which is reportedly the world's largest source of myrrh; it is also produced in a wider area including the Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and as far south as Kenya. Myrrh is collected through a similar method to frankincense (ND December 2021, pp 9-10) by cutting into the bark of the tree and collecting the yellow sap, which solidifies to a reddish-brown solid. As far back as 2800 BC, myrrh was imported into Ancient Egypt from the Land of Punt, now believed to have



been what we know as Eritrea and eastern Ethiopia. Myrrh was brought into Mesopotamia and Europe from India and Arabia over what became known as the spice route.

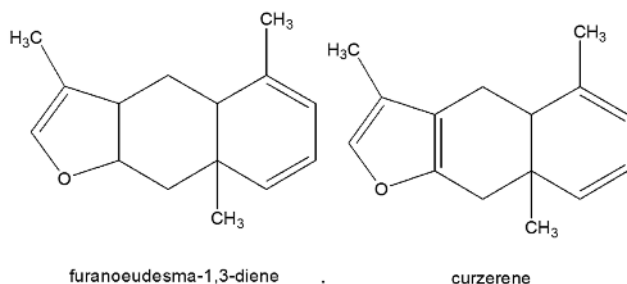
As with frankincense, myrrh has a variable composition, with the molecules present and their amount depending upon factors like geography and climate, as well as the particular species of tree. Like frankincense, myrrh has a characteristic fragrance, though its fragrance is more earthy and bitter. Remember the hymn line *'Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume Breathes a life of gathering gloom'*? Well, in Arabic, the word *murr* means 'bitter'.

Myrrh is made up of many different molecules. 4-ethynyl-4-hydroxy-3,5,5-trimethyl-2-Cyclohexen-1-one, accounts for the highest percentage of the components in myrrh essential oil (12.01%).



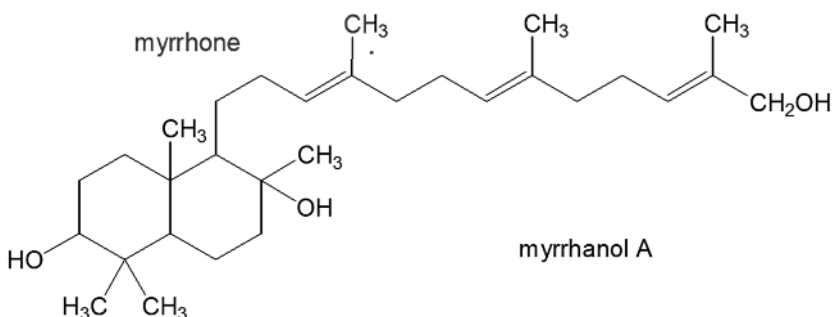
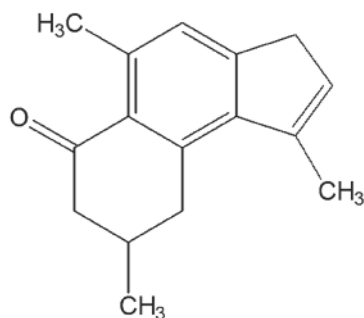
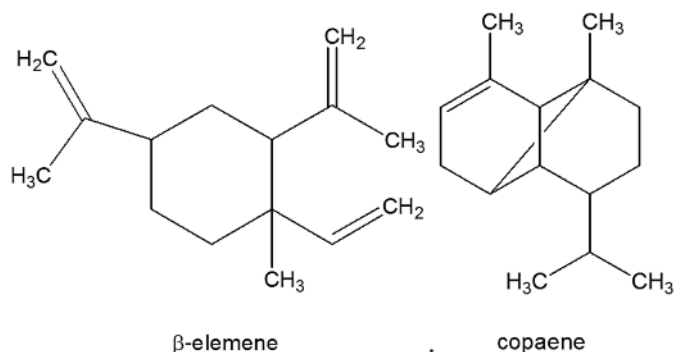
4-ethynyl-4-hydroxy-3,5,5-trimethyl-2-cyclohexen-1-one

Perhaps the most important of the molecules is furanoeudesma-1,3-diene, which is not just an important contributor to its smell.



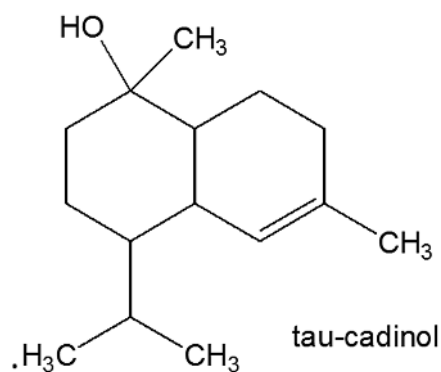
About 25 years ago, scientists at the University of Florence carried out some tests on mice. They placed them on a hotplate at 52°C and timed how long it took for the mice to lick their paws, a sign that the hotplate was causing pain. They then fed the mice a dose of myrrh, and found that the mice held out longer before licking. Other tests showed that of the molecules in the myrrh, furanoeudesma-1,3-diene and another similar molecule, curzerene, acted as painkillers, and that they were acting on the opioid receptors in the mouse brain (the same receptors that painkillers like morphine act upon).

Hydrocarbons like β -elemene and copaene are also abundant in myrrh, whilst other molecules present in myrrh include myrrhone and myrrhanol A, of which the latter has attracted scientific interest on account of its anti-inflammatory properties.

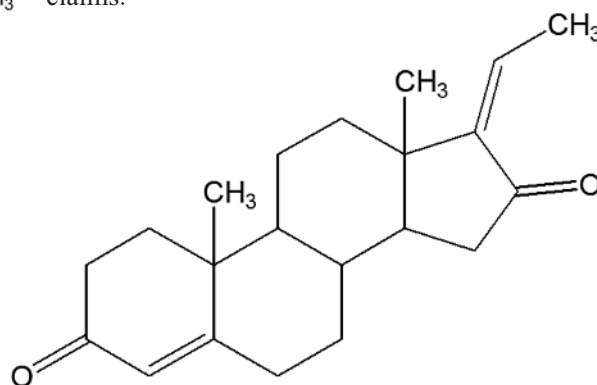


Medicinal uses of myrrh go back thousands of years. Historically, myrrh was often used in perfumes and medicines, for healing wounds, including bleeding gums and sore throats (it is put into mouthwashes and toothpaste to this day) and to preserve bodies. It has been used in the East too; myrrh is associated with women's health, including treatment of menstrual pain. It is a significant drug in Chinese Traditional Medicine, where it is known as *mo yao* and has been used for the treatment of syphilis, leprosy and rheumatism. In Eastern medicine myrrh is frequently used in conjunction with frankincense; it has often been reported they when used together they exhibit synergistic effects (i.e. 'stronger together').

Recently extracts of myrrh have been found to have antibacterial properties against bacteria including *Staphylococcus aureus*. One compound mentioned in that context is tau-cadinol. More than that, such extracts have been found to possess activity against certain liver, colon and breast cancer cell lines.



A molecule with a steroid-like structure called guggulsterone, found in *Commiphora mukul* from the Indian subcontinent, has been claimed to reduce cholesterol levels, but several independent research groups have found no evidence to support these claims.



Myrrh's history goes back thousands of years, but there is scope for many more discoveries in the future.

ND

Secrets betrayed

Mark McIntyre looks at suffering through a new study of Anne Frank and her family

One author has suggested that to place the suffering of Carmelite martyrs such as St Edith Stein and St Titus Brandsma in context, the Christian needs to read recently published *The Betrayal of Anne Frank* by Rosemary Sullivan (2022). It considers the impact of the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands on the lives of both Jews and non-Jews. This important historical and ethical reflection reminds us ‘by the end of World War II, the Netherlands would have the worst record of Jewish deaths in Western Europe: 73 per cent of Jews in the Netherlands died’. Sullivan goes on to say that of the estimated 25,000 Jews that went into hiding in the Netherlands, around a third were betrayed to the Nazis.

This latest investigation, by the Cold Case Team of 2016-21, looks into who betrayed the Frank family and those hiding with them at Prinsengracht 263 in central Amsterdam. A telephone call is reported to have been taken on the 4th August 1944, by SS officer Josef Silberbauer, that Jews were known to be hiding there and so the ‘Jew Hunting unit’ was despatched to raid the house. A further twist is that Otto Frank may have discovered who turned them in and kept it secret, hence the subtitle ‘less a mystery unsolved than a secret well kept’.

From the Christian perspective, our emphasis is on the analysis of motives for the betrayal of so many Jewish families in hiding in the Netherlands. Anne herself wrote in her diary, rather naively: ‘It is a wonder I haven’t abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impossible. Yet I keep clinging to them, because I still believe, in spite of everything that people are truly good at heart.’

In contrast Elie Wiesel the Holocaust survivor and author of *Night* wrote: ‘Hunger – thirst – fear – transport – selection – fire – chimney: these words all have intrinsic meaning, but in those times they meant something else.’ And in another context, the Russian author Alexander Solzhenitsyn commented that once the tolerance level for evil is surpassed in the world then all morality cracks and human beings become capable of anything.

In such dire and terrifying circumstances, it would appear that human beings are capable of anything and the definition of words and life as we understand them suddenly change. The Nazi occupation gives testimony to these dramatic changes. Dutch neighbours become suspicious of one another to the point of betrayal. Co-workers, employers and employees could inform on one another. A straightforward grocery deliveries became complex and clandestine operations to feed those in hiding.

The Team looked at various possibilities for who may have given away the hiding place, but of most interest were the wider motives that betrayal presented, including those working with and for Otto Frank in the

‘Opekta’ company, and those who suspected there were Jews hiding in Prinsengracht 263 (including residential neighbours and people employed in surrounding companies overlooking the Annex and factory courtyard). There were also enlisted informers on those in hiding, often referred to as ‘V-men and women’ – often paid a fee, or *Kopgeld*, based on how many Jews were captured as a result. Some were even placed in prisons and transit centres like Westerbork camp, from which 102,000 Jews were deported by train to concentration camps in Eastern Europe. Some became informers to be acquitted of petty crimes, others were of Jewish background and often gained the trust of other Jewish families and the Resistance in order to discover other hiding houses and then hand over their lists to the Nazis.

Why would people do this? Is it simply as Solzhenitsyn said that in such circumstances human beings are capable of anything? Was Anne Frank so completely wrong in her diary to believe that, despite all that she experiences, people are truly good at heart? Of the person seen as responsible for the raid, Sullivan says: ‘a person put into a devil’s dilemma by circumstances for which he was not to blame, and, under pressure, he may have failed to understand fully the consequences of his actions. He did not turn over information out of wickedness or self-enrichment, as so many had. Like Otto Frank’s, his goal was simple: to save his family.’

Sullivan explores how people respond to evil around them. Some hide away to in attempt to save themselves and loved ones, others give in out of fear in order to survive. Some are forced to comply and cooperate with evil, others do so willingly and for profit. Some again simply long for it to be over and come through with their lives and families together. The Holocaust reminds us of many things, but especially that for so many Jewish people and others, they were not given that option of being able to come through.

Sullivan’s hopeful concluding chapter is called ‘The Shadow City’. In Amsterdam today there are at least 80 monuments to the Second World War including the Anne Frank House, the Jewish theatre from where at least 6700 Jews were deported, the children’s nursery and school from which at least 600 Jewish children were saved and placed in hiding. A statue of a dock worker commemorates the strike in the city when the first arrests of Jewish men were taking place. ‘Lotty’s bench’ memorialises the horrendous treatment of those returning as survivors of the concentration camps, often with nothing and forced to sleep outdoors on park benches. Though some of the memorials and commemorations speak of holocaust horror, others speak of great heroism, perhaps giving us some hope that even among the evils of our modern day, Anne Frank was right: *people are truly good at heart.* **ND**

Holocaust Memorial Day is on 27 January.

parish directory

BATH Bathwick Parishes, St Mary's (bottom of Bathwick Hill), **St John's** (opposite the fire station) Sunday - 9.00am Sung Mass at St John's, 10.30am at St Mary's 6.00pm Evening Service - 1st, 3rd & 5th Sunday at St Mary's and 2nd & 4th at St John's. Contact Fr Peter Edwards 01225 460052 or www.bathwick-parishes.org.uk

BEXHILL on SEA St Augustine's, Cooden Drive, TN39 3AZ Sunday: Mass at 6pm (first Mass of Sunday) Sunday: Mass at 8am, Parish Mass with Junior Church at 10am. Further details of services and events at St. Augustine's please visit our website: www.staugustinesbexhill.org.uk

BIRMINGHAM St Agatha, Stratford Road, Sparkbrook (B11 1QT) "If it is worth believing in, it is worth travelling for" Sunday Mass 11am. Contact 0121 449 2790 www.saintagathas.org.uk

BISHOP AUCKLAND St Helen Auckland, Manor Road, West Auckland Medieval church. A Parish of the Society of S. Wilfrid and S. Hilda. Sunday: Sung Mass 10am, Evensong and Benediction (First Sunday of the Month) 6pm. Weekday Mass: Mon 7pm, Tues, Fri, Sat 9.30am, Wed 10am, Rosary Mon 6.30pm. Messy Church every third Saturday 11.30am, Parish Priest: Canon Robert McTeer SSC 01388 604152. www.sthelenchurch.co.uk Curate Fr Edward Gunn 07485 756177 st.helen.curate@gmail.com Youth and Community Worker 07485545278 communitysha@yahoo.com

BLACKPOOL St Stephen on the Cliffs, Holmfield Road, FY2 9RG. A SWISH Registered Parish. Sundays - 9am Said Mass, 10.30am Solemn Mass, 6pm Evening Service. Easy Access & Loop. Tel 01 253 351484 www.ststephenblackpool.co.uk

BOSTON LINCOLNSHIRE St Nicholas, Skirbeck Boston's oldest Parish Church. A Society and Forward in Faith Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Richmond. Sunday Solemn Mass 9.30am. Daily Mass, Feasts, Solemnities, Offices, Benediction and Confessions as displayed on noticeboards. Parish priest: Fr John Underhill SSC 01205 362734 www.skirbeckstnicholas.com

BOURNEMOUTH St Ambrose, West Cliff Road, BH4 8BE. A Parish under the patronage of Ss. Wilfrid & Hilda. Sunday: 8am Low Mass BCP, 10am Sung Mass Traditional Ceremonial (CW), 4pm Solemn Evensong, 2nd Sunday of the month Solemn Evensong with Benediction. Daily Mass, Monday to Saturday, at 8.45am and Daily Evening Prayer, Monday to Saturday, at 5.30pm and the Rosary on Wednesdays at 5.00pm before Evening Prayer. Parish Priest Fr Adrian Pearce SSC 01202 911569; Parish office 01202 766772. Email: afpear2@gmail.com

BOURNEMOUTH St Katharine, Church Road, Southbourne, BH6 4AS. A Parish under the Episcopal oversight of the Bishop of Richmond. Sung Mass at 10.30am on Sunday. Contact: Dean Quinton, Churchwarden 01425 672601 deanquinton@hotmail.com

BOWBURN, Durham Christ the King, DH6 5DS; A parish of the Society, under the care of the Bishop of Beverley. Durham City's 'Forward in Faith' parish. Sunday: 11am Sung Mass and Sunday School; Weekday Mass: Wed 9.30am, Fri 6.30pm; Parish Priest: Fr John Livesley SSC 01388 814817

BRADFORD St Chad, Toller Lane (B6144, 1 mile from city centre). Society Parish. Sunday: Solemn Mass 10.45, Solemn Vespers and Benediction (Latin) 18.30. Tuesday: Mass 18.00. Wednesday: Mass 19.30. English Missal. Saturday: 18.30 Vigil Mass. For all other services and information please contact the Parish Priest, Fr Liam Beadle liam.beadle@gmail.com

BRIGHTON & HOVE WAGNER GROUP St Barnabas' (11am) Fr. John Eldridge 01273 881761 www.stbarnabashove.co.uk. **St Bartholomew's** (10.30am Fr Ben Eadon 01273 325301. **St Martin's** (10.30am) Fr Trevor Buxton 01273 604687. **St Michael's** (10.30am) 01 273 822284. **St Paul's** (11am) Fr Ben Eadon 01273 325301. (Sunday Principal Mass times in brackets.)

BRISTOL Ebbsfleet parishes All Hallows, Easton BS5 0HH. **Holy Nativity**, Knowle BS4 2AG. Sunday Mass 10.00 a.m. (both Churches), Weekday masses: Tuesday 7.15 p.m & Wednesday

day 10.00 a.m. (All Hallows). Contacts: Fr Jones Mutemwakwenda 01179551804, www.allhallowseaston.org Philip Goodfellow, Churchwarden. 07733 111 800 phil@holynativity.org.uk www.holynativity.org.uk

BROMLEY St George's Church, Bickley Sunday 8.00am Low Mass, 10.30am Sung Mass. Low Mass Wednesday 9.30am, Friday 9.30am, Saturday 9.30am with Rosary. Parish Priest Fr Henry Everett 0208 295 6411. Parish website: www.stgeorgebickley.co.uk and find us on Facebook.

CARDIFF near rail, bus, Principality Stadium, city centre and Bay Daily Mass **St Mary**, Bute Street Sunday: Solemn Mass 11am; Parish Priest Fr Dean Atkins SSC 029 2048 7777 www.stmaryscf10.co.uk

CHARD The Good Shepherd, Furnham. Under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Ebbsfleet. Sunday: Sung Mass 9.45am, Miss Alison Cruickshank 01460 68779 www.churchofthegoodshepherd-chard.weebly.com

CHESTERFIELD S. Paul, Hasland, Derbyshire, S41 0JX Sunday: Sung Parish Mass 10.30am, Low Mass: Wednesday 10.30am, Benediction: Last Tuesday 7.15 pm, Cell Mass: 2nd Friday 7.15 pm. **S. James the Apostle**, Temple Normanton, Derbyshire, S42 5DB Sunday: Parish Mass 9am, Thursday: Low Mass 7.15pm, except Benediction: 2nd Thursday 7.15 pm. Contact: Fr Geoffrey Borrowdale SSC 01246 232486 frgeoffrey@stpaulshasland.com www.stpaulshasland.com

CHOPWELL Saint John the Evangelist NE17 7AN A Society Parish. Sunday - Sung Mass 10am. Daily Office & Mass as displayed. Parish Priest: Rev Tom Brazier: 07799 217775 greensidevicar@solo.net

COVENTRY St. Oswald Tile Hill Monday & Thursday - 9am BCP Morning Prayer, Tuesday, Friday & Saturday - 9am Morning Prayer (CW), Tuesday - 1pm Rosary Prayers, Wednesday - 9.30am Mass, Sunday - 10am Mass, [First Sunday] 6pm Evensong & Benediction. Fr Edward Backhouse SSC - 07485 493418. Church Office - 07512 924401. Find us on Facebook www.stoswalds.co.uk

DERBY St Anne's. Sunday Sung Mass 1115. For directions and details of weekday Masses and Choral Evensongs with Benediction - see A Church Near You website. Fr Giles Orton SSC 07768 827101

DEVIZES St. Peter's, Bath Road, Devizes, Wiltshire. Society of St. Wilfrid and St. Hilda parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Ebbsfleet. Sundays 10am Sung Mass. Wednesdays 10.30am Low Mass. On major festivals & Saints' Days - times vary. Contact: Duty volunteer Tel: 0785 269628 stpetersdevizes@outlook.com www.achurchnearyou.com/9679

DONCASTER St Wilfrid's, Cantley DN4 6QR A beautiful and historically significant church with much Comper restoration. A Society Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverley. Modern catholic worship with a friendly atmosphere. Sunday: 8am Mass and 10am Parish Mass. Wednesday: 9.30am Mass (followed by coffee morning). Friday: 8pm Mass. Saturday 9.30am Mass. Visitors very welcome. Contact: Fr. Andrew Howard ssc. (01302) 285316, mob. 0774 0932758 fatherahoward@gmail.com

DONCASTER Benefice of Edlington S John the Baptist (DN12 1AX) with **Hexthorpe S Jude** (DN4 0BT), Sung Mass Sundays 9.15am Edlington. Youth Group at Edlington on Fri 7pm, Messy Church at Edlington on the last Monday of each month 4.00 pm at the ECO centre (DN12 1AB). Please refer to our Facebook pages for details of other activities and service times for St Jude's (Hexthorpe). <https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsEdlington> and <https://www.facebook.com/stjudeshexthorpe>

EASTBOURNE St Saviour's A Society Parish. Sunday: Said Mass 9.00am Solemn Mass 10.30am. Daily Mass & Office. For details and information contact Fr Mark McAulay SSC, 01323 722317 www.stsaviourseastbourne.org.uk

ELLAND All Saints, Charles Street, HX5 0LA A Parish of the Society under the care of the Bishop of Wakefield. Serving Traditionalists in Calderdale. Sunday Mass 9.30am. Mass Tuesday & Friday 9.30am. Other Times from Fr David Burrows SSC, 01422 373184

David.burrows@leeds.anglican.org
<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/9987/>

FOLKESTONE Kent, St Peter on the East Cliff A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Richmond. Solemn Mass: Sunday at 10.30 am. Benediction with Exposition: Sunday at 6 pm. Weekday Masses: daily at 12 noon. Thursday: 11 am coffee/tea prior to Mass. Contact The Parish Priest 01303 680 441 <http://stpetersfolkestone.co.uk> e-mail: church@stpetersfolkestone.co.uk

GRIMSBY St Augustine, Legsby Avenue Lovely Grade II Church by Sir Charles Nicholson. A Forward in Faith Parish under Bishop of Richmond. Sundays: Parish Mass 10am, Solemn Evensong and Benediction 6pm (Third Sunday). Contact telephone number 07941894822

HALIFAX St Paul, King Cross: Queens Road, HX1 3NU. An inclusive resolution parish receiving sacramental provision from the Bishop of Wakefield. Sunday: 11.00 Solemn Mass; Occasional Choral Evensong. www.stpaulskingcross.co.uk

HARTLEPOOL St Oswald's, Brougham Terrace. A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverley. Sunday: Sung Mass 10am. Daily Mass, Offices and Confessions as displayed. Parish Priest: Fr Richard Massheder, 01429 272934

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD St Francis of Assisi, Hammerfield, Glenview Road, HP1 1TD. Under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Richmond. Sunday Sung Mass at 10am. Solemn Evensong and Benediction at 6.30pm (4th Sunday). Traditional rite and ceremonial sung to Merbecke. Vicar: Fr Michael Macey, 01 442 243258 e-mail: vicar@stjohnsboxmoor.org.uk

KINGSTON-upon-THAMES St Luke's, Gibbon Road (short walk from Kingston railway station) Sunday services: 8am Low Mass (English Missal), 10.30am Sung Mass (Western Rite), 5pm Evensong. Weekday services Tuesday to Friday 9am Mass. For further information phone the Parish Office 0759 2408419. Web page: www.stlukeskingston.uk

LINCOLN All Saints, Monks Road. LN2 5JN. Society & F in F Parish under the care of the Bishop of Richmond. Sundays - Sung Mass 9.30am. Evening Prayer 6pm. (2nd & 4th Evensong & Benediction) Weekdays - Monday, Wednesday, Saturday 8.30am; Thursday 7pm (Eucharistic Adoration from 6.15pm); Friday 10am. Vicar: Fr Paul Noble SSC- 01522 524319 www.allsaits-monksroad.com Facebook- All Saints Church, Monks Road

LOFTUS-IN-CLEVELAND St Leonard, Loftus & St Helen, Carlin How, situated on the North Yorkshire Coast. Sunday - Said Mass at Carlin How 9am and Family Mass at Loftus 10.30am. Parish Priest Fr. Adam Gaunt 01287 644047. Email: AdamGaunt@btinternet.com Further details on our website: www.loftusparish.co.uk or on Facebook: www.facebook.com/loftusparish

LONDON EC3 St Magnus the Martyr, Lower Thames Street (nearest Tube: Monument or Bank) A Society Parish Under the Episcopal Care of the Bishop of Fulham. Mass: Sunday 11am, refreshments following, Tues, Wed, Thur and Fri 12.30. [Midweek mass subject to change] Visitors very welcome. Website: www.stmtm.org.uk rector@stmtm.org.uk

LONDON E1W St Peter's, London Docks, Wapping Lane. Nearest station is Wapping (Overground). Buses: D3 or 100. A registered parish of the Society of S. Wilfrid & S. Hilda. Sunday Masses: 9.15am and 10.30am. Contact: Fr Jonathan Beswick SSC 0207 481 2985. For daily mass and office times please see website. www.stpeterslondondocks.org.uk

LONDON N21 Holy Trinity, Winchmore Hill, Green Lanes, N21 3RS. A modern catholic parish under the Bishop of Fulham. Every Sunday: Parish Mass 10.30am with Junior Church. Weekdays: Wednesday 11.00am Rosary or Exposition and Simple Benediction followed by 12.00 noon Angelus and Mass. Friday 12 noon Angelus and Mass. For the Sacrament of Reconciliation and other enquires contact Fr Richard Bolton at rdeb2010@btinternet.com or phone 0208 364 1583

LONDON N21 Holy Trinity, Winchmore Hill, Green Lanes, N21 3RS. A modern catholic parish under the Bishop of Fulham. Every Sunday: Parish Mass 10.30am with Junior Church. Weekdays: Wednesday 11.00am Rosary or Exposition and Simple Benediction followed by 12.00 noon Angelus and Mass. Friday 12 noon Angelus and Mass. For the Sacrament of Reconciliation and other enquires contact Fr Richard Bolton at rdeb2010@btinternet.com or phone 0208 364 1583

LONDON NW3 All Hallows Gospel Oak, Hampstead, NW3 2LD A Society Parish under the Bishop of Fulham. Parish Mass each Sunday at 10am. For further details: Prebendary David Houlding SSC

LONDON NW9 St Andrew's, Kingsbury (Wembley Park tube station then 83 bus (direction Golders Green) to Tudor Gardens.) A Society Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham. Sunday: Sung Mass 10.30am, Thursday: Mass 10.00am – both followed by refreshments. Contact: Fr Jason Rendell on 020 8205 7447 or standrews.kingsbury@london.anglican.org - www.standrewskingsbury.org.uk

LONDON SE11 4BB St Agnes Kennington Park, St Agnes Place. Under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham. 8 minutes walk from both Kennington and the Oval tube stations (Northern line) Sunday: 10am Solemn Mass. Daily Mass: Mon, Tue, Thur & Fri 10am. stagneskenningtonpark.co.uk 020 7820 8050 frpaulensor@btconnect.com

LONDON SE13 St Stephen, Lewisham (opposite Lewisham Station) A Forward in Faith Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham. Sunday: Parish Mass 10am. Weekdays: Mon 10am, Tue/Wed/Thur/Fri 12.15pm, Sat 10am. Parish Priest: Fr Michael Bailey - 07713 258429 www.sswsml.com

LONDON SE18 St Nicholas - the Ancient Parish Church - St Nicholas Road, Plumstead. A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Fulham. Masses: Solemn Sung 11am; Mon 12 noon; Tu es 12 noon; Wed 9.30am; Fri 12 noon; Sat 10am. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament half an hour before every Mass apart from Sunday. Modern rite, traditional ceremonial. Parish Priest: Fr Andrew Stevens 020 8854 0461

LONDON SW1 St Gabriel, Pimlico Sunday: Mass 8am; Sung Parish Mass 10.30am. Choral Evensong (termtime) 6pm. Wednesday: School mass (termtime) 9.15am; Choral Evensong (termtime) 5.30pm. Midweek Mass: Tues 9.30am, Wed 6.30pm, Thurs 9.30am, Fri 10am, Sat 9.30am. www.stgabrielspimlico.com

LONDON SW7 St Stephen, Gloucester Road (entrance in Southwell Gardens) A Fulham Jurisdiction Parish. Modern rite, traditional ceremonial, gospel preaching and good music. Sunday: Masses 9am and 11am (Solemn). Daily Mass: Tues 12.30pm, Wed 7pm, Thur 12.30pm, Fri 6pm, Sat 9.30am. Holy Hour: every Friday 5pm. Fr Philip Barnes SSC Contact: 020 7370 3418. Email: saint.stephen@homecall.co.uk www.saint-stephen.org.uk

LONDON SW11 The Ascension, Lavender Hill. Famous and flourishing Resolution and Society Parish, in the care of the Bishop of Fulham. Sunday: Solemn Mass at 11am. Weekday Masses: Tuesday at 10am; Wednesday at 19.30; Saturday at 11.30. Rosary: Saturday 11am. Active SOLW Cell which organises pilgrimage, social & fundraising activities. Parish Priest: Fr Philip Kennedy CMP. Contact: 020 7228 5340 ascensionsw11@gmail.com

LONDON SW19 All Saints, South Wimbledon. Society Parish Under the Episcopal Care of the Bishop of Fulham. Sunday Solemn Mass 11am. For other masses and services contact Fr Christopher Noke 020 8948 7986, the church office 020 8542 5514 or see <https://allsaintschurchsouthwimbledon.com/>

LONDON WC1 Christ the King, Gordon Square The Forward in Faith Church. Mon to Fri: Mass at 12.30pm, plus: Thur at 12 noon: Angelus followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament until 12.25pm. Other services: as announced. Contact the FIF Office on 020 7388 3588 or email: chaplain@forwardinfaith.com

LOWESTOFT St John the Baptist, Lound. Society Parish under the Episcopal oversight of the Bishop of Richborough. A warm welcome awaits you at our listed medieval building with a superb interior by Sir Ninian Comper. Sung Mass regularly each month. Please contact Rev Leslie Hobbs 01502 732536 or Kevin Turner 07828661970 for further details. www.loundworship.co.uk

MANCHESTER The Parish of Swinton and Pendlebury: All Saints, Wardley; Saint Augustine, Pendlebury; Saint Peter, Swinton. A Society Parish. Sunday Masses: 8am and 5.30pm (SP), Sung at 9.30am (AS), 10.30am (SP) and 11am (SA). Daily Mass in Parish. Priest Jeremy Sheehy 0161 794 1578, Parish Office: 0161 727 8175 email: paroffsandp@btconnect.com

MIDDLESBROUGH The Church of St Columba Sunday: Mass 9.30am. **St John the Evangelist** Sunday Mass 11am. For further information contact Fr Stephen Cooper 01642 824779

NORTH YORK MOORS S. Leonard, Loftus and S. Helen, Carlin How. Situated on the Cleveland Coast. Sunday - Mass at Carlin How 9am and at Loftus 10.30am. Further details on our website www.loftusparish.co.uk or on Facebook www.facebook.com/loftusparish Parish Priest Fr. Adam Gaunt 01287 644047 AdamGaunt@btinternet.com

PORTSMOUTH The Ascension and St Saviour, Society Parishes under the Bishop of Richborough. **The Ascension P02 OJG**, Parish Mass 11am. Low Mass: Thursday 7pm. **St Saviour P02 8PB**, Parish Mass 9.30am. Low Mass: Monday 10am, Wednesday 11.30am, Friday 7pm. Solemn Evensong and Benediction (last Sunday) 6pm. Modern rite, traditional ceremonial. Fr Benjamin Weitzmann SSC 02392439711 www.ascensionportsmouth.org.uk

PRESTON St George's, (PR1 2NP) - 'Preston's Hidden Gem'. Affiliated to The Society under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Burnley. Sunday - 10.30am Parish Mass. For Daily Masses see website. Parish Priest: Fr David Craven SSC (01772 755125 or dacraven@hotmail.com) www.sgp.org.uk or www.facebook.com/stgeorgethemartyrpreston

READING St Giles-in-Reading, Southampton Street (next to the Orade). Medieval church. Forward in Faith, affiliated with The Society. Sunday: Parish Mass 10.30am; Low Mass 6pm. Daily Offices (Mattins, Evensong) and Daily Mass (except Mondays, check website for times). Compline daily online at 9pm. Regular study groups, see our website. Parish Priest Fr David Harris 0118 957 2831. sgiles.vicar@gmail.com www.sgilesreading.org.uk

REDDITCH St Peter's Church, Crabbs Cross, Littlewoods, Redditch, B97 5LB - Services: Sunday Sung Mass 10.30am, Thursday Sung Mass 10am. Friday Stations of the Cross 11am. Contact: Diane Mowatt 01527 542222

ST. LEONARD'S-on-SEA Christ Church with St Mary Magdalen and St Peter and St Paul. Daily Mass 10.30am and 6pm. Sunday Mass 8am, 9.30am, 10.30am. Contact: Parish Office 01 424 447784 www.christchurchstleonards.co.uk

SALISBURY St Martin - the oldest Church in Salisbury. We can be found in St. Martin's Church Street just over the inner city ring road. Walk up St. Ann Street from the Close and through the tunnel. A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Exeter. Sunday: Mass at 8.00am, Parish Mass at 10.30am. For further information about the Daily Office, weekday mass and confession see www.sarumstmartin.org.uk or call 01722503123. Parish Priest: Fr. David Fisher. 01722 500896

SCARBOROUGH St Saviour with All Saints, Parish affiliated to the Society of St Wilfrid and Hilda and under the Episcopal Care of the Bishop of Beverley. Sunday Mass 11am with refreshments to follow. Evening Prayer and Benediction as announced. Weekday masses: Thursday 10.15am. Major Festivals times vary. Fr David Dixon 01723 363828 frdavidmart@gmail.com stsaivour-scarborough.org.uk

SEAHAM: COUNTY DURHAM Parish of The Society in the Episcopal Care of the Bishop of Beverley. **S John, Seaham Harbour SR7 7SA (with All Saints Deneside & S Mary's Seaham)** Sunday 11.00am Solemn Mass & Sunday School. 9.30am Sung Mass **All Saints** (9am 1st Sun) 10am Sung Mass **S Mary's** (1st Sun). 5pm Solemn Evensong & Benediction **S John's** (2nd Sun). Mass Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat, 9.30am & Tues 6pm & Thurs 12pm noon **S John's**, Sat 10.30am **S Mary's**. Confessions by arrangements with Priests. Clergy: Fr Paul Kennedy SSC 0191 3665496, Fr Chris Collins 0191 5817186.

SHREWSBURY All Saints with St Michael, North Street SY1 2JH (near Shrewsbury railway station). A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Ebbw Vale. Sunday Parish Mass 10.30am. Daily Mass and times of confessions: contact the Parish Priest, Fr Simon Sayer CMP. T: 01743 357862. allsaintscastlefields.vicar@gmail.com

SNEINTON, NOTTINGHAM St Stephen's with St Matthias. Services Thursday and Sunday at 9.30am. Contemporary Worship Wednesday at 7pm. Rev John Blakeley Priest in Charge. Mobile 07368 697 292 john@ststephens.info

SOUTHAMPTON, St Barnabas, Lodge Road (off Inner Avenue A33 London Road). A Society Parish (under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough) welcomes you. Sunday Solemn Mass 10am, Daily Mass and other service details from Churchwarden 023 8067 1883

SOUTH SHIELDS, St Michael and All Angels, South Westoe, NE33 3PD. A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverley. Sunday: Mass (BCP) 8am and Sung Mass 11am. Evensong and Benediction, first Sunday of the month, 5pm. Weekday Masses: Monday 9am, Tuesday 6pm and Thursday 11am (BCP). Contact Fr Mark Mawhinney SSC: 0191-454-8060 fathermarkmawhinney@gmail.com

SPENNYMOOR, CO. DURHAM St Andrew, Tudhoe Grange, DL16 6NE A parish of the Society, under the care of the Bishop of Beverley; Sundays: 9am Sung Mass, Last Sunday of the month - 10.30-12 noon "Messy Church" in the hall for children and families, 6pm Evensong (with Benediction on 1st Sunday of month); Weekday Masses: Tues 7pm, Thurs 10am. Parish Priest: Fr John Livesley SSC - 01388 814817

STOKE-ON-TRENT, LONGTON SS Mary and Chad. A Society Parish. Sunday: Parish Mass 10am. Weekdays: Mon. No service, Tues 6.30pm, Wed 10am Parish Prayers online, Thur 11.30am, Fri 6.30pm. Confessions after any Mass by appointment. Fr Kevin Palmer - Parish Office - 01782 313142 - <https://www.facebook.com/stmaryandstchads>

SUNDERLAND St Aidan, Ryhope Road, Sunderland, SR2 9RS. A Parish of the Society under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverley. Weekday Masses: Monday 9.30am, Tuesday 12.30pm, Wednesday 9.30am, Thursday 7pm and Saturday 9.30am. Holy Rosary Monday 6pm. Confessions Sat 6.15 pm or by appointment. Parish Office; Thursdays 6.00-6.30pm. Contact: Vicar Fr David Raine SSC: 0191 5143485, farvad@sky.com

SUNDERLAND St Mary Magdalene, Wilson Street, Millfield. A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Beverley. Sunday: Parish Mass 10.30am, Benediction 6.30pm, Mass 7pm. Weekdays Mass 10.30am Mon and Wed, 7.30pm Thurs, 7.30am Fri, 10.00am Sat. Rosary 7.15pm Thurs, 6.15pm Sat. Confessions 6.30pm Sat, or by appointment. Parish Priest: Beresford Skelton CMP SSC 0191 565 6318 www.st-marymagdalene.co.uk Visit our Facebook page

SUTTON All Saints, Benilton A Parish of the Society in the care of the Bishop of Fulham. Sunday: Low Mass 8am, Solemn Mass 9.30am. Weekdays Low Mass: Monday and Tues 7.30am, Wed 7.30pm, Thurs 10am, Fri 7.30am, Sat 10am. For further information please contact Fr David Chislett SSC: 07860 636 270. Churchwardens: Linda Roots 020 8644 7271, Carolyn Melius 020 8642 4276

SWINDON Parish of Swindon New Town A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Ebbw Vale. Sunday masses: 9.00am S. Saviour's; 10.30am S. Mark's; 11am S. Luke's. Daily mass as advertised. Contact 01793 538220 swindonnewtown@btinternet.com

TAUNTON Holy Trinity, Trinity St, Taunton, TA1 3JG. Society Parish. Modern Catholic liturgy. Musical tradition. Sunday Services 8, 10 & 6.30. Daily Mass. Fr Julian Laurence SSC, Vicar. See website for full details of services and events holyltrinity-taunton.org

TIPTON, West Midlands St John the Evangelist, Upper Church Lane, DY4 9ND. A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Ebbw Vale. Sunday Parish Mass 9.30am. During the vacancy, please check times on 'A Church Near You' or contact Churchwardens: Annmarie Hinde 07940 991306 or Glenis Darby 07958 371611

TIVIDALE, Oldbury, West Midlands St. Michael, Tividale Road B69 2LQ and Holy Cross, Ashleigh Road B69 1LL. A Society Parish. Sunday: Parish Mass 11am (St Michael's), Sunday School 2 pm (Holy Cross). Contact Fr Martin Ennis 01384 257888 frmennis@gmail.com, www.vicaroftividale.co.uk

N. YORKSHIRE near Skipton. Three rural churches. Sundays: **THORNTON St Mary** Sung Eucharist 9.15am. **MARTON St Peter** Prayer Book Holy Communion 10.45am. **BROUGHTON All Saints** Sung Holy Communion at 4 pm. (Winter time) 5pm (BST) Rector Fr. Robert Findlow. As services may vary, please check with Fr Robert on 01282-788621 or the Church Wardens. robert.findlow@leeds.anglican.org

WALSALL St Gabriel's, Fullbrook, Walstead Road, Walsall, off Junc.7 or 9 of M6. A Society Parish. Sunday: 8am Mass, 10am Parish Mass, 5pm Evening Mass. Daily Mass. Parish Priest: Fr Mark McIntyre 01922 622583

Continued on next page

WEDNESBURY, West Bromwich St Francis of Assisi, Friar Park WS10 0HU (5 minutes from junc 9 of M6) Sunday Morning Mass at 10.00am. Weekday Mass: Tues and Thur 9.30am, Wed and Fri 7.30pm, Sat 10am. *Lively worship in the Modern Catholic Tradition, with accessible preaching, and a stunning gem of a church beautifully restored.* Parish Priest: Fr Ron Farrell SSC: 0121 556 5823 Visit us at www.saintfrancisfriarpark.com

WELLINGBOROUGH St Mary the Virgin, Knox Road (near BR station) A Society Parish under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough. Sunday: Mass 10.30am. Daily Mass and Office. For further information see our Website: www.stmarywellingborough.org.uk

WEST KIRBY S. Andrew, Graham Road, Wirral, CH48 5DQ. Parish of the Society under the pastoral care of the Bishop of Beverley. Sunday 10:30 AM Sung Mass. Evensong 6pm Third Sunday. Tuesday 10am Low Mass. Traditional Church of England Parish in the Diocese of Chester, visitors always warmly welcomed.

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/12709/>
<https://www.facebook.com/saintandrewwestkirby/>

WESTON super MARE All Saints with St Saviour, All Saints Road, BS23 2NL. A Member of the Society under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Ebbsfleet - All are welcome. Sundays: 10.30am Parish Mass. Weekdays: 10am Mass (Tue and Thur). Priest-in-Charge: Fr Andrew Hughes SSC 01934 204217 fatherandrew@sky.com - Parish Office 01934 415379 allsaintsandstsaivour@btconnect.com Visit our website www.allsaintswsm.org

WEYMOUTH St Paul, Abbotsbury Road DT4 0BJ Under the episcopal care of the Bishop of Oswestry. Sundays: Morning Prayer 9.45am, Sung Mass 10.30am (creche and Sunday school from 10.00am), Evensong and Benediction 5pm (BST) or 4pm (GMT). For daily service times see www.stpaulsweymouth.org or ring Vicar: Fr Gregory Lipovsky on 07796 963703 or stpweymouth@gmail.com

WINCHESTER Holy Trinity. A Society Church under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough. Sunday: Sung Mass 10.30am. Weekday Said Mass: Thur 12 noon. Contact: Churchwarden: John Purver 01 962 732351 - email: office@holyltrinitywinches ter.co.uk

YORK All Saints, North Street (near Park Inn Hotel) A Society Parish. Sunday: Low Mass 10.30 am [1st Sunday], Sung or High Mass 5.30pm, Thursday Low Mass 12.45 pm. Feast Days are observed on the Day. Visitors to this beautiful medieval church are always welcome; the church is normally open during daylight hours. - website: www.allsaints-northstreet.org.uk

WALSINGHAM St Mary & All Saints, Church Street. A Society and Forward in Faith Parish under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough. Sunday: Solemn Mass, 11.00 am Weekdays: please see www.walsinghamparishes.org.uk Contact: Fr Harri Williams SSC, 01328 821316

Diocesan Directory

FIF, DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM Society Parishes Kingstanding St Luke 0121 354 3281, Kingstanding St Mark 0121 360 7288, Small Heath All Saints 0121 772 0621, Sparkbrook St Agatha 0121 449 2790, Washwood Heath St Mark & Saltley St Saviour* 0121 328 9855

FIF, DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY Society parishes Deal St Andrew 01843 654 102, Folkestone St Peter 01303 680 441, Harbledown St Michael 01227 479377, Maidstone St Michael 01622 721123, Ramsgate Holy Trinity 01843 654102, Rough Common St Gabriel 01227 479377

FIF, DIOCESE OF CHESTER Chester St Oswald and St Thomas of Canterbury, Fr Stephen Sheridan 01 244 399990; Congleton St James the Great, Society, Fr Colin Sanderson 01260 408203; Crewe St Barnabas, Society, Fr Ralph Powell 01270 212418; Crewe St Michael, *Coppenhall*, Society, Fr John Leal SSC 01270 215151; Knutsford St John the Baptist, Society, Rev Nigel Atkinson 01565 632834/755160; Liscard St Thomas the Apostle, Society, Fr Robert Nelson 0151 630 2830, Stockport St Peter, Society, Fr Kenneth Kenrick 0161 4830675; West Kirby St Andrew, Society, vacant (contact: Mr Paul Nelson, Churchwarden 0151 6326623)

FIF, DIOCESE OF COVENTRY Coventry Centre: St John the Baptist (Fr Dexter Bracey 024 7671 1687); Holbrooks: St Luke (Fr Simon Oakes 024 7668 8604); Radford: St Nicholas (024 7659 9152); Ansty: St James (Richard Grindal 024 7661 2628); Shilton: St Andrew (Interregnum); Nuneaton: St Mary the Virgin (Fr Roger Butcher 024 7638 2936).

FIF, DIOCESE OF DERBY Calow: St Peter, In Interregnum, contact: Sheila Cotton, 01 246 292538; Derby: St Anne, Parish Priest Fr Giles Orton SSC 01168 827101 frgilesorton@fastmail.fm; St Bartholomew and St Luke: Fr Leonard Young SSC 01 332 342806; Hasland St Paul and Temple Normanton St James: Fr Geoffrey Borrowdale 01246 232 486; Long Eaton St Laurence & Ilkeston Holy Trinity Parish Priest: Father David Lawrence-March 0115 9464060 fatherdlm@icloud.com; Staveley St John Baptist with Inkersall St Columba and Barrow Hill St Andrew: Fr Stephen Jones, 01 246 498603

DIOCESE OF EXETER FIF Recommended Parishes. Abbotsham St Helen, Churchwarden 01 237 470447; Babbacombe All Saints, Fr P Jones 01803 323002; Barnstaple St Peter, Fr D Fletcher 01271 373837; Bovey Tracey St John, Fr N. Debney 01 626 681259; Exeter St Michael & All Angels, *Heavitree*; St Lawrence, *Lower Hill Barton Rd*; St Paul, *Bumthorpe Lane*; St Mary Steps, *West Street*, Fr B. Rabjohns 01392 677150; Great Torrington St Michael, Taddipore St Mary Magdalene, Vacancy-Churchwarden - 01 805 623328; Newton Abbot St Luke, *Milber*, Fr N. Debney 01 626 681259; Paignton St John the Baptist with St Andrew & St Boniface Fr N. Knox - 01 803 551866; Plymouth St Peter and the Holy Apostles Fr D. Way - 01 752 240119; Plymouth Mission Community of Our Lady of Glastonbury St Francis, *Honicknowle*, St Chad, *Whitleigh*, St Aidan, *Emesettle*, Fr D Bailey

01752 773874; Plymouth Sacred Heart Mission Community Parishes St John the Evangelist; *Sutton-on-Plym*; St Mary the Virgin, *Laira*; St Simon, *Mount Gould*, Vacancy - Church answerphone 01 752 664191; Plymouth Discovery Mission Community, St Bartholomew, *Devonport* & St Mark, *Ford* Fr R. Silk - 01752 562623; Plymouth St Gabriel, *Pevelev Park* Churchwarden 077528 51525; Torquay St Martin, Vacancy 01 803 327223; Torquay St Marychurch vacancy; Torquay St John with Torre All Saints, Fr P. March 01 803 312754

DIOCESE OF GUILDFORD Society Parishes Aldershot St Augustine, Fr William Perry - 01276 609498, Hawley Holy Trinity and All Saints, Fr William Perry - 01276 609498. - For further contact details and details of all activities, events etc in both parishes, visit the church web sites www.staugustine-aldershot.org.uk and www.parishofhawley.org.uk

LEEDS FIF, WITHIN THE DIOCESE OF LEEDS Belle Isle & Hunslet St John & St Barnabas, Sunday Mass 11am, Vicar: Fr Chris Buckley CMP 07858 427796; Cross Green St Hilda, Sunday Mass 0930 Vicar: Fr Darren Percival SSC 07960 555609; Harehills St Wilfrid, vacant: Sunday Mass 10am contact Lynne Dransfield [Churchwarden] tel: 0113 2730323

FIF, DIOCESE OF LINCOLN Resolution Parishes: Binbrook Group (Louth) Fr McEune 07411 761883; Edenham Group (Bourne) Fr Martin 01778 591358; Grimsby St Augustine vacant contact Mr D. Buten 07848 819068; Lincoln, All Saints: Fr Noble 01 522 524319 Skirbeck St Nicholas (*Boston*) & Fosdyke All SS (Kirkton) contact Fr J. Underhill 01 205 362734; Wainfleet Group (Skegness) Vacant until March Contact Mr J. Seymour 01754 881046; Burgh-le-Marsh (Skegness) Vacant until March. Contact Miss L. Kent 01507 463275. **Non-petitioning parishes information**: South Lincolnshire - Fr Martin 01778 591358; North Lincolnshire - Fr Noble - 01 522 524319

FIF, DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER Blackley Holy Trinity, Society, Fr Paul Hutchins - 0161 681 3644; Lower Broughton The Ascension, Society, Canon David Wyatt 0161 736 8868; Chadderton St Mark, Society Fr Steven Smith - 0161 624 0535; Failsworth Holy Family, Society, Fr Paul Hutchins - 0161 681 3644; Hollinwood St Margaret, Society, Fr Tom Davis - 0161 681 4541; Leigh St Thomas & All Saints, Resolution, Fr Robert Eloff - 01 942 673519; Lightbourne St Luke, Society, Fr Paul Hutchins - 0161 681 364; Little Lever St Matthew, Resolution, Fr John Wiseman, 01 204 700396; Middleton Junction St Gabriel, Resolution Fr Steven Smith - 0161 624 2005; Moss Side Christ Church, Society, Canon Simon Killwick 0161 226 2476; Oldham St James with St Ambrose, Society, Fr Graham Hollowood - 0161 624 4964; Peel Green St Michael, Society, Fr Ian Hall - 0161 788 8991; Prestwich St Hilda, Society, Fr Ronald Croft 0161 773 1642; Royton St Paul, Society, Fr Graham Hollowood - 0161 624 4964; Salford St Paul, Society, Canon David Wyatt 0161 736 8868; Swinton and Pendlebury St Peter, St Augustine, All Saints, Soci-

ety, Fr Jeremy Sheehy 0161 727 8175; Tonge Moor, Bolton St Augustine, Society, Fr Tony Davies 01204 523899; Winton St Mary Magdalene, Society, Fr Ian Hall 0161 788 8991; Withington St Crispin, Society, Fr Patrick Davies 0161 224 3452

FIF, DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH Fareham SS Peter and Paul, Fr Roger Jackson 01 329 281521; IOW: All Saints, *Godshill*, and St Alban, *Ventnor* vacant; Good Shepherd, *Lake*, and St Saviour on the Cliff, *Shanklin*, vacant; Portsmouth: The Ascension, *North End*, Fr Benjamin Weitzmann 023 9243 9711; Southsea Holy Spirit, Fr Russell Lawson 023 9229 6364; Stamshaw St Saviour, Fr Benjamin Weitzmann 023 9243 9711

FIF, DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER Beckenham St Michael, 11am Sung Mass; Belvedere St Augustine, 10am Sung Mass; Swanley St Mary, 10am Sung Mass; Bickley St George, 8am Low Mass, 10.30am Sung Mass; Chislehurst The Annunciation, 8am Low Mass, 10am Sung Mass; Elmers End St James, 9.15am Sung Mass, 10am Sung Mass; Gillingham St Luke, Parish Mass 10.30am; Gravesend, *Perry Street*, All Saints, Sung Mass 10am; Higham St John, 9.30am Sung Mass; Sevenoaks St John, 9am Low Mass, 10am Sung Mass; Tunbridge Wells St Barnabas, 11am Sung Mass; all contact details from Fr Clive Jones 01634 711019, 07946 867881 or frdive@tiscali.co.uk

FIF, DIOCESE OF ST ALBANS Society Parishes Bedford St Martin, Fr Norwood 07886 276467; Bushey Heath St Peter, Fr Burton 020 8950 1424; Luton: Holy Cross, *Marsh Farm*, Fr Brown 07867 494688; St Mary, Sundon & St Saviour, Fr Smejkal 01582 583076. (Please contact clergy for details of services)

FIF, DIOCESE OF ST EDMUNDSBURY and IPSWICH Cookley St Michael and All Angels, Fr Jonathan Olanczuk, 01 502 470079, 9.30am Mass (3rd Sunday in Month); Ipswich St Bartholomew, Fr Paul Carter 01473 727441. Sunday Mass 10am.; Ipswich St Mary at the Elms, Fr John Thackray 07780 613754. Sunday Mass 10.45am, daily Mass at 12.30pm; Mendlesham St Mary, Fr Philip Gray 01449 766359; Eye SS Peter and Paul - The Rev. Dr. Guy Sumpter 01 379 871986.

FIF, DIOCESE OF SHEFFIELD Bolton-on-Deame St Andrew, Fr Schaefer 01 709 898426; Cantley St Wilfrid, Fr Andrew Howard 01302 285 316; Doncaster Holy Trinity, Fr Stokoe 01302 371256; Edlington St John the Baptist, Fr Richard Hume 01709 231326; Goldthorpe SS John and Mary Magdalene, Fr Schaefer 01709 898426; Hexthorpe St Jude, Fr Richard Hume 01709 231326; Hickleton St Wilfrid, Fr Schaefer 01709 898426; Hoyland St Peter, Fr Parker 01226 749231; Mexborough St John the Baptist, Fr Morrison 01 709 582321; Mooreds St Wilfrith, Fr Pay 07530921952; New Bentley SS Philip and James, vacant; New Cantley St Hugh, Fr Stokoe 01302 371256; New Rossington St Luke, vacant; Ryecroft: St Nicholas vacant; Dalton: Holy Trinity, vacant; Doncaster SS Leonard & Jude (with St Luke) Fr D'Silva 01 302 784858; Sheffield: St Bernard, *Southey Green* and St Cecilia, *Parson Cross*, Fr Ryder-West 0114 2493916; St Catherine, *Richmond Road*, Fr Knowles 0114 2399598; St Matthew, *Carver Street*, Fr Grant Naylor 01 142 665681; St Mary, *Handsworth*, Fr Johnson 01142 692403 (contact clergy for Mass times, etc)

FIF, DIOCESE OF TRURO Falmouth St. Michael, *Penweris* Fr. Michael Oades 01326 341304; Truro St. George the Martyr, Fr. Christopher Epps 01872 278595

FORWARD VIEW

This forward view will be refreshed for each edition of New Directions, looking a year ahead each time and focusing on national events. Further details of each event will be contained on the lead organisation's website. If you would like to add or amend any items, then please email: director@forwardinfaith.com. Thank you.

December 2022

25 Sunday Christmas Day

January 2023

6 Friday The Epiphany

7 Saturday Guild of the Servants of the Sanctuary: Epiphanytide Festival at Holy Trinity, Hoxton in London

30 Monday Annual Commemoration of Charles, King & Martyr, at All Saints, Margaret Street in London

February 2023

2 Thursday Consecration of the Bishop of Oswestry in Canterbury Cathedral

6 – 10 Monday – Friday Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham: Priests' & Deacons' Retreat Pilgrimage

22 Wednesday Ash Wednesday

March 2023

3 – 5 Friday – Sunday Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham: Children's Pilgrimage

13 – 16 Monday – Thursday Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham: Lent Retreat

15 Wednesday Guild of All Souls: 150th Anniversary at St Stephen, Gloucester Road in London

April 2023

9 Sunday Easter Day

15 Saturday Guild of the Servants of the Sanctuary: Easter Festival at St Stephen's, Gloucester Road in London

May 2023

6 Saturday Coronation of King Charles III

8 Monday Additional bank holiday to mark the Coronation

11 Thursday Guild of All Souls: Day Conference at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham

13 Saturday Society of Mary: May Devotion at St Silas, Kentish Town in London

18 Thursday Ascension Day

20 Saturday Forward in Faith: National Festival at St Alban, Holborn in London

20 Saturday Our Lady of Egmont: May Devotion

28 Sunday Pentecost Sunday

29 Monday Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham: National Pilgrimage

June 2023

17 Saturday Society of the Maintenance of the Faith: Annual Festival at St Magnus the Martyr, City of London

29 Thursday Ss Peter & Paul

July 2023

8 Saturday Glastonbury Pilgrimage

31 July – 4 August Monday – Friday Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham: Youth Pilgrimage

August 2023

5 Saturday Our Lady of Egmont: Assumptiontide Mass

7 – 11 Monday – Friday Society of Mary: Pilgrimage to Lourdes

15 Tuesday The Assumption

28 Monday Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham: Pilgrimage of Healing & Renewal

September 2023

21 Thursday Guild of All Souls: Day Conference at St Wilfrid, Cantley in Doncaster

22 Friday Church Union: Catholic Evangelism Lecture to be delivered by the Bishop of Lewes at St Matthew, Carver Street in Sheffield

October 2023

7 Saturday Society of Mary: October Devotion at St George the Martyr, Preston

14 Saturday Guild of the Servants of the Sanctuary: Autumn Festival at All Saints, North Street in York

23 – 26 Monday – Thursday Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham: Family Pilgrimage

November 2023

1 Wednesday All Saints' Day

3 – 5 Friday – Sunday Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham: Bible Weekend

4 Saturday Our Lady of Egmont: Annual Requiem Mass

13 – 20 Monday – Monday Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham: Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

24 – 26 Friday – Sunday Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham: Adoremus

December 2023

1 – 3 Friday – Sunday Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham: Advent Retreat

3 Sunday Advent Sunday

25 Monday Christmas Day

N.B. The three Egmont dates changed just after the Christmas 2022 edition of Together went to print and so the Egmont dates listed here are the correct ones.



◆ AFTERWORD ◆

Christians have a moral duty to condemn this Russian genocide, says *Yuri Polakiwsky*

It is both disappointing, even shocking, that after ten months of war in Ukraine, Pope Francis had to ‘clarify’ his views. He called the war ‘senseless, repugnant and sacrilegious’. In secular terms, that may be accurate, however, most unfortunate was that he chose not to employ biblical terms, which would have injected a powerful moral and rhetorical component and distinguished his message from the strict secularists whose language dominates the ‘evils’ taking place in Ukraine.

Absent in the discussion regarding Russia’s aggression in Ukraine is the lack of a dominant moral narrative that would not only frame and contrast the competing values systems of both nations, but inject an uncompromising moral imperative to further inspire Western moral resolve towards confronting Russian genocidal acts in Ukraine.

Russia is committing deliberate evil and sinful acts against Ukraine’s innocents for which it must repent and be made accountable. Russia’s actions must be judged and be seen to be judged on the record. These evil acts include: the deliberate targeting of ordinary civilians in residential neighbourhoods by bombing, the conducting of summary executions in their cities, towns and villages, torture, the indiscriminate killing of evacuees attempting to flee, the stealing of children and sending them to Russia, in addition to the rape of women, the destruction of hospitals, educational and cultural institutions.

Over 10 million people have been displaced and tens of thousands of innocents have been killed as a result of a deliberate effort by Russia to destroy the Ukrainian people. In purely secular terms, and according to the Geneva Conventions, Russia is perpetrating a genocide. Such behaviour began in the earliest days of the war and was easily known to everyone.

Anyone who read Putin’s essay ‘On the Historic Unity of Russian and Ukrainians’ could clearly deduce the ideology. Ukrainians were dehumanized as not a sovereign country or a distinct peoples, contrary to historic fact. A basis for genocide was established. Ukraine’s resistance to Putin’s authoritarian ‘Russky Mir’ (Russian World) would have to be ‘punished’.

This said, why this Vatican ‘clarity’ now? (St) John Paul II would not have been beholden to the political machinations of the Roman Curia and concern himself with Church politics regarding future relations with the Russian Orthodox Church. The lives of millions would take precedence over earthly political interests.

In light of the evil being perpetrated by Russia, Karol Wojtyla would not have been reluctant to confront the immoral and fear tactics of Moscow. He was a witness to the Holocaust. He would have known the truth and the power of true words that need to be spoken to malicious power. He would have courageously, and without compromise, stood up and spoken up against immoral power and resisted, without fear, any potential blackmail by

Putin. He would not have been fooled that the Russian church exists in servitude to Russian authoritarianism, and Putin in particular, knowing full well that it had long ago abandoned its moral authority very much like the German church did with Hitler. He, like Bonhoeffer, would have employed the spiritual insight to distinguish when religious authorities compromised their fealty to the essence of the Gospel and when they were ‘anti-human’ and ‘anti-life’. What is missing in the worldwide contemplation of the situation in war-torn Ukraine?

Simply put, a prophetic voice that would act as a critique of the guiding principles of the Russian world. A voice that not only emphasizes the plight of the innocents, those struggling to maintain basic human dignity and who are intentionally targeted through military power, but a message that calls out the evil being perpetrated by Russian forces on a daily basis. Gospel language suggests that evil is the intentional destruction and killing of human life.

Russia is directly targeting innocents in Ukraine and trying to destroy the nation. An uncompromising ‘prophetic word’ is needed that judges Russia’s behaviour to be evil and sinful, and its need to repent of its evil ways. This would more accurately frame Russia’s act of aggression and morally inspire those who believe in the dignity of all human beings to stand up and resist evil.

Employing a transcendent Old Testament ‘prophetic’ voice would not only convey a message on the meaning of evil, but articulate an alternative voice to the Nietzschean secular relativism of the world’s political elite – to condemn the killing of innocents, but with the power to inspire justice-based principles for future peace and ‘blessing’ the potential for transformation.

God is not dead in Ukraine. Yet an undisciplined and heretofore unaccountable evil runs rampant through Ukraine’s lands. What is missing is a relevant, applicable ‘theology of evil’ to act as a moral judgement on Russia. Yes, it is laudable to pray for peace and it is exemplary Christian behaviour to give to the displaced and provide funds for refugees. It is impressive to formulate resolutions condemning Russia’s aggressive actions in Ukraine within our religious institutions. But it is not enough. It is essential for any faith to shine a light on the forces of darkness and express a biblically-based condemnation of the deliberate destruction and killing of innocents.

To resist, and call out evil, is one of the most essential messages of ‘revealed’ religion. The strength and clarity of this will be clear and understood. For it will not only frame our understanding of what Russia is doing in Ukraine, but help save of thousands of lives, and for future peace, in addition to holding perpetrators accountable for their sins. **ND**

Yuri Polakiwsky is Canadian-born political analyst and Ukraine correspondent for NE Global, where a previous version of this article was published.



The Society of King Charles the Martyr

**Feast of Saint Charles
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Living with the Judge

In the Book of Common Prayer, the canticle after the Old Testament lesson at Morning Prayer is always the *Te Deum*. In the Roman Divine Office, the *Te Deum* is only used on Sundays and solemnities. This means that every day (according to the BCP) we use this phrase 'We believe that Thou shalt come to be our judge. Come then Lord and help your people bought with the price of your own blood and bring us with your saints to glory everlasting'.

In the Prayer Book, judgment is a daily theme. The *Te Deum* provides a template on which to lay all our life as we consider Christ as our judge.

The *Te Deum* makes it clear that Jesus is the Judge, the same Judge who 'shall come again in glory to judge both the quick and the dead'. Jesus has come to us to redeem us; he has come as the Advent Collect reminds us in 'great humility'. Jesus our Judge is loving and merciful and this love was revealed by 'his death upon the cross for us miserable sinners'. There is nothing to fear in the judgement of one who died for us 'while we were still sinners' (Romans 5.8)


There is certainly a fearfulness which is appropriate in the face of judgement. But this judgement is one that the Holy Spirit enables us to exercise on ourselves in coming to recognise the extent of the disorder in our lives and our falling short in our love of God and our neighbour. The spirit of penitence is the spirit of self-judgement. The Prayer Book



Communion Service makes this plain in the Third Exhortation. As we prepare to 'eat spiritually the flesh of Christ and to drink his blood' we must beware of 'receiving the same unworthily'. Thus the exhortation runs 'judge therefore yourselves brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord, repent you truly for your sins past; have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour'.

Self-examination and confession are the outcome of recognising the reality of encountering the holy presence of Christ, our Judge and our Redeemer. Self-judgement is the only sure path to holiness and wholeness.

It is a mark of the humility of Christ our Judge that he should first allow us to judge ourselves. He offers to us the reality and experience of his divine presence in the Holy Communion to give both necessity and urgency to our self-judgement. Our Lord is a judge who graciously waits for us to come for judgement and is full of compassion and mercy.

The judgement of Christ is not solely a Last Thing, it is the constant experience for those who live in love and faith with Him who knows and loves us. All this is summed up in the heartfelt prayer at the Burial of the Dead in the Prayer Book. 'Thou knowest Lord the secrets of our hearts; shut not thy merciful ears to our prayer; but spare us, Lord most holy, thou most worthy Judge eternal suffer us not at our last hour, for any pains of death to fall from thee.' 

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