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Resurrection: The Cry Of Hope

After one of my closest friends, the Christian writer Kathy Keay, died from cancer, I painted my pain into a large, agonised crucifixion. *The Cry of Dereliction* represented Kathy falling into Christ's outstretched arms on the Cross. That took several months to complete, but its companion *Resurrection: The Cry of Hope/Victory* took years; its form, title and effects kept changing. I believed the promise of Resurrection but painting it forced me to scrutinise how sincerely I trust God.

This picture developed into an interpretation of the 'Resurrection Icon', where Christ releases renewed souls to eternal life, pushing aside the tomb's stone, freeing us from fear of death. The figure is Grünewald's Isenheim *Resurrection* imagined from below. The image grew, suggesting parallels with birth, baptism, and that notoriously mysterious passage, *1 Peter* 3: 18-19: *"Christ suffered for sins once for all … so that he might bring us to God. He was put to death in the flesh,* ***but made alive in the spirit; in which also he went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison…"***

I have imagined the dead, like my loved friend, set free, drawn by Christ to God's light and Life. Jesus climbs bodily from death and "*leads captivity captive*" (*Ephesians* 4: 8). His Resurrection has powerful implications for us: *"If Christ has not been raised, our preaching and faith are in vain … But Christ has indeed been raised from death, the first-fruits of those who sleep … For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."* (*1 Corinthians* 15: 14, 20-22).

Christ's return to life promises us far more than future life. In some mysterious way this power lives and revitalises us now through God's Spirit's work (*Romans* 8: 11). The writer of *Ephesians* affirms: *"the same power is working in us as raised Christ from the dead"* (*Ephesians* 1: 19-20). Painting this became a meditation on what Christ's Resurrection promises, not just in future but now. Hope radiates through Creation. Spiritual life and Church mission are founded in trust that Jesus' Resurrection can bring freedom now, can unchain us from many restrictions and frailties that too often control our material human lives. Life is a struggle; Christians are to live "as if we are already experiencing" this promised resurrection-life, already dead to sin (*Romans* 6). God's resurrecting Spirit is active for us and our world, freeing us, forming us for God's Kingdom. We do not understand this 'mystery' but we discover its power and freedom by living the resurrection promise, actively allowing God to transform and direct us and our Church in his light.

In meditation perhaps consider:

What does Resurrection's power offer to you, our churches and our mission?

How is the power in Christ's Resurrection active in you now?

From what can it free you?

How does it strengthen you or assure you about your and others' future?

How is trust in Resurrection forming you now for God's Kingdom?

How do you live out Resurrection's promises in your mission and message?

Iain McKillop

CR

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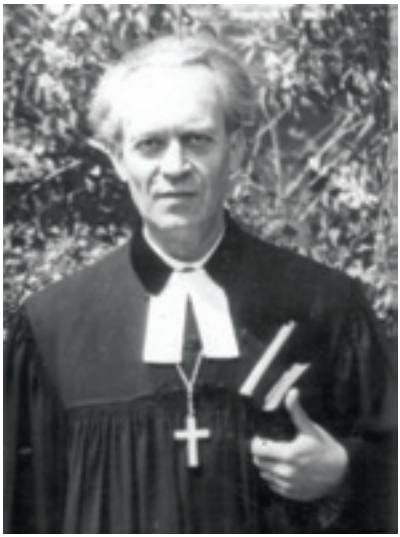
An Unknown Hungarian Lutheran Saint:

Bishop Lajos Ordass' Testimony During Communism



In the round sanctuary of the Lutheran Church of Willmar Minnesota there is an oak frieze encircling the sanctuary containing in gold-leaf letters 78 names of "*the cloud of witnesses"* (*Hebrews* 12:1) from the Bible and church history. The list begins with the name of Enoch and ends with the names of Bonhoeffer and Ordass. Ordass was the only person who was still alive when the carving was made in the 1960s. 'Who was this man?' we may ask.

Lajos Ordass (1901-1978) was a Lutheran pastor who, as a sign of protest, changed his original German name 'Wolf' into the Hungarian 'Ordass' on the day of the Nazi invasion of Hungary on March 19th, 1944.

After the war he was consecrated as Bishop of the Hungarian Lutheran Church. However, he was able to exercise his office for less than five years altogether: 1945-1948 and 1956-1958. The Communists first imprisoned him and, with the help of collaborators, forced him twice into total isolation.

The Experience of the Hidden God, the 'Veil' of God.

That God is a hidden God, inscrutable, unknowable, was first experienced by Ordass at his show-trial in September 1948. The real cause of his imprisonment was that he did not collaborate with the communists' demand to nationalise church-related schools. Ordass was allowed to speak before the court withdrew for the verdict. Voluntary stenographers recorded what he said. This moving speech is a unique and shocking example of his personal testimony of the hidden and loving God:

> If I am convicted, then the conviction will become a veil that hides God's will from me and renders it incomprehensible to me. But I will accept it from the hand of God without grumbling. One thing I know - namely, that whatever happens to me is God's beneficial will.

When Ordass got out of prison in 1950 he was forced to spend six years in total isolation. Even his pastors avoided him. He made a living by knitting scarves and gloves with his wife.

At The Foot of the Cross, Lenten Meditations.

By Lent 1955 he completed a devotional book *At the Foot of the Cross* in which he meditated on the Passion in the form of prayer. He conflated the texts of the four gospels and began each meditation as a dialogue between himself and the Lord. The Bishop, who had experienced what suffering, prison and being deserted meant, was now kneeling, preaching and praying under the cross. The volume was published anonymously in an English translation in the United States in 1958 and in Hungarian only in 1989. He spoke silently of how he came to understand the meaning of his suffering:

> The meaning of my life has become that I might suffer for you and with you. People may regard perhaps what has happened to me as bankruptcy and shame of my life. As for me, I bless you, my Lord, that you have placed me at the foot of your cross. Now I know that this is why I had to live. And this is very good.

Back to Leadership in 1956-1958.

Bishop Ordass was rehabilitated just a few days before the Hungarian revolution in October 1956. He quickly reorganised the church and was able to stay in office until June 1958. He was even allowed to lead the Hungarian delegation to the Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Minneapolis August 1957. At the opening worship Ordass was honoured to deliver the sermon. The large congregation was especially touched by his modest testimony: at the end of his sermon he witnessed in the third person singular to the love of Christ he had experienced while he was in prison:

> An elderly disciple of Jesus now speaks to you. He wants to conclude this official sermon with a personal testimony about his Lord and Saviour. He would like to say how often he has experienced already in his life the forgiving grace of Christ. When he had to experience being imprisoned, he was still able to be with Christ in royal freedom in the truest sense of the word. What happiness to have been allowed such freedom. How wonderful was the fruit of the death of Christ then, when the world offered only bitterness.

Man spitting on decapitated head of Stalin statue, during the uprising in Hungary 1956.

Once he was again its leader, the Hungarian Lutheran Church was able to flourish. This, however, could not last long, as he was unwilling to compromise his conscience. But when it became evident that he would never become a partner with the state running the church

from inside, the state slowly and slyly managed to remove him: the 'red' Bishop's resignation in 1956 was not recognised by the state. That period was the beginning of 'soft' communism (1957-1989) which morally ruined the churches and divided families. With Ordass removed, the Hungarian Lutheran Church was 'beheaded'.

***Útravaló (Food For Travel,* 1989).**
In his new isolation from December 1958 he began to write meditations again day by day. Every day he passed his new handwritten meditation to the former Deaconess-in-chief who was a doctor and lived in the same house with Bishop Ordass. She sent it further to her fellow sisters in Germany who typed them and thus they were smuggled into West Germany under the cover name '*handkerchief*' where they were first published in 1967, and then, being printed, were re-smuggled into Hungary without, of course, the author's name.

***Nem tudok imádkozni* (I Cannot Pray, 1989, 1992)** .
This book was finished in 1961 but was eventually published after the political changes in 1989. The preface sheds light to Ordass' spirituality. First there is a deep humility before God; a sober sincerity and the flaming love for Christ reminiscent of hymns of Christ. Ordass addresses God with the shining, enthusiastic words of lovers even in the fearful depth of his sufferings. The book's subtitle is: '*Counsels to those who Pray and to those who want to Pray*'.

The book has twelve chapters and sixty five sub-chapters. Each sub-chapter begins with a quotation from the Bible. Ordass' voice is pastoral throughout. He is both the caring teacher and a man of concern and compassion. His mysticism is explicitly manifested in the last chapter which is on adoration. Here it is:

> *From the gospel and other biblical scenes it is evident that one can bow down before God in adoration on his own initiative but it remains an unforgettable deep experience when it is God who takes the hands of men and women and shows Himself to them so much that they cannot but fall on their knees and adore Him.*
> *In such circumstances men and women become filled with God in a particular way, that for them God will be all in all. What seems to be a dominating feature in human life ceases to exist totally. One can entirely forget about oneself. His otherwise permanently rebelling dissatisfaction stops. He is not any more strangled by the concerns of world or everyday life. He is not consumed by his own sorrow any more. Joy is going to triumph in his soul.*
> *In most cases this adoration is entirely wordless. It is, of course, not a necessary rule but in most cases it works like that. One instinctively feels that by speaking one would break the silence of adoration. In such cases only an awkward clumsiness can leave his lips (cf. Peter's words* Luke 9: 33). *If there is word here at all it can only be the voice of God. The heavenly voice. Whatever we experience during adoration is always a foretaste of the happiness of eternity. This cannot last on earth forever. Whenever God gives us the gift of this elevating experience of adoration He does not want to free us from the world of earthly struggles. Here on earth*

adoration is not yet our constant way of life. But by this experience – when descending the hill of adoration - God helps us not to forget, in the bustle of life, what we have seen and heard. With the heavenly vision and with the clear sound of the word of God in our souls we can live with the lesson we have learned: God is to be adored in spirit and truth. Now we know that the Father seeks such worshippers. (Translation by Tibor Fabiny)

The last sub-chapter 'Corona' is a personal yet cosmic *Te Deum*, a five-part hymn by the author. On the last page the author expresses his hope that he will see his readers face to face in eternity.

In his lonely isolation Ordass translated into Hungarian *The Passion Hymns* of Iceland's famous pastor and poet Hallgrímur Pétursson (1614-1674), whom Ordass considered a soulmate.

Bishop Lajos Ordass was a lonely Lutheran mystic in communist Hungary. Unlike those of the majority who compromised their consciences for a so-called *modus vivendi* with the communist state, Ordass remained steadfast and faithful to his Lord even in the dark hours of temptations.

His as yet unpublished diary will reveal more about his readings and personal reflections. Nevertheless the body of his devotional writings is now available for the public, some of them even in English. In the history of Christian spirituality one chapter should be devoted to Ordass.

No wonder that the Minnesota Lutherans recognised this already in the 1960s when they decided that the Hungarian bishop's name should be seen on the oak-frieze of their church's sanctuary, among the 'cloud of witnesses.'

Professor Tibor Fabiny

Professor Fabiny spent a recent sabbatical at the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield

See also: **Tibor Fabiny**: *The veil of God, the testimony of Bishop Lajos Ordass in Communist Hungary*. Budapest Centre for Hermeneutical Research. 2008. Isbn 978 963 87986 0 2.

Fr Thomas Seville CR with other participants at the Anglican-Lutheran Society Conference in Révfülöp at the Lajos Ordass Study and Conference Center September 2014

The Hungarian Revolution Memorial 1956

Preaching Easter

One of the joys for us CR Brethren is preaching Holy Week in parishes around the country. It is often quite a lot of work, but it takes us to new places, introduces us to new people, helps us to see very good things that are happening in the church and even in this broken society in which we live. And preaching Holy Week is such a privilege, contemplating the mystery of Christ's suffering and sacrificial death, walking with him as we seek to understand what this should mean in our lives and witnessing the very moving responses so many people make to this.

Then Easter Day comes and can be an anti-climax. Of course there is usually wonderful liturgy and that says a lot. The preacher has little really to add to that. Probably he is intimidated at preaching about Resurrection which of course none of us has yet experienced! There may well be a lot of relative strangers in church along with a number of children clutching Easter eggs or other Easter gifts. It is not quite the time for a long sermon on the meaning of the Resurrection; and of course there is probably a splendid lunch to follow! So we preach quite briefly, everyone goes off to enjoy Easter Day (which is very right and proper). Next day we come home, clergy take post-Easter breaks. Everyone relaxes. Low Sunday is very thin. Holidays start looming. Probably it is only around Pentecost we begin to think seriously again about the Christian Faith; maybe not till Summer is over.

So the Resurrection and the 40 days after (or 50 if you consider Pentecost as the end of Eastertide) get very little attention compared with Lent or Christmas, or even the patronal festival. Is it not strange, more than strange, that we Christians neglect the central mystery of our faith? One reason for that, as I suggest above, is the exhaustion which follows Lent and Holy Week. Lent and Holy Week are very rich and important times in our life but maybe we need to pace ourselves a bit and think in terms of running the extra 50 days after Easter as well as the 50 days before. Yet I suspect there is a deeper reason for this neglect. We simply do not know what the Resurrection means and struggle to say anything much about it that is not banal, vacuous or idealistic. That is not really surprising as the Resurrection has so far only happened to Christ. It is something that happens beyond this life and so is hard to understand within this life. Yet Christ did leave us lots of clues as to what it is about and we in the family of the Community of the Resurrection need to put our dedication mystery right in the centre of our Christian lives and consider what these clues mean.

First, as many before me have observed, the Resurrection of Jesus was not like the raising of Lazarus. It was not simply a continuation of ordinary life. Quite clearly Jesus' body was raised from the dead. There was no sign of it in the grave

and no relics of it (even patently false ones!) have ever been produced. Yet also Jesus was able to appear through locked doors, disappear from the house in Emmaus, eat fish, walk and talk, yet be unrecognised for a while by those who knew him best. Clearly Jesus had 'fast forwarded' to the end of time. He was now what we shall all be when finally the resurrection of the dead comes about.

That is another problem: we say we believe in the resurrection of the dead yet most of us are hard pushed to say what that means. Tom Wright in *Surprised by Hope* has much to tell us about this. I strongly recommend it to anyone who finds this a problem. Briefly he insists that resurrection of the dead involves the restoration of all creation. God created this world and the whole universe. The fact that humans have messed up their part of it does not mean that God will abandon it all and just take the good human spirits off to heaven to live with him for ever. God will restore creation to what it should be with men and women in our risen state as part of it. This you might say is life after life after death. No one really knows what happens when we die. Some say we simply sleep till the last day. Others postulate a purgatory in which we are slowly made ready for life with God. Catholic theology sees some people (the saints) already living with God and others on their way there. Yet this is not the end. The end will come when all is restored and then we shall see what the resurrection means.

This does not mean in Tom Wright's mind (and nor in mine) that we do not need to worry about this world. Simply because this is the world that will be restored we need to be taking part in that now: environmental concern, the battle to stop global warming destroying the earth and the ongoing work to establish a just society in which people and creation live in harmony is all preliminary to God's restoration of the world. That needs to be part of Easter preaching.

One other problem we have is death. We are told that Christ has overcome the power of death and sin. Death is no more, we cry. But it is not true. We will still all die even if our current age does all it can to pretend this will not happen. And sadly we all sin. What Christ does seem to have done is change the nature, or the effect, of death and sin. We do all sin, but there is now the opportunity for forgiveness which completely changes the nature of sin, opening up to a new life with God. Anyone who has sinned and repented knows the truth of that. Sin for some people has been the moment when their lives were transformed into something good and beautiful for God. Death also is no longer a gateway to hell, or to the shadowy kind of existence the Greeks and Romans expected it to be. Death is now the gateway to life with God. What could be better than that?

And what will we do in this life beyond death? Not of course sit on clouds and play harps! Tom Wright sees us having more than enough to do being proper stewards of the new creation. With a whole universe to manage that should keep us busy. Yet simply to be in the presence of God should be enough. We see from

Jesus that people loved being in his presence. They talked with him, loved him, argued with him and betrayed him ("*each man kills the thing he loves"* said Wilde). He was never boring. "He who has seen me has seen the father" said Jesus; we can be sure that life with God will be enormous fun.

So the end time is not really an end but a beginning. Resurrection is not simply a state in which we shall exist but a life we shall live. Augustine puts it well at the end of *The City of God*:

God shall rest as on the seventh day, when He shall give us (who shall be the seventh day) rest in Himself. But there is not now space to treat of these ages;suffice it to say that the seventh shall be our Sabbath, which shall be brought to a close, not by an evening, but by the Lord's day, as an eighth and eternal day, consecrated by the resurrection of Christ, and prefiguring the eternal repose not only of the spirit, but also of the body. There we shall rest and we shall see, we shall see and we shall love, we shall love and we shall praise. This is what shall be in the end without end. For what other end do we propose to ourselves than to attain to the kingdom of which there is no end?

Nicolas Stebbing CR

For a review of Tom Wright's 'Surprised by Hope', turn to page 32

Edwin Muir

The poet and critic Edwin Muir died in January 1959. It was a pity that the fiftieth anniversary of his death went almost unremarked as Muir's poetry, with its strong Christian resonances and its ability to ponder the deep questions of life, still needs to be heard.

Edwin Muir was born in 1887 in the Isles of Orkney where his father was a farmer. The landscape was idyllic; the way of life virtually untouched by the industrial revolution. This Orkney upbringing was ever to

remain for Muir the touchstone of all that was beautiful and good. But not even the Orkneys could be spared the harshness of rural poverty. Muir's father had to give up the farm tenancy and move south to Glasgow to find work.

The move from a gentle way of life to the brutality of a big industrial city was traumatic for the sensitive young boy. Worse was to follow with the deaths in rapid succession of both parents and two of his brothers. It is hardly surprising then that Muir was often physically ill himself and suffered from severe bouts of depression. He supported himself with a number of low-paid jobs as a clerk. Despite all this, the vital spark in his personality somehow kept him going. He devoured books, started writing articles, and joined a circle of like-minded friends who were seriously involved in left-wing politics.

By the time Muir was thirty years old he was still unsure of himself and insecure, but salvation was to come in the form of a remarkable wife, Willa Anderson, who discerned his genius and was determined that they would find their fulfilment together in writing. Willa was an expert linguist and she and Muir made a living translating modern European writers. The first books by Kafka to appear in English were translated by the Muirs.

In addition Muir started to write creatively. His first efforts at novel-writing were not especially successful, but he turned in his late 30s to writing poems. The early poems draw heavily on his dreams. He still suffered from fits of depression but encouraged by a session of psycho-analysis he was able to make creative use of his nightmares in his poems. At about the same time he was drawn back to the Christian faith. He had been brought up a Christian, and had been affected by revivalist meetings in Glasgow, but he had rejected the shallow Calvinism he found there. In February 1939, as he was preparing for bed he found himself reciting the Lord's Prayer "in a loud, emphatic voice – a thing I had not done for many years – with deep urgency and profound disturbed emotion – and I realised that this simple petition was always universal and always inexhaustible, and day by day sanctified human life." (*An Autobiography* chapter 11).

This experience, together with his own increasing skill as a poet, enabled Muir to achieve real greatness in his later poems. Some are significant interpretations of events recorded in the Bible such as the Annunciation. A powerful poem describing Christ's crucifixion, *The Killing* concludes:

Michaelangelo crucifixion

I was a stranger, could not read these people
Or this outlandish deity. Did a God
Indeed in dying cross my life that day
By chance, he on his road and I on mine?

Other poems pondered the dangers threatening present day life. Muir was writing in the 1950s, when the world was threatened by nuclear war. His poem *The Horses* is about the renewal of life in a remote island community after the world has been devastated by nuclear war, but its sentiments can equally apply to communities suffering the collapse of their environment. New hope comes from a very old source, horses.

The strange horses arrive
.....as if they had been sent
By an old command to find our whereabouts,
And that long-lost archaic companionship...
Our life is changed, their coming our beginning.

Finally other poems dwell profoundly on the meaning and purpose of human existence. Personal details are kept to a minimum, but again and again the poems draw their strength from the triumphs and tragedies of Muir's own life. In the poem *One Foot in Eden,* Muir takes his inspiration from the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, with its teaching that authentic goodness can only emerge after it has struggled with evil:

But famished field and blackened tree
Bear flowers in Eden never known
Blossoms of grief and charity
Bloom in these darkened fields alone.
What had Eden ever to say
Of hope and faith and pity and love
Until was buried all its day
And memory found its treasure trove?
Strange blessings never in Paradise
Fall from these beclouded skies.

Prebendary David Nash

50 years' challenge in Southern and Central Africa

As a former Mirfield student who owes much to the Community of the Resurrection, readers may be interested in an account of my life as a New Zealander who has spent thirty years as priest and twenty as bishop in Southern and Central Africa.

My interest in Southern Africa originated from reading *Naught for your Comfort* by Fr Trevor Huddleston CR. This led me in 1958 as a university graduate to sail in the 'Southern Cross' the three weeks' journey from Auckland to Durban. There I bought a motorbike for a six weeks' tour of South Africa, ending in Cape Town where I continued my journey to the UK on the 'Pretoria Castle'. I was amazed by the city of Durban and the wider South African environment with its ethnic and cultural variety, and disturbed by economic disparities so totally different from the secure white middle class city of Christchurch I had come from.

Through members of St Paul's church in Durban I met members of the Indian community, visited the shanty towns and made some friends from the Black section of Natal University at a student conference in Pietermaritzburg. One friend, Ernest Galo, accompanied me on my motorbike for some days. This enabled me to see the country through his understanding as an educated black South African oppressed by apartheid racism. He was committed to the ideals of the African National Congress of a truly democratic, non-racial, equalitarian South Africa. Staying at the CR Priory in Sophiatown, Johannesburg, I saw the on-going removals of the stable African community Fr Huddleston had described in his book.

Conversations with Father (and later Bishop) Alphonse Zulu alerted me to the need for the Church to make a difference for radical change. This gave me the impulse to consider ordination to the priesthood for work in South Africa. I met Fr Huddleston at the Holland Park London Priory in 1959 to discuss my vocation. He suggested that I work in Lesotho, the small independent kingdom in the mountains of South Africa, as I was already learning Sesotho at the School of Oriental and African Studies.

I trained at the College of the Resurrection where I learned to value the richness of the Catholic tradition in the Church, and the daily office of prayer. As I had no family members in England, Mirfield and the Holland Park Priory with Fr Trevor became my second home. I thank Fr Hugh Bishop CR, for choosing my place of curacy to work at Rawmarsh, near Rotherham in Yorkshire, a village of steel workers and coal miners. I enjoyed excellent training, especially house-to-house visits to the local people, most of who seldom attended church and valued clear and down-to-earth teaching.

In 1965 I began work in Lesotho. I was surprised to see many similarities between the Rawmarsh mining village and close-knit Basotho rural

communities, both valuing their community solidarity and ways of life. I was told by English priests that blacks were not welcome into their parish houses. I declined to become a member of the all-white club at Mohales Hoek, especially as the local Mosotho doctor trained in Edinburgh was not permitted to join. Immediately all the white expatriates stayed away from the 8 am Sunday English service, except for the police officer and his wife. The expatriate missionary priests stayed with the white traders when on tour by horseback of their mountain congregations, whereas I preferred to stay in the villages so I could remain together with my Mosotho assistant priest. This did not go well with the expatriate community, and the bishop sent me to the mountain priory of the Society of the Sacred Mission at Mantsonyane to work on the road, and be re-trained to be a proper 'mission priest'.

The young Nelson Mandela

I enjoyed having my own parish of Quthing in the south, with its eight mountain congregations. Eventually I had 3 parishes and 21 congregations and 18 church primary schools to visit, all by horseback as there were few roads. In 1970 one of my parishes became a place of acute political conflict through a political coup by the national party in power which had lost the elections. I helped set up a school in the local prison for 120 political prisoners held without trial for 18 months, accused of public violence. With the help of the Christian Council of Lesotho we rebuilt many homes burnt by government supporters, and paid for the education of children whose fathers had become refugees. I was followed closely by government security agents, and anticipated deportation at any time. Eventually our local relief effort became a national one with the help of the Christian Council, which also funded the defence of opposition political leaders accused of high treason.

While in Quthing I became secretary of the Lesotho SCM with 25 branches throughout the country. We affiliated with the South African University Christian Movement, with its emphasis on black theology, women's empowerment and

education for liberation. Following their national conference and banning in 1972, I was made a prohibited immigrant to South Africa, and would not enter South Africa for the following 19 years. The prohibition was lifted so I could attend the recently unbanned ANC National Conference, along with Archbishop Huddleston, in Durban 1991.

My second parish of Masite was the home of the contemplative Sisters of the Society of the Precious Blood that I described in a previous article. The parish required monthly visits, half of them on horseback, to eleven mountain congregations. I took nurses on tour with me from the church clinic, establishing five outstations for primary health care for the under-fives. In 1976 young South African exiles came into the county in large numbers following the Johannesburg Soweto student uprising. Many needed to continue their education, and I found places for them in local schools. They also wanted political education, and I could help them with publications from the UK International Defence and Aid Fund, and the ANC magazine *Sechaba*. Each weekend five or six would come to Masite to meet the sisters, to ride the horses, and have a break from the confined quarters of their community in Maseru.

In July 1979 the South African security sent me a parcel bomb in a parcel of *Sechaba* magazines, which blew off my right hand and the front part of my legs. That attack made me aware that the work I was doing in supporting the young exiles to align with the ANC was important, important enough to be killed for it, and consequently I should continue even more strongly in the future. I had extensive skin grafting in Queen Mary hospital in London, and returned to my work in Masite. Fortunately I was still able to ride my horse and drive my car. The year following I visited a Lutheran pastor friend in East Germany and friends in the UK, and was told I could not return to Lesotho. I was traumatised. It was much worse than being bombed, as it was totally unexpected, and overnight I lost the work I so much valued and enjoyed. Only much later did I learn from the ANC President Oliver Tambo that my expulsion came from pressure on Lesotho from the South African government.

I was invited to stay with the CR fathers at St Katherine's Royal Foundation in East London. Having few clothes to wear, I lined up with homeless people for second-hand clothes at the nearby 'Crisis at Christmas', being taken to visit there by Fr Mark Tweedy CR, always a good friend, as was Fr Aelred Stubbs CR who gave me valuable counseling. I spent some months in New Zealand where I was invited to assist the mobilisation against the Springbok rugby tour in 1981. Massive New Zealand opposition to the tour made a big impact on white South Africans.

In 1981 I went to Botswana, at the invitation of Archbishop Khotso Makhulu, a distinguished church leader. The South African government urged the Botswana government to remove me, but through President Masire's support

I remained for eight years as a rural parish priest and the only ANC member who was not underground. In 1988 a death squad was known by the Botswana security to be in the country to kill me, believing me to be responsible for sabotage in the Transvaal. I had to leave at a day's notice. I moved to Lusaka where the ANC had its headquarters with 3000 ANC cadres, the new South African government-in-waiting.

My bombing in 1979 had led the ANC to see that the Church could be an ally in the freedom struggle, and the liberation movement set up the 'Church Front', with church activists for democratic change, which later became the 'Interfaith Chaplaincy'. Our leader was Thabo Mbeki, and another member was Fr Michael Lapsley SSM, a fellow New Zealander who suffered a letter bomb attack in 1990 causing him to lose both hands and an eye. I became part of the ANC Chaplaincy in Lusaka for five years, taking funerals of cadres at St Peter's Church Libala, and the Holy Cross Cathedral, some of them killed by enemy agents. There was the need to visit ANC cadres in prison, the sick, and families who came from South Africa to visit their sons and daughters. We were also active in linking with international church organisations supporting us, such as the Lutheran World Federation and those in the Nordic countries.

When ANC cadres returned to South Africa after 1991 I remained in Zambia to assist the Zambian church, then 81 years old.

The Rt Revd John Osmers
Assistant Bishop of Lusaka

"Do You Resemble Jesus?"

When the great festival of Easter arrives, the cross atop Calvary's hill speaks its poignant message of love and we are reminded of how Jesus taught us to love everyone. Limiting our loving to those whom we like is not enough. Christ also summons us to love even the most difficult people in our life.

Loving our enemies is nearly impossible unless we understand that God loved us when we were his enemies! Naturally we do not like to think of ourselves as God's enemies, but the bottom line is that in countless ways we act in opposition to God. As a member of the human race we are guilty of sin and rebellion against God. Yet God still loved us so much that he gave his only Son for our salvation. Recognising our own role in nailing Christ to the cross is a good starting point for considering how we are to love everyone else.

If we are going to live as disciples of Christ then we must love even those people whom we can hardly stand and can barely tolerate because they so greatly irritate and infuriate us. Furthermore we are to love them as God does – not just a little or partially but with our whole heart. It is through loving others that we show the world what God is like as we give people a glimpse of the Divine.

Genuine loving is not something that you can fake. Throughout his life Jesus was not posturing, and this was shown quite clearly in his crucifixion. As the Pharisees tried and condemned him, as the disciples fled in fear and left him friendless, and as the Roman soldiers whipped him and drove nails into his hands and feet, he loved them all. Even when each one of us is his mortal enemy, God still loves us.

Loving difficult people is not easy, but when we make the effort to love as Christ does then we can reveal to the world something of what God is like. As you enter into the Easter mysteries ask yourself: "Can others see God in me? Do I resemble Jesus in how I love others?" Those are questions that we must ask ourselves as we consider what it really means when Jesus says "Love your enemies."

Dennis Berk CR

Oblates And Celibacy

One thing that distinguishes CR oblates from those of other communities is that CR oblates have to be celibate. This is one way in which they are closely related to the vocation that CR Brethren live. Yet to most outsiders celibacy seems a horrible life choice, a choice of deprivation, loneliness and even bitterness. Why do people make such a choice? What does celibacy really mean?

Celibacy has many meanings, or many different significances. It begins by meaning a life without sex. It is a little more than that. A person is celibate not just because he happens not to have a partner, or is locked up in prison and therefore unable to find one. To be celibate suggests that for one reason or another one has chosen celibacy either as a temporary or a permanent state to be in.

There are bad reasons for being celibate. It could be a selfish choice, not to get involved at any deep or demanding level, with another person. It may come from fear, inadequacy or past abuse. It can be the result of psychological damage and it can also be a cause of such damage. Priests or religious or other people who have accepted a commitment to celibacy against their wills can be very angry about it and grow increasingly bitter about it. Any normal human being, male or female, will find celibacy difficult from time to time and will feel resentment, loss or deprivation. A person who doesn't find celibacy difficult is probably more to be worried about than one who does!

Modern society of course believes that celibacy is completely aberrant and is probably impossible. Sex is necessary to health and anyone who abstains from sex for any length of time is either damaged, or will become damaged, or is probably a hypocrite. We have to accept these difficulties as part of the challenge, and see how we who have committed ourselves to it can live it out lovingly and positively and not become bitter, angry or inadequate.

Celibacy can be undertaken for the sake of one's work. Or it can set one free to do work that one might never otherwise have done. In this respect we have to be careful not to claim too much. Many great and heroic missionaries were married; many of those who have fought for justice in dangerous places have been married. Sometimes the marriages have suffered enormously because of it. Sometimes they have provided strength and resources without which the work could not have happened. Yet there is a real pragmatic aspect: unmarried people cost less, can be deployed more easily, can take bigger risks than those who must (quite rightly) consider the needs of spouse or children.

Celibacy needs to be undertaken for love. It is not (or should not be) a denial of love. In the cases where it is accepted for love of the people one is serving it is

immensely fruitful both for them and for oneself.

For Christians celibacy needs to be seen as a call from God. One may feel quite specifically that God is asking for this offering; or one may simply, for the sake of God, choose a way of life that demands it. Either way we make a free choice. It is not imposed on us, yet nor do we do it simply because we want it. If we do it for love of others, we do it for love of God.

We do it also because God loves us. There is a mystery here. Many people who are great lovers of God and who know more than most of us how much God loves them still find no difficulty in integrating a wife and children into that love and it is beautiful to see. Yet many of us have found that God's love is exclusive and simply will not allow us to give ourselves completely to another person. "Why me?" we may ask, and are likely to receive the answer from God "Because that's what I want". You can't argue with that!

One aspect of this may be the need to pray. Of course all serious Christians pray and some pray a great deal. And again there are very many very happily married people whose prayer is rich and deep. But some of us find that we cannot mix prayer with anyone else. It is not always a simply matter of 'having time to pray', or not having distractions like small children when we want to pray. For those of us in the monastic life the whole life is an offering of prayer. That doesn't mean we are consciously praying all the time; it means that as we remain faithful to the condition of celibacy and the demands of the common life we are living in a relationship with God which must be called prayer. For those whom God has called to it, it is the only way they can pray.

Put like that it all sounds a bit grim, and those of us called to celibacy often do make it seem rather grim. That is a shame because it is not grim. Celibacy in community has many really attractive features. You have your own space. You have freedom to read, pray, or enjoy friends, and yet you have the community around you at a respectful distance. You are not alone. You have support and companionship. Praying the offices on one's own can be a dry and bleak experience. Praying the office with others is almost always better. Living with others gives you opportunities to learn from them. Conversation about books, experiences, news or people can be very enriching. It is probably one reason why we seem to know more than we think we do.

Living a life of celibacy with others also gives us the chance to grow out of our self-centredness. We learn, or should learn to listen to each other and care for each other. Often we have to look after each other when we are sick or be around in times of sorrow or confusion. Life in community may be celibate; it should not be selfish.

We do also have a physical freedom. It is easier for us to visit friends and enjoy their hospitality because we are only one. It is easier to travel because we

can stay cheaply in foreign parts. Travelling for work can be a great pleasure because we stay with nice people in beautiful places. All this is of course not a reason to take on a life of celibacy. Some people do come into community life simply to find their own space and support; perhaps to read study and pray but not in a God centred way, only for self-fulfilment. If celibacy, and the life in which it is lived, is self-centred it will not be happy and fruitful. If it is God-centred it will.

And that is where the joy lies. If we take on celibacy for the love of God we will find our life expanded, our horizons stretched out. We live on a big stage. Like Wesley we may sometimes feel the world is our parish. We find it an amazing privilege to be able to pray, to sing the office day after day with others who are also trying to serve God. Not many of us will claim great spiritual experiences, but we do know that our prayer is not just 'saying our prayers'; we are living our prayer, and the celibacy is a constant reminder to us that we are doing this simply for God.

Nicolas Stebbing CR

Our Oblate Ben Bradshaw making friends in Zimbabwe

Tariro and Tongogara

Josiah Tongogara was the general in charge of the guerrilla forces during the Zimbabwe Liberation war. Thought to have been a good soldier and a good man he was killed in a car accident shortly before independence. His name has been give to a refugee camp in the South East of Zimbabwe. Back in 2010 three of us from Tariro turned up there by accident and found ourselves moved almost to tears by the refugees' plight. There are thousands of them in this hot dry place in miserable houses; they come from all over Africa, as far away as Somalia and Ethiopia; and there is a group of Anglicans from Rwanda and the Congo. We felt we should work with them to help them establish their church and try to find some hope in a bleak and depressing existence.

It has not been an easy journey. Refugees are hard to work with. They have been traumatised, battered and have survived by grabbing what they could. They do not trust each other and they certainly do not trust outsiders. Somehow we had to persuade them to work together. Wonderfully generous people in England gave money to help them build a church. After 3 years and much drama we finally completed the church. Edwin, my assistant there, was chiefly responsible for working that miracle. I privately doubted whether it was worth it, given the divisions and distrust. In fact, now there are 3 times as many people worshipping in that little community. Slowly, in a staggering kind of way, the mission of the church moves forward.

We tried also to help some of the young people with education. One girl, the pastor's daughter, is exceptionally clever and is now in her third year at St David's, Bonda, an excellent girls' school. She is doing well. Two others did not do well and had to be sent home. Two others we have tried to help lost interest. Again one is tempted to give up. Why not spend our money on obviously bright and motivated kids and stop wasting it on these? But these were the ones God seemed to have put into our hands. They are children in need of help and somehow we must find the way to help them.

Now we are concentrating on small things. They have a school near the camp and we can help to ensure they have what they need to make the best of their studies. We encourage them to meet together and do things together. In this way they learn to build up levels of trust their parents do not have. They love to sing and so now we are helping them to form a choir: they need drums, hymn book, bibles and T-shirts. T-shirts are essential to give them a sense of group identity. Uniforms are a very important part of life in Africa.

A good choir will bring more young people into church, so it is a way of envangelising the people in the camp. It also helps to solve the liturgical problem I have when I go there. Only two or three adults speak English or Shona. I speak

no Kirwandan or Swahili. I preach with an interpreter but how does one do a liturgy? It might as well be in Latin! But now the klids are growing up. They speak Shona and English as well as Kirwandan. They can provide the core of the liturgy.

So as I look back on these last five years I am encouraged by what I see. It is not spectacular. It is not the most vibrant, healthy, satisfying community of Christians that I know. But it is there. The church building stands as a sign calling people to worship Christ. The numbers have grown, tripled in five years. How many churches in England have done that? The young people may find a purpose in their lives and break out of the refugee trap which imprisons their parents. The Holy Spirit does not always work in obvious, spectacular ways. Here perhaps is his more typical work: starting with a depressed, broken and scattered community he is slowly building them to become a recognisable member of the body of Christ. How lucky we are to see it and be allowed to be part of it!

Nicolas Stebbing CR

Alliance Muhoza at Bonda

The Editor
C R REVIEW

Dear Editor,

I enjoyed the article by Steven Haws CR in the Michaelmas issue about CR and the First World War.

It might be worth a mention too, that CR was strong in numbers in South Africa in those days, and some of the CR priests served as chaplains with South African troops who were prominent in some of the actions – notably at Delville Wood where they were decimated.

One piece of history which resulted was that during the war some of them met another chaplain in the person of Arthur Karney, later Charles Gore's Canon Missioner in Oxford. The returning CR Fathers were instrumental in electing Karney as the first Bishop of Johannesburg in 1923.

Sincerely

Peter Lee
Bishop, Diocese of Christ the King. Johannesburg

Companions CR

Companions Register:
New: James Tomba RIP: Mary Marsden

Reminder to all Companions:
During Lent we give special attention to our observance of the Rule so that when we receive our commitment cards we can sign them with the intention of dedicating ourselves afresh to our life in the Risen Lord. Cards returned to the chaplain or brought along by Companions will be placed on the altar during Mass on the Festival Day (July 11th) as a sign of rededication.

John Gribben CR

Companions Study Day

Contemplating with Fra Angelico

led by **Iain McKillop**

Open to All

A reflective study day exploring Fra Angelico's paintings and the Dominican prayer-traditions they reflect.

As Prior of his community, Fra Angelico would have been immersed in Dominican teaching on art and faith. His paintings were designed to stimulate contemplation and preaching. How does this help us to appreciate his work, and how can his art inspire our own contemplative Christian life?

Talks will be interspersed with times for personal prayer and quiet.

Friday 10th July 2015 10.00am - 4.00pm

(opportunity to join the Community for evensong at 6.00pm
or stay on for the CR Festival Day on Sat 11th July)

To book or for more details, contact:
The Administrator,
The Mirfield Centre, Stocks Bank Road, Mirfield, WF14 0BW
Tel: 01924 481920 e-mail: centre@mirfield.org.uk
www.mirfieldcentre.org.uk

SEEKING GOD IN WORSHIP AND PRAYER

10.30am Talk on Vocation

12 noon Festival Mass *preacher - Fr Eric CR*

Afternoon Activities:

Stations of Salvation Pilgrimage
Talk on Forgiveness - *Fr Simon CR*

Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament
Confessions
Prayer of Healing and Anointing

Book Stall and Plant Stall
Treasure Hunt for young and old

4.15pm Benediction

5.00pm Solemn Evensong

Refreshments available throughout the day

CR FESTIVAL DAY 11 JULY 2015

Let us know if you are coming! Parish groups especially welcome. Pre-booked cooked lunches available - help us to be able to cater on the day by booking through the website:

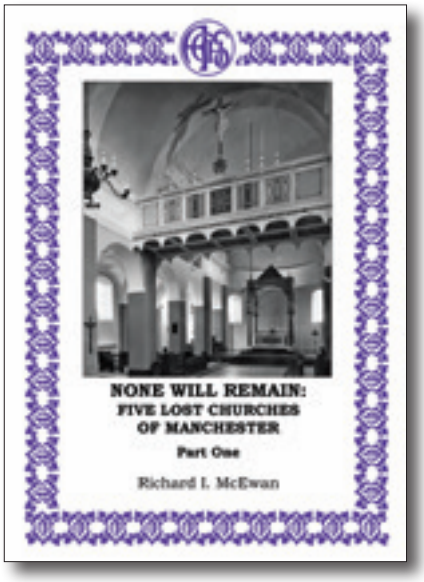
http://www.mirfieldcommunity.org.uk/festival2015

or contact the Festival Brother directly:

email: community@mirfield.org.uk tel: 01924 483349

Review Article

None Will Remain: Five Lost Churches of Manchester - *Richard McEwan*
Anglo-Catholic History Society 2014 ISBN: 978-0-9560565-7-3 £30 for two volumes



This is a fascinating account of five parish churches in Manchester that were built in the 19th and early 20th century as a result of the Oxford Movement. It tells the story of how these churches were founded, the priests who ministered in these parishes, and the role of the laity who played a pivotal role in the worship and social life of the local church. This book of 367 pages is in two parts: Part I includes an introduction followed by the first three chapters describing S. John Miles Platting, S. Gabriel Hulme, and Our Lady & S. Thomas Gorton. Part II concludes with the remaining two churches of S. Alban Cheetwood, and S. Benedict Ardwick. The book's dedication is in pious memory of three of Manchester's slum priests: Fathers William Kemp of Ardwick, Edward Glenday of Cheetwood and J. Paul Deussen of Hulme, as well as the Rector of Miles Platting, Father Sidney Faithorn Green who spent over a year and a half imprisoned in Lancaster Castle from 1881 to 1882.

These churches were built in some of the most deprived areas of Manchester, yet the dedication and self-sacrifice of their priests who taught the Catholic faith in all its beauty and richness won the hearts of the people who attended them. In spite of all the good these churches were doing, there was opposition from the largely Protestant diocese in which priests and people were targets of verbal and physical violence. Most of the bishops at the time were totally opposed and unsympathetic to these churches that were bold enough to proclaim the Catholic faith. We get a glimpse of life within these parishes and from the parish priests who ministered to their flock. A number of priests had trained at the Theological Colleges of Kelham and Mirfield which at the time were staffed by members of the Society of the Sacred Mission and the Community of the Resurrection, respectively. Also working and living in the parishes were a number of Religious Communities of Women including the Community of S. Peter, Horbury, the Community of the Sisters of the Church, Kilburn, the Community of S. Mary the Virgin, Wantage, the Society of the All Saints Sisters

of the Poor, London and the Society of S. Margaret, East Grinstead. Parish Missions were also part and parcel of parochial life and these were often led by Mirfield Fathers (CR) and Franciscans (SSF). In the mid-1970s the West Gorton parish of Our Lady and S. Thomas Church was staffed by members of the Company of Mission Priests (CMP) which continued until 1982 when the parish received its first married vicar.

These 'slum' churches in their heyday were all flourishing; many of the faithful who attended the services were active members of the various Guilds and Societies that were part of the Anglo-Catholic scene: the Church Union, the Guild of Servants of the Sanctuary, the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, the Guild of All Souls, the Society of Mary. Pilgrimages and May Day processions were also part of parish life. There were large Sunday Schools and Youth Clubs, active Mothers' Unions and Men's Clubs, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, Men & Boys Choirs, to name a few.

During the next several decades there was growth in these parishes but by the 1950s onwards many of these close-knit neighbourhoods fell into decline, rack and ruin. Unemployment was one of many social deprivations that became part of these neighbourhoods. Government schemes were introduced through the NHS and Social Services to alleviate the poverty and degradation. The Sisterhoods who worked in these parishes had found their own unique role diminished and with few Sisters to allocate, slowly they began to withdraw: their valuable contribution replaced by secular agencies. These once healthy parishes were being replaced by estates where drugs, vandalism, burglaries and acts of violence were commonplace.

The book also highlights the tragic and unprovoked death of parish priest Father Christopher Gray who was brutally murdered outside his vicarage in the neighbouring diocese of Liverpool in 1996 for helping someone whom he had visited in prison. Gray was making himself available and vulnerable and was there to help someone in need yet he paid with his life, having been stabbed to death. Violent crime would appear to have escalated and not only in the North but also in the South, in London where Head-teacher Philip Lawrence was stabbed to death outside his school. Father Gray's death was not in vain. His legacy and example should encourage hope; the best answer to the misery and deprivation in our inner cities should not be retreat but engagement.

S. John Miles Platting

There is a bitter-sweet ending to this book. All five of these churches ultimately were closed; two of them were demolished: S. Gabriel Hulme in 1970 and S. John Miles Platting in 1973. S. John's congregation, now part of a united benefice, moved into their new church which was renamed S. Cuthbert. It has been described as one of the ugliest modern churches in the diocese of Manchester, replete with every gimmick of the 1960s in ecclesiastical design. After forty years of its existence few people in the community relate to it at any level. There was no reason to demolish S. John. Several groups urged its retention because of its architectural merit and its very fine sgraffito paintings and other internal furnishings. It seems poor judgement on the part of those who made the decision to have S. John demolished, a lovely church built in the style of an Italian Romanesque basilica, all glorious in the beauty of holiness that brought people to prayer and sacraments.

In West Gorton Our Lady & S. Thomas, which was under the patronage of CR, closed in 2000. But it was spared the demolition ball and was bought by Mount Olivet Apostolic Church - so it continues to serve as a Christian presence to the glory of God. S. Benedict, which had the reputation of being a 'shrine Church' of the Anglo-Catholic movement, was closed in 2002. After it was de-consecrated, it reopened in 2005 as the Manchester Climbing Centre.

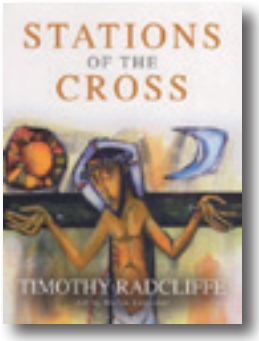
None Will Remain was published last year, which ironically was the 140th anniversary of the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874 which was an attempt to restrict 'ritual' used in churches, to put down ritualism and suppress the "Mass in masquerade". During an age of persecution and 'institutionalised bullying' these parishes continued to witness to the faith once delivered and won the admiration and respect of the people whom they served.

Steven Haws CR

S. Benedict Ardwick then and now

Book Reviews

Stations of the Cross. *Timothy Radcliffe.* Bloomsbury, 72 pages, £9.99



The Via Dolorosa is walked every Friday in Jerusalem, and at other times by individual groups, it is an integral part of a pilgrimage to Walsingham, yet few churches think of doing Stations of the Cross outside Lent and Holy Week. But why should a meditation on the events of our Lord's Passion be so confined?

Certainly this new book of Meditations on the Stations of the Cross by the Dominican Timothy Radcliffe would repay a reading at any time of year. I say a reading as I do not think this book is intended to be used liturgically, in procession around Church, but would rather reward careful meditation, perhaps even a Station at a time, during a personal quiet day or on retreat.

In his Preface the author explores the relationship and contrast between going on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the ability to follow the way of the cross in one's own church. 'Anywhere from Chicago to Tokyo, you can walk with Jesus, see him, … be crucified and buried.' The meditations themselves look at the incidents as historical events, then relate them to contemporary or recent events in history, as well as to our (and sometimes his own) lives. I was surprised at the omission of a 15th Station of the Resurrection (though it is at least implied in the 14th), but still feel that this book would be suitable for use at times of the year other than Passiontide.

The book is illustrated by a series of colour reproductions by Martin Erspamer, a North American Benedictine. The paintings are striking, but I do have misgivings about them. If they were painted in response to Radcliffe's text (this is not clear) then it may be that they are trying to illustrate the passivity of Jesus that the author is keen to stress in his Preface, but to me there is something slightly Docetist (the heresy that suggests that Jesus was not truly human, but only seemed to be, thus always in control and not sharing human emotions or suffering) about them. Even on being nailed to the cross and dying on it (11th & 12th Stations) I see no pain in the face of Jesus, merely resignation.

It is not a cheap book – a penny shy of £10 gets you 48 (not very full) pages of Radcliffe's actual text (illustrations, acknowledgements etc. make up the 72 quoted in the heading), but it is attractively laid out and nicely produced. Overall I think it is a worthwhile addition to an admittedly crowded field.

Bruce Carlin

Love's Will: Love's Way. The Way of the Cross. *Eric Simmons CR.* Mirfield Publications, 20 pages, £3.50 (with free fold-out picture card).

At the same time as reviewing Timothy Radcliffe's Stations, I was asked to prepare Fr. Eric's Way of the Cross for publication, and give it a light edit. Whilst this level of involvement precludes me from reviewing the booklet impartially (hopefully we will have one in a future issue) I would like to take the opportunity to commend it to readers.

Unlike Radcliffe's, Fr. Eric's Stations are clearly intended to be used in Procession in Church, and indeed (as any worthwhile worship should be) it has been honed by being used this way during Holy Weeks that he has led and on other suitable occasions. Thus the meditations come to publication well tried and well prayed. Beginning with the traditional responsory, each Station is set by a Scripture quotation, followed by a meditation on the event being considered, often relating it to our lives, and concluding with a prayer of some kind. Although primarily intended for liturgical use they would also reward careful private meditation.

Yes, there are a lot of versions of Stations of the Cross out there — I have over 250 in my own collection! — but there is always room for another, especially one such as this. Rather than include illustrations in the booklet and thereby increase its cost considerably, we are instead offering purchasers a complimentary copy of the fold out card of the Stations in the Upper Church of the Community, by Joseph Cribb. Since this normally sells at 75p it makes this booklet, at £3.50, excellent value for money.

Bruce Carlin

I Think It's God Calling. *Katy Magdalene Price.* BRF. 173 pages. £7.99

Initially written as a blog, this book charts the personal journey of Katy Magdalene Price (a former Mirfield student) from "devout cradle atheist" to Curate in the Anglican Church. She provides rich detail of the emotional and spiritual ups and downs, the challenges of theological training, and finally the ordination itself.

This book is accessible, and is written with honesty and humour. When you start reading it you won't want to put it down. In the end Katy discovered, as many others have done before her, that when God calls your life changes for ever. I would hope to meet her one day, though I feel I know her already, which says a lot about the book.

Jan Carlin

Surprised by HOPE. *Tom Wright.* SPCK in paperback.
Isbn 978-0-281-05617-0 £12.99

The author of this book, the Bishop of Durham, feels passionately that "the church needs to recapture the classic Christian answer to the question of death and beyond, which these days is not so much disbelieved (in the world and church alike) as simply unknown." He has studied intensely (he uses the expression 'soaked himself in') the life and thought of the early Christians, and the 'surprise' in the title is that the ultimate Christian hope *also* "offers a coherent and energizing basis for work in today's world." In his Preface he writes: "All language about the future ... is simply a set of signposts pointing into a fog ... But supposing someone came forwards out of the fog to meet us? That, of course, is the central, though often ignored, Christian belief."

Tom Wright writes about the "contemporary confusion in our world – the wider world, beyond the churches - about life after death" and he also looks at the "worryingly similar uncertainty" which is to be found in the churches themselves.

First, the word 'resurrection' is often misused as simply meaning 'escaping death' or 'having a glorious and noble post-mortem existence' but its true meaning was 'coming to bodily life again after bodily death'. The Resurrection of Jesus is about his actual *body.* This is discussed and explained with clarity. Wright points out that the early Christians saw that "something had happened to him which had happened to nobody else" on Easter Day. "Most Jews of the day" (i.e. in Jesus' time) "believed in an EVENTUAL [my capitals] resurrection: that is, that God would look after the soul after death until, at the last day, he would give his people new bodies when he judged and remade the whole world." (Remember Martha saying to Jesus about Lazarus, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.")

Jesus' words: "Today you will be with me in Paradise" are often understood as indicating an instant transfer to eternity. But note that "the early Christians hold firmly to a two-step belief about the future: first death and whatever lies immediately beyond; second, a new bodily existence in a newly-re-made world." I find the explanation of the word Paradise helpful: that "the Christian departed are in a state of restful happiness" as, in other Jewish writing, paradise is described "not as a final destination, but the blissful garden of rest and tranquillity, where the dead are refreshed as they await the dawn of the new day." Wright also points out that the word used for 'dwelling-places' (the 'many mansions' in some translations) is "regularly used in ancient Greek not for a final resting place but

for a temporary halt on a journey."

Judgment (a word many are shocked by, or afraid of) is described as "necessary – unless we were to conclude, absurdly, that nothing much is wrong, or, blasphemously, that God doesn't mind very much ... The sovereign declaration that *this* is good and *that* is evil and to be condemned, is the only alternative to chaos. Faced with a world in rebellion, a world full of exploitation and wickedness, a good God *must* be a god of judgment." But we are reminded that it is "the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief" who will be the Judge.

'Saving souls' means more than bringing new Christians into "a private relationship with God or Jesus for a disembodied eternity." Jesus 'rescued' people from "the corruption and decay of the way the world presently is, so that they could enjoy, ALREADY IN THE PRESENT, [my capitals] that renewal of creation which is God's ultimate purpose."

We must remember that "the present bodily life is not valueless just because it will die. God will raise it to new life. ... It is not we who go to heaven (Heaven being 'God's space') it is heaven that comes to earth. (The earth God created and found Good) Indeed it is the church itself, the heavenly Jerusalem, that comes down to earth ... the redeemed people of God in the new world will be the agents of his love going out in new ways, to accomplish new creative tasks, to celebrate and extend the glory of his love."

What I have enjoyed about this refreshing book is the author's firm stand against sentimentality (harps; sitting on clouds; everlasting rest – how dull – and vague guesses about the nature of heaven) and the way he carefully draws attention to words actually written for anyone to see ... but that we have not noticed or have ignored. The book is an excellent antidote for the overwhelming discouragement one can feel about the ways of today's world.

Jenny Lay

Vincentian Spirituality Through the Centuries.
Edited by *John Cuthbert CMP*. 137 pp. £7.50

There have been many biographies of St. Vincent de Paul. His profound influence on church reform and the development of new and enduring forms of religious life in 17th century France is not in doubt. St Vincent's life story is not particularly well known in the Anglican Communion however.

In this introduction to Vincentian spirituality John Cuthbert CMP has given us a guide which deserves a wide readership though his focus is essentially on the inspirational nature and relevance of the example of St Vincent to the Company of Mission Priests (St. Vincent was adopted as a 'secondary' patron to

the Company in the 1990s.)

For the past 15 years the Anglican CMP has been part of the worldwide (largely RC) Vincentian family which includes The Congregation of The Mission; The Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul; The Society of St. Vincent de Paul (700,000 membership) and a number of smaller organisations.

Cuthbert's portrait of St Vincent is that of a quite exceptionally gifted priest and servant of God. His vocation to the service of the poor and to raising the standards of clerical education and discipline were at the centre of both ecclesiastical and social reform in mid-17th century France. This politically unstable and troubled period involved France in the Thirty Years War with many devastating social consequences. It was a time of widespread atrocities, social unrest, population displacement and famine.

In tracing St. Vincent's spiritual development Cuthbert includes a breathtaking account of the swift rise to prominence in society of the third child of a peasant couple from southern France. Ordained to the priesthood at the age of 19, St. Vincent was for a while close to Abbé (later Cardinal) Pierre de Bérulle, founder of the French Oratory. It was St. Vincent's later friendships with St. Francis de Sales and St. Jeanne de Chantal which were to prove the more decisive in relation to both his spiritual development and to the forms taken by the religious organisations he founded however.

St. Vincent refers to St. Francis 150 times in his writings and the influence of that great saint is surely seen in their constant refrain of 'gentleness' , as well as in the virtues commended by St. Vincent as necessary for the missionary priest: 'simplicity, humility, meekness, mortification and zeal'.

Cuthbert also includes brief histories of other great figures in the Vincentian tradition. Prominent amongst them is St. Louise de Marillac, patron saint of Christian social workers and founder with St. Vincent of the Daughters of Charity. By the time of her death in 1660 there were 70 foundations of this community in France and Poland.

The constantly unfolding Vincentian story is brought into the present by accounts of more recent activities including work with asylum seekers in the UK and amongst slum dwellers in the developing world.

It is overall a deeply moving story. Anyone exploring a vocation to the priesthood, or seeking fresh inspiration, will find much here to reflect upon.

Michael Gartland
Head of Pastoral and Spiritual Care
SW Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Obtainable from
CR Mirfield Shop or Fr. Beresford Skelton CMP, St Mary Magdalene's Vicarage, 21 Wilson Street, Millfield, Sunderland, SR4 6HJ.

Brothers CR and friends on our monthly gardening morning; February 2015

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We plan to complete art commissions for the Church as well as starting work on the Quarry Theatre and looking forward to the new monastery. Please do be in touch if you would like to support a particular aspect of the Community's work.

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Thank you for helping to continue and enhance the work of the Community and College.

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