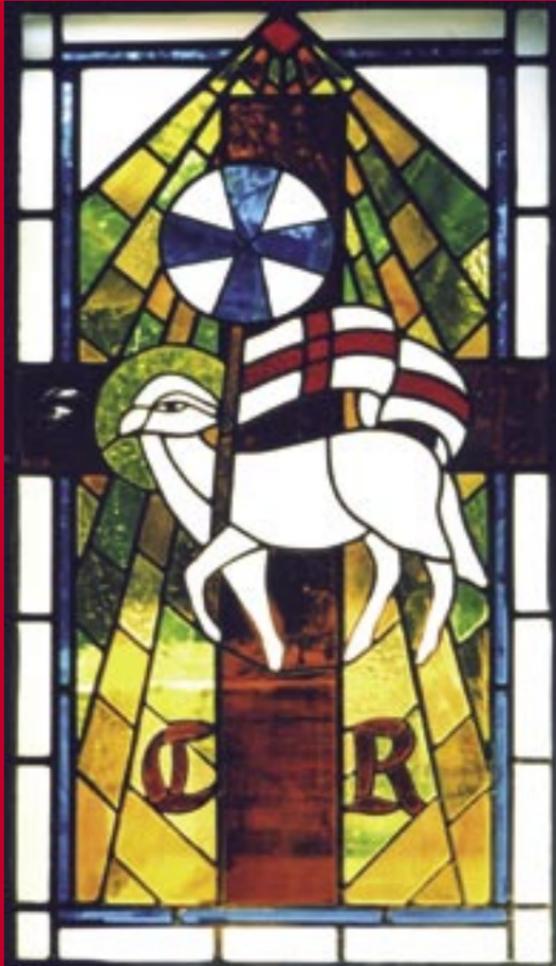


# CR



**QUARTERLY REVIEW OF THE  
COMMUNITY OF THE RESURRECTION**

Michaelmas 2009

Number 427



## ~ St Francis' House ~

There will be a thanksgiving Eucharist for St Francis' House Hemingford Grey on ***Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December at 12 noon***, in St Francis' House, followed by a buffet. On that date the House will close. In order to help plan for catering, please contact the Warden, Mary Campbell, if you intend to come.

**Post:** St Francis' House, Hemingford Grey, HUNTINGDON, Cambridgeshire, PE28 9BJ Phone: 01480 462185

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# CR

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## **From the Superior**

Progress on the buildings

**O**ur church is a listed building, and nowadays, like any parish church, we need approval from the Diocesan Advisory Committee, who have been very helpful. They also have to take into account our proposed new Community building, which will join onto the church. Six public bodies have to have their say, either on the church, the new monastery, or both: English Heritage, the Victorian Society (whose remit goes up to 1914), the 20th-century Society, the Church Buildings Council, the Conservation Officer, and the Planning Authority. Some have

raised strong objections, and so there is a delay, no surprise to any familiar with church building projects. This creates extra work, but we are still hopeful of a start before the year's end. Prayers please that we may deal with these things with patience!

Anything that happens to a religious community is grist to the mill, and here in this instance we are prompted to think what motivates the conservation lobby. Organizations like the Victorian Society have an important role to play in helping protect our built heritage, and they need our support. But what is it that can make people extremist about some things today? Some aspects of Health and Safety controls for instance are lacking in proper human sanity - they have taught us to be much more sensible about unnecessary risks, but in some ways now go to extremes that betray something else: a neurotic fear of suffering so strong that it must eclipse our healthy desire to live life to the full, taking risks in our stride.

In like manner, what motivates those keen to keep some buildings unchanged whatever the inconvenience? When we recently built the new refectory at the College the authorities insisted, because of proximity to the church, that the roof be a low one, and only lead could be used to cover it. We objected that it's not a case of 'if' but 'when' the thieves move in, but they insisted. Now in July some lead was stripped away. All we can do is replace it, but it will happen again. There can be a fanaticism about 'conservation' that seems rather to seek a compensation for the loss of a sense of God - there has to be something to hang on to - so let's make some things and buildings absolutely sacred and unalterable.

A more sane Christian response would suggest that proper protection of significant buildings has to be held in a tension with the fact that everything is passing away. Tibetan monks make stunningly beautiful sand sculptures which, when finished, they tip into a river - so enacting an unavoidable truth about creation. We all can grieve at the loss of the familiar, but God has to be free to bring new and old from his endless storehouse. We are looking forward to our church being, not a dead object to be viewed, but a fine building whose architecture sings through the worship that goes on within it.

**George Guiver CR**

## Mirfield and me

Writing this short story about Mirfield and me is most certainly a highly appreciated escape from endless reading, correcting and amending of my doctoral dissertation. I do not think that I will be able to express fully in this writing the meaning of the time that I spent living together with the brethren in the Community of the Resurrection. I am not even sure that I am yet fully aware of this meaning. The amount of inspiration that I accumulated is far too much to be digested in so short period of time. Every now and then, I discover ideas emerging that most certainly have their source in Mirfield. I feel privileged that I can share some of this inspiration with readers.

### *First inspiration – the Porvoo Agreement*

My awareness about the Church of England was quite weak before the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church joined the Porvoo Agreement in 1994. I did know more about England, because I studied in the English-biased school where we learned the history and culture of Britain together with the English language. This was during the Soviet occupation and, obviously, there was no indication in our curriculum that there is also Church in the British Isles.

For a short period, before the Porvoo Agreement, I visited regularly the Holy Spirit Church – a Lutheran congregation in Tallinn where English services were held every Sunday at 3 pm. It was quite a good arrangement for someone who wanted to spend Sunday mornings in bed and still go to church. There was also a small Anglican Parish in the Holy Spirit Church and sometimes an Anglican priest came from Helsinki to conduct the service. On other Sundays, this duty was assigned to Rev. Gustav Piir who was raised in Canada and was able to conduct services in English.

Then the Porvoo Agreement came to be. I remember the solemn celebration in the Dome Church in Tallinn. A few years later, in 1996, I started my career as the Executive Secretary of the Estonian Council of Churches. On my first visit to Britain after the Porvoo Agreement, I went to a communion service in Abergavenny, in Wales. After the service, I went to the priest and said how glad I

was to use the privilege of the Porvoo Agreement. “Porvoo what?” he replied. Probably it was not a very important thing for him.

In my understanding, at least until recently, the Porvoo Agreement was primarily about the Holy Communion. In the conservative religious landscape of Estonia the question of participation in the Holy Communion of another church was almost unthinkable. Therefore, it was of great significance when two different churches agreed that we could share the Holy Communion. Actually, I never thought that the connection through the Holy Communion happens only for a small minority of the members of the Porvoo churches. Probably for most, it is a symbolic sign of unity.

When I was living with the Community of the Resurrection in Mirfield, from time to time I heard the brethren praying for my home church – the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church. It was an eye-opening experience. The distance between Tallinn – the capital of Estonia – and Mirfield is over 1000 miles. The Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church is nowadays a small denomination with about 50,000 active members. The idea that there is a community 1000 miles away from my home that regularly prays for my church gives me hope. I think it gives hope to all Porvoo churches and beyond. I still think that the unity through the Holy Communion is the ultimate form of unity but it most certainly is not the only one. The prayers of the Brethren of the Resurrection helped me to understand the significance of the Porvoo Agreement from a point of view that was blocked by my one-track thinking of unity.

### ***Second inspiration – the sound of silence***

I have studied and practised liturgical chant actively since 1995. I am aware that it is not ever possible to get to the end of the road of studying liturgical chant. Compared to the nature of liturgical chant it is simply not imaginable to reach perfection.

After fourteen years of active studying, singing, and composing liturgical chant, I hoped that I had established a foundation in liturgical chanting. However, the experience of singing and saying Psalms during the services at Mirfield proved to be something different. For the first time in my experience of chanting, I heard the sound of silence. I knew the tradition of making a longer pause between two halves of the Psalm verse. I have even taught it in many

workshops. Now I understand that before my Mirfield experience I did not even have a vague idea what this silence is about.

There is an immense difference between silence and silence. It can be a 'dead silence', which is a result of our human decision not to make a sound. Or it can be a 'living silence', which happens because there is not meant to be a sound. Humanly, we are not able to make 'living silence'; we are only able to disturb it. 'Living silence' is a Grace of God. It is a little fragment of Eternity in our lives, giving us hope. I have actually found it to be the best and most valuable part of chanting. Giving meaning to this short silence drastically reshaped my understanding of liturgical chant.

I am trying now to explain the sound of silence at my workshops, but I am not sure if I am actually able to. Perhaps it can only be understood by experiencing psalmody with people who actually know how to let the 'living silence' happen.

This short writing does not do any justice to what Community of the Resurrection actually means to me. Sometimes I dream about Mirfield. I am in the Resurrection Chapel and the silence around me is filled with calm anticipation.

You have put gladness in my heart ...

**Eerik Joks.**



## Returning to the UK

Well here we are and I am hearing the sounds from my window, lawnmowers and birds chirping with a lovely cool breeze and blue skies. So you could say I am now happy to be back and enjoying the peculiarities of England and its people. No I am not joking! England is a lovely country; just as long as you don't watch the TV, go to any supermarkets or need to buy train tickets! I am now heaving a sigh of relief as I am now at the end of what is called 'deputation' for USPG. This involved travelling every weekend to a different church and speaking in the sermon slot about my time in Tanzania. Apart from trying to prepare each of these talks well, I would end up spending literally hours on the internet trying to find the cheapest way to travel from A to B to C and then pay for it online! It reminds me of the times I got so frustrated in Tanzania haggling over bus ticket prices and feeling like I got ripped off. At least that only took a few minutes! I am trying to work out which I get more personally offended by, being ripped off by a computer website system or a tout outside a Tanzania ticket desk?

Some of you may be wondering, "Andrew's back from Tanzania now, so why are we still getting these blasted reports from him!" Well this is the FINAL newsletter. It is supposed to be my reflective newsletter. I think probably the hardest any returning missionary has to write. Suddenly you feel, well what was all the point? Yes I had a great time, I learnt a lot, and I hopefully made some positive contribution to the community I lived in and the Church as a whole. But did I need to go all the way to Tanzania for that? I think the answer has to be yes.

I have come back to exactly where I left, kipping at my parents' house while I am in an 'in-between' stage of life. This is not my right and is something my parents do amazingly graciously. This is where I left when I got on the bus to leave England in January 2006. The house is the same, my parents – similar, Halifax – pretty similar, life – pretty much as I left it. Every one has moved on to an extent, but the situation is still the same. By moving back into what seemed at first exactly what I had left three years previously, my first weeks in the UK were very weird; like I had been in hibernation or

just popped off the earth for a while. Tanzania was a dream I had woken up from; emphasised by how much I slept once I got home – about 18 hours non-stop. However I had changed. I could see that by how I reacted differently to those experiences which are particular to being back in Halifax at my parents. I feel in a similar situation as to when I left University; I am free to go anywhere and be anything that I want to be. Or am I? I think our society is full of this promise that is actually not true at all. We are all constrained, some far more than others, about what we can do or be. Not only that but once we start getting involved in the systems that pervade our society – mortgages, credit, direct debit, social security, NHS, taxes, student loans, bills, employment - we actually get more and more tied down and limited in what we can do or be.

I have come back from a society which has very few of these benefits or constraints. People in Tanzania live by faith. In Tanzania the constraints are dominated by God in a very direct way. My friend Frank used to tell me that there is no such thing as unemployment in Tanzania. Because everyone is free to pick up a hoe and find a plot of land and farm it. Your life is literally in your hands and God's hands. Tanzania is a rural and to a large extent subsistence farming society. You grow to eat and to trade. You depend on God for the weather to grow your crops and your neighbour to sell them to. Now is that incredibly free or incredibly limited? Well both I think. I love that freedom from systems that I feel I am controlled by when coming back into the UK. Being told what I HAVE to do otherwise my life will not be so good or comfortable or even legal. Do you remember in your history lessons learning about the 'hut taxes' the British colonial government imposed on the people in their African colonies? Forgetting about how this money was used or extorted from the people, can you imagine what a great attack on people's sense of freedom this would have had? Now I am not talking about any such 'good old days' of life in Tanzania before modernisation and globalisation. What I am trying to do is just create a contrast for you to see how life is for us in 'Westernised' society compared to much of the 'developing' world.

I think these systems must play a large role in creating a 'poverty of spirit' in our society. Either we feel that 'we have rights' that we are entitled to (because we are law abiding and pay our taxes), or we feel that we have few rights and are only controlled by systems

that won't let us be. So we either ignore God as we can focus on having a happy family and social life, or we despair and turn to drink, drugs, sex or even suicide. God is marginalised in both situations. In contrast, society in Tanzania is dominated by God and the spirit world. (Just look at the incredulous reactions we have to international media reports of the murder and dissection of albino children by witch-doctors that has become a big problem in East Africa recently.) People rely on God or spirits as there is little else to turn to for controlling their environment or making their life better. So again, is this any better than our situation here in the UK? Well it certainly means the churches are full and seen as very relevant to people's lives in Tanzania, while here the opposite is the case.

So for me as a Christian, I believe there is a God who actively engages in our lives and can help us if we listen to his voice. For those I come across who are struggling, I can offer this, the teachings and life of Jesus Christ; my love, compassion and support. For the rest, I suppose the key is finding where people struggle and showing how God can play a role in helping this. I suppose in Britain, life is very comfortable for many and so it's a much bigger challenge to identify where people struggle and how the church can offer them support in those areas. Believing that God is relevant to everyone is maybe what distinguishes me as a Christian believer. I can only offer my experiences of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to those I meet as an example of how real God is and how involved God is in our world.

This is the challenge for the church and my challenge as I re-enter into my home culture and community. I'd like to hope that three years in Tanzania have made me a wiser person; that I am better equipped to live and work in communities where people have very little money and feel oppressed or alienated by systems they have no control over. I'd like to hope that their situations can be transformed with some help from the Holy Spirit and people's compassionate engagement. That is where I would like to see myself in the coming months and years.

**Andrew Russell**

*Photos from my final weeks in Dodoma and Tanzania:*



*Leaving service at Chang'ombe*



*Saying goodbye to Pastor Fredrick's family*



*....and Agnes's (parish worker) family*



*At home with housemate Frank (on left) with new wife Helen, Benard (my successor) and my brother Nicholas*



*On top of Mt. Meru at dawn with friends and Mt. Kilimanjaro in the background (Christmas holiday)*

## The Mirfield Centre

**B**ack in 2006, the Church of England received the Archbishop's Council report: *Formation for Ministry within a learning church*. A key section within the report addressed the need for the church to be 'more fully a learning church- a body that promotes a dynamic and reflective discipleship for all its members' (Hind 4.1 p.36). It went on to speak of developing 'programmes of interest to lay people who wish to serve God in their ordinary lives.' It introduced the term 'Education for Discipleship' as an umbrella term for learning that embraced the 'whole life response of Christians to Jesus Christ' rather than simply equipped them for tasks of ministry within the church. The vision of enabling the church to become 'more fully a learning church' embraces the following expectations (not all every time!) for those embarking on such learning. Whether attending an evening session, a day course, a short course, or a day/residential retreat there is a hope that participants will:

- Become more confident in faith, discipleship, and understanding in relation to God and to their engagement as Christians with the world.
- Grow in their understanding of Christian identity, both within the Church community and in society at large.
- Be able to draw effectively on a solid grounding in knowledge and understanding of the Bible and Christian Tradition.
- Be able to voice an understanding informed by Christian reflection and dialogue with others.
- Grow in their awareness of themselves and others.
- Be open to the exploration of a variety of personal pathways in response to God's call to discipleship.
- Develop a deepening and sustainable life of prayer.

The Mirfield Centre, as a public work of the Community, is a significant contributor, within the Yorkshire regional partnership, to furthering such a vision. Its location on site at Mirfield alongside the Community, the College and Yorkshire Ministry Course has the potential to realise the vision of the Hind Report, in a holistic way, as ordinands, clergy and lay Christians find opportunity to

learn together through the Centre programme. Within the limits of our time (both the Director and administrator work half of their time for Wakefield diocese also) and financial resources, the Centre team (three of the CR brothers are part of the Centre team) plan a programme of varied learning each year- evening events, day courses, pilgrimages, short courses and residential events. Our annual leaflet gives details of this year's programme; however new learning opportunities are often added as the year moves on and the website ([www.mirfieldcentre.org.uk](http://www.mirfieldcentre.org.uk)) provides details of all events as they emerge.

People often tell us how much they appreciate the Centre's programme, particularly as it happens on site, here at Mirfield, alongside a monastic community. They appreciate the reflective space and place that Mirfield provides and is. They enjoy the varied programme of events, valuing not only the learning together, and the fellowship of sharing good food, but also the opportunity to pray alongside the brethren as part of a day event or the quietness of Compline at the close of an evening session. *Education for Discipleship* as it happens here, out of the rootedness of all that Mirfield is, undoubtedly enriches the varied opportunities for learning within our Yorkshire region.

The Director is also a member of CLAY – Christians learning across Yorkshire – an ecumenical group of trainers/educators who plan events together ([www.claycourse.org.uk](http://www.claycourse.org.uk)). Details of our singly and jointly planned events can be found on the twice yearly leaflets (now in its eleventh edition) and website. On from the Hind report, *Shaping the Future*, rightly discerned that for the 'whole church to become a learning church.....[this would] involve many players and contributors' (*Shaping the Future* p.3). CLAY was indeed ahead of the game in discerning the importance of ecumenical learning opportunities within the region.

A large part of the Centre's life would be missing if I failed to mention the hosting of meetings and conferences through the Centre. In particular, the Diocese of Wakefield works in partnership with the Centre for its School of Ministry provision. We are also the base for the diocesan Resources Centre (a library of learning resources for adult Christian learners) and also frequently used as a venue for a variety of diocesan and regional meetings. Other

organizations are also increasingly seeking to use our facilities in this way, as they bring staff teams together for days of reflection and learning.

We live a varied life at the Centre and look forward to emerging opportunities for increased partnership on site under the broad umbrella of 'Education for Discipleship' as it develops within the region.

**Revd June Lawson** (Director of the Mirfield Centre)



**Mirfield Centre Richard Rolle Pilgrimage to Hampole, Adwick and the Chantry Chapel, Wakefield, Sept 12th 2009**



## Tariro – Hope

One of the delights of visiting Zimbabwe of late has been arriving at St Augustine's mission. As our car draws up about 20 scruffy youngsters from the children's home hurl themselves on us, shaking hands, hugging, smiling, greeting and laughing. It is wonderful fun and the days we spend there are punctuated with the sheer delight of these kids. And yet their outlook is bleak. Most were left at the home as babies. They have no families. They do not know their roots. When it comes to marriage they will not know their totems. They will find it hard to integrate into society. They are not very bright academically and are not well equipped to survive in a society with 90% unemployment. When they reach 18 they are supposed to leave, but most have nowhere to go, so they stay on, frustrated, angry and making trouble. Recently, because the Government cannot support them in orphanages the ministry have insisted that any child over 14 who has any kind of family must go to it. But often the family abused them in the past; most families are poor and cannot feed them or send them to school.

We don't want these nice kids to become disaffected young adults, surviving by petty crime and dying young of AIDS. So we are planning to open a house in Harare where we can take a number of these young people and set them up in life. It will be called Tariro House. Tariro means Hope. The driving force behind this house are three remarkable people in Zimbabwe – Phillip and Tambu Mutasa and Dr Beata Tumushine. Phillip is an insurance broker; Beata is an eye surgeon. For some years they have worked in one of the poorest areas of town with young people who have lost parents, helping them back into education, giving them confidence, encouraging them to face the traumas of their past so they can be free of them and walk towards the future.

Tariro will be a home for young people who have no other home. It will help them get further education, or vocational training. It will also be firmly based on Christian life. Zimbabweans expect this. We hope that these young people will do more than survive; they need to become leaders in their own generation of Zimbabweans who must rebuild a country shattered by the selfishness and stupidity

of their elders.

Apart from those who live in the home Tariro will continue to work with youngsters from the poorer areas of town helping them in the same kind of practical ways; teaching them to be citizens of both the earthly society of Zimbabwe and the Kingdom of God. Carl Melville went out there in July to live with these young people for a year and help them set up the House, assisted by Edwin Komayi.

We ask your prayers. We are starting this without sufficient money and lacking a lot of experience; but there is so much need among the young people, we feel compelled not to wait. We are convinced this is of God and that he will guide us through the difficulties. But we need your prayers.

**Nicolas Stebbing CR**



*The first Trustees of Tariro*

## Of Circles and Spirals

**A**t the time of writing I've just been back to Mirfield after well over twenty years. I've been at Companions' Day, during which I was admitted as a Companion for a second time. It's a new beginning, in which I rejoice, but it's also caused me to reflect on how, coming around again to something, one is never in quite the same place as before.

The Community of the Resurrection has been a recurrent thread in my life. I grew up in a parish in the Midlands where the vicar had been trained at Mirfield, so CR was mentioned quite frequently, and came to hold a certain mystique for me. There were some particularly devout ladies who belonged to the Fraternity, which I suppose was named inappropriately as it seemed that membership was predominantly female in those days, in our church at any rate. I recall particularly that when I was about eleven or twelve years old there was a Mirfield Mission in our parish, and Father Vincent Girling came to our home for Sunday lunch. He talked to me about J.R.R. Tolkien. As I was 'heavily into' 'The Lord of the Rings' at the time I was thrilled to find a grown up who seemed to understand my enthusiasm.

A decade or so later (mid 1970's) I was fortunate to be part of the vibrant community at the then University Church of Christ the King in London. I attended my first retreat, at the Royal Foundation of St. Katharine, and was delighted to discover what it felt like to have space for silence. I remember that Fr. Mark Tweedy played a recording of Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons' to us during meals. I loved that oasis in the East End, and was part of a number of memorable retreats there. I also went once to Hemingford Grey. I encountered Father Aidan in the University Chaplaincy. He'd only fairly recently returned from South Africa. It was under his guidance that I became a Probationer Companion, and was duly admitted as a Companion with him as my warden. I still have the little card that Fr. Ronald Haynes, the then Director of FR, gave me to wish me well. I made quite a number of visits to the retreat house at Mirfield. I loved the opportunity it gave me for reflection, prayer and reading, joining in the services in the church but, oh

how I enjoyed the talking meals and meeting all those larger than life characters in CR!

I'm not sure why I stopped visiting Mirfield. I was already working full time as a vet. It wasn't getting married that stopped me, as my husband, Malcolm, accompanied me at least once to HR. The arrival of two daughters was probably what did it! I continued as a Companion, but I regret to say that I never kept my Rule very well. I wrote to say so every Michaelmas, and Aidan always tried to encourage me. I became detached. During these years I attended one or two meetings with other Companions in the London area, but never quite fully comprehended the importance of these contacts, or that being a Companion was about more than a relationship of mutual support between me and the Community. Therefore, when I heard a couple of years ago that what had been FR had been rethought, and that individual wardens were no longer to be, I thought that now was the time to 'throw in the towel', feeble character that I am, so I wrote to Aidan and 'resigned'. (Perhaps writing this article is my penance for that!)

I was somewhat adrift. I hadn't acknowledged it, but something was lacking. I felt slightly bereft. I was still receiving the 'Quarterly', and seeing the advert for the 2008 Companions' Day in Leighton Buzzard', I was surprised to find that I felt a curious compulsion to go. I went. It was a great day. 'Discerning the Presence of the Risen Christ' was one of the themes, and the sharing of insights and experiences has stayed with me. I knew then that I had to come back. I was delighted to discover subsequently that something was afoot in the London area, and found myself at Southwark Cathedral in January offering tentatively to help with a new London group, which is now meeting every two months.

Well, back to Mirfield: returning after more than twenty years, it was like coming home in some ways, but no, it was different. Life is a pilgrimage. I'm in a different place, and the Community is in a different place. Some things were a little unsettling. I was surprised to learn that there are frequently as many as four different groups on site at the same time. I confess that I felt slightly 'exiled' to find that meals were to be in the College, but then again, you don't really go to visit a monastic community to be entertained at meals, do you?! What else had changed? We sat in the Choir in church. That was different, but the Community is smaller than it

used to be. I don't remember the trees in the grounds being quite as large. Rather a silly observation, because of course they must have grown at least a bit in twenty something years. We all grow. We all change.

Fr. Oswin gave a presentation to us about the development plans. I think they are stunning. I was thrilled to learn that the design for the church floor plan was based on a computer graphic of the pattern made by light emanating from a sparkler, over which the outline of the church was superimposed. The image might have originated from one of those mind-boggling astronomical photographs. I am reminded of a picture that struck me of 'The Pillars of Creation', seen by the Hubble Space Telescope. These dense clouds of gas in the Eagle Nebula were actually 'demolished' by a supernova about six thousand years ago, but that won't be seen from earth for another thousand years or so, because the light takes seven thousand years to arrive here. Things change. Both the very large and the very small humble us. That image also relates to unicellular organisms viewed through a microscope. We have an image which tells us something about Creation. The outline of the church on the computer graphic produces an image which suggests a river flowing out of the Sanctuary. This also speaks to me of new life, Baptism, Resurrection, a source of renewal, a spring, a place of pilgrimage. It was explained that the proposed design for the new monastery building was that of the Mandorla, an almond shape often used to frame Christ in Majesty in traditional Christian art. It could also be that Christian symbol, the fish, or a small boat, docked to the church, the harbour of Salvation. However, the first thing that came to my mind was a leaf, a new shoot, new growth.

Someone remarked that the scheme was so radical, that the fact that they have all agreed on it means that it must be of God. There will be a container for holy water in the church, which will be spiral in form. It was seeing this depicted which began my reflections on how you can't get back to exactly where you were before. My thanks here go to Linda Blenkinship, who reminded me of T.S. Eliot's

*'We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.'*

One of the aspects of CR from which I take encouragement now is the commitment to stay together in spite of differing points of view on some of the 'big issues' affecting the Church today. That commitment is an inspiration for the rest of us, at a time when most of us feel at least unsettled by tensions in our Church, wherever we happen to find ourselves standing. That other particular endeavour of Brethren and Companions to seek the Presence of the Risen Christ is something which must inform and inspire future plans. The way is bound to be hard at times. At a Quiet Day for Companions in 1994 Fr. Eric Simmons said that the Resurrection is not evident as a tangible, visible presence, but just enough, now and then, for us to realise that this is the meaning of life.

I hope that we'll all try to support the Community in its bold venture, but also that we'll support each other. I'll certainly find encouragement in meeting with other Companions. We have the resources of the electronic age to assist us now. Although I sometimes curse our computer, what a blessing email is for helping us to keep in touch.

Finally, I'm sorry that I 'wandered off'. I'm glad I kept my tatty old notebooks from retreats, quiet days, jottings recalled from sermons etc. I won't wallow in nostalgia. However, I'm still realising how very much I owe to CR. At this 'growing season' of the Church's year it's good to think about roots, as long as they help us grow. Some people will probably be horrified at CR's plans, but to be alive is to change.

I'll finish with a quotation from notes I made after listening to Bishop Trevor Huddleston on Ash Wednesday 1975:

'The Church must not try to remain the same, because then it will be no use to God. We must follow his Spirit into the wilderness... In the wilderness of doubt and confusion we learn to have faith. It is in the wilderness that we find God.'

**Vanessa Dixon**

## **A Sermon preached on 6th July 2008 in the Church of the Resurrection, Mirfield for the Dedication Festival**

**Texts:** *Micah 6; Heb 12:18-24; Matt 21:12-16*

Just the idea of being able to travel through time is exhilarating – the thought of being able to visit chosen moments of the past (or even the future); and equally exciting is the idea of being able to move through space without the restraints that time imposes. This is, in part, the fascination of Harry Potter – that effortless movement from one dimension to another by the use of portkeys or flue-powder; and the parallel worlds represented by Platform 9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> sitting with convincing reality, but undisputed invisibility, between platforms 9 and 10. This place, this church, is for us something of a Platform 9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>. It is joined to the House; it sits firmly in the grounds, making a bold statement that is visible to the outside world - yet what happens within it takes us to another place and beyond the constraints of ordinary time. But when we try to put our finger on what it is about the building that does that, we find ourselves struggling. There is no mistaking that the building plays a key role (and certainly influences who we are - and how we are the Community of the Resurrection), yet we know that is a gift, not a necessity. It is gratuitous - an undeserved plus.

As we celebrate on this dedication festival – and the 70th anniversary of the completion of the church; and as we seek to make wise and inspired decisions about the renewal of the Church, we find ourselves caught in the counterpoint between the Hebrews reading and the cleansing of the temple as recorded by Matthew. Matthew's harsh account seems at first inappropriate until we recognise the way in which it warns against that most contemporary of sins, the commodification of things - and even people. What David Jones calls the thusness of things is too easily lost - and it is surely part of our task to go on pondering and wondering at the thus-ness of this church, not attempting to crack open its meaning, but letting ourselves be addressed by the mystery that has inspired our predecessors in the Community and that still speaks, if we will but hear.

The Hebrews passage is altogether different. Some of you may recall that novel of the 1960's that gently mocked the public schools – “Lord, dismiss us”. One of the key characters is the chaplain who

is greatly devoted to boys in a not entirely wholesome way, but who cannot abide their smell and always carries around an orange stuffed with cloves. His preaching is dramatic and the whole school waits with baited breath to see if today will be *the* sermon. You can't tell at the beginning, but the clue is when, with a great crescendo, he announces, "Our God is a burning fire!" For us, however, the letter to the Hebrews describes the very opposite of commodification. "You have not come to something that can be touched... You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God." For us, the place of prayer at the heart of the Community has also to be the place of encounter. I was going to say that here we remember our participation in the company of the faithful in heaven and on earth, but it is more powerful (and no less true) to say, Here we are *remembered* - for we come here to let ourselves be seen, heard and remembered rather more than we can claim to be doing the remembering. Just like Moses before the burning bush, we turn aside not to seek, but because God is seeking us and calling us into his presence, though we may be attracted by the signs of that presence. If the Gospel warns against commodification and all forms of idolatry; and if the Epistle dramatically suggests that the church is the place of encounter; - the Mattins reading from Micah presents a complementary strand. "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" And so we are reminded that, unless we allow our coming together in this place to be the instrument of conversion; unless our letting ourselves be seen and heard here is also the theatre in which we are remade in the image and likeness of God, then we shall remain unsatisfied and frustrated. The church building cannot do the work for us, but it can encourage in us the desire for that conversion of heart which is the fruit of humility. May this celebration help our decision-making. May it strengthen our resolve to keep our eyes and our hearts fixed on the mystery at the heart of the faith and not allow our desires to be distorted by any commodification or idolatry. May we rather hold fast to the biblical alternative to commodification - to the hidden, unnoticed, quiet witness that is ever more attentive to the needs of the neighbour and all whom God has given us to love and serve; that same Lord who says, "Today I must stay at your house."

**Peter Allan CR**

## Companions' Notes

I'm sorry I missed the Summer School and the Companions Day. Both seem to have been very happy events. Numbers at the Summer School were smaller than we had hoped but the talks were of a very high standard and those who came appreciated the more intimate nature of the gathering. It was good that so many Companions came on the Saturday and it was a great joy for all of us to admit a number of new Companions:

Michael Aiers, Matthew Askey, Vanessa Dixon, David Rennison, Lee Spragg, Steven Young, Margaret Yates, Graham Vahey.

Many of these have been around a long time and are already old friends.

One fact we have to take into consideration is that it is impossible to get a majority of Companions together in any one place – age, difficulties of travel, other commitments mitigate against it. Yet in the survey of Companions' reasons for being a Companion conducted on that day an overwhelming majority said it was the possibility (hope?) for community, support, encouragement from each other that motivated them. We need to keep trying to find ways in which this can be done.

One such is to recognise that it simply is difficult for many Companions to travel long distances; so in 2010 there will be two Companions Days – one in York; the other in Canterbury. More news of that anon.

We do, however, need to exploit every possible way of keeping in touch, and those of you with internet will find the website – [www.mirfieldcompanions.org.uk](http://www.mirfieldcompanions.org.uk) a constant source of news. Please read it and send your own comments to it.

### ***The Companions' Council***

The Companions Council really motivates the Companions and others associated with CR. A few years ago we tried various ways of electing a Council and it was difficult to make it properly democratic, or representative. Last year we simply invited certain people to be on the Council, ensuring a good spread geographically.

So we have Ros Johnson and Kevin Sims in the St Alban's area, Fr Richard Coles in London and David Wells in East Anglia. These constitute a kind of Southern Command who meet together from time to time. In the north we had Paul Taylor, Linda Blenkinship and Pauline Briscoe, along with me. Linda has been doing a magnificent job updating our records and keeping me and everyone else informed. She has asked to come off the Council because of other commitments but will continue to look after the records. Susan Kirby has now joined the Northern segment and we hope the whole council will have met by the time you read this.

### ***Mirfield***

What makes a Companion? I keep asking this question in various ways and get back a variety of answers. A large number of them revolve around Mirfield. Many old students love and value their time of formation here and want to reconnect with it; people who have known particular brethren want a wider connection. Some value the prayer, monastic or liturgical life the Community stands for; others find the Community's involvement in Africa or ecumenical matters a welcome counter balance to parochial life. In all this it is surprising then that many Companions hardly ever visit us; some never. Sometimes the reasons are obvious. Some are too infirm to do so; others live too far away. But it is hard to maintain a really lively connection with a Community like ours and never visit. So we would like to suggest that every Companion makes it, as far as possible, a part of their rule to visit Mirfield, if not every year, at least every other year. Such a visit could be for a retreat or a day or two or even just dropping in for the eucharist and a meal. We must do all we can to make the Companion's commitment real and lively.

**Nicolas Stebbing CR**

## **Companions' Pilgrimage – Report**

On Friday 29th. May, 2009, a group of 13 Pilgrims inc. Fr Nicolas CR met at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. As ever, the group had come from many different directions: this year we were

blessed with the company of Companions from Barbados and the USA.

Highlights included the Procession of Our Lady on Saturday afternoon; and the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament on Sunday afternoon was a most moving experience.

Next year's dates for the Companions' Pilgrimage are from Friday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2010 (in time for supper), until Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2010 (after breakfast). The details of prices, etc., will not be received until late December. However, I suspect that the deposit (non-refundable once the Shrine have it) is likely to remain at £20, as it had only gone up in 2009. The deadline for reserving places is possibly going to be earlier in 2010 at the Shrine's request (possibly February), but we will be made aware of that in due course.

Geoff Dignum (e-mail [geoff.dignum@googlemail.com](mailto:geoff.dignum@googlemail.com) or phone 01582 762623) will be only too happy to receive enquiries for next year.

## **Companions' Summer School**

**Held between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> July 2009 at the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield**

Ask folk when CR last held a Summer School and one would observe much head scratching; it was that long ago! All credit, then, to those who decided one rainy afternoon last December in the retreat house to try and reintroduce to the CR timetable this once popular and well attended event. I can't begin to imagine the degree of co-operation, co-ordination and cajoling which took place over the succeeding months but out of that initial bright idea on a gloomy day came a properly structured programme based around the subject of Liturgy. Nine intrepid souls gathered in the Thursday afternoon sunshine at the college.

We were given a fascinating insight by Fr Ben Gordon-Taylor, into Walter Frere, co-founder of the Community. Fr Ben brought along many of Frere's original, hand written slides which, in their day, would have been projected through a "magic lantern" and used in lectures to students. Seeing the detail meticulously produced in

these slides, particularly the origins of the services set out in the prayer book, the changes made over time and illustrations of early worship brought us closer not only to the mind of Frere but also to a better understanding of the evolution of liturgy. At some points we could almost hear the genius that was Walter Frere expounding the detailed points on the slides to his classes of earnest young student priests (but perhaps that was Fr Ben's grandiloquent impression of the great man)!

Our next session was led by Fr Aidan CR who spoke about the Mirfield Office. He gave some of the background to the way the traditional seven daily Offices became four, the Community's Midday Office effectively replacing Prime, Terce, Sext and None. We learnt more about Mattins and Evensong in their wider context within the church and the seasonal variations applied to these Offices. Also discussed was the delivery of worship and how, in our parish churches, so often the words are gabbled and the music is dragged. This is in complete contrast to the Community where the music is sharp and focused but the words are spoken in a calm and, importantly, reflective manner.

Later in the day we went to the cinema, courtesy of Fr John CR! Actually, we were still in the college seminar room being enthralled by a succession of clips from a wide variety of films which portrayed liturgy, defined by Fr John as "those things which make the gospel story available to us". Just as in spoken liturgy the words are there to make God's story come alive, so in other forms where we learnt how background subtleties – music, lighting, costume etc – are used to make the story live. It is perhaps subtleties similar to these which we should consider when endeavouring to enhance our own experiences of worship. For anybody reading this who might have seen a similar presentation from Fr John in the past, you will understand completely that, by the end, there were few – if any – dry eyes in the house.

By the time Terce was concluded the next day, the Summer School had morphed into the Companions' and Associates' Day (of which an account appears elsewhere in this edition). Suffice to say what a delight it was to see our numbers swelled by the arrival of Companions and friends old and new from near and far; how sad, too, to have to say farewell later after seemingly so short a time.

For the two or three who were able to stay on with us for the evening, we were treated to the remarkable sight of Timkat, the enormous, spectacular (and noisy!) Ethiopian celebration commemorating Jesus' baptism by John in the River Jordan. Following this brief but memorable film record, Ursula Hashem explained the background to this annual festival under the title "The point at which Liturgy and Culture meet?" and showed us a series of photographs taken during her attendance at one of these amazing gatherings, explaining the significance of the "tabots" (copies of the Ark of the Covenant), the blessing of the water, the drenching of the crowds etc. It all looked and sounded like tremendous fun and a very public proclamation of faith.

On Sunday, Fr George CR spent most of the morning with the Summer School and we were immensely grateful for his time and highly personal approach when delivering two sessions to us. The first examined early Christian practices and how these were adapted from around 300AD when other buildings, increasingly purpose built, began to be used for worship. Processional liturgy played a major part then and whilst in this country priests took over most of the roles previously undertaken by the people, this was not necessarily the case in mediterranean churches, at least up to the renaissance. Effectively, "church" changed from being an arena more towards being theatre.

Fr George's second session built on these themes to demonstrate how some of the changes proposed for the Community church are based on sound historical practices and how the envisaged future



*Fr George leads our Sunday morning sessions*

flexibility would aid the liturgy and provide many new opportunities to engage in, for some, even more meaningful worship. This session concluded with some answers to questions which had been posed on a variety of

topics and a discussion on proposals for equipping Companions with further tools to aid in their path of living the charism of the Community beyond its walls.

Our final formal session, entitled “Liturgy and the mission of the church”, tried to wrap up all we had learnt over the past few days and to look at how some of the ideas could be applied in our own environments and church families, going forward.

Happily, Fr Oswin invited those who could to stay on until lunchtime the following day to help celebrate the dedication of the Community church. Some of those who were able to do this inevitably departed finally with a twinge of sadness knowing that, however necessary and exciting the planned changes to the church, this would probably be the last time we saw it looking as it did.



Grateful thanks must go to Paul, Linda, Pauline and Fr Nicolas for the many hours of work put in to bringing about this Summer School and making it such a success. The CR Summer School is well and truly back where it deserves to be, as a meaningful, educational and thoroughly enjoyable event on the CR timetable.

**Kevin Sims**

## 'Bright Hope For Tomorrow'

CCR Companions' Day - 4<sup>th</sup> July 2009

When I read that the CR 'Fraternity' was to be re-ordered, my first reaction was scepticism. Was this just to be an attempt to rekindle a dying ember? Would it be a case of 'too little, too late'? I wasn't sure. The first CCR Companions' day was held at St Albans last year but I was unable to attend. Reading about it afterwards led me to regret that fact, so when this year's Companions' day was planned for Mirfield, I made sure I was there.

As we entered it was clear that we were in for an interesting time. At the front of the college refectory stood an alluring display of photographs, diagrams and computer 'imaginings' of the plans for the new monastery buildings and the re-ordering of the community church. Curiosity was aroused and there was an exciting buzz of interested conversation. The morning sessions comprised an audio & visual outline of the reasons for the changes to the community buildings and the proposals to carry them out. We also heard from the newly-appointed Appeals Co-ordinator, Jonathan Pape, who talked us through the consequences of taking no action and the financial implications of the proposals.

Fr John Gribben's account of the way in which decisions were reached and the brethren's reactions to the proposed changes added



humour, frankness and a human touch to the plans. We were beginning to understand just how momentous is this undertaking. There is

the loss of the two houses, at Hemingford Gray and London, the sale of which will substantially help to pay for the new monastery. There is the loss of use of the well loved 'old house' and there is the enormous financial commitment to be taken on at a time of general economic difficulty. Each of these could have presented an insurmountable barrier to the project. We were shown the necessity for consensus reached by prayer and discussion in such undertakings.

Attending Holy Communion in the Community Church with the admission of new companions, the necessity of re-ordering the church could be experienced first-hand and we had the chance to imagine 'in situ' what we had learned.

The afternoon session was our turn to work. We turned our attention to the needs of the Companions of CR and plans for our future development. We left feeling very privileged to be part of this forward-thinking and courageous community. Thanks to all who made the day possible. My thought as I drove home was that God's hand is guiding these brethren and that for CR there is indeed, 'bright hope for tomorrow'.

**Susan Kirby**

## **Letters**

In January 'CR' mentioned work with our 'Roman' brothers and sisters. I thought you might be interested in that we at St Mary's Mellis are, every Wednesday, saying an evening office using 'The Divine Office'. Numbers are small between six and ten but three are Roman Catholics from the village.

In addition at L'Arche Ipswich we have had an unofficial visit from Bishop Michael (East Anglian Diocese).

**David Wells CCR**

## New Book – Lively Worship

Extract from **Vision upon Vision: Processes of Change and Renewal in Christian Worship**, by *George Guiver CR*, Canterbury Press, October 2009.

If the first church buildings were simple rectangular spaces, St John Lateran in Rome, dedicated in 324, was built on a new plan, based on that of the secular building known as the basilica: a long hall with aisles on either side, each divided from the main space by a row of columns. At the far end was a semicircular area known as the apse. St John Lateran set a fashion quickly imitated everywhere...

While usually segregated into men, women and children, plus other categories such as catechumens and penitents, the congregation was not ordered in rows of fixed seats but had an open space where they could freely move around. The nave was more akin to the market-place than the theatre. By our standards, people were unruly: they were noisy in church, not least for the reason that personal prayer was always done aloud. The capacity to pray silently is an art we have learned over more recent centuries, and while an expectation that people ought to be quiet in church has been with us a long time, so has clerical frustration at the inability of people to keep it. Because the congregation would be given to standing with their hands aloft and praying aloud, one of the tasks of the deacon was periodically to call for silence. In the medieval liturgy of Milan at major services ‘a deacon by the side of the altar gives the order: *parcite fabulis* (stop talking); the two custodians loudly repeat: *Silentium habete* [be quiet]; then [when the deacon has announced the reading] ... the custodians make their *silentium habete* resound’. People could need a lot of telling! In North Africa Augustine warned his mother not to be drawn into the general conversation that could mar the worship. This reminds us to beware of clean, tidy pictures of worship in the ancient world, whether in a basilica or in the earlier house-church. People’s behaviour will have varied in quality, as would the degree of their commitment, and both clergy and laity will have believed and acted in ways strange to us ... They are unlikely to have been as polite and as quiet as mice as we would like to think.

As the people gathered in big local basilica churches in the

Christendom of the time of Constantine and after, the drama of the marketplace came in with them. The town square, its bustle and badinage, spilled into the House of the Church, not only on Sundays but every day of the week. Deacons have to call for quiet .. and as the choir strikes up and the first of the actors come in, the drama of life begins to be placed in a different climate, an opening-up to the holy. It is difficult for us to imagine the potency of this experience, for our aesthetic and corporate experience is much more compartmentalized. Worship at this time and for centuries to come was to provide people with their concerts, poetry, storytelling, drama and art gallery. The church came, in tandem with the marketplace, to hold the centre ground of people's lives, so that as the liturgical drama gets under way its enacting of a corporate reality is elemental for people. The two arenas overlap, for liturgy rapidly took to the streets in public processions to and from the church, in Rome in one way, in Constantinople or Milan in another, a liturgy with stopping-places and observances through the city's thoroughfares, in places every Sunday of the year ... Roles in the liturgy which in earlier times will have been the backbone of scattered Christian communities intermittently suffering persecution gradually became part of the civic imagination, with all the pitfalls that could imply, not least in bishops often coming to be identified with magistrates or rulers. The coming-alongside of *ecclesia* and *polis* however is to be expected in any outworking of the incarnation, setting before the Body of Christ a sharp test of its capacity to discern a wise course. In various times and places the church has seen itself as needing to stay unspotted from the world, uncompromised, clearly distinct. While that is attractive for its straightforwardness, more demanding but incarnational is a preparedness to live with a messy picture where the church throws itself into involvement with the *polis* aware of the vigilance needed to ensure inevitable compromises and arrangements do not lead it too far astray. The aspect of that which concerns us here is the fact that in many places, and increasingly in most places, the perception of the liturgy by its participants will not have been bounded by the church building and all it stood for. They were participating in what at some levels of their consciousness was a public drama of the city, even though a strongly other-worldly piety and theology meant that the distinctiveness and holiness of the liturgy were clear...

Comparison has been made with Wagner's invention of the 'Music-drama', a total work of art (*Gesamtkunstwerk*) in which music, literature, theatre and art come together in a unity. If Wagner's music-dramas were that, then the liturgy is more. With Wagner the performers perform, the audience watches and listens and can clap at the end. In the liturgy this is not so, for all are performers: the drama is enacted by every person present; it is not outside them – they are in it as its constituent materials. Ancient Greek theatre was probably religious in its origins, all its participants co-actors with the gods. So it is in the liturgy – not performers on one hand and audience on the other. There is no audience: all are co-actors with God in the liturgical action, all transfigured by it. One early figure in the Liturgical Movement shows his enthusiasm for this in a beautiful passage:

'One imagines the stately basilica with its glistening mosaics, one sees the bishop at the altar surrounded by his priests and deacons and lesser clerics in order of rank and splendid vesture, one hears the chant of the choir and of the whole assembly, and one understands why in the writings of the post-Constantinian period the thought so frequently recurs that the basilica, the church-edifice here on earth, prefigures the eternal court of heaven. In the fifth and sixth centuries the liturgy had reached the term of its development as a complete art-synthesis (*Gesamtkunstwerk*).

... Hence, as the idea of transfiguration is the art-principle of the liturgy, so is the liturgy itself the principle of the Christian art of life. The liturgy produces that divine life which assimilates us to the eternal Logos, the archetype of all art.' (Ildefons Herwegen)

The early liturgy is a profoundly rich source for insight into the nature of Christian worship, and we shall be distilling some of those riches throughout this book – but one aspect that now especially calls for our attention is the thought that liturgy might be drama ...

## Book Reviews

**Pre-Benedictine Monasticism. Initiation into the Monastic Tradition 2.** *Thomas Merton. Edited by Patrick F. O'Connell.*  
Cistercian Publications. £17.99. Isbn 978-0-87907-073-1

This book comprises a wide variety of material drawn from lectures and conferences given by Thomas Merton whilst he was novice master within the Gethsemani community. Patrick O'Connell, a founder member and former president of the International Thomas Merton Society, has carefully edited this material. The result is a rich store of teaching material derived from Merton's own study of monastic thought. The reader will get a sense of the sheer scope of Merton's research into pre-Benedictine monasticism, some of which drew upon sources which had been scarcely heard of at the time. All this is characteristic of Merton's vast mental energy and enthusiasm for study and teaching.

O'Connell points out that, at times, Merton seems to fall in love with his material, such is the intensity of his engagement with it. This was the case with his explorations into the writings of Egeria, the Spanish pilgrim nun, whose works provide some fascinating insights into the ancient liturgy in Jerusalem and the East as well as the religious life of that period. As is often the case with intense personalities, Merton could also seem to cool just as rapidly towards his current interest before switching his attention to new areas. This quirk nevertheless serves to bring both breadth and depth to his study.

In series one, we find summaries of the works of St Paulinus of Nola, John Cassian and others. In his work on Cassian, for instance, Merton charts the contribution this monk and theologian made to the adaptation of Eastern monastic thought and practices to the Western tradition, a process for which St Benedict was later given much credit. Further on, Merton uncovers the way in which Pachomius helped to develop an understanding of common life, which was to become a strong theme in Benedictine monasticism. This encompasses especially the offices and the work that was shared by the community. Merton draws out the themes of discretion and moderation in the Rule of Pachomius, showing a consistency

between this and the Rule of St Benedict, thus challenging the thinking of those who saw Benedict's approach as revolutionary rather than developmental.

Series two turns its attention to Syrian and Persian monasticism and also the eremitic tradition. Merton uses his own research in addition to his formidable insight to draw out a picture of St Ephrem and his teachings, whilst acknowledging the paucity of factual material. The man whom Syrian biographies had portrayed as bald and mirthless nonetheless seemed far more willing to rejoice in the goodness of creation and the blessedness of human relationships than some of his contemporaries who shunned the world and saw virginity and the solitary life as the only true way to the things of heaven. Ephrem shows the importance of a holistic approach to spirituality in extolling vocal prayer and physical participation, in contrast to a present-day assumption that contemplation and meditation are superior forms of prayer. His advice to monks on living the common life is somewhat more explicit than that which is found in Benedict's Rule, even to the point of counselling against slurping food and drink and scratching oneself in company.

The writings in this book are copiously annotated and the reader can access some of the Latin in which Merton's subject material was originally composed. This absorbing study shows how the scene is set for the Benedictine tradition to develop as well as the contrasts between St Benedict's passion for the common life and the more austere and solitary models which seemed to be pointing in another direction. Above all, Merton's distinctive voice can be heard in the deep but lively and often humorous teaching material found in these pages.

**Richard Parker**

**Romania.** *John Villiers (Ed).*

Pallas Guides. 2009. £19.99. ISBN 1-873429-55X

Over the past 20 years CR has become closely linked with Romania with brethren and students travelling there, and many Romanian students studying here. Now, too, we have a Romanian congregation who meet in our church almost every Sunday. Everyone who goes to Romania finds it a beautiful country with a fascinating culture

and a long and intricate history; and they want to know more. This excellent guide by John Villiers admirably fills a gap.

It begins with a concise but adequate and very readable history of Romania from its early pre-Roman days to the 21st century which helps one to understand the kind of trauma that Romanians suffer from today, having been subjected in their history to wave upon wave of foreign invasion and exploitation. Romanian art, architecture, music and the painted churches are dealt with thoroughly. Then there is a long gazetteer of places, with a good description of what they are famous for. Romanian culture is impressive, though there is tragedy too: the city of Bucharest must have been a beautiful place before Communists built their ugly blocks of flats, and Ceausescu ripped out its heart. And so much of the really interesting Romanian culture is built around a peasant society. Will that survive?

The only surprising lack in this book is a section on the place of the Christian churches (apart from their more famous buildings) in the life of the nation: whether the great and inspiring Orthodox church or the smaller but in many ways equally interesting Reformed and Lutheran traditions. A major part of Romanian identity is the Christian religion, as Communism itself found to its cost.

**Nicolas Stebbing CR**

(Our reviewer is the author of: **Bearers of the spirit. Spiritual fatherhood in Romanian Orthodoxy.** Cistercian Publications. 2003. Isbn 0 87907 7018.)

**The Labour of Obedience. The Benedictines of Pershore, Nashdom and Elmore - a history.** *Peta Dunstan.* Canterbury Press 2009 P.B. 216pp. Isbn 9 781853 11974 3.

Dr Dunstan has produced a fascinating, scholarly study of the trials and triumphs of the Anglican Benedictine men's community, which emerged after the monks of Caldey, led by their abbot, Aelred Carlisle, were received into the Roman Catholic Church in 1913. Only one monk in solemn vows remained an Anglican, to be persuaded by influential laymen to attempt to rebuild an

Anglican community of monks at Pershore. He soon returned to Caldey and became a Roman Catholic.

Many may find the title of this book unattractive but it is appropriate, coming as it does from the opening words of the Rule of St Benedict, 'The labour of obedience will bring you back to God, from whom you have drifted through the sloth of disobedience.' Those who entered the community of Pershore, Nashdom and Elmore may have had mixed motives but a desire to do God's will was plainly a force which drove them to attempt great things and often at great personal cost.

This was certainly true of Denys Prideaux, who went to Caldey in 1907 as a priest oblate, living alongside the monks and sharing to some extent in their life. He had considerable influence there, since he had a profound, scholarly knowledge of monastic history. At Pershore he reluctantly became the leader of the tiny community after 1915 and supported it financially, although he remained an oblate. Denys considered that a monastery required the blessing of the diocesan bishop. This was not easily obtained by monks who with other Anglo-Papalists were aiming to reunite the Church of England with the rest of Catholic Christendom under the Pope and to that end adopted most of the doctrine and liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1921 Denys was solemnly professed, elected Abbot of Pershore and installed by a retired Bishop of Bloemfontein. Gradually the community increased in numbers and strength, though Denys unwisely tended to encourage short novitiates and to profess monks too soon. He maintained that the Benedictine life did not require strict enclosure. Monks could be sent to pastoral and evangelistic work or to do theological study. This might require them to live mostly apart from other monks.

Unfortunately this policy was followed when the Pershore community was too weak to sustain it.

In 1923 at the invitation of the Bishop of Accra two monks were sent to the Gold Coast (Ghana) to found a monastery at Kumasi. In the next year another monk was sent to start a theological college. Sisters of the Order of the Holy Paraclete went out to Ghana in 1926 and still have a community there but after eight years the Benedictines had to withdraw. They had done magnificent work but overstretched themselves.

In 1924 the community purchased Nashdom near Maidenhead and moved to their new abbey in the following year. It was a hasty, ill-considered decision but in the long term was beneficial to the growth of the community and gave it an identity. Ten years later Abbot Denys died and was succeeded by Dom Martin Collett. At that time there were seven solemnly professed choir monks and one life professed lay brother but some were remarkably distinguished: Dom Anselm Hughes was an authority on Plainchant, Dom Gregory Dix, an historian of liturgy, and Dom Bernard Clements, vicar of All Saints, Margaret Street in London and a radio broadcaster. Over the next few years the abbey's finances and property were put in order and the Community's Constitution agreed. Ecumenical contacts, especially with Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians, were strengthened. From 1935 men from America, who hoped to establish a Benedictine monastery there, came to Nashdom to become novices. They returned to the States and, after disappointments and difficulties, with the help of Nashdom monks St Gregory's Priory was established in 1946 at Three Rivers, Michigan.

In 1948 Dom Augustine Morris was elected third abbot. The following years saw the Catholic movement in the Church of England increase in strength and Nashdom, with other religious communities, prospered. The number of monks more than doubled and a novitiate building was completed in 1968 to accommodate the expected growth. This confidence was shaken by questioning about fundamentals of belief by some Christians, which severely reduced the number of enquirers. The Nashdom community was divided about whether or not to accept liturgical changes which were introduced by the Roman Catholic Church after the Vatican II Council. In 1974 Dom Augustine resigned and Dom Wilfrid Weston was elected abbot. He advocated radical change but was unable to persuade the community and resigned in 1984.

Abbot Godfrey Stokes (1984-88) and the community recognized that they must leave Nashdom as it was too large for them to maintain. In 1987 they moved to Elmore, near Speen on the outskirts of Newbury. The move opened the way for the monks to accept changes in their worship and way of life. Dom Basil Matthews became abbot 1988-2005 and was succeeded by the present Prior, Dom Simon Jarrett.

This brief outline of the Community's history cannot convey Peta Dunstan's enthralling account of the interplay of relationships between the monks, and between them and Episcopal superiors. She finely describes the character and convictions of individuals and gives an excellent account of their strengths and weaknesses which enables the reader to appreciate the development of the community. It is an absorbing and remarkable story.

**Crispin Harrison CR**

P.S. from Dom Simon OSB: "We are still at Elmore Abbey. There are 4 of us here (Simon, Kenneth, Francis, Bruce) and one brother (Hugh) in care at St John's Home Oxford. 2009 has become a year of discernment for the monks to consider how best they can continue their communal life under the rule of St Benedict."

**Light for my path. Spiritual Accompaniment.** *Bernardo*

*Olivera OCSO.* Translated by Augustine Roberts OCSO.

Prologue by Santiago Fidel Ordonez Fernandez OCSO. Monastic Wisdom series 18. Cistercian publications, Liturgical press. (Spanish edition 2004) 2009. US\$19.95. Isbn 978 0 87907 018 2.

The writer of this review was first called to offer "spiritual direction" almost fifty years ago. For the latter half of this period, he stopped calling this ministry "direction" and thought, spoke and taught in terms of "spiritual accompaniment". "Direction" seems to lay claim to superior knowledge and expertise; "accompaniment" speaks of walking alongside, as suggested by the woodcut reproduced on the cover of Bernardo Olivera's book. Olivera speaks from the Cistercian tradition – his quotations from St. Bernard of Clairvaux (among many other monastic authors) are stimulating – but he also draws a great deal from the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

The three main chapters of this book are entitled "The Guide and the Guided", "Purpose and Function of Accompaniment" and "Welcoming, Speaking, Discerning". The Bibliography directs us to priceless treasures. Appetising, don't you think?

**Andrew Norton CR**

## **Renewing the Eucharist. Vol 2: Word.**

*Jo Bailey, Gordon Mursell, Joy Tetley and Andrew Gregory. Ed: Stephen Burns.* Canterbury Press. 2009. £9.99. Isbn 978 1 85311 888 3.

Whatever did we talk about before the mid-sixties ushered in the first of a series of alternative Eucharistic rites? Series 1 (little red book) largely making respectable what many people were doing any way; Series 2 (little blue book) with a service of a different pattern; Series 3 (little green book) using “You” language rather than “Thou” language; then Alternative Service Book of 1980. While we were getting used to that I went off to Africa and was engaged with something else. During this time the processes of consultation occurred which resulted in Common Worship 2000, so maybe we are in for a period of relative liturgical stability. Advertisements of services in the press commonly designate them as CW or BCP, so you know what you are likely to get. With the texts established we can more easily appreciate the content. The series “Renewing the Eucharist” edited by Stephen Burns is clearly going to be a big help in this. Volume 2 “WORD” offers stimulating essays on the scriptures read/proclaimed in the Parish Eucharist, together with notes on using the book to support preaching and sample questions for reflection and conversation. I find this refreshing – instead of banging on about how the Eucharist should be done we have something helpful about why we do it.

**Andrew Norton CR**

## **Books Received.**

**The Christ’s faith. A dogmatic account.** *R. Michael Allen.* T & T Clark/Continuum. 2009. £65.00. Isbn 10: HB: 0 567 0339 6.

R. Michael Allen is adjunct professor of Theology at Wheaton College, Illinois, and this book originated as a doctoral dissertation for that college. “At a time when the quest for the Historical Jesus dominates the headlines, Allen’s dogmatic account of Christ’s own faith is particularly welcome.” “Integrating contemporary biblical research with the insights of Karl Barth and the Reformed confessional tradition, in dialogue with Thomas Aquinas and others ...”



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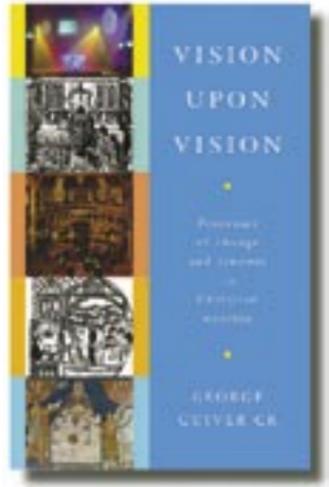
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