

# CR



**QUARTERLY REVIEW OF THE  
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**Title:** Tree of Life (II)

**Media:** Oil on canvas

**Size:** 25" diameter

**Artist:** Fr Matthew Askey

## **Picture Prayer Meditation: The Tree of Life...**

The Tree of life is a theme that has interested Christians, and especially Christian artists, for centuries; linked as it is with the origins of mankind and with the figures of Adam and Eve. As a symbol it is a potent one – in the Middle-East water and shade are the means of life for all, providing drink, fruit/food, an environment for animals, shade, and quite simply life. It was in seeing the bush that Moses took a great step forward into a deeper relationship with a monotheistic notion of God, and understood the Spirit of God to be in everything; he saw it as a fire, as it would also be seen on the day of Pentecost when those first disciples received the Holy Spirit. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, also in Eden, may be this same tree or may be another, it is not clear. Eating the fruit of this second tree marks the beginning of man's self-awareness and the god-like freedom that stems from it. Suddenly man has the freedom but not the sense to be able to use it wisely.

The tree as the source of all life takes on a whole new meaning in the crucifixion of Jesus, and it is in this symbol of the tree that the freedoms man has misused are made-good and redeemed through God's love; in his self-offering of himself made for us all on the cross. This is the Tree of Life brought to earth for us to share in. Jesus unites us in his suffering, and it is on this perversion of a tree that his death is seen to bring new life...only God can bring about such a transformation. It is through the cross, the true Tree of Life, that we find the gifts of God laid bare for each one of us; the fruits of the spirit and the way to life in the eternal. Jesus said 'I am the vine, and you are the branches' ...and it is only by uniting ourselves with his great love and gesture of self-giving that we also become one with God in the cross, the Tree of Life, made all the more true and real through the meeting of so much human mess with so much divine love and hope.

Now please take the time to pray with the image, and let God take you where you need to be at this time.

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***Note from the Editors:***

In order to cut down on postage costs, Appeal newsletters are now being sent via email where possible. If you have not received a newsletter electronically or with this copy of CRQ, please let Adele Hannah (our appeal administrator) know.

You can contact Adele via email [ahannah@mirfield.org.uk](mailto:ahannah@mirfield.org.uk) or telephone 01924 483308.

## The Place of Prayer – Some Reflections

‘Where do you pray?’ I sometimes ask this question when leading sessions about different ways of praying, and the answers range from ‘on the train’ and ‘when walking the dog,’ to ‘in the bath’, ‘while watching the News’, ‘on the ice rink’ and ‘in the school hall’ (where a dinner lady prays for each child as she dishes up the food). Some people have a favourite spot in their house, or go to a nearby church or park for their ‘personal pit stops in the race of life,’ as Philip Roderick, founder of the Quiet Garden Movement, calls them. Others depend on regular visits to retreat houses. The way we answer the question about where we pray reveals much about the ‘place’ of prayer in our own lives, and it is worth pondering what it is about certain places that makes us want to pray there.

External locations can be powerful parables of internal realities: ‘Church space mirrors the space within the human person,’ (Melvyn Matthews). At one time I wanted very much to go to the rocky outcrop of Skellig Michael off the South West coast of Ireland, in order to stand among the beehive stone huts of the extraordinary community of monks who lived there in fierce austerity from the seventh century onwards. But it took the wisdom of my spiritual director to point out that my longing to go there was a sign of my desire to engage more deeply with God in the ‘inner room’ of my own heart (cf. *Matthew 6:6*). Similarly, the desert has literally been a place of prayer for countless people, offering both symbolically and in practice the ideal setting for a radical stripping away of inessentials in order to be more available to God. But there are deserts of the heart too, and we may find ourselves in a spiritual wilderness while in the comfort of our own home. Recognising a dry period as a ‘desert’ experience may help us to see it as an opportunity to grow in trust and simplicity, just as the Desert Fathers and Mothers used the fierce landscape to sharpen their self-abandonment to God.

I recently led a quiet day at Tabor Carmelite Retreat Centre in Preston, Lancs. As soon as I set foot in the house I began to sense some old, familiar stirrings within myself. It was as if the place itself was drawing me into silence with God, while other,

pressing issues that had bothered me all week suddenly seemed less urgent. What is it about places like Tabor that so readily puts us in touch with our deepest aspirations? I believe it is something to do with the way our own story connects with that of the place we are in. Many visitors to the Minster in my home town of Southwell comment on a sense of entering a building that has been ‘prayed in’ for centuries. The chaplains say that the people who are most open to the sacredness of the place tend to be those who come with worries and anxieties, or who spend time in the side chapel lighting a candle. This indicates that our desire for help and healing, perhaps for God himself, is an important factor in the way a place may speak to us. On the other hand, a location can take us by surprise when we are anything but open to faith. I know two people for whom this is true: an agnostic tourist who was overwhelmed by a sense of the holy when standing near a saint’s tomb in a cathedral, and a convinced atheist reluctantly accompanying a friend to Evensong in a small country church and finding a Presence there which he could not ignore. Both are now priests.

Certain places have an undeniable atmosphere that reflects events from the past. In the early 1980s the entire team of technicians working on a BBC Television programme about religion in China refused point blank to stay more than one night in a hotel in Peking, because they found the whole place sinister and malign. It later transpired that this building had been used by Madame Mao during the ‘Cultural Revolution’ as an interrogation centre. If places can have ‘memories’ of dreadful events they can also hold within themselves a sense of goodness and of God.

Only this week somebody said to me, ‘I can’t get a handle on this cathedral – so much history and human life has been here; it always takes me into the beyond, into the infinite.’ St Benedict’s hermitage above Subiaco in Italy is, in my experience, a sacred place which carries a powerful sense of the prayer and surrender to God that have been a reality there since 500 AD. As Alan Ecclestone puts it, ‘a holy place is one where some revealing of the love and goodness of God takes place.’

We can, of course, pray anywhere and at any time. But there is a deeply rooted impulse in the human psyche to mark out certain

places which are not invaded by everyday concerns, where it is easier to engage with the divine. Even Jesus, who had a unique, ongoing communion with his Father, still needed quiet places like the wilderness of Judaea, the Galilean hills and the garden of Gethsemane, spaces where he could abandon himself totally to prayer. Like us he could be frustrated. When he went to a 'lonely place' before dawn to pray, Peter fished him out and remonstrated, 'Everyone is looking for you!' - echoing the kind of incomprehension still faced by clergy and others who appear to be abandoning their duty in order to go away on retreat (cf. *Mark* 1:35-7).

I remember smiling to myself in a retreat house chapel where they had inscribed above the sanctuary the words of Jesus, 'Come ye apart and rest awhile': ironically the disciples never got their much-needed break on the occasion to which this text refers, because the crowds guessed where they were going and arrived there first (*Mark* 6:31ff). This incident encourages me to feel less guilty in my own struggle to find spaces for prayer. And it is good to remind ourselves that God is always present to us, so that the place where we are at any moment is holy, even if it is a noisy office rather than a tranquil church: 'Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?' (*Psalms* 139:7). Generally speaking, the more we pray 'on the hoof' within the fabric of ordinary life, the easier it becomes to identify specific places and times for God alone.

But is there a danger of assuming that God is more available to us in one place than another? It is fascinating to see how different Old Testament traditions wrestle with this question, particularly in relation to the issue of whether or not the Jerusalem Temple is a good idea. At the consecration of the Temple in around 950 BC King Solomon is reported as saying, 'But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built!' (*I Kings* 8:27). Yet the Israelites then proceed to celebrate and make full use of their new house of God. No building can possess God. But there are places where we may find God taking possession of us.

Finally, the symbolism and layout of a chapel or church are crucial, in the creation of an environment which offers a sense

of welcome and belonging but also affords sufficient space for quiet and solitude with God. Icons, mosaics, glass and stonework have, for centuries, touched worshippers at a deeper level than logic, drawing us, sometimes in spite of ourselves, into the transforming love of God. Sometimes a church may strike us as cold, remote, cluttered or perhaps clinical. But even this can be an opportunity if we approach the external bleakness with the same kind of determination that we try to apply to those times of inner darkness when God seems to be hidden or absent. That said, we rightly rejoice when the gift of a holy place, such as the newly refurbished church at Mirfield, reflects the living faith of others, and draws us out of ourselves into the mystery of God and into a stronger sense of our relatedness to the wider world. Then the challenge is to be fully present, with mind and heart open to the encounter. God's presence to us is given, but we ourselves may be, as it were, 'somewhere else' because of the many preoccupations that can beset our inner landscape. Once we are wholeheartedly in that place, grace comes to meet us and enables us to be more fully alive in Christ, ready to be sent out as Christ-bearers in the world. And the most important word in that sentence, I would suggest, is 'in'!

**Angela Ashwin**

Angela Ashwin's latest books are available from Mirfield Publications Bookshop <http://www.monasterystay.co.uk/shop/>; Tel: 01924 483345

*Faith in the Fool: Risk and Delight in the Christian Adventure*  
DLT. ISBN: 9 780 232 52770 4

A new edition of *Woven into Prayer: A Flexible Pattern of Daily Prayer through the Christian Year*  
Canterbury Press. ISBN: 978 1 84825 052 9



## Getting To Know God

All of us who are Christians know we should love God. Some of us do love God deeply and passionately. Some of us think we love God but don't think we do it very well. And some of us find God a rather distant figure whom it is hard to love; respect, yes, but love is more than that. We know there is a problem here. If only we could have some time, or some guidance we might fill the gap between us and God. But life is so busy, there is no time.

That is why people come on retreat, to find time to be with God. Retreat is really an unhappy word to use as it suggests going backwards, defeat even. Yet if we go into retreat we are going forwards. We will definitely grow in our knowledge of God. We will deepen our love for him. We will find how much more he loves us than we ever thought was possible. Going on retreat should be stimulating, exciting and full of new possibilities. It's not a holiday or a rest, though it may have elements of holiday and rest in it. It is a time to grow.

Catholic Anglicans used to be good at retreating. It is one of the many aspects of Catholic life that has fallen rather by the wayside. People have become too busy and think they cannot stop, even for a weekend. Priests are too busy and think the parish can't cope without them for a few days. This is nonsense and arrogance. A retreat is not a luxury to be taken only when there is plenty of space. It is a necessity for healthy Christian life. Priests especially **MUST** go on retreat to rediscover the centre of their life which is not themselves, or their parish, but God. If you are a priest and have not been on retreat in the past year, then you must stop reading this article **NOW**. Get on the phone or the email and book a retreat. Priests who do not go on retreat break down. They lose the centre of their ministry and become focussed on the wrong things. This drains grace out of their ministry. We find a church that is dying through too much busyness, too much management and not enough attention on God and Jesus and the power of the sacraments.

As Christians we follow Jesus; we try to be like Jesus and to live our lives as Jesus did. Jesus knew the Father. He knew him intimately because he spent much time with him. For thirty years he lived quietly in his village, getting to know God. When he

emerged people were amazed because he spoke with authority. He knew what he was talking about. That is what we could be like, really effective Christians telling the world about Jesus, if only we spent time getting to know him.

When we are tired we easily see Christianity in negative terms. We find it rather dull; we find the people at church rather boring; we feel God is a hard task master who doesn't give us much fun; we find Jesus a rather distant teacher who makes impossible demands on us. None of these things are really true but we need time and space to discover that the devil is tempting us once again with lies. In fact when we read the gospel with care we find that Jesus is delightful company, amusing, loving, surprising, interesting, challenging. He's often uncomfortable, but he is never dull. And God too. We tend to default into stereotypes of thinking of God as the Old Testament God who is always angry and vengeful. But even in the Old Testament he is not usually like this. The prophets show him angry simply with people who maltreat the poor. He loves the poor. The psalms show him to be caring and full of light and wonder.. The old Testament is full of the most delightful characters, people like Ruth, Elijah and dear old Jonah. Coming away on retreat is a chance to get to know these wonderful characters in our Christian mythology. More importantly we find God as he really is and as he wants us to see him. We find we grow into a much more mature awareness of God. We are raised to a new level of Christian discipleship and church going is never quite the same again.

And there are the sacraments. Parish worship has many virtues and joys but it can be crowded, disjointed and noisy. Sometimes a Eucharist in the quiet order of a retreat, perhaps with good monastic singing can give us a new vision of how God really is at the centre of all true worship. And what about confession? God is love and because of that he forgives. Experiencing his forgiveness is one of the surest ways of experiencing his love, but we cannot be forgiven unless we confess our sin. Coming apart in retreat gives us a chance to do this properly and to find that it really is true that "there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents..." and we can share in that joy.

So when did you last make a retreat? Do you need to make one now? If so, don't wait till next week. Make your booking now!

**Nicolas Stebbing CR**

## Our Church: A Place of Prayer

In the gospels we are told that Jesus often met with His disciples to pray. Usually it appears to be outside, in a garden or on a hillside. But Jesus attended worship in the synagogue and the Temple and practiced daily prayer. As we read in the gospels, He Himself teaches us the importance of prayer and how to pray. In the long history of Christianity church buildings have become essential to our life as members of the Body of Christ. A church is a sacred place, a place set apart to the glory of God, for the worship of God.

At Mirfield we want our whole site to be a place of prayer and stillness. In a noisy world where so many people are hurt by the careless and, at times, ruthless attitudes of others, we pray that people may find acceptance, healing and love here. At the centre of this site, is the Church of the Resurrection. As I write this small article and stare out of the window in hope of inspiration, I see the monastery church and hear the building work going on around it, the sound of workmen from within the church, and of a flurry of activity as the church gets ready for a new life of prayer and worship.

The church here at CR is an important place for me. Years ago I was visiting one of the brothers and after our chat went to sit quietly in church before Midday Office and Mass. As I was sitting there I realised that the restless yearning that was within me had stopped, and there was an overwhelming sense that this, of all places, was where I was being called to be. I was terrified! The end of my stay couldn't have come sooner. I said my goodbyes and couldn't get away from this place quickly enough. On another visit a few years later I was sitting in the Resurrection Chapel. I had run out of excuses and finally gave up arguing with God and accepted that I may have to come and test my vocation to the Religious Life here at Mirfield. Praying in church is a very dangerous activity! When on my travels I have come across churches that have a quaint little sign about the door that reads 'This is the house the God, this is the gateway to heaven.' (*Genesis 28:17*). To my mind churches should have a big yellow warning sign outside that reads, 'DANGER: this is the house of God!'

It has been convenient for us to have the chapel in the house, but it is not the same as praying in the church. Although we seek to make the whole site a place of prayer it can be very noisy in the house as people go about their daily work. We have many visitors and the college students join us for worship, so at times it can feel less like a chapel and more like an oversized tube train. The worship experience for visitors and for the college is not quite what we would like it to be.

A church builds community and that is true for us in CR. For better and for worse, however we feel, we come together to offer our prayer and worship to God before the altar. The church too is a place where we are renewed and sent out refreshed and recharged for the work of the gospel.

By making the effort to go to church to pray we are making a physical act of love, showing God that we are serious about our relationship with Him.

Every day, apart from services, brethren go to chapel to make our meditation or to say prayers for the people we know and love and for those we have never met and will never meet, holding before God all that weighs heavy on people's hearts and minds. We give thanks too for the love that God has shown to others and to ourselves.

Prayer isn't easy. There are many distractions that can come our way. At times prayer can feel empty and pointless, and we can wonder if God is really hearing us or whether we should even be bothering to disturb Him at all. Therese of Lisieux gives us an image of Christ asleep on a boat. 'For my part' she says 'I prefer to let Him have His sleep.' But so long as we can keep alive our desire to pray, we should continue to persevere in prayer. When we pray in church we can find ourselves praying along side other people. Sometimes it can be off putting to see people who seem to be praying with ease, (don't be too put off by a pious looking monk who looks deep in prayer!). For myself I find praying in church with other people helpful, especially after an exhausting and busy day: it helps me to centre myself, calm down and focus my racing mind.

We keep the church as a place for silence and attentiveness to God. Those who come here on retreat will find the church a place of stillness and silence away from the hustle and bustle of daily

life. Although we know that God is everywhere it isn't always easy to find ourselves at prayer with Him. We go there seeking to find Him and discover that He is there waiting for us, and in meeting Him we discover that we are found in Him, for He is the source of our lives.

I hope that you will visit us, stay here on retreat or come here on pilgrimage. Please pray that all those who visit the church in this place may encounter our crucified and risen Lord and be refreshed, renewed and transfigured by the love that God has for us all.

**Jacob Pallett nCR**

## **The Priest and The Publican**

*I had heard of the Pilgrim's route to Santiago de Compostela many years ago. And for many years I had found some reason or another not to set time aside and walk it. But the death of a mutual friend had the priest (me) and the publican (Hervie Magnall) talking seriously about attempting some section of it. The talking eventually turned into a commitment to undertake a stretch of the Camino as a debt of friendship to a great philanthropist and benefactor (Leslie Ratcliffe) and as a focus of fund raising for two charities dear to his heart; Bury Hospice and Derian House Children's Hospice. So the priest embarked upon his pilgrimage and the publican upon his walk. The Publican, by his own admission was not "religious" and he reminds me of many servicemen I have known; hard men but with generous and expansive hearts.*

**W**e had decided that we would try to walk the 300+ kilometres from Leon to Santiago. Time was not on our side with heavy commitments at home. Finally I was able to organise priestly cover in my parish whilst I was away for the last week of August and the first two of September. We did a little bit of planning in so far as the route was concerned but neither one of us wanted the time away to be too organised and hoped to avoid finding ourselves hamstrung by dates and ideas of *completion*. I borrowed various bits of kit that I thought would be useful and listened to the insights of others who had been on Camino previously. Not everyone who embarks upon the Camino



is a Pilgrim. There are walkers and cyclists who use the route as a means of keeping fit during the summer. One man I met had cycled 89 kilometres in one day and I rather wonder what on earth he actually saw with his eyes fixed most of the time on the road! At one point I wondered whether I would find any Christians at all!

I was very excited about the thought of having this brief moment in time to reflect, to pray and take each day as it came. I kept a daily diary, I prayed the Mirfield Office and went to Church (where they were open) when I could. I wore the Profession Cross of an old friend now dead, my Companion's medal and amongst other things I took with me a scapula from the Community that I used at times for a pillow and which I wore on the final leg into Santiago itself. I did not walk with my friend, he is six feet one and I am five feet four!! But this worked well and I was able to enjoy the solitude and my own thoughts, singing bits of hymns to myself, reciting Christian mantras along the paths and up and down the hills, in driving rain and in the burning heat. I remembered the Community brethren by name as I walked along (forgive me if I forgot someone!) and I prayed also for others close to my heart.

For me it was also a time to slow down and go only as fast as my little legs could take me. I told no one that I was a priest and I relished the thought of anonymity although on one occasion, by way of conversation, a girl from Ireland instinctively knew that I was. It was quite wonderful to be able to take time and just "be". I had no diary, no phone was going to ring, nor doorbells either;

there were no meetings to attend, but there were people.

And along the way I noticed how much loss was being carried by these people, men and women whose personal relationships had fallen to pieces or who had been struck down by some tragedy or other. A 50 year old Mexican now living in Paris, Luis Hernandez, was hit by a drunk driver at the age of 19, killing his girlfriend and he was walking the entire Camino on crutches and one leg. There were folk who were seeking spiritual consolation and renewal. Sergio from Argentina was walking the Camino because he felt that he had lost something very precious in his relationship with Our Lady, Anna from Poland prayed the Rosary every day as she hope that God would bless her with a good husband and that she could start her own family. Bethany from Switzerland wanted to hear the voice of God as she tried to work out where her life was going. There were others too with their own reasons for why they were walking the Way to St James. And I too had my own very personal reasons as well.

I could of course write reams about each day and the many conversations that I had. But perhaps my last Sunday in Santiago will suffice at this stage because it was moving and touching and significant. Having arrived in Santiago I had wondered whether or not to go to Mass at the Cathedral. I had never received communion in any Church other than my own; I had even declined the invitation at the requiem I attended of my dear friend Sr. Norah



Moran SSH whose profession Cross I had worn every step of the way. But on Sunday morning I had decided to go to the packed cathedral Church and I stood at the back. At the point of the Peace folk that I had in some way shared my Camino with turned and greeted me – from Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Italy and elsewhere. I went forward to receive a blessing (something again that I have never done) and said to the priest in two languages that I was Church of England having properly crossed my arms in front of my chest. He looked at me and I looked at him. This was repeated three or four times whereupon he administered the Sacrament. And in that gesture I felt that he was saying to me, “You belong here too, you have been on Camino, you are a pilgrim, this



is your place; the bell is ringing for you as well”. I found it personally deeply moving and stood in the Cathedral long afterwards allowing the whole experience to just wash over me, thinking about so many, many things. It was for me such a humbling experience.

The Camino is such a metaphor for life and I am continuing to process my brief time spent on it and articulating the lessons and insights that I learned. The Camino goes on.

**Fr Hugh Bearn**  
Companion CR

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**Footnote:**

These days there is a big demand for “theme retreats”, because not so many people want just to sit and listen to a series of addresses or sermons, as in the customary “Preached retreats.” One of the most



effective, ancient and original ways of specifically spending time with and for God is to go on pilgrimage. The tomb of the Apostle Matthias at The Abbey of St Matthias Trier is one such pilgrimage destination itself, and next year Trier Cathedral celebrates the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the very first showing of the Holy Robe (*Heilige Rock*) of Our Lord in 1512. Pupils of the school next door to the abbey have made 500 sticks, which will be carried next year in procession from the school to the cathedral. Here are the sticks ready waiting for them.



Informative websites about other pilgrimages today:  
[www.csj.org.uk/](http://www.csj.org.uk/); [www.pilgrimsprogress.org.uk/](http://www.pilgrimsprogress.org.uk/)  
[www.walsinghamanglican.org.uk/the\\_shrine/why\\_pilgrimage.htm](http://www.walsinghamanglican.org.uk/the_shrine/why_pilgrimage.htm)  
[www.glastonburypilgrimage.com/](http://www.glastonburypilgrimage.com/)

**For Retreats: See page 29**

## Reflections of a Former Warden

**M**y very first retreat at Pleshey was with Peter Morris, superb conductor and warden. The seeds of a desire one day to work in that field were sown. The joy of shedding responsibilities of breadwinner for a young family for a whole week-end. Permission to enjoy the peace, the regular pattern of worship, addresses, meals, being cared for and the time to “wait on the Lord”. Since then an annual retreat has been a priority and I never fail to marvel at the incredible way our Lord honours this time we set aside. As we slow down and learn to “Be Still” He has opportunity to speak to us in the silence, guide us to appropriate books, and deepen our prayer life.

Many years later, welcoming people as retreat house warden, I was strongly influenced by my own experience of the importance to a peaceful atmosphere, of ensuring the programme went smoothly, meals were appetising and served on time. It is curious how important meals become on a retreat and how retreatants start congregating around the dining room as mealtime approaches! What I realised later was how much work it takes behind the scenes to achieve this.

My introduction to the retreat house world began when my husband Roger and I joined the community at Hengrave Hall. This Tudor mansion reputedly visited by Elizabeth I lies in 80 acres of beautiful grounds in a quiet part of Suffolk. At that time a conference centre and retreat house owned by the Sisters of the Assumption and run by an ecumenical community. Clergy and lay, young and mature, married and single people worked together. What an extraordinary experience ! Not the quiet and peaceful life many people imagine. Getting used to living in community was a huge culture shock and incredibly difficult - missing home, independence, privacy, contact with family, not even choosing what we ate and when. However shortly after arrival I was appointed Warden of the Youth Centre and then Warden of the Hall itself. An enormous challenge, it used my experience in the outside world to practise the hospitality I hoped for.

Our 3 years at Hengrave were so full, so complicated, so exhausting, so frustrating, so exhilarating, so unique. A few

snapshot observations: long days and corridors; quick changeovers, allocating 98 bedrooms and making sure sharing groups weren't sharing beds (and were compatible); greeting guests, hoping they wouldn't stop to chat too long on departure so the long post-retreat procedures could be carried out; checking every room to make sure windows were closed, taps turned off and no belongings left behind. - It was extraordinary what we found ! Frustrating community meetings with endless discussions about dirty mugs in sink, 26 different opinions and inability to reach decisions. Meeting wonderful interesting people from all over the world. Experiencing and planning unusual liturgies: unforgettable and imaginative enactments at Christmas: one year with a soldier and rifle blocking the entrance to where the Christ Child lay; and Easter: after dawn eucharist 'Jesus' is rowed across the lake and found in breaking of bread. Re-enactment of the Last Supper in the 'upper room' of our barn. A Liberal Rabbi guided us through the meal with authentic recipes. Cooking Christmas dinner for more than 50 people and then on New Year's Eve cooking spicy chicken and rice for 98 Oxfam volunteers and staff ... I could go on ...

After Hengrave, a few adventures. Then, at last, the best position of all - warden at St Francis' House. All the previous experiences "behind the green baize door" were very useful. My ambition was that guests would feel cared for in an unobtrusive way and should never be aware of the large and small crises that occur in the daily running of a retreat house; days when the cook or one of the cleaning staff or the gardener was off sick. Crisis in the kitchen just before the meal was to be served, when deliveries were late, when the boiler didn't work and, worst of all, when my wonderful deputy needed major heart surgery and was unable to work for quite a while. I felt privileged to be in such a beautiful, prayerful house, able to offer to our guests all the things that had been so valuable to me over the years, but always wished I had been 10 years younger when this opportunity came along. Being warden of a retreat house is very hard work and not good for family life so I decided to retire. My dear husband Roger and I made plans for our future with more time to spend together. It was devastating when he died suddenly and instead of moving together into our new home, I was following the coffin at his

funeral. So retreat house life ended on a very sad personal note.

As warden it is so rewarding to be in a position of offering time out to those who need it and at the end of their stay I was the one who received so many heartfelt thanks but never forgot the unseen work behind the scenes. Curiously, after 10 years in retirement I still keep to retreat times for meals although afternoon tea does not these days include cake or scones.

**Sue Smith**

Resident Warden St Francis' House  
Hemingford Grey 1998-2001

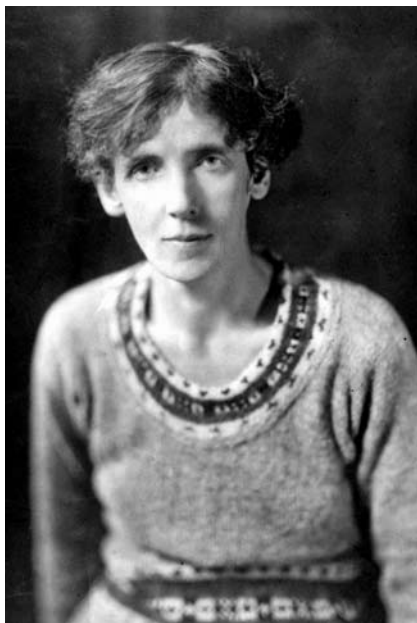
## Literary Links

I had the privilege of working for seven and a half years in the CR Library, where, as well as cataloguing and accessioning books, I sometimes undertook other work in particular areas of the Library. The re-cataloguing of the books and pamphlets in the Tower Music Room was suggested by the current Principal of the College, Fr Peter Allan CR, after a query from an American academic revealed that the details of some of the material kept there were somewhat inadequate. This was deemed to be a suitable project for a novice to work on with me, and he set to work with great energy.

As we worked on this somewhat laborious task, nuggets of information would emerge from the books and pamphlets about the members of the Plainsong and Medieval Music Society and other august bodies, and this literary detective was delighted to discover that three of her literary heroines had connections with the Community of the Resurrection.

One of these was Rose Macaulay. Rose was born in 1881, the second of seven children who spent the better part of their childhood running wild on the Ligurian coast of Italy where Rose's love of travel and swimming began. She later became a familiar figure in the literary life of London, and wrote a total of 23 novels during her life, the most famous of which is *The Towers of Trebizond* with its memorable characters, Father Chantry-

Pigg and Aunt Dot and her camel. Her secret affair with a married man, Gerald O'Donovan, lasted for 25 years until his death in 1942, and as a result of the affair, she became estranged from the Anglican church. Then in 1950 she began a correspondence with Father Hamilton Johnson of the Society of St John the Evangelist (the Cowley Fathers) who was living in Boston, Massachusetts and had sent Rose a fan letter after the publication of her novel *They Were Defeated*. They continued



to correspond until Rose died in 1958, and her letters describe her return to the Church, in which Fr Johnson was of great assistance to her. They were edited and published after her death by Constance Babington Smith, a third cousin.

While we were cataloguing some unbound papers ascribed to Edward Conybeare from the Tower Music Room, Fr Eric Simmons CR told us that Conybeare, an Anglican priest, was Rose Macaulay's uncle, and, furthermore, that a member of the Community, Reginald Smith CR, was a cousin of Rose's. Smith spent 26 years of his life working with the Community in Africa, and in his *Centenary History of the Community* (p.244), Alan Wilkinson gives a snapshot of Smith's life in St Augustine's Penhalonga in what is now Zimbabwe. And Fr Martin Jarrett-Kerr CR tells us in his obituary of Smith in the CR Quarterly of Christmas 1986 that he was Prior there from 1947, but that much of his work was 'on Trek'.

In a letter to Fr Johnson in *Last Letters to a Friend*, dated 7<sup>th</sup> May 1956, Rose writes of Fr Trevor Huddleston's book *Naught for Your Comfort* and of hearing him speak at the Caxton Hall on that day:

Today the Community [of the Resurrection's] feast began with High Mass at the Annunciation church [Bryanston Street,] to which I went, invited by my C.R. cousin who is home on leave from South Africa, and knows Fr Huddleston well. He introduced me to him after Mass.

A footnote confirms that this cousin was Rev. C. Reginald Smith, C.R. This is the only reference to Smith in the 2 volumes of Letters, and Fr Johnson's letters to Rose were among the papers she ordered to be destroyed after her death.



My second author is Sylvia Townsend Warner who was born in 1893, the daughter of a Harrow School master. From the age of 19 she had a 17 year long affair with the eminent musicologist, Percy Buck who was music master at the school until 1927. It would seem that in 1917 Buck engineered a place for Sylvia on the committee of the Tudor Church Music project, joining him, R R Terry, E H Fellowes and the Revd Arthur Ramsbotham. Their task over the

next 12 years was to collect and edit the wealth of Tudor music scattered around the nation's cathedrals, and Sylvia excelled in this work which was published to great acclaim by the Oxford University Press in 10 volumes for the Carnegie Trust.

Sylvia was also a member of the Plainsong and Medieval Music Society, and as Claire Harman tells us in her biography of Sylvia, she accepted an offer to edit the 'Eton Manuscript' for the PMMS in 1929. An entry in her diary of 8<sup>th</sup> July 1930 records that she had received a letter from Dom Anselm Hughes OSB 'suggesting to

me once more a seat on the PMMS Council.’ And in the Tower Music Room is a list of the names of the PMMS Council in 1933, among them being that of Miss S Townsend Warner, along with Percy Buck and the Bishop of Truro CR, indicating that Sylvia knew Walter Frere, one of the founders of the Community.

Sylvia Townsend Warner could have continued with her career as a musicologist, but instead she chose to concentrate fully on her writing. In 1930 she moved with her partner, Valentine Ackland, to Dorset where she lived and wrote for the rest of her life, dying in 1978. She wrote novels, poetry, and short stories, many of which were first published in the *New Yorker* magazine by William Maxwell, its fiction editor with whom she kept up a lively correspondence, later published as *The Element of Lavishness*. Her other letters were collected and edited by William Maxwell, and excerpts from the diaries she wrote for 50 years were edited by Claire Harman.

The third author is the American poet Denise Levertov. On one occasion I was filing a page under ‘LE’ in the paper catalogue kept in the Main Library when I saw the name of Paul Levertoff. I wondered if this was the father of Denise Levertov, the poet of recognition and the fleeting epiphanic moment whose poems on religious themes of doubt and faith are collected in *The Stream and the Sapphire*.



Denise Levertov was born in Ilford in Essex in 1923, and she moved to the United States in 1948 where for a while she was associated with the Black Mountain group of poets and later wrote political poems about America’s war in Vietnam. Her father, Paul Levertoff, was a Russian Hasidic Jew who converted to Christianity while at university in Germany. He later became an Anglican priest, not long before Denise was born, though

he always emphasised that he was a Jewish Christian. Denise describes her father's early life in one of the autobiographical fragments in her book *Tesserae*.

The book in question in the Library catalogue is *Die religiöse Denkweise der Chassidim nach den Quellendargestellt von Paul Levertoff*. It was published in Leipzig in 1918 when Levertoff was a lecturer there during the First World War. It has a handwritten dedication on the soft paper cover,

To the Rev. Frere, D.D., father superior of the C.R. With gratitude for spiritual and intellectual inspiration and for many kindnesses. P. Levertoff.

This is dated 12.xii.19, and suggests to me that Walter Frere CR was somehow involved in Levertoff's move to Anglicanism in the early twentieth century.

A further reference to Levertoff is to be found in the newly published *Walter Frere: Scholar, Monk, Bishop*, edited by Benjamin Gordon-Taylor and Nicolas Stebbing CR. Philip Corbett writes in his chapter, 'Between the Devil and the deep blue sea: Prayer Book revision and beyond' that

On 24 May 1924 Randall Davidson, the Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote to Frere concerning the translation of the Communion Service into Hebrew by one Dr Levertoff.

Frere gave his support to this undertaking, and the resulting liturgy, entitled 'The Order of Service of the Meal of the Holy King', was used at Holy Trinity, Shoreditch, where Levertoff was priest-in-charge.

Among Denise Levertov's papers stored at Stanford University is *In Memoriam: Dr Walter Howard Frere*, an article written for the *Mirfield Gazette* in 1939, which indicates that Dr. Levertoff continued to keep an interest in Frere and his work until Frere's death in 1938.

And so we have three literary links with the Community, and I am sure that there are many more to be found, not least among the papers of Fr Martin Jarrett Kerr CR.

**Rosie Irvine**



## The Hostel Revisited

I was recently in Leeds for a University Old Students Committee meeting with forty minutes to spare, so I went around to Springfield Mount to see the former Hostel of the Resurrection. I was there from 1956-59 and had not seen it since. Stories and rumours that it was to be converted into luxury apartments had saddened me. But there it was, with a board outside advertising “The Priory” student accommodation. After ringing the door bell I was duly admitted and was allowed to walk around. So I went up the stairs to the Chapel, still with its stained glass, holy water stoop and the oak seats where the Fathers sat. It is now comfortably furnished with sofas and a TV. Then to the Refectory, again well set out as a lounge. I was impressed particularly that students were to live there again, albeit I imagine at rather high rentals.

The Quad was under some scaffolding as much restoration work is going on. The person who invited me in listened as I spoke of life in the Hostel and the happy times we enjoyed there. She said another old student had called some months ago.

Incidentally if any old Leeds graduates are interested we do enjoy the Leeds University Old Students Association (LUOSA). If anyone is interested in knowing more please feel free to contact our Secretary Mrs Roche (Tel No 0113 261 4564) and she will put your name on the mailing list.

**Canon Brian Pearson**



## Zimbabwe Adventures

God never ceases to surprise us. Back in 2005 a student stopped me after a Greek class. Could I arrange for him to visit South Africa? I did; and took him to Zimbabwe too. He loved it. The next year he was back with three other students and his girlfriend (now his wife!). Every year since then has seen at least two College students come to Zimbabwe, and some have been to Johannesburg, Lesotho and Cape Town too. And it is not only College students who come to Zimbabwe; three priests, an OHP sister, a teacher, a chiropodist and most recently some Americans have been with me round parts of Zimbabwe tourists do not usually see. It has been wonderful fun but what has it achieved?

I suppose most of us go with the idea that we will help Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe has been in a mess for years now and really needs help. There is no doubt that our visits do help. We bring money which the church desperately needs. Our young ordinands and priests give an example to young clergy in Zimbabwe which they don't get elsewhere. Our visits have brought Tariro into being and that has been a life saving project for scores of young people. My companions find themselves laden with the most extraordinary variety of luggage: vestments, chalices, rosaries, spectacles, foot balls, wool, books, medicines and all kinds of odds and ends that improve life for people out there. The vestments, chalices and rosaries have been particularly important in helping priests and people to rediscover the riches of catholic devotion and to do it properly.

Yet beyond this material help it has been important for Zimbabweans to meet people from overseas and discover that Anglicans in other parts of the world know of their problems and care about them. In the early years of the economic collapse people constantly asked me "Do people in England know how we are suffering?" Now they know that people do. In the ecclesiastical struggles between true and false bishops they have come to see the importance of being in full communion with Anglicans all over the world. Our visits have put real flesh on the teachings they have heard about the world wide nature of the body of Christ.

On the day I write this piece we have heard the gospel for Christ the King – that those who give food to the hungry, clothes to the naked, visit the sick and the prisoners are doing it to Christ. We have done that and it has been a wonderful privilege for us. And of course through that we have found that the people who benefit most from all this is ourselves. The students who came have gone

back home enriched, with their concepts of Anglicanism broadened. They have found courage and joy and most incredible life amongst people who seemed to have nothing but in fact have God. Students have found they can live without electricity, running water, choice of food. There have been scary moments, and surprises too: at our first road block on one journey the policeman looked in the back of the van and saw four students surrounded by petrol cans and NO seat belts. "Hi!" he said cheerfully and sent us on our way.

This year, as our financial commitments grew we put out an appeal that people should help us through their Harvest Giving. Many parishes have done this and it has given our finances a big support. If you are one of those who helped us here, thank you very much. At the same time it has become clear that we need to develop our projects so that they are no longer just 'first aid' ,that is getting kids back into school, crucial as this is. We need to get the local communities more involved so that they share in the benefits and in the long term planning. The local communities are Anglicans, often very poor, and by helping them get involved we can help them find a stronger Anglican identity. And we can show them, as St James in his epistle tells us to do, that Christian love is not of the feelings; it has really practical consequences.

Many people have asked whether Archbishop Rowan's visit was good for the Anglican Church. Most definitely it was. Anglicans were hugely encouraged by his visit and his conversation with Mugabe seems to have resulted in two significant court judgements in our favour.

As you read this article I shall be back in Zimbabwe, visiting the Tariro groups and the Anglican churches. Please do pray that this is fruitful, that we are able to see where God wants us to God and that we will find the means to do it.

**Nicolas Stebbing CR**



## **That's Your Lot..**

**T**he financial result was beyond my dreams – something like £48,000 on the day with about £7,000 in pre and post auction sales and the unexpected gift of £5,000 brought it to about £60,000. Several dealers were very generous in rounding up their bill to the nearest hundred or thousand! So a good time was had by all and we are a bit nearer to our reaching our appeal targets. Nevertheless we still have a long way to go and there is much to do before our church will be completed. Thank God that stage one is nearly finished and we will soon be praising his name in a place of light, beauty and in a reasonably healthy temperature.

Now let us finish the job. Let us each play our part. There will be more bike riding, story-telling, coffee mornings, fun days and – another auction! The target, like last time is £10,000. With your help, who knows?

**John Gribben CR**

### **Two Accounts of The Sale of the Centenary**

The Sale of the Centenary turned into quite an event for the College as well as the Community. On the eve of the auction the College Refectory was packed with the treasures collected and interested visitors. Students and friends were seen wandering among aisles of furniture and memorabilia. On Saturday morning, watched over by the Gribben brothers, brethren and companions, the doors opened, and as I took position to supervise the car-parking, an expectant buzz had begun to build. The Senior Student and I did our best to get everyone parked we could and to direct others, fortified by warm cloaks and a constant supply of coffee brought by kindly Novices!

When we entered the Refectory for the start of the auction people were packed into every available space and there was a real sense of occasion. With things under way, George Gribben moved intrepidly through bid after bid, without pause or rest and with an instinctive feel both for the lots and the people buying them. We had the lucky vantage point of being 'behind the counter' and were soon involved in holding the lots aloft so potential buyers could view them. It was amazing to be near the silver-covered icon of

Our Lady, or the many clocks, medals, books and curios as they were sold for considerable sums, and the real highlight was the silence, expectation and then celebration when the much vaunted 'Mouseman' furniture secured such an impressive amount. On a personal note, being photographed with Princess Margaret's portrait just before it was purchased by an ardent fan was a very special (and slightly surreal) moment.

After 4 hours and 10 minutes all was concluded, and with prolonged applause for the organiser, the auctioneer, and a very well behaved and grateful crowd, the Sale of the Centenary was over - it was history in the making, and a really positive day for Community, College, Companions and friends to demonstrate our working together to secure and enhance our collective future and mission. An unforgettable and wonderful experience. Thanks be to God.

**David Warner**

Ordinand, College of the Resurrection

The distinction between Royal Crown Derby and Royal Doulton is not something that I expected to learn during my first six weeks training to be a priest at theological college! It was however, one of the many things I picked up whilst helping at the CR Sale of the Centenary. Other useful facts gained included the difference between WW1 and WW2 medals, silver and silver plated, and valuable, not valuable and incredibly valuable! From exhibiting items for potential buyers to wrapping and packing items as their buyers took them home, the auction was a wonderful opportunity to see some of the treasures of the auction close up and to meet a wide variety of people from the local area and beyond. The highlight of the weekend for me as a new student at the College, was the feeling of truly sharing in part of the life of the Community of the Resurrection as we are privileged to do here at the College. To have some fun working together, brothers, students, staff and volunteers, supporting each other and the Centenary Appeal was a great joy and inspiration, not to mention the amazing amount of money raised for the appeal, owing to Fr John's hard work and the support and generosity of all involved.

**Penny King**

Ordinand, College of the Resurrection

## Companions and Friends

We all enjoy Christmas presents; for us in the Community the best present we shall have this Christmas, apart of course from the Gift of Jesus, is our newly renovated church. We shall be back in it by the time you read these words and if the space seems rather larger than before it will still be lovely to sing and pray in a Church designed for that.

We hope you will all come and see it for yourselves either as a guest, a retreatant or at one of the events advertised in our retreat list. This is your church as well as ours as you have all contributed most generously with prayers and money. We want you to enjoy it too.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find advertised:

**5<sup>th</sup> February at 6.00pm:** Evensong of Candlemass followed by cheese and wine and an evening of music from some of our friends and Brethren. Come and enjoy!

**17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> March:** an *organfest* in which we invite any organist we know to find sponsorship to play the organ for an hour.

**7<sup>th</sup> July: Companions' Day** opening out in the afternoon to a time of celebration in which we hope to be joined by hundreds of people from parishes that support us.

**8<sup>th</sup> July: Fun Day.** This really has been such fun over the past two years and has helped us get to know our neighbours. Do stay over from the Companions' Day or come and join us in the afternoon anyway.

**10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> August** Getting to know the Bible through film.

### Pilgrimage to Walsingham

For many years now Companions and friends of CR have made a pilgrimage to this lovely shrine of Our Lady in Norfolk. Although centred on the appearance of Mary in a dream, the shrine at Walsingham really celebrates the gift of Jesus which God made to the world. It is a place to pray, to celebrate the sacraments, to deepen Christian faith and to enjoy the beautiful countryside and lovely village of Walsingham. If you've never been before why not come this year?

The pilgrimage is from Friday 8<sup>th</sup> June till Monday 11<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to come please contact Geoff Dignum at [geoff.dignum@](mailto:geoff.dignum@)

[hotmail.co.uk](mailto:hotmail.co.uk) or phone 01582 762623. The chaplain will be Br Jacob Pallett so you will have a chance to meet one of our newest brothers.

### **New Visitors to Mirfield**

Now that our church is back in business we want new people to come and pray in it. We rely on you dear Companions and friends to bring them. Tell people about us, invite them to come and hear plainsong, suggest they need a time of space and quiet; those of you who are priests may find this a good place to bring someone who is looking for a deeper knowledge of God, or someone in grief. Confirmation groups, teenagers, students and other groups of young people can find monasteries fascinating places to be in. We who live here can't go out and find such people or there will be no one here to live the life of prayer and hospitality. We need you, our friends, to bring us new friends and help us into new kinds of service and prayer for the world. Please start thinking now how you can do it. If you are interested in talking with another Companion about this contact Fr Hugh Bearn in Bury at [hughbearn@aol.com](mailto:hughbearn@aol.com). He has lots of ideas!

**New Companions:** Ian Pople

**RIP** Mary Ulyott

**Companions website details** - [www.mirfieldcompanions.org.uk](http://www.mirfieldcompanions.org.uk)

**Nicolas Stebbing CR**

### **RETREATS**

***Mirfield retreats:*** [www.mirfieldcommunity.org.uk/retreats/retreats-2012](http://www.mirfieldcommunity.org.uk/retreats/retreats-2012)  
or

***Retreats 2012:*** Annual publication of the Retreat Association  
([www.retreats.org.uk](http://www.retreats.org.uk))

Order by post (UK only): Send a cheque for £9.00 (£6.50 per copy plus £2.50 postage and packing) to our contact address:

The Retreat Association, Kerridge House, 42 Woodside Close, Amersham,  
Bucks, HP6 5EF. UK

[info@retreats.org.uk](mailto:info@retreats.org.uk) tel +44 (0)1494 433004 fax +44 (0)871 715 1917

**The bookshop for the Community of the Resurrection, formerly known as Mirfield Publications, is now on line.**



[www.monastery-stay.co.uk/shop](http://www.monastery-stay.co.uk/shop)

The shop sells a range of literature recommended by the brethren, including their own titles, as well as devotional and gift items.

If you cannot find something you are looking for then ask Brother Daniel for assistance on 01924 483345 or [theshop@mirfield.org.uk](mailto:theshop@mirfield.org.uk)

We stock and sell the following books reviewed in this CRQR.

Woven Into Prayer £ 9.99

One Foot in Eden £ 7.50

Strike the Cloud £ 8.99

Faith in the Fool £ 12.95

Walter Frere £ 18.99

We use the standard Royal Mail postage charge, and the postage price can be seen when you order the books in our online-shop.

## **Companions Study Days 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> August**

*"Theology in Film: The Bible and the Movies"*

Study with a difference;  
see what films have done with the Bible.

Cost will be £150.00. It will be a good opportunity for Companions and others to enjoy time together, share in the CR worship and learn something about Holy Scripture. Please contact [p.briscoe425@btinternet.com](mailto:p.briscoe425@btinternet.com) or 37 Holly Grove, Goldthorpe, Rotherham, S Yorks, S63 9LA. Tel 01709 896739



## A Musical Evening.



**5<sup>th</sup> February at 6.00 pm.**

To celebrate our return to our church we invite you to join us for Candlemass evensong followed by wine and cheese, then back into church for an evening of music presented by our friends and brethren.

Tickets at £5.00 will be available at the South Porch door, but we would prefer it if you booked them in advance so we know how many are coming.

Email: [appeal@mirfield.org.uk](mailto:appeal@mirfield.org.uk) or phone 01924 483308.

Please come; there will be plenty of room.

## Organfest: 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> March

*We have a beautiful new organ but we need to pay for its installation. We invite anyone who would like to play our organ (in our church with its fantastic acoustic!) to find sponsorship from friends of £200 (or more!) to play for an hour. If you can bring along your supporters to listen that would be even better. If you would like to do this (and we would love you to do it), contact Br Jacob Pallett ([jpallett@mirfield.org.uk](mailto:jpallett@mirfield.org.uk)) or Fr Peter Allan ([pallan@mirfield.org.uk](mailto:pallan@mirfield.org.uk))*

## Companions Day and Day of Celebration – 7<sup>th</sup> July

- 10.00 Companions and Friends of CR gather for coffee/tea
- 10.30 Talk on church architecture (particularly our own)
- 12.00 Mass and renewal of commitment for companions
- 1.00 Lunch

£10.00

Please book in with Pauline Briscoe [p.briscoe425@btinternet.com](mailto:p.briscoe425@btinternet.com) or 37 Holly Grove, Goldthorpe, Rotherham, S Yorks, S63 9LA. Tel 01709 896739

2.00 – 5.00pm We invite parish groups from anywhere to come and see our new church, meet the community and finish with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and Evensong.

## Fun Day – 8<sup>th</sup> July

2.00 – 5.00pm Activities, stalls, raffles, tea, a bar and an opportunity to see the grounds and the Church for any who would like to come.

If you would like to stay Friday, Saturday, or Sunday nights in order to take part in more, please contact the Guestbrother ([guests@mirfield.org.uk](mailto:guests@mirfield.org.uk)) or House of the Resurrection, Mirfield. West Yorks WF14 0BN

## Book Reviews

### **Walter Frere: Scholar, Monk, Bishop.**

Edited by *Benjamin Gordon-Taylor* and *Nicolas Stebbing CR*.  
Canterbury Press, Norwich, 2011

Those of us in the know have eagerly awaited the publication of this book. It has been a long time in the making, but the editors are to be congratulated in planning a book which not only provides an excellent introduction to Walter Frere, but also covers the key aspects of his ministry and of the various ways in which this enigmatic and hugely gifted figure contributed to the wider Church. The book, with its ten separate chapters, is not a conventional biography, but it succeeds in its twin aim of introducing the reader to a figure who deserves to be more widely known, and in inviting further enquiry into the respective areas treated by the individual authors. Alan Wilkinson, the author of the centenary history of the Community, provides a biographical sketch which identifies the major influences upon Frere's life and vocation and carefully charts his career as a religious, scholar and bishop. Frere's episcopacy is affectionately drawn by John Livesley, who in another chapter, sets out Frere's liturgical projects in the wider context of continental liturgical reform and scholarship. I detected a slight technical slip possibly resulting from a confusion of the anamnesis and the oblation, but otherwise this piece is well researched and fluently written, as are all the chapters in this very welcome collection.

A further evaluation of Frere's contribution to liturgical revision, both in England and elsewhere in the Anglican world is presented by Philip Corbett, although the assertion in the concluding footnote seems somewhat arbitrary. However we understand this multifaceted and variously gifted character, Frere was a convinced Anglican Catholic. As Alexander Faludy tellingly shows in his scholarly evaluation of Frere's contribution to Reformation historiography, Frere was grounded in the post-reformation history of the English Church. His ecumenical involvement ranged widely from Russian Orthodox Christians in St. Petersburg to Methodists in Cornwall. A full account of Frere's

steady and sustained contribution to the Malines Conversations is well told by Bernard Barlow, but the welcome treatment of this episode in Frere's ministry reveals the missing chapter in this volume, namely a single essay on Frere's interest in the Christian east. References to this occur throughout the volume, but it deserves a more sustained and systematic treatment.

Frere, the prelate brother, ended his days at Mirfield, and it is the Mirfield story that is at the heart of this collection of essays. Benjamin Gordon-Taylor's account of Frere's hand in the setting up of the College and his enduring influence on its formational curriculum is drawn with evident admiration and affection. It was at Mirfield that Frere's singular vocation to live the Christian life in community with his brothers of the Resurrection came to fruition. There he lived a life of prayer, which as John Davies shows, was disciplined and deeply rooted in scripture, (quite unlike the subjective introspection which all too often passes as 'spirituality' in many circles today); and there he sang, and persisted in doing so as an old man with a discordant voice. A life together, centred on the liturgy, was the life to which Frere was called. His specific contributions to the shaping of that life and to the singing of the Church's prayer and praise are wonderfully presented by the present Superior, Fr. George Guiver CR and Fr. Peter Allan CR in their respective chapters. The latter contains what could well come to be regarded as an exemplary piece of writing on monastic theology, of the formative effect of singing the Offices and the Eucharist. Walter Frere's wisdom shaped CR's life, and that life evidently shaped him. And in the end, a demanding life took its toll, and Frere died in 1938, aged 74. If he had lived another decade or so, I wonder what the old man would have made of CR as it began to enter into its more baroque and triumphalist period? Circumstances are very different now. CR is more modest in its size and in its aspirations. But it is the living of the life that really matters, and that is why CR needs to be back in the Upper Church, and why the Church of England today so needs CR.

**Christopher Irvine**  
Canterbury Cathedral

**One Foot in Eden.** *Alan Wilkinson.*

Mirfield Publications. 2011. £7.50. 131 pp. Isbn 0 902834 30 4

A young Catholic Anglican ordained in 1962 leaves his deprived London parish for a monastic community in the north. Many references will be clear to CRQR readers.

The Archbishop of Canterbury writes: *“This is a very engaging narrative, challenging in its way, as it holds up a mirror to the recent decades of the Church’s life in England, but ultimately deeply positive, affirming of so much of what makes the Church of England worth loving and defending.”*

We hope for a fuller review in next Lady Day CRQR.

**Strike the Cloud. Understanding and Practising the Teaching of *The Cloud of Unknowing*.** *Graeme Watson.* SPCK.

2011. £8.99. Isbn 978 0 281 06425 0

We are all different and relate to God in prayer in different ways. But the basic need we all have is a need for God himself. We need him if we are going to love him with our whole heart. We need him if we are going to love our neighbours as ourselves. Apart from him we cannot do it. If we are aware of this need and want it, it may be that we are called to contemplative prayer.

The author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* wrote his book in the fourteenth century to teach a young man how to do it. Contemplative prayer consists in giving our whole attention to God. It sounds simple, but it’s not. It’s not easy to forget about thoughts about God. Regrets about the past, anxieties, and plans for the future, come crowding into our minds. All these thoughts have to be buried - under a cloud of forgetting.

During our time of contemplative prayer we simply want to attend to God. Sometimes a word helps. This is not a mantra – a phrase to be repeated like the Jesus prayer. It is just a cry for help which God always gives. It helps if we have feelings of devotion. But feelings are not under our control. They come and go – mostly go in my experience.

Much of what the author wrote is relevant today. Some is not. In this book Fr Watson has arranged what he believes to be the essential teaching in the first six chapters. In the last two chapters

he has written about its relevance today. He has done well and I thoroughly recommend it.

**Timothy Stanton CR**

**The Extra Mile. A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Pilgrimage.** *Peter Stanford.*  
Continuum. 2010. £12.99. Isbn 978 1 4411 6735 4. Paperback,  
black and white illustrations.

Probably the two most important events at boarding school were confirmation, and the discovery of antiquarian bookshops. They came together in the purchase of an 18<sup>th</sup> century Book of Common Prayer, which I needed to follow diligently at early service, not having been brought up a church-goer. There was an interesting variant spelling in the *Comfortable Words*. Instead of the usual “Come unto me, all that **travail** and are heavy laden” (*Matt.11:28*). the 18<sup>th</sup> century BCP had “**travel**.” With a superior sneer which friends will recognise, I pointed this out as a misprint. But Peter Stanford, the engaging Tablet columnist, shows that in the ancient world, which still prevails in pilgrimage, to travel is indeed “travail” – b--- hard work. Carrying a cross, even just a backpack, over rough roads day after day in all weathers isn’t something anyone does for fun. It is done in search of the numinous, places where prayer was and is valid, where the Presence is almost tangible.

“Britain has arguably as many holy places per square mile as any other island in the world.” Peter undertakes pilgrimages to just 8 of them, and entertainingly describes the people he met. The sites are not all Christian, for pilgrimage, like God, unites every faith – and some of the goings-on are pretty weird, perhaps not recognizably God-centred at all. Read his book before you decide where to go. Then you’ll know what to expect: at Glastonbury and Stonehenge, Peter’s first and last pilgrimages, as well as at Bardsey Island, the wells of Derbyshire, Walsingham, Holywell, Iona, and Lindisfarne. There is no debunking, indeed some fellow Catholics might raise an eyebrow at a few of the activities he takes part in, but you know all along that here is a family man who lives the life of faith. To go on pilgrimage with Peter Stanford takes you on the road that leads to God.

**Antony Grant CR**

## **The Language of Genetics: An Introduction.**

*Denis R. Alexander. D.L.T. 2011. ISBN 978 0 232 52878 7*

The research and study relating to deoxyribonucleic acid otherwise known as D.N.A, the building blocks of life, has advanced greatly in recent years. This book gives a readable and comprehensible introduction to this expanding area of science. Explaining clearly the basis of genetic make-up, Alexander goes on to unveil the complexity of what genetic scientists are dealing with.

Exploring data gathered by the Genome Project, Alexander looks at the DNA of Desmond Tutu in a chapter called ‘The Rainbow Diversity of Humanity’. This chapter gives scientific weight to Tutu’s argument about the diversity and uniqueness of every human person. Christians should not be fearful in engaging with science. Instead we should offer a listening ear to those who struggle with what they discover. Dr Alexander balances the view of Dawkins and others, who dismiss the sanctity of the body as nothing more than ‘a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules.’

Bringing God into an argument can be disastrous. The result is usually that nothing of God is communicated only someone’s opinion of God. The arguments surrounding the role of God in genetics is one that Dr Alexander rightly leaves out of his book. Yet he presents a more level headed argument for the relationship between science and religion.

People’s recent interest in family history by researching their ancestors and mapping their ‘family tree’ may in the future take on a new form as people map their genetic relationship to the whole of humanity. For anyone interested in the science of genetics and wanting to explore this fascinating area of science, I recommend this book.

**Jacob Pallett nCR**

**The Rage Against God.** *Peter Hitchens.* Continuum, pbk 2011.  
£10.99. ISBN: 978-1-4411-9507-4.

This book is part autobiography and part polemic. Without gratuitous introspection, there is enough personal interest to be compelling. It charts a spiritual journey from uncritical civic

religion, through militant atheism to what is described as an unmodernised belief in Christianity.

Hitchens is a columnist for the Mail on Sunday. And it shows. There is contempt for the Church of England as Hitchens found it when he returned to its fold. He excoriates it for failing to be a force for conservatism.

Yet Hitchens left the church for good reason. He provides a convincing social critique of what had gone wrong: the church of the late 1950s and early 1960s had become a prop for post-Victorian civic hubris. Thereafter the decline continued, on a scarily exponential trajectory, but was already set in. Hitchens did not leave a gloriously successful church only to return forty years later to find it had been ruined.

Those who remained faithful to the church in the 1960s also concluded it was not fit for purpose. They tried to do something about it. They realised the church is not a force for conservatism. Rather, by giving people the security of being rooted in absolute truth, conversely it gives them the liberty to be radical. That often means being prosaic: it doesn't get much more prosaic than credit unions on destitute housing estates. On the other hand, the Kingdom of God rarely gets so close.

Admittedly, the Church of England would be impoverished if choral evensong were never sung or if the cadences of the King James Version were never heard. But the Church of England had failed by 1960 for offering *only* that - and would fail all the more assuredly today without contemporary liturgical alternatives.

The second part of the book goes over well-worn ground but does so refreshingly. Hitchens concludes that it is no more irrational to believe in God than to believe there is no God. Indeed, there is no rational basis upon which to discern between right and wrong other than to believe that God sets an absolute standard by which we shall be judged. He makes candid confession that fear of this judgment played a part in his return to religion. He suggests he should be ashamed to do so. But who is to gainsay his experience of the living reality of God in his life? Perhaps we try too hard to make God nice.

Where Hitchens makes, in my experience, a novel contribution to the current debate about God is in his passionate description of the failure of Soviet atheist utopianism. This experiment was

the biggest catastrophe in history. And it was all done in the name of enlightened atheist humanism. If religion has faults, atheism is demonstrated to be a worse alternative.

*The Rage Against God* is a popular book. Its lasting impression should be to add this devastating argument to the arsenal of the Christian apologist in popular discourse.

**Matthew Pollard**

Vicar of Rastrick, Diocese of Wakefield

**Borrowing From The Future: A Faith-Based Approach to Intergenerational Equity.** *Ann Morisy* London: Continuum, 2011. Isbn 978-1441-12536-1, £14.99, (Kindle edition, £10.11).

‘Baby boomers are poised to take more out of the system than they put in’ writes Ann Morisy in the first sentence of the introduction to her latest book. By this she means that people who grew up in a post-war era of affluence are invariably living longer than previous generations but the costs of their longevity are and will be borne by younger generations now denied the same economic opportunities. The solution, Ann suggests, is for baby boomers to become a ‘pivot’ generation ‘willing to embrace a different standard of living and to cast aside the automatic pursuit of self-interest’. In contending this case she draws on Gospel stories to tell afresh of the transformative ministry of Jesus and His importance as a moral exemplar for the world.

The argument is developed through eleven chapters. The first three reflect on cultural, demographic, economic, and political aspects of intergenerational change whilst the fourth pleads that churches and Christian theology have changed for the better and should be given a ‘second chance’ within popular culture. The fifth chapter posits the possibility that an ageing population could be the basis for an about-turn in societal values and chapters six, seven, and eight look respectively at retirement, inheritance, and the burdensomeness of older people to younger generations. The final three chapters are more attitudinal: chapter nine examines the pervasiveness of narcissism in contemporary culture, chapter ten focuses on death, including issues around assisted dying and the concept of a ‘good death’, and chapter eleven looks at blame,



resentment, and scapegoating.

The book will not appeal to everyone. Some may find its thesis too sweeping, not highlighting sufficiently dramatic and widespread disparities in capital, income, and other forms of wealth, and failing to explore multi-causal explanations for historical cycles of economic boom and bust. Many may feel that the author's Christology is almost indistinguishable from secular humanism and that her central argument could be improved by drawing more fully from both the Christian tradition and other faiths, (not least other Abrahamic ones: these have much to offer when thinking about ageing, intergenerational behaviour, wealth creation/transfer, work, and social justice).

For those untroubled by such caveats, the author's account provides an interesting journey, visiting issues such as life-work balance before and after retirement, taxation in respect of inheritance and land, and the role of community organising as a campaigning tool for political change locally and nationally. It also proffers useful insights drawn from some contemporary lifestyles, the altruistic 'self-restrained individualism' of the gay community and the new monasticism of latter-day religious networks being examples. There is even a neo-Benedictine chord: 'The availability of time, but no structure to give shape to it, turns out to be a recipe for having no time at all'.

Overall the book is well organised. It selects data and opinions from an eclectic range of sources, (including books, cartoons, Internet archives, newspaper articles, and research reports), and presents them in readable form. At the end there is a section of comments and questions for individual reflection or collective discussion. Like the rest of the narrative, it is written with the imaginative warmth for which Ann Morisy is deservedly known.

**David Bunch**

**The Return to the Mystical. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Teresa of Avila and the Christian Mystical Tradition. Peter Tyler.**

Continuum. 2011. £18.99. Isbn 978 1 4411 0444 1.

Dr Peter Tyler, Director of Pastoral Theology, St Mary's College Twickenham, strikes new ground here: the interaction of two

highly original thinkers, separated by centuries. They are not simple writers, and often choose a style to perplex the reader. In the face of the ineffable how can language say anything meaningful ? This topic is perhaps the hardest task that faces the human individual.

Few religious people would look to Wittgenstein for guidance, yet in 1949, towards the end of his life, he said: “I am not a religious man, but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view.” Dr Tyler uses Wittgensteinian methodology to interpret the distinct method of discourse arising from 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century reception of the works of Dionysius in the Schools of Paris. He traces its evolution from the Schools there and in Germany to ultimate flowering in convents and friaries of Renaissance Spain. He concludes by comparing Wittgenstein’s own life and work with that of Teresa of Avila. “If you and I are to live religious lives, it mustn’t be that we talk a lot about religion, but that our manner of life is different,” said Wittgenstein.

**God’s Passion. Praying with Mark. Praying with the Gospels.** Terry Hicks. DLT. £8.99. Isbn 978 0 232 52838 1

Terry Hicks, minister in United Reform Church, has strong ecumenical commitment. His whole aim in every page is to get us praying. First he provides an introduction to this series *Prayer in the Four Gospels*, which follows the lectionary cycle. Then comes a “pattern for prayer”, the structure for a highly flexible do-it-yourself office, using the Gospels. Then an introduction, just under 20 pages, to Mark’s gospel, underlining what distinguishes it from the other gospels. Then 40 different episodes in Mark, each one just a couple of pages: a gospel citation, then a reflection, concluding with an extended prayer. As Terry says, “all too easily, reading books about prayer can become an alternative to praying, and reading about the gospels an alternative to reading the gospels themselves.”. We are made by love, and we are made for love. Without love life is worse than impossible, it isn’t worth living. What else are the gospels about, but to teach us how to love ? To love is to pray. If this won’t get you praying the gospels, what will?



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