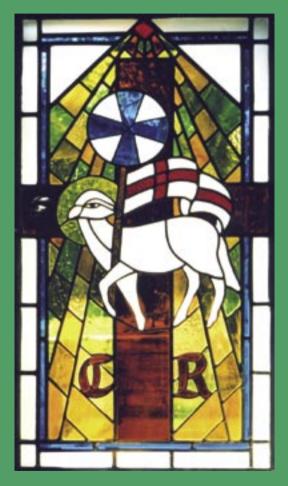
CR



QUARTERLY REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE RESURRECTION



A recent work by Mary Katsilometes

CR

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST 2009

Number 426

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From the Superior

Preparations for work on the Community church go on apace. For those directly involved there is a sense of a crescendo, and of something big approaching. For many in the Community on the other hand this stage feels a bit like the 'phoney war' before all the banging starts. We have failed to find temporary buildings of the right kind (and cost) for all the worship on site, and while we won't quite be like the church of the catacombs, for 18 months there will be a lot of making-do. Operations are due to start at

the end of September, and by then we need to have converted the Community's refectory into a temporary church. We shall be eating in our Community Room and taking over the Guest Parlour as our Community space, to serve both for relaxation and for meetings. The other space doubling up as a church will be the new refectory at the College. Between them we shall be fitting in the worship of all the various groups based here. We are very lucky to have landed on Jonathan Pape as our fundraiser: he is beavering away at getting our Church appeal off the ground. The Committee, chaired by Bishop Jack Nichols, is shortly to have its first meeting, and we are hoping that the Companions' Day on 4th July will mark a kind of launch of the Appeal.

At the same time plans for the new monastery are advanced, and we are still hoping for an autumn start on that. Archbishop Desmond Tutu is coming to lay the foundation stone on 7th November.

We intend to keep the retreat house running as normal. It is difficult to say at this stage how that end of the site will be affected: hopefully not unduly. We hope you will pray with us that what is done here will be for the strengthening and equipping of God's people, and may draw many to him in a world that has lost its old path to God and needs to be drawn back to it.

George Guiver CR

Companions' Notes

et's start with the Companions who have died. No, that is not a depressing place to start. The Risen Christ shows us that death is not the end; that the life after death is infinitely better than life here on earth since it is life lived with Christ – the most exciting, delightful, loving human who ever lived on earth and now lives in the Godhead for ever. So it is right to celebrate those who have passed from death into life in the sure and certain hope of the Resurrection:

Peter Mayhew Revd. Hugh Pruen Maureen Bryan Mary Griffiths Revd Alan Nicholls Mary Butler

Why do we pray for them when we are sure they are in the care of God as committed Christians whose Christian life was enhanced by their years of living also with the commitment to the Companions of this Community? I am not expert in the theology of praying for the dead, but it does seem to me that death is a journey and not an easy one. We know nothing of the passage between death and the final glory of God but changing us from one degree of glory to another so that we fit to enter the presence of God must take some doing. We pray with our departed friends so that we may help them through that journey, so that they will know the presence of Christ working in them this great transformation. We pray for them and with them, too, because they are still bound to us in love and friendship and through baptism into the Body of Christ. Death does not loosen those bonds. If anything it should strengthen them. These are the friends who go ahead of us exploring the way that we shall also travel. In Afrikaans there is a word – die vorloper - to describe the small boy who walked ahead of the team of oxen who pulled the waggon on which the Boer families travelled into the unknown north. The Christian dead are marking out the road that we will all take one day and one part of our commitment to the mystery of the Resurrection is to think from time to time of that journey. Are we ready for it? Can we prepare for it? Can we even long for it? In the end, however important the work we do for God on this earth, our sights are fixed on heaven on the God who created us that we might return to him, on the Christ who came to us to lead us out of this created world into the infinite glory of his Father.

Then there are some new companions all in the Sheffield and Barnsley area: Keith Johnson, Pat McDonagh, John Medforth. Pray for them as they begin to live out this new commitment. We are expecting quite a number of probationer companions to make their commitment on the Companions Day here at Mirfield on 4th July. I hope many of you will be here to support them in it.

Fr Gareth Jones in Brighton is contacting those who would like to form a Companions branch in that area. And Fr Julian Gray would like to make contact with other Companions & Associates in his part of Wales

Email: usk.vicarage@btinternet,com

The Vicarage, Castle Parade,

Usk, Monmouthshire, NP15 1AA

Tel: 01291 671441

Companions website - <u>www.mirfieldcompanions.org.uk</u> Companions outside England can feel rather isolated. We would like to hear from you either directly to me, or via the website.

Companions List for weekly Intercession:

An updated version available May 2009, and is on the Companions website. Hard copy can be obtained from the Companions Office price £1 inc p&p.

Nicolas Stebbing CR

Companions Day Saturday 4th July		
10.00	Arrival and Coffee Introduction	
10.45	Fr. Oswin CR Presentation on CR future plans	
12.00	Mid-day Office and Eucharist	
13 00	Lunch	
14.00	Where we fit in - facilitated by Fr. Oswin CR	
15.30	Plenary Session followed by Benediction	
16.00	Tea and depart	

Please note: "Arrival at the college" and don't forget to bring a packed lunch

It would help if you could let us know you are coming:-contact <u>p.briscoe@talk21.com</u> or leave a message for Linda in the Companions office

~ SUMMER SCHOOL 2009 ~

There are still places available for the Summer school: Thursday 2nd July 15.30 to Monday 6th July 9.00 – £150 Please contact p.briscoe@talk21.com as soon as possible

Introducing Jonathan Pape CR's New Fundrasing Manager



at Mirfield. This is a somewhat more inspiring view that I had out of the window in my previous job. This is because I have just served as an RAF Fighter Controller for 10 years, most of which was spent working in underground bunkers in Norfolk, Aberdeenshire and Northumberland. For now, home remains in Northumberland (the village of Shilbottle, just outside Alnwick), but by the time you read this my family and I shall be living in Mirfield.

I decided to leave the RAF on the birth of our first child. The exigencies of service life at this time are not compatible with having a stable family life and having served my country it is now time to serve in another way. It is not the best time to be in search of a new job, especially when your previous experience doesn't immediately lend itself to a new career in Civvy Street. We prayed about it, and whilst we would have liked to stay in Northumberland, we made ourselves available to the Lord; "Send us where you need

us". I'd applied for a job in Leeds in February and we got a really good feeling about the area... closer to the new grandparents, good schools, opportunity to buy a bigger house for a bigger family... but that job was not to be. We were both disappointed at the time, but God was just whetting our appetite for the area.

At this point I'll mention a little about our church background. We worship at County Church Northumberland, which is part of the New Frontiers family of churches led by Terry Virgo. I think evangelical free church would be the easiest way to describe it. The worship is somewhat different than that to be found here at Mirfield, but I know the Lord takes pleasure in all the joyful songs we send to him, regardless of style or musical accompaniment.

Anyway, returning to the point about moving to Mirfield, it was my wife who found this job advertised on a website. She was sure it was something I could turn my hand to and after doing a bit of research into both fundraising and CR I decided to apply. We were really encouraged when I was invited down for an interview but there was one thing nagging away at the back of my mind: the nearest New Frontiers church is in Leeds and we really don't want to be that far away from our church. Then the day before the interview I was talking to a friend who works for the church in Newcastle. I mentioned the possible job here and he said "Oh, that's good, the church in York is just about to plant a new church in Huddersfield". I should never have doubted Him!

Needless to say, we felt really welcomed when all three of us came down to Mirfield on the day of the interview. Even after the interview I wasn't 100% sure if I could do it, so I left it in God's hands: If You want us here please guide Fr George and the others, if not I'll be content with Your answer. That evening Fr George rang to offer me the job... THANK YOU LORD!

But why does the Community need a Fundraising Manager? The target for the Centenary Church Appeal is to raise £2 million for the refurbishment and raising that amount takes a full-time effort. It would be unreasonable to expect one of the Brethren to devote themselves purely to fundraising, and neglect their other duties, for 2 years. I can focus purely on raising the money necessary to enable the Community to continue on its mission well into the middle of the century. Indeed, it's 50 years since any major works were undertaken in the church and it's starting to show. The heating

has completely failed and come the autumn the church will be unusable. That's why it's so important that we get it right now and that this refurbishment sees it through for another 50 years.

I've been here 6 weeks now and have been so overwhelmed by the openness and warmth with which the Brethren have supported me. I realise that CR and all its friends are one big family and I ask that you accept us into it in the way that the Brethren have. We look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the forthcoming Companions' Day. The plans for the refurbishment of the church are looking really exciting and it will be great to share this with you all.

Centenary Church Appeal



Jonathan, Jenne and David Pape

Lark Rise to Candleford

am sure that many readers of this Review have been fascinated or even hooked by the BBC series based on the book first published in 1940 and written by Flora Thompson. Yes, the series is a bit loosely based on the book, indeed on a trilogy with the last one appearing in 1945, but the idea is still the same as that of the author, to show gently and perceptively, the huge social differences between 1880 and 1940 in rural Oxfordshire. Many others have written about the "dark satanic mills" that once surrounded us here in Mirfield, but Oxfordshire did not "do" dark satanic mills although there was poverty and squalor and insecurity in abundance. I read the books for the first time when I was at school and, it being an enlightened establishment, was always more interested in social history than list of the kings of England, all those Henries and Edwards! There was also a personal involvement in that my father could remember holidays

in rural Oxfordshire at the very beginning of the twentieth century with the family being met at Oxford station by a farm cart which would take them to the farm on the Blenheim estate where the grandparents lived. When he talked to me of all that, it was of events 50-60 years before and how remote that seemed, and now those conversations themselves took place 50-60 years ago, a time for today's young teenagers that also appears a long time ago, a bit like the battle of Hastings!

Flora Thompson points up the social inequalities, "the rich man was very much in his castle and the poor man at his gate": the effects of the enclosures had taken away the common land from the poor, agricultural prices were at rock bottom and there was still emigration to the industrial centres of England. The armed forces were still recruiting and there hadn't been a real war since Waterloo. The grand right down to the not very grand had servants and any sort of radicalism was not happily tolerated. By 1930 things were even worse. The 1914 war and the flu of 1918/19 killed millions; the great houses were largely derelict for the families had been decimated, the heirs killed in war; almost all those men born after 1890 were called up for military service and lots of them died. Economically the country was in a mess, but the Empire was still there. We had a holiday from Primary school for "Empire Day" and rejoiced at how much of the map of world was coloured pink, not aware of how economic collapse was staved off by imperial exploitation. Then in 1939, as her books appeared, came yet another war ushering in another 60 years of unparalleled change.

Flora Thompson does not paint the 1880's as a golden age, but notably the 1944 education act and the revolutionary reforms of the Attlee government would, it clearly appears, meet with her approval. The church receives scant mention, probably because it was peripheral to the majority of folk. She writes with approval of such country clergy who had been affected by the Oxford movement for their desire to minister the better to the poor and to beautify the churches, but church in Candleford was much as it had ever been with the squire complete with top hat going to Mattins, and the servants, freed from their Sabbath labours, which were not inconsiderable, going in the evening. I shall come back to all this in a snap shot of today at the very end, for I

have a thesis.

On the level of social psychology most of us seem to be still in a "big village" state. We need other people but not thousands of them. In 1880 when travel was both difficult and expensive there was not a great deal of mobility; my Father's migration each summer, en famille, to Bladon was not the norm. Those in service would come home each year, the members of the armed forces when not defending the Empire would return from time to time, but holidays for the masses would have to wait for Mr Butlin. Days out were the things and greatly enjoyed. A look at these tells us how people had meaningful relationships beyond the family. The church had its days out, and, indeed its days in with various celebrations marking both the natural and ecclesiastical year and people co-operated and generally got together, like the "Penny Readings" which delighted Candleford, and Lark Rise. In greater conurbations there were the nascent Trades Unions, Miners' Welfare and Working Men's Clubs and lots of "special interest" groupings which flourished both before and after the 1914 war.

In the gap from 1920 until 1940 came tarred roads, the rural bus and the wonderful network of rural railways, always operated at a loss, with bizarre timetables so that Mirfield station boasted a waiting room and a billiard room because to travel from Wakefield to Huddersfield involved two railways, changing at Mirfield and there was nearly always at least an hour's wait, and more than one early bishop of the diocese laments that he spent more time on Mirfield station than anywhere else in the diocese! Commuters there certainly were in large conurbations, a special first class only train ran each working day from Southport to Bradford solely to carry the wool magnates, and it was always seen off by the Southport Station master complete with top hat. (There used to be a station at Cooper Bridge, near to us at Mirfield, solely for the convenience of the then owner of Kirklees hall who was a director of the Lancashire and Yorkshire railway!) Most people however worked quite near to home. Even in North West London people didn't travel far, all around were industries making things, highly skilled and labour intensive for the most part and in my fifteen minute journey to school the trolleybus would empty and fill again! Church too fulfilled an important function in being a place where people, usually neighbours, could and did relate. You

walked to church and so you tended to go to the nearest, once in a while leaving the middle of the road parish church for something rather more exotic. Secondary schools involved travelling but most of one's friends were within easy cycling distance; it involved a wrench being the first time in contact with people outside "the group", but new groups soon manifested themselves.

Now work and home are separated by a considerable distance; no longer can one dawdle home from primary school and whereas 50 years ago university usually demanded living away from home, more and more have to stay at home which is a poor substitute for an almost total freedom from restraint! Fifty years ago you only went into the sixth form if you intended going to university; most left at 15-16 for the Civil Service, banking, accountancy, or craft apprentices, -those with the railways or Leyland were much sought and usually ended with an academic qualification as well as considerable skills and the jobs were for life. This too contributed to a greater stability. The big stores, banks and suchlike all had a plethora of sporting clubs and their own sports grounds; all this gave a manageable area for belonging, but now these lands have been sold for "development" and a job is something that fills the day and pays the mortgage and which is frequently changed either through choice or cruel necessity. Society is so much more unstable, and this is description, not a judgement. It may well be that the joys of Facebook, the ubiquity of the mobile, computers, and Skype, which enables you to actually see and talk with someone the other side of the world, all help to make up for the hole where once people belonged. Significantly the Trades Unions, professional associations, political parties, and the Churches are all experiencing a decline unless they are situated in a place which is still a community.

Many villages are now rather superior dormitories. Many husbands and wives leave home somewhere about six and get home some time after eight. Commenting on this once to a taxi driver, I said, as we passed along an avenue (it certainly wasn't a street) of large houses, "all they can do here is sleep", all he replied was "But they do it in style!" This is the way that it is and it is too early to see if the present recession is going to make any difference. No longer is a car a mark of success or even of distinction. A two car family is often a necessity, or thought to be

if both partners work, while the present for passing the driving test at 17 is a car. The big trouble is that very few houses have room for more than one car so they clog the streets, impede the progress of buses and make cycling dangerous, but they are a big fact of life and give to many an unheard of freedom. Parents no longer have to be taxi-drivers, and the meaningful group has small geographical relevance. One particular victim of all this personal transport is the local church. Cathedrals are now attracting lots more people, they can easily get there, you can worship anonymously, and you don't have to know what Sunday it is in the month in order to know the time of the local service or what it will be. Cars enable, in theory, clergy to operate in lots more churches but five services on a Sunday in five different churches savours more of the machine than a personal ministry, and it does not help the role model of ministry it should provide. Cars enable to clergy to get around. They also enable the faithful to escape the clergy, and fewer and fewer Anglicans are inspired with the catholic teaching about the church being the body of Christ and therefore having some visible shape apart from a small group, or even a large group, gathered at the altar rail.

There are indeed "cyber churches" but conviction is best transmitted face to face. We do need groups bigger than the nuclear family and it is good to have contact with lots of people all over the world and at little or no cost, but not, please, at the expense of human contact. There are lots of ideas about how the church should be itself in these different days, but what about the ways things were done when there really were communities and if you were to walk along a high street at the same time each day you would see a lot of the same people. Do they see the Vicar? "Loitering with intent" is as effective now as it ever was. Gateprotected flats, long working hours, militate against home visits but I am sure that they are still worthwhile if not quite as "cold" as once they were. Even in the cyber age people get sick, endure tragedies. Without a support group as of old and probably not even knowing the neighbours, there is a need for some structure, some concern that is there to be activated when needed, and not merely curiosity.

Fifty years ago parish missions were very successful, usually aimed at bringing back the lapsed. Now we have three or four

generations of unbaptised, certainly unchurched, how are we to commend the gospel to them? Flora Thompson speaks kindly and well of some of the clergy, especially those who involved themselves in the life of their parishioners, but what does this mean for today? I am sure that the church has access to all the relevant sociological data, yet the pattern is still very much that of the 1940's harking back to the 1880's when every church, be it never so small, had its vicar and probably a curate as well, all provided at no cost to the parish. So I wonder if the time has come to bid farewell to lots of churches, urban as well as rural. Not because hardly anyone goes to them but rather is it a right use of clergy to have them minister to a minuscule number each Sunday – in the days of three and four car families, lots of Sunday work, and no tradition of keeping Sunday holy? I think we need to strengthen the clergy in places where they are going to meet people, lots more university chaplains, bigger parishes as a consequence of reducing the number of churches and probably slowly bringing more people together - and we might once again have the church providing a meaningful group to build up and encourage relationships and support without feeling that you have just got to help with this and that, like the coffee rota and the flowers! There are many big evangelical churches which draw people from miles around; could not their very success say something to others? I am certainly not suggesting some sort of theocracy where the church is the only approved meeting place Let us return to lots of clubs and societies, team sports and rambling clubs, anything really getting people talking face to face and infiltrated by practising Christians. Life is always a matter of "both....and" and never "either....or", or almost never. In case parents get the wrong idea and bin this "CR", we should not demonstrate against computers or Bebo or Facebook but recognise they are only means to an end. It is when they become the "end" that they diminish us, and what I have written is to encourage rather than diminish the reader.

Aidan CR

Reflections of my trip to Zimbabwe

Think I must begin by saying that my overarching memory is what a beautiful country Zimbabwe is; the scenery, the wild life, and the people. Before leaving I was very nervous about what I would find, what would it be like for a white person, how would the officials treat me, how would the people treat me? What I discovered was a land where hospitality is hugely important, where people take you into their homes and treat you as family and where, despite the scarcity of commodities, people want to share the little they have. This was a really humbling and moving experience. When I announced to my mother that I was going to Zimbabwe she worried a great deal; however, one of my first surprises was to see that the police carry no firearms, and often no batons; the Zimbabweans are peaceful welcoming people.



Fr Nicolas CR and I flew from Manchester airport on Monday of Easter week, through Zurich and Johannesburg, and finally to Harare. We spent our first night with the Mutasa family. From here we went on to Masvingo Cathedral. Here we stayed with Bishop Godfrey and his family, as we spent two and a half days teaching the priests of the diocese. This was a good opportunity for them to gather not only to study some of the history of Anglicanism, liturgical history and to share in some Bible study, but also to relax and chat about their experiences. Unlike here these, mainly young, men were ordained and sent straight out into the bush to look after numerous churches and plants (no IME 4-7 there!). They often have to walk miles to preside at mass on Sunday; one of the priests has to spend Saturday night with people on the way, it is such a trek.



This couple of days' teaching was a great experience. Fr Nicolas had asked me to prepare some material and so I did much of the teaching, which is something that will stay with me. Unlike here in Britain, there is a real thirst for knowledge. Whenever these men were asked to discuss in groups, they were immediately on subject and excited to be thinking theologically with others. We all gathered for morning and evening prayer and Fr Nicolas and I took it in turns presiding at mass. On Saturday we travelled with Bishop Godfrey into the bush to attend a Father's Union meeting. Bishop Godfrey has set up this guild to try and encourage the men of the diocese. So in this remote part of Zimbabwean countryside

over two-hundred men gathered, some having hitch-hiked for two days, to worship God in song, dance, Bible reading, and Eucharist. Unlike the Bishop who stayed until the early hours of the morning (despite having a Confirmation to do on Sunday morning!) Fr Nicolas and I headed back to Masvingo. On Sunday I presided at the English speaking mass at 7.30am and preached at the Shona mass at 9am. There were about 250 people in Church and Fr Nicolas (who can speak Shona and presided) admitted 16 girls into the St Agnes' guild for girls and young women. In the afternoon we spent a few

hours with the sisters of the Community of the Blessed Lady Mary, in Bible study and reflections about what it means to be community, as they have had quite a few inquirers come to stay with them.



After five nights in Masvingo we drove to our next place of stay. When we arrived at St Augustine's, Penhalonga, I discovered a wonderful part of mission history. CR had been based there for many years (as were sisters from the Order of the Holy Paraclete from Whitby), and in early days two brothers would take it in turns going out into the bush with donkeys for six weeks at a time to evangelise. The site is large, however, because the brothers also founded and ran a high school, which until recently was the highest achieving school in the country. Yes, there were many mistakes made by imperial forms of mission, but there were also wonderful examples of Gospel truth too.

Since the 1980s there have been no brothers from CR or sisters from OHP but there is a community of Shona sisters who despite, or perhaps because of, their quirks are some of the holiest and most wonderful people I have ever met. Their hospitality towards us was quite astonishing, with Sr Elizabeth even getting up at 3am on our first night to make scones for our breakfast (English people like scones!). While with the sisters I tried to experience what life was like for them, so I spent a little time helping them in the fields, in the kitchen, making Communion wafers, and in the orphanage. Of

course, I also said mass and preached, every other day, including Sunday. This was marvellous. On our last day, after we had finished mass, one of the older sisters tearfully told us how much it had meant to have priests come and give them some attention and to take time to preside at the Eucharist and to preach a sermon every day for them. These women work very hard, and yet try to maintain their primary vocation to prayer, which they admit sometimes suffers. For me this thanks (Fr Nicolas told me afterwards what she had said but I knew she was talking about us as she kept saying Baba Nicolas and Baba John) was so humbling. Presiding at the mass is a privilege, and certainly was in this Religious community, and yet to see how much it had meant to these sisters who are so often ignored by local priests, was very moving.



On the site of the convent is a children's home. The day-to-day running of the home is in the control of Sr Hilda. Despite being 70 she looks after 26 children, and there have been more. Now, of course there are limitations to what she can do, but these kids were so full of life and so friendly that I am convinced that there is something of God in that place. I was very moved when I discovered

that the children who were abandoned very young and arrived at the home with no name were all given the same last name by the sisters 'Wedu'. This means ours, and it made me think of how I would always refer to my brother as 'our Roy' etc, and here these children were 'our James' etc. The children were all part of one big family. They were each other's family. They were the sisters' family. They are, of course, part of God's family. One Saturday I held a drawing competition, which kept the kids entertained for a couple of hours. But of course they wanted to know who had won; being a softie I said that they had all done so well they had all won! Leaving St Augustine's, the CZR sisters and the children,

was one of the most difficult parts of the trip for me. I had grown very attached to these people and thank God for the opportunity of visiting them.



From there we travelled onto Harare. On the way we saw a woman in a Mother's union uniform and so we stopped to say hello, and then noticed that she was with a priest! As we pulled over the priest shouted out 'Father Nicolas' and so we stopped and chatted to them for a while, before resuming our detour to the Monastery of Monte Casino, where there are brothers from Ampleforth. After a brief stay we continued on to Harare. There we spent a couple of days with some of Fr Nicolas' friends, having a little bit of a break. This included the extraordinary experience of attending the HIFA festival of arts opening ceremony. There must have been 3000 people seated on the ground watching a symbolic telling of what has happened in Zimbabwe over the past twenty years, and ending with the symbolic cleansing of a character who had a striking resemblance to the president!

Fr Nicolas departed for South Africa to do some teaching, and I stayed on with the Mutasa family. Their hospitality and generosity was overwhelming. Whilst there with them I went for a walk around Highfields high density area, where the sewerage systems have collapsed, into the bush to concelebrate at a Requiem and bless some new graves, and a meeting of the fund-raising committee of St Paul's Church (I really could have been in England!). On Sunday we went off very early to St Valentine's Church so that I could preside at mass and then I was the guest preacher at St Paul's 10am Parish Mass. This was an amazing experience for me. When we arrived, just in time, I discovered that Bishop Robert Mumbi

of Luapula Diocese in Zambia was presiding. So not only did I preach before a diocesan bishop for the first time, I also preached to a congregation of 1000 people- which may never happen again either!



My trip ended with a long flight home beginning on Monday afternoon and ending on Tuesday morning. It had been an amazing experience for me, and I am grateful for the opportunity. There is much wrong with the country, and sadly with the Church. Excommunicated bishops are still exerting influence, priests are fighting, and the church is divided. There is much that saddens me, including the politicising of children, and the involvement of the church in supporting the racism of the government. And yet there is so much that was wonderful, that spoke of the love and power of God. My prayer is that God will raise up men and women of faith who will understand the truth of Christ's command to shepherd and to resist the evil that tries to separate and hate, and be visible signs of unity and love, not only to the rest of the church but to all in Zimbabwe.

John Williams

A Year in a Monastery



owadays, most young people would think twice about spending a year in a monastery. The idea of leaving the comforts of life, friends and family, home life, and entering into a monastic pattern of community and prayer can be a put off to young people exploring their vocation.

Well, that is exactly what I did just over a year ago. I dropped my involvement with my local church, I left a steady home life of parents and siblings behind and I dared to leave my social circle of friends, to step out to explore my vocation in a very different way.

CR gave me the opportunity to come and stay with them for a period of about a year and I quickly jumped at the offer. It would be a way for me to test my vocation to the priesthood and monastic life, but also an experiment to see if monastic life still has something to offer young people and, if so, what.

The first major change for me was entering into an Anglo-Catholic framework of worship. Coming from a charismatic background, I soon began to miss the little things that I got from charismatic worship. However, it wasn't long before I allowed myself to enter into the rhythm of worship here – the plainsong, structure of each service and the frequency of worship.

Routine and pattern

Many young people today do not understand the value of pattern and routine. I had never appreciated the value of it until I settled in. Now, I really appreciate it when I leave the monastery or go home or spend time away. Routine and pattern is something essential to the lives of autistic children and adults; remove it and the person is damaged or affected. It is also something essential not only to religious life, but to everyday Christian life too. St Benedict wrote his rule steeped in pattern and routine to bring people back to the flow and rhythm of God's Spirit. There is a danger of course that we expect God to conform to our pattern. I believe St Benedict uses the more negative warnings in his rule to avoid this. 'Live in fear of judgement and have great horror for hell... confess your sins with sighing and tears' (RB 4: 44-54). We are encouraged time and time again to be obedient to God and each other rather than expecting God to be obedient to us. In our Churches, we are sometimes so unwilling to be obedient to the Shepherds and leadership and each other. How, then, can we be obedient to God? Christ became obedient unto death, but how far do we live up to that call? Monastic life teaches a great sense of servanthood amongst the monks, and Christianity on the whole teaches that we are to become servants, as Christ came to serve not to be served. Servanthood wrapped up in a pattern and routine of worship, prayer and work is good servanthood. It is in that routine where we serve others. Out of that pattern of life comes mission. Society tells us that we are all individuals, that we must fight for our rights as individuals and as a result we become cut off from the rest of the community as we are only thinking of ourselves. A pattern of life absorbed in obedience and servanthood seeks to restore a society and make it Christ-centred - St Benedict's vision.

Silence

The hardest part of the experience has been the silence – this won't surprise many of you!! It is true that we say far too much and most of it is really unnecessary. However, young people today are being born into a noisy world. There is simply too much noise. We like to talk and it is good to talk! With personal headphones, mobile phones, texting, email, internet, TV and media, it really is hard to escape these things, and the value of silence in our culture has been

lost. In monastic tradition, I sense that silence can often be 'forced' onto a community and certainly in St Benedict's day, no one dare to speak lest they face 'severe punishment.' I think today we have to allow people to find silence in their own time and monastic living has the potential to offer the perfect framework for that. I would like to stress that silence can be a scary and threatening tool. Within silence we enter into a conversation with nature and our surroundings. In the space, we can begin a dialogue with God. However, the most threatening part of silence, is facing ourselves. Sometimes we don't like what we find out. For me, silence has been scary at times. But, it has also been liberating. The things I least like about myself, the things I find out and the things I confront, are the things God wants to be entangled with. What a joy and assurance! We have to explore new ways to encourage people of all traditions to use silence to bring the many disjointed sparks in our lives to infuse and ignite.

Community

For me, the highlight of the year has been to spend time within a community. Community is so much more than simply a group of people. A community is a group of people of know, love and share in each other's experiences. Today, we find the mega Churches packed to the seams with thousands of Christians, while the smaller Churches struggle. Why is this? I believe people flock to the mega Churches because in these places, you don't have to confront who you are, or share who you are. You can effectively remain an 'individual' and not know anything about the two thousand others you worship with. Although these places bring people to faith, I just long for a deeper sense of community to be rooted within them. We are a family and we don't know each other! How can we tell others of Jesus when we cannot share our own testimony with each other?

Mirfield is rooted in community. Decisions are made together, meals are shared together, by participating in the routine of life you being to learn about and know each other – even the bad bits are shared! Of course, there have been a few disagreements and a few moments you wish you could murder someone, to put it politely. However, this is community and the reason why it is called common life. The true identity of society has been lost simply

because we don't know each other, whether through fear or choice. Community is only community when differences come together for one purpose. We know the differences, we recognise our failure to accept others fully, but we choose to put those things behind us to share in something greater.

I would like to thank CR for allowing me to catch a glimpse of their life and letting me be involved in my own time and space.

I would like to leave you with an image I jotted down in my journal during my stay here. Probably the most simplest, but memorable of my stay here:

The bell tolls 33 times for the age of Jesus, and the patters of footsteps run down the sides of the church, taking their seats, acknowledging the Sacrament before they are seated - heads down, heads up. The flapping of the cassocks as people assemble at some speed, late, echoes in the dark cloisters. All is silent for a few moments, expecting and waiting for the bell to toll. The Superior reads an extract from St Benedict's Rule, after a little cough. When the reading is ended, everyone kneels on the harsh ground of the cold church. 'The Lord almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end. Amen.' This following a few moments of silence is by far the noisiest of the night. All the thoughts and actions you had involvement in throughout the day come flooding back, recalling to mind our sins and failures, our success and joys, reliving the day step by step. The moment is only just long enough to recall a brief account of the past day, but your mind races back over those things sharply. The Confession follows: We confess... before the whole company of heaven and one another... sins... failures... sorry... please... forgive... help... grant us eternal life. The Psalms follow, said alternately by each side of choir. The reading for the day is read with somewhat a reflective manner, when the offer of unloading sin and burden onto Jesus is recalled and presented to us once again. The Response to the Reading is handed over to God in the word: 'Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my Spirit' the famous last words of Jesus are sung. The acoustics of the buildings mean that words and notes are intermingled, which is somehow rather moving and mysterious. The words 'hands,' 'Lord,' 'spirit' and 'alleluia' are overlapped as they rise to the ceiling and bounce off the altars. Somehow the darkness and gloom of rather dull church is broken here. The colours are lifted, the place revived by a presence of the Spirit.

The Hymn follows, shattering the darkness of the building and our lives: 'Creator of all life, your care is in the pain your children bear; as darkness falls upon the land, look down on us, stretch out your hand.' The Song of Simeon comes rather more peacefully and more naturally than any other part of the Compline service, or probably any service. Followed by the Antiphon, the Nunc is relived in our singing: 'Lord, now let your Servant depart in peace, your word has been fulfilled.' We have met with Jesus, now help us do your will. The final Gloria resounds with thanks. The words 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit' intermingled in the great sound chamber, capturing the heart of the Great Trinity. The Superior leads the prayers for the Community, college and guests, and offers the blessing for the night, and all depart in peace. In peace with God, each other and at peace with ourselves, until tomorrow.

Carl Melville

Romanians in Mirfield

y name is Ionut and I am one of the many Romanian students who were hosted by the monastic Community of the Resurcction in Mirfield. I am the beneficiary of a scholarship for an MA at the College of the Resurrection.

I first found out about this community five or six years ago while I was still a student in Sibiu/Hermanstadt, Romania. I clearly remember Fr. Peter in the CR habit visiting our Theology Faculty. We participated together to a commemoration service in remembrance of another Romanian friend of CR, Fr. Aurel Jivi. Of course, soon after I found out some more about the monastery in a more modern fashion – I "googled" it.

I spent almost one year here and it was a really complex experience. First of all, my first son Filip was born (not here, back at home!), which made every thing more dramatic. The courses, library facilities were great. I got in contact with different methodologies of teaching and research, western theology, western history of the Church etc.

But what was really interesting was the chance I had to actually live inside a western monastic order, to pray and eat together, to see and understand the spirituality of an Anglican monastery.

In the same time, I found out about the long term relation of the CR with the Romanian Orthodox Church. Its founders, bishops Charles Gore and Walter Howard Frere, frequently visited the Eastern Orthodox Churches including the Romanian Orthodox Church. In the period between the two World Wars there were many exchanges between the priests and students of the Anglican Theological College based in Mirfield and the Orthodox Theological College in Sibiu, Romania. This collaboration continued after 1989, by which time the Theological College in Sibiu had become the "Andrei Saguna" Orthodox Theological Faculty.

The first Orthodox Liturgy was celebrated in the church of the Community in Mirfield by Serbian priests and theology students on the 28th of October 1917. These priests and students had taken refuge in the UK at the end of World War I and were welcomed by the Community in Mirfield through the recommendation of St. Nikolai Velimirovich. It is believed that the saint himself celebrated the Holy Liturgy in this church, at the altar of the Holy Cross, where a relic from the Cross of our Lord is preserved – a gift from the Patriarch Damian of Jerusalem, in 1929.

What made my experience here feel more like home was the



presence of an Orthodox Romanian parish hosted in the Lower Church of the Community. The parish serves the Romanian community living in the north of England and here the Romanians celebrate the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and feast days.

Between the many things that left a print in my formation here was the understanding and opening towards mission and its culture. The Church of England has a very rich missionary experience and this is a field from which there is a lot to learn. I will leave this Community enriched by the new friendship with the brothers and fathers here, and with the wish to go for a few months to volunteer in Africa.

Ionut Mavrichi

For more information on the Romanian parish of St Macarios the Great, based at Mirfield, see their web-site:

http://geocities.com/ortodoxuk/en/htm/frameset.htm
or with more news in Romanian:

http://www.sfmacarie.org/en.htm

Genesis, Creation and everything. A few rambling thoughts.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". These, the opening words of Genesis, are surely one the foundation stones of the Biblical faiths. They form a statement that can either be accepted, as an act of faith, or rejected, also as an act of faith. They are not, as yet, subject to scientific proof or disproof, as even the best telescopes available cannot see that far back in time and current theory suggests that we may never be able to do so.

This first verse of Genesis may be open to acceptance by faith but what of the subsequent verses that describe that act of creation? Is the creation story of Genesis a silly story made up for a simple people? Is it a true and accurate account of creation, as some religious groups, particularly in America, insist? Or is it an attempt, in terms of the best understanding of its time, to convey some important truths that are still relevant today? The creation story of Genesis has always intrigued me. What is it describing,

did it make sense to those who first told it and does it have any meaning for today? These are questions that I have pondered, on and off, for many years.

In an attempt to understand the story told in Genesis I have asked myself just how, at the time Genesis was written, possibly before 1000 BC, did people see the world? They did not have our modern instruments nor did they have the centuries of observations that lie behind our own view of the universe; so, discarding all of this, what does the world look like to me and so what might the world have looked like to them? How then might they have envisaged its creation?

The Genesis story opens with the earth already existing, but formless, empty, water covered and in darkness. I imagine that it would have been a very early observation that something could not be made out of nothing; a pot could not be made without clay. Thus if God was to make the earth, they knew he must have had the raw materials available to start with, namely the earth and water. It was only in the 20^{th} century that it was realised that energy and matter are interchangeable (Einstein's $E=mc^2$) and the creation of time, space and matter in the 'Big Bang' could be envisaged. Surely a far more amazing act of creation than that of Genesis!

Day 1: God creates light and separates the light from the darkness to provide 'day' and 'night'.

Why do 'day' and 'night' appear without the sun and moon? The creation of light and its separation from darkness might be seen as the first step in bringing order out of chaos but surely the link between daylight and the sun would have been appreciated? The only suggestion that comes to mind is that, because clouds can hide the sun and yet it is still light, the sun and light were considered separate entities.

Day 2: The waters are separated by a 'firmament' (AV) or 'expanse' (NIV).

That there must be waters above the earth seems a reasonable deduction as rain has to come from somewhere above and the lower waters are not difficult to identify as they are called 'seas'. The 'firmament' has, however, always been a puzzle to me until I discovered that the root

verb underlying the word translated as 'firmament' relates to beaten metal work. Knowing that all things tend to fall to earth and yet observing the clouds and sky apparently forming a dome shape over the earth, one can certainly envisage something like an upturned bowl or shield holding the clouds up above the earth.

Day 3: The lower waters are gathered together, dry land appears and plants and trees appear.

Dry ground will be necessary for the known plants and trees to grow, so clearly that must have been created before vegetation could arise. As plants can be seen to spring up, apparently of their own accord, from freshly created 'dry land' the idea that they first did so at God's command would not be a difficult one to accept.

Day 4: The sun, moon and stars are created.

The motion of the sun across the sky has, I imagine, been known to mark the passage of the seasons since long before the development of agriculture. That the sun is observed during the day and the moon and stars generally at night is perhaps the most obvious of observations man could make.

Day 5: Birds, fish and other water creatures are created. With the seas, the sky and vegetation on dry land now available there are suitable habitats and food for fish and birds. One would not have expected them to appear before they had somewhere to live and breed.

Day 6: Land animals, including man, are created.

The animals I see today look just the same as those I saw as a child and the same as those in pictures dating back over several generations. Therefore, just by simple observation, I am unable to detect any obvious changes in them and so, without the observations of Darwin and those who followed him; I could happily believe that all animals have existed in their present form from the beginning.

The creation of man on the same day as the land animals could be taken as recognition of man as one the animals. However the declaration that man is created "in the image of God" and that he should rule over all living creatures does serve to set man apart. For a people keeping livestock

and used to fighting off wild animals, man's 'superiority' over the other animals would have seemed obvious.

Day 7: God rests.

As a little boy in Sunday School once said, on hearing the story of creation, "God has been very busy hasn't he?" A day of rest, once a week, would, I believe, have made sense 3000 years ago, just as it made sense when I was working for my living and continues to make sense to me today in an almost-as-busy retirement.

Although there are some aspects of the Genesis account of creation that still puzzle me I do think that overall it does represent a reasonable account which would have been acceptable to the people of its day. That account may indeed seem a little simplistic to us today but I cannot help reflecting how much more ridiculous our own view of the universe would appear to people 3000 years ago. The idea that the earth is a sphere when, from the practical point of view of living on it, it appears flat, would surely have been hard to accept. How much more difficult then would it be to accept that the earth is spinning and travelling around the sun when one cannot feel that movement? The astronomer Aristarchus proposed such an idea in the 3rd century BC, but it was not accepted and had to await more detailed observations and the work of Copernicus, Galileo and Kepler in the 16th and 17th centuries before its superiority as a model could be justified. What then would the first readers of Genesis make of our current view of the universe where, not only does the earth orbit the sun but also, the sun is moving around within a galaxy of millions of stars which itself, is only one of many millions of galaxies? Rather mind-blowing isn't it? And that is without adding our current understanding of geological time, plate tectonics reshaping the land-masses on earth and the evolution of life from single cells, through dinosaurs, to the species we see today. Although perhaps, considering some of the creatures seen in visions recorded in the Bible, dinosaurs might appear quite tame!

Over the millennia, through observation and measurement with increasingly refined instruments, our understanding of the created universe has come a long way. What then might the Genesis account of creation have to say to us in the 21st century and what light might our own understanding have to reflect back on that old story?

A few thoughts:

- 1. Genesis describes an ordered creation and it is belief in that order which lies at the root of all scientific research. It is that research which has shown us a far greater and more awe-inspiring creation than was envisaged by the writers of Genesis and, if we are prepared to keep open minds, we have no reason to doubt that there are even greater insights to come.
- 2. According to Genesis, man was created to "rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground", and he has indeed done that. Man has certainly exploited pretty well everything found on the earth, whether animal, vegetable or mineral, for his own ends. Indeed his rule has been so Mugabe-like that there is much concern over dwindling mineral resources, the loss of food plant species and the hunting of fish and birds, including the dodo and the moa, to extinction. Perhaps our enlarged view of creation, which places man on a modest-sized planet, orbiting a not-very-impressive star within one of many million galaxies, can help to remind us that it is not we who are the lords of creation but that we are only a small part of it.
- 3. God may have created man to rule over the earth but Genesis also records, before any mention of ruling, that God created man in his own image. In our eagerness to rule have we forgotten this part of the creation story? The prophets and our Lord himself have continually reminded mankind of God's concern for the widow, the orphan, the alien, the poor, the sick and anyone in need. If man was created "in the image of God" to "rule over ... every living creature ... " then surely that rule should express God's concern. Something we need to bear in mind as we face up to the effects of climate change, as it is these very people who will be the first to suffer.

As I completed these thoughts the latest copy of 'The Reader' was delivered through my door. The theme for this issue is "God and science"! It arrived too late for me to read, and draw inspiration from those much wiser than myself, but it should prove interesting 'further reading'.

Michael Aiers

Universalismo e Ecumenismo

he late Fr Aelred Stubbs C.R. said of Steve Biko, the antiapartheid yet non-violent activist; who was murdered by South African police, and of whom there was an icon in the Chapel at Emmaus in Sunderland; that 'his was a truly ecumenical spirituality based on a Gospel of Liberation.' Perhaps the finest thing that could be said of anybody.

Such was my introduction to a paper I gave in June 2008 at a colloquium hosted by the monastery San Silvestro at Fabriano. The conference was part of an ongoing discussion of 'The Future of Humanity' organised by the Inter Religious Monastic Dialogue group of Italy. I was invited as Chairman of the British Teilhard Association through my friends in the Italian Teilhard Association who were already participants in this dialogue.

I observed that some such similar estimate, as that applied to Steve Biko, could also be applied to Fr Pierre Teilhard de Chardin S.J.; though their lives and circumstances were so different. Teilhard's vision was truly ecumenical because it embraced the whole cosmos and at its heart enshrined freedom.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) was an eminent geologist and palaeontologist who saw his life's work as harmonizing the insights of science, especially those of evolution, with theological thought. For Teilhard God is involved in the process of evolution, moving towards its fulfilment. Humanity is vital to this. Human beings are not yet complete but are responsible for their own evolution towards a higher social and cultural development and a greater unification of the human community; made possible through love as known in Christ.

Teilhard's theological works were not acceptable to his Order or the Vatican and it was only after his death that his works were published. Of major importance were 'The Human Phenomenon' and 'Le Milieu Divin'. Others of his works 'The Future of Man' and 'Towards the Future' show that his focus is on the future. Indeed those Christians who are struggling to understand afresh what the Christian faith has to say about the future of humanity are increasingly turning to the insights, indeed

the vision, of Teilhard.

Indeed Teilhard said that 'The whole future of the Earth, as of religion, seems to me to depend on the awakening of our faith in the future.'

In 'The Future of Man' (p15) Teilhard explains this more fully:

"The question of whether the Universe is still developing then becomes a matter of deciding whether the human spirit is still in process of evolution. To this I reply unhesitatingly, 'yes, it is.' The nature of man is in the full flood of change. But to grasp this it is necessary (a) not to overlook the biological value of moral action, and (b) to accept the organic nature of individual relationships. We shall then see that a vast evolutionary process is in ceaseless operation around us, but that it is situated within the sphere of consciousness (and collective consciousness).

On the next pages Teilhard elaborated this.

He explains our superiority over Primitive Man as being 'in the realm of self-knowledge; in our growing capacity to situate ourselves in space and time, to the point of becoming conscious of our place and responsibility in relation to the Universe.'

He goes on

"We have discovered that there is a Whole, of which we are the elements. We have found the world in our own souls."

Thus not only is evolution a continuing process (and within that humanity is still evolving) but human reflection; the development of human consciousness, particularly collective consciousness, must be a major factor in opening up the future.

The morality, the spirituality of human beings, are instrumental in opening up the future. For Teilhard this can only be through Jesus Christ the resurrected and ascended Lord. Nowhere is this better expressed than in that brief creed of Teilhard.

I believe the Universe is evolution

I believe evolution is towards spirit

I believe spirit is completed, in human beings in the personal

I believe the Supreme personal is the Universal Christ.

Teilhard is clear that taking evolution seriously means for Christians that a new range of questions and concerns arise; which may well be different from the Church's traditional questions and concerns.

From now onwards the Christian who takes evolution seriously must ask what is the significance of Christ in an evolving world? What is the significance of Christ at the heart of a humanity which is seeking for its future?

It is, I believe, these that are our true universal, ecumenical concerns. How humanity and the world will evolve.

To claim that we have found the world in our own souls is to be truly ecumenical. For it is to share in, to have responsibility for the evolutionary development of humanity and of the earth. We are not just part of the evolutionary process, we are the sense, the motivation of it. Because of this humanity will be changed.

There is a Whole of which we are part, for which we have responsibility, which indeed in a sense we command. That is our universal task. It is as we face it, indeed embrace it, that our very humanity will evolve.

I am sure that Teilhard, facing the enormous challenges of today, would say that these are essentially spiritual problems affecting our very humanity.

Global warming, the waste of the earth's resources, the inequitable sharing of food and water, the enormous expansion of the earth's population without adequate processes to sustain them; the constant extinction of animal and plant species – these are not issues that can adequately be addressed with technological and political agendas – they are intrinsic to our human spiritual and moral responsibility.

If these challenges are to be embraced in a way that enables us to have faith in the future then the meeting of these challenges requires the exercise of freedom.

In 'Toward the Future' he writes

'For more than 400 million years the vast mass of beings of which we form part has been tenaciously and tirelessly climbing towards a fuller measure of freedom, of sensibility, of inner vision.' (p115)

Teilhard also relates freedom to love. Freedom can never be exercised if it is controlling or being controlled. In 'Writings in Time of War' Teilhard suggests that in our modern world what has gone wrong

'is that we have neglected these forces of freedom which emerge from the depths of a human person and therefore constitute a unitive force which is interior, a force based not upon coercion or fear but upon love.'

In Teilhard's thought the distinguishing feature of human evolution is the capacity to reflect. Reflection is what is characteristic about humanity. Teilhard simply observes 'reflection entails freedom.'

Bringing all this together, the capacity for freedom, operated

through reflection, is what is special about humanity and it is as we learn to employ our freedom in a way that is consistent with love, that that convergence which will make possible true harmony, true unity, will arise. It is only through reflective freedom that love will embrace the future. It is as humanity exercises reflective freedom that we will be the motive force in evolutionary development. The exercise of freedom alone opens up the possibility of universal love.

The Universal Christ is leading us forward though the responsible exercise of our freedom to the unity and fulfilment which is God's will.

As the evolutionary process moves forward (and not least since humanity, for good or ill, has become the prime motivator of that process) so the future will be determined by human action. If the future is to be marked by unity, by harmony, by a sense of true ecumenism, by which I mean the well-being of the whole inhabited earth, then the exercise of human freedom infused by Christlike love will bring that about.

As we evolve as human beings, or better human becomings, the one thing we have to learn above everything else is how to understand and exercise freedom. The future of the earth, the future of humanity, depends on freedom infused with love.

Now, at the present, we scarcely understand, let alone exercise, our human potential for freedom. Freedom can never be an excuse for greed or the denial of others. For there to be a future marked by unity requires that we grasp the significance and potential of freedom; that we grow in freedom, which must mean respecting the freedom of all.

Canon Alan Nugent, Sub-dean of Lincoln

Collins 1959

Books by Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin referred to:

'The Phenomenon of Man'

New translation by Sarah Appleton-Weber 'The Human Phenomenon' Published by Sussex Academic Press 1999

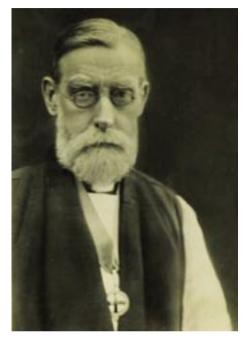
'Le Milieu Divin' Collins 1960

New translation by Sion Cowell 'The Divine Milieu' Published by Sussex Academic Press 2004

'The Future of Man'	Collins 1964
'Toward the Future'	Collins 1975
'Writings in Time of War'	Collins 1968

Charles Gore (1853-1932) Our Founder And The Vocation Of The Companions Of

Our Founder And The Vocation Of The Companions Of The Community Of The Resurrection.



he London Chapter of the Companions meets on the first Saturday of every second month from 2 pm until evensong at 4 pm at the Gary Weston library Southwark cathedral: 2nd May, 4th July, 5th September, 7th November. Those who are interested in future mailings about the chapter, please drop an email to drewstocker@me.com. You can find full details about the Companions of the Community of the Resurrection and the London Chapter at http://www.mirfieldcompanions.org.uk/ and a copy of the current CR Quarterly at http://www.mirfieldcompanions.org.uk/crq.htm

At their 7th March meeting James Lawson gave an important talk on Charles Gore. The full text is strongly recommended (on the Companions' website.). What follows is a summary of James' insights into what has made the Community and the Companions what they are.

"Our purpose is to live out Gore's ideal of seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness by drawing together to support each other in our witness to the world in our keeping of the rule of the Companions."

Fr James makes it clear how essential it is for all Companions, and indeed for anyone wanting to understand them and the Community itself, to understand the spirit of our founder. Although Gore hardly lived in his Community, all the early brethren were profoundly influenced by him. He was one of those people who change lives, as he still does through the Community and Companions. We have had to draw on other sources of inspiration in the monastic life as well, but Gore's spirit lives on, and provides what is distinctively CR. Gore always remained deeply Anglican, but he saw how our church has to move on from a comfortable establishment of rich man in his castle, poor man at his gate. Gore urged that the church must become more disciplined, defined, and holy – worthy to be called salt of the earth. The Community of the Resurrection was to be the affirmation and instrument of this new ideal.

Father Benson founded SSJE at Cowley in 1866, intent on the sanctification of the group which would influence the church unobtrusively. Charles Gore on the other hand was always in the front line of the struggle between holiness and the needs of the world. At Harrow school he heard a sermon demanding that the social evils of the new Victorian industrial city life must be met by a social organisation, a new monasticism: "a life of absolute and calculated sacrifice is a spring of immeasurable power."

Once he was a don at Oxford, at the age of 32, Gore fascinated undergraduates: "here was a man consumed by one dominating passion – to be conformed in thought and action with the Lord." Gore, a thin restless man with a red beard, was one of the founders in 1889 of the Christian Social Union, which opposed laissezfaire, gross injustice and inequality, and which claimed that social practice should be ruled by Christian law as the ultimate authority.

Gore's famous **kenosis** theology (*Philippians* 2:5-7) was revolutionary at the time, and is still very much questioned: that Jesus *emptied* himself of his divinity so that even his knowledge was limited to the knowledge available to him as a man of his time. For

Gore humiliation and limitation are at the heart of Christ himself, and most importantly these are expressions of Divine love. It is the vision of the kenosis of Christ in the Incarnation that was the basis of Gore's social vision. Gore's is the Christ who surrounds himself with the poor and dispossessed. The beatitudes express his character. It is precisely this powerless Christ who provides the model for the character of the Christian.

Gore's acceptance of the validity for Biblical criticism – the scholarly examination of the text – is largely accepted, though ever more fiercely under attack world-wide from fundamentalists of different faiths. Gore occupied the classical Anglican position of faith and reason – not unquestioning faith. Rowan Williams puts it best: Gore "not only had a profound influence in those who knew him, but also he was one of those chiefly responsible for the church of England in the 20th century becoming neither obscurantist nor anarchic."

His Community reflects his personality. The Rule was new, not based directly on Benedictine or Dominican patterns. As an early brother puts it: "Many rules without friendship he was sure did not work. Friendship with a few wise rules well kept ..." Gore was a natural leader who distrusted leadership. This is why there is so much emphasis on liberty of conscience within the Rule. Gore, an individualist himself, created a community of individualists, but though he could create fellowship, he could not sustain it himself.

Utter devotion to the Father in complete abandonment to his loving will is what allows us to develop a Christ-like character. The Christian is to shine out with this character against the ethos of the age:

"You are to help men by being unlike them...by offering them a character filled with the love of God...Would it not be better never to be Christians at all than to be Christians who do not mean what they say?"

Thus Gore asks, "Are you walking worthily of the vocation wherewith ye are called? For your principal of conduct is to be nothing less than a real striving after the perfection of God, which is indeed the character of Christ."

For Gore, Christianity is life-changing or it is pointless. Christians must be prepared to stand against the majority. Real Christianity was not a religion for the crowd but for the disciple. Social reform proceeds not by the methods of majorities, but from

small groups of sanctified men and women. He wanted not more Christians but better Christians. Fundamental to his understanding of the Sermon on the Mount is his emphasis on discipleship. "Such" he claims, "was the method of the early Church. It let all the world see the beauty of its life, the glory of its brotherhood, the splendour of its liberality." The formation of communities that return to the truths of New Testament Christianity where everything was shared "would surely be calculated to make men see how holy and happy a thing is Christian life when it can free itself from entanglements and begin again..."

Fr. James concluded with words from Charles Gore that could be a challenge and a charter for all Companions of the Resurrection:

In 1894 he preached a University Sermon in Oxford on the second Sunday in Advent. He chose to speak on exactly the same text that he had heard Westcott preach on when he was a schoolboy, the sermon that first allowed him to imagine the power of a disciplined life. The text he chose was *Ephesians* 5.15: *Look carefully how ye walk, not as unwise but as wise; buying up the opportunity because the days are evil.*

The sermon contains an assault on Mammon. Gore condemns the moral slackness, lawlessness, selfishness, and luxury of his age and speaks of the futility of countering these evils by an easy-going religion. It is time to speak "stern words in the king's sanctuary and the royal house." Search for the faithful servants of God. "Where they are, there is the secret of recovery, the hope of revival."

"We want... 'to seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness'; to consolidate Christian moral opinion in each district of Church life; to let it be known what Christian living means; to stand by one another in voluntary league to carry it out; to let its charity, its beauty, its attractiveness, its possibility be more apparent; to silence cynicism a little by drawing together in groups and leagues of the life which already exists scattered and in isolated ways. I am sure I am not unduly optimistic. I hope I am not wholly impractical."

James Lawson

Book Reviews

For God Alone: A Primer on Prayer. Bonnie Thurston D.L.T. Isbn 978-0-232-52760-5

God loves us and wants to live in relationship with us; so he has given us all a desire to pray. Many books have been written to help people to do so. Of the few I have read, I think this is the best.

Bonnie Thurston makes no claims to be an expert. As she says, all of us are beginners, so she calls her book a Primer on Prayer. But obviously she has read widely, not only Christian books but Buddhist and Muslim books as well. Her select bibliography is interesting.

In the first chapter, she invites us to think what prayer is. She gives us a list of possible definitions, including her own. This is important because how we pray depends on what we think we are trying to do. In subsequent chapters she writes about different ways of praying which she has used and found helpful. There are chapters on the different categories of prayer – praying with words, praying by using the mind and imagination, and contemplative prayer in some of its forms. Because prayer involves the whole of us, body, mind and spirit, there is a chapter on Christian anthropology and she suggests some exercises.

So what is the best way to pray? There is such a thing as progress in prayer but there is no best way – no wrong way. We are all different and we all pray differently. The best way for each of us is the way that works – the way that fulfils for us our definition of prayer.

At the end of her book she writes some notes about the results of a life of prayer. Hopefully we shall become our true selves, as God made us and means us to be.

This is an excellent survey of the whole field of personal prayer and I thoroughly recommend it.

Timothy Stanton CR.

Ancient Faith, Future Mission: Fresh Expressions in the Catholic Tradition. Edited by Steven Croft and Ian Mobsby.

Contributions from Archbishop Rowan Willams and others.

Canterbury Press, 2009. £16.99. Isbn 978 781853 119736

When I was at COR, one of our colleagues continually challenged our views, our prejudices, our deliberations on liturgy or tat with the phrase, "What's that gotta do with the Gospel?" It has become a mantra to me and to many of us, grounding us in our mission, our ministry, our witness. Who would have guessed that Dave's constantly repeated phrase would echo continually in the back of my head in the long intervening years?

It would be all so easy to simply write off the Fresh Expressions movement as passing fad in the evangelical wing of the Church of England: a cheap way of attracting press coverage with a few gimmicks: a bit of messing around with clay and bible stories or yet another (yawn) café church. And yet, this is not the whole story: the Fresh Expressions label also manages to encapsulate a whole host of other ideas and initiatives that speak of depth and tradition, of sign and sacrament and an incarnational, catholic understanding of faith. "What's that gotta do with the Gospel?" it would appear that this has everything to do with it. Ian Mobsby and Bishop Steven Croft pull together a number of writers who are able to contribute on this hitherto largely ignored sphere: some well known names, such as Bishop Stephen Cottrell, Richard Giles and Phyllis Tickle and others who are virtually unknown outside of their local communities and perhaps a late-night slot at the Greenbelt Festival. The aim is to enable the Church to see some of the depth of engagement and enlighten it to some of the possibilities that the Catholic and Contemplative traditions have to offer the wider church

The book is book-ended with two papers given at Coventry Cathedral on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in December 2008 at a Day of Pilgrimage organized by the Catholic and Contemplative traditions in the Fresh Expressions umbrella. Archbishop Rowan and Abbot Stuart OSB both gave considered and multilayered talks around which a Eucharistic celebration and a variety of meditations and devotions were presented. The event was vastly oversubscribed and gave many the opportunity to experience something new, something challenging, something uncomfortable in the context of the spirituality which gives life to so much of the Church

As someone ministering in this sphere, what I found most inspiring was the papers by the practitioners of the Catholic and Contemplative Tradition, as many of them honestly and openly described their stories, complete with successes, failures

and frustrations. This book is not a manual or a 12-step guide to "doing Fresh Expressions" so you can tick that box on your Statistics Form in December, there isn't a quick fix on tap and no, just putting on a "U2charist" as described here by Paige Blair does not mean that you too can be a Pioneer Minister. These papers and shared experiences tell us that we need to start with our communities, and most significantly with those outside our communities, to take the tools of our ministry: bread broken and wine outpoured and the forgiveness and grace of the spirit borne out in his holy sacraments and grow community and service organically to reflect your community and its charism rather than impose on it from the outside the whims of Liturgical Commission, Curia or latest glossy evangelism programme. Everyone who reads this book, lay or ordained, carries the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 with them, and can find a beginning, an opportunity to create and innovate and to make Christ known amongst the people outside the walls of their comfortable, cosy Church.

Many facets of the breadth the sacramental traditions are covered by practitioners who actually do it: Karen Ward writes about an intentional religious community in Washington State in the USA, the next phase of Anglican Monasticism which was initiated by communities like CR, this New Monasticism happens in different contexts and in different ways from those of Gore and Frere but in which a new engagement with the Religious Life and a new call for separation, for engagement and a new dynamic of prayerful service. Meanwhile, Philip Roderick explores the Contemplative Life and brings quietness and stillness through simple acts and simple, low-tech things into busy lives: a stark contrast to the multimedia-based, immersive sacramentalism of 'Visions' based in York as described by Sue Wallace. The chapter on 'Sacramentally-based Youth Mission' is clearly outstanding – I felt as if the author of that chapter and I shared something special ...

"What's that gotta do with the Gospel?" This book shows that creative and innovative ways of using the Sacraments in proclaiming the Gospel is both possible and essential, that the Sacraments *are* the Gospel, and they are powerful tools for evangelism to a world which has otherwise lost sense and meaning and purpose.

The Sacramental Life has so much to offer the world, and its agent in this offering is you: your church, your tradition. If you read this book and see facets of your mission in here, then here you will find something to support you. If you normally put the *Fresh Expressions* newsletter straight into the bin alongside *Alpha News* when it comes inside the *Church Times*, then you should read this collection, and maybe you will be challenged or inspired.

The call to proclaim the Gospel afresh in every generation remains as strong today as it ever was. This generation. This Gospel. This might just help.

Fr. Simon Rundell SCP

As far as useful websites go, I recommend the following:

- http://www.agnusdei.org.uk a collection of video resources that can be freely downloaded for use in worship, much of this from blesséd, the Walsingham Youth Pilgrimages and other useful bits and pieces.
- http://www.blessed.org.uk/ website of the blesséd alt.worship community described in this book, lots of examples
- http://sacramental-fresh-expressions.ning.com/ a network site for those people working in or interested in the sacramental fresh expressions
- http://www.youtube.com/user/simonrundell youtube area for most of my video work, a good way to see quickly what is on agnusdei.org.uk
- http://jonnybaker.blogs.com/jonnybaker/worship_tricks/ not strictly of the Catholic tradition, but a good source of insight into creative worship and liturgy

Fr. Simon Rundell SCP (COR 1999-2001) is a parish priest in the Diocese of Portsmouth, although College of the Resurrection students probably curse his name more for writing the (now ancient) library catalogue whilst a student; and yes, he did write the chapter on Sacramental Youth Ministry, he is the curator of the Blesséd alt.worship community www.blessed.org.uk . Mass will be said at Greenbelt, and you are invited.

Survival or Prophecy: The Correspondence of Jean Leclercq and Thomas Merton.

Edited by Patrick Hart. Cistercian Publications. 2008. £13.50. (First published 2002) Isbn 978 0879070175.

As Abbot Weakland suggests in his prefatory essay to this volume, both writers were part of the scholarship of post-war return to sources in monasticism. Both were equally intrigued by the Asiatic context of asceticism in other faiths, and agreed on the ideal of restoration of the hermit life within Western monasticism. For Weakland it is these streams which lead them to their prominent role in what he calls prophecy. This correspondence spans from the 1950s until Merton's death in Bangkok in 1968.

Leclercq believes we can only understand Cistercians in the context of pre-Benedictine monasticism. He comments on attempts to get back to simplicity, and wants to distinguish between vocation and illusion in the eremitical tradition. Initially he appears somewhat guarded about Merton's desire for solitude. Merton comments on the influx of novices to Gethsemani, 150 of them. He draws a picture of bewildered senior monks used to a stricter regime now overwhelmed by the incomers! Not I think today's problem. Merton as ever is critical of the activity in the monastery which he senses ruins the monks' vocation. There is constant awareness in the letters of the underlying critique of established monasticism concerning contemplation, almost as if they were being encouraged by popular external lay pressure to live a more mystical life.

These letters span the years in which Merton cajoles his abbot Dom James to be permitted to live as a hermit and gathers as much external ecclesial pressure as he can to get the decision he feels he needs. The same goes for his trip to Asia in the context of which Dom Flavian Burns gets the pressure treatment. The letters lead us from the forestry log cabin tower to the right to have mass in the purpose built cabin the woods. It is interesting how for Leclercq and Merton the obedience theme runs like a golden thread through the text. Leclercq clearly is more able to travel and be free of his house, Merton much less so. Merton's comment November 13th 1957 runs "your order is much more-clear sighted than ours. You have the flexibility which we so sadly, so miserably lack. I am afraid there is a rigidity endemic in the very structure of the Cistercian

Order which will in the end stifle all serious development" (p99).

These letters mirror Merton's restless struggles despite his often professed stability. "For some people the solitary life is their only way of truth and it is their truth precisely as it is not imposed on them from the outside. Some people are congenitally incapable of understanding this." Whom could he be referring to? Let the reader understand.

On Holy Saturday 1964 he comments: "In order to preserve this charismatic quality, the monk must first of all be entirely faithful to the charism of his vocation to solitude and to the desert" (p 80.)

One can hear Merton's concern for his novices: "Unless we have a real reorientation a lot of our younger vocations are going to end in despair and we will not get any new ones" August 2nd 1964 (p83).

Finally permitted to live in the hermitage, Merton says: "I do not claim that I am an ideal hermit, but then neither was I an ideal cenobite. I will probably cause less scandal being hidden in the woods" July 7th 1966 (p101).

It is enlightening to see the progress through the letters to the point of Vatican II and Merton's final release to be able to fly. The title of the book comes from a line in one of Merton's letters, July 23rd 1968, six months before his journey to both Asia and his final departure. "The vocation of the monk in the modern world, especially Marxist, is not survival, but prophecy" July 23rd 1968 (p129).

Michael Casey's afterword is intriguing and most readable. He points out that both writers were sustained by the community of a large institution, and that only in such a context can perhaps one or two more charismatic individuals be given their free reign, while others cook their food and wash their clothes.

He says, "If prophets lose their sense of humour and start taking themselves too seriously, they usually leave and try to establish a way of life more in accord with their vision of monasticism" (p133). Clearly Cistercians should recognize this well, given the initial move under Abbot Robert from Molesme and the move of the St Mary's monks from York to establish Fountains! Is this not the inevitable pattern of some ecclesial reform even within the flexibility of Catholicism? He indicates the decline in the novitiates of most present day monasteries, although acknowledging at the same time that both Merton and Leclercq would approve the more

relaxed atmosphere of most contemporary communities.

With regard to the solitary life he suggests "perhaps interest in this singular form of life was more a reaction to an overbearing communitarianism than a response to grace – an escape rather than a call" (p137). Something he suggests which in a more humane monasticism has lost its urgency ... "From what I can judge they both enjoyed their contrarian status and the liberty it gave them to point out the inconsistencies between monastic theory and practice. Both men were somewhat marginal to the daily life of ordinary monks" (p141). Casey suggests that prophecy needs to support the survival of the institution, not simply critique it.

For both Merton and Leclercq of course, the solitary life is now an utter impossibility among the choirs of heaven. Doubtless Merton has found by now a suitably convenient way of avoiding choir practice. A timely republished book which with the new afterword enables us not only to gain a deeper insight into Merton and Leclercq's dialogue, but also into ecclesial issues about charism and institution which are always with us.

Kenneth Carveley

(Director of Liturgical Studies, Yorkshire Ministry Course)

Seeking life. The baptismal invitation of the rule of St Benedict. Esther de Waal.

Canterbury press. 2009. £9.99. Isbn 978 1 85311 879 1

The life which Esther de Waal writes about is the new life which we enter at baptism. After making our baptismal promises we are buried with Christ: and are raised to new life in Christ. So the first part of this book is about baptism. She describes what happened in the early church at Easter. This is similar to what happens in churches which keep the Easter vigil today, when we renew our baptismal vows. But we still have to work out our baptismal commitment, in the path of daily discipleship. St Benedict wrote his rule to offer people a way to do this. He intended to establish a school for the Lord's service, to guide them on the road that leads to salvation. In a previous book – Seeking God – Esther wrote about the whole rule. In this one she concentrates on the prologue which was a fragment of a baptismal catechesis – a call to action

which will bring people to fullness of life in Christ. The last part of the book consists of an anthology: a collection of extracts from instructions to catechumens and baptismal homilies, written by some of the early fathers of the church. I warmly recommend it.

Timothy Stanton CR

The Memoirs of 'a Very Dangerous Man'. Donald Reeves. Continuum. Isbn 9781847063137. £16.99

It was Mrs Thatcher who called him a very dangerous man. Others have called him a communist, a lefty and many other things besides. He began life in a somewhat dysfunctional family, was sent to a prep and then public school which was a pretty dysfunctional experience but evidently taught him not to be afraid to be different. He found religion on his own after some years in the army, in the British Council in Beirut and in teaching. He got ordained and went to be first a normal Sixties curate in Maidstone, then chaplain to Mervyn Stockwood; so far pretty unexceptional though of course anyone working with Bishop Stockwood would have their attitudes to life and church considerably changed. Then he became Vicar of St Peter's Morden. A brief stay in the United States at the Urban Training Centre in Chicago helped radicalise him. He became in a sense, the quintessential Seventies vicar.

He was determined to take the church out of its stuffy churchiness into the community. He engaged with the community through programmes, encounters and community activities. He encouraged art, music and dance within his church. He set up the Urban Ministry Project to train ordinands and clergy in urban work. Donald was (and still is) a man of imagination and drive. Things happened around him; the church flourished. After 10 years it was time to move on. He was offered St James Piccadilly. This was the ultimate in stuffy upper class religion. Donald completely changed that. Donald welcomed everyone and everything into the church. Every kind of Christian or not, gay, straight, royal, left wing, black, homeless, mad, artist, musician – you name it and you would probably find it sometime at St James'. This could seem gimmicky, or populist, but underneath that appearance was a determination to serve the people who really needed serving, to learn from anyone

who could teach, to show that Christianity was a welcoming religion taking in the weak and the needy, not an exclusive religion for the righteous. He moved on a long way from the seventies when he subscribed to the therapeutic model that situations could be healed, problems could be fixed. Life became more existential in that its problems had to be lived, ideas had to come together, imagination was stimulated and new forms emerged. He listened to the New Age religionists, though he criticised them for their self-centredness. He was anathema to the fundamentalists, but became a refuge for evangelicals seeking a larger faith.

After 15 years it was time to move on to the Soul of Europe organisation which he created. Much of its work has been in Bosnia, painfully engaging with a shattered community, helping people to listen to each other, slowly moving forward the long process of reconciliation. It is a moving story and one which defies simple solutions or easily achieved endings. Though now 74, Donald's story still goes on. Someone else will have to tell how it ends.

I could never be a Donald Reeves. I would disagree strongly with some of what he says. And I would agree even more strongly with much that he has done. Thank God for the likes of him in the church of England. May there be many, many more!

Nicolas Stebbing CR

Orthodoxy, Evolving Tradition. David N Bell Cistercian Publications 2008 PB pp 241 Isbn 978 0 87907 228 5

Here is an attractive introduction to the liturgical practice and doctrines of the Orthodox churches. The author, who is Professor of Religious Studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland, describes chiefly the Greek and Russian Orthodox tradition but some reference is made to the Oriental Orthodox: Copts, Syrians and Armenians. Historical information is kept to a minimum and comparisons with the beliefs of other Christian traditions and even other faiths are presented. Further reading is indicated in footnotes and there is a very full index.

Crispin Harrison CR

The Life and Miracles of Saint Maurus, Disciple of Benedict, Apostle of France.

Translated with Introduction by John B Wickstrom. Cistercian Publications 2008. Pbk 156pp. Isbn 978-0-87907-323-7.

This scholarly work gives an insight into the establishment of Benedictine monasticism in France in the ninth century. The author, who is Professor of History at Kalamazoo College, provides informative historical introductions to the two short works which he has translated: The Life of Maurus and The Little Book of Miracles. There is a Bibliography and Index.

According to Pope Gregory the Great, Maurus was an early disciple of St Benedict and became his chief helper. The Life was probably produced with A Little Book of Miracles by Abbot Odo of the Abbey of Glanfeuil in the ninth century. He tells how Benedict sent Maurus to France in response to a request from the Bishop of Le Mans On the journey Maurus performed miracles and thus showed that he was a true heir of Benedict. With the support of kings and noble laymen he founded the Abbey of Glanfeuil in the Middle Loire and was buried there. The abbey became the centre of the cult of St Maurus at a time when the Benedictine Rule was being established in monasteries throughout the Carolingian empire.

Crispin Harrison CR

Becoming Fire, Through the Year with the Desert Fathers and Mothers Edited by Tim Vivian. Cistercian Publications 2008 pbk. Pp556 Isbn 978 0 87907 525 5

Tim Vivien is an Episcopalian who teaches Religious Studies at California State University. His collection of the wise sayings and stories of the hermits of the fifth and sixth centuries is arranged in short groups for each day of the year so that those who use it can savour their meaning and apply it to their own circumstances. As one Sufi master said, "There is a big difference between merely collecting recipes and actually cooking and eating." A Glossary, Bibliography, and Word Index are provided. This is a fascinating and inspiring collection.

Crispin Harrison CR

Short Notices

Word made flesh.

Recovering a sense of the sacred through prayer.

John Main. With an introduction by Laurence Freeman. Canterbury Press. 2009. £8.99. Isbn 978 1 85311 965 1

Details of another book by the world-famous John Main OSB are to be found on pages 45-46 of the John Baptist 2008 issue 422 of this Review. That book was a reprint of an edition originally issued in 1988. Now we are given a reprint of a book first printed in 1993. The need for these reprints shows the importance of John Main's work. He writes with simplicity and directness, giving us seventeen 3-page addresses. His teaching may not be the only one available, but he has certainly got a vast number of people praying in a life-changing way, and this work continues and is furthered by Laurence Freeman OSB, the World Community for Christian Meditation and its 16 international branches: www.wccm.org

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