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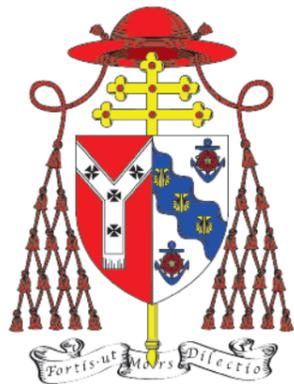
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The Beauty of Being in Love with Christ



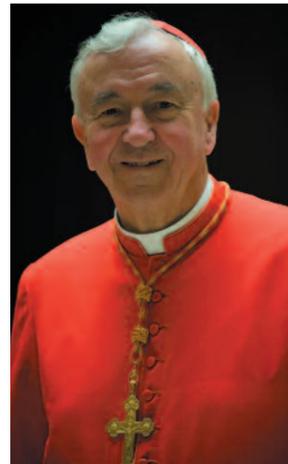
Last October I had the joy of attending the extraordinary Synod on the Family in Rome. It was a wonderful experience. I was greatly encouraged by the desire to give 'a trumpet call in support of marriage' as a 'sanctuary of holiness', as one participant so beautifully described it. Likewise heartening was the clear affirmation of the dignity of every person, created in the image of God. As such, all are to be welcomed as members of God's family, the Church.

The Church is at once the family of God's children and our Mother too. The Church is, to quote Pope Francis' concluding address to the Synod: 'the fertile Mother and the caring Teacher, who is not afraid to roll up her sleeves to pour oil and wine on people's wounds'. Her doors, he added, are 'wide open to receive the needy, the penitent, and not only the just or those who believe they are perfect!'

So the Church is a family embracing many sinners still journeying towards perfection. We are truly a family made up of all sorts of different people; but we gladly recognise the presence of the same God in us all – including those with whom we find it difficult to live. Pope Francis again:

'The Gospel tells us constantly to run the risk of a face-to-face encounter with others, with their physical presence which challenges us, with their pain and their pleas, with their joy which infects us in our close and continuous interaction. True faith in the incarnate Son of God is inseparable from self-giving, from membership in the community, from service, from reconciliation with others.' (Evangelii Gaudium, 88).

Powerful witness to this 'true faith in the incarnate Son of God' is given by women and men religious. In this Year of Consecrated Life, I wish to thank each one of them for their most valuable contribution to our Church. Their lives reveal the beauty of being in love with Christ, of enjoying deep communion with him and one another. They show us how to be God's family, just as they learn so much from the loving fidelity of married couples and their children.



As we approach the mystery of Christmas, let us, as one family, be renewed in our ready willingness to see the good in one another. Or, to echo Pope Francis, may we become ever more, 'capable of seeing the sacred grandeur of our neighbour, of finding God in every human being, of tolerating the nuisances of life in common by clinging to the love of God, of opening the heart to divine love and seeking the happiness of others just as their heavenly Father does ... Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of community!' (Evangelii Gaudium, 92).

My Advent prayer, then, is that we may all grow in joyful gratitude for our families and religious communities, for the gift of discovering the God who comes to be with us in our brothers and sisters – no matter how awkward some may be! But I pray especially for any of you feeling lonely, rejected or despised, cut-off from any kind of family life. You are held most dear in the heart of our family the Church, our Mother.

Wishing you all every blessing this coming Christmas,

+ Vincent Nichols

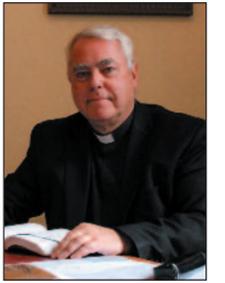
✠ Cardinal Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Westminster
Patron of *Oremus*

From the Chairman

Advent has always been a favourite time of mine, and I associate it with various things. First, because of the time of year, I associate it with the dark of winter, both early in the morning and late afternoon, and with a certain darkness in church, enriched by the liturgical purple frontals and veils. Then there is the scent of fresh greenery from the Advent wreath and then from the Christmas trees when they arrive later in the season, and the light from the Advent candles, reminding us that this is a time of waiting, waiting in hope and expectancy. We focus on the twofold coming of Jesus Christ; of his coming in flesh at the Incarnation which we will celebrate when we gather around the Christmas Crib, and of his Second Coming which we know will happen but of which 'we know not the day nor the hour', but for which Jesus asks us to stay awake and be watchful.

This waiting time should engender a sort of holy hush, in our lives and in the church, but sadly it rarely does because we are so taken up with our Christmas preparations. From early in December the Cathedral is busy with a variety of Christmas carol services, and that can't be helped, but we strive to retain the sense of Advent in the morning and

midday Masses. Perhaps I could recommend using one of the various Advent booklets which provide a reading, a reflection and a prayer for each day of the season. There are many different versions available from the two excellent book-shops close to the Cathedral. Daily reading can help us to keep the sense of waiting, even in the midst of all that's going on around us.



As well as articles on the season of Advent, this month's *Oremus* contains many reflections from those who live the religious life – reminding us all, in this Year of Consecrated Life, that every consecrated person is, in the words of the Holy Father, 'a gift for the People of God.'

I wish you all a prayerful and holy Advent, and a happy and blessed Christmas,

Canon Christopher Tuckwell

Seasons Greetings from the Oremus Editor: I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers, sponsors, advertisers and contributors a very blessed Advent and happy Christmas. I am extremely grateful to you all, as well as to all who volunteer and work for *Oremus*, including our printers and designer, for your continued generosity and support. Since becoming a free publication *Oremus* has experienced a great increase in its readership and is also, thanks to your donations, in a stable financial position – as such, I would also like to thank the Cathedral's Finance Committee and the Diocesan Finance Department for their encouragement and sage advice. Without you, our readers and advertisers, this publication would not exist. So, from the bottom of my heart, I wish to say, again, 'Thank you!' Dylan Parry, Editor.

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Marana tha!

Come, Lord Jesus – Do not delay!

Stan Metheny



We Christians live in the world with a certain tension between the 'already' and the 'not yet' dimensions of God's definitive saving action in the world. At Mass, we announce Christ's death and proclaim his resurrection until he comes again: the mystery of our faith. We begin each new liturgical year with the season of Advent, literally 'the time of the coming,' that highlights that tension. We prepare ourselves anew to celebrate the coming of the Word made flesh at Christmas, the 'already' dimension, and to await his coming in glory, the 'not yet' dimension. Fully comprehending this mystery is beyond us. So the Advent liturgical texts make especially heavy use of poetry and imagery, because poetic language is multi-faceted and allows for layers of meaning that can offer allusions to realities that transcend the meanings of the words themselves. And, as St Paul reminds us, what we ultimately await transcends our words as well as our understanding (1 Cor 2:9).

The Divine Office texts of Tuesday of Advent Week II are a précis of the first part of the season. Following on from the celebration of Christ the King at the end of the liturgical year, a frequent Advent image is that of a king and his kingdom. In the Office of Readings we hear Isaiah, the Prophet, speaking of a glorious Reign of God who is faithful and true. Then we hear Vatican II's description of the Church as an eschatological pilgrim on a journey toward that Reign. In the Little Hours, Our Lady is seen, in her person, as the ideal dwelling place for the King who is to come into the world, as the prophets had foretold. At the Magnificat antiphon, St John the Baptist, the other leading player in the Advent drama, announces our need to prepare the way and make straight the paths that lead to this Kingdom that God wants us to inhabit. And in the responses of the day we pray for God to forgive our sins and free us from those things that prevent us from accepting that life in the Kingdom he wills us to have. It is a Kingdom that he wants everyone to enjoy, both now and in the future.

O Antiphons

The second part of Advent, from 17-24 December, is even more intense and layered. The recurring image of Jerusalem as both the earthly city of history and the heavenly city of eternity reminds us again of that two-fold tension: our salvation is both here and now and yet to be enjoyed fully. The beautiful symbols in the 'O Antiphons' at the Magnificat each evening at Vespers portray the prophetic longing for God's Kingship over Israel and his rule over our own lives. Our coming King is Wisdom, Lord and Ruler, Root of Jesse, Key of David, Rising Sun, King of Nations, and his rule culminates in the unending joy of his presence as God-with-us, Emmanuel. These symbols invite us to make the prayers of the prophets our own and to recognise that our own longing is really searching for a peace that God alone can give.

On 21 December, we hear the joyous news at Lauds that 'On the fifth day (*quinta die*)' our Lord will come to us. We have nothing to fear, for the Lord himself will rise up from the East over Jerusalem and his glory will be seen there. Our task is clear: we must prepare ourselves to be ready to enter into the Kingdom when we are called to share in that glory. The Mass of the day (though this year, 21 December happens to be the Fourth Sunday of Advent) has a beautiful reading from the Song of Songs: our lover is coming to take us away from the dark and dreary life without the saving grace of salvation. We will see a time of new growth, as the vines are pruned to make way for that. On the following day we ask at Lauds that God rain down the Righteous One, and that the earth yield a new flowering of salvation and righteousness. St James picks up that agricultural image again at Vespers, comparing our expectation to that of the farmer who awaits the yield of his land, depending on the rain at the right time. Our own efforts can only be fruitful when we cooperate with God's saving grace.

Advent's many images, then, are full of hope and promises. On the final day of the season, 24 December, the morning reponsories tell us the final promise: Tomorrow (*Crastina die*) the wickedness of the earth will be destroyed, and the Saviour of the world will reign over us. The coming King, the Lamb of God announced by St John the Baptist, will indeed destroy the wickedness of the earth by his death on the cross, and 'He will reign from the tree,' as St Venantius Fortunatus puts it. Hopefully we have answered the season's call for conversion of heart to prepare for the coming of the Lord and His Kingdom and stand ready to take our place in it, alongside our crucified and risen Lord. With this in mind, we end the season with this prayer: *Come quickly, we pray, Lord Jesus, and do not delay, that those who trust in your compassion may find solace and relief in your coming.* A most blessed and fruitful Advent!

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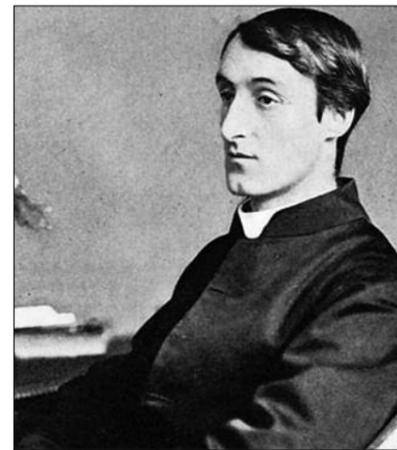
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Catholic Poets: Gerard (Manley) Hopkins, SJ



Mgr Mark Langham

We cannot conclude our series on Catholic poets without reference to perhaps the greatest talent of them all, Gerard Hopkins (he never used 'Manley' in his lifetime). Few poets have minds so great, imaginations so powerful, skills so overwhelming. He invented a new type of poetry and rhythm; if you want to know how unique he is, try copying his style. I guarantee you will write doggerel – only in the hands of the master could his form of poetry reach the sublime.

Born in 1844 in Essex, Hopkins belonged to a pious and artistic family, but was shy and withdrawn. In 1863 he went to Balliol College, Oxford, to read classics and there, after encountering members of the Oxford Movement, decided to become a Catholic, and was received into the Church by John Henry Newman in 1866. A man of strong inner passions, Gerard resolved to begin his life anew, and soon afterward, entered the Jesuit novitiate. Here he grappled with a difficult personal question that plagued him all his life: could he be a faithful Jesuit and still write poetry? In 1875, while teaching at St Beuno's in Wales, he wrote what is probably his greatest poem, the *Wreck of the Deutschland*, commemorating five nuns fleeing the anti-Catholic laws in Germany, who were drowned off the coast of England.

Despite his fierce attachment to the Jesuits, Gerard never gave the impression of being entirely at home there; he was often downcast, and his theological studies did not go well (he had achieved a First at Oxford), and his health suffered. Moreover, he was frequently relocated, either a sign of his own restlessness or the Order not knowing quite what to do with him. He had spells in Oxford, London and Dublin, where he died of typhoid fever in 1889.

Hopkins is famous for his rediscovery of 'sprung rhythm' whereby, instead of a fixed number of syllables in a line, he stressed the first syllable of each foot, while varying the number in between – it is a system adopted by the Grail translation of the psalms with which we are all familiar. His most striking feature, however, is his use of language, which he pushes to the edge of its meaning, using archaic words or

even inventing them. His use of language is difficult, ever rich and creative – you have to read it out loud to catch the full effect. He also developed the notoriously subtle concept of 'inscape', the individuality and uniqueness of every created thing, through which he communicates his passion for nature.

I end with a seasonal poem – not Hopkins' best known, but one which illustrates his passion for renewal and purification:

*Moonless darkness stands between.
Past, O past, no more be seen!
But the Bethlehem star may lead me
To the sight of him who freed me
From the self that I have been.
Make me pure, Lord; thou art holy;
Make me meek, Lord; thou wert lowly;
Now beginnings, and always;
Now begin, on Christmas Day.*

Mgr Mark Langham is Catholic Chaplain for Cambridge University and is a former Administrator of Westminster Cathedral, he was also recently appointed the Editor of the Westminster Record, the diocesan newspaper. This article is the last in his series on the Catholic Poets, which also happens to be Mgr Langham's last series for Oremus, for the time being. We are very grateful to him for penning so many fascinating series for us over the years. Thankfully, Mgr Mark Langham will continue to write articles for Oremus from time to time. We wish him well in his new post as the Editor of the Westminster Record.

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The Church's Year of Consecrated Life

Offering a special kind of witness to the Gospel

As *Oremus* goes to print, it is expected that Cardinal Vincent Nichols will celebrate a Mass at 2.00pm on Saturday 29 November to open the Church's Year of Consecrated Life here in the Diocese of Westminster. The Year of Consecrated Life will be observed throughout the universal Church and was specially inaugurated by Pope Francis. Therefore, much of this issue of *Oremus* is dedicated to the vocation of religious and consecrated men and women. The following few pages contain reflections and articles from men and women religious, monks and nuns, friars and other consecrated people – the January edition will also feature similar articles.

To introduce the Year of Consecrated Life, we revisit Pope Francis' Angelus address of 2 February, the Feast of the Presentation and Day for Consecrated Life. In his address, the Holy Father reflected on the origin and importance of consecrated men and women to both the Church and world. They are, he said, 'the testimony that God is good and merciful.'



Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Today we are celebrating the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. This day is also the Day for Consecrated Life, which recalls the importance for the Church of those who have welcomed their vocation to follow Jesus closely on the path of the evangelical counsels. Today's Gospel recounts that 40 days after the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph took the Child to the Temple to offer and consecrate him to God, as was prescribed by Hebrew Law. This Gospel narrative also constitutes an icon of the gift of one's own life on the part of those who, as a gift of God, take on the characteristic traits of Jesus: virgin, poor and obedient.

This offering of self to God regards every Christian, because we are all consecrated to him in Baptism. We are all called to offer ourselves to the Father with Jesus and like Jesus, making a generous gift of our life, in the family, at work, in service to the Church, in works of mercy. However, this consecration is lived in a special way by religious, by monks and nuns and by consecrated lay people, who by the profession of their vows belong to God in a full and exclusive way. This belonging to the Lord allows those who live it authentically to offer a special kind of witness to the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Totally consecrated to God, they are totally given to their brothers, to bring the light of Christ wherever the shadows are darkest in order to spread his hope to discouraged hearts.

The consecrated are a sign of God in the different areas of life, they are leaven for the growth of a more just and fraternal society, they are the prophecy of sharing with the least and the poor. Thus understood and lived, consecrated life appears as what it really is: a gift from God, a gift of God to the Church, a gift of God to his People! Every consecrated person is a gift for the People of God on its journey. There is a great need for their presence, which strengthens and renews commitment to: spreading the Gospel, Christian education, love for the needy, contemplative prayer; commitment to human formation, the spiritual formation of young people, and families; commitment to justice and peace in the human family. But let us think a little about what would happen if there were no sisters in hospitals, no sisters in missions, no sisters in schools. Think about a Church without sisters! It is unthinkable: they are this gift, this leaven that carries forward the People of God. These women who consecrate their life to God, who carry forward Jesus' message, are great.

The Church and the world need this testimony of the love and mercy of God. The consecrated, men and women religious, are the testimony that God is good and merciful. Thus it is necessary to appreciate with gratitude the experiences of consecrated life and to deepen our understanding of the different charisms and spiritualities. Prayer is needed so that many young people may answer "yes" to the Lord who is calling them to consecrate themselves totally to him for selfless service to their brothers and sisters; to consecrate one's life in order to serve God and the brethren.

For all these reasons, as was already announced, next year will be dedicated in a special way to consecrated life. Let us entrust as of now this initiative to the intercession of the Virgin Mary and St Joseph, who, as the parents of Jesus, were the first to be consecrated by him and to consecrate their life to him.

To read this text online, please visit www.vatican.va



The Call of Love in Action: The Augustinian Sisters



The sight of Sister Clement Doran OSA, dressed in her black and white habit, rushing in and out of Archbishop's House in her kind and purposeful way, is familiar to many of us. Her job keeps her very busy: she is the Health Co-ordinator for the Diocese's Sick and Retired Priests.

Sister Clement is a Sister of the Augustinian Order. The rule of St Augustine is one of the oldest in the West. It stresses the importance of love and life in common. The Augustinian

Sisters came to England from Bruges in 1842 at the invitation of Cardinal Wiseman. The invitation had a distinct purpose. At the time, Canon Peter Maes, whose concern was the care of the sick – especially the mentally ill – and who had travelled extensively to study their treatment, came to see the value of having Sisters who were dedicated to the task. He received permission to move a small group of Sisters from Bruges to Burgess Hill, and the Mother House was founded.

Sister Raphael was the first Superior, and on the Feast of St Joseph 1868, the first patients – men and women – were admitted. Possibly owing to the difficulty of cross-Channel travel in those times, Burgess Hill became independent of Bruges.

Throughout the years since then, the Sisters have continued their work in various fields of nursing. Always keeping astride of new developments and thinking, three new purpose-built facilities were erected in the grounds of St George's Park ten years ago. The Sisters take an active part in the day-to-day running of these, particularly in the field of pastoral care.

For more information on the Augustinian Sisters, please write to the Augustinian Sisters, St George's Retreat, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 0SQ or visit www.anh.org.uk

A Life Hidden in God: The Monks of Mount St Bernard

Fr Michael Burleigh OCSO

There are many stereotypes attached to monastic life. One such is surprisingly common among Catholics. It concerns the value of monastic life. You may have thought of it yourself. It goes along the lines of saying 'Isn't monastic life a wasted life? Surely it's better to get married and raise a family?' It suggests that if monastic life was like that of Mother Teresa's nuns, then we could understand why someone would enter a monastery.

It has become normal for us today to see value in things in so far as they achieve something, bring some tangible reward. The trouble with an enclosed contemplative vocation, such as the Cistercian life, is that it is very difficult to show what we achieve, to show results; for the contemplative lives, in a very real way, a 'life hidden in God'.

It is not for the Cistercian to achieve or to become successful. Rather, his place is with the sinful woman who sat at Jesus feet in the Gospel. There he discovers what it means to be a fallen creature. There he discovers true repentance and conversion of life, and hears those precious words of Christ: 'Your sins are forgiven you.'

St Benedict says to his monks 'Listen my son to the master's instructions and attend to them with the ear of your heart.' It is in silence that the monk begins the inner journey to the heart – not just to his own heart, but to the heart of our common humanity. It is in the silence, where there are no distractions that the monk begins to see that all he thought he had left behind has really followed him into the monastery.



It still lurks in the depths of his heart. It is in the common life that he discovers and comes to love the individual beauty and complexity of his broken brothers. It is when he works by the sweat of his brow that he is reminded of all those who are overburdened and are likewise forgotten by the world. He becomes one with them.

Perhaps this is why Cistercian vocations are rare, because secretly we wish to achieve, we long to buy God's love by works, we wish to avoid the depths of our spiritual poverty. But it is precisely at Jesus' feet as a repentant sinner that the monk becomes a man of humility, accepting his condition before God. There he becomes a man of ceaseless prayer, calling out for mercy.

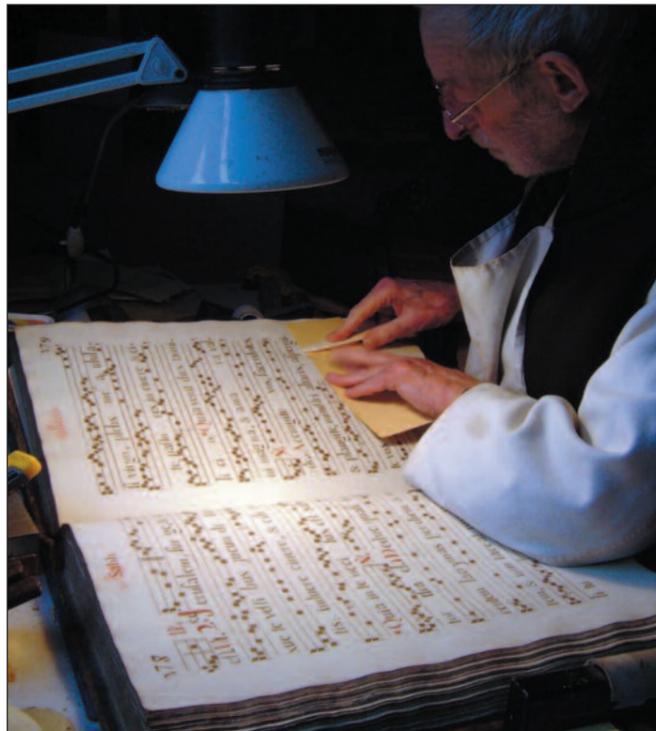
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And it is here that the monk finds his joy. It is when we see the immensity of our poverty that we discover the immensity of God's love for us. The monk becomes one who receives, receives God's love, comes to experience and know that love, discovers what he has always sought: that 'I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine.'

Vocations are never about which one is best, which is more profitable. Rather a vocation is about a response. It is about having the courage to respond, to receive the gift of vocation from the Lord.

The Cistercian monk may not be someone who spreads the Gospel through missionary work, parish life, or by being a nurse or teacher. But a Cistercian monk has the potential to be someone who knows what it means to be a fallen creature that is infinitely loved by God. Someone who has been called and has come to know that he is enfolded in God's love. A monk becomes someone through whom God can reveal his love, his care for all fallen and broken people. He manifests to those with whom he comes in contact that we do not need to fear, for He is always with us.

Fr Michael Burleigh OCSO is the Novice Master at Mount Saint Bernard Abbey. To find out more about the Abbey, please visit: www.mountsaintbernard.org/



©Fr. Martin

The Carthusians: The gaze that wounds with Love

Dom John, A Carthusian

'Rejoice, my beloved brothers.' Joy is the key word used by Saint Bruno to his brethren in encouraging them to persevere in their monastic vocation. 'Rejoice, my beloved brothers, over your blessed call, and for the grace of God that you have received in such abundance. Rejoice over having escaped the turbulent waters of this world and reached the peaceful quiet of a sheltered cove.'



On this beginning of the year dedicated to the consecrated life, these words of our founder resonate in our hearts and urge us to raise towards the Lord an immense act of thanksgiving. In his gratuitous love, he calls men and women to devote themselves entirely to him. He leads them into the desert to reveal to them something of his incomparable splendour and to unite them to himself in intimate love, to the praise of his glory.

The Carthusian Order was born in 1084 in the French Alps. Saint Bruno and a few companions settled in a very solitary place called Chartreuse to live there a life of prayer and contemplation. Their way of life was inspired in part by the Palestinian monasticism of the first centuries. The monastery of the Grande Chartreuse founded by Bruno is now the head house of an Order that numbers about 25 monasteries of monks and nuns scattered throughout Europe, North and South America, and Asia. In England, the first charterhouse was founded in 1178, and had as prior Saint Hugh of Avalon, the future Bishop of Lincoln. At the time of the Reformation, the nine existing English charterhouses were dissolved and a number of the monks martyred. The Carthusian life was reintroduced in 1873 at the monastery of Parkminster in Sussex.

Carthusians are neither pure hermits nor coenobites; they are a community of solitary monks, living in hermitages (called cells) linked to one another by a cloister. One of the first Carthusians, Guigo, expressed in a few words the essence of the Carthusian life: 'Repose and solitude, silence and the ardent desire of heavenly realities.' On ordinary days, a

Carthusian monk never leaves his cell, except to go to the church three times: in the morning for Mass, in the afternoon for the office of Vespers, and in the middle of the night for a long night office. He spends the remainder of his time alone, striving to live in God's presence and to adore him in spirit and truth. His life is hidden with Christ in God (cf Col 3:3) in pure faith and love.

Solitude does not shut the monk up in himself, but on the contrary opens his mind and heart, until it embraces the whole world and the mystery of Christ's Redemption. It is in the name of all that he stands before the living God. He experiences that separated from all, he is united to all; devoted to God alone, he becomes a universal brother.

The Carthusian life is marked by a great simplicity. God is Simplicity itself: he is One. In order to come close to him, the monk must apply himself to a great poverty and purity of heart. In the solitude and the silence of the desert, 'he strives', wrote Saint Bruno, 'to acquire that eye whose limpid gaze wounds the Spouse with love; a love pure and transparent which sees God.' God rewards bountifully those who persevere in seeking him by bestowing on them true joy and peace; a joy and a peace that dwell in their hearts only to pour out over the whole Church. 'O Bonitas!' – 'O Divine Goodness!'

The author is a Carthusian monk. For more information on the Carthusians, please visit the Parkminster Charterhouse website: www.parkminster.org.uk/

The Dominicans: Proclaimers of the Gospel

Fr John D O'Connor OP



Dominicans speak of four 'pillars' of our life: prayer, a common religious life, study, and mission. A particular friar may tend to one or other of these pillars according to his temperament, but each one of us is meant to integrate all four into a fruitful religious life. I like to think of Dominicans as both highly varied, that we are encouraged to be true to ourselves, and yet united by a common vision and way of life.

Here in our community at Blackfriars, Oxford, we are 27 in number. Many of us are in our twenties and thirties. We have brothers living in Oxford from Croatia, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland, South Africa and the United States, with the rest from Great Britain. Having brothers from such a wide range of countries is a wonderful witness to the diversity and richness of the Dominican Order, a diversity and richness that is present across the whole Dominican family of friars, nuns, apostolic sisters and Dominican laity.

We also have a wide variety of ministries in Oxford. An important part of our work is our House of Formation, forming young men to be Dominican preachers of the future, as priests or co-operator brothers. We have a *Studium* (Dominican House of Studies), where we teach and train not only Dominicans, but also Benedictines, Carmelites, Franciscans, Oratorians, as well as lay men and women. We have a Permanent Private Hall of the University of Oxford, which helps ensure we are engaged with the burning questions of our age. As part of this we have two research institutes, The Aquinas Institute, to promote the thought of St Thomas Aquinas, and The Las Casas Institute, to promote Christian reflection on issues of human dignity. In addition to this, we have an active pastoral ministry through serving those who come to Mass and Office at Blackfriars, as well as going out to parishes and giving retreats and talks.

If you are interested in a Dominican vocation, then please visit the websites below. Finally, I ask your prayers for us, for our work, and for those to whom we minister.

You can find out more about the Dominicans by visiting the Blackfriars, Oxford, (www.bfriars.ox.ac.uk) and English Province (www.english.op.org) websites.

I first got to know Dominicans by going to Mass at Blackfriars, Oxford. I was living in Oxford at the time and had thought about priesthood and religious life for many years. Finally, at the age of 26 I entered. Since taking vows for life and being ordained, I have been an assistant priest in our parish in London, a parish priest in Glasgow, and five years ago I returned to Oxford as prior of the community there. I am now 17 years a Dominican friar and I am glad to say that I have experienced, and continue to experience, much fulfilment and joy in the life.

One way to think about Dominicans is to look at what is said about the Order in one of its earliest documents, the *Fundamental Constitution*: 'The Order of Friars Preachers, founded by St Dominic, is known to have been established, from the beginning, for preaching and the salvation of souls specifically.'

This gets to the core of our life, which is dedicated to the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ so as to bring the men and women of our time into closer relationship with God. We do this by words, deeds, and by how we live together as brothers.

Consecrated Virgins and Widows: Restoring a special way of life in the Church

Sr Elizabeth Rees OCV



In the New Testament we learn of widows and virgins who are described by St Paul as having a role in their local Christian community. The Second Vatican Council restored the ancient Order of Virgins, with its beautiful rite of consecration, in part dating from the fourth century.

In canon law we are described as follows: 'Through their pledge to follow Christ more closely, virgins are consecrated to God, mystically espoused to Christ and dedicated to the service of the Church, when the diocesan bishop consecrates them according to the approved liturgical rite' (Canon 604).

The document *Vita Consecrata* (1996) adds: 'Again being practised today is the consecration of widows, known since apostolic times (cf 1Tim 5:5, 9-10; 1 Cor 7:8), as well as the consecration of widowers. These women and men, through a vow of perpetual chastity as a sign of the Kingdom of God,

consecrate their state of life in order to devote themselves to prayer and the service of the Church'.

We live an independent life within the local Church community. We are autonomous, and each plans their own pattern of life, which is approved by the local bishop. We are each individually responsible for our own work, our ministry and our finances. There are about 200 of us in the UK. Some of us work in the Church, while others have secular jobs; some are unable to work, while others are solitary or retired.

We form a support network of friendship with one another. Those of us who wish to meet every summer for a four-day Gathering at Douai Abbey, where we can reflect on our calling. We also have a six-monthly newsletter.

For further information, contact Elizabeth Rees OCV on 01458 851561 or email: elizabethrees_ocv@hotmail.com

The Norbertines: Needing each other in Christ

Fr Hugh Allen OPraem



I grew up in Welwyn Garden City and I owe a huge debt of gratitude to two great Westminster priests, Fr Andrew Moore and Fr Michael Archer, both now enjoying their eternal reward. Their fidelity, kindness and patience were a great encouragement to follow a religious vocation.

After university, I joined the novitiate for the Norbertine community in Storrington. From there, I studied for the priesthood at

St Benet's Hall, Oxford and was then ordained to the priesthood at the Norbertine church in Manchester. In 2008, the Order established a Priory in Chelmsford and I was appointed the prior and also parish priest. We are a growing community of 10 priests and brothers. We currently have four men in formation and more on the horizon.

Now, you may easily be forgiven for having never heard of the Norbertines. We are only 900 years old, so relatively new kids on the block. As a religious order, we do not fit easily into general descriptions of religious life. Founded by St Norbert in 1121, we are an order of canons regular, which means that we follow a life that is both contemplative and active, monastic but also apostolic. We gather together to sing the Divine Office each day but we also serve in parishes and work as chaplains. A great blessing of working with others is that people keep you sane (mostly!). Yes, there are times we drive each other up the wall, but we need each other. For me that is the essence of religious life – our need of each other in Christ.

St Norbert's ideal of community life is one of friendship. It is a blessing in my community that we actually like and get on with each other, but it is built upon the friendship we find in Christ. This is all built around our commitment to poverty, consecrated celibacy, obedience and stability. All of the vows are important but perhaps the most important for friendship is obedience. The kind of radical love expressed in obedience – an obedience that can make our hearts ache and bruises our vanity – is the seed of renewal in every age of the Church.

All of us who are religious share that same commitment to love and obedience – love *for* and obedience *to* Jesus Christ, to the Church, to our community. Consecrated life demands more than a polite relationship with Jesus and his Church. Christ does not ask for our approval or agreement. He doesn't need either. Instead, he asks us to follow him – radically, with all we have, and without exceptions or reservations.

St Augustine says 'love and do what you will'. The reality of that love is about putting up with each other. When you love someone, it really means you are prepared to put up with them. My community has to put up with me, and I have to put up with them; who has the tougher job depends on who you ask! So, religious life, especially Norbertine life, is about putting up with each other in the joy of Christ – to grow in our friendship with Christ through our love for each other. I hope this coming year celebrating consecrated life will be one in which we can all rediscover the beauty of friendship in living out our commitment to Christ and each other.

To find out more about the Norbertines, please visit: www.praemonstratensis.co.uk/



To Know the Gift of God: A Community of Former Anglican Sisters

Sr Barbara Claire SBVM



'Open wide the doors for Christ!' So said Pope St John Paul II at the inauguration of his Petrine ministry. These words were echoed by his successor, Pope Benedict XVI, in his Apostolic Letter for the beginning of the Year of Faith 2013: 'The "door of faith" is always open for us, ushering us into the life of communion with God and offering entry into his Church'.

At the time the Letter was given, who would have thought that on 1 January 2013, a group of ten nuns would walk in through the open door of the Oxford Oratory church as Anglicans, and emerge as Catholics?

In 2009, the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus* was given in Rome. This document was to have far reaching consequences. For us, the genius of the document was that it would allow us to move across as a community, with our vows respected. The day came, sadly, when we realised that, in order to follow the path of truth, we would have to separate from our dearly loved Anglican Sisters.

So it was that we embarked upon our new lives as Catholics. At our reception, we were instituted as a Public Association of the Faithful, with each Sister under private vows. The

following day we left Wantage for what became an eight-month stay at St Cecilia's Abbey on the Isle of Wight. During this time we received essential Benedictine formation and discovered how much our identity had actually been Benedictine all along.

Through an extraordinary course of events, a convent in Kingstanding, Birmingham, became available and we moved here in August 2013. On 1 January 2014, we were erected as an Institute of Consecrated Life within the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, with each Sister renewing her life vows under the Benedictine formula.

So, from the Year of Faith to the Year for Consecrated Life. Each day, we do what Benedictines the world over do: the Work of God; manual labour; hospitality; common life, 'under an Abbot and a Rule' – in our case, under the leadership of Reverend Mother Winsome, and the Rule of St Benedict.

'The Pope invites us to renew our vocation and to fill it with joy and passion, so that the increase in loving activity is a continuous process – "it matures, matures, matures" – in a permanent development in which the 'yes' of our will to God's will unites will, intellect and feeling'. These words from the Letter of the Institute for Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life for the Year for Consecrated Life form a fitting conclusion. For us, it is of paramount importance that we are now in the full communion of the Church and can live out our calling at its heart. 'If you knew the gift of God!' (John 4.10). For that, *Deo gratias!*

To find out more about the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, please visit their website: www.ancilla-domini.org

Benedictine Life: A particularly English Abbey

Fr Mark Hargreaves OSB

The origins of the Prinknash community stretch back to a room above a shop in Oxford Road, Ealing, around 1893 – an unlikely start! Not far away was St Benedict's parish, now Ealing Abbey, whose founding father, Cardinal Vaughan, when setting up the Cathedral, thought would be responsible for singing the daily round of the Divine Office.

But, to continue our story, one day in the summer of 1893, a group of rather intense Anglo-Catholic young men gathered round Benjamin Fearnley Carlyle, a medical student. After the initial group broke up, he began a community on the Isle of Dogs, in 1896, which celebrated the Divine Office and looked after boys and young men in difficulties. Ten years later, after being in Dorset and Yorkshire, the by then fully monastic community took up residence on Caldey Island, off Tenby, South Wales, and built the present monastery. Their ultra-Catholic way of life would eventually get them into



Continued on page 24

Cathedral History: Who chose Byzantine?

Patrick Rogers



The ruins of an early Byzantine basilica of 463 – St John the Baptist, Istanbul.

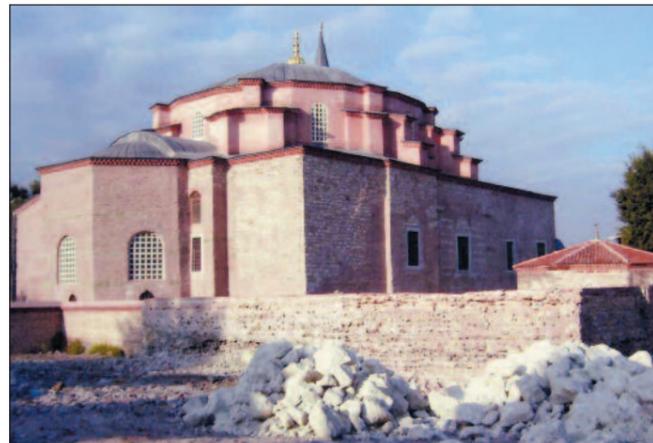
Westminster Cathedral is built in the early Christian Byzantine style, modelled on the brick-built basilican churches of Constantinople (now Istanbul), Ravenna and Venice. But almost to the last, the plans were for a Gothic-style building built of stone, similar to the great medieval cathedrals of Britain. So who chose Byzantine and why?

When the Roman Catholic Hierarchy was restored in England and Wales in 1850, Cardinal Wiseman became the first Archbishop of Westminster. He was enthroned in St George's Southwark and used St Mary Moorfields, then London's largest church, as his pro-cathedral. Cardinal Wiseman was succeeded by Cardinal Manning in 1865 and he and friends and supporters of Cardinal Wiseman resolved to build a metropolitan cathedral in Wiseman's memory. Manning bought a strip of land on the west side of Carlisle Street (now Carlisle Place) and commissioned the Catholic architect Henry Clutton to prepare designs for a Gothic-style cathedral on the site. The following year, Manning bought the land on the other side of Carlisle Street and Clutton designed a building in the same style for the new site and also a larger one to occupy both sites. Finally, when a military club building became available at the end of the street in 1872, Clutton designed a massive cathedral 450ft wide, in the Early English Gothic style.

Such a cathedral would have required a huge sum to build and was quite beyond the resources of the Diocese for the foreseeable future. So there the matter rested until an eight acre site previously occupied by Tothill Fields Prison (where Westminster Cathedral stands today) became available. Cardinal Manning bought the site in 1884 and sold the land on Carlisle Street. He had hoped that a wealthy Yorkshire landowner, Sir Tatton Sykes, would pay for his new cathedral and had agreed to his condition that it be modelled on the Gothic-style Votivkirche in Vienna and designed by its architect, Baron Heinrich von Ferstel, but the plan came to nothing. In 1892, Manning was succeeded by Cardinal

Vaughan as third Archbishop of Westminster. Vaughan was determined that the cathedral should be built in his lifetime. Both Clutton's and von Ferstel's Gothic designs were available and Vaughan received more from a friend, Archibald Dunn of Newcastle, in 1893. But Vaughan knew that a Gothic cathedral could take decades to build and easily cost £500,000 (about £55 million in today's money).

Vaughan wanted his cathedral for congregational use, a great open space accommodating large numbers of people in sight and sound of the liturgies. He considered Gothic architecture appropriate for monastic use and for small congregations but unsuitable for his purposes. So his mind turned to the style adopted by the early Christians for their churches – the Roman meeting house or basilica. In a private circular of July 1894 to his friends and potential donors, Vaughan explained that: 'Our actual need is a Cathedral that shall be large enough for carrying out with splendour the Liturgy of the Church and for accommodating large audiences'. He therefore proposed to build the Cathedral in the style of an early Christian basilica, using Constantine's fourth century church of St Peter in Rome as a model, the same style as used by the Emperor for his early Byzantine churches in Constantinople. Added advantages of this would be that the building could be erected more quickly and economically than if any other style was adopted, that ornament would need to be applied initially only to the façade, internal decoration being added later, and that such a building would not appear to attempt to rival Westminster Abbey nearby.



A Justinian Byzantine church of 527 – SS Sergius and Bacchus, Istanbul.

Having decided on the size and style of his cathedral, and after seeking advice from other architects, Vaughan chose John Francis Bentley as his architect. In fact Bentley seems to have influenced his appointment by letting it be known that he was going abroad to study the basilican style. A letter to him of 5 July 1894, prior to his appointment,

reports that: 'Your decision to go and study the basilica in its own native haunts has quite taken the Cardinal's fancy ... I feel nearly certain it will be yours.' Until then Bentley had favoured the English Gothic style. In a subsequent interview in *The Tablet* of 6 July 1895 in which he described the style of the future cathedral as 'Early Christian Byzantine', he explained that: 'It was thought by the Cardinal that to build the principal Catholic church in England in a style which was absolutely primitive Christian, and that was not confined to Italy, England, or any other nation, but was, up to the ninth century, spread over many countries, would be the wisest thing to do. Personally, I should have preferred a Gothic church, yet on consideration I am inclined to think the Cardinal is right'.



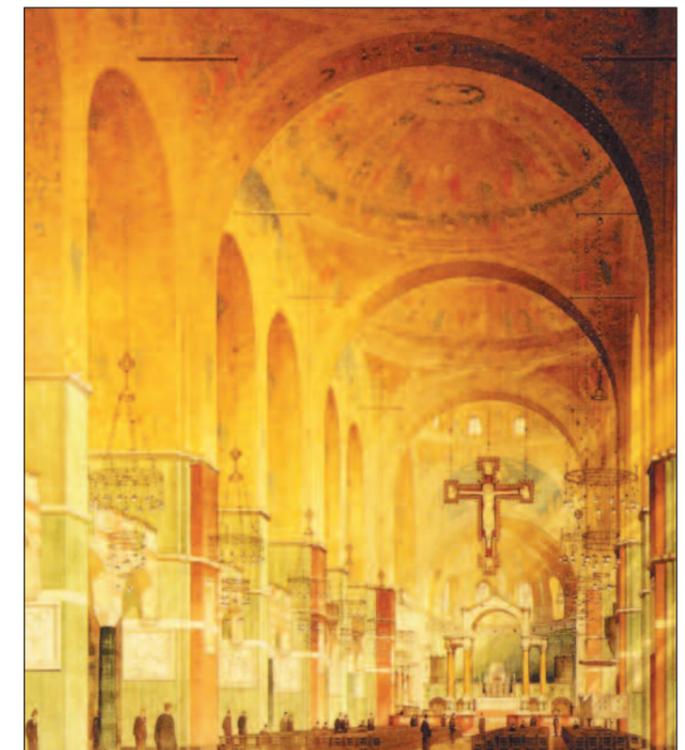
An eleventh century Venetian-Byzantine basilica – St Mark's, Venice.

Bentley left England on 22 November 1894 and travelled to Milan where the ninth century campanile and tenth century baldacchino of the basilica of Sant' Ambrogio interested him particularly. He also found Byzantine influences in the basilican cathedral at Pisa but was unimpressed both by the Duomo at Florence and St Peter's in Rome where he remained for six weeks awaiting Cardinal Vaughan's arrival in January 1895. From Rome, Bentley travelled to Ravenna where, in the sixth century domed Byzantine church of San Vitale and basilica of Sant' Apollinare-in-Classe, he began to study the problem of adapting the Byzantine style to modern congregational requirements. From Ravenna Bentley arrived in Venice where he began an exhaustive study of St Mark's Basilica, the building which, probably more than any other, influenced the design of Westminster Cathedral. Bentley had intended to go also to Constantinople to study Justinian's great sixth century domed church of Santa Sophia but an outbreak of cholera there prevented this.

Bentley returned to England on 19 March 1895 and immediately began to design Westminster Cathedral. On 4 May *The Tablet* announced that he had submitted two preliminary ground plans 'recalling to some extent features to be found in the great churches of Sant' Ambrogio, San Vitale, and San Marco', and his third and final plan followed soon afterwards. It shows the Cathedral in all essentials as we see it today – a long, wide, brick-built,

basilica surmounted by four shallow domes and terminating in a raised sanctuary and apse. In the first issue of the *Westminster Cathedral Record* in January 1896 Bentley described the plan of the Cathedral as: 'Not that of an Eastern church of the Justinian period, but rather an example of what might have been unfolded, had not the decadence of the Roman Empire terminated the growth of congregational requirements in the East. From a glance at the plan of SS Sergius and Bacchus, Constantinople, or of San Vitale, Ravenna, both of about the same age, it is evident that they were arranged from a liturgical rather than a congregational standard, while the church of St Mark, Venice, erected nearly four centuries later, indicates a marked advance in the latter direction, showing clearly the course the development was taking'.

Bentley died prematurely on 2 March 1902. Speaking at his funeral three days later, Cardinal Vaughan described Westminster Cathedral as Bentley's monument and spoke of his own gratification that he had given him a free hand: 'Having laid down certain conditions as to size, space, chapels and style, I left the rest to him. He offered me the choice between a vaulted roof and one of saucer domes: I chose the latter. He wished to build two campaniles: I said one was enough for me. For the rest he had a free hand'. The rejection of the popular Gothic style in favour of the early Christian basilica was Vaughan's decision for the reasons which have been described. But it was Bentley who adapted early Byzantine basilican architecture to meet the congregational and liturgical requirements of a large, modern, metropolitan cathedral. The overall concept and choice of style were Vaughan's, but it was Bentley who implemented his idea and brought it to a successful conclusion'.



An artist's impression of the interior of Westminster Cathedral when the mosaic decoration is complete.

Patrick Rogers' latest book, *Westminster Cathedral – An Illustrated History*, recounting the story of the Cathedral from its earliest origins to the present day, is available from the Cathedral Gift Shop.

Farewell, Bishop John



For the past few years, Bishop John Arnold has regularly celebrated the 7.00am Mass on Fridays at Westminster Cathedral. To congratulate him on his appointment as Bishop of Salford and to mark his departure from Westminster, regular attendees of this 7.00am Mass presented Bishop John with a card and gift on the morning of Friday 14 November. The presentation was organised by Cathedral parishioner, Theresa Giwa. Afterwards, a few parishioners and Cathedral worshippers, as well as Canon Christopher Tuckwell, had their photo taken with the Bishop.



We Shall Remember Them

On Sunday 9 November, Remembrance Sunday, Canon Christopher Tuckwell celebrated the 10.30am Mass as a Solemn Requiem for the Fallen. Representatives of the three branches of the Armed Forces were in attendance, including Major General Martin Smith, Commandant General Royal Marines. The preacher was Fr James Caulfield, Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain to the Royal Air Force. The Mass concluded with the traditional Act of Remembrance, including the Last Post, two minutes silence, Reveille and the National Anthem. Those servicemen and women who had attended the Mass joined the Cathedral parish for tea and coffee afterwards. Among those present were wartime friends, Betty Roberts and Violet Heath – both mentioned in last month's *Oremus*.



Vespers for the Dead

This photo shows Vespers for the Dead being sung on All Souls' Day in the Cathedral's Chapel of the Holy Souls. Vespers was led by Fr Alexander Master, the Cathedral's Sub-Administrator, and was sung by the Lay Clerks.

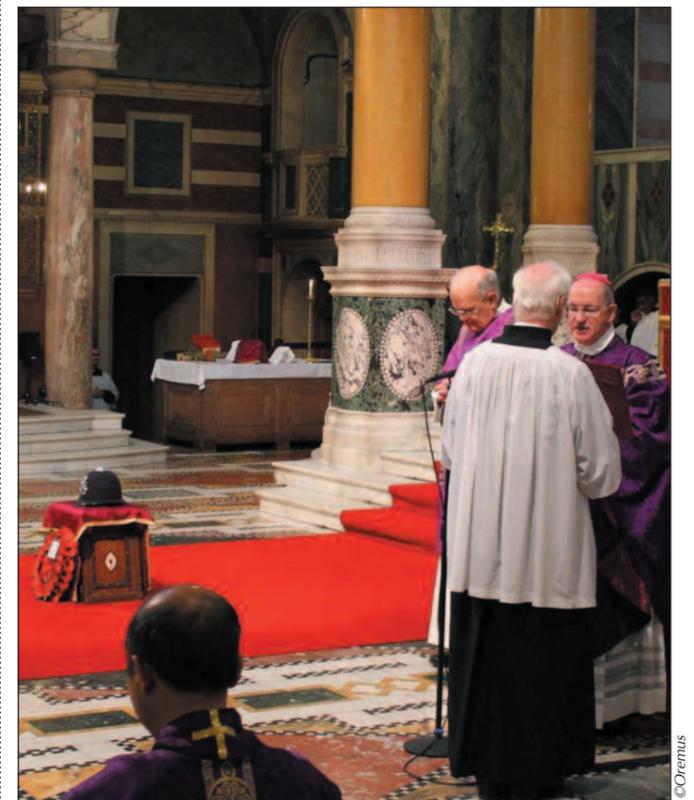
Praying for the Middle East

A Divine Mercy Day of Prayer for Peace in Syria and Iraq and the whole Middle East was held at Westminster Cathedral on Saturday 4 October. The day was led by Mgr Keith Barltrop, Fr Shafiq Abouzayd and Fr Charbel El-Azzi LMO, and was held in the presence of Archbishop Samir Nassar, the Maronite Archbishop of Damascus. The relics of St Charbel Makhlouf were present on the High Altar throughout the day.



Police Guild Requiem

On the afternoon of Wednesday 5 November, Bishop Richard Moth of the Forces celebrated the annual Catholic Police Guild Requiem for all police officers, community support officers and police staff who have lost their lives in the line of duty. *Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.*



Requiem for Deceased Clergy

On Thursday 6 November, Bishop John Arnold celebrated the annual Requiem for Deceased Clergy of the Diocese of Westminster. The Mass was also his opportunity to bid farewell to the whole Diocese, prior to his installation as Bishop of Salford on 8 December. The guest preacher was the Rt Revd Aidan Bellenger OSB, former Abbot of Downside.

Please Note: Many events happen at Westminster Cathedral every month and, as we are constrained by space, we cannot always feature stories immediately in *Oremus*. For up-to-date stories and photos, please visit our Facebook or Flickr pages: www.facebook.com/westminstercath and www.flickr.com/photos/westminstercathedral

The Unburnt Bush

A foreshadowing of the Virgin Birth

Sharon Jennings



Lord to pass and then was shut for ever (Ezekiel 44:2). There are also figures at the centre of the edges: at the top, God the Father; and correspondingly at the bottom, another traditional image of Our Lady – the Tree of Jesse, the human stock from which Jesus sprang.

The centre of the icon reveals the truth to which these Old Testament events pointed. Our Lady holds her Child within a circle of red. Red in icons is suggestive of the divine; in this case it shows that heavenly uncreated fire which does not consume. She holds not only her Child, but in the other hand a ladder which leads to an image of God the Father – Jacob's ladder again. The circle is outlined with more symbols of the way in which heaven and earth meet: the sacraments and, at the top, the Lord of creation, the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove. This circle is contained within two diamonds which form an eight-pointed star, and together suggest the bush. The inner one is dark green, symbolic not only of the unburnt bush but also of the created order, and is inhabited by angels and stars. The outer star is red. It contains within its corners the symbols of those who proclaimed to the world the Good News of the birth of the Saviour, the four Evangelists. The star is decorated with eight light green petals in which stand eight archangels, the highest ranking of the heavenly powers.

This very attractive and detailed icon presents a way of thinking about the Incarnation which is unfamiliar to us in the west. The Old Testament incident which is its inspiration is shown in the top left-hand corner. Moses, keeping the sheep of his father-in-law on Mount Horeb, is greeted by an angel from a flame of fire out of a bush which was burning but was not consumed. He decides to have a closer look; whereupon God calls him by name, and tells him to take off his shoes, because 'the place on which you are standing is holy ground.'

The phenomenon of the burning – or in the more accurate phrase of the Eastern tradition, 'unburnt' – bush, has long been considered to be a foreshadowing of the Virgin Birth: the Mother of God conceived and bore a Son, but her virginity was not consumed by it.

The other scenes around the icon prefigure different aspects of the Incarnation. In the right hand corner we see a seraphim touching the lips of the prophet Isaiah with a hot coal taken from the altar of the Temple (Isaiah 6:7). Since in the narrative he speaks immediately after this, we assume that he was not burnt by it, but was purified. In the right bottom corner, there is Jacob's dream of the ladder on which angels danced from heaven to earth – another image of Our Lady through whom the divine was made earthly (Genesis 28:12). And in the opposite bottom corner, we see Ezekiel's vision of the gate of the sanctuary which opened for the

All this is very well – pleasingly congruent and of great interest – but it must always be remembered that icons are intended to teach the reader. And what we learn from this one is contained within the outcome of each of the Old Testament stories around the edge. Once his lips had been purified, Isaiah was sent to go and preach repentance to the people of Israel. The revelation which came to Jacob through his dream of the ladder, led him to vow his allegiance to the Lord. The teaching given to Ezekiel through his vision of the Temple was about keeping due reverence to things that are holy, even in the midst of a society which had become bland and had diluted the absoluteness of God's law with relativity.

Moses of course, having shown himself brave and inquisitive enough to approach the Unburnt Bush – and even to ask God his name – was commissioned to lead the people of Israel out of the captivity of Egypt, even as the Child held by the Mother of God led the children of Adam out of the captivity of sin and death.

*The glorious mystery of your childbirth
Did Moses perceive within the unburnt bush,
O undefiled and all-holy Virgin.
Therefore we extol you in hymns unto the ages.*

(From *The Service of Salutations to the Most Holy Theotokos – ninth century.*)

Guild of St John Southworth

Moving on to the next phase

Anne Marie Micallef

For 16 afternoons between 13 October and 3 November – the first phase of a pilot – members of the Guild of St John Southworth welcomed visitors to the Cathedral and offered, to those who wanted them, short guided tours. Tours were given to visitors from the United States, Israel, Italy, Belgium and Germany, to name but a few. And, of course, visitors from all over the UK were offered guided tours, too. Some visitors were people of faith, some not. Members of the Guild reported that visitors were impressed by the prayerful atmosphere of the Cathedral and were interested in all aspects of the Cathedral's history. Some of visitors marvelled at the mosaics and others at the variety of marbles in the Cathedral. In the New Year, it is hoped that the guides will become a regular feature of Cathedral life as the project 'goes live' in January.

If you would like to be a member of the Guild of Saint John Southworth please contact Anne Marie Micallef on 020 7931 6067 or email: annemariam@rcdow.org.uk



Westminster Cathedral As seen on TV!

Westminster Cathedral will feature in two series on EWTN in the coming months. In one, called *Extraordinary Faith*, both Canon Christopher Tuckwell and the Master of Music, Martin Baker, will be interviewed by the presenter, Alex Begin. In the other, a new series called *Walking through History*, broadcaster and regular *Oremus* contributor, Joanna Bogle, will lead viewers along the banks of the Thames, telling the story of London's history. The Cathedral features in the programme on Westminster, which also includes the Abbey and Parliament, and has Catholic poet Sarah de Nordwall reading Wordsworth's *On Westminster Bridge* while looking out over the Thames. Joanna Bogle's *Walking through History* also explores Chelsea, the Tower of London, and Kingston, among other places. The photo shows Canon Tuckwell being interviewed by Alex Begin.



The Rosary is prayed each weekday in the Lady Chapel after the 5.30pm Mass. The Chaplet of Divine Mercy is said in the St Patrick's Chapel every Sunday at 1.00pm. Other groups that meet regularly include the SVP, the Interfaith Group, the Nigerian Catholic Association, Oblates of the Cathedral, the Filipino Club, RCIA, and the Calix Society. Times and dates are prone to change – please check the newsletter for details or contact Clergy House Reception. (see page 33)

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Perhaps you yourself have a business which could be advertised in *Oremus*? Our rates are very reasonable and our circulation wider than many other Catholic publications.

Westminster Cathedral – Social Media

Westminster Cathedral is now on the social media sites Facebook and Twitter. To keep up to date with all the most recent news, photos, events and timetable changes, please follow us on **Twitter** (@westminstercath) or 'like' our page on **Facebook** (www.facebook.com/westminstercath).

Painting views from the Cathedral Tower



Alice Hall



With this first set of paintings (exhibited in my 2013 show) I decided to approach the Cathedral Shop to see if they would like to sell cards of my pictures. John Daly, the Commercial Manager, kindly agreed to meet me. Quickly we realised we had a great mutual appreciation of the arts, and within minutes I was being whisked up the Tower to see the view. Until that moment I had not realised that for a small fee you could take the 64 metre lift up to marvel at the horizon and hotchpotch of London.

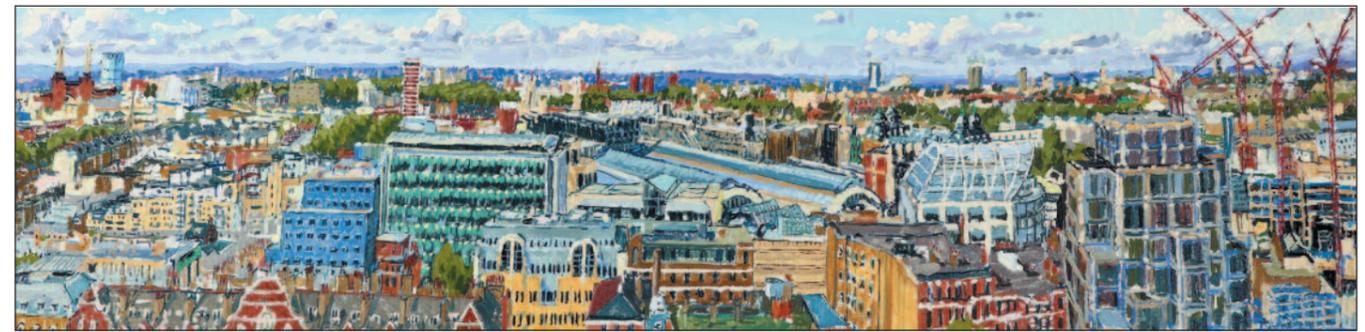
There and then, in the excitement of seeing London sprawling out beneath us, a plan was hatched for two panoramic paintings to be commissioned, which ultimately would hang in the shop – one looking East from Buckingham Palace to the Turbine building, and the other West from Battersea Power Station to Wembley Arch. This would be a challenging composition, with each canvas measuring 35x142cm. John's idea had been sparked by seeing on my website two paintings of the Waterloo skyline in this unusual elongated format – one of which will be hanging at the annual ROI Mall Galleries exhibition from 10-21 December.

Being a 'plein air' artist I normally paint obsessively in a focussed period of time, to capture the spirit of the moment, but the Tower dictated its own pace of work. The four balconies are open to the elements. When there was a mild wind the canvas would flutter, making work slow, but a large gust would make it totally impossible – although exhilarating for the visitors!

My first challenge was setting up an easel to support the awkwardly-shaped canvas. This was achieved by wedging one end of the canvas through the railings and the other to the easel with velcro. In this unorthodox manner the paintings progressed slowly. Working on them only in the mornings to capture the light, and snatching small periods of time to paint, I was able to employ my usual technique of building up the image with rapid application of paint.

On days when the weather was poor, John allowed me to paint within the Cathedral, looking down the nave from the Treasures' exhibition balcony. It was a great pleasure to depict the grandeur of the interior. Often, several Masses

An artist captures the London sprawl



and even a wedding would take place while I was at work. I hope I captured the solemnity and sense of scale.

I'd like to thank John and Westminster Cathedral for the amazing opportunity to paint in and around this wonderful building – the experience presented me with exciting challenges and was very memorable. I hope that John

achieves his objective of increasing visitor numbers to the Tower; and I'm proud to have two new Alice Halls hanging within such a magnificent building.

To find out more about Alice Hall, please visit her website: www.alicehall.co.uk. The original paintings are on display in the Cathedral Gift Shop.

Keeping the Faith in the Middle East

A report on the latest ACN Westminster Event

John Newton

Addressing a packed Cathedral Hall, Archbishop Elias Nassar of Sidon, Lebanon, described how the influx of two million refugees from Iraq and Syria – who fled extremism and conflict – has exacerbated the country's economic crisis. '[T]he Christians of Sidon do not have a lot of opportunities ... they have difficulty working in the private sector of Islamic business owners, because these tend to employ persons from their communities.'

Speaking to Aid to the Church in Need's benefactors for its annual Westminster event, Archbishop Nassar described his commitment to supporting the faithful in practical ways and deepening their commitment to Jesus. He is overseeing a number of projects, including cheap housing for young Christian couples, enabling them to stay in the region, and rebuilding churches destroyed during the civil war to renew communities' spiritual lives.



Pointing out that Jesus visited Sidon (Mt 15:21), he said: 'Sidon is part of the Holy Land. It is mentioned several times in the Bible, and Lebanon is mentioned 72 times.' The Archbishop sees his activities as part of the project to keep Christians in the Holy Land, as their numbers fall across the region.

In conclusion, Archbishop Nassar said: 'I urge all Christians abroad to support the presence of Christians in the Middle East by all means, in order to preserve the Christian faith and history, and in order to spread Christian faith and values which can build bridges between the different peoples and cultures and can help to establish peace, love and justice in the whole world.'

John Newton works for Aid to the Church in Need UK. To listen to all of Archbishop Nassar's talk, please visit www.acnuk.org/extremism-faith-and-hope

As an artist who exclusively paints *in situ*, it is a delight to find new and interesting vantage points. So when a friend offered a fifth floor vantage point from an office building in Victoria overlooking Westminster Cathedral, I leapt at the opportunity. The view instantly inspired me and before the paint was dry, several canvases were being worked on simultaneously.

Westminster Cathedral is a very striking building, surprisingly retiring for such a large structure, being set back from Victoria Street. However as soon as you start to admire the enormity of its façade and tower – set against the shifting light and seasons, Westminster Cathedral is a magnetically awe-inspiring subject.

difficulties with the Anglican authorities, and in March 1913 they made their submission to the Catholic Church. Fifteen years later, they left Trappist monks in charge of Caldey, and made for Prinknash Park in Gloucestershire, where they have been ever since. The community expanded greatly, took over St Michael's Abbey, Farnborough from the French in 1947, refounded Pluscarden Abbey, Elgin, Scotland, in 1948 and, together with Ramsgate (now Chilworth) Abbey and Pluscarden, founded the monastery of Kristo Buase, Techiman, Ghana in 1989.

Sadly, Prinknash, along with most religious houses in Northern Europe, is now a shadow of its former self, with only twelve solemnly professed monks and an average age of 74.2. Though other parts of our worldwide Subiaco Cassinese Congregation flourish (notably our Vietnamese Province, where there are about 45 novices and 80 junior professed) it seems that, in England at any rate, only the mixed kind of life (part pastoral, part liturgical) such as is lived by Dominicans, Premonstratensian Canons and Oratorians (to name only the most obvious examples) enjoys any great influx of vocations.



©Prinknash Abbey

Be this as it may, I am constantly astounded at the resilience of my own elderly community. Statistically speaking, we should not exist. Yet we not only do but are, in some ways, more 'authentic' (a horrible word that needs to be used with great caution) than we were in the days of our (superficial) glory – because we now have nothing much to show for it, and it is better that way. And there is not now, nor has there ever been, a day when the Divine Office and Mass has not been celebrated. 'Hidden apostolic fruitfulness', to use Vatican-speak, does not necessarily have a lovely face. We also have a very flourishing community of secular oblates, about 150 of them, with monthly meetings and various organised trips. This group increases, year by year.

Prinknash Abbey, Gloucester, is within the English Province of the Benedictine Subiaco Cassinese Congregation. Men wishing to stay should contact the guestmaster on guestsprinknash@waitrose.com

Come, Lord Jesus!

Each month the children at the St Vincent de Paul Primary School have a Prayer Focus. For this purpose, they say a special prayer each day in school and at their Prayer Corners at home. The Prayer Focus for the month of December is Advent and Christmas.

Advent Prayer

*O Mary, your heart was full of love.
Help me to welcome Jesus
Into my heart this Advent time
As you welcomed him that first Christmas Day.
Amen.*



Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus, Come.

Prayer Before the Crib

*O Lord, we have come to find you
In our hearts at the stable in Bethlehem.
May we love you as Mary loved you.
May we serve you in others
As Joseph served you.
May we worship you as the angels,
Shepherds and wise men worshipped you.
Jesus our King. Amen.*



A Reflection on Advent

Serena Hopkins, aged 10



During the month of December our school Prayer Focus is Advent. This is the time of year when we prepare for the birth of Jesus. Sometimes we can get distracted by all the decorations of Christmas, but Advent helps us to focus on the true meaning of Christmas. In our school we use the Advent Wreath to help us to prepare.

The Advent Wreath is a spectacular sight of evergreen branches, candles and purple ribbons. Each week a new candle is lit.

On the first Sunday of Advent, the first purple candle is lit. This candle is called the 'Prophecy Candle'. This candle helps us to remember the prophets, especially Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Jesus. This candle represents the hope of Jesus coming, the Saviour of the World.

On the second Sunday we light the second purple candle. This candle represents love, sometimes called the 'Bethlehem Candle' symbolising the manger where Jesus was born.

On the third Sunday of Advent the pink or rose candle is lit. This candle is mostly called the 'Shepherds' Candle' and represents joy. This Sunday is known as Gaudete Sunday, which means rejoicing. On this day you will see the priest wearing pink vestments.

The last purple candle, the 'Angels' Candle', represents peace and is lit on the fourth Sunday.

On Christmas Eve the last candle is lit and this candle sits in the middle of the Advent Wreath. This candle represents the life of Christ, that is why it is called 'Christ's Candle'. It is a white candle symbolising that Christ is pure and sinless.

Each Sunday look at the candles and think about the meaning of each candle as it is lit. When the crib comes to Westminster Cathedral, say the special 'Prayer Before the Crib' as part of your preparation for the coming of Christ.



Cathedral Groups: Guild of the Blessed Sacrament

Theresa Giwa

The inspiration for Holy Hour – prayers before the Blessed Sacrament – is of course the prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, during which he reproached his sleeping disciples with the words: 'Could you not watch with me one hour?' The desire to watch with him, in Eucharistic adoration and devotion, has been part of Christian practice since very early on in the life of the Church. St Basil in the fourth century is said to have always kept a third of the consecrated host for this purpose. St Francis, who revived Eucharistic adoration in thirteenth century Italy, described it as 'seeing Christ.' More recently, our great English theologian and saint, Blessed John Henry Newman, attributed his conversion to the experience of Holy Hour.

In 1593, Pope Paul III founded the Universal Guild of the Blessed Sacrament, and a branch was formed in Westminster in 1905 – only two years after the Cathedral was opened for public worship. The Cathedral branch is linked to branches throughout the Diocese of Westminster through public devotion, retreats and pilgrimages. Until 1998, there was an annual diocesan rally.

Members of the Cathedral Guild meet on Mondays after the 5.30pm Mass in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel for an hour of prayer – both private and communal – devotion and adoration. This is attended not only by regulars from the Cathedral congregation, but also by people from other parishes and visitors from abroad. The devotion has drawn many to the Lord.

There is an annual pilgrimage to different religious shrines and holy places in the UK. In 1995, Father Norman Brown – a very faithful and long-serving chaplain of the group – led a pilgrimage to Rome, Assisi and Lanciaio – the site of a Eucharistic miracle. Since 2007, we have had four pilgrimages to the Holy Land led by Mgr Mark Langham and Canon Christopher Tuckwell, successive Administrators of the Cathedral. We have also been on other pilgrimages throughout the UK.

We express our gratitude to our forefathers in the Faith, for passing on to us the wonderful gift of this devotion, through which we can grow closer to Christ through his presence in the Holy Eucharist.

*O Sacrament most holy,
O Sacrament divine,
All praise and all thanksgiving
Be every moment thine.*

Westminster Cathedral – Social Media

Westminster Cathedral is now on the social media sites Facebook and Twitter. To keep up to date with all the most recent news, photos, events and timetable changes, please follow us on **Twitter** (@westminstercath) or 'like' our page on **Facebook** (www.facebook.com/westminstercath).

The Choristers of Westminster Cathedral
Martin Baker, Master of Music

Benjamin Britten's
A Ceremony of Carols

Tuesday 2nd December, 7.30pm
(doors open at 7.00pm)

Tickets priced: £15
Tickets available from Westminster Cathedral Gift Shop and
Ticketmaster: 0844 847 1524 or www.ticketmaster.co.uk

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In praise of the Welsh poets

Christina White



The Friends turned out in large numbers for our Welsh poets evening on 27 October with a talk by Archbishop George Stack on Dylan Thomas and RS Thomas. The date marked the 100th anniversary of Dylan's birth and by a stroke of luck I happened to speak to someone who knew RS Thomas's grandson Rhodri – so he and his wife Alice also came to the talk, and even presented the Archbishop with a gift on behalf of the Friends.

The Archbishop spoke very movingly about RS Thomas's spirituality and love of nature. The poet was a keen naturalist and often, when out walking on the Welsh hillsides, he would find the still warm form of the hare where he would place his hand, feeling the warmth of the animal. That warmth, he explained, was why Thomas could believe in God, believing without seeing in sure and certain knowledge of God's warm presence. Claudette, from the Passage, provided a tasty hot Welsh supper with delicious Welsh cakes for pudding.

We thought it appropriate to give Archbishop George a thank you present. The Penderyn whisky distillery has a rather fine bottle dedicated to Dylan Thomas so it was the obvious choice. Anyone interested in buying a bottle for

a friend this Christmas should log on to the website: www.penderynstore.com

A small group turned out on a dreadfully wet and stormy night for Jackie Bennett's talk on *The Writer's Garden*. She chose images to illustrate the talk which focused on the gardens that have inspired some of our best-loved writers. As the windows rattled we looked on pictures of the vicarage at Grantchester and Virginia Woolf's garden at Monk's House. Now winter is here, in all its wet fury, we can look forward to summer 2015 and maybe some day trips to the gardens featured. Thanks must go to Peter Sheppard and Keith Day who generously provided use of their private kitchen for the post-talk drinks.

Tickets are now on sale at just £15 for the Friends' Choristers' Recital on 2 December which again focuses on Benjamin Britten's beautiful *A Ceremony of Carols*. There will be a post-concert party in the Cathedral Hall with plenty of fizz and hot canapés. If the music isn't to your taste, then please do come along to the party. Tickets are £20.

At the time of writing we are in the process of organising an afternoon tour of All Hallows – the beautiful church which I mentioned in last month's

Oremus. This will be in December and flyers will go up shortly on the Friends' noticeboard. Numbers are limited to 15, so please book early.

For all of you clearing out cupboards pre-Christmas please remember that the Friends will have a stall at the Christmas Fayre on 14 December; all donations are most gratefully received and the store cupboard is filling up. Please bring donations to Clergy House marked 'Friends'. We will also be selling cupcakes, so cake donations on the day would also be most welcome.

A reminder too that The Passage's Carol Service will be on Tuesday 16 December at St Margaret's, Westminster. Invitation is by ticket-only with a minimum donation of £25.00. To purchase tickets please call 0207 592 1856 or e-mail: tickets@passage.org.uk.

Thank you all for your support and friendship over the last twelve months. 2015 will be an important year for the Friends, with some important anniversaries to celebrate and some major fundraising too. Have a very Happy Christmas!

Forthcoming Events

2 December: A Ceremony of Carols.

The annual and highly popular performance of Benjamin Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols* by the Choristers of Westminster Cathedral directed by the Master of Music, Martin Baker. This event is sponsored by the Friends. Please see the main article opposite and the Cathedral website for more details.

14 December: Cathedral Christmas Fayre. The Friends will have a stall at this event. Please see the main article for more details.

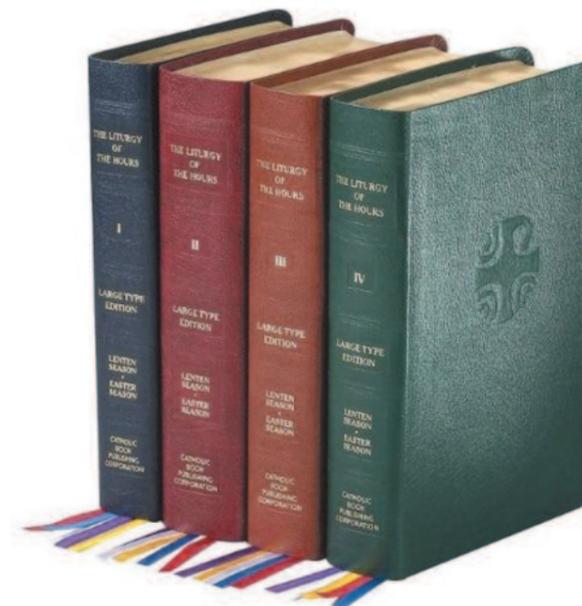
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- Call: 020 7798 9059
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An Advent Challenge... Rediscovering the life of prayer

Fr Keith Sawyer



December sees us back to Advent, the beginning of a brand new year in the prayer life of the Church. For those of us who are committed, either by ordination or religious profession, to saying the whole or part of the Divine Office (better called the Liturgy of the Hours), we take out a new volume for Advent and Christmastide, and rearrange the marker for the first Sunday of Advent.

Each year, I tell myself I must re-read the first 90 or so pages at the beginning of the Advent volume. This divides into two parts: an eight page letter by Blessed Pope Paul VI, which authorised the revised Liturgy of the Hours, and then the General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours, which tells us what to do for communal celebration (perhaps in seminaries, monasteries, and Morning and Evening Prayer in the Cathedral), but also goes a bit deeper into the purpose of the various parts. Each year, when I change volumes after the first volume has finished, I find myself trying to justify why I haven't got round to reading again these sections. So, perhaps this year...

Important not to go overboard

But, it is important not to go overboard on the Liturgy, whether of the Mass or the Divine Office. Both, certainly, deserve serious consideration, and have long been part of the Catholic Church's heritage of prayer, rightly handed on to us and updated as necessary. Yet, we still need our private prayer, or devotions, our times of quiet. I remember being told in my seminary days that you have to bring a life of prayer to the Liturgy if you are to get much out of the Liturgy. Yes, we fulfil our Sunday obligation by going to

Sunday Mass, and those of us committed to the Office fulfil our duty by doing all, or as much as we can, of what is required. But, as with any relationship (and prayer is really our relationship with God), there are levels of involvement.

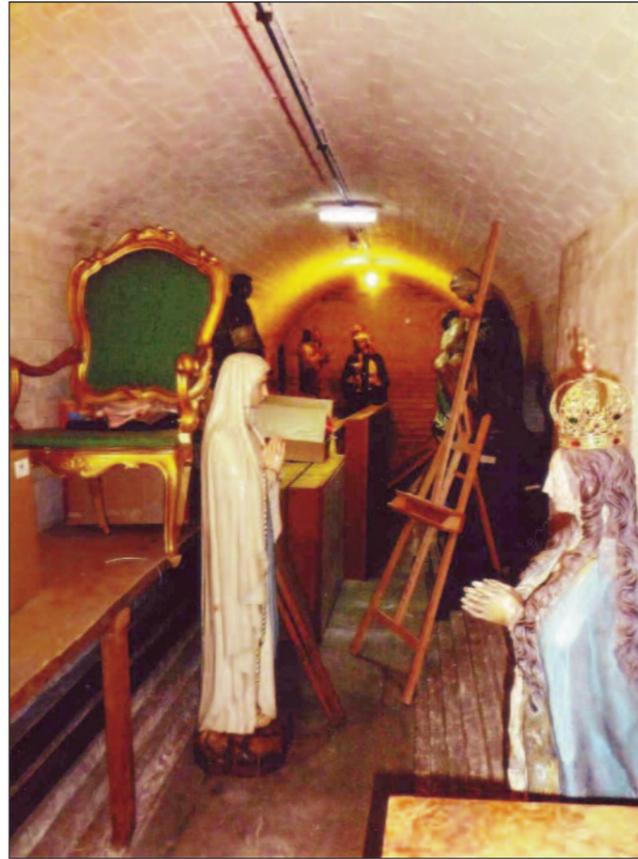
If we don't try to vary except when we have to, the chances are that our compulsory prayer will be unfulfilling. Of course, as we advance in prayer, it is said that we move into dry periods, but that is a different thing. We need some time of our own with the Lord, Our Lady, the saints, and our loved ones who have gone before us. What we do in that time alone isn't that important. A loving heart, a heart seeking God, is probably the best that most of us will reach. A bit of the Rosary might well help – we're back to Blessed Pope Paul VI who encouraged the Rosary and the Angelus in his Exhortation *Marialis Cultus*. Invocations, novenas, holding a miraculous Medal, sitting quietly at home, all these things and more play their part.

So I look forward with mixed feelings at the Advent volume of the Divine Office. Perhaps at least in this year of his beatification, I can reread Pope Paul's fairly short Exhortation on the Liturgy of the Hours, but I also know I've got to keep going with the private prayer, too.

Fr Keith Sawyer is a priest of the Diocese of Northampton and is a regular confessor at Westminster Cathedral. Although clergy and religious are normally obliged to recite the whole or part of the Liturgy of the Hours each day, lay people are also encouraged to join in the official prayer of the Church, either with their priests or in families, groups or as individuals (cf Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1175; General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours, 27.)

Behind the Scenes: The Crypt Store Room

Oremus readers are probably very familiar with the public face of the Cathedral building; behind it, though, is a truly Byzantine network of offices, rooms, and spaces rarely seen, except by those who use them. In this series, we hope to show you some of them. The series on Cathedral Treasures will return next year.



Many parishioners will have attended Mass in St Peter's Crypt below the Cathedral sanctuary, but few will have noticed a door on the right beside the spiral staircase leading upwards to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. This door leads to a large store-room consisting of three arched, tunnel-like bays.

The store room contains statues and pictures of saints, vestments, candlesticks, offertory boxes and much other church furniture from a bygone age. It also contains the lead coffin which held the body of St John Southworth, who now lies in a feretory in the Holy Souls Chapel above, but will eventually return to St George's Chapel.

Just inside the entrance is a notice firmly pasted to the wall. Despite an attempt to erase it, enough of the words have survived to enable its meaning to be deciphered. It reads:

CITY OF WESTMINSTER. WASHING FACILITIES AND PUBLIC CONVENIENCES. NORMAL CHARGE 3 PENCE INCLUDING SOAP AND TOWEL. REDUCED CHARGE FOR SHELTER USERS. UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE, PERSONS WHO HAVE SPENT THE NIGHT IN THIS SHELTER IN WESTMINSTER, LONDON, MAY, FOR THE PRICE OF 1d, OBTAIN THE USE OF THE WASHING FACILITIES AND PUBLIC CONVENIENCES PROVIDED AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATION: LEICESTER SQUARE, CHARING CROSS ROAD, GARRICK THEATRE.

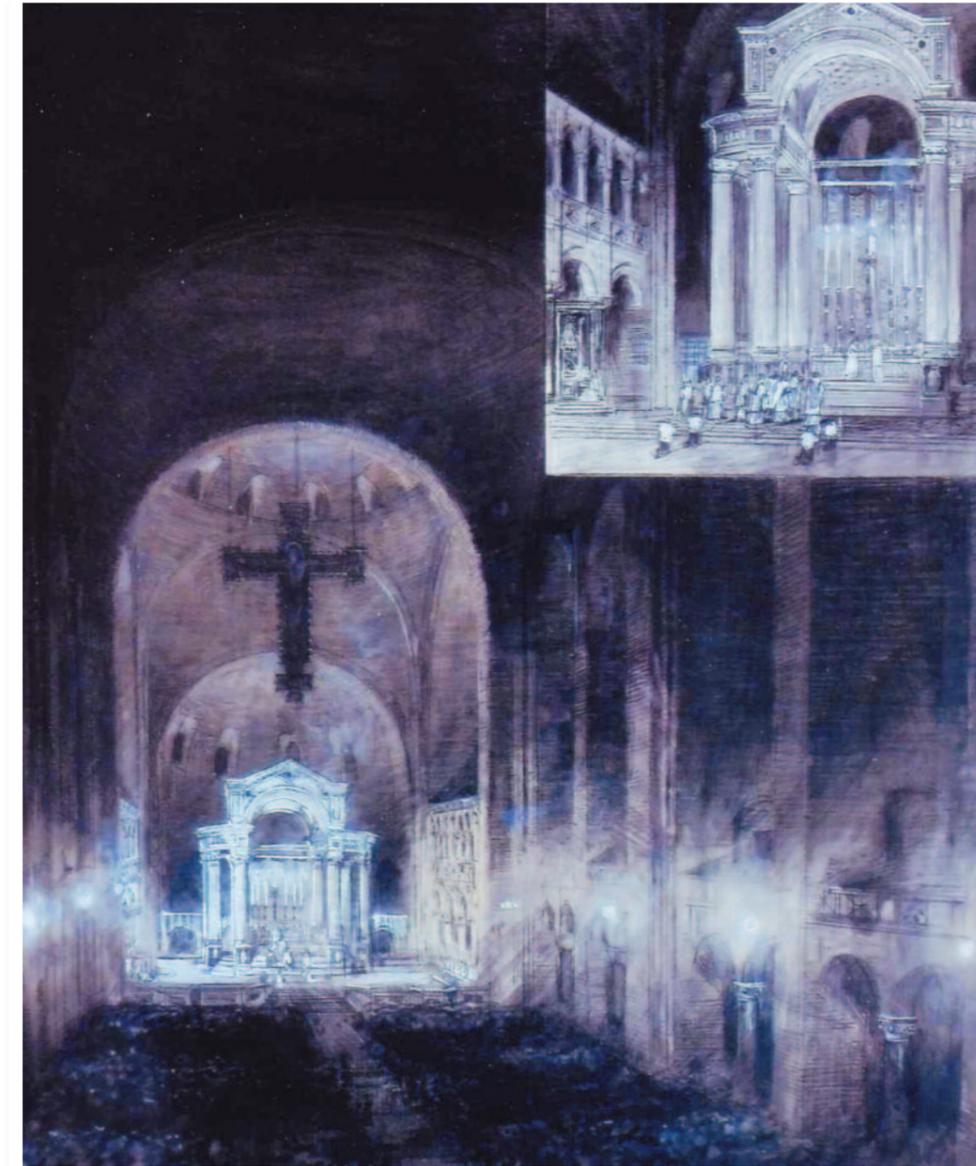
The notice reminds us of the fact that St Peter's Crypt and the store room beside it were used as an air-raid shelter by parishioners and those living nearby during both the 1914-18 War and that of 1939-45, being inspected and approved to hold 2,000 people in 1918. *PR*



Cathedral History

A Photographic Record

Unveiling the Baldacchino – Christmas Eve 1906



This photograph, from an original picture by C Brewer, shows the Cathedral baldacchino when it was first unveiled to public gaze at Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, 1906. It was described in *Oremus* two months ago. The sharp-sighted may notice that the Archbishop's throne on the left of the sanctuary is surmounted by its present carved wooden canopy, but that the cross and candlesticks on the altar are not the ones of today and the artificial lighting, both in the sanctuary and in the nave, is much inferior to that provided by our present great electrical chandeliers.

The wooden canopy above the throne was installed earlier in 1906 and the present altar cross and candlesticks were first used at the consecration of the Cathedral on 28 June 1910. As for the chandeliers, they arrived in 1909 but it was agreed with the makers (J W Singer & Co of Frome) that they would not be used until they had been paid for – which they were in 1912. Eric Gill's Stations of the Cross began to be installed in the nave two years later and all fourteen were completed by 1918. *PR*

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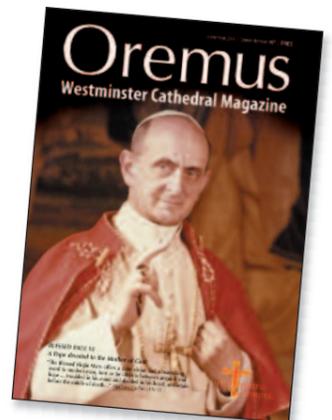
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New Cathedral Chaplains

Following on from the previous edition of *Oremus*, we introduce to our readers new members of the Cathedral's College of Chaplains. Here are brief introductions to Fr Andrew Connick and Fr Michael Donaghy.

Fr Andrew Connick



Ministering in the Cathedral is not an entirely new experience for me: I spent five weeks here when I was first ordained three years ago. Since then I have been assistant priest in Enfield with Fr Slawomir Witon, whom many of you know and remember with such fondness. The parish in Enfield has two churches and three priests and thank God it is a vibrant and busy place – so much so that Fr Witon likes to call it

the 'cathedral of the north'! My time there was a wonderful introduction to priestly ministry.

I grew up in the parish of Golders Green and read Computer Science at Cambridge University. It was there that it became clear that the Lord was asking something more of me. I worked for a year as software developer before going

to Allen Hall seminary to begin my priestly formation. I was ordained in the Cathedral in July 2011.

The Cathedral is at the heart of our Diocese, and it is a joy to serve here as a chaplain. Life here is marked by the many special occasions and visitors from around the world, the ministry of Reconciliation, and the rhythm of Mass and prayer; but I am particularly grateful, too, for such a good group of brother priests in Clergy House and for the lively parish community who have given me such a friendly welcome.

Aside from the regular responsibilities of a Cathedral chaplain, I am looking after the Confirmation programme for young adults and I am also chaplain to the London campus of the University of Notre Dame in the USA.

Sadly, my time in the Cathedral will be short lived. The Cardinal has asked me to do some further studies in systematic theology, which, please God, I will begin next September. Still, I am looking forward to the wonderful opportunities that this year will bring in the mother church of the Diocese. Please keep me and the other chaplains in your prayers, and be assured of our prayers for you all.

Fr Michael Donaghy



My dear friends, it is a great joy and privilege to serve once again as a Cathedral chaplain, having since worked as a parish priest, and more recently as a priest in teaching. Cathedral staff and parishioners have been so welcoming and friendly that I feel very much at home already, almost as if I have never been away. Indeed, it is quite a delight when some young parents in the

parish remind me that I gave them their First Holy Communion in the Cathedral long ago.

My own parents came from County Cork and Lincolnshire, but I was born in Luton on 4 October 1956. It was in Luton that I was taught by the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who also have a convent at Whetstone. In secondary school I studied the sciences to A Level and considered training as a biochemist. However, I had strongly felt the call to become a priest from my infancy, much to the astonishment of my parents, who wisely resisted my being sent to a junior seminary.

So, in 1975 I began to train for the priesthood at Allen Hall, the Westminster Diocesan Seminary in Chelsea, where the Rector was Mgr James O'Brien. The seminary had just moved that summer to Chelsea from St Edmund's College, Ware. I studied for my theology degree at Heythrop College, University of London, after which I was ordained to the diaconate with my peers at Westminster Cathedral.

My diaconal year was spent in Our Lady and St Joseph's parish, Hanwell, where I was ordained to the priesthood by the then Bishop James O'Brien on 27 June 1981, the Feast of St John Southworth. It is also the Feast Day of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. I have great devotion to both.

I then served as an assistant priest in Willesden Green before becoming a Westminster Cathedral chaplain in 1985. Cardinal Basil Hume was the Archbishop and Canon Oliver Kelly was the Administrator at that time. I held a number of posts at Westminster Cathedral: Prefect of the Sacristy, Registrar, School Chaplain (St Vincent de Paul) and Keeper of the Clocks (around the complex) amongst others.

I was also a substitute Hospital Chaplain for the Westminster, Children's and Gordon Hospitals. Along with the hospital chaplain, Fr (now Bishop) John Arnold, I

ministered to the first HIV/AIDS patients at the Westminster Hospital. Furthermore, Cathedral chaplains used to celebrate a Mass in the Westminster Hospital Chapel every Sunday and then visit those who were very sick, before returning to the Cathedral for the remaining Sunday Masses, Vespers and Confessions.

After seven years at the Cathedral, I was appointed parish priest at the Church of St Vincent de Paul and St Louise de Marillac in Potters Bar, taking over from the Spanish Vincentian Fathers. This parish was later merged with the diocesan parish across the town. Since then, I have also served as a parish priest in Teddington and Hoddesdon.

When I moved from Teddington, Cardinal Hume gave me permission to train as a teacher during a sabbatical year. I trained as both a primary and secondary school teacher in Hereford, on an experimental dual PGCE, with the Marches Consortium SCITT. The PGCE was granted by the Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education (now called the University of Gloucestershire).

Upon my return to London, I taught in the Cardinal Hinsley Secondary School in Harlesden (now the Newman Catholic College) and thereafter in schools in Luton and Shefford, Bedfordshire. In secondary schools I taught RE, Citizenship, PSHE and Chemistry (to GCSE), A level Philosophy of Religion and Ethics.

When I was teaching, secondary schools were required to have at least one formally trained teacher of Citizenship, so I was sent to study at Leicester University. After 18 months of part time study while teaching, I obtained a Postgraduate Certificate in Citizenship Education. Leicester University's certificate in Citizenship Education involved study at Master's level and was regarded as the best qualification in Citizenship in Britain.

In my last school I was Head of Careers and Work Experience for 1,800 pupils, a sixth form tutor and a mentor for trainee teachers within the Bedfordshire SCITT. While teaching in primary school I taught every subject in the curriculum to Year 4 but specialised in RE and Science.

A structured life suits me best, so in August 2014 Cardinal Vincent Nichols appointed me to serve as a Cathedral chaplain once again. Having looked after my elderly mother in her later years and experienced the devastating effects of a stroke upon her and the family, I feel most suited to be the chaplain with responsibility for the nursing homes, the sick and housebound within the parish. I look forward to getting to know everyone and thank God for the special blessing of being able to serve for a second time in this great Cathedral community.

The Choir School's Christmas Card Project 2014

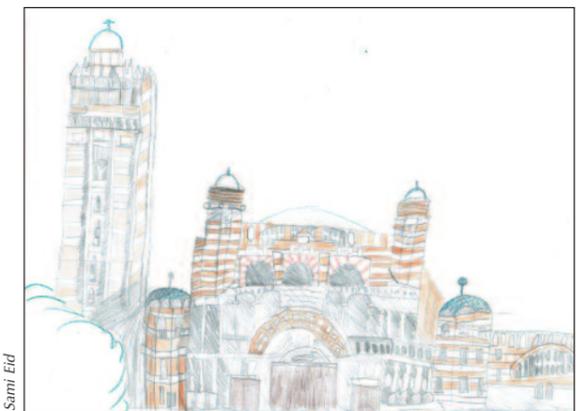
Jemima Hurst-Bannister

Christmas started in September for Westminster Cathedral Choir School! We always begin our Christmas card project at the start of term so we can get them all scanned and printed ready for the Christmas rush.

This year I decided that we would take our inspiration from the Cathedral itself. We spend a lot of time worshipping within the majestic walls of the building, but rarely do we spend time taking in the beauty of the building from the outside. So, I took each Form to the Piazza for a short sketching session of the Cathedral's façade. I got the boys to really think about the architecture in front of them; the architectural features, the height of the tower compared to the rest of the building, the materials and finally the wonderful decoration which adorns the façade.



Xavier Ferras



Sumi Eid

Back in the classroom we transferred our sketches on to clean paper and added colour with paint or colouring pencils. The boys then added a Christmas touch with the snowy skies. They are extremely lucky to be at a school which sits so close to such a fine example of architectural and artistic brilliance, and hopefully we have captured it in our own style in this project.

Jemima Hurst-Bannister, is Head of Art & Design at the Choir School. All the designs, including the two above, will soon feature on the Cathedral's Facebook page.

December
2014

The Month of December

*Hark the glad sound!
The Saviour comes,
The Saviour promised long!*

As frequently lamented, for the world the Season of Advent has gone almost completely out of the snow-sprayed window in favour of a muddled celebration lasting several months. For us too – victims of logistics – it is more and more difficult to wait and prepare in preference to the ‘glad sound’ of carols and parties all December long. But it is important to try taking a leaf out of our pagan ancestors’ book – not that they had such things! For them this was decidedly *aerra jeola* – before Yule.

*Let every heart prepare a throne,
And every voice a song.*

“When he came on earth, God so completely took the lowest place, that no one has ever been able to take it from Him.”

Bl Charles de Foucauld Feast Day: 1 December



TUESDAY 9 DECEMBER

Advent FERIA or
St Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin

5.30pm: Chapter Mass
WEDNESDAY 10 DECEMBER
7.00pm: HCPT Carol Service

THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER

Advent FERIA or
St Damasus I, Pope

FRIDAY 12 DECEMBER (*Friday abstinence*)
Advent FERIA or
Our Lady of Guadalupe

SATURDAY 13 DECEMBER

St Lucy, Virgin & Martyr

4.30pm: Monthly Latin Mass Society Mass

SUNDAY 14 DECEMBER

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (*Ps Week 3*)
Gaudete Sunday

9.00am: Family Mass

10.30am Solemn Mass (*Full Choir*)

Missa Ave Regina caelorum *Victoria*
This is the record of John Gibbons
Vox clamantis in deserto *Esquivel*
Organ: Prelude and Fugue in A major
(BWV 536) *J S Bach*

3.30pm Solemn Vespers & Benediction

(*Full Choir*)

Magnificat septimi toni *Bevan*
Gaude et laetare *Sweetinck*
Organ: March on a theme of Handel
Guilman

WEDNESDAY 17 DECEMBER

7.00am, 8.00am and 10.30am Masses transferred to the Crypt

12.30pm, 1.05pm, and 5.30pm Masses transferred to the Cathedral Hall

5.00pm: Vespers transferred to the Cathedral Hall

7.30pm: Christmas Celebration

THURSDAY 18 DECEMBER

7.00am, 8.00am, and 10.30am Masses transferred to the Crypt

12.30pm, 1.05pm and 5.30pm Masses transferred to the Cathedral Hall

7.30pm: Christmas Celebration

FRIDAY 19 DECEMBER

(*Friday abstinence*)

SUNDAY 21 DECEMBER

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (*Ps Week 4*)

10.30am Solemn Mass (*Full Choir*)

Mass for five voices *Byrd*
Rorate caeli *Byrd*
Ecce virgo concipiet *Byrd*

Organ: Litanies *Alain*

3.30pm Cathedral Parish Carol Service

(*Full Choir*)

MONDAY 22 DECEMBER

5.30pm: Diocesan Staff Mass celebrated by the Cardinal

TUESDAY 23 DECEMBER

St John of Kanty, Priest

WEDNESDAY 24 DECEMBER

CHRISTMAS EVE

4.00pm: Solemn First Vespers of the Nativity celebrated by the Cardinal

(*Full Choir*)

Magnificat octavi toni *Marenzio*

O magnum mysterium *Victoria*
Organ: Dieu parmi nous (La Nativité du Seigneur) *Messiaen*

6.00pm: First Mass of Christmas

11.00pm: Vigil followed by Midnight Mass at 11.30pm celebrated by the Cardinal (*Full Choir*). *Midnight Mass will be broadcast live on BBC Radio 4*

Missa Hodie Christus natus est *Palestrina*

Hodie Christus natus est *Gabrieli*

O magnum mysterium *Gabrieli*

Organ: Hodie Christus natus est *Schütz*

THURSDAY 25 DECEMBER

CHRISTMAS DAY

10.30am: Solemn Mass celebrated by the Cardinal (*Full Choir*)

Krönungsmesse (K.317) *Mozart*
Hodie Christus natus est *Schütz*

Organ: Sinfonia to Cantata 29 *J S Bach*
arr. Dupré

3.30pm: Solemn Pontifical Second Vespers celebrated by the Cardinal (*Full Choir*)

Magnificat primi toni *Bevan*

O magnum mysterium *Poulenc*

Hodie Christus natus est *Palestrina*

Organ: Quand Jésus naquit à Noël *Balbastre*

Note that times of other Masses on Christmas Day are: 8.00am, 9.00am and 12.00pm (No Masses at 5.30pm or 7.00pm)

FRIDAY 26 DECEMBER

ST STEPHEN, The First Martyr

Confessions: **11.00am-1.00pm**

Masses: **10.30am, 12.30am and 5.00pm**

SATURDAY 27 DECEMBER

ST JOHN, Apostle

Confessions: **11.00am-1.00pm**

Masses: **10.30am, 12.30am and 6.00pm** (Sunday anticipatory)

SUNDAY 28 DECEMBER

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS MARY AND JOSEPH

10.30am: Solemn Mass (*No Choir*)

3.30pm: Solemn Vespers and Benediction (*No Choir*)

MONDAY 29 DECEMBER

ST THOMAS BECKET, Bishop & Martyr

Confessions: **11.00am-1.00pm**

Masses: **10.30am, 12.30am and 5.00pm**

TUESDAY 30 DECEMBER

SIXTH DAY IN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

Confessions: **11.00am-1.00pm**

Masses: **10.30am, 12.30am and 5.00pm**

WEDNESDAY 31 DECEMBER

SEVENTH DAY IN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

St Sylvester I, Pope

Confessions: **11.00am-1.00pm**

Masses: **10.30am, 12.30am and 5.00pm**
11.15pm Mass for the New Year

Key to the Diary: Saints days and holy days written in CAPITAL LETTERS denote Feasts, those in BOLD CAPITAL LETTERS denote Solemnities, those not in capitals and where there is a choice denote Optional Memoria, all others not in capital letters are Memoria.

Throughout the Year

Mondays

11.30am: Prayer Group in the Hinsley Room

6.00pm: Scripture Discussion Group in Clergy House

6.00pm: Christian Meditation Group in the Hinsley Room

6.30pm: Guild of the Blessed Sacrament in the Cathedral

Tuesdays

6.30pm: The Guild of St Anthony in the Cathedral

7.30pm: The Catholic Evidence Guild in Clergy House

Wednesdays

12.00pm: First Wednesday Quiet Days on the first Wednesday of every month in the Hinsley Room.

Thursdays

6.30pm: The Legion of Mary in Clergy House

6.45pm: Scripture Discussion Group in Clergy House

Fridays

5.00pm: Charismatic Prayer Group in the Cathedral Hall – please check in advance for confirmation.

6.30pm: The Diocesan Vocations Group in the Hinsley Room on the last of each month.

Saturdays

10.00am: Centering Prayer Group in the Hinsley Room 2.00pm: Justice and Peace Group in the Hinsley Room on the last of the month.

Extraordinary Form: For the liturgical calendar of the Extraordinary Form (1962 Missal) of the Roman Rite, please visit the Latin Mass Society website: www.lms.org.uk/

From the Registers

Baptisms

Francesco D’Ercole

Edoardo D’Ercole

Archie Hogan

Victoria Holt

Louis Arthur Windsor

Marriages

Leonardo Satya and Adriana

Sumitomo

What Happens and When

Public Services

The Cathedral opens shortly before the first Mass of the day; doors close at 7.00pm, Monday to Saturday, with occasional exceptions. On Sunday evenings, the Cathedral closes after the 7.00pm Mass. On Public and Bank holidays the Cathedral closes at 5.30pm in the afternoon.

Monday to Friday

Masses: 7.00am; 8.00am; 10.30am (said in Latin); 12.30pm; 1.05pm and 5.30pm.

Morning Prayer (Lady Chapel): 7.40am.

Evening Prayer (Latin Vespers* sung by the Lay Clerks in Lady Chapel): 5.00pm

(*except Tuesday when it is sung in English). Solemn Mass (sung by the Choir): 5.30pm. Rosary will be prayed after the 5.30pm Mass.

Saturday

Masses: 8.00am; 9.00am; 10.30am; and 12.30pm. Morning Prayer (Lady Chapel): 10.00am. Solemn Mass (sung by the Choir): 10.30am. First Evening Prayer of Sunday (Lady Chapel): 5.30pm. First Mass of Sunday: 6.00pm.

Sunday

Masses: 8.00am; 9.00am; 10.30am; 12.00 noon; 5.30pm; and 7.00pm. Morning Prayer (Lady Chapel) 10.00am. Solemn Mass (sung by the Choir) 10.30am. Solemn Vespers and Benediction 3.30pm. Organ Recital (when scheduled): 4.45pm.

Holidays of Obligation

As Monday-Friday, Vigil Mass (evening of the previous day) at 5.30pm.

Public Holidays

Masses: 10.30am, 12.30pm, 5.00pm.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

This takes place in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel every Monday to Friday following the 1.05pm Mass until 4.45pm.

Confessions

are heard at the following times: Saturday: 10.30am-6.30pm. Sunday: 11.00am-1.00pm; and 4.30-7.00pm. Monday-Friday: 11.30am-6.00pm. Public Holidays: 11.00am-1.00pm.

Funerals

Enquiries about arranging a funeral at the Cathedral or Sacred Heart Church, Horseferry Road, should be made to a priest at Cathedral Clergy House in the first instance.

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“Changing lives, a letter at a time”

A Tree of Love, Life and Peace

The history of the Christmas Tree

There is much more to the relevance of the tree in the celebration of Christmas than a focus for a display of gifts and decorations



Alan Frost

It is often claimed that the origins of the Christmas tree are pagan. This is not really true since those links with pagan custom are about conversion and substitution; they are about monumental change, not continuation. And whilst it is the case that the Christmas tree in this country became greatly popular through its promotion by Prince Albert and the image of Queen Victoria's family around their tree at Osborne House in the Illustrated London News of 1848, it is in fact to an Englishman back in the eighth century that the symbol of a decorated tree at Christmas can really be traced. Just as the origins of the Christmas Crib can be traced back to the thirteenth century and St Francis.

Having said this, the link with Prince Albert is only one aspect of a continuing German connection to the establishment of the physical and symbolic importance of the tree at Christmas. This link goes back to the Catholic origins of the tree when an English missionary from Devon, born with the name Winfrid but who became Bishop (and later Saint) Boniface, was preaching and converting in the Geismar area of Germany. It was here on a second visit in or around 723 after a time in Rome, that he discovered the people had lapsed and returned to their pagan practices of worshipping false gods, and that a boy was to be sacrificed to appease Thor beneath a mighty tree known as 'Odin's Oak'. Boniface intervened and took an axe to the tree which fell, perhaps with divine assistance. Amid the subsequent devastation a young fir tree remained standing, seemingly pointing towards heaven. The people took this as a sign, and their faith was restored; a message like that of the angels to the shepherds at the Nativity had been received and they too were filled with wonder. Boniface, who became known as 'the Apostle of Germany', informed them it was the tree of the Christ Child.

St Boniface and the Tree

There had already been established for some time the custom of taking a small fir into their houses by the people, and Boniface told them now to decorate these evergreen trees in their homes in recognition of, and gratitude for, the gift of the tree and its attendant representation of the promise of eternal life. Gradually, shaped pieces of bread like Communion wafers were made to adorn the tree along with pieces of fruit; berries might look like little stars evoking the Bethlehem narrative, and apples came to have more significance than bright decoration.

By the early Middle Ages in Germany a practice of enacting scenes from the Bible became a popular form of religious street theatre, as it were, and some time before the tannenbaum custom became established, there were short plays from the early eleventh century on, the beginnings of the ubiquitous morality plays, featuring the paradiesbaum or 'Paradise Tree'. This literally took centre stage, often represented as full of apples, in a depiction of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and the choice as to Good or Evil. As it was thereby also the Tree of Life, it became an image much represented in churches of northern Europe. The play itself ended with the coming of Jesus and so was mainly enacted during Advent.

Over time the breads baked to decorate the trees were cut into the forms of stars and suchlike, and then sweet things like barley twists and gingerbreads were added and later little objects in wax. By 1610, tinsel had been invented in Germany and this became a standard feature of the decorated Christmas tree, often glistening in public display in moonlight or snow. Though such settings would have been so different from the geography and climate of the Holy Land, they perhaps related to the glittering gifts in the Nativity stable, and certainly were in the intended spirit of joy and celebration. And the idea of a tree of life was not lost as even to this day in southern Germany at Christmas, trees may still be referred to as 'paradeis'.

The Christmas Tree in literature

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the practice of decorating trees, especially at Christmas time, spread across Europe and across the seas into America as emigrants carried the custom with them, into the New England states initially. Moreover, in 1850, images of the British Royal Family around the Christmas tree were also carried in US magazines. One of the earliest writers to refer to Christmas trees was Goethe, and later the German poet Schiller (his is the ode used by Beethoven in his Choral Symphony). About the same time as Dickens was penning his famous Christmas stories, in Russia, Dostoevsky was also making reference to the Christmas tree, as was Hans Christian Andersen. One of the very popular carols written for the celebration of Christmas was a reworded German song about a fir tree, *O Tannenbaum*.

The Batwa are one of the last remaining pygmy hunter gatherer tribes left in Burundi

They are the most marginalised and deprived people in the country. The land they once owned has gradually been taken from them. This means they have great difficulty clothing and feeding themselves and have no access to education or medical attention. The family home which has about 6 people is a one room hut with a diameter of about three metres which is made from vegetation, has an open fire and is not waterproof. A private life is almost non-existent.

Fr Elias has asked SPICMA to assist him in his project of empowering the Batwa Pygmy people to take their first step out of poverty. Our donors will fund the materials. Each family will build their own small several roomed, safe, dry brick houses (pictured right).



Two Villages have now been completed with the help of the donors of SPICMA. Please help another 27 Families to have a secure dry home.



"I pray that you can help us in our pastoral work with this very poor minority people, the pygmies (Batwa) of Burundi who are the poorest of all the poor here."

Fr Elias Mja (White Fathers)



To make an instant no cost safe Card donation please go to our website www.spicma.org/or send a donation to SPICMA, P.O. Box 299, Cirencester GL7 9FP. Please indicate if you can Gift Aid your donation and would like a receipt. Spicma will not and has never shared personal details with any other person or organisation. SPICMA Catholic Charity No. 270794, Est. 1967, is still run by volunteers.

But the idea of a tree in the Catholic faith evokes much more than an association with Christmas. At the end of his journey on earth that began in the Bethlehem cave, Our Lord is sometimes described as hanging on a tree or being nailed to a tree. Many who also gave their lives in sacrifice as martyrs were hanged from a gallows that was a tree, not least the infamous (so-called) Tyburn Tree.

Across the world in homes and churches, in the centres of towns and cities, the Christmas tree has become a seasonal feature and is associated with a time of goodwill. For all the irrelevant, insincere and secular practices that have evolved in the run-up to Christmas, there is always the hope that the link between the tree and the purpose of the Bethlehem miracle will be discovered and understood by people across the globe. For this reason, surely, Blessed Paul VI introduced the annual erection of a Christmas tree in St Peter's Square. Indeed, the Vatican's own newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* in 2005 declared that 'the tree lit by little lights is the symbol of the light that Jesus brought to the world with his birth'. The writer, Lino Lozza, identifies a 'tree of life, love, peace' and makes numerous links from legend, history and scripture to conclude that 'all this endows the Christmas tree, in harmony with the crib, with the religious and Christian significance of salvation that the Son of God brought to the whole world by his humble birth.'

This is surely true and is also an evocation of a second but sinless Eve, instrumental in that salvific event. Apples do not grow on a fir tree.

Alan Frost is the crossword compiler for Oremus. He is also a published poet.

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