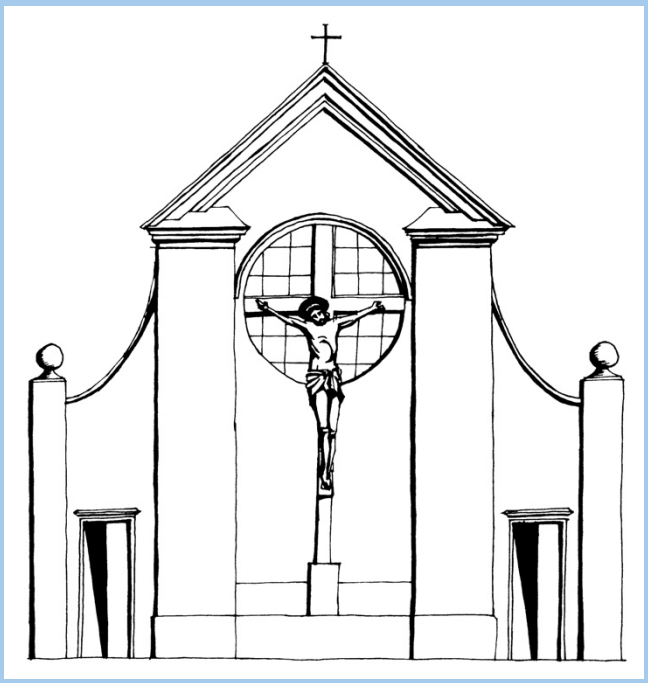
FAIRACRES CHRONICLE



WINTER 2012
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Sister Mary John Marshall, O.S.B.
Sister Christine SLG James Woodward John Scott

COMMUNITY NOTES

DEAR FRIENDS,

Thank you for the greetings which you kindly sent me and the Community to mark my Installation as Reverend Mother on 24 June. For as long as most Sisters can remember, we have used exactly the same form of ceremony whenever a Reverend Mother is installed, but this time we used a modified form, acknowledging the preceding years in Office. Soon after this, on 5 July, Sister Mary Magdalene celebrated her one-hundredth birthday. Despite the Community being 106 years old, and about 15 other Sisters having reached 90 years during its history, God called them to heavenly pastures before they became centenarians. Sister Mary Magdalene had been in hospital for a number of months, but in June was finally able to leave and move to St John's Home, which is just a short distance from Fairacres. St John's adjoins the Convent of the All Saints Sisters of the Poor, and residents in the home are able to attend services in the Sisters' Chapel. Sister Mary Magdalene feels at home at St John's and receives very good care.

In this edition of the *Fairacres Chronicle*, the first article is the sermon preached at the Thanksgiving Mass on 5 July by Sister's nephew, Stephen Wright; Stephen's brother, Bishop Tom Wright, was the celebrant. Seven Sisters, together with friends and more family members, were able to attend the Mass with the All Saints Sisters and the residents in the Chapel of All Saints Convent. SLG Sisters read the lessons, led the intercessions and helped administer the chalice. It was a very happy and moving occasion, with the two communities coming together for worship, as in the past. Many readers will know that SLG began in a small terrace house opposite the All Saints Community; in the early years we worshipped with them and enjoyed their garden, and it is lovely to have such close links with them once again.

Unfortunately Sister Anne had a fall in early November and as I write is in Auckland Hospital recovering from surgery. She was in Auckland at the same time as the Anglican Consultative Council

meetings in that city. Many friends, including members of the Episcopate, visited Sister Anne in hospital; one friend remarked that she had seen more bishops in a day than most of us see in a lifetime! She is making good progress, but will need quite a time for rehabilitation before she is able to return to the Hokianga, as she needs to be able to live independently there and drive the car again. Our friends in Auckland and the Church have kindly arranged for her to be at Selwyn Heights Retirement Village. Her address for the time being, should you wish to contact her, is:

Sister Anne Gibbons SLG
Selwyn Heights
42 Herd Road
Hillsborough
Auckland 1042
Aotearoa / New Zealand

She, and indeed the whole Community, is very grateful for all the care she has received, for all the arrangements which have been made for her rehabilitation and for keeping us informed of her progress.

Readers of the summer edition of the *Fairacres Chronicle* and those who visited between Easter and September will know that our summer was somewhat disrupted by the installation of a lift in the main part of the convent, which we call St Mary's. It is now fully operational, and we are very pleased with all the work. The exterior fire escape has gone, and the renovated outside wall is beginning to look as though it has always been thus.

During the building work we experimented with having some 'space' on Mondays. When we reviewed that experiment, the conclusion was that the space was broadly appreciated and it seemed appropriate to continue the principle. However, many Sisters felt that Monday was not the right day and instead we should take Saturdays as our Sabbath/rest day—we are not sure what to call it as yet. It will begin after supper on Fridays; our prayer will be solitary during the day, but Saturday Vespers will be said corporately. Many of us acknowledge not only the need for space, but for solitude and an opportunity to delight more in the things of God. Also, we hope that it will give an opportunity to

engage with each other in different ways. On the experimental Mondays, many of us appreciated the greater opportunity for 'being', and also for longer times of reading and study. We have been considering this possibility for about fourteen years! It has not been an easy decision to make, and it is a big decision. Not only does it seem important for us, but it is possibly a prophetic act in a world which is very much 24/7 and often unable, perhaps even afraid, to stop. There will be a small team of Sisters 'on duty' each Saturday to cover essentials and they will have the opportunity of a day 'in lieu'. This means that we cannot receive guests on a Saturday (apart from the Eve of Palm Sunday). Guests here over a Saturday will be asked to self-cater, and it will not be possible to have guests for quiet days on Saturdays. It is still experimental; we shall review our Saturday timetable after a few months, and perhaps make changes.

We are about to enter the season of Advent and at its end to celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace. The prophet Isaiah, in Chapter 9: 6, prophesied:

> For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Christians see this prophecy fulfilled in Jesus. Sadly, the world which God loves so much appears to remain so deaf to the message of the Prince of Peace. At the time of writing these notes, in late November, our world seems to be involved in an increasing number of conflicts, with further potential wars appearing likely to break out. A ceasefire, albeit fragile, has thankfully been agreed in Gaza, but the Middle East remains a volatile area, as do many other parts of the world. We know that there is much violence in many homes in the so-called developed world, and recently while driving, I myself was the target of road rage—I was rather shaken, but not physically hurt.

Sadly, our Church too seems sometimes to forget that Jesus is 'The Prince of Peace', and that whatever our views on women in ministry, homosexuality, etc., and whether we feel devastated, bewildered or relieved by the recent vote in General Synod regarding the legislation about the ordination of women as bishops, we are called to live in peace with all people, whatever their views.

The rediscovery of Mother Mary Clare's article on some aspects of aggression is surely timely, and she offers some insight into dealing both with the aggression we receive and that which we give out. The article is entitled 'Dealing with Aggression through Prayer'.

While Jesus is referred to as 'The Prince of Peace', other titles attributed to him are the subject of the leading article in this edition. The author is the late Michael Stagg, a friend of the Community for many years, and the article is 'Prophet, Priest and King'. He begins with a brief history of the titles from Calvin—the first to use these titles—to more recent times. He points out that these titles for Jesus have been made popular through hymnody, including one often sung at Epiphany, 'Songs of thankfulness and praise'. He then explores each of the titles in turn, with reference to Jesus and their implications for the Church and the individual Christian. The Feast of the Epiphany was the day on which Gregory Platten preached a sermon at Fairacres about Pilgrimage. He includes the insight that the Magi themselves were making a pilgrimage, a first pilgrimage to Jesus.

Since the summer we have welcomed a few women to live alongside the Community, two for shorter periods and one for a longer time. We, and many other communities, are able to offer this possibility for those who wish to simply share our life for a time, as well as for those who are exploring vocation, possibly to the Religious Life. We welcomed Oblate Sister Eileen of the Mercy of God into Life Oblature on the Feast of St Luke, 18 October, and received Rachel Wadey as an Oblate Postulant on 8 November. I have written in previous Community Notes about some of our contacts with those forms of community living often called 'new monasticism'. The Conference of Leaders of the Anglican Religious Communities in Britain and some of those leading the newer communities are gradually getting to know each other and finding that we are enriched by mutual exchange. While we have differences in how we live out our callings, there is much overlap, and this is valued by those involved.

In the summer edition of the *Fairacres Chronicle* I invited you to give some feedback about the Retreats which we organise each year. These retreats are for our Associates, the readers of this journal, and those who happen to find the details on the website.

Thank you for your responses; they were not many in number, but valuable in their content. The details for retreats in 2013 are inside the front cover and will be on our website shortly; we hope that many of you will be able to participate.

We are grateful to all who contributed articles, poems and reviews for this *Chronicle*, just as we are for all the support which we receive in so many ways from all our Associates and friends. We wish you a very blessed Advent and Christmas, and hope that, like the Magi, you will receive the gift described below by Gregory Platten in 'A Pilgrimage of Faith and Reason', on page 16:

> so we, too, are promised that all that we see so darkly now will be lit more gloriously than we can imagine, as we gaze on God face-to-face, and allow God to gaze upon us.

With all good wishes,

SISTER MARGARET THERESA SLG

A MYSTERY OF LOVE

STEPHEN WRIGHT

This sermon was preached in the Chapel of All Saints Convent, Oxford, at the Thanksgiving Eucharist on 5 July 2012, the one-hundredth birthday of Sister Mary Magdalene of the Resurrection (Mary Lindsay Wright) by her nephew.

The readings were: Col. 3: 1-4; John 20: 11-18.

What a joy, what a sacred privilege, to meet together to celebrate the hundred-year life of someone who is still very much among us! As we thank God for a very special Sister and aunt, it is good to dwell for a few moments on the mystery of this life that we celebrate, the life of one who has lived for over sixty years within the name 'Sister Mary Magdalene of the Resurrection'.

The mystery is that of one hidden from the world for most of those years, yet through whom the life of Christ has been wonderfully revealed. In this, the life of our Sister and our Auntie Lindsay has become no more and no less than an example of what is true for all those, whatever their calling, whose life is bound up with that of Christ.

A hidden life. Just as the risen Jesus was strangely hidden, appearing first to Mary as a gardener, and then forbidding her to hold on to him because he was going to his Father, so we his people are essentially a hidden people. We have heard Paul's words: 'You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.'[1] Yes, people can still see us. But we carry within us a secret, a mystery, like the secret and mystery of the risen but invisible Christ. We live like others around us: we eat and sleep and dress and work and play. But our *real* life is not what people see on the surface. It doesn't belong to this temporary, finite world. Our *real* life is hidden with Christ in God. It is safe in God's eternal sphere.

[1] Col. 3: 3.

And so we dance to a different music and march to a different drumbeat. As we do, others may, mysteriously, encounter the hidden Christ whose secret life we share. The glorious paradox is that it's those few who are called to focus most fully on the inward, secret source of our life who may play the largest part in revealing that life to the world.

It is amazing to think that, just as Auntie Lindsay was at Fairacres when I and my older siblings were here as students in Oxford, so she is still with us now, when my daughter is a student here! In our encounters with her over the years, we have all met that mysterious, secret source of life, whether we have always realized it or not. We have sensed that her life is so wrapped up in that of Christ that, though her focus has been on the inner world, that inner world has given her abundant resources to go on giving and giving to us in the outer world. What we owe to her thoughts, her letters, her conversations, and above all her prayers, we shall never know.

I found a letter from her sent to me in 1987, shortly before I was ordained priest exactly 25 years ago today. She wrote about the poems of George Herbert, for which we share a fondness. She had just been reading a learned-sounding work about Herbert, and she quoted these words from it:

> There emerges as the centre and heart of Herbert's system the person of Christ. And here Herbert transcends dogma in all its aspects, not relinquishing the doctrine of his Church, not denying it, but gathering it up, and offering to God the theology of his Church as a mystery of love.

She went on to say: 'So I hope George Herbert may refresh you in your prayer and meditation as today you move on in your pilgrimage to Him—our Source, Goal and Guide—finding the deepening meaning of the mystery of love.'

I have kept that letter in my copy of Herbert's poems ever since. Those words mean still more to me now than they did at the time. 'Not denying the doctrine of the Church, but gathering it up, and offering to God the theology of his Church as a mystery of love.'

Beyond our thinking and reading and knowing and speaking, we offer to God the theology of his Church as *a mystery of love*.

The hidden secret of our Sister's life and the life of her Community are offered in love to God; and in God they are offered in love to the wider Church, including those of us called to more public ministry, and in love to the world. Not so that their lives can substitute for ours, offering that mystery of love so that we don't need to, but so that the mystery of their lives can rub off on ours. So that we too may come to radiate something of the hidden heart of all existence in Christ Jesus, in whom all things have meaning.

We rejoice and give thanks today for one hundred remarkable years. But, as we know, they are as nothing compared to what is to come. One day, Paul says, Christ our eternal life will be revealed. The curtain will be pulled back on his splendour. And there, with him, will be his people, those who have died to this world-bound existence and found their true life in him. And till then?

Till then, we enter day by day as Jesus taught us, and as our beloved Sister and aunt has taught us, into the secret place of prayer, where we revel again in our roots in eternity; where we open wide the channels through which the fresh springs of true life can pass from Christ.

Till then, we live each day in *this* world as those who have a compass and light from another. We live trusting that the way of *Jesus* is the way of the future: not the way of the dictators or the suicide bombers, not the way of the small-hearted and hard-hearted, the self-inflating and the self-promoting

Till then, we pass on the memory; we tell the story. We don't allow the news of Jesus to be silenced by vague religiosity, or embarrassment, or ignorance, or the tragic failings of his followers. We share it—simply and straightforwardly, not raucously or defensively. We have no visible Christ to parade before people: we have ourselves, as the channels of his hidden but eternal life. And till then, we gather round his table, where we remember his life and his death, find his absence and his presence, and eagerly anticipate the day when the curtain is drawn back—and we see, and believe.

ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT

HOLY LIGHT

The Light of God
has broken through;
all that is tawdry
is made new;
see the stalls and stable shine
lit by the presence of the Child Divine.

Holy Mary
has born in love,
strengthened by the Holy Dove,
the Holy Child,
who has come to be
the mainstay of humanity.

Rejoice, rejoice,
rejoice and sing
welcome to the Infant King,
who now lives with us
so that we may be
one day at home
with Him in Eternity.

Dannie Newson

HOLY NIGHT

Virgin pure,
we bow before thee;
Holy Infant,
our hearts adore thee;
shepherds tremble.
angels sing,
wise men
telling treasures bring:
the marvelling moon
dances
in and out of time,
while myriad stars
in simple silence shine.

Now all is hushed,
the Baby falls asleep,
the patient beasts
their vigil keep;
man, in awe,
steals away.

The night is over,
what brings the day?

Dannie Newson

A PILGRIMAGE OF FAITH AND REASON
THE JOURNEY OF THE MAGI

GREGORY PLATTEN

A Sermon preached at Fairacres on the Feast of the Epiphany, 2012

'Nations shall come to your light, and kings
to the brightness of your dawn.'[1]

IMMEDIATELY after the birth of a child, time stands static like a bubble. Within that brief sanctuary of time, parents gaze on the child, and the child, with startled, needy love, gazes blinkingly back. Everything else remains outside: 'For while gentle silence enveloped all things, and night in its swift course was now half gone …'[2] This time is utterly still—before the greater family, friends and presents descend into the frenzied outpouring of love, the celebration of a new life made. Such was Jesus' birth, that we still recall the Holy Family's own bubble with days of holiday and quietness following Christmas. People are only now really beginning to get back to work. The bubble is bursting, even if many people care little for the cause of this rest time.

At Epiphany the bubble bursts; time ceases to stand still. No longer do Mary and Joseph adore Our Lord alone. The Book of Common Prayer calls us back to the ancient liturgical understanding of this feast as the 'Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.' Today we go from a static scene in a stable stall to the moment when the truth of Christ journeys out, and we simultaneously are called to journey to him; we are called to worship and adore.

Today we celebrate the first pilgrimage, of the wise-ones to the source of wisdom; their journey sets the pattern for us to follow. The story of these enigmatic sages is inspirational: compass-bearers

[1] Isa. 60: 3.
[2] Wis. 18: 14.

guiding our own pilgrimage homeward to God. The Magi, using wisdom and trusting in God, found truth, despite the costs of a great journey and the threats to their own lives. These *magoi* remind us that from the start of the Christian story, the journey Christ calls us to make demands both faith and reason. This journey is summed up perfectly in the Epiphany Collect, derived from the ancient liturgies of the Church. The Book of Common Prayer renders it thus:

> O GOD, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles: Mercifully grant that we, who know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reason

The story of the Magi is one of the most sentimentalised aspects of the Christmas narrative. Nowhere, of course, are they called 'kings'. Apart from three mentioned gifts, we have no idea how many they were, and for all we know, there could have been a hundred, and they could all have been female! Call them Caspar, Balthasar and Melchior, if you will, but where those names emerge from, nobody really knows. And yet, when the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams pointed out these long-established truths, *The Daily Telegraph* boorishly accused him of describing the Nativity as a legend!

You may have read of the recent book from a young scholar, Brent Landau, *Revelation of the Magi*.[3] He translates and adds commentary to an ancient and little-known text, which had lain largely untouched in the Vatican archive for hundreds of years. This text apparently had two authors, and it adds to what we read in Matthew's terse account. It suggests that the Magi were mystics from a land called Shir, descendants of Seth and Adam. More pertinent to the Sisters of the Love of God is the suggestion that 'magi' were those who 'prayed silently'. Perhaps they were the contemplatives of their own day.

This text and the Biblical account both intrigue us and also show how little we really know about these mysterious characters

[33] *Revelation of the Magi: The Lost Tale of the Wise Men's Journey to Bethlehem,* Brent Landau, HarperOne, 2010.

from one Gospel account. But they are in the Gospel for a reason, and tradition has handed them down in this peculiarly enigmatic and symbolic way; we get enough even from these short verses in Matthew's account of the *magoi apo anatoloan* ('wise men from the East').

Alas, the tradition hands them down as astrologers, which rather discredits them in an age where astrology is relegated to the back pages of the red-top newspapers. These *magoi* were probably scientists, explorers, discoverers; they were the Isaac Watts, Marco Polo or Galileo of their own time. Even the Gospel account implies that they used their skill to navigate some distance, following the stars, no doubt with sextants and elementary star-gazing tools.

These were wise-ones, intellectuals: perhaps more astro-physicists of their age than astrologers, with instruments and texts being the tools of their trade. These were people of reason, who, using what they knew and analysed, became the first to pay homage to the reason-defying, supranatural Messiah; they were led by their study of the stars, by their God-given reason and intellect.

Faith

But even as they gazed on the Babe in the manger, we are to wonder at their faith, too. As the Book of Common Prayer says, 'grant that we, who know thee now by faith …' How could these great men of letters, pioneers of their age, have believed that a king could be born to peasants in a cowshed cave?

They had to trust in their knowledge, but in faith too. As much as their knowledge of the stars helped them journey onward, so they were also driven by their faith in the revelation they had received, not least when they encountered what must have been a confusing conclusion to their expedition. This king had no palace to receive them; no fanfare and no royal welcome. Yet there is no sense that their faith wavered in the presence of this tiny king-redeemer. Rather, we are told, they fell down and worshipped. They were overwhelmed by it all, and worship was their response, and precious gifts their second response.

Reason meets faith and Emmanuel, God with us, is taken out to the world.

Pilgrimage

This was pilgrimage, the first pilgrimage. These map-reading wise-ones used all their skill to find Christ, fully convinced by their faith in God's revelation.

But it was not an easy task. The fact that Matthew's account tells us they came from the East, and that theirs is a different country, tells us that they came some distance. If that wasn't enough, we have some sense of the trouble that their journey encountered, not least in their meeting with a tyrant king. (By way of an aside, I'm always fascinated by this interlude. The Magi ask a king where to find a king. I always think metaphorically that this is a bit like asking someone in Selfridges where Harrods might be found!)

Herod colludes with their quest, assures them of his good wishes and asks for their help; but they sense in a dream that he is no good, and up to no good. They go home, avoiding this charming tyrant's hospitality. Their faith remains strong, and their intent is not to put the Messiah to death, but rather to manifest his Good News, to take his Gospel eastward, to the lands from which they came. They are not intimidated, but stick to their quest for the truth in Christ Jesus, and are not diverted even by a king with his palaces and promises.

As soon as the bubble of the nativity scene is burst, time presses on:

> For while gentle silence enveloped all things, and night in its swift course was now half gone, your all-powerful word leapt from heaven, from the royal throne, into the midst of the land that was doomed.[4]

Time presses on, and we are called to press on too, knowing that our journey will take its toll. Our feet will blister and we will grow physically weary from the toll life takes on our bodies. Like the mediaeval pilgrims who had no *images* of the earthly Jerusalem or of Rome, we have no vision of the heavenly Jerusalem, save for that which Scripture hints at, and we journey faith-first, with what we know in our packs. Yet we press on, like Eliot's Magi:

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[4] Wis. 18: 14-15.

… no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.[5]

But as we press on, we have faith in our reason, and reason for this faith. Just as the Magi saw God face-to-face in an infant Christ, so we, too, are promised that all that we see so darkly now will be lit more gloriously than we can imagine, as we gaze on God face-to-face, and allow God to gaze upon us.

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[5] 'Journey of the Magi', *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot, Faber and Faber*, 1969, p. 104.

DEALING WITH AGGRESSION THROUGH PRAYER

MOTHER MARY CLARE SLG (1906-88)

PRAYER is a great deal more than a therapy to make us nicer people and better able to cope with ourselves. It is not merely a way of doing some good to ourselves, nor is it a technique that can be adopted in order to control aggressive feelings. Prayer is lived relationship with the God who made us. We have to work hard to make the basic energies of our lives a positive part of this relationship, and this is what used to be called the 'ascetic' side of prayer. It has always been an essential part of the spiritual life, and from its earliest days Christianity has had its experts who knew from experience how to handle aggression and desires. The greatest of these were the Desert Fathers in the fourth and fifth centuries in Egypt. They were specialists in 'thoughts', in what goes on inside a person, and they knew all about aggression. They spent their lives integrating these things into their prayer. What made them experts was that for them it was a matter of life and death. Alone in the desert, they had no escape from themselves into activities or good works. They could not delude themselves that prayer is just a matter of words and feelings of piety. They had to achieve the integration of their personalities, or go mad. It took them a lifetime to achieve this integration completely.

We are complicated people, intricate bundles of flesh and nerves and mind and spirit, and yet we have to return and relate to God who is One and most simple. In order to do this, we have to understand ourselves. One way of doing so is to say that we are compounded of urges, energies, drives. These are the raw material we are given to work with, and they can be used in all kinds of ways. All too often these energies are experienced as *aggression*. *Aggredior*, the Latin verb from which 'aggression' is derived, has the meaning of going towards, attacking. There is an implication of hostility, of an approach that breaks and damages and harms, and it is quite different from the approach which is *compassion*, suffering alongside, or *understanding*, standing below in order to learn and

support. The energy in aggression can be used quite differently. It cannot be ignored, but it can become something of positive value: strength and fortitude and valour. But first we have to recognise aggression, the wrong use of energy, before we can see how to deal rightly with it. Aggression can be from others directed towards ourselves, or in ourselves directed towards others. Let us take each in turn.

Aggression from others directed towards ourselves

The first and simplest way of dealing with this kind of aggression is to go away! Given the aggression of late Roman society—the imperial tax collector, the recruiting sergeant, the oppressive demands of village and family life—the Desert Fathers simply went away, and when the world followed them with its demands, they went away further still. The monks of St Benedict built a wall around their self-contained monastery to put some distance between themselves and the aggression of a semi-barbarian society. To put ourselves out of the reach of the aggression of others does not sound heroic; perhaps it sounds escapist. But it is an aspect of humility, a bit of commonsense, which we all need to learn at times.

It is not the answer to our own aggressive feelings, as we shall see in a moment, but it can settle the matter of aggression towards ourselves. The response to aggression forbidden to Christians is to fight back and meet aggression with aggression. The great pattern here is Christ on the Cross ('Father forgive them'), and the first martyr, Stephen, who prayed for those who were stoning him. This response, which entirely accepts the aggression of others and turns it into love, was expressed in a prayer written during the Second World War on a piece of scrap paper in Ravensbrück Women's Concentration Camp by Dr Hildegard Schäder (1902-84), Prisoner No. 31,795. The prayer is now to be found in the German Protestant Hymn Book.

Prayer for our tormentors

Peace to those who are evil-minded,
and an end to all vengeance
and all talk of punishment and retribution.
Their terrible deeds are a mockery
of all that has ever been;

they exceed the bounds of human comprehension;
and countless are the martyrs.
Therefore, O God, do not weigh the sufferings inflicted
on the scales of your justice;
do not exact a terrible reckoning,
but keep account of them in a different way.
Let the sufferings inflicted be credited
to the account of all executioners, traitors and spies,
and to that of all evil people.
And forgive them for the sake of
the courage and constancy of soul of the others.
Total up all that is good, not the evil.
And in our enemies' remembrance
we shall not continue to live
as their victims,
or as their nightmare,
or as sinister ghosts.
Rather, we shall come to their aid,
so that they can distance themselves
from their depravity.
This alone will be demanded of them,
that, when all is over, we may live
as human beings among human beings;
and that peace may exist again
on this poor earth
for people of good will;
and that peace may also come
to the others.[1]

This is that complete reconciliation in prayer of the aggression of others which brings in the kingdom of God. But it is not something which is discovered by chance. We have to ask for this power; and at the moment when the aggression of others impinges upon us, we must learn how to say, like St Felicitas before she was thrown to the wild beasts, that 'Another will be inside me who will suffer for

[1] Translation of 'Gebet aus dem Frauen-Konzentrationslager' in *Evangelisches Gesangbuch*, an additional prayer which follows Hymn 94 in the 'Passion' section.

me, just as I shall be suffering for him'.[2] We must train ourselves to be firmly rooted in the peace of Christ, so that when we meet aggression we can be still enough, selfless enough, for Another to be in us, turning hostility into gain by his love.

These are perhaps the two ends of the scale when thinking about the aggression of others directed against ourselves: on the one hand, the common sense to recognise our inability to forgive or suffer, and therefore the humility simply to go away; on the other hand, the supreme act of reconciliation, into which we can enter in Christ alone. Between these two lies a whole stretch of *ascesis*, of training. And now we come to the second half of the subject: our own aggression directed towards others.

Our own aggression directed towards others

We shall never be able to deal rightly with aggression directed towards us by others unless we have recognised and come to terms with aggression within ourselves. We do not like to think of ourselves as aggressive, as hating, as angry, as hostile. We are nice, civilised people, and we know how to mind our manners. And we think of aggression, and particularly anger, as bad manners and crude. But prayer before God is not concerned with our illusions and facades. It is concerned with us as we really are, and at times we are *all* hostile, aggressive, for one reason or another. It is a hatred that, if it is not recognised, can go outwards to harm others, or turn inward to hurt ourselves with even more frenzy. But New Testament teaching is wiser than this. It does not say: 'Do not be angry'; 'Do not show you are upset'; 'Do not show what you feel'. Instead, it says: 'Be angry but do not sin';[3] 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you';[4] 'If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also'.[5] It recognises our hostilities and turns them into something positive. Not, 'I will not be angry' but, 'I will love'. We have to recognise our helplessness in this, as in so many other ways, before we are in a position to ask for the help we need.

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[2] 'The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas' in *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, trans. H Musurillo, Oxford University Press, 1972, pp. 123-5.
[3] Eph. 4: 26.
[4] Matt. 5: 44.
[5] Luke 6: 29.

When we do so, we can hold ourselves in our anger before the mercy of God, perhaps with a form of the Jesus Prayer such as, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner'. It is a long training, learning to do this constantly.

Very often the Desert Fathers used the Pauline language of conflict.[6] They spoke of the inner life in images, externalising aggression as demons who attacked them. The same message emerges: the demon has to be recognised as such, and can then only be overcome by the Name of Christ and the power of his redeeming love. I am not concerned here with the question of whether demons exist in themselves. In this context I am simply pointing to the fact that for the Desert Fathers the internal passions and the external demons were dealt with in the same way. In a sense they *were* the same, since the demons need human beings in order to manifest themselves at all. It is of significance, too, that the language used was that of conflict: the language of aggression rightly directed, not ignored.

So far we have been talking about aggression mostly in terms of its most obvious result, which is anger. But this is by no means the only kind of aggression within us. We need to be vigilant, awake, to see it in other expressions as well. For instance, there is the aggression of *organisation*, of the attack waged on other people's integrity by the person with a good idea and ruthless determination that it should work, whether we like it or not. Or there is the aggression of *lust*, that invades another's mind and/or body, without any regard for them as people. Or there is the more subtle aggression of *misery*, perhaps the most difficult of all for us to resist. We can use our personal misery and need, invading others' affections and sympathies, crashing through their right judgement and sense with constant demands for attention: 'Look, I will cry, scream, kill myself, unless you give me more… and more… and more…' We must first be honest enough to recognise our aggression for what it is, and then want to change it, being willing to let go of the prospect of immediate gratification which it promises. It must then be brought into all of our prayer and we must acknowledge our need for the mercy of Christ our God. We ask for Christ's power to be in us, enabling us to redirect energy

[6] See in particular Eph. 6: 10-18.

which cannot be got rid of and to use it by weaving it into the whole pattern of our life in him—so that this energy is no longer aggression, but the strength and fortitude of perseverance in love.

How can we come towards one another, not with the aggression that alienates, but with the love that unites? There is no easy answer to this; a major part of prayer can be occupied in learning it. But one very practical thing helps: thanksgiving. Not humility—for which of us can claim to know anything about that?—but that cheerful, gracious act of being thankful. Always there is something in every situation for which one can be thankful. The situation which contained all the tragedy in the world was one which was redeemed by thanksgiving: Jesus, in the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread and gave thanks. When *we* meet the betrayals and diminishments of daily life, which often turn our energies into sour aggression, it is possible in Christ to learn to take them and give thanks—not in any romantic or false way, but in the kind of reality of relationship which produced the prayer from Ravensbrück which I quoted above. There great suffering produced, amazingly, gratitude for love. When we ourselves betray and diminish others, we also have to turn that aggression into peace within ourselves.

God does not leave us alone in this work. To quote from a sermon someone gave a few years back, God 'takes my head between his hands and turns my face towards him. And though I struggle and hurt those hands, they do not let me go until he has smiled me into smiling; and that is the forgiveness of God.'

This is an edited version of a talk given in about 1973 which came to light recently in our files.

CHEQUES MADE OUT TO US

We have recently been having difficulty in paying into the bank cheques with return address stickers affixed to the reverse, as they do not go through the bank's automatic scanners. May we ask, please, if those who send us cheques could refrain from attaching address stickers? Thank you.

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PROPHET, PRIEST AND KING

MICHAEL STAGG

The author submitted this article in May for the Winter edition of the Fairacres Chronicle*, knowing that he was terminally ill. He died on 17 September. We send our sympathy to Wendy, his widow, and to the rest of his family.*

THE FIRST person to describe Jesus under the threefold title of 'Prophet, Priest and King' was the Reformer John Calvin. He wrote:

> To know the purpose for which Christ was sent by the Father and what he conferred upon us, we must look above all at three things in him: the prophetic office, kingship and priesthood'.[7]

These titles tend to be familiar to English speakers, thanks to the teaching contained in hymns such as John Newton's eighteenth-century hymn, 'How sweet the name of Jesus sounds'; the nineteenth-century Epiphany hymn by Christopher Wordsworth, 'Songs of thankfulness and praise'; and the twentieth-century hymn by James Quinn, 'Forth in the peace of Christ we go'. The last-mentioned covers each of the concepts of Prophet, Priest and King in a separate verse. Wordsworth's hymn makes the point that these characteristics of Jesus were 'manifest at Jordan's stream'. They are associated with his anointing by the Holy Spirit at his baptism, just as priests and kings were anointed with oil in the Jewish tradition, and prophets were those inspired by the Spirit of God. They describe aspects of Jesus as the promised and expected Anointed One of God, the Messiah, the Christ.

In their book *Jesus Our Priest: A Christian Approach to the Priesthood of Christ*,[8] Gerald O'Collins SJ and Michael Keenan

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[7] *Institutes* 2. 15/1, 494.

[8] *Jesus Our Priest: A Christian Approach to the Priesthood of Christ*, Gerald O'Collins SJ & Michael Keenan Jones, OUP, 2010, Ch. 8 on 'Trent and the French School on Christ's Priesthood'.

Jones explain that in the seventeenth century Calvin's descriptions were taken up in France by Roman Catholic priests of the Counter-Reformation, the founders of the first seminaries for training priests. They also revived preaching; hence the large pulpits in the naves of many continental churches, sadly rarely used now. Two centuries later, on 31 October 1824, soon after his ordination in the Church of England, John Henry Newman spoke in a sermon at St Clement's Church, Oxford, about Christ as 'our Prophet, Priest and King unto those who believe'. In the first half of the twentieth century, the renowned Protestant theologian Karl Barth explored these titles in his exposition of Calvin's teaching. This was followed by the writings of his disciple and exponent, the Presbyterian Thomas Torrance. All this reflection and teaching bore fruit in the early 1960s in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, and in 1982 in the still important, but now unfortunately somewhat neglected, statement from the ecumenical conference at Lima, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*.[9]

We can see, therefore, that over the last 500 years there has been a growing consensus that *all* those who are baptised into Christ Jesus participate in his prophetic, priestly and kingly roles and responsibilities, even if there is a specific place for 'a ministerial priesthood'. St Cyprian wrote: 'That which Christ is, we Christians shall become.' It is, therefore, worth examining the roles into which, as infants or adults, we were baptised, and into which we are invited to grow and become—for there is nothing automatic about our response to our Christian vocation.

1. PROPHET

Before we get too excited at being called to be prophets, we should remember that a prophet is a pain, an irritant and a challenge to comfortable, established, powerful structures, especially ecclesiastical and political ones! And it is not just in the Bible that they invariably come to a sticky end. How, then, is this an appropriate title for Jesus, and therefore for all the baptised?

[9] World Council of Churches, Faith and Order Paper No. 111, the 'Lima Text', 1982.

Justice

As Old Testament lecturers never tire of pointing out, the Hebrew prophets were often *forth*-tellers; more frequently and significantly, they were *fore*-tellers, and their most insistent message from God is the call for justice. This is a constant theme in the Psalms and becomes the overriding feature of the eighth-century prophets Isaiah, Amos and Hosea, culminating with Micah. Examples of the theme of justice are to be found in Isaiah's Servant Songs, 'I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations',[10] and in Micah, 'What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?'[11]

For all the nations

The Servant Songs[12] also suggest that it is too light a prophetic task to speak and act on God's behalf only to Israel (and equally, we might say, to God's people, his Church, today). A prophet is a prophet for all 'the nations'.[13] It is an acknowledgement that the message of the Abrahamic vision is that God's revelation is to be a blessing on all.

Jesus the Prophet

The excitement aroused by the appearance and preaching of John the Baptist came from the fact that the prophetic voice had been absent within Judaism for several hundred years. And in seeking to explain the enigmatic and quicksilver Jesus, his contemporaries found 'prophet' to be one of the best ways of describing him.[14] The Fourth Evangelist makes this point by comparing and contrasting Jesus with Moses, who was regarded in Judaism as a prophet. Matthew gives us a Jesus who offers the new Law of the Sermon on the Mount; he structures his Gospel in five 'books', echoing the 'five books of Moses' with which the Hebrew Bible begins.

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[10] Isa. 42: 1; cf. Isa. 42: 4; 49: 6.
[11] Mic. 6: 8.
[12] Isa. 42: 1-4; 49: 1-6; 50: 4-9; 52: 13 – 53: 12.
[13] Isa. 42: 1; 49: 6; cf. Isa. 52: 15.
[14] Mark 8: 28; Luke 24: 19; John 4: 19; 6: 14; 7: 40; 9: 17.

Many decades ago, C. H. Dodd set out fifteen features of Jesus' ministry which could have led to Jesus being viewed as a prophet; among them, his authoritative teaching, his sense of calling, his possession of divine insight and his symbolic actions.[15] A more recent commentator, Dale C. Allison,[16] comes to a similar conclusion. But the New Testament also expresses the early Christian belief that Jesus was 'more than a prophet', in that he fulfils the prophetic promises.[17] In reality, he is the prophetic word made flesh.[18] This would seem to have been part of Jesus' own self-awareness, as he announces the realisation of many long-term prophetic hopes.[19] The time is fulfilled and the blessings of the age to come are already being experienced in and through his words and ministry.

Prophetic Inspiration

The prophets had developed the capacity to see what others did not see and to hear that to which others' ears were closed.[20] This may help us to answer the question what it means for us as baptised Christians to be prophets. As Jim Cotter's version of Psalm 123 puts it, we need to pray for:

> Fiery eyes, angry for justice;
> Compassion eyes, warming the poor;
> Courteous eyes, attentive and waiting;
> Steady eyes, calm and courageous;
>
> A reverent look, awed and still;
> A ready glance, willing to obey;
> A look of hope, expectant of good;
> A look of trust as between friends.[21]

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[15] 'Jesus as Teacher and Prophet', *in Mysterium Christi*, ed. G. K. A. Bell and Adolf Deissmann, Longmans, Green & Co., 1930.
[16] *Constructing Jesus*, SPCK, 2010. See also *The Signs of a Prophet: The Prophetic Actions of Jesus,* Morna D. Hooker, SCM, 1997.
[17] Heb. 1: 1-2.
[18] John 1: 1-14.
[19] Matt. 11: 4-5; Luke 4: 16-21.
[20] Num. 24: 3-4, 15-16.
[21] Ps. 123, *Out of the Silence ... into the Silence: Prayer's Daily Round*, Jim Cotter and Paul Payton, Cairns Publications, 2006 (printed with permission).

The Lenten Preface in *Common Worship* says that, 'through study of your holy word you open our eyes to your presence in the world'.[22] So, 'listening' to God's word seems to be a prerequisite to 'looking' with God's eyes. Indeed, Melvyn Bragg in his book on the influence of the King James Bible[23] lists the following as examples of the radical impact of listening to the words of Scripture: the English Civil War and the execution of the King, Charles I; the establishment of the Royal Society and the birth of modern science; the abolition of the slave trade, the liberating spirit of the slaves themselves and the American Civil War; the nineteenth-century social gospel movement, supported by such people as F. D. Maurice and Octavia Hill; the ending of apartheid in South Africa; democracy itself.

If we are to follow our prophetic vocation, then we need to heed these words in the Prologue to the Rule of St Benedict:

> Listen, child of God, to the guidance of your teacher. Attend to the message you hear and make sure that it pierces your heart, so that you may accept with willing freedom and fulfil by the way you live the directions that come from your loving Father. … Let our ears be alert to the stirring call of his voice crying to us every day: today, if you should hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. And again: let anyone with ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.[24]

2. PRIEST

Jesus was recognised by at least some of his contemporaries as a prophet, but no one at the time considered him to be a priest. Unlike John the Baptist, he was not even from a priestly family. So

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[22] 'Holy Communion: Seasonal Provisions', *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England*, Church House Publishing, 2000, p. 309.

[23] *The Book of Books: The Radical Impact of the King James Bible 1611-2011*, Melvyn Bragg, Hodder & Stoughton, 2011.

[24] Rule of St Benedict, trans. Patrick Barry OSB, quoted in *Wisdom from the Monastery: The Rule of St Benedict for everyday life*, Canterbury Press, 2005.

perhaps I shouldn't have been quite so surprised to read on the back cover of O'Collins & Keenan Jones:

> In recent years many books have been published in the area of Christology (who is Jesus in himself?) and soteriology (what did he do as Saviour?). A number of notable, ecumenical documents on Christian ministry have also appeared. But in all this literature these is surprisingly little reflection on the priesthood of Christ, from which derives all ministry, whether the 'priesthood of all believers' or ministerial priesthood.

However, this could be because the New Testament priestly understanding of Christ appears most prominently in the Letter to the Hebrews, one of the less-frequently-read books. It could also perhaps arise from a neglect of Jesus' Ascension, compared with the celebration of other events of his life, and the consequent failure to appreciate adequately and teach sufficiently the ongoing significance of his ascended ministry (as recounted in the even-less-frequently-read Book of Revelation).

A Ministry of Intercession

The World Council of Churches' document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* and the ARCIC[25] *Final Report* (both 1982) make the following points:

Christ is the unique priest or high priest of the new covenant, whose once-and-for-all sacrifice for all human beings brought salvation or reconciliation to the world. His priesthood continues through his interceding 'before the Father', by the incorporation into him of the baptised, and by the celebration of the Eucharist, whereby he 'unites' his people and 'gathers, teaches and nourishes the Church',[26] or 'presides' and 'gives himself sacramentally'.[27] All priesthood is derived from Christ's priesthood.

There are, then, two ways in which the priesthood of those who are baptised can be exercised: by the offering of themselves as a

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[25] The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission.

[26] *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Eucharist, III The Celebration of the Eucharist, para. 29.

[27] ARCIC *Final Report*, Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine 1971, III The Presence of Christ, para 7.

spiritual sacrifice,[28] particularly united with Christ in his Eucharistic sacrifice; and by sharing in Christ's ascended priestly ministry of intercession, again particularly in the Eucharist. As Fr Gilbert Shaw expressed it in his written Intentions for Mass, it is 'to share in Christ's drawing of all things into the Divine Unity and to stand in his victory and reversal of evil'. It is also expressed more simply in the words of Michael Ramsey as 'carrying others on our hearts to God'.

The ecumenical documents just quoted speak of the ascended Christ 'continuing his priesthood', implying that priesthood was a feature of his earthly life and ministry, even though he was certainly not a member of the Jewish Temple priesthood. One specific ministry of the Jewish priesthood was to offer sacrifice for sins. Jesus has been understood to have been doing this above all in his Crucifixion, though this has been expressed in many ways, not least through describing him as both Priest and Victim. One of the earliest and most original theological explorations of this was by the anonymous author of the Letter to the Hebrews, in which Christ's heavenly intercession is related precisely to this historic intercession once and for all on the Cross.

A Pastoral Ministry

It is always true that God is one step ahead of us, whether expressed as going before his pilgrim people in a cloud by day and fire by night,[29] as the risen Christ who promised his disciple that he would be found in Galilee,[30] or as the 'I am' of the Fourth Gospel (helpfully translated by Michael Hollings in the book *I will be there* as, 'I will be there for you as…').[31] Nevertheless, one definition of a priest is of someone who brings God to the people, and the people to God, something Jesus did throughout his ministry. He exercised a liminal, or threshold, ministry. He is the Door or the Gate,[32] the One who stands at the intersection of human and divine. An

[28] Rom. 12: 1; 1 Pet. 2: 5.
[29] Exod. (many verses).
[30] Mark 16: 7.
[31] *I will be there*, Michael Hollings, Mowbray, 1975.
[32] John 10: 9.

example is the raising of Lazarus.[33] Here we see Jesus at his most human before God, 'weeping' and being 'deeply moved in spirit and troubled', and then in his divinity, which he exercises by raising Lazarus. In traditional Jewish thought, only God would have the authority and power to carry this out.

Here, in a slightly adapted form, is how Mark W. G. Stibbe describes this story:

> In standing at the threshold of the tomb—an entrance associated so obviously with suffering, mourning, sickness and death—Jesus is revealed as the God who is prepared to stand at the most extreme and painful of human experiences. Here Jesus stands at the threshold between life and death, between suffering and glory, pain and sleep. The Messiah is not aloof from the mystery and experience of human pain. Jesus, the Son of God, is the deity who sheds tears, who feels anger and who dares to look through the dark threshold of a place which he himself will have to enter. John's Gospel, in short, presents us with a potent, liminal Christology which consoles us in the face of our own human limits. [34]

A Costly Ministry

As with the call to follow Christ in a prophetic vocation, that of a priestly calling also comes with a health warning. Jesus pulled no punches.[35] C. K. Barrett, commenting on Paul's teaching in the Second Letter to the Corinthians,[36] says that the grim fate of a wealthy, spiritual and successful Church and its apostles is that it forgets that the only legitimate mark of the Christian Church and its leaders is that they do not simply preach the Gospel, but carry within themselves the death of Jesus and the promise of his Resurrection.[37] In other words, we are to be 'stigmata Christians', remembering that, as the apostle of unity, Paul Couturier, said, 'We come to die.'

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[33] John 11: 1-44.
[34] *John*, JOSP Press, 1993.
[35] See Mark 8: 34-5; 10: 41-5.
[36] 2 Cor. 4-6.
[37] *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Adam & Charles Black, 1973.

The current emphasis on academic learning and qualifications in ministerial formation and continuing education (for both clergy and laity) has meant that inadequate time and attention have been given to the significant consequences of being drawn into and participating in the costly self-oblation of Jesus' consecrated life as we see it expressed in his High Priestly Prayer.[38] The cost of drawing others into his offering to the Father through committed pastoral work, serious ministry of the Word and the leading of attentive and prayerful worship—especially the Eucharist—have also been neglected.

3. KING

When the theologian John Fenton asked parish groups and first-year university students what they most associated with the names of Hitler, Stalin and Jesus, the replies were unanimous on Hitler and Stalin: Nazism and Communism respectively. Few, if any, gave the answer for which he was hoping regarding Jesus, namely 'the Kingdom of God'. Whatever the reason for that, it should be a surprise, since the question, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?'[39] comes right at the beginning of the New Testament. It follows on from Matthew's opening genealogy, which establishes Jesus in the ancestry of King David. In Mark, the first recorded words of Jesus are: 'The time is fulfilled! God's kingdom is arriving!'[40] And Mark tells us that the inscription nailed to Jesus' cross, giving the charge against him was, 'The King of the Jews'.[41]

This is emphasised even more in the Fourth Gospel, where the word 'king' appears twelve times in the Passion narrative, along with references to a crown, a purple robe, and the royal quantity of spices with which Jesus is buried.[42] In Luke's Gospel, the question that most concerns the disciples just before the Ascension is whether this is the time when Jesus is going to restore the kingdom

[38] John 17, esp. v. 19.
[39] Matt. 2: 2.
[40] cf. Mark 1: 15.
[41] Mark 15: 26.
[42] John 19: 2, 39.

to Israel.[43] A reading of almost any of Tom Wright's books will show how central this is to our understanding of Jesus. In his recent translation of the New Testament,[44] Wright invariably translates the words 'Christ' and 'Messiah' as 'King Jesus'.

While there has been a general failure to observe the feast of the Ascension, and so to value the significance of Christ's continuing priestly ministry, the same could be said of appreciating his continuing kingly ministry. In the Church of England, however, the additional feast of Christ the King, which has long been observed by Roman Catholics, has done something to alleviate this. It often seems to suit established Churches to play down the overall Lordship of Christ. I attended a local theological society meeting recently, because I had no idea what the title of an advertised lecture meant: 'The Divine Rights of the Redeemer'. I discovered it was a phrase and belief much loved by seventeenth-century non-conforming Baptists, who stressed their ultimate loyalty, not to any earthly or ecclesiastical authority, but solely to 'the Redeemer'.

But given the state of the world and present-day politics, how can we possibly claim that, as Fr Gilbert Shaw once put it, 'Christ reigns over all things and all 'isms, be they socialism, capitalism, consumerism or communism'? Tom Wright devotes chapters to answering this crucial question and to the subject of God's rule through us, in his books *Simply Jesus: Who He Was, What He Did, Why it Matters* and *How God Became King: Getting to the Heart of the Gospels*.[45]

A Kingly People, following the Servant King

It is quite clear in the New Testament that the Church is called to continue Christ's kingly ministry and to be a sign, instrument and foretaste of God's Kingdom. It would have been even clearer if John's Gospel had not been placed between Luke's two-volume work of Luke and Acts. In the First Letter of Peter and in the Book

[43] Acts 1: 6.
[44] *The New Testament for Everyone*, Tom Wright, SPCK Publishing, 2011.
[45] Both SPCK, 2012.

of Revelation, the Church is quite specifically described as a 'royal priesthood'.[46]

Fr Gilbert Shaw writes:

> Seek ye the Face of Jesus.
>
> He reigns upon the Cross.
>
> He reigns through death.
>
> He is the everlasting reconciliation for man's sinfulness
>
> to draw all men to himself that they might be again
>
> a kingdom and a priesthood to their God,
>
> restored, incorporated in his lovefullness.[47]

The Church is transitory and temporal and penultimate. We are to compose a score based on Jesus' original melody, to create a garden and build a house based on his design and drawings.

As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: 'Christ is Lord over all of life or none. … for a Christian to be an ethereal figure who merely talks about God but somehow refuses to get his hands dirty in the real world where God has placed him, is bad theology.'[48] He himself was to walk in the footsteps of the One who 'came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many'.[49]

CONCLUSION

All I have said is best summed up by Thomas Torrance:

> Only as the Church lets itself be implicated in Christ's death and in His reproach, can it minister in His ministry. Only as it learns to let the mind of Christ be in its mind, and is inwardly and outwardly shaped by his servant-obedience unto the death of the Cross, can it participate in His Prophetic, Priestly and Kingly ministry.
>
> Not by standing on its dignity, or vaunting its right, not by lordly rule or by patronage, not by wielding of worldly

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[46] 1 Pet. 2: 9; Rev. 1: 6.

[47] *The Face of Love*, Gilbert Shaw, Mowbray, 1959, p. 189; rev. ed. SLG Press, 1977, p. 87. Available for free download from www.slgpress.co.uk

[48] *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, Eric Metaxas, Nelson, 2010.

[49] Mark 10: 45.

authority and glory, can the Church effectively fulfil its ministry, but by renouncing all these temptations of Satan.

The model presented by the Suffering Servant is one of the great characteristics of the Church's ministry, but one which above all determines the nature of priesthood in the Church. That applies to the Church's threefold participation in Christ's Prophetic, Priestly and Kingly Ministry, for the Church is engaged in all these as a servant bearing the Cross like the man of Cyrene. It is indeed in terms of the suffering-ministry that we are to see the basic unity in the Church's prophetic, priestly, and kingly functions.[50]

REVIEW ARTICLES

JESUS THE CHRIST

ANDREW TEAL

Jesus the Christ, Walter Kasper, T & T Clark International, 2011, £14.99. ISBN: 978-0-5672-0964-1.

Cardinal Walter Kasper, formerly President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, wrote his important work *Jesus the Christ* in the mid-1970s, and it first appeared in English in 1976. It was reprinted by Continuum last year, unchanged apart from a new introduction. A key strength of this work, which has stood the test of dramatically-changing times, is the axiomatic manner in which Kasper addresses the humanity of Jesus as pivotal in telling the story of who Jesus is, and who God is.

Historically, orthodoxy has approached this question 'from above': the subject of the person in the narrative is the divine Word

[50] *The Mediation of Christ,* Thomas F. Torrance, T & T Clarke, 1992.

incarnate. Clearly Kasper is committed to a means of responding to the central Christological question, 'Who do you say that I am?' in the widest possible terms. And for this reason his work takes refreshingly seriously the conviction that, as the valid self-communication of God for all time, the human face of God is real. This means that all the ways in which we explore, understand, and engage with a human being are methodologically appropriate to approaching Jesus the Christ and, in him, the mystery of God.

This evaluation of the re-publication first reviews and assesses the material and the book's contribution to Christology. It then explores its relevance beyond the academy, and its usefulness to each of us, at whatever stage of life or faith we find ourselves, as, in the fragility and woundedness of who we are, we are challenged to answer that central question, 'Who do you say that I am?'

The new edition of Kasper's book reasserts his approach to Christology, based on an orthodox determination to hold in tension the apparently contradictory aspects of Jesus's nature and life—his real humanity and his true divinity—in a united person. The strength of re-publication without revision is that it allows Kasper, nearly forty years on, to provide in his new introduction an evaluative analysis of the issues and of his work. The weakness is the inevitable feeling of a great leap backwards from that contemporary introduction into an old, if classic, text. The revised book is provocative and important, but I would venture to say that it is not quite worth the investment needed if it is simply a re-purchase, but that it is worth a look-through in a library.

In the 1976 text, we can see Kasper outline, with flair and thematic clarity, Christological trends in modern theology in terms of historical and New Testament theologies. He reviews the 'Quest for the Historical Jesus' in a manner still cogent because of its appreciation that this affirms the eternal significance of actual, accessible history. Central to the original book is his concern for an organic nuance in interpreting Jesus, that is, a textured, holistic vision of a Christology connecting human contingency with divine Reality. In doing this he assigns Bultmann's method of demythologization to the project of the English deists (p. 32), a rare veering into a less-than-convincing caricature of another scholar's method. Though he is not at his best here, Kasper does prepare the

road well for a Rahnerian synthesis (p. 36). Of particular interest to this study is how Kasper's approach with historical intellectual integrity fits with a search for meaning, salvation and spirituality in what has become late- or post-modernity. Kasper's distinctive approach to the life and teaching of Jesus (p. 53 f.) is that the *Leitmotif* in the narratives, teaching and miracles, the conflicts and events, is the dynamic that, 'Love, as it were, entraps evil and by doing so, it overcomes it and creates the possibility of a new start.'

Kasper recoils from readings of Jesus as a political activist. Love is never brutish or revolutionary, he urges—a sideswipe at his perceptions of the agenda of Liberation Theology (p. 57). The emergent emphasis is that the most compelling icon of Jesus the Christ is 'not just the man for others, but the man from God and for God'. Kasper's evaluation of the *kerygma*, the direct proclamation of the Good News, also embodies the 'Catholic method' of stretching the frame of a question to see broader connections. He accomplishes this very well, with sustained coherence. His modest, but sound, exploration of the Kingdom of God in terms of contemporary expectations of theocracy, the rule of God, brings out in its first-century context the theological character of Jesus' emphasis. Hence Kasper does not shirk from exploring the significance of miracles in the demonstration of the Good News as visible eruptions of God's self in this man. Kasper neither attempts rationalistic explanation nor an a-historical assertion about their factuality. Instead, he sees the whole through the lens of first-century apocalyptic and the eschatological character of the Christ-event. This is the context for appropriating Jesus' incomprehensible death by torture, and the explosion of life from utter hopelessness which is Resurrection (p. 112 f.). So, the whole of Jesus' life is not merely a manifestation of an eschatological hope, but 'a paraphrase for the word of God and his Kingdom' (Barth, see p. 119).

The chapter on the Resurrection is the most useful for those exploring modern theological thought about God, Christ, and salvation, and the most pertinent for formal study beyond strictly New Testament concerns. The section on the Mediator (pp. 218-56, especially pp. 220-3) is pedagogically masterful, in demonstrating patristic teaching.

There are some questions confronting the reader, though; not exactly 'gripes', but certainly puzzlements. For example, the discussion about the Son of Man (p. 185 f.) still patterns classical Christological approaches from above, where a narrative really only makes sense from the perspective of the divine subject taking flesh. But more problematic is Kasper's review of Jesus' message and the Kingdom of God (p. 61 f.) in terms of theocracy, shunning any political use of the gospel. Part of this theocracy has to be justice: *Shalom* necessitates a refocusing of priorities. Kasper admits that we get to the concept of Kingdom only with great difficulty, but part of the whole picture is the materiality of social justice and liberation. There is evidence here of over-reaction of some forms of Western European and North American Catholicism to theologies of liberation.

The real achievement, however, appears to me to be Kasper's dogged determination to focus on the provocative question of how this singular life, this unique, specific, history-bound Jesus, can be the definitive Word of God to creation. How may we appropriate this mystery beyond the historical context of eschatologically-orientated apocalyptic of the first century? How can we do this truthfully and deeply, without collapsing into quasi-fundamentalist doctrinal certainties, or into Jesulatry (that form of idolatry which remains fastened on Jesus the Man, failing to pass beyond his humanity to the Jesus who is Christ, and therefore to meet God)? Kasper points out that there is 'yet another twist to this hope' (p. 63). And here is the irony: the continuing life, impact and reception of this specific incarnate Word isn't relativism at all, but the perpetual outworking of the scandal of particularity of the face of God in Jesus Christ, refracted authentically in every face, so that we may 'mark in every face we meet' not merely the wounds and 'marks of weakness, marks of woe' (as William Blake poetically observed), but the very face of God.

How might we recognize this face? How do we become aware that this real Jesus is our companion, so that we can push out into the stormy depths of our identities and histories with the presence of the fisherman-Lord, and the teaching of this companion-Wisdom who reveals God as Love?

Kasper prompts us to ponder the deepest questions of our existence with a Christological lens to focus questions of life and death, trusting that the harrowing of our hells and the sanctifying of our lives is the power of the Good News of him who really saves us from the dreadful grip of sin and death. Spirituality is not, then, the icing upon the cake for those whose stomachs are full, but every person's very life. The depiction of the Resurrected One, who in his action and his passivity is raising and being raised, awakening from the dead and being awakened, connects with our spiritual journeying in its negotiating between passiveness and action, in its being both sheer gift, and also hard-won accomplishment, both grace and discipline. This focus on Jesus the Christ invites our energetic co-operation with the Holy Spirit, the divinization of our passions, and eventually, in faith, of our diminishments, passivities and deaths.

The Good News is of God's completely generous love, the origin of all reality in the human life of Jesus—reiterating the Christian hope in the 'wholly human character of salvation' (p. 196). The person and cause of God cannot be separated in Jesus, who is himself the person and cause of God and humanity. Unveiling the life-giving implications of the Resurrection in the fragility of our bodies and minds, our lives, losses, and loves, is the stuff of our discipleship.

This all sounds rather intellectual, so I will add some very different insights communicated recently by two friends. One came from a discussion with a Benedictine oblate, as we explored what spiritual guidance really means. He was recollecting the teaching of Metropolitan Kallistos Ware that our life in Christ is about the Gospel made personal. According to Ware, the Gospel is not to be interpreted in fixed and abstract terms, as a legal code, a set of moral rules. The Good News of salvation in Christ is communicated to each one of us in a specific and immediate way, directly and personally.

The other is a more contemporary communication. A colleague and friend forwarded me an email, an unashamedly emotive, yet inspiring, story of how our frail and wounded humanity can be transcendent. It is a powerful contemporary type of narrative, pointing to the self-transcendent nature of humanizing relationships.

It does so in a genre and style readily accessible to a secularized internet culture, yet seeking to discern the theological possibility of a grandeur in human being. The email tells of the extraordinary inclusion of a person with learning difficulties in a competitive game, and how a mysterious transformation of that game enhanced the humanity of all involved. Here it is, in an abbreviated form:

> At a fundraising dinner for a school serving children with learning disabilities, the father of one of the students delivered a speech. He asked this question: 'When not interfered with by outside influences, everything nature does is done with perfection. Yet my son, Shay, cannot learn things as other children do. He cannot understand things as other children do. Where is the natural order of things in my son?' He continued: 'I believe that when a child like Shay comes into the world, an opportunity to realize true human nature presents itself, and it comes in the way other people treat that child.'
>
> He related how he and his son witnessed a baseball game, and how his son longed to be allowed to play. The losing side acquiesced to his request, which made both the young man and his father profoundly happy. Shay's participation initially appeared tokenistic until, near the end of the game, the boy was given the bat. Shay didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, much less connect with the ball. Yet it didn't destroy the team's purposefulness, but rather transformed tribalism into something greater. Although the pitcher could easily have thrown the ball to the first baseman, so that Shay would have been out and that would have been the end of the game, he threw the ball right over the first baseman's head, out of reach of all team mates. Everyone started yelling, 'Shay, run to first!'
>
> Never in his life had Shay run that far, but he made it. Everyone yelled, 'Run to second, run to second!' Catching his breath, Shay awkwardly ran towards second, struggling to make it to the base. By the time Shay rounded towards second, the right fielder had the ball—the smallest guy on their team who now had his first chance to be the hero for his team. But he, too, intentionally threw the ball high and far over the third baseman's head. Shay ran toward third base deliriously as the runners ahead of him circled the bases toward home. The spectators were on their feet, screaming, 'Shay, run home!

> Run home!' Shay ran to home, stepped on the plate, and was cheered as the hero who won the game for his team.
>
> 'That day', said the father softly with tears, 'the boys from both teams helped bring a piece of true love and humanity into this world. Shay died that winter, but having been, and making me, so happy, and coming home and seeing his mother amazed as she embraced the hero of the day.'

There are questions, of course, about whether this story is patronizing, unrealistic, or even true. But it also appeals to our irrepressible hope that each person not only has a value, but also a vocation. It was Shay's vocation to draw love and life and holiness out of opposing teams without the din of words.

The story has a particular resonance for me, because it reminds me of how a vocation to ministry and theology formed in me, as I spent weekends looking after Arthur, the profoundly-disabled eldest son of my theological inspiration, Frances Young. I spent them feeding, changing, and playing with him, watching him repeat 'Oh Arthur!' as he delighted in the interplay of shade and sunshine in the garden through his arched hand, shaking his toy plastic hammer rattle. Perhaps that is why I don't write off the email story as mere sentiment. It is the story of the power of humanity to humanize others: a story of vocation, and salvation. The email's ending is compelling. It observed that the story would probably be passed on only to a selection of our friends. But Love is both specific and unconditional, and has a power to transform all:

> We all have thousands of opportunities every single day to help realize the 'natural order of things'. So many seemingly trivial interactions between two people present us with a choice: Do we pass along a spark of love and humanity, or do we pass up those opportunities and leave the world a little bit colder in the process?

Kasper's book connects this humanizing power of the image of God in all people with the perfect human icon of divine Love in Jesus Christ. He recognizes that this is possible only because Jesus, the Christ, is the unrepeatable Human Face of God, refracted kaleidoscopically in each person throughout all time. This re-publication of Kasper's work celebrates this connection clearly.

STANDING UP TO BE COUNTED

Courage, Love and Theology in the Face of Death, 1944-5

HANS JÖRG AND BERNHARD SCHÜNEMANN

Abschiedsbriefe Gefängnis Tegel September 1944—Januar 1945 ('Parting Letters from Tegel Prison September 1944—January 1945'), Helmuth James von Moltke & Freya von Moltke, ed. Helmuth Caspar von Moltke & Ulrike von Moltke, published in German by C. H. Beck, Munich, 2011, € 29.95. ISBN: 978-3-406-61375-3.

The publication last year of the final letters between James von Moltke and his wife Freya, written largely in secret before his execution by the Nazi régime in January 1945, has generated much interest amongst theologians and amongst Germans in general. Moltke was, together with Father Alfred Delp SJ, in Tegel Prison in Berlin and condemned to death. They were leading thinkers in the Kreisau Circle (*Kreisauer Kreis*). Both, without knowing it, were in Tegel Prison at the same time as Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Moltke was working in the Counter-Intelligence Service, Foreign Division, under Admiral Canaris at the time of his arrest, and had links with Britain due to his sojourn in Oxford as a student. His desperate plight in Tegel led him to deep discoveries about God and his Christian faith. As well as being love letters, these letters reflect theology in the making by someone who never had any formal theological training. At the same time, and in the same prison, Bonhoeffer wrote his famous 'Letters from Prison'.

My father, Hans Jörg Schünemann, and I have corresponded about this book of Moltke's letters, and what follows is my translation of what amounts to a review written by my father. Born in 1925, he lived through the Third Reich as a child and teenager, being drafted into the army on the Eastern Front for the last year of the war. His interest in Christianity is that of an engaged observer.

In this review article, I'd like to commend the book to those who can read German, and also to make something of its world available to those who do not read German, since it may be some time, if ever, before this is translated into English.

BERNHARD SCHÜNEMANN

(1) *Background: the Kreisau Circle*

The letters between Helmuth James von Moltke and his wife Freya were written from September 1944 to January 1945. After the failed assassination attempt on Hitler (20 July 1944), James was moved from 'protective custody' in the concentration camp at Ravensbrück to Tegel Prison in Berlin. It was here, under intensified security conditions—for most hours of the day and night, he was bound hand and foot—that he wrote the letters to his wife. The letters were smuggled out by the prison chaplain, Harald Poelchau, who risked his life doing this. In the difficult conditions of the final year of the war, Freya regularly travelled the 500 kilometres from Kreisau to Berlin, to bring a bare minimum of essential supplies to him in prison, and on very rare occasions to meet him when permission for this was granted.

This 580-page collection of letters was not published until after Freya's death in 2010. These are documents which, in a sense, decisively end a long discussion in Germany about the nature of German resistance to the Hitler dictatorship. For years post-war West Germany was haunted by doubts about the heroic nature of resistance groups, including those who plotted to assassinate Hitler, because of their demoralising effect on the soldiers fighting on the Eastern Front. Only in 1958, following the publication of a new edition of the book *Die deutsche Opposition gegen Hitler* ('The German Opposition to Hitler')[1] by the German-Jewish historian Hans Rothfels, were these ghosts laid to rest and the heroes of the German resistance to Hitler and his extremely well-oiled machine of 'total war' appropriately honoured. (An earlier edition, published in 1949, had not been so widely disseminated, or received the same attention.)

To understand the significance of the Kreisau Circle, one has to know that Moltke always distanced himself from the group around Stauffenberg and Goerdeler, who were plotting the July assassination attempt. He did not want murder to mark the beginning of the new Germany. He wanted a new beginning after the war, with a redistribution of land and a social system as described and demanded by the radical socialists in his Circle. This difference in his approach to opposition to Nazism is illuminated in many of the

[1] Fischer-Bucherei, 1958.

letters, and it culminates in his palpable relief that it had been decided at a sitting of the *Volksgerichtshof* ('People's Court') that his case would be treated separately; in Moltke's words, he was 'out of this Goerdeler mess' (p. 473, cf. pp. 486-7).[2] At this sitting, the President of the Court, Roland Freisler, had separated the Moltke case from all the others. This 'fanatical' but 'significant' judge (p. 457) had obviously recognised Moltke as the leading intellect in the resistance movement. The hearing became 'a kind of dialogue': 'From whom do you take your orders? From the beyond, or from Adolf Hitler?' (p. 478). Moltke, already condemned to death, regarded this deadly serious dialogue with satisfaction, and so did not make use of the opportunity for a final summing up, to which he had a right. Through Freisler it had become clear that Moltke had 'laid the axe at the root of National Socialism' (p. 531), while Goerdeler's plan would only have been 'a change of façade' (p. 531).

(2) *The Struggle Without Hope*

The appalling conditions which Moltke endured in Tegel Prison for the last four months of his life (pp. 106-7) set free in him enormous reserves of power, which liberated him not only to pursue solutions for the care of his wife and children after his death with great energy, but also to describe his own state of mind and questions of faith, and to work tirelessly on his legal defence for the court hearing, which could come at any time. He writes that the time spent in Nazi prisons has given him the opportunity to develop a 'realistic relationship with [his own] death, and therefore with eternity' (p. 396). Freya, Moltke's wife, describes her happiness when he writes that they are now 'more married than ever before in the past 13 years' (p. 231). She has found the inner resources to cope joyfully with the administration of the (considerable) country house and lands, as well as the upbringing of the two children.

The 'intimate and close neighbourliness of death' (p. 396) brought with it very deep and real challenges to his faith, with which he struggled in the loneliness of his cell. He had memorised lengthy passages from both the Old and the New Testaments. His favourite books were the Psalms and St John's Gospel; the latter

[2] The page references are to the German volume of letters.

because it contains the mysteries of the Holy Spirit (cf. p. 92). He felt that to understand the New Testament at all, one needs a profound understanding of the Old Testament. Only when read together can one begin to understand the theology of St Paul (cf. p. 93). Moltke regarded the Letter to the Romans as central to an understanding of the Resurrection. He was enabled to come to terms conceptually with the Resurrection through Kant's insights into absolute timelessness and spacelessness (pp. 53, 533). Moltke regarded the Sermon on the Mount as 'the absolute pinnacle of ethical teaching in the New Testament' (p. 95). It was the guiding principle of all that he did and laid aside.

The letters are shot through with the bitter prospect of being hanged, and at the same time with hope of being able to avoid this fate. He tries to overcome his existential fear by meditating on words from Hebrews 11: 1: 'Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen' (p. 164). He tries to live with the feeling that God cares for him (p. 485). But this faith has to be struggled for every day (cf. p. 532), and it remains weighed down by the underlying thought that he does not know for what purpose God might still need him (p. 490). These doubts bring him close to the Old Testament, and specifically to Isaiah, the 'greatest of the prophets' (pp. 417-8), who describes the utter otherness (inapproachability) of God, his unfathomable decision-making and his namelessness. Isaiah is not concerned about the needs of humanity, for it is God of whom he speaks (p. 417). 'I, I am he, who blots out your transgressions for my own sake',[3] but, 'not so that we are justified … we could go to hell … no, because God wills … does he forgive sins.' Isaiah's words are those of someone who has seen God 'face to face' (p. 418). All this can be read in Moltke's letter to his beloved Freya on New Year's Eve 1944.

But through his encounter with Freisler on 10 January, all these doubts are overcome. Now he is able to see himself as Jonah, who will be spat out by the fish after three days (p. 490). In the remaining 12 days of his life, despite further existential doubts, he became totally prepared to entrust himself to God's merciful guidance.

HANS JÖRG SCHÜNEMANN

[3] Isa. 43: 25.

THE KREISAU FOUNDATION FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING IN EUROPE

FREYA VON MOLTKE was 33 when Helmuth James von Moltke was murdered by the Nazis in Berlin in January 1945. Months later, the Second World War came to an end and Freya, like many other Germans in Silesia, lost her home. After leaving Kreisau with her two sons, she went with them for a number of years to South Africa. She moved back to Germany for four years and then to Vermont in the USA, where she lived until her death on 1 January 2010.

The picturesque village of Kreisau became part of post-war Poland and known as Krzyżowa. It is situated about 35 miles from Wrocław (formerly Breslau) and about five miles from Świdnica (formerly Schweidnitz). The eighteenth-century Kreisau Castle and the rest of the von Moltke family estate came into state ownership. Outwardly, it fell into decay, as did the nearby village; yet the work of the Kreisau Circle and its principles of tolerance and of openness of approach to social organization were remembered by many. History was, in a sense, repeated as the Cold War drew to a close. The plans of the Kreisau Circle became a model for some who opposed the communist régime and sought a way forward for Poland after the end of communism. People from Poland, East and West Germany, other European countries and the USA worked for Kreisau to become a place of international mutual understanding. This project was dear to the heart of Freya von Moltke, who participated from her home in Vermont.

The Berlin Wall fell in 1989 and, with it, the Iron Curtain. Not long afterwards, a meeting took place at Kreisau between the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, and the first democratically-elected Polish President, Tadeusz Mazowiecki. As part of a broader European civic movement, the 'New Kreisau' movement made efforts to purchase the former Kreisau estate. This was supported by a charity bearing the name of Freya von Moltke, who herself worked untiringly to support the redevelopment of Kreisau and travelled there annually from the USA. In a Europe which had been so long divided, one of the goals from the beginning was to support European consciousness and mutual encounter amongst young people. By 1994, the first part of an international youth meeting site

had been rebuilt. The site as a whole was officially opened in 1998. The buildings at Kreisau are owned by the Krzyżowa Foundation for European Understanding, an independent Polish organization. There are at present over 150 projects per annum, and up to 10,000 visitors from many nations and of diverse views. As Freya commented in 2004, 'Kreisau fulfils every day the task assigned to it: bringing youth together on European soil.'

Krzyżowa Foundation for European Understanding
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SANDY RYRIE was until his retirement Rector of St John's Episcopal Church, Jedburgh, in the Scottish Borders. He is the author of the SLG Press pamphlets *Prayer of the Heart & Prayer in the Night* and *Prayer as Self-offering*, of two books on contemplative prayer and one on the Psalms. His most recent book is *The Desert Movement*. He is a Priest Associate of the Community of the Sisters of the Love of God.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Fear & Friendship: Anglicans engaging with Islam, ed. Frances Ward & Sarah Coakley, afterword by Archbishop of Canterbury, 2012, Continuum, £14.99. ISBN: 978-1-4411-0149-5.

Here is a timely, honest and very readable collection of essays from the Littlemore Group, a gathering of 'Anglican clerics who have devoted themselves simultaneously to scholarship and to the demands of ordinary parish life' (p. vii). *Fear & Friendship* follows an earlier collection, *Praying for England*; the later book explores relations between Christianity and Islam, particularly in the light of the crises of New York 9/11 and London 7/7. Although written by Anglicans, the issues described are by no means confined to Anglican/Muslim exchanges. There is a strong emphasis on hospitality, as Anglicans, forming the established Church in this country, are placed in the ambivalent position of officially representing Christianity. How do Christians, especially those finding themselves in numerically modest numbers in contrast to a multi-ethnic population, engage with those of other faiths, in particular with the wide diversity of British Islam? How do we negotiate relations with and between them? Are we to react with fear or competitive animosity, or are we to seek to establish mutual respect and understanding? It is of great importance to comprehend the diversity of both religions as we try to meet and co-operate with one another as people of faith in the midst of a highly secular society.

Each of the essays describes stories of differing and imaginative approaches to engagement that readily suggest to the reader possible ways forward in inevitable encounters with Muslim neighbours. The essays are presented by both Anglican and Muslim writers. They all stress the need to listen attentively to unfamiliar voices and cultures in order to deepen mutual relations, and to inspire further common action for the building of a culture of faith and peace in Britain.

The particularly outstanding essays for this reviewer include the first by Alex Hughes entitled 'Fear and Friendship: Conversation or Conversion?' which describes his encounters with Mohammed,

who first contacted him with the evident intention of converting him to Islam. The honesty and humility that shine through this story are heart-warming, not least because of insights gained by Hughes of the value of unselfconscious public worship recognised by him in the Muslim discipline of prayer.

The next essay of particular value is that by Philip Lewis: 'From Identity Politics to Engagement: Making Sense of Muslim Communities in Britain'. Here he describes the broad diversity of British Islam—cultural, historical and traditional—and how British Muslims adjust, or not, to Western culture. He stresses the important issue of education and the perspective of imams in this country.

Following this is a contribution from Nuzhat Ali who writes on 'Islamophobia' from her experience as a child born in Pakistan, but growing up in Bradford. She holds a positive view of the good elements in British society, believing that there is much in Islam capable of enhancing that good. She has worked with Frances Ward and others in Bradford Cathedral, revealing to public view the value of inter-religious friendship. In recounting her personal life and experiences of Islamophobia she exposes the dangers and distortions to which it leads on both sides. Frances Ward's essay, 'Much Ado About Nothing at Bradford Cathedral' follows, describing the friendships she has cultivated with Muslim women and examining the potentialities and boundaries of such bonds. She relates how a shared experience of Shakespeare's play led to discussion of the suppression of women in both cultures. She makes the important point of the value of such feminine friendships and the contribution these can make for a harmonious society.

The final two chapters were, for me, especially engaging. Catriona Laing's experience of 'Scriptural Reasoning' is offered in the context of her personal experience, and illustrates the value of sharing the Scriptures of those of other faiths. She makes the important observation that such sharing is best set in the context of common action and concern. The last contribution is that of Sister Judith, SLG, which was the most heart-warming for me personally, as well as for my community; the book was read with keen interest in our refectory. 'Hospitality in Prayer' offers the story of Sister Judith's shared silent prayer with her Muslim neighbours, which

began as a response to the events of 7 July 2005, 'a response to an act of violence which violated the heart of Islam' (p. 133). By such silent prayer Christians and Muslims of strongly opposing traditions were gathered into one in the one God. Sister Judith honestly recounts her own fears and questioning of her Christian integrity by her personal use of texts from the *Qur'an*: would such a practice imply a denigration of her own prayer practice? Yet there was nothing in these verses remotely incompatible with Christian prayer; they could be prayed from a Christian heart as a means of bridge-building between faiths. The question was resolved by the reality of the shared experience.

The 'Afterword' by Archbishop Rowan Williams tackles the crucial question of conversion that often or always underlies interfaith encounters, whether consciously or unconsciously. Both Christianity and Islam claim universal truth, and such a claim is inherently threatening to each, as well as to other religions with whom we try to engage. All fear secular universalism. How can we engage with others with integrity to our own deepest convictions? He writes:

> Any 'conversion' that is the result of manipulation, force, threat or whatever is bound to be unreal. The only conversion that matters is a recognition that here, in these relationships to God and humanity, I am able to be who I am created to be. Or perhaps, more accurately, I discover something already true about myself, a solidarity I had never sensed before. (p. 149)

Underlying the many questions presented and explored by these essays lies the reality of our human solidarity under God, and our shared discovery of that reality under the penetrating light of God.

SISTER MARY JOHN MARSHALL, O.S.B.

Healing Agony: Re-Imagining Forgiveness, Stephen Cherry, Continuum, 2012, £14.99. ISBN: 978-1-4411-1958-4

As a priest Stephen Cherry is often brought face to face with the complexities of both how to forgive and how to begin the work of forgiveness. He has been wrestling for many years with what forgiveness is and means. This book opens with a pastoral situation

where he had to give an instant reply as to whether forgiveness was required; it ends with advice for those who listen to others who are beginning to move towards forgiveness for wrongs done to them. In between are chapters considering how forgiveness is possible, how it 'works' when a victim wants to forgive, and whether personal forgiveness that is unreciprocated is valid. That sentence is a too-brief digest of a challenging and thoughtful—and thought-provoking—book.

Dr Cherry looks carefully at several situations which have received extensive media coverage in the past twenty years or so, the bombing in Enniskillen in Northern Ireland and the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa amongst them. Whether it is possible to forgive those with whom you must still live in changed political situations is a perennial difficulty, especially for anyone who has been involved in war or civil strife. I found especially helpful his assertion, illustrated by the case of the late Eric Lomax, who wrote *The Railway Man*, about his experiences as a Japanese prisoner of war in Burma. He shows how forgiveness requires time, both to begin and to continue, and it may not be finished in this lifetime. Very few of us can state that our innermost person has not been violated in ways that cause on-going hurt or diminishment in our lives. It may be many years before we can admit that there is a need for the healing which comes with forgiveness.

> … in the aftermath of hurt much suffering is internal and goes unseen. Forgiving might help people live with the consequences of harm and hurt but will not eliminate the consequences. As many have observed, in some cases forgiving is something which has to begin afresh everyday. In this way it is like both grief and love. The jagged hole within is something which the wise forgiver will seek not to close, but to live with.
>
> Forgiveness is slow, deep, enigmatic, unpredictable and vulnerable. (p. 152)

But once admitted, new pathways of thought and perception arise. The author recognises that this is almost impossible without talking to someone about the hurt—as Lomax did to Helen Bamber, who founded the charity Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture (now called Freedom from Torture).

One of the strengths of this book is the emphasis that broken relationships must be healed for us to be fully human. Ideally the victim should be able to tell the perpetrator how the wrong done has affected his or her life, with repentance spoken by the one who has done the hurt; but in reality many of us have to live with the work half-complete. Even if hurt can be articulated, the wrongdoers may be convinced of the rightness of their actions, or there may be no possibility of expressing sorrow to, or asking forgiveness of, the wronged person. In the chapter 'Visiting Evil' in particular, which explores what it means to engage with someone who has perpetrated manifestly evil acts, Cherry develops the meaning of his phrase 'distasteful empathy'. A degree of compassion and relationship with the perpetrator arises, which is both surprising and antipathetic to the victim's deepest feelings. However, it becomes a necessary element in the work of forgiving the other.

The central chapter of the book, 'Forgiveness as Spirituality', is a long meditation on Jesus in Gethsemane, on the Cross, after the Resurrection and at the Last Supper (in that order). This could form the basis for a series of fruitful Holy Week reflections. Earlier in the book Jesus' teaching on forgiveness has been considered, and the author has concluded 'that his followers should actively seek to develop a forgiving heart' (p. 117). However, here we are urged to look at what forgiveness is—or isn't—for Jesus, and how badly the disciples fail at accompanying him during the time of the greatest unravelling and destruction of his humanity. But we are reminded what God is like, evidenced in our baptism. It is

> not an initiation into a process of trying to repent but is a more literal washing away of, or freeing from, sin and its consequences. In baptism, we see that forgiving is what God does. God's concern and care for sinners takes the risky first step to support the sinful soul before it has yet repented. Freed from the burden of seeking forgiveness the baptized person has the task of seeking to live a life of repentance which involves finding authentic ways to forgive others. (p. 130)

Lest anyone is thinking by now that only big and difficult issues need forgiving, I should note that one of the early chapters, 'Anger, Resentment and Grudge', reflects on what could be called 'everyday' situations to which we react angrily, or which build up

resentment in us or long-term and long-held grudges. As in the chapter just mentioned, there is material here for reflection which can lead into a closer examination of how personal anger arises and is dealt with. There are cases when anger is justified, but most often we have to admit it has arisen from some thwarted desire or cherished opinion of our own.

> Sometimes our anger will be a sign to us that our intuitions have realized that things are wrong, very wrong. Other times it will just be our ego having a fit of pique. Forgiveness calls us to be careful with our anger, and to discern its cause patiently and wisely. It also invites us to do something very strange and counter-intuitive. It invites us, when we have ascertained for certain that our anger is justified, to give it up and move beyond it. Forgiveness does not invite us not to be angry. Rather it *requires* us to take the risk of anger when we recognize injustice. (p. 83)

Perhaps one of the most important ideas Cherry explores is whether justice and forgiveness can walk hand-in-hand. Justice is necessary where the law has been broken and people's lives have been shattered or defiled. But it does not stand for or preclude forgiveness by the victim, nor a conviction by the victim that justice must be seen to be done. There is a hard work to be encompassed here, especially in the face of anger, encouraged by the media in so many ways, and nearly always the first response when one is a victim.

> The forgiving heart … is one where there is space for justice, for the future, for faith, and, through empathy, for the one who caused the harm or who perpetrated the violation. Any actual forgiving involves all four of these dimensions of facets but will take on a different quality or feel depending on many contingencies. (p. 204)

So this is how to go about the matter of forgiving. It involves suffering and a constant looking forward to being in a new place. We cannot go back to the place before the violation, but we can expect that there will be something more to be learned about the Love of God as we make small efforts to move out of the place of hurt. 'Forgiveness is like love in that it comes only from the heart' (p. 193). This is how it is 're-imagined'.

This is not a self-help book, although the title might lead some to think so. The importance and necessity of relating to other people in the process of forgiveness precludes pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps. It is, rather, a book for anyone engaged in pastoral or counselling ministry. However, by giving engaged attention to someone struggling with forgiveness the listener will inevitably need to look at personal unforgiven memories and find ways of cultivating a forgiving heart. It is not an easy read because of the challenges it poses, but well worth the effort.

SISTER CHRISTINE SLG

ReModelling Medicine, Jeremy Swayne, Saltire Books, Glasgow, 2012, £48.99. ISBN: 978-1-908126-00-6.

Sometimes it may be best to wait, and indeed even for several decades, before attempting to put pen to paper! Time, perspective and experience are important ingredients of wisdom. Dr Jeremy Swayne has done just this. He brings nearly 40 years' experience in general practice and the National Health Service to this fascinating narrative. His skill, humanity, careful attention to detail, intelligent organisation and capacity to open up and develop an argument are all more than evident in this text.

There are 20 chapters organised into five parts. The introduction sets the scene, followed by a discussion about disease, which leads to part two which explores medicine and its inter-relationship with society, the individual, science and the patient. Swayne is clear that medicine is in crisis, as it is faced with an on-going dilemma of cost and resources, as well as a more important loss of its core vocation and morality. Parts three, four and five then argue for change in the light of the first nine chapters, which present the questions and problems. Swayne is equally convincing and compelling about the solutions. He is never prepared at any point to allow the clarity of the analysis of the difficulties to detract any energy from the reader seeing that medicine needs fundamentally to be re-modelled.

There are about one million consultations in general practice every day in the United Kingdom. Many of us will have had the experience of a doctor's skill and humanity in diagnosis and

treatment. As patients we present an extraordinary mixture of symptoms, deeply bound up with our psychological and spiritual selves. We may expect simply too much of our doctors, or our conditions may be so complex that it simply is not possible to understand what is going on in us and how best the medical profession may help us. We might reflect on what expectations we bring to the hospital or consulting room and ask whether we may ourselves have unrealistic expectations of our doctors. It is not easy to gain perspective about the task of medicine when so much is at stake!

Swayne demands that we stop and think, and he unashamedly introduces the concept of healing as his critique of the biomedical model exposes and demonstrates significant limitations. The text achieves a high quality of synthesis between philosophy, ethics, empirical evidence and the author's own experience. Here we have a rather rare example of excellence of a critically self-reflective medic demanding that we look more radically at medicine in order to achieve more for the whole person. Swayne paints a picture of medicine as both art and science, where the humanity of the Doctor is at the heart of the nurture and promotion of health and well-being. This provides a very radical and countercultural alternative to what some have viewed as an over-managed Health Service, where too much political change has resulted in low morale.

Swayne's work deserves to be widely read but, more critically, it demands action for change. I wonder what it would need for some of these core ideas to be translated into social, cultural and economic action. Although that would have made this volume impossibly longer, these debates certainly need to be placed within a global perspective.

Finally this reviewer wonders how the theological and spiritual formation of the author, an ordained priest, have shaped these arguments, and what role the Churches may have in this remodelling?

JAMES WOODWARD

Saints, Sacrilege and Sedition: Religion and Conflict in the Tudor Reformations, Eamon Duffy, Bloomsbury, 2012, £20.00, hardback.
ISBN: 978-1-4411-8117-6.

Let it be said first that this is a collection of essays, rather than a sustained study of any particular aspect or period of what Duffy carefully calls the Tudor Reformations. Of course, themes are re-visited which are already familiar to us from his previous works, *The Stripping of the Altars* and *Fires of Faith*. Thus in Part II of this book, three chapters offer detailed studies of parochial life (with six colour and ten black-and-white plates), whilst Part III gives us further perspectives on, and rehabilitation of, Cardinal Pole. But in the Introduction and first two essays, Duffy is concerned not least to explain quite how we have come to the present point in Reformation studies. The first chapter raises the spectre of Providentialism, which was to haunt English Catholics and Protestants. Was England indeed specially favoured of God? Pole certainly thought so, just as firmly as did his adversaries, who saw Divine Mercy manifested in salvation from Papal tyranny. Anglicans who go on pilgrimage to Walsingham still sing of these views in the Pilgrim hymn:

> And this land, which had once been our Lady's own dower
> Had its Church now enslaved by the secular power.

This leads to Duffy pointing out the initially close relationship with the Continental Reformers, from which the Church of England gradually drew back under Elizabeth; a withdrawal which he sees perfected in George Herbert's 'The British Church': 'breath-takingly arrogant', Duffy terms that poem's last stanza.

This may alert us to some strong sentiments. In the Introduction Simon Jenkins' understanding is judged 'woefully lacking'; and as Duffy explores the development of Reformation historical writing, so the judgments continue:

> The established church's quiet and rather dour domestic ideal of Christian holiness had little space for the heroic, and no room at all for explorers of the spirit …

Professor A. G. Dickens, 'of impeccably Protestant stock', long this country's historical authority on the Reformation, writes 'the purest

tosh … but it is revealing tosh all the same'; his account of the Reformation has 'totally unravelled'. Meanwhile the Dean and Chapter of Durham, who allowed Kapur's film 'Elizabeth' to be shot in their cathedral, should suffer 'eternal disgrace' in view of its historical bias and inadequacy. This is quite knock-about stuff (for whom was the essay originally written?), but it has a point. Historical methods and perspectives change; and the default position can no longer be one of committed (or even atheist) Protestantism, which leads neatly into the chapters of detailed parochial study, seeking insight into the late medieval mind's assumptions and hopes.

Personal detail is taken further in two chapters on St John Fisher—the only Cardinal, Duffy reminds us, ever to have been martyred. Treating first of his personal history and then of his spirituality, we see him deeply rooted in medieval devotional tradition, affirming its affective approach to God. However, it is an error to exclude him from humanistic influence; and here Duffy points to the danger of taking Erasmus as the sole exemplar and pattern for newer ways of discipleship. In the end, what impresses with Fisher is his courage. A royal favourite when it so suited the king, who knew that he had a bishop of European standing on his hands, Fisher did not scruple to preach in ways that compared Henry VIII to Herod. The bishops of that age were not necessarily spineless, but many of them were aware of needs for reform in the Church's life and therefore not minded to dismiss out of hand Henry's own actions (which, whilst variable, never amounted to an outright attack on the Mass). Fisher saw more clearly than his colleagues, however, and was the only one of them to stand against the king, and so to kneel at the block.

But Fisher was not the only martyr. For Duffy, St Thomas More's execution points towards an answer as to why there was little apparent resistance to the later Henrican and Edwardine reforms. He notes that there is a significant body of material protesting against them, but that it dates largely from the time of Queen Mary. It had become safe to speak out; and the violence of reform had made the issues (anticipated by Fisher) clearer for many more. Just as the Royal Supremacy under Henry and Edward had successfully silenced both Catholic-minded preachers and presses,

so security under Mary opened the mouths of protest. Cardinal Pole took advantage of this mood to explain the importance of Papal primacy. Previously, perhaps, it had been largely taken for granted and therefore, when it was first questioned, few had known how to defend it. Now, however, the spiritual and moral disorder that had followed Henry's rejection of Rome made it clear that the Petrine primacy was indeed the cornerstone of the Church. Elsewhere Duffy has argued for the success of this teaching, certainly among the bishops and leading scholars, so many of whom, maintaining their Catholicism, were to lose their sees or depart overseas in Elizabeth's reign.

A final chapter takes its cue from the well-known line in Shakespeare's Sonnet 73: 'Bare ruin'd quiers, where late the sweet birds sang'. Shakespeare himself, notoriously difficult to assess for his religion, is not the main concern; rather, Duffy looks at how Elizabethans looked back particularly on monastic history and ruins. If Jesuit priests coming to England at risk of their lives were not greatly concerned, recusant Catholics voiced their sense of loss at a whole structuring of society and way of life that had been taken from them. Yet not only recusants; it seems that the 'Rites of Durham', the evocation of that cathedral's past glories, comes from the pen of one who conformed to the Church of England. Could monasteries, though, be separated from monks? Antiquarian writers seemed to believe so, praising the institutions whilst damning the perceived corruption of their late residents. Were there, in fact, 'sweet birds' lately singing in the 'quiers'? The Sonnet leaves us with the question.

Readers of the 'Guardian' may have noticed this book reviewed by Professor McCullough, Duffy's academic opposite number at Oxford, who seems to suggest that here we have not so much history as Catholic history, and has done so rather in the manner of an irritated teacher needing to put down a bright sixth-former. The present reviewer only comments that this book is a well-worthwhile addition to what Duffy has already and valuably given us. The only black mark is to be awarded to Bloomsbury, the publishers, for a well laid-out and illustrated volume, but with repeated and obvious spelling errors.

JOHN SCOTT

Through the Year with Newman: Daily Readings, ed. Bernard Dive, Burns & Oates, £10.99. ISBN: 978-0-8264-3919-2.

Given less than a year to review a book such as this, how is justice to be done? The more organised among us may well keep up with a daily devotion; those who have days off, or are disciples by fits and starts, will remember that Newman himself saw much of the progress towards sanctity simply in the faithful performance of daily duties. I set myself a month's reading of five pages a day and thereby missed out on a crucial aspect of Bernard Dive's selection. He has taken the Catholic Church's General Calendar as his formal structure for the book, starting with the moveable feasts and continuing with the days of the year from January to December. There is an obvious advantage here: whether we go to the Eucharist, say some or all of the Daily Office or simply need a meditational focus during the day, Newman has something to say which may enlighten, assist or question. You may, of course, miss a favourite saint. St Alban doesn't make the cut, although Sts John Fisher and Thomas More do, along with the hermit St Sharbel Makhluf. But don't worry. The passages chosen may often speak directly of the saint whose feast it may be, but always with wide reference. What will, however, take some getting used to is the inevitable difference in length between the extracts. For St James (25 July) we have two-thirds of a page on Justifying Faith, and it requires reading and rereading until we understand. On the next page, for 28 July, Newman gives the briefest aphorism: 'Were it not for faith, love would become impatient.'

Bernard Dive has given us a helpful Introduction. He discusses Newman's understanding of faith, of how we come to it and of how it forms us and how we express it. That expression Newman was always concerned to see in real and tangible form. The passage chosen for 30 August puts it thus:

> Our duty lies in acts—acts of course of every kind, acts of the mind, as well as of the tongue, or of the hand; but anyhow, it lies mainly in acts; it does not directly lie in moods or feelings … he who aims vaguely and generally at being in a spiritual frame of mind is entangled in a deceit of words … Let us do our duty as it presents itself; this is the secret of true faith and peace.

Newman's younger contemporary, Dean Church, said of Newman's preaching that 'he set the heights of religion very high'. But that height of religion was earthed and rooted in the ordinariness of fidelity; just as, indeed, so much of Newman's ministry was parochial and pastoral in none-too-salubrious Littlemore and Birmingham (as he remarked to the somewhat unattractive Mgr Talbot, who invited him to Rome, 'people have souls, even in Birmingham'). At times, we will be struck by an apparent rigour (19 July): 'A bad man, if brought to heaven, would not know he was in heaven … He would see nothing wonderful there'. Yet turn to Candlemas (2 February) and Newman's account of the Presentation of the Lord:

> … there is evidently nothing great or impressive in this … we know what the world thinks of such a group … the weak and helpless, whether from age or infancy, it looks upon negligently and passes by. Yet all this that happened was really the solemn fulfilment of an ancient and emphatic prophecy. … Behold the glory; a little child and his parents, two aged persons, and a congregation without name or memorial. 'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation'.

You will find your own ways of using this book, whether daily through the year or otherwise; but you should find encouragement from Newman, however you do so.

JOHN SCOTT

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Bloomsbury:

Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People: An Introduction and Selection, ed. by Rowan Williams & Sister Benedicta Ward SLG, 2012, hardcover, £16.99.
ISBN: 978-1-4411-2354-1.

Faith in the Public Square, Rowan Williams, 2012, hardcover, £20.00. ISBN: 978-1-4081-8758-6.

Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives, Pope Benedict XVI, 2012, hardcover, £12.99, ISBN: 978-1-4081-9453-9.

Inside the Christmas Story: Reflections for Advent, Anthony and Melanie Bash, 2012, £10.99. ISBN: 978-1-4411-2158-5.

Abiding (The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2013), Ben Quash, 2012, £10.00. ISBN: 978-1-4411-5111-7.

Journeying with Jesus: Personal Reflections on the Stations of the Cross and Resurrection (The Mowbray Lent Book 2013), ed. Lucy Russell, 2012, £.9.99. ISBN: 978-1-4411-2158-5.

From SPCK Publishing:

Falling Upward: A spirituality for the two halves of life, Richard Rohr, 2012, £10.99. ISBN: 978-0-281-06891-3.

Words of Spirituality: Exploring the Inner Life, Enzo Bianchi, 2nd ed., 2012, £9.99. ISBN: 978-0-281-06867-8.

From Teresian Press, Oxford:

Elizabeth of the Trinity: The Unfolding of her Mystery; Volume 1: In the World & In Community, and *Volume 2: In the Infirmary & After Her Death;* Joanne Mosley, Teresian Press (from the Carmelite Book Service, Oxford), 2012, £10.00 per volume.
ISBN: 978-0-947916-11-4 (Vol. 1) and 978-0-947916-12-1 (Vol. 2).

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