

CR



QUARTERLY REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE RESURRECTION

Epiphany 2010

Number 428



Artist: Revd Matthew Askey

Medium: Oil on wood

Size: 12" diameter

Picture Prayer Meditation

~ for Epiphany ~

At Epiphany Jesus is presented to us, and to the whole world as God. At Christmas God appeared to us as man, and at Epiphany man, Christ, is shown to us as divine, as God. What was waited for has now been revealed; what was hoped for is now reality; what was unseen, in darkness, is now our light. The three Magi, bringing their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh represent the whole outside world coming to recognise the truth of God, in a baby. We come to Jesus as Lord of all life, and this is how he looks.

What does God look like when he is a man? He looks how he does on the cross, and he looks how he does in his mother's arms. After the Resurrection Jesus' wounds are still visible; he retains his vulnerability and his humanity. This is a vision of love, through sacrifice; vulnerable body and the most valuable and precious thing on earth.

CR

EPIPHANY 2010

Number 428

Superior's Notes	2	<i>George Guiver CR</i>
Why is St Francis' House For Sale?	4	<i>Antony Grant CR</i>
Finding God in Zimbabwe	7	<i>Carl Melville</i>
Learning to Pray	12	<i>Timothy Stanton CR</i>
Revolutionary Luke	15	<i>Nicolas Stebbing CR</i>
Walking With God	18	<i>Sheila Sowcroft</i>
Innovation and Challenges in Africa	20	<i>Fred Gault</i>
A Sermon	23	<i>Joe Kennedy</i>
Travelling towards the Truth	27	<i>Robert Kepster</i>
Companions and Friends	29	<i>Nicolas Stebbing CR</i>
Book Reviews	33	

Superior's Notes

By the time this issue appears we will have held our closing eucharist at St Francis' House, Hemingford Grey on 12th December. It will be sad for all of us, but we can give thanks that over the last 59 years the House has contributed to that great growth in the retreat movement that has been a characteristic of the modern church. That phase is now over, as retreat houses move into more difficult times. It is harder today to run them as they have been, and quite a few have closed. We plan to concentrate our energies on the Retreat House at Mirfield and enable it to be much more fully used. St Francis' House could hardly have had a better

Warden to see it out, and we shall greatly miss Mary Campbell's gentle and caring competence. She has been an absolute brick in coping with everything that has come her way through this year. We have been immensely lucky too to have had Anne Broxham and all the other staff of the house - a happy and devoted group who have pulled together marvellously through this year. We are very grateful to them all, and wish Mary and all the staff well in whatever next lies ahead for them.

Fr Dennis Berk joined us as a Postulant in October, but had to return to the US after 6 weeks due to visa problems. By the time you receive this we hope to have sorted it out and have him back with us.

The mild autumn has enabled us to continue worshipping in our unheated church until early December, with, it has to be said, more than the odd shiver, but we are now about to say a reluctant farewell to it, as our refectory is almost ready for use as a chapel. You may have seen some correspondence in the national press about our plans. It helps us to think things through, and has prompted us to put more information on our website. The local press has been particularly active - it isn't often they have controversies involving monks (as they call us) to write about. All of this interest gives us a good opportunity to give an account of ourselves. We still await permission to begin the work, but hope the road might be clear by mid-January.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu spent a week here in November, during which he blessed the foundation stone for our new Community building. He was a great delight to have with us and caused a bit of a sensation with the local press. Preliminary negotiations with the Conservation officer are holding up submission of our application for planning permission, so work on the new building is delayed as well.

Meanwhile life on the site continues - a life so interestingly busy that we have had to appoint an overall site manager, who starts work in March. We had over 200 enquiries for the post, and many of those we asked said the main attraction was the opportunity to work in a place that was a community, and with such an unusual variety of things taking place. In order to avoid getting sidetracked by all that is going on at the moment we have decided to have an extra retreat, which will begin after Boxing Day. We could become

so absorbed in our practical affairs that we slip from a firm centring on God, and awareness of a world with an urgent need to know of him.

George Guiver CR



The new House Chapel at Mirfield (with Crispin CR)

Why Is St Francis' House Hemingford Grey For Sale?

The closing service for St Francis' House was at 12 noon Saturday 12th December. When we think of Mary Campbell and all the wonderful resident wardens, each one even better than the last, the unfailingly excellent staff, and the hosts of very appreciative guests and retreatants over so many years, why has St Francis' House to close as a retreat house? This is a decision brethren have come to with difficulty, regret and sorrow.

Many retreat houses have been sold at this time. Some have kept their heads above water by having two scales of fees, one for parishes and retreatants, another for conferences. But the resident wardens and the Community have always wanted to keep St

Francis' House primarily for retreats, thereby retaining the peaceful atmosphere. The policy has been supported by those who use the house – and it has been very fully used, with people coming back year after year. The house is not big enough nor are there the ensuite rooms which are expected by people paying commercial rates. The Community does not have the capital necessary to increase the number and size of the rooms and other changes needed to put the house on a sound financial footing.

St Francis' House was given to the Community by Miss Muriel Florence Bevan in 1950 in memory of her parents Ernest George and Florence (formerly Tillard) Bevan, whose family home it had been. Miss Bevan's reasons, written into the conveyance, were that she wished to support the Community in "furthering Christian work in England or any other country." The Community has taken professional advice that there is no moral or legal reason preventing the sale of the house, provided that the funds so raised are used for these purposes. And that is our intention.

Meanwhile at Mirfield we have embarked on an appeal to renovate the Community church. We do not have funds to do work which is urgently needed. Please look at the website www.mirfieldcommunity.org.uk/appeal or we can happily send the appeal brochure.

But the church appeal cannot solve all our problems, because brethren are living in an extended 19th century mill-owner's house which annually costs a fortune to keep heated and clean and decorated and is hardly appropriate or convenient for a 21st century religious community. Therefore we must raise what capital we can in order to build a simple building next to the church. The existing house can then be converted into apartments to let, so as to generate income – very necessary if the books are to be balanced.

Sales of property as well as fundraising are essential if we are to stay at Mirfield, which is very well used indeed by people from far and near. We need to increase and improve the facilities, so that more of those wishing to come can do so. The same retreat work, which Miss Bevan supported 60 years ago by her gift of St Francis' House, will continue without interruption at Mirfield, and will be expanded, with much else in addition. Please remember with thanksgiving Muriel Florence Bevan, born at Hemingford Grey 29 July 1878 died at Bexhill 20 April 1958 and all other living and

departed benefactors, wardens and staff and retreatants.

Retreat houses need all the help they can get, so please transfer your enthusiasm to your nearest retreat house or visit us here at Mirfield; it is less than 3 hours on the train from London.

Antony Grant CR



Mary at St Francis' House



Finding God in Zimbabwe



some orphans in Chipinge

It was in March 2008 that I chose to spend a year with the Community of the Resurrection. Little did I know that the experience there would change my life – spiritually, physically and mentally.

In August 2008, amidst the “Mirfield Experience”, I got the chance to go with Fr Nicolas to Zimbabwe. I wrote my report for the CR magazine soon after, telling you how the suffering and pain of the people had changed my outlook on mission work and the face of God in the world. In January 2009, I returned to Zimbabwe after my somewhat traumatic August experience. We recorded the ‘*Nobody’s Child*’ CD and thanks to so many Christians, we sold nearly 600 copies! This was simply an amazing achievement, only fuelled by the orphans singing and the blessings of God on the project. Thank you to you all who supported the project. Mirfield and Zimbabwe are two places that are interconnected, still today.

Both places deeply affected my journey in life. I would like to thank the CR brethren for a truly worthwhile experience (even if only for me!). During my stay at Mirfield I also attended a B.A.P conference at Ely and was successful. I was due to start training for the priesthood at Bristol in September 2009, but it seems God has other plans for the year ahead!

Now, here I am, again in Zimbabwe! To be honest it was not what I expected to be doing, but I couldn't get away from the fact that there was a deep desire in me just to work and live here for a time. God gave me a passion for orphans. He wanted me to open and run a house for teenage orphans. Having received a small vision in January, I have to say my first visual vision, I was extremely scared and somewhat bewildered. I felt like Moses – unworthy and inadequate.

After my trip to Zimbabwe in January, Fr Nicolas and I sat down with various people to pray and talk about the possibilities and realities of bringing this small vision to life. Not one person turned us down and we started to receive donations and offers of money. Working with friends from Zimbabwe, we formed a charity called 'Tariro Youth Project'; *tariro* in Shona means 'hope'. This is exactly our vision - to bring a little hope into the lives of teenage orphans who have been neglected and forgotten over the past ten years. I was inspired by a young man named Comfort, who had been abused by his father and step mother and ended up at Penhalonga Orphanage. Comfort, now 14, had to go back and live with his abusive parents, simply because the orphanage cannot afford to keep him. The government no longer gives support to orphans of orphanages due to lack of funds. I knew there had to be change, so Tariro Youth Project was formed.

Before long, we had found a house to rent in Harare and we came face to face with many teenagers who need our help and who would benefit living at Tariro house. Alongside the house we set up a number of projects and courses in order to give teenagers practical skills and life skills – chicken projects, materials, batiks, woodwork and metal work and so on. As well as this, Tariro House hosts a weekly HIV course and community group and teenagers in the local community are encouraged to join in with other programmes teaching life skills.

When I arrived in July, the house was a dump. Ceilings were

crumbling, walls needed to be painted, the garden was a nightmare and there was no running water! As soon as I saw the house, I wanted to return to England. However, we transformed this mess into a lovely home and I unearthed skills I never thought I had! On August 29th we saw the opening of the house, dedicated to St John the Baptist, who preached a message of hope. Two weeks later, two teens moved in – Harry and Jawett. Both boys came with difficult backgrounds. According to Social Welfare they had overstayed their welcome at their previous home on the grounds of being ‘too old’!

In September, we were joined by Meredith Hannen from Canada, who came to work with Tariro. As the manager of the house, I had the task of keeping things running and working, despite the problems in the country. I’m not a father, but I now have an insight into what being a father is all about! I can see why my mother always ‘tutted’ when I did things wrong! Somehow I had to act as a role model to those who had never had a father figure in their lives before. I could only look to God, the Father, for strength. God has taken me through an amazing journey over the past four months, from someone who always doubted, to a place where there is no room for doubting because these children, God’s children, needed us.

As regards the country itself, the political situation has improved but the unity government is looking very shaky as I write. Newspapers are telling us that Mugabe is pleading for Morgan Tsvangirai to stay. No one really knows the truth of these stories. There are now road tolls to raise money for road maintenance. The shops are filled with goods. The banks are open and there are even reports that some cash machines are now working again, of course, with US Dollars. Rumours are circulating that Mugabe wants to bring back the Zimbabwe Dollar to gain support and votes from the rural areas, where foreign currency is still rare. Schools are open but in bad condition. The education system can only cater for those that can pay the rising school fees. Unemployment is still over 80% and the poverty rate is below the line. Sewage pipes are only being repaired in medium density areas; very few are maintained in the high density areas where sanitation is bad and cholera is still visible. There are parts of the country where finding clean water is still a struggle and where food is short, even though aid is still

coming into the country. My passion is for orphans and we know that the number of orphans is still on the rise, mainly because of HIV/AIDS and poverty. Many schools, children's homes and other institutions need money, resources and aid to help them back on their feet and to survive, but from what I have seen, this has been slow. People can speak openly about politics now, although we don't. Now is the time for forgiveness and reconciliation, although people are still concerned about Mugabe's power. The politics of the Anglican Church has not helped the overall situation. The splits continue both in Harare and Manicaland Diocese. Bishop Chad was consecrated for Harare in July and the service was attended by over 5,500 Anglicans from the Church of the Province of Central Africa (CPCA). On the 22nd November, Manicaland CPCA received their new bishop, Julius. Harare diocese is sharing its churches with the other faction but Manicaland is really struggling because of the rural nature of the diocese.

Since being in Zimbabwe, God has allowed me an insight into so much. I now feel that I walk with orphans every day and I come face to face with suffering and pain, even though the situation here is getting better. Every day I learn something new about myself and about who God is. I have learned my weaknesses here. I know I have an inability to cope with suffering and pain, especially with children and orphans. When I walk down the street and see a begging child, I find it hard to confront God in prayer. When I meet a child who has HIV or has been raped, I admit, I struggle to base my life on God. However, the benefit of this is learning to trust God and simply love this place and the world. I may struggle and find it dreadfully painful to be here, but it only encourages me simply to love more and more and I am constantly filled with God's love and peace myself. Trusting God becomes easier amongst the poverty here. Where there is pain, I have amazingly found love. Through the lives of so many people here, God has given me *tariro* – hope in humanity and hope in Him.

The past few months have been a challenge for me. There have been tears and laughter and frustrations. Facing poverty, and running a house for teens has been a challenge; so also has it been to fit in with another culture without causing offence or hurt, but also confront the injustices of this culture. It is because of this challenge that I decided to leave Tariro as manager. This gives me a chance,

now the house is active, to focus on other places and people. Have I failed? No, I don't believe I have. I have experienced the pain of what it is to follow God's way, not mine. I have learnt valuable lessons about life and about Faith – exposing my weaknesses but turning them into strengths, confronting my pain in order to help the pain of orphans in Zimbabwe, bringing me down so God can raise others up, becoming poor so I can easily tell others that Christ wants to make them rich.

I am in awe at how God seems to turn every experience on its head to bring me to a better understanding of his Kingdom and what He wants for His world – August 2008, January 2009 and now today. I pray that God will continue to bless the orphans of Africa, blessing them with people who care and love them, assuring them of His love, as their Father.

Carl Melville



the choir at Tariro House open day

Learning To Pray:

A Talk for Monastery week September 2009

We human beings are meant to live in relationship with God. The Bible is full of examples of people who did, or did not, do so. Abraham had faith in the Lord (*Genesis* 15:6). The Lord used to speak with Moses, face to face (*Exodus* 33:11). Samuel, Elijah and the prophets believed that the Lord had a message for his people, which they had to give them. The psalms are expressions of people in relationship with God. And in the fullness of time, God spoke through his Son (*Hebrews* 1:2). The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (*John* 1:14). In the gospels we read what he was like. He had a perfect relationship with his Father in heaven, a relationship of love.

It was a relationship, which he tried to share with his disciples. “I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father” (*John* 15:15). It was a relationship which he continued to share with his disciples after his resurrection through his gift to them of the Holy Spirit (*John* 16:13). It is a relationship which he seeks to share with us, in prayer. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.” (*Revelation* 3:20) So Charles Gore writes in *Lux Mundi*: “Our race was created for conscious fellowship with God, for sonship, for the life of the spirit.” (p.319)

And now I can only speak from my own experience of trying to do it. I hadn’t taken prayer very seriously until I was accepted for training for ordination before the war. But then I did. Someone said to me, “Well, if you are going to be a priest you must be a man of prayer.” I took his word to heart. I decided that whatever else I did, I would try to learn to pray. I am still learning. But this desire to pray I regard as sheer gift. It has been my guiding light ever since. I gave it time – priority time – time when no doubt I should have been studying. I read the books on prayer which were current in the 1930s. For my confession at that time I was going to Wilfred Knox. He had recently published *Meditation and Mental Prayer*. I used that. The method was to use my imagination: “Picture, ponder, pray.” I found it helped me to

concentrate if I actually wrote my prayer. Another book being read at that time was: *The Way of a Pilgrim*, translated from Russian by R.M. French. The pilgrim had heard a sermon in which people were told to follow St Paul's injunction in 1 *Thessalonians* 5:17 to pray continually. He determined to try to do that. He was led to practice the Jesus prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me a sinner." Repeated often enough the prayer sinks into the subconscious mind. That was the way for him. Obviously it is not suitable for everyone.

War broke out in 1939. War as I experienced it consisted in long periods of doing practically nothing, interspersed with short periods of feverish activity. The periods of doing nothing were ideal for prayer. I could spend as much time as I wanted writing my meditations which gradually took the form of meditation on each of the phrases of the Lord's prayer. And for spiritual reading I had the autobiography of Therese of Lisieux in which she writes her prayer.

As a result of my first retreat conducted by Fr Victor Shearburn CR I decided to apply to come to the College here. I was accepted and came as soon as I could after my discharge from the army. For the first time I encountered liturgical prayer in a big way, and I was given plenty of time and encouragement for personal prayer as well. My two years in a parish as deacon and priest were not so happy. My vicar and one of my fellow curates got married and the other curate was engaged. I considered marriage myself but it was not what I really wanted. I still wanted to have time for prayer. So I applied and came to CR as a postulant in 1950. As a novice and junior professed brother I was given some retreats to conduct; they seemed to go all right. But the one mission I was given did not. After my preliminary visit the vicar wrote to the Superior asking for someone else.

So, not being an academic, nor a missionary, I was sent to South Africa. After a short spell in Sophiatown I was moved to St Peter's College in Rosettenville. Philip Speight CR had recently been appointed Principal. He was a man after my own heart: "Teach them to pray," he used to say, "the rest does not matter." We did all we could to help the students to form habits of prayer. Half an hour meditation after the daily Mass was the programme. I persevered with my written prayers and was given the gospels to

teach. What more could I want?

Well, there was something. After the College moved to Alice and became part of the Federal Seminary, I was given a course on “Prayer and the Christian life” to teach for two years. There is nothing like having to teach others to do something to make one learn to do it oneself. I had the benefit of lecture notes of others who had taught the course before me including those of our brother Simeon Nkoane CR. I was sorry when the course was abandoned.

Over the years my prayers have become much simpler – more a matter of the heart than the head. My desire to learn to pray has become a desire to love God with all my heart. Now I am back at the mother house I have time. I am usually able to spend three half hour periods praying. The first one before Mattins follows a pattern. I start with thanksgiving – thanksgiving for God’s love for me. Everything springs from that. I go on to prayer for myself and other people. This is the time when I look at the Orate (community intercessions for each day) and whatever requests for prayer I have had. Then I go on to pray about things I have on – things I am worried about. I still find it helpful to pray with a pen in my hand though what I write is mostly illegible. An early morning cup of tea helps too.

After breakfast I do some spiritual reading. And then I am usually able to spend another half hour praying with as few words as possible. Only enough to help me to give my full attention to God. “Jesus, pardon and mercy” is enough. Or “Jesus, knit my heart to you that I may love you.” Some simple words incorporating the Holy Name repeated slowly I find helpful. Similarly I spend another half hour in the late afternoon or evening. And I try to follow St Paul’s injunction in 1 *Thessalonians* 5:18, to give thanks for what has happened during the day.

So I go on. The great thing is to go on. The rule is to pray as one can. There is no wrong way of doing it. I am no expert. I have had no visions, no ecstasies. I have no hot line to God. All I have is desire – desire to love God and to live in relationship with him. And the religious life has proved to be a way of life in which it is possible to give to prayer a priority which I think it ought to have. I am thankful for my experience of it in CR.

For further reading I would recommend a book by Bonnie

Thurston, *For God Alone*, which I reviewed in CRQR No 426 John Baptist 2009.

Timothy Stanton CR

[Eds. Note: Those still lucky to have copies will find an example of Timothy CR's written prayer *Thanksgiving and intercession Epiphany 1984* in the corresponding issue of this journal. His thanksgiving sermon for +Desmond's 25th anniversary of consecration as bishop is printed in: **Tutu as I know him. On a personal note.** ed. *Lavinia Crawford-Brown*. Umizi/Random House, 2006. Isbn 10:1-4152-0023-g]

Revolutionary Luke

If we were to conduct a poll amongst our readers as to which was their favourite Gospel I suspect the result would be a tussle between Luke and John, with Luke perhaps winning. This year we use the gospel of Luke for most of the Sunday readings at Mass and so now is a good time to think about this popular Gospel.

It is easy to see why it is popular: it includes some of our favourite parables, the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son; it tells some of the best stories of the birth and childhood of Jesus; it contains the canticles Benedictus, Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis; and even the passion story is softened by Jesus' gentle forgiving nature – he says “Father forgive them..” of those who crucified him, and only in this gospel story do we hear that he forgave a penitent thief on the cross. At the same time Luke's Gospel reads more smoothly than the others. He is well educated (perhaps he really was a doctor and really did accompany the cosmopolitan Paul around the Mediterranean). He writes better quality Greek than the other evangelists and even in English his Gospel reads more smoothly than the ruggedly constructed John or the rather more tightly written Matthew. It comes as rather a shock to discover that Luke is actually quite a social revolutionary, perhaps the most revolutionary of all the Gospel writers, and that is saying a lot. Mark makes it clear that the coming of Jesus has thrown everything into a confusion which probably presages the end of all things; Matthew takes that further by showing us how the Jews have been superseded by the

gentiles ('the last shall be first and the first last'- *Matt.20:16*) and his version of Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount suggests very different ways of relating to each other than those we know at present. Yet Luke surpasses them all.

More than any other he highlights the role of Mary in bringing the Christ child into the world. Mary wasn't just made pregnant by the Spirit; she had to agree to it. She is absolutely crucial to the salvation story. In a sense most of great Marian doctrines, and the devotion that has grown up around Mary, find their source in the Annunciation (*Luke 1: 26-38*). And for Mary read 'women'. In almost every part of Luke's Gospel a story about a man is followed by a story about a woman. It was revolutionary in Luke's time to present women as equal to men. Yet, he goes further in his revolutionary Gospel: it is not just women who are raised up to an unaccustomed height; the first of his canticles contains the verses:

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. (Luke 1:32,33) That verse would please even the most radical Marxist! Luke makes it clear from the start of his Gospel that the new Kingdom's prime concern will be the poor, the weak, the sick: when Jesus emerges from his desert retreat he begins his preaching in Nazareth and reads from Isaiah as a kind of manifesto: *The spirit of the Lord ... has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives ... to let the oppressed go free. (Luke 4:18,19)* Poor people were oppressed both by rich Jews and by the Romans. These were the people who first joined the new Christian church in significant numbers. Luke has Jesus promising that they will be the ones to inherit the kingdom of God.

Most of us are quite happy with that sort of social radicalism. In the past century particularly we have become used to the idea that the gospel speaks to the poor and that social inequality is abhorrent to God. We are far from creating a society that reflects this but we do know we should try. Jesus goes further, however, in Luke's Gospel. He challenges the Jewish racism which set the Samaritans apart. Can we imagine how a member of the National Front would feel if he were the traveller on the road to Jericho who was attacked by thieves, and a Pakistani, or a black person picked him up and cared for him? Racism has no place in the Kingdom of God. Nor does contempt for any of God's people. Tax collectors

(publicans) were hated, despised and feared in Palestine for the way they robbed the people. Today the people our society most hates, despises and fears are the paedophiles. Imagine the story of Zacchaeus with Zacchaeus as a paedophile, and Jesus goes and eats with him; or Matthew the tax collector actually welcomed into the company of disciples. What if he were a paedophile? Would Jesus not have called him? Or a story of a paedophile and a priest in church, where it is the paedophile who is forgiven, not the priest, since the paedophile simply says, "Lord have mercy on me".

Those are the obviously shocking stories. But others also shock when you think of it. Take the great favourite – the Prodigal Son. (*Luke 15: 11-32*) We all love the image of the generous Father forgiving the penitent son. Actually the son is not that penitent. There is no sign he regrets the pain he has caused. He has come home to get food and shelter, that's all. Would it not be sensible to keep him waiting till he shows sorrow and understands the nature of his sin? When people like him turn up at our churches, sometimes during services, do we welcome them as the Father would, or do we ignore them hoping they'll go away? We do want sinners to repent but they need a long period of rehabilitation, socialisation and education before they can really count. I think most of us would be like the older brother, resenting this wasteful young man who is getting all the attention. Yet even to us the Father says '*You are ever with me, and all that I have is yours.*'

Or to return to the Passion story, can we be like Jesus and genuinely forgive people even while they hurt us? I may wish I could do that, but honesty compels me to say I can't. How far I am from being the kind of Christian Luke, or Christ, expects me to be.

I could go on, but perhaps that is enough to show that Luke's gospel is a really shocking Gospel. That if we are not shocked, disturbed, made uncomfortable by our Gospel readings, we have probably missed the point.

A good rule for this year, to add to our Rule of Life, would be to prepare the Sunday readings at least the day before. Or perhaps we could have a weekly study group that would prepare them looking for the parts that really challenge our way of life. An excellent aid to this would be Tom Wright's commentary *Luke for Everyone*. Catholic Christians need to read the Bible constantly for there we

find God; and in the Gospels we find Jesus, that same Jesus whom we meet in the Blessed Sacrament, who forgives us in confession and whom we love to follow. Let's make this year a real year of grace by following him in Luke's story about him with a new desire that he will change us to become more like he is.

Nicolas Stebbing CR

Walking With God

I am a divorced mother of two sons, Gary and Dean. I volunteer as a Chaplaincy visitor at the Royal Blackburn Hospital two days a week. I have my own wards, and sit and chat with patients and offer to pray for them. They can have a prayer at their bedside or receive a personal prayer in the evening as I recite Evening Prayer. Sometimes there can be 10-15 patients to pray for so it is a demanding, but oh so fulfilling job, and I consider it a very special privilege to be in a position of such trust. On Good Friday 2008 I made a personal commitment to consecrate my life to God, and kneeling before a crucifix in my room I offered myself in service to be used as God chose. In the following months this commitment didn't feel enough, but I didn't know what I was searching for.

I went on Retreat in August 2008 to the Convent of the Holy Cross at Rempstone, Loughborough. I hadn't visited this particular convent before and it was very much a last minute decision. I arrived and settled into my cottage and went for a chat with Reverend Mother Luke saying to her, "Well, I don't know what I'm doing here!!" After a long chat she asked me if I had heard of the Single Consecrated Life, where a woman who is single, divorced or widowed, makes a vow of chastity, simplicity and obedience, in front of a Bishop, receives a ring, and offers herself in service to God for life, living and working in the community, but not wearing a habit or veil. While I sat there in stunned silence Reverend Mother went on to explain that I would have to be attached to a religious community, and that I could become an Oblate at Rempstone. I realised that this was what I had been seeking, and that God was calling me to live the Single Consecrated Life in service to Him.

I stumbled back to my cottage totally shell-shocked and in a state of alternate euphoria and sheer terror of what lay ahead for me. I returned home and purchased the Divine Office and the Rule of St Benedict, and started reciting morning and evening prayer from the Divine Office, and reading the daily rule from the Rule of St Benedict, because the nuns at Holy Cross Convent live their lives according to this Rule. This was something I would have to learn to do over the coming months, and to have a commitment to the Daily Office, to pray more, and also seek to work for God at every opportunity.

I contacted other oblates of Rempstone and other S.C.L.'s to find out all I could about living this life. Some I met, with some I exchanged letters and phone calls. I compiled a new 'Rule of Life' for my Bishop, Parish Priest and Spiritual Director, and also for the Oblate Mistress at Rempstone. Later on I met with my Parish Priest and Spiritual Director to discuss my vocation as S.C.L., and they gave me their support and blessing. Then came a visit to Mirfield to talk to the Companions Chaplain, as I had been pursuing a 10-month probation as a Companion to the Community. I was told that I couldn't be a Companion if I was going to be an Oblate of Rempstone, but I could be an Associate, thereby keeping my ties with Mirfield. I was very pleased as I have enjoyed many happy retreats at Mirfield, and got to know the Brothers well.

I met with Bishop John of Burnley in November 2008 requesting permission to pursue a vocation to the S.C.L. Bishop John gave me his support and blessing, and asked me to continue seeking spiritual closeness to God, and to return in 6 months because of the seriousness of the two commitments I was about to pursue. At the end of November 2008 I wrote a formal request to Reverend Mother to begin as an Oblate Postulant - and the response was yes! On 1st January 2009, Solemnity of the Holy Name of Jesus and Mary Mother of God, I was admitted as an Oblate Novice at Rempstone. I met with Bishop John again in May 2009 and he requested references from my Parish Priest Fr Lawrence Featham, my Director Fr David Morgan, and Sr Mary Bernadette the Oblate Mistress. I left with a date to see Bishop John again when references had been provided.

In July 2009 I went to Rempstone for Oblates Day to meet others and to request to move up to Oblate Novice as my 6-

months postulancy had ended. On 29th September 2009, feast of St Michael and All Angels, in the company of Fr Lawrence, I took my first vow. In the lovely chapel at Rempstone I vowed to be 'clothed' to God, and during a beautiful ceremony I offered my life to God, and received my scapular to wear as a sign of my commitment to serve God. I took the name Mary Bernadette, and will be known by this name at the convent. In another year I will take another vow as Oblate Temporary, and then 3 years later a vow to Life Oblation, in the presence of a priest.

On April 29th 2010, feast of St Catherine of Siena, I will take my First Temporary Vow into the Single Consecrated Life, and this will take place at my parish church, St Mary Magdalene's in Accrington. Bishop John will receive my vows of chastity, simplicity and obedience, and I will receive a ring as Bride of Christ. Final Life Vows will be taken at Bishop John's discretion. I hope that God continues to shower me with His blessings, and that I keep 'Walking with God'.

Sheila Scowcroft

Innovation and Challenges in Africa

The Copenhagen conference on climate change is not likely to produce an agreement, only a direction for further negotiation. Meanwhile, the climate changes, weather becomes more extreme and unstable, and farming in Africa becomes more difficult. As a result of climate change, and other factors, famine in Africa is a serious threat.

While the climate changes, HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis are killing people. They are removing teachers, public servants, and creators of knowledge, leaving the grandmothers - the subject of the Stephen Lewis Foundation - to look after the grandchildren when their parents have died. Disease and food scarcity co-exist with armed conflict in various parts of Africa. As pestilence, famine, and war, stalk the land, ever present is the fourth Horseman of the Apocalypse, Death. What hope have these people got?

Aid agencies have tried to help for the last sixty years with little lasting impact, and some of that negative. Part of the reason is that aid initiatives have not come from the grass roots, but from the top

down, or from outside the country and the culture. There are two current initiatives that try to approach the problem from a different perspective. Both involve helping people to do better what they do with a view to empowering those people to help others. One initiative is in business and the other in agriculture.

People sell things to survive. Groups of people come together in firms, or co-operatives, to do the same. Part of survival, as a business, is to attract new customers by offering new things. Look at the offering of breakfast cereals in any local shop as an example. Another way of surviving is producing the good or service in a way that costs less, or is faster, or solves some problem of delivery. Then, for larger firms, the work can be reorganised to make the design, production and delivery of a product better. And, finally, there is the market. Finding a new one or capturing a bigger share of the existing one are part of survival. All of these activities are part of innovation and there have been many studies of how firms, and individual entrepreneurs, innovate in developed countries. The same information is not available in Africa.

To make a small change to this, the United Nations University-Maastricht Economic and social Research and training centre on Innovation and Technology (MERIT) is offering grants to groups in Mozambique, Rwanda and South Africa to study innovation in small firms, and by entrepreneurs, and then to present their findings in a way that will help other small firms do better what they do. The call for proposals does not ask what the firms do that are to be studied. The expectation is only that they will be studied through interviews and other methods of data gathering and some findings gathered that can be shared.

Once the teams have started the process, UNU-MERIT will send in an international team to work with the researchers to help them solve their problems and move the work forward. This connects the researchers on the ground to a group of experienced researchers and helps build the capacity to go on doing this kind of work when the project comes to an end. This is not too far removed from the work of CR when it ran schools in South Africa and trained generations that went on to contribute to their societies.

Using case studies to understand innovation will be complemented by statistical information coming out of surveys in a group of countries working with the New Partnership for

Africa's Development (NEPAD) Office of Science and Technology in Pretoria. NEPAD is a programme of the African Union and, while it is supported by the Swedish aid agency, it is carrying out an African agenda to meet African needs.

Another approach to improving the lives of people deals with agriculture and comes out of a workshop held at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris in April 2009. The message is straight forward, but not that easy to implement. Agriculture is carried out by individuals, and small groups, and it can drive economic development if it moves from a subsistence level to become a knowledge-intensive productive sector. This is another innovation story and it requires linking farmers with various levels of government, with universities, business and civil society, and improving the development and delivery of agricultural products to domestic and foreign markets. Supporting this requires technology, infrastructure, and training.

A key technology is mobile broadband telephony for monitoring markets, transmitting funds and communicating with the various players needed to contribute to the process of making agriculture a dominant industry in African countries, able to feed the people and provide agricultural products for export. Producing agricultural products and moving them around the country for consumption and export require a reliable infrastructure including roads and ports, energy and water management, and financial and logistics services. This is a far more complex undertaking than supporting groups of researchers to understand how innovation is happening in small firms and it requires political commitment at the highest level.

Harvard professor, Calestuous Juma, has summarized the findings of the OECD workshop and is circulating them to the president of every country in Africa. This is also an innovation initiative as research can give rise to new crops that cope better with drier climates, and entrepreneurs can process and sell agricultural products, with support from government for risk sharing.

The work of Professor Juma is just beginning, but it has potential to transform agriculture in Africa, to feed the people, and to create wealth as countries innovate out of poverty. This and the UNU-MERIT projects are initiatives to help Africans solve African problems.

Fred Gault Companion CR

**A Sermon preached during the Eucharist in
the Church of the Resurrection, Mirfield,
for the Feast of SS. Simon and Jude 2009 –
Foundation Day of the College of the Resurrection –
*Ephesians 2: 19-22***

Today we thank God for the Foundation of our College. We thank God that, one hundred and seven years ago, the Community of the Resurrection – then in its infancy – founded a college for the education and formation of those testing a vocation to the ordained ministry in the Church of England.

We give thanks, secondly, that, since that date, successive generations have built on that foundation, so that this College has continued to be able to make a contribution to the Church's life and to the formation of future priests – at once coming from its own distinctive perspective and at the same time accountable to the wider Church of England.

And we give thanks, thirdly and finally, for the commitment of so many to the life of the College today and to the task of building a future for the College. Again we see that twin movement of looking to the distinctive perspective of the College – a going back to sources – and at the same time an accountability to the wider Church of England and to wider perspectives on the needs of future clergy.

And as we thank God, so we come to Church to be nourished by Jesus Christ acting in Word and Sacrament.

What then do we find in God's Word on this foundation day? We find, as is so often the way in Scripture, a challenge. And the challenge we find is this: we find God asking us to expand our vision – to thank God for the foundation of our College, certainly; but also to place that foundation within its proper context – the much larger and more diverse building which God has founded. Or, to put it more succinctly: we are challenged to put God and God's work at the centre of our thanksgiving and our vision. Hear these words set in the lectionary for today, from *Isaiah 28:16*.

The Lord God says this:

Now I shall lay a stone in Zion,

a granite stone, a precious cornerstone.

A firm foundation stone.

The Community founded our College in 1902. How good a work that was! But millennia before that foundation, God the master-builder promised in Isaiah to lay a cornerstone for a much great construction. A foundation stone of righteousness, on which is inscribed the name, 'No-one who relies on this will stumble'. It is this new building built by God – the one with the foundation stone of righteousness – which forms the proper context for thinking about our College and its foundation.

And there is something else. For in our epistle, we find what sounds at first like an echo of *Isaiah*. Paul's message to gentile Christians:

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.

But what we find here is not an echo, but an answering word – a proclamation of the fulfilment of the promise God made. In *Isaiah*, God promises to lay a cornerstone and to build a new edifice. In *Ephesians*, Paul joins other Jewish scholars of his period in saying that the Messiah, the Christ, is that promised cornerstone.¹ And now Paul goes further, calling Jesus the Christ and proclaiming *him* as the cornerstone on which God's glorious new building is being built.

The Haggadah would put it this way: if God had laid the foundation stone and had not laid the whole foundation, that would have been enough. But, as God's people have sung down the centuries, God's generosity outdoes our expectations. And so Paul is able to write, in this beautiful passage in *Ephesians*, not only of a foundation stone but of the entire foundation of God's new building – laid by God himself – "the position of all the other stones in the foundation is [...] determined by [...] the cornerstone."²

Who are these foundation stones whose lives and words have been determined by the Christ? They are the apostles and prophets. The foundations of the Church, both apostolic and prophetic, structured and pneumatic.

But there is yet more. Our New Covenant Haggadah continues:

¹ Schnackenburg, Rudolf, *The Epistle to the Ephesians : A Commentary*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991; 123.

² Schnackenburg, *op.cit.*, 124.

if he had built the foundations, and had not begun to build the building, that would have been enough. But God's generosity always outdoes our expectations. Listen again to Paul:

You are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.

God beginning to build the first floor of his new glorious building, and God's people as the stones for the building.

So here is our first key point. What good news it is! God has used and is using our lives – at least to the extent that sin has not got in the way – for his own building project, the building of the New Jerusalem. And for that reason our little works of founding and building – whether the work of our Founders and Benefactors, or the work to which we are called in our day – find their meaning and significance insofar as they are part of this larger whole which is God's construction project.

And now Paul continues:

In him, the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

First Paul told us that we are built on the apostles and prophets. Now he tells us that we are built together. First Paul wrote that God takes our building work into his own, making us into living stones in his building project. Now Paul writes that we are made part of Christ himself. And he continues by proclaiming that being in Christ brings us into relationship with other another. In Jesus, we are made God's children and so members of God's household – brothers and sisters to one another. Paul indeed rather labours the point. We are joined together, built together, fellow citizens, members of the same household. Grafted into God's chosen people.

And so here is our second point. Just as we need to look for the signs of God's work in our own little corner of God's great new building, so we need, too, to acknowledge and celebrate the signs of God's work in all the little other corners. In Christ, the whole structure is joined together. Not just our College or our Community. But the Centre, the Yorkshire Ministry Course, the School of Ministry, the Resources Centre. We're not even off the site yet. In him, the whole structure is joined together. Not just our site, but our sister training institutions, our sister religious

communities, our sponsoring bishops, our Dioceses, the Ministry Division, the Archbishop's Council. In him, the whole structure is joined together. Not just the parts of the Church we find appealing or safe or comfortable, but the whole Church – and for us, as for everyone, the place that truth is most difficult to live out is in the concrete, in our own Church structures, in our own Church of England. God, of course, has his own structures, not built by human hands, which are joined together in Jesus Christ. But God has also taken our structures – to be concrete, our Church of England structures – and woven them into his greater and more glorious pattern. In Christ, and only in Christ, the whole structure is joined together.

Or we might close by recalling the words of Charles Gore, co-founder of the Community of the Resurrection, whose body is now buried beneath this building awaiting the day of resurrection. Reflecting on our epistle reading, Gore wrote:

The Church, as a visible organization [...], can be what it is – the city of God, His household and His sanctuary – [...] because it is pervaded by Christ's life and spirit. The 'stones of the building' are not merely placed together side by side [...], or held together by any external agency of government; they are as branches of a living tree, limbs of a living body.

How are we to receive this great and manifold ideal of what the Church is? [Gore asks. How are we to begin if we want to build our little corner of the building aright? His advice is this: Meditate] upon [this ideal] till St Paul's conceptions – and not any lower or narrower ones, Roman or Anglican or Nonconformist – become vivid to our minds.³

Gore was right when he wrote those words five years after the foundation of the Community and he is right today. It is precisely when we succumb to party spirit, precisely when we allow our conceptions to become narrow and mean, that we are least likely to make any contribution to God's great new building project. If we are to build aright, nothing less than Paul's glorious vision of Jesus Christ and his Church will do.

Joe Kennedy,
Principal, College of the Resurrection

³ GORE, Charles, *St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: A Practical Exposition*, London: John Murray, 1898; 119f.

Travelling Towards The Truth

A familiar picture of the Christian life is that of a journey where new truths are revealed along the way. Here there are glimpses of God, but it isn't until "the Spirit of truth" comes that the traveller will be led into all truth. Then, when God is seen in all the fullness of glory, the long journey of discovery will end.

But as the young traveller sets out everything seems clear-cut and obvious: there are few doubts or grey areas. Yet as the years go on, what was once so definite often becomes less so. Such things as suffering and death, love and war, vastly affect the understanding of God's ways. Gradually there is the realisation that few things in belief or practice are set in stone, except perhaps the very nature of God, who is "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever". So there should be no surprise, that as the journey continues, there may be more and more unanswered questions, for here so much is seen "through a glass darkly". As the traveller comes closer to God, so the "dazzling darkness" becomes ever more intense.

And so there are some who become afraid of travelling into this "darkness" that they sit down on the way, holding to the beliefs and practices they have always had, shutting their minds to anything else, and refusing to go forwards. Such people choose clear-cut rules and definite statements of belief which provide a sense of security and togetherness. Those who keep the rules are "in", while the rest are excluded.

It may be tempting to imagine that the Church has always believed the same through the ages, but the advances of science and psychology among other things have brought new truths and insights. Once those who questioned that the earth was flat were accused of heresy. Once the Church gave its blessing to such things as the Crusades and the slave-trade. So in the huge decisions that face the Church to-day there is the challenge to move forwards into new ways, or to oppose all change holding on to what many regard as an immutable tradition. Some Religious Communities, which in various ways are a microcosm of the Church, have resisted change, and sadly have seen their numbers fall. Whereas those Communities that have been willing to keep travelling towards the truth, find that men and women still come to them, looking for new ways of

growing in the spiritual life.

So those who do “not cease from exploration” continue to journey towards the truth, even when the way may lead through great tracts of unmarked desert. As the signposts become fewer more reliance is placed on such things as reason, the discoveries of science, a critical assessment of tradition and the Bible, and above all else, the guidance of God, the Holy Spirit. Such an approach calls for great personal responsibility and an acknowledgement of the individual conscience. So what is right for one person is not necessarily right for another. Many sincere Christians believe in a “just war”, believing it is right to kill in certain circumstances, while others at great cost to themselves believe in pacifism, seeing war as “organised murder”. Many sincere Christians hold to the indissolubility of marriage, while others see that sometimes it is right to re-marry and start again. Surely God calls all to different ways of life, to varying commitments, and rather than attempting to lay down a blueprint of belief and morality for everyone, is it not possible to value, affirm and respect all differences? For all are to be drawn into God’s love whatever their race, their culture, their nature, their beliefs, their religion or their lack of it. So it is “tragic that in a Church that has, since the Reformation, lived at peace with huge theological differences, we are now considering a ‘confession of orthodoxy’ caused, even if the proposed Covenant does not say so, solely by differing views of sexuality and how they relate to episcopal authority. That is utterly un-Anglican, and alien to our real life and to the world in which we live”. (PAUL OESTREICHER)

Thus the unity that Our Lord prays for is not just the unity of Christians. Surely it is the unity of the whole world, the unity of God’s amazing rainbow creation. Before signing up to any Covenant, with the inevitable hardening of various positions, perhaps consideration should be given to what we hope for in heaven. Before believing that only our chosen group, denomination, or religion is right, would it not be possible to see the huge variety of beliefs that will be welcomed in heaven? Surely there, all will come into the light of the truth, where the full knowledge of God will sweep away all that is exclusive and divisive. In heaven we may trust that we will remain as individuals yet united in one communion, drawn together in a glorious inclusiveness into the complete and perfect circle of God’s love.

Robert Kempster

Companions And Friends

Companions' Rule

This issue contains an insert just for Companions of a draft rewriting of the Companions Rule. Please let me know what you think of it, and then we may put it in a more permanent form. This comes as a result of a frequently expressed desire from Companions to have something more clearly defined than what we have worked with in recent years. What I have written should not make a substantial difference to Companions' lives, but may simply clarify the expectations, and, more importantly, reasons for the expectations.

Companions Days

A Companions Day is an annual festival at which as many Companions as possible offer their commitments on the altar at mass. Other friends of the Community are welcome to come and join in as well. In some ways these days replace the old Commemoration Day. Because of our building works we are not holding one at Mirfield this year. Instead there will be two: one, chiefly for those in the North but also for anyone who wishes to come, will be at St Olave's Church in York on 29th May. We have been very lucky to get the new Bishop of Whitby, Martin Warner, who was formerly at Walsingham, to speak and celebrate at this; I hope as many people as possible will come and show him what a vigorous body of Christians surround CR. The second Companions Day for Southerners and anyone else who is interested, will be at Canterbury on 18th September, and will take the form of a pilgrimage to that great and historic cathedral.

Retreats

Going on retreat is something we encourage. People get over busy and find it difficult to get away on retreat. At the beginning of this year before your diary fills up may I suggest you book a retreat.

For anyone wanting something a bit more spacious than usual we are offering an Individually Guided Retreat from 18th – 24th April. If you would like to join us in this Ignatian style retreat please contact me or the Guestbrother. You will be welcome.



COMPANIONS DAY 2010 – YORK

Saturday May 29th 10.00 – 16.00
At St. Olave's Church, Marygate, York YO30 7BH

**Celebrant and speaker Canon Martin Warner,
Bishop designate of Whitby
Preacher Fr Nicolas Stebbing CR**

Cost for the day £10 to include refreshments and lunch.
Further details and booking from Mrs Pauline Briscoe, 1 Osborne Mews,
Doncaster Road, Barnsley S70 1UU
Email p.briscoe@talk21.com





Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield
COMPANIONS & FRIENDS DAY
at Canterbury Cathedral
 on Saturday 18 September, 2010



At the invitation of the Archdeacon of Canterbury, the Ven Sheila Watson, a CR Companions & Friends day will be held in Canterbury on Saturday 18 September 2010 to include a Mass in the Eastern Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral. Plans are well advanced and we invite you to indicate below your interest in attending this very special event.

Planned Agenda	
10.00am	Meeting in the Reception Area of St Augustine's Abbey
10.15am	Pilgrimage Walk to Canterbury Cathedral (about 15 mins)
10.45am	Coffee/Tea break in the Cathedral Lodge
11.30am	Mass in Eastern Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral
12.30pm	Lunch in the Cathedral Lodge
(13.30pm to 14.45pm Optional Guided Tour of Cathedral: £5 extra , to be pre-booked)	
3.30pm	Cup of Tea/coffee and farewells in the Cathedral Lodge

This timing will be confirmed nearer the date, plus information about overnight accommodation, if you require this.

The total price for the day including morning drinks, lunch with tea/coffee, afternoon tea/coffee will be £19.50.

It is anticipated that a number of Brethren from the Community of the Resurrection in Mirfield will join us. It is also hoped that we will be joined by the Archdeacon and by Christopher Irvine, former Principal of the College of the Resurrection at Mirfield and now Residentiary Canon at the Cathedral.

IMPORTANT: Numbers are limited. To secure each place, please complete the form below and return with a £5.00 per person non-refundable deposit. An early reply is advisable. Maps and further information will be sent nearer the date.

-----<

PRINT Name

PRINT Address

.....□

Telephone e-mail

No in party No requiring optional Guided Tour

Accommodation information required?

Please make cheques payable to "Rosalind Johnson" and write "Canterbury Pilgrimage" on the reverse. Then return this form and your deposit to Mrs Rosalind Johnson, 7 Prae Close, St. Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 4SF.

Please advise any special dietary or mobility needs

Prayer for Christian Unity

As I write these words I am about to set off to Switzerland for an ecumenical meeting of religious near Basel where the Riehen Sisters have their house. They are Swiss Reformed. We shall also have a French Benedictine sister, a Belgian Benedictine monk, an English Roman Catholic sister, a sister of the Lutheran Christusbruderschaft and a Romanian Orthodox monk. We shall talk for three days about the problems and joys of seeking the unity which Christ desires for his Church. Also we shall simply enjoy being together, celebrating our common Christian life and our common calling to the religious life. There are differences between us but we are united by far more than divides us; we are Christians following the One Christ in prayer and service.

CR has always had this ecumenical dimension: Walter Frere, Lionel Thornton, Geoffrey Curtis in the more distant past; Christopher Lowe, Benedict Green and a host of others still living more recently. As the week of Prayer for Christian Unity hoves into sight (18th – 24th January) perhaps we could all commit ourselves to praying for unity and seeking to meet other Christians in generosity and openness to all they have to give to us.

Walsingham Pilgrimage

Our annual pilgrimage to Walsingham will take place from Friday 4th to Monday 7th June 2010. Fr Antony Grant CR will be leading it. Please contact Geoff Dignum at geoff.dignum@googlemail.com or phone 01582 762623. Book in good time as there are only a limited number of places.

Companion RIP

Frank Eric Clegg FR member for 50yrs +

New Companions

Robin Waite, Pauline Ward, Keith Battarbee

Companions website details - www.mirfieldcompanions.org.uk

Nicolas Stebbing CR

Book Reviews

Guardian of the Light *Paddy Kearney*

Continuum £16.99 (Hbk) Isbn 9780826418753

Racial discrimination is a very horrid thing and it was at the heart of South African life from the time white people first arrived. It may have been the Nationalist Party who enshrined apartheid as a doctrine, but they only formalised and pushed to extremes practices that were well established in South Africa. It took the Christian Church centuries to realise that it was wrong. Individuals there were, but it was only with the public witness of people like Michael Scott and Trevor Huddleston that the church hierarchy began to understand that more was needed to oppose this wrong. It took the majority of clergy and white Christians very much longer. Only in the 1950s did the Church really begin to make a stand and though there are proud moments in its witness thereafter, there is much shame at how long it took for the church to understand or *really* to understand the needs of its Black majority.

The Roman Catholic Church was slower than most others to come to this point. Traditionally conservative and inward looking they had the added fear that their schools might be deregistered if they antagonised the government and the very large number of foreign priests and religious on whom their work depended might be deported. Slowly in the 1950s they came to realise the need to stand against apartheid. After Vatican 2 their stance became more radical until in the 1980s the Catholic Bishops' Conference and other catholic institutions were in the forefront of the witness to the evil of apartheid and the demand for democratic change. The person who more than any other drove forward this change in Catholic political and social witness was Denis Hurley, Bishop and then Archbishop of Durban from 1947 till 1992.

Denis Hurley was a magnificent person. He was a big man, with a big personality. Highly intelligent, he was also a good pastor who cared for people and was able to give himself equally to all kinds of different people. A member of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, he had done most of his priestly studies in Rome and so was fluent in

Latin, French and Italian, yet he was critical of the old Roman way of training priests, with its lack of concern for pastoral formation and preaching. A key experience in his own development had been studying the social doctrine of Pius XI proclaimed in the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*. This helped to alert him to the social evils in South Africa, exacerbated by apartheid. It took him a long time to get his fellow bishops to see this too.

Paddy Kearney tells the story well of how Hurley did this. He gives the right kind of attention to detail, but never loses the momentum of a magnificent prophetic life. He points out that a Christian prophet does not foretell the future, but shows how evil is inherent in the present to produce very likely results in the future. This Hurley did, and he was involved at every level, in the struggle to preserve catholic mission schools against Bantu Education, in resisting the policy of removals and alleviating the suffering of those removed, in exposing the evils of the military struggle in Namibia, in supporting young men who refused to enter the armed forces, in trying to get justice for those who had suffered at flashpoints such as Boipatong, and in trying to bring peace in the civil war that raged in Zululand and Natal in the run up to the first free elections.

At the same time he was first an Archbishop; he found the Second Vatican Council the most exciting event of his life and helped to form the new attitude of openness to the world and new ideas which have informed the church ever since. He laboured to put the decrees of Vatican 2 into effect in his own diocese and also worked at an international level, particularly with ICEL that produced the English texts for the liturgy. He loved that work and did it superbly and, if some of us dislike the banality of the earlier translations (much improved in later years), the story of how the Vatican suddenly changed the rules and destroyed much of ICEL's later work makes the reader's blood boil. Perhaps because he would not keep the Vatican line on all things (birth control, women's ordination, for instance) and because of his high political profile (the Vatican doesn't like clergy who get involved in politics) he never became a Cardinal. That is a pity as his influence on the Vatican would have been greater.

Hurley seems to have managed old age without diminishment, continuing as parish priest of Durban Cathedral until he was 86

and travelling overseas, particularly to work with the Sant'Egidio Community in their peace-making efforts and their work with the poor. One of the last things he said was, "More and more I realise that love is the only thing that matters. Love makes the difference ... Love is the distinguishing mark of the Christian."

He ended his life as a humble member of the OMI community, literally with his boots on as he died quite suddenly in a car on his way back from celebrating a jubilee mass. He joins that small pantheon of bishops and priests who helped to make South Africa and the Church a different and better place.

Nicolas Stebbing CR

Faith in the Fool *Angela Ashwin* Darton Longman Todd
Ibzn 13 – 978 -0232527704. 176 pp £12.95

I suspect that this is one of those books which will self-select its readers. One is either attracted to the title or baffled. For those whose hearts leap at the idea of the fool then it is rich store of delights.

Ashwin has a far-reaching and well-stocked mind and she writes with great fluency and ease. There is thoroughness here but no over-laboured erudition. She wears her well-researched scholarship lightly.

She takes a broad sweep of the history of the fool, his or her role in literature, history, legend, and religion, and relates it to our needs. As she reveals for us the images, stories and lessons of fools she shows that they have deep resonance in our spirituality. We all could do with the fool at every level of our personalities and at all times of life.

The instructions that Ashwin gives us at the beginning of the book are 'fool'-ish and liberating to start with. It is dispiriting to read a book on spirituality which tells you firmly to start at the beginning and progress steadily through to the end, not forgetting to do all the exercises on the way, with that deadening and guilt-inducing suggestion that there is measurable progress and achievement in a prayer-life. Instead she starts by actually telling us to pick and choose. An approach that underlies and mirrors so

much what the book is about. There is a randomness about the fool; an unpredictability, a leaping up in joy and a fall into a blundering collapse, that delight, surprise and appal us in equal measure.

The book is divided into five sections: the Value of Uselessness, the Delighted Fool, the Problem of being Perfect, the Uncluttered Fool, and, finally, taking the book into the darkest areas of suffering and sacrifice, the Vulnerable Fool. In each section there are about six chapters that probe, uncover and reveal the wonderful variety of fools and foolishness.

If there is a thread at all then it is in the universality of fools. Ashwin collects a truly impressive assortment as she ranges far and wide in her gathering and garnering of the lives, sayings and actions of the fool. One of the great delights of this book is the extensive use of writings that pertain to fools and our perceptions and reactions to them. There are quotations from St Paul, the Psalms, John Lennon, Simon Barnes, just to give a very small sample of the unhampered diversity of her frame of reference.

The book provides a wonderful counter balance to the concerns of so much of our contemporary society. It is difficult to see that her celebration of play, making mistakes, simplicity, uselessness – all aspects that lie at the heart of the fool – would gain much credence in the wider world, but, oh boy, how desperately it needs it.

I believe that of all the books that Ashwin has written this is her best.

One small nit-picking comment, Ashwin has succumbed to the Lent-book/church-study-book-syndrome, and has given – admittedly tiny – suggestions of activities, thoughts, questions, ponder points at the ends of chapters. I rather wish she hadn't. The book does not need them, they are implicit in the text and unnecessary.

And on a personal level I warm immediately to someone who professes a passion for sudoku and bird watching. She is a woman after my own heart.

The book is a gem, a must for anyone interested in spirituality. It does all the things that it should: moves, changes and above all liberates the mind and soul.

Kate Griffin

How contemporary novelists rewrite stories from the Bible. The interpretation of scripture in literature.

Anthony C. Swindell. Edwin Mellen Press. 2009. 356 pp.

Isbn-13 978-0-7734-4764-6.

Dr Swindell has been a parish priest for over 30 years but that has certainly not stopped him from studying. He writes that the subject has interested him throughout his ministry and has fed his preaching. “A long time ago I was supervised by Martin Jarrett-Kerr CR when doing an M.Phil. I have never stopped working in the field since... I think it is extremely important for us to get to grips with the dialogue between the sacred text and the lived experience of men and women in conditions utterly different from those associated with the circumstances of the text’s original production. This is what the “literary” side of reception-history is mostly about, from Christ as a knight in medieval literature to Ruth as a South African maidservant in a recent novel by Marlene van Niekerk.”

It is not a work to be tackled by the faint-hearted, as this extract from the introduction indicates: “This work is an examination of fourteen monographs, written by fourteen different authors, over a period of thirty years, on ... the treatment of specific biblical stories in literature, art and theology.” The Bible in its traditional black binding is far from just a dull, dutiful book. It is almost the first port of call for any novelist suffering from writer’s block. Among the more popular writers analysed here are Marina Warner, Milton, Willa Cather, Byron, Kazantzakis, James Joyce, George Macdonald, John Steinbeck, Nicholas Mosley – about 50 in all are considered.

The Bible presents itself as the Word of God, but people for more than three millennia have been writing out these hallowed words, often with significant differences, in an attempt to make sense of them in very different contexts, reading into the texts layer upon layer of additional meanings. The churches have tried to impose authoritative interpretations, but people have always managed to find something new in the text to which they respond in highly creative ways.

Your reviewer is quite out of his depth here, and has enlisted the author’s help, but we believe that not a few people who see CRQR want to know about new academic developments, and church

people in general can be encouraged to tackle serious reading. It seems worthwhile drawing attention to a related new encyclopedia in production, a truly vast project, to which Dr Swindell has agreed to contribute thirty or so articles, one contributor amongst over a thousand internationally:

Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception. ed. *Hans-Josef Klauck and others.* Walter De Gruyter. 2009. Isbn 3 11 018 353 2

The EBR pursues the twofold task of comprehensively rendering the current state of knowledge on the origins and development of the Bible according to its different canonical forms in Judaism and Christianity, and documenting the history of the Bible's reception not only in the Christian churches and the Jewish Diaspora but also in literature, art, music, and film, as well as Islam and other religious traditions and current religious movements. The biblical texts have exerted their influence, in countless religious, theological, and aesthetic settings. EBR is a resource tool for scholars in biblical studies and related fields but also accessible to general readers interested in the Bible. Dr Swindell is a contributor and his articles on the literary reception-history of Abel, Adam, Adam and Eve, and the Ascension have recently appeared in Volumes I and II.

Antony Grant CR

An altar in the world. Finding the sacred beneath our feet.

Barbara Brown Taylor. Canterbury. 2009. £9.99.

Isbn 978 1 85311 880 3

It is common among human beings to imagine that holiness is achievable only if impossible conditions are met. "If only I could go to the foothills of the Himalayas and sit at the feet of Guru Mukurghi! - but I couldn't afford the fare or take the time off" - so I give up. Barbara Brown Taylor (a new name to me, but what a delightful discovery!) in *An Altar in the World* shows what you can do by staying at home. The title of each of her dozen chapters begins with "The Practice of" and the practices are:- Waking up to God, Paying attention, Wearing skin, Walking on the Earth, Getting lost, Encountering others, Living with purpose, Saying No, Carrying water, Feeling pain, Being present to God,

Pronouncing blessings. There's no need to go to the Himalayas – just stay right where you are. Refreshing, don't you think?

Andrew Norton CR

Can Words Express our Wonder? *Rosalind Brown*

Canterbury Press 2009 PB pp190 ISBN 978 1 85311 969 9
£12.99

The Word is Very Near You. *John Pridmore*

Canterbury Press 2009 PB pp332 ISBN 978 1 85311 951 4
£19.99

Here are two very different books for preachers. Rosalind Brown is a residentiary Canon of Durham Cathedral and her book is about how to preach. She has taught on two ordination schemes and this enthusiastic offering appears to be the fruit of her college courses and her own preaching. Footnotes at the end of each chapter testify to her wide reading on this subject.

Her advice is perhaps more suited to occasional preaching than to those who preach every Sunday but it is full of salutary reminders to help preachers who may be becoming slack in their preparation or dull in their delivery and above all Canon Rosalind Brown believes ardently in the importance and value of the traditional sermon.

John Pridmore offers reflections on the Sunday lectionary readings for Years A, B and C, based on his regular columns which appeared in the Church Times. A former tutor and chaplain at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, he was later on the staff of St Martin-in-the Fields and until his retirement Team Rector in London's East End. Communicants will find in it inspiration to help them prepare for the Sunday Eucharist and food for thought in their daily meditations afterwards. Archbishop Michael Ramsey used to advise young priests who had to preach to the same congregation more than once on a Sunday, to turn to someone's book of sermons for the second preaching engagement. Preachers will find John Pridmore's book very helpful. He gives illuminating exposition of the appointed readings and engages with the diverse concerns of today's world.

Crispin Harrison CR



Quarterly Review of the Community of the Resurrection is the Community Journal, printed and published four times a year: Epiphany (January 7th); Lady Day (March 25th); John the Baptist (June 24th); and Michaelmass (September 29th), for which the annual subscriptions rates (postage and packing inclusive) are as follows:

UK (Inland)	£15.00
OVERSEAS (Surface Mail)	£17.50 (GBP) or US\$28.50
OVERSEAS (AirMail)	£20.50 (GBP) or US\$33.00

All orders please write to: The Editors CRQ, House of the Resurrection, Mirfield, West Yorkshire. WF14 0BN England.

Please direct all materials, enquiries and comments to the editorial team:

Oswin Gartside CR ogartside@mirfield.org.uk

Antony Grant CR agrant@mirfield.org.uk

Philip Nichols CR pnichols@mirfield.org.uk

Please send articles for consideration for the CR Review to the editors at least 5 weeks before the issue date.

Useful web addresses:

Community web address is:

www.mirfieldcommunity.org.uk

e-mail contact is:

community@mirfield.org.uk

Postal Addresses:

House of the Resurrection,
Mirfield, West Yorkshire
WF14 0BN

College of the Resurrection,
Mirfield, West Yorkshire
WF14 0BW
chaynes@mirfield.org.uk

The Mirfield Centre,
Mirfield, West Yorkshire
WF14 0BW
rsalmon@mirfield.org.uk



Archbishop Desmond Tutu spent a week here in November, during which he blessed the foundation stone for the new monastrey



Supporting the Community and College

Legacy stewardship is an expression of our devotion and faith, not unlike an inheritance we provide for our family.

Please consider making a bequest to support the Community or College in your will using the following Forms of Bequest or simply make a donation.

FORMS OF BEQUEST

1. To the Community and its General works

I GIVE free of duty to the Members of the Society at Mirfield in the County of West Yorkshire known as the "Community of the Resurrection" to be applied for the general purpose of the said Community under the direction of the Chapter the sum of £..... AND I DECLARE that the receipt of the Bursar for the time being of the Community of the Resurrection aforesaid shall be a good and sufficient discharge to my Trustees for the same.

2. To the College of the Resurrection

I GIVE free of duty to the College of the Resurrection (Incorporated) situate at Mirfield in the County of West Yorkshire the sum of £..... for the general purposes of the said College AND I DECLARE that the receipt of the Treasurer for the time being of the said College shall be a good and sufficient discharge to my Trustees for the same.

DONATIONS

1. To the Community

Cheques or Postal Orders should be made payable to the "Community of the Resurrection". Please send to: The Bursar, House of the Resurrection, Mirfield, West Yorkshire WF14 0BN.

2. To the College of the Resurrection

Cheques or Postal Orders should be made payable to the "College of the Resurrection". Please send to: The Treasurer, College of the Resurrection, Mirfield, West Yorkshire WF14 0BN.

Thank you.

The Community is a Charitable Company (No. 232670)