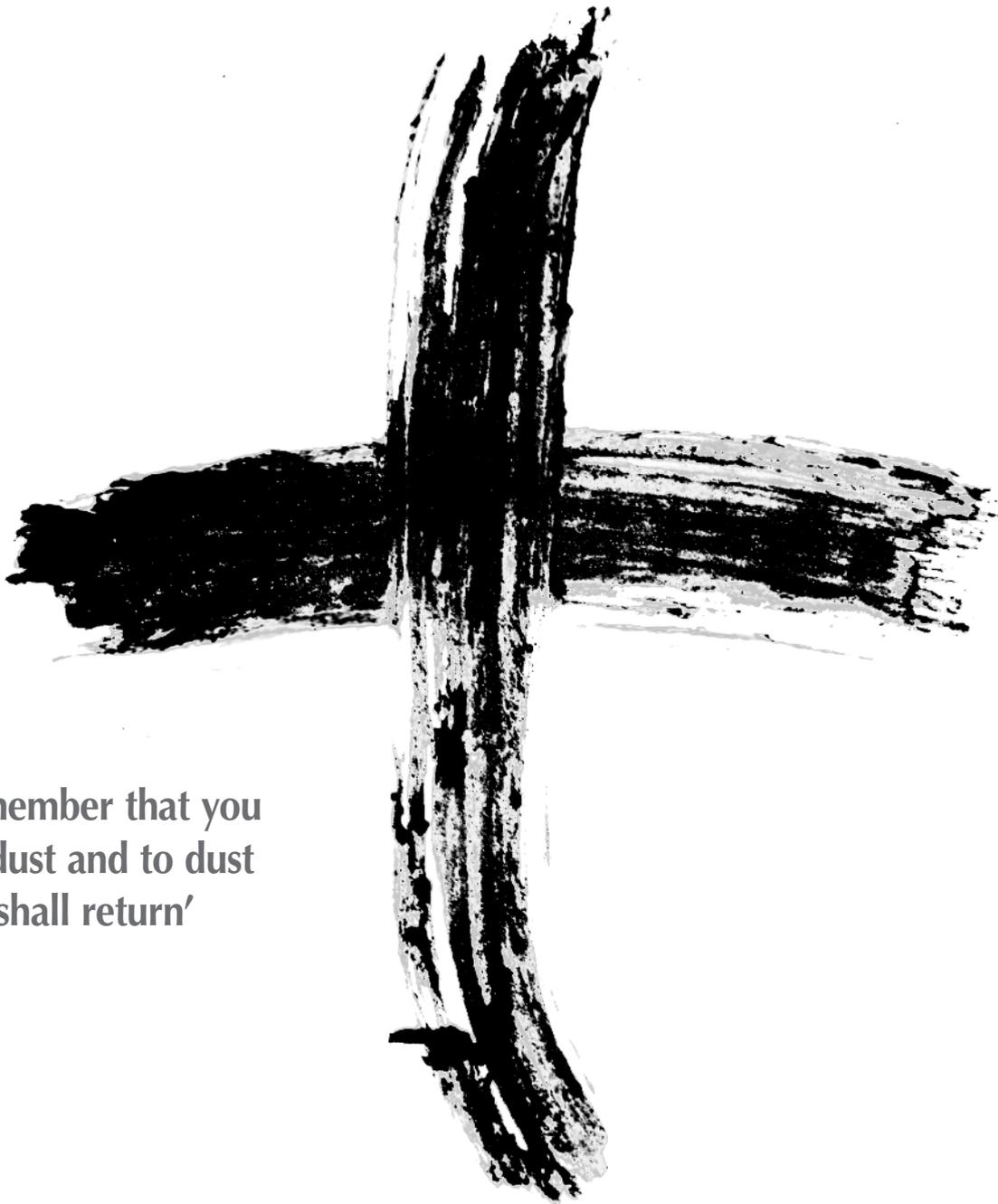


February 2016 | Edition Number 211 | FREE

Oremus

Westminster Cathedral Magazine



**'Remember that you
are dust and to dust
you shall return'**

**Preparing for Lent
An Interview with The Dean of Westminster
William Shakespeare and the Year of Mercy
Features, articles, and poetry
PLUS: Cathedral diary, events, news and more...**





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Oremus, the magazine of Westminster Cathedral, reflects the life of the Cathedral and the lives of those who make it a place of faith in central London. If you think that you would like to contribute an article or an item of news, please contact one of the editorial team.

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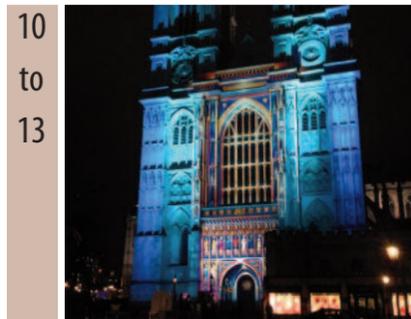
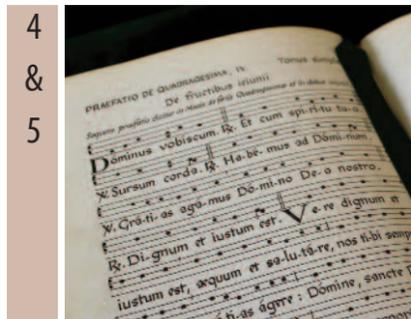
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From the Chairman

Quite often people ask me when talking about Westminster Cathedral 'Why was it never finished?' The next question which follows soon after is 'Will it ever be finished?' The simple answer to that is that I don't know. I very much hope that one day it will be completed and that the upper vaults will be clad in mosaic as the architect, John F Bentley, intended. To see those upper spaces radiant in gold and silver mosaic would truly be a magnificent sight.

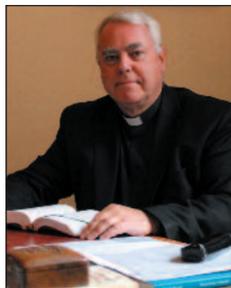
As soon as I say this someone will say, 'Oh, I prefer it as it is, all dark and mysterious.' This is a view which I can appreciate and have some sympathy with. When talking about the architecture of Catholic churches in London there are always those who praise the baroque of the Brompton Oratory and the gothic of St James's, Spanish Place, but I am always pleased when people claim Westminster Cathedral as their favourite. When the discussion turns to church architecture in general the great cathedrals of England are always cited but my favourite architectural period has always been the Romanesque. I love the rounded arches, the solid pillars, the tiny windows, the apse chapels and the general feel of solidity and simplicity that goes with Saxon and Norman architecture of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Here in London my two favourite examples are the church of St Bartholomew the Great in Smithfield and the chapel of St John in the White Tower of the Tower of London.

Talking of simplicity reminds me that we shall soon be into the season of Lent with its own particular liturgical flavour and its annual call to prayer, fasting and alms giving.

This issue of *Oremus* begins with an article on the use of ashes as a profound liturgical symbol for the beginning of Lent. The theme of this holy season is encountered in other pages, too. I am particularly delighted that this issue of our Cathedral magazine also includes an interview with the Dean of Westminster, who is a great friend of ours. We are blessed to live in a time when both Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral enjoy such strong bonds of friendship in Christ.

May I wish you all a blessed, fruitful and simple Lent.

Canon Christopher Tuckwell



link between death and penitence. In the Rite of the Red Heifer (Numbers 19:17; cf Hebrews 9:13), the ashes of the sacrificial victim mixed with water had the ceremonial efficacy of purifying the unclean. (Some sources trace the use of ashes back even further to various pagan rituals.) Christians sentenced to do public penance once donned an outer robe of sackcloth and a sprinkling of ashes on the head, as Jews had done in time of mourning. So ashes provide, in a sense, a symbolic link between penance and death. And whence the traditional prayer formula: *Memento homo quia pulvis est et in pulverem reverteris*. (Remember man that you are dust and to dust you will return.)

This link has been a frequent theme of artists and poets, especially when describing the time of year in which Lent begins. The death of winter is ending, and we are eagerly awaiting a new springtime of re-birth. The analogy to willing the death of our own sinfulness and an eagerness to be re-born in baptism is a frequent theme of the liturgy in Lent. Romano Guardini, a favourite writer of both Benedict XVI and Francis, comments:

'Ashes signify man's overthrow by time. Our own swift passage, ours and not someone else's, ours, mine. When at the beginning of Lent the priest takes the burnt residue of the green branches of the last Palm Sunday and inscribes with it on my forehead the sign of the cross, it is to remind me of my death. Everything turns to ashes, everything whatever. This house I live in, these clothes I am wearing, my household stuff, my money, my fields, meadows, woods, the dog that follows me, my horse in his stall, this hand I am writing with, these eyes that read what I write, all the rest of my body, people I have loved, people I have hated, or been afraid of, whatever was great in my eyes upon earth, whatever small and contemptible, all without exception will fall back into dust.'

How appropriate then, that we use this symbol as we begin the season of penance and of preparation for the celebration of the Resurrection. For we hope one day to share in that Resurrection to new life ourselves after our own death. The prayer for the blessing of ashes sums all this up well:

'O God, who desire not the death of sinners, but their conversion, mercifully hear our prayers and in your kindness be pleased to bless these ashes, which we intend to receive upon our heads, that we, who acknowledge we are but ashes and shall return to dust, may, through a steadfast observance of Lent, gain pardon for sins and newness of life after the likeness of your Risen Son.'

But Lent is not only a call to conversion and penance in preparation for a new life some time in the future. The reading from Pope St Clement's letter to the Corinthians in the Divine Office for Ash Wednesday makes that clear, echoing the prophet Ezekiel: "As I live" says the Lord; "I do not want the sinner's death but that he repent and live." We hear this repeated again for emphasis in the response to that reading. God promises to strengthen the repentant and make them sharers in his own life. And that can begin now for those who learn to be merciful as he is merciful. If our own practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are effective, they will increase our awareness of our own need for mercy and forgiveness, and for extending that to others.

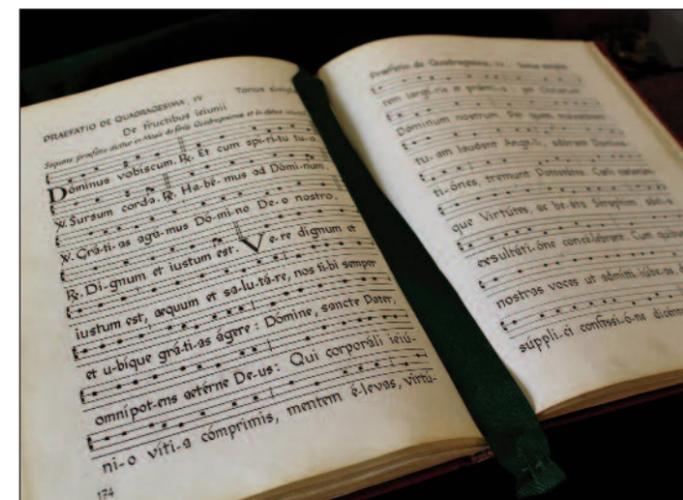
True conversion is a source of inner peace and, ultimately, of joy.

This theme continues throughout the early weeks of Lent. Works of prayer, penance, and purification are not ends in themselves but practical ways to experience in our own flesh and in the reality of the world around us God's merciful love (*hesed* in Hebrew). It is an unfailing love of perfect fidelity – God is always faithful. On the first Sunday of Lent the sung propers for the Mass are drawn from Psalm 90 (91). In the Tract – the longest one in the repertory – we sing almost the entire psalm. Often sung at Compline, the Church's prayer before bedtime, here we have it in a different context. We are assured that, whatever difficulties and threats and challenges we face, God hears us when we call on him. He sends his angels to bear us up and keep us safe, and we hear repeatedly that he gives us refuge under his wings as his faithful love surrounds us as a shield.

The poetry of T S Eliot, who grew up across the street from where I live in Saint Louis, often reflects these ideas, particularly in works after his conversion to Anglo-catholicism. Many consider 'Ash Wednesday' his greatest work. With allusions to Marian and liturgical texts threaded throughout, he prays at its end sentiments that seem appropriate for the imposition of ashes if it's more than habit or superstition:

*Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood
Teach us to care and not to care
Teach us to sit still
Even among these rocks
...
Suffer me not to be separated
And let my cry come unto Thee.*

In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, our attention is especially drawn in various ways to this Lenten call to conversion. We are invited to discover anew the value of the sacraments of Baptism and Penance in our lives. We are called to a deeper love of the Holy Eucharist by a more frequent attendance at Mass. And the Divine Office, now so readily available online and on mobile devices, is ever at hand when we want to deepen our life of prayer and our understanding of the Paschal mystery that we are preparing to celebrate in the Holy Week and Easter liturgies. Accepting the mercy and love of God into our lives can change us and through us offer new hope to others.



The Preface of Lent

Ashes to Ashes Why do we have Ash Wednesday?



Stan Metheny

Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York City is always crowded, but rarely more so than on Ash Wednesday. Ashes are distributed continuously throughout the day, but separately from the Mass. Wooden barriers strictly separate the left and right naves of the large gothic Cathedral from the centre (main) nave. Those wishing to receive ashes enter one of the side naves. Those wishing to go to Mass as well must exit and then re-enter the main nave. From opening (6.00am) until closing (7.00pm) the queues for ashes are so long and continuous they often stretch out from the building on to 5th Avenue for a block or more in each direction. Why, in a time when the practice of religion is 'in decline,' does this custom of receiving ashes still hold a place in the lives of so many? Habit? Superstition? Something else?

Passages from various Early Fathers show that Christianity adopted early on the Jewish use of ashes as a symbol of mourning and penance. However, as is the case for the origins of Jewish usage, the liturgical use of ashes doesn't leave a clear train in its evolution. Various Old Testament passages connect 'ashes,' *efer* in Hebrew, with mourning rituals; but there is also some confusion with the word *afar*, 'dust.' These words are often used together, and *efer* might better be understood as 'dust' in some contexts, making a

The Architect's Daughter

Winefride de l'Hôpital

Peter Howell



All those who admire the work of John Francis Bentley must be grateful to his eldest daughter, Winefride de l'Hôpital, for her magnificent two-volume book, *Westminster Cathedral and its Architect*, published in 1919.

Bentley did not marry until he was 35, in 1874, and Winefride Mary was born the next year. In 1908 she married, at Holy Trinity, Brook Green, René le Brun de l'Hôpital (1877-1929), the third son of Jean, sixth Duc de Vitry. He was descended from Michel de l'Hôpital, Chancellor of France, and – perhaps surprisingly for the husband of a devout Catholic – was a staunch Protestant. His old friend, the prolific author Douglas Sladen, recorded in his memoirs (*My Long Life: Anecdotes and Adventures, 1939*) that he was brought up in a great house full of treasures, that he never used his title of Count, and (incredibly) that he could not speak a word of French. His profession was as a painter, especially of portraits. He claimed descent from Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun, the eighteenth century portrait artist. His subjects included Bonar Law, Leo XIII, Sir Oliver Lodge, Joseph Chamberlain, Cardinal Vaughan, and Canon Liddon. He painted Lord Halifax for his father, who commissioned 25 portraits. His portrait of Cardinal Mercier hung in Lord Halifax's bedroom.

Sladen's wife Dorothea was the model for 'Priscilla, the Puritan Maiden' which her husband considered to be the artist's best subject picture. He did illustrations for the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. His studio, at 13A Sumner Place, Brompton, was full of antiques, including

armour which he left to the Victoria and Albert Museum. He was Gold Staff Officer at the coronation of George V. Sladen praised 'the nobility of his disposition', describing him as deeply religious and a man of extraordinarily high principles. Mrs Sladen was a friend of the Chavasse family, and took a great interest in St Peter's College, Oxford, which had been founded in memory of Bishop Chavasse. After de l'Hôpital died in 1929, she made a benefaction to the college in his memory, and a stone tablet in the college chapel commemorates him. It states that he 'steadfastly upheld the reformed faith for which his ancestors laid down their lives'.

His memorial at Westminster Cathedral is the portrait of his father-in-law which until recently hung in the sacristy, but is now in the Clergy House common room. After the death of Winefride in 1967, the charming portrait which William Christian Symons (designer of the Holy Souls Chapel decoration, the rood, etc) painted when she was a little girl, came to the Cathedral. She is shown with an apple branch. It was characteristic of the then Administrator, Mgr Francis Bartlett, that he at once had her portrait hung beneath that of her father. The Cathedral sacristy must surely have been the only one in the world containing a portrait of a little girl.

According to Douglas Sladen, Winefride 'was a brilliant woman, and had a career of her own, so they each went their own ways'. It is not clear what this 'career' was, though in 1948 she was Organising Secretary of the Scottish Women's Hospitals Memorial Association, and had been awarded the OBE. She also used the initials LLA, for 'Lady Literate in the Arts', a qualification introduced by the University of St Andrews to provide women with the equivalent of a degree. By then she was living at Cranmer Court, Sloane Avenue, a block of serviced flats. For her book, she was able to use her father's diaries, but their disappearance suggests that she destroyed them after use. She also inherited a great quantity of drawings from his office. In 1952, she gave 100 drawings to the Royal Institute of British Architects, including 59 drawings for the Cathedral. It seems that she was not feeling well disposed to the Cathedral, and so did not want them to go there, the obvious reason being the barbaric removal in 1949 of the column in the north transept (later put back). The remaining drawings she sent to the various churches, etc, to which they related. This was an understandable solution to the problem, but unfortunately it means that many have been lost (not least those for St James's, Spanish Place).

When she died, the gross value of her estate was £19,677. She left £2,000 to the Cathedral, 'towards the cost of completing the interior', and smaller sums to the Crusade of Rescue for Destitute Catholic Children, the Converts' Aid Society, and St Mary's church, Cadogan Street. She had no children of her own, but she left bequests to her youngest sister Audrey Hunt (along with her furniture and jewellery), her solicitor, her god-daughter the Hon Janet Forbes-Sempill, and

the staff of Cranmer Court. She also left £5,000 to be invested for the education at the Convent of the Holy Child at Mayfield or St Leonards of her great-niece Elizabeth Lamb, grand-daughter of her sister Dorothy.

It is clear from her book that Mrs de l'Hôpital was a woman of strong opinions, and was a fierce defender of her father's work. For example, she says of the chapel of St Andrew, designed by Robert Weir Schultz, that 'designs, based on Bentley's drawings, had already been prepared by the Bentley firm; but in some mysterious and unexplained fashion the entire set disappeared and their fate never became known'. She did not approve of Eric Gill's Stations of the Cross: 'the original [marble] frames ... have been torn down and replaced by mouldings more in keeping with the strangely crude sculptured "Stations" which have taken the place of the *opus sectile* pictures intended for this position'. Even John Marshall sometimes came in for criticism, his screen in the Blessed Sacrament chapel being described as reminiscent of the Empire style, and 'akin to the triumphal arch of a Roman holiday'.

A word may be added about Bentley's third child, and eldest son, Bede, born in 1878. He was educated at Beaumont College, and spent a few months in an architect's office (presumably his father's). He set out in 1898 for New Zealand, to his father's distress. He served in the South African War, worked in Egypt and Australia, and travelled in India and Somaliland. In 1907, he drove a Wolseley from Djibouti to Addis Ababa, the first car ever seen there. The journey was described by his friend Clifford Hallé in *To Menelek in a Motor Car* (1913). The Emperor Menelek was delighted, and learned to drive. He showed Bentley some churches he had designed, so he showed him a picture of Westminster Cathedral. Menelek expressed surprise that Bentley had not wanted to follow in his father's profession, but 'with visions of the few months he had spent in an office with a drawing-board before him', he said he would prefer to have been an emperor. In 1917, Bede married Margaret Ribbentrop (apparently not related to Hitler's Foreign Minister) at the Assumption, Warwick Street, but they seem to have had no children.

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Capturing the Merciful Father

Among the paintings on display along the Cathedral's 'Way of Mercy' are two by the artist Mike Quirke. One shows the Merciful Father and the other the Conversion of St Paul. Here, the artist describes the process that went into creating the first of these artworks.

Starting work on the commission to paint two pictures for the Way of Mercy Stations in early September, it was the thought of working on the Merciful Father that most excited me. The vivid narrative of the parable story is always engaging but also the prospect of tackling a subject with such celebrated precedents including Rembrandt's *Return of the Prodigal Son*, and the emotionally charged sculptures and paintings of Charlie Mackesy. My intuition was not to wander in that direction, but to work stylistically with the Byzantine examples in evidence throughout the Cathedral.

I was impressed by icons that showed Jesus in the place of the Father. This seemed accurate to me, as Jesus is the human face of the Father. The earliest drawings I made were of Jesus embracing the returning Prodigal Son. The decision to go with the more traditional representation of the Father, his white hair and a long flowing beard was prompted by the thought that this would be the image of the Father the viewer would want from knowing the gospel narrative. This is a very moving rendering of the Father – I'm particularly drawn to the beautiful illustrations of William Blake. He captures the Father's tenderness, portraying him with large gentle eyes. He often returned to the theme of the Father in his works.

The posture of the Prodigal Son is stooped, he is an exaggerated version, more bowed than in traditional icons that I have observed. His shirt is removed, skirt is soiled, smelling of pigs. The arms hang in ungainly fashion, like those of a corpse, he is unable to return his Father's embrace. I am impressed by the thought that perhaps he will never fully stand again. Perhaps never find the strength to lift those arms and embrace the Father. He has been in battle with the enemy, yet is not overcome because even in the moment of failure he finds his way back to the Father.

A gentle restoration to dignity

The robe carried by the servant is from a medieval illustration of a public bathhouse. The form is interesting and unusual, but a little out of place as stylistically it does not match the other elements. I remained attached to it, however, and was struck that the sleeves reflect the position of the Son's arms, hanging limply. The robe that the Father calls for is a perfect fit for the Son in the place where he meets him. The Father clothes his child and gives him back his dignity, restoring him gently.

The Older Brother is borrowed from a nineteenth century stained glass window. He was the occasion for the most working revisions, both at the drawing and painting stages, as his period dress and hairstyle differed from the Byzantine model. The problem was solved, but the Older Brother is in any case the most unsettled character in the story. Does he join, or not join the party? He is pictured in his dilemma brooding and clutching at his beard.



A conservator's nightmare

The painting would most likely prove a conservator's nightmare. I began the canvas using oil paint, but my studio partner had a strong allergic reaction to the turpentine and white spirits used to thin the paints and clean the brushes. It was necessary then to continue with a water-based medium, but I couldn't decide exactly what to use. Some of the under-painting was completed with inks. For much of the painting I experimented with an egg tempera recipe mixed in a blender with linseed oil. I also used water-soluble oils and acrylic paint with a variety of slow dry retarders, glazing mediums and gels. To complete particular areas I used sign painters' enamel.

Twelve books of 23 carat loose leaf gold were required to gild the Merciful Father. We planned to apply the gold working through the night if necessary. The process was tricky as draughts running along the gallery corridors made the loose gold flutter and difficult to control. In order to speed progress we made a second gilders cushion using a chamois leather, cotton wool and talc. Eventually we discovered that it was easier to apply the gold directly from the books. The process was completed in three hours. The original intention had been to gild the entire background including the border.

Continued on Page 13

Church Schools, Ecumenism and The Queen

An Interview with the Dean of Westminster

The Very Revd Dr John Hall is the Dean of Westminster – a position to which he was appointed by the Queen 10 years ago. Since his appointment, Dr Hall has famously celebrated the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, led important national religious services, such as the Service to Celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Queen's Coronation, and also welcomed Pope Benedict XVI to Westminster Abbey. To mark his tenth year in the role, and mindful of the strong friendship that exists between the Abbey and the Cathedral, Dylan Parry recently visited the Dean of Westminster.



The Dean with Lord Chief Justice Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd

Could you tell us something of your vocational journey? I know that you worked as a teacher before becoming a priest. How did you experience the 'call' to minister as a priest within the Church of England?

I was brought up in a church-going family. I was a boat boy from the age of five and joined the choir when I was eight. We had a vicar, called Canon Hodges, who had moved to a church in Stafford. He invited all the family to go up to visit him when I was about 11 or 12. So we went up one Saturday and, after lunch, he drove my parents and me around Stafford. During the drive he said to me, "John, what are you going to do when you grow up?" I told him that I hadn't thought about it at all, and he replied, "You should think about ordination." That stayed with me and played on my mind a lot.

When I was 17, I was on my way back from church, on my own, thinking about the sermon, which had been on the 'Call of Isaiah'. And I thought, "Well, Lord if that's what you want." So from that moment I began the process of discernment – I spoke with my vicar and was put in touch with the vocations adviser in the diocese. So it crystallised for me when I was 17.

I was put through a selection conference when I was 20 and had a place at Cuddesdon to train for the priesthood. I was reading Theology at Durham at the time, but decided that I ought to do something else first. There was a feeling in the air in the early 1970s that priests might not be paid for the whole of their lives. The Church was going through difficult times financially and it was felt that we should have a second string to our bow. It was partly that and partly because I'd thought about being a teacher before. So I went to teach for a couple of years before going on to train for the priesthood. But I was already on the route.

You were the Chief Education Officer for the Church of England until you took on your present post. Do you think that 'faith schools' have a secure future in this country?

I think the first thing to say is that the Church and churches founded education. It didn't begin as a government funded exercise until 1870. By then, the Church of England had been providing mass numbers of schools throughout the country – since the foundation of the National Society in 1811. So there was a big move in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century to develop education within the Church. The Church of England had about 5,000 schools by the middle of the nineteenth century. There were Catholic schools developing throughout the nineteenth century, too. There were also some Free Church schools. The Free Church gave up their schools more or less by the end of the nineteenth century. Obviously, Catholics and Anglicans retained their schools.

The key moment was 1870, when the government decided to fill in the gaps between church schools – not provide a whole system of education. Since then we've had the dual system of education – some provided by the churches and some provided by the state. The major funding is by the state now and has been for a long time. Nevertheless the Church has a real investment in and engagement with these schools. So I don't think that there is any real fundamental threat. They've been under attack for decades. Even in 1944, when the Education Act introduced the current system, there were very serious criticisms of the very idea of church schools.

More recently they began to be called 'faith schools'. This is largely because Tony Blair's government was very keen on church schools. Not all Labour members were. In fact, Charles Clarke said to me once, when he was Secretary of State for Education, "What can we do to make my party like church schools?" But Tony Blair supported our wish to expand the number of Church of England schools – they spoke of them as 'faith schools'. This was in 2001 – which became a cataclysmic year, what with the assaults in New York. Then began a revolt against the idea of faith-based education, which continued for a period. It comes and goes.

I think the vast bulk of faith schools – I call them church schools – are Anglican; about 5,000. There are almost 2,000 Roman Catholic schools. In fact, the Catholic Church worked jolly hard in the 1950s to provide 10% of

'I admire the strength of Catholic education within Catholic schools and have often wished that Anglican schools could be that little bit stronger about the faith.'

places at primary and secondary – and that's a wonderful proportion of the whole system. In Jonathan Sacks' time there was an increase in Jewish schools. There are a handful of Muslim schools, a Sikh school and a Greek Orthodox school, as well as others. But the bulk are Christian – Anglican and Roman Catholic. They're popular with parents, they

do well and the league tables show that they do well, so I don't think there is any substantial risk to them. I think the system will continue.

I suppose that the argument made against faith schools often involves the issue of so-called 'segregation'?

Anglican schools on the whole are inclusive of their local community, but hope to have a clear Christian thread running through their system. What we discover now about Catholic schools is that on average about 30% of the pupils are non-Catholic. I admire the strength of Catholic education within Catholic schools and have often wished that Anglican schools could be that little bit stronger about the faith. I think there is a profound thirst for things of the spirit in our society and church schools can provide openings for people and children who don't necessarily sign on the dotted line.

As Dean of Westminster, you answer directly to the Queen, whose Christian faith is a shining example to many – her latest Christmas message, for example. She must take a great interest in the running of the Abbey?

I'd like to reflect on what you said about the Queen's Christmas message, and other occasions when she has spoken very strongly and explicitly about her own faith, and how her Christian faith is a guiding light for her. I think she's been wonderfully open about that. In fact, if you go back through her Christmas broadcasts, the Queen has always referred to her faith. But in the last 15 years or so it has been a stronger and more marked statement – very strongly so in 2000 and again last year. I admire that. I believe the Queen has a very strong, clear Christian faith and a wonderful sense of duty, as we know.

I welcome the Queen here for a number of occasions during the course of the year. Clearly, she doesn't just slip in for services, because the security implications are considerable. I also make an annual report to the Queen, so am given the privilege of an audience from time to time, when I have a chance to talk about what we're doing at the Abbey and what we're planning. There is no doubt in my mind that for the Queen the Abbey is a place of considerable importance, perhaps in the sort of way a local church is important to people – where funerals and weddings happen. The Queen was married here and more recently the funeral of her mother was here – as well as her coronation, of course. So it's an enormous privilege for me to be able to meet her occasionally. Always when I welcome her here, I have a great sense of delight.

Over the past 10 years you have been present in an intimate way at some of the most important celebrations and events of this country, such as the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Do any events stand out for you?

My first big special service was in March 2007. This was a service to mark the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade. We had a wonderfully diverse congregation and I knew that the Queen was very interested in how this service would work. I wanted it both to reflect Wilberforce's work and also to reflect on slavery as it exists today. So it was planned that the Queen would lay flowers at the Wilberforce memorial at the end of the service, and at the Innocent Victims' memorial outside the West front on the way out.



Dr John Hall with HM The Queen in the Deanery

The service started at noon and was being televised live on the BBC, so needed to finish by 1.00pm so that the news could start. During the service, someone got up from the

'Taking the Pope with the Archbishop of Canterbury to pray at the shrine of St Edward was really moving.'

congregation and protested that the government hadn't apologised for its involvement in the slave trade. He stood half way between Tony Blair and the Queen, and shouted and so on. I was in the middle of the Confession but carried on and gave the Absolution, after which he was gently shuffled out. My great anxiety was that the service would over-run and that the BBC would leave us and that these wonderful symbolic moments of the laying of flowers in the two places would be lost. As it was, they stayed with us!

The Cambridge wedding was an extraordinary and wonderful occasion and there was such a powerfully happy atmosphere in the Abbey that you couldn't really be nervous. I thought I might be, but I was buoyed by it.

The 60th anniversary of the Queen's coronation in 2013 was a marvellous service. We had the ampulla that had been used for the oil as well as St Edward's crown – both on the altar. I wanted people to get a sense of the service that the Queen has given so spectacularly through her long reign so far. All Christians are called to give service – serving God and one another. We had a flask of oil, carried up through the Abbey by a group of people. It was actually carried by a Guide leader who is an active Methodist and around her she had people dressed in various uniforms, symbolising the different professions – among others, there was an academic teacher in a gown and a schoolboy as well as a lollipop lady in her high visibility jacket. It showed that we're all called to serve in a generous spirit. That for me was one of the very great highlights of my time so far.

Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the Abbey in 2010 must have been an unique moment in the life of this place?

It was an absolutely unique event, so far – I mean, some future Pope may come as well. But certainly no Pope had been here before. Adrian IV didn't come and when Pope John Paul visited the UK, he went to Canterbury. I had spoken informally to the Archbishop of Westminster as to whether we might be involved in some way. But when I was invited to hold an ecumenical service of Evening Prayer, it went beyond my expectations. I was very thrilled indeed. So we had quite a lot of careful planning to ensure that the congregation represented every group.

It was wonderful, and taking the Pope with the Archbishop of Canterbury to pray at the shrine of St Edward was really moving. They both placed incense on a brazier in front of the shrine and prayed there. We tried to make sure the whole thing was reflective of Anglican worship, but also inclusive of other people.

There were two things that surprised and moved me. One was the degree of interest that the Pope took in everything. He had just been to Westminster Hall and it was all part of a big occasion, but he seemed very calm and very interested. I thought that was impressive. To get close to

him was to get through all the flummery and to feel a relationship with a man of personal humility and holiness. The other thing was that after praying at the shrine, I'd asked the Archbishop and the Pope to give the blessing together. What I hadn't expected was that as I led them around the high altar in front of the shrine, the Pope – I think perhaps instinctively – turned to the high altar, bowed and kissed it. The Archbishop followed suit. Then they turned again and gave the blessing. I thought that was a wonderful affirmation of the nature of the Abbey as a church – a place where holy things have happened. Whether it was an instinctive thing or whether it was thought out, I don't know. For me it was very moving.

I know that you and Canon Christopher Tuckwell get on very well, and your visits to the Cathedral, for joint Vespers in May, for example, are highlights in the diary. What, though, do you see as the future for Christian unity? Do you envisage a time when we will all be able to receive from the one Eucharistic table?

I'd love that and I pray for that and long for it. I have very great affection and respect for the Roman Catholic Church. The relationship between the Cathedral and the Abbey is very good, and very strong. That goes back to my predecessor, Edward Carpenter who, when Basil Hume was appointed Archbishop of Westminster, went up to Ampleforth and said, "Look, you're Benedictines and our history and tradition is Benedictine, can we be friends?" On the day of his episcopal ordination and installation, the monks of Ampleforth came and sang Vespers here in the Abbey. I think that was a marvellous moment.

Clearly, things are difficult, with the ordination of women within the Anglican tradition, which has set back the cause of reconciliation with Rome. But I have also noticed that there are no deep doctrinal differences between the Orthodox and Catholic traditions, and yet there hasn't come the moment of reconciliation there. So, I ask myself, are we going to walk alongside one another on our pilgrimage, and always remain a little separate? I don't know. I hope the moment will come when although we may continue to be separate in some ways we can share Eucharistically. We all recognise each other's baptisms, we walk alongside each other in many ways now – in ways that were inconceivable 50 or 60 years ago. The strides in terms of the relationship have been enormous and I have witnessed the close friendship, collaboration and mutual respect between the Archbishops of Canterbury and Westminster. There is so much that has happened that we share together that the moment will eventually come. Cardinal Cormac has spoken about all that ecumenical work being in the bank – well, I hope we can cash it out again!

In 2018, the Abbey will open the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries. Could you tell us a little bit about where – in the triforium – these will be, and what will be on view in this exciting space?

The triforium is a gallery that runs all the way around the Abbey, about 70 ft up. So the chapels radiating around the shrine of St Edward have got replica spaces above, which they may, in the thirteenth century, have thought should be chapels. But they were never furnished as such.



© Dean and Chapter of Westminster

The Litlyngton Missal

So we're going to build a seven-storey tower outside Poets' Corner, in Poets' Yard as we call it. It will be Gothic. We've had formal approval for it; it's going to happen. There will be a lift in the middle and a spiral staircase around and wonderful views as you go up and a covered walkway into these chapels around the East end. It's a great space, where we hope to show more of the Treasures than we have so far been able to.

One of the things we hope to show is the *Litlyngton Missal* – Nicholas Litlyngton was the Abbot in the fourteenth century. We've had the Missal digitised now, or at least quite a lot of it, and we have a large screen so that it will be in its case with the best page open – the Crucifixion page, next to the 'Te igitur clementissime Pater', the beginning of the Roman Canon. Visitors will be able to turn the pages on this screen and open up the images. There are some stunning images around the crucifixion on that page.

We also have a head carved of Henry VII after his death – which was on show in the National Portrait Gallery recently, in the Real Tudors' Exhibition. It's very striking when it's properly displayed. We haven't had it properly displayed, but we will.

Many of the things we'll have up there will be revelations to people, who will also get fantastic views inside the Abbey and also out on to Parliament. It'll be very exciting!

For updates on the Queen's Jubilee Galleries, please see the Abbey website: www.westminster-abbey.org. A book by Dr John Hall, Queen Elizabeth and Her Church was reviewed in Oremus. It is published by Bloomsbury (Continuum).

Continued from Page 9

Because of its large size at 3.3m x 2.8m, the painting required a scaffold platform to paint the upper areas. Working on the platform though proved difficult. Two work lights could be strategically hung from each side and directed to illuminate the working area. However, positioning these would invariably produce a temporary blindness caused by having caught the glare of the light beam. Additionally, such strong lights created areas of deep shadow obscuring the path of progress. Toward the end, I turned the painting upside down to work on the upper levels.

The working area of the gallery studio was only marginally larger than the size of the painting. This meant that it would always be difficult to get a good view of the work in progress. It was evident that this was going to be a problem before starting work so a detailed master drawing was essential to secure all the particulars. Toward the final stages of the painting I discovered there was a good view from the organ loft.

The painting was installed in the chapel of St Gregory and St Augustine one evening after the Cathedral had closed. On another night, I had stayed on as the scaffolding team erected a stand allowing us to insert a structure that would support the painting without making a fixture. The Grand Organ had provided much of the soundtrack during painting and seemed appropriate now that the journey of the canvas from the upper gallery to the chapel was accompanied by a number of dramatic organ pieces in rehearsal. A short video captures our excitement as the painting approaches its destination, which may be viewed here: www.flickr.com/photos/66507374@N03/23126298124/

For more photos of work in progress visit the Way of Mercy Icons's Flickr page: www.flickr.com/photos/66507374@N03

By Kind Permission of Sir Vernon and Lady Ellis

Gala Concert for Corpus Christi Restoration Appeal

Friday 19th February
Drinks Reception at 7pm
Concert 7.30pm

Introduction by John Gilhooly OBE
Director of Wigmore Hall

FEATURING
Ailish Tynan, Benjamin Appl
& James Baillieu

Programme to include songs & duets by
Mendelssohn, Schubert, Brahms,
Rubinstein & Britten

www.corpuschristimaiden.lanc.org.uk/restoration/

TICKETS
£95
Sparkling wine & canapés

TICKET REQUESTS
vernon@vcf.org.uk

CONCERT VENUE:
49 Queen's Gate
Terrace, London
SW7 5PN

Notes: Takes High Street Entrance, Gloucester Road

All proceeds from the evening's entertainment go directly to the Appeal.

Corpus Christi Restoration Fund
Corpus Christi Church
1-5 Maiden Lane
Covent Garden
London WC2E 7NB

Registered Charity No 233699

The Priestly Fraternity of St Peter

Filial loyalty to the Bishop of Rome

Over the past year, a few articles have appeared in Oremus in relation to the Church's Year of Consecrated Life. This special year will draw to a close this month and, as such, we publish this final article in the series.



Archbishop McMahon with the Rector of the shrine church of St Mary's, Fr Armand de Malleray, local dignitaries and the author.

Marcus Williams

In 1988, St John Paul II established the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter (FSSP) as a Clerical Society of Apostolic Life of Pontifical right, and approved its constitutions.

The particular charism and mission of the Fraternity is to offer the Sacred Liturgy in Latin, according to the liturgical books in use during the pontificate of St John XXIII. The Fraternity's name denotes its filial loyalty to the Successor of St Peter, as well as the brotherly unity its members strive to live out in their apostolic life and work.

St John Paul II and Benedict XVI were both directly involved in the setting up of our community in 1988. Our 12 founders were greatly helped, encouraged and supported by Cardinal Ratzinger, at the time Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. It was in greater part thanks to him that our community's mother house and European seminary were established in Bavaria, Benedict XVI's beautiful homeland. We owe both popes an immense debt of gratitude for supporting our community and for remaining close to us over the years.

The Fraternity runs two international seminaries: St Peter's Seminary in Bavaria and Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary in the United States of America. We also have a house of formation in Australia, offering first year seminary studies in English. Our two international seminaries are currently training 159 candidates for the sacred priesthood. In total, 10 of our seminarians hail from the UK.

The Mission of the Fraternity of St Peter

The Fraternity currently has 262 priests, serving in 121 dioceses throughout the world. We seek to respond to the call to evangelisation through a priestly and apostolic life, centred on the Sacrifice of the Mass and the salvation of souls. Our priestly life is usually lived in community. Our mission is essentially threefold:-

The sanctification of the clergy through solid seminary formation. Our two international seminaries are open to candidates from other communities or dioceses, sent by their bishop or religious superior. We also endeavour to reach out to clergy throughout the Church through friendship, instruction, advice and support. A special part of this outreach involves helping priests who wish to learn to celebrate Mass in Latin, using the Missal of St John XXIII.

Pastoral work. The Fraternity of St Peter's charism is essentially pastoral. It is in the parish that souls are formed and nourished. The principal duty and joy of our priests is to serve souls, baptise, hear confessions, and to give spiritual direction and support to the faithful. Our liturgical apostolate is accompanied by sound catechetical teaching and we pride ourselves on our fidelity to the Magisterium. We are particularly committed to youth apostolates such as the international youth movement Juventutem, which organises monthly events and takes part in World Youth Day. We also run several schools, the closest to London being L'École de la Croix des Vents in Normandy. We run a summer camp for boys in the South of England each year and are planning to open a summer camp for girls this year.

Evangelisation. Our Fraternity is firmly committed to the New Evangelisation and our priests and seminarians are involved in a multiplicity of apostolic projects in Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia and Latin America. We also run missions in Colombia and Nigeria.

The Fraternity of St Peter in the British Isles

The Fraternity first arrived in the UK in 1997. Fr John Emerson FSSP was in charge of all our British apostolates until 2008, when our growth made it opportune to appoint two separate superiors for Scotland and England. The Fraternity is canonically established in the Archdioceses of Liverpool and St Andrews and Edinburgh, as well as the Dioceses of Portsmouth and Northampton. We also serve on a monthly basis in the Dioceses of Brentwood, Dunkeld, Cork and Ross and Ferns. In 2015, Archbishop McMahon welcomed us to the Archdiocese of Liverpool, where we are in charge of the beautiful shrine church of St Mary's, Warrington. St Mary's was founded by Ampleforth in the 1870s and built by E W and P P Pugin. Please keep our young Fraternity and our many young vocations in your prayers.

Marcus Williams is a seminarian of the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter. He was educated in Oxford, Rome and Bologna and is currently serving at St Mary's shrine church in Warrington.

Ushering in the Festive Season

Service and safeguarding last December

In this article, Patrick Somerville casts his mind back to December and describes the joys and frustrations of stewarding in the Cathedral during the pre-Christmas and Christmas period.

Preparing for the great feast of Christmas last year, we could not fail to realise that society has moved some way from the ideal of peaceful sharing of the great events of history and Christianity. Just as the door of the inn was closed to Mary and Joseph in their time of need, we too have had to consider closing one of our Cathedral doors on grounds of security to assist in efforts to make it a safer place to worship and pray. With those concerns in mind, the Cathedral Stewards prepared for the many ceremonies and events that occurred throughout the month of December.

Cathedral Stewards often encounter attitudes in others that challenge them to remain calm and strong in their efforts to control events. The moving and symbolic ceremony of the Opening of the Holy Door on 13 December was one such occasion. The larger than expected congregation processed out on to the Piazza in preparation to re-enter by the Holy Door. Regrettably, in their desire to get in again some lack of good manners and consideration for others created difficulties, especially for the less able. It resembled enthusiastic shopping rather than a pious religious experience.

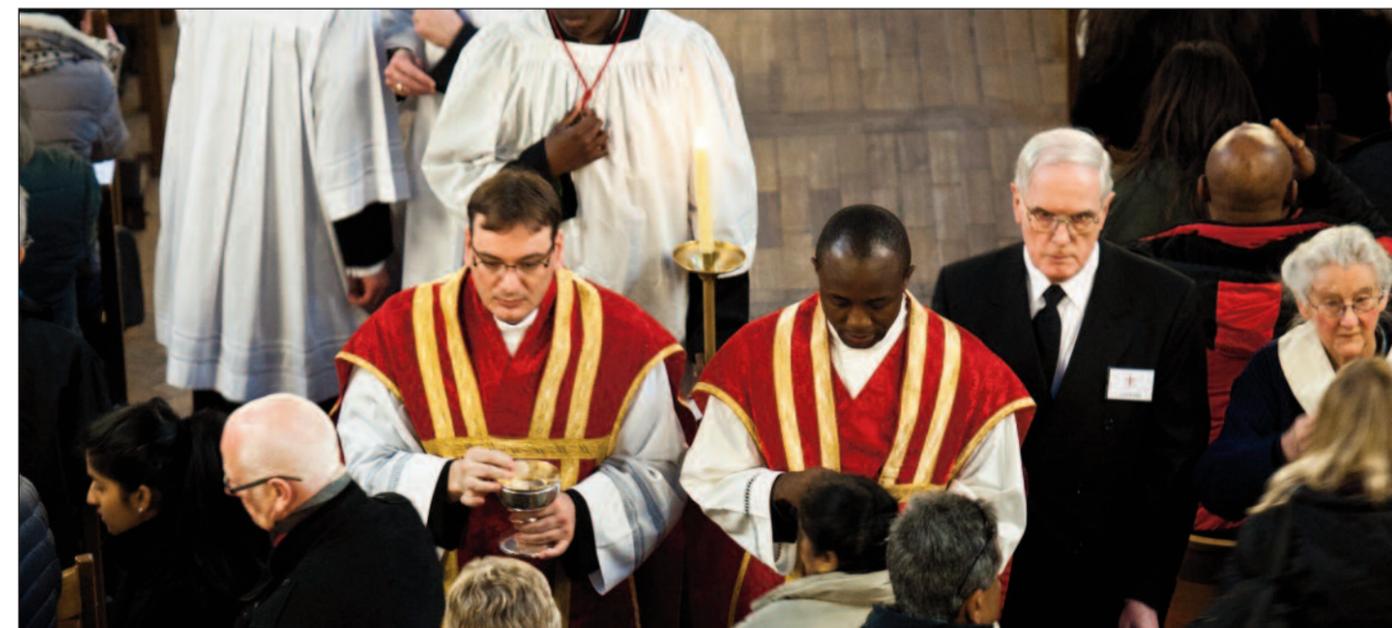
Among other more orderly and delightful events were the school Advent services that brought to the Cathedral two groups each of over 1,000 school children. These visits are made more enjoyable by the presence of Larry The Donkey, whose occasionally unpredictable behaviour is often a source of great amusement, whether braying during the Cardinal's or the Bishop's homily, or relieving himself so that the bucket and mop support team have to spring into action. There was also a rather better behaved live sheep and a docile papier-mâché

camel. Stewards present enjoy these services as much as the children and their teachers.

The ever popular Christmas Celebrations, held on 16 and 17 December, attracted large audiences, almost completely filling the Cathedral each evening. The preparation for each event involves laying out the Cathedral seating in accordance with the seating plan and numbering each seat accordingly. Staging is erected in front of the sanctuary for the choir and orchestra and arrangements made behind the scenes for the orchestra to change and rehearse. Special lighting is required and candles are placed all along the upper balconies to be lit for these and other events. Volunteers, the Cathedral Managers, Sacristans and Maintenance Team are all involved in these activities. Visiting readers drawn from various walks of life and celebrity roles and their guests are accompanied by stewards into the Cathedral and seated just before the Celebration begins.

The Security Team of Elizabethan Security Ltd is increased as necessary. Cathedral Stewards are supported by volunteers from the Catholic Police Guild engaged on door duties, checking tickets, admitting people purchasing or collecting pre-paid tickets from the box office with Ticket Master staff in attendance. Inside, a dozen or more volunteers from the North London Provinces of the Catenian organisation assist stewards welcoming and helping the audience to find their correct seats and assisting in other ways. These Christmas tours of duty are usually for four hours or more, plus travelling for an additional hour each way for some. This additional help is much appreciated.

Continued on page 21



This photo was taken a couple of years ago and shows the author (to the right of the clergy) at a Holy Week liturgy

Pope St John Paul II in London, 1982

Patrick Rogers



Cardinal George Basil Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, welcoming Pope John Paul II to Westminster Cathedral.

On 28 May 1982 Pope John Paul II, now canonised, celebrated Mass on British soil, the first time in history that a Pope had done so. His first destination was Westminster Cathedral for Mass, after which he met Her Majesty the Queen at Buckingham Palace, and administered the Sacrament of Anointing the Sick at St George's Cathedral, Southwark. The following day he travelled by helicopter to Canterbury Cathedral where he was welcomed by the

Anglican primate, Archbishop Runcie, before returning to London to celebrate a huge Mass at Wembley Stadium. On subsequent days the Pope travelled to Coventry, Liverpool, Manchester, York, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Cardiff. It was a gruelling five-day schedule and it nearly didn't happen.

The invitation to the Pope to come to Britain had been issued 18 months earlier when Cardinal Hume (Archbishop of Westminster) and Archbishop Worlock (Archbishop of Liverpool) went to Rome to present the findings of the 1980 National Pastoral Congress. They had not gone there with the intention of inviting the Holy Father, but it seemed appropriate and he accepted. But on 13 May 1981 the Pope was shot in St Peter's Square by an assassin reputedly hired to kill him by the Soviet KGB and their Bulgarian surrogates, furious at his support for the anti-Communist movement in Poland and Eastern Europe. Three shots were fired: the first hit the Pope in the stomach, right elbow and left finger, damaging internal



Pope St John Paul II celebrating Mass in Westminster Cathedral.

organs; the other two struck bystanders. To the amazement of the assassin, the Pope lived, but only just. An initial blood transfusion was rejected by his body but a second went well. Pope John Paul II left hospital on 13 August 1981 and returned to St Peter's Square in October.

The second potential problem was the Falklands War. On 2 April 1982, Argentine armed forces seized the Falkland Islands, over which they claimed sovereignty, overwhelming the small British garrison there. In response, Britain assembled an amphibious task force to retake the islands. It set sail three days later and British Special Forces were the first units to land on the Falklands on 21 April. They were followed by Royal Marines, paratroops and other army units. After bitter fighting on land, sea and in the air, the Argentine commander surrendered to the British on 14 June and six days later hostilities were declared to be over. There had been a real fear that Pope John Paul, a declared man of peace, might have called off his visit to Britain as a result of the war which was reaching its climax at that time. But the Holy Father would not hear of cancellation, though he urged us to pray for the dead and wounded on both sides and for a peaceful solution.

So, early on 28 May, the Holy Father's plane landed at Gatwick Airport where he was welcomed by the Papal Nuncio, Cardinal Hume, the Bishop of Arundel and Brighton (in whose diocese Gatwick lies), other members of the clergy and the Duke of Norfolk, representing the Catholic laity. A special train had been laid on to take the Pope to Victoria Station. It had to leave on time to fit in with the busy weekday timetable on the Gatwick-Victoria line and in the confusion four members of the Vatican group, including two photographers, missed the train. Fortunately the police were on hand to rush the four to London by road, arriving just before the train. From Victoria Station, Pope John Paul was conveyed by armoured Popemobile through cheering crowds to Westminster Cathedral.

After being welcomed to the Cathedral by Cardinal Hume, Pope John Paul II made his entry. There were 3,147 people seated in the Cathedral with a further 1,173 on the piazza outside and more in the surrounding streets and buildings, and the roar of applause was deafening as those assembled had their first view of the Pope. The previous afternoon, Scotland Yard had asked for the names and addresses of all those in the congregation. But many of the tickets had been obtained by ballot and hundreds had changed hands within families and among friends. All that could be done was to present the lists of those who had been originally invited which, although bearing little relation to the actual congregation, fortunately seemed to satisfy the police.

Baptism was the sacrament chosen to be celebrated by the Pope within the Cathedral Mass and during it he baptised and confirmed four candidates for reception into the Catholic Church. In his homily he spoke of Baptism as incorporation into Christ, of accepting his promise and his commands. He spoke of the waters of Baptism washing away sin through the redeeming power of Christ's suffering, death and resurrection, and of the holy oil strengthening us in the power of Christ to become living temples of the Holy Spirit. Baptism was the foundation of the unity that all Christians have in Christ, a unity



St John Paul II blessing the crowds from the balcony of Westminster Cathedral.

that we must all strive to perfect, working together as brothers and sisters in Christ in a world which is sorely in need of Jesus and his Gospel.

After Mass, the Pope was due to make his way to the Cathedral balcony overlooking the piazza below, but he managed to escape his entourage and wandered down the south aisle of the Cathedral towards the Lady Chapel by himself. His escort was shortly to be seen running after him. He then proceeded to the balcony from where, protected by a bullet-proof screen, he blessed the thousands cheering him on the piazza and in the streets and buildings surrounding the Cathedral. It was now time for lunch at Archbishop's House. The Sisters there had prepared veal *Saltimbocca a la Romana*.

But it was suddenly remembered that it was a Friday. Did Pope John Paul eat meat on Fridays? He did not. It was too late to prepare an exotic fish dish, and the time for lunch was fast approaching. So fish fingers were hurriedly bought from a nearby store, Cardinal Hume presenting them as a particular English delicacy. The Pope looked as if he was

wondering what strange English fish had fingers of that size and shape. But he ate them and appeared to enjoy them.

After lunch and a rest, the Pope was driven in an armoured Jaguar the short distance to Buckingham Palace for a private meeting with Her Majesty the Queen. He was then taken through the centre gates of the palace, past the Houses of Parliament and across Westminster Bridge to St George's Cathedral, Southwark where, in an intensely moving ceremony, he administered the Sacrament of Anointing the Sick to nearly 4,000 of the sick, infirm and dying who had been brought to the Cathedral from all nine dioceses of the provinces of Westminster and Southwark. In his homily, he

urged us not to turn away from the elderly, the sick and the handicapped, for they teach us that weakness is a creative part of human living and that suffering can be embraced with no loss of dignity.

Early the next day, Saturday 29 May, Pope John Paul addressed some 4,000 representatives of Catholic religious orders. He then left London by helicopter for Canterbury where he was welcomed by Archbishop Robert Runcie, travelling with him in the Popemobile through enthusiastic crowds to Canterbury Cathedral where a Celebration of Faith service was held. There he was introduced to the Prince of Wales and leaders of the different Christian churches in Britain. The Pope then returned to London to celebrate Mass at Wembley Stadium where a capacity crowd of 80,000 had gathered, with thousands more outside the stadium. The Westminster Cathedral Choir were among those singing at Wembley and after the service they hurried back to the Cathedral where the Pope was due to meet members of the parish and diocese. There in the Long Corridor they sang a specially learnt Polish motet as Pope John Paul II made his way among the guests. Next day, after addressing 24,000 of his fellow Poles at Crystal Palace, he left London for Coventry and the North.



St John Paul II meeting the choristers of Westminster Cathedral.



The memorial of the visit of Pope John Paul II to Westminster Cathedral. In translation it reads: 'Behold the footsteps of the Supreme Pastor John Paul II who as a pilgrim to England celebrated here his first Mass. 28 May 1982. May God be glorified in all things.'

Christmas Day

As usual, the Cathedral was full for the Masses and services held on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, which began with Solemn First Vespers on Christmas Eve, and which included the ever popular Vigil Mass at 6.00pm, Midnight Mass and Solemn Morning Prayer and Mass of the Day celebrated by the Cardinal. The image was taken at Solemn First Vespers with the Cardinal and Cathedral chaplains.



Christmas Crib

These images show two cribs that furnished those parts of Clergy House in which the Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Victories live and work. The smaller crib (right), in Clergy House kitchen, with the words 'Gloria in Excelsis Deo' above it, was designed by Sisters Francisca Belo and Jacinta Eco. The larger one (above) was designed by Sister Angelina Moniz and was located in the Sisters' convent.

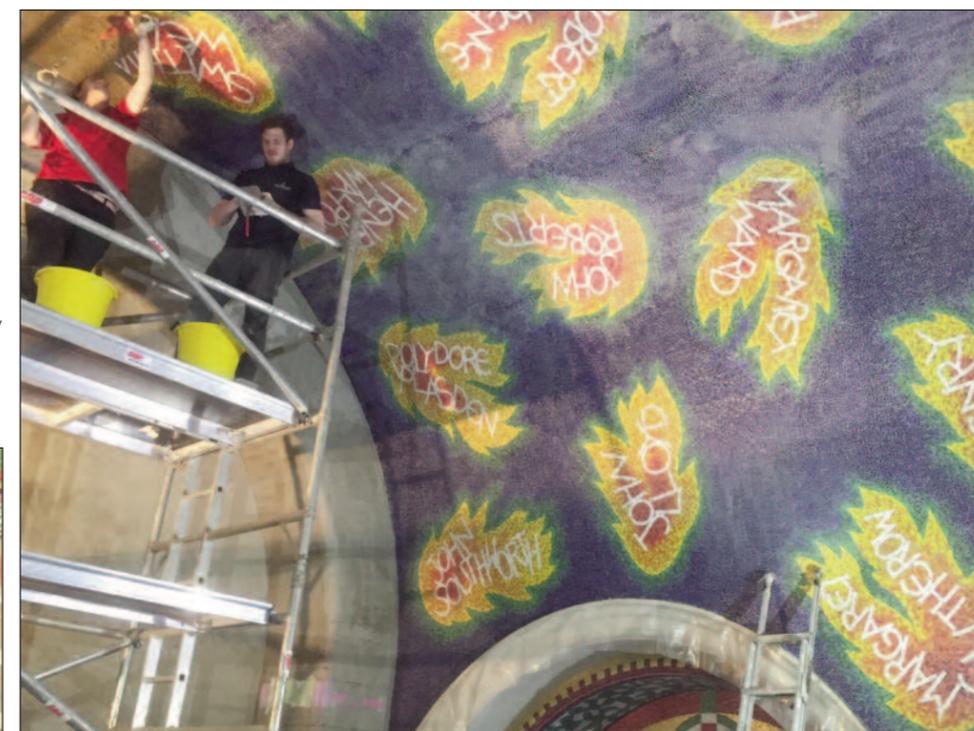


New Year's Day

Canon Christopher Tuckwell celebrated a Mass at 11.15pm on New Year's Eve, which welcomed in the New Year. Other New Year's Day – Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God – Masses were also very well attended. This image was taken during the 12.30pm Mass on New Year's Day.

St George's Chapel

Work is progressing rapidly on the mosaic scheme in the chapel of St George and the English Martyrs. It is hoped that the chapel will be completed some time this month. These images were sent in by Gary Bricknell, who has been working on the project. More on this in the next issue of *Oremus*.

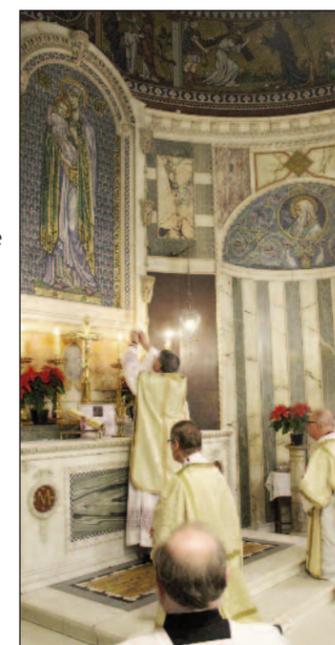


Photos: Gary Bricknell

Presentation of the Ordinate Missal

The new Ordinate missal, called *Divine Worship: The Missal*, was officially presented to a group of supporters of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham on Monday 11 January. Organised by the Friends of the Ordinariate, the event took place in the Cathedral's Lady Chapel and followed a Solemn Mass according to the Ordinate Form, celebrated in the chapel by Mgr Keith Newton.

Among the guests who received a copy of the altar version of the missal were representatives of the Cathedral (Canon Tuckwell), the London, Birmingham and Oxford Oratories, the National Shrine at Walsingham, the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Mary's College, Oscott.



New Choristers

This image dates back to last September and shows Cathedral choristers being inducted into the Choir during Solemn Vespers on Sunday 20 September.

We hoped to publish the photo at the time and apologise for the delay in doing so.



© Robert O'Brien

Aspects of Shakespeare

The Quality of Mercy

Sharon Jennings

This year marks the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. In this short series, Sharon Jennings will consider some of the Christian themes in his work.

*The quality of mercy is not strain'd;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.*

Cardinal Vincent Nichols recently described this text as his favourite quote from Shakespeare. It is Portia, the heroine of *The Merchant of Venice*, who delivers this famous speech when, disguised as a young but expert lawyer, she is judging

the dispute between Antonio, the eponymous leading character, and the Jewish money-lender Shylock. This is a pivotal scene of the play and appears to set up the final struggle between hero and villain. But it is not quite like that!

As many readers will recall, Antonio has defaulted on a debt of 3,000 ducats, and according to the bond set up by Shylock, he has to forfeit a pound of his flesh cut from near the heart.

Goaded by a long-held grudge, Shylock is baying for justice; but Portia urges him to show mercy, the 'natural attribute to God'. With the image of rainfall, Shakespeare perfectly captures our own experience of mercy – as a gentle but complete and often surprising immersion which has the power to change utterly the world around us.

The relationship of mercy and justice is something which Shakespeare considers often in his work, and it is a major theme of the play generally considered his last – although, like Frank Sinatra, he made several further farewell appearances! – *The Tempest*. There Prospero punishes and denounces those who usurped his kingdom and sought to kill him and his baby daughter – upholding the law of justice – but then goes on to forgive them. He becomes Godlike, not only in his power and his insistence upon calling the characters to account, but particularly when 'mercy seasons justice', to quote from the rest of Portia's speech.

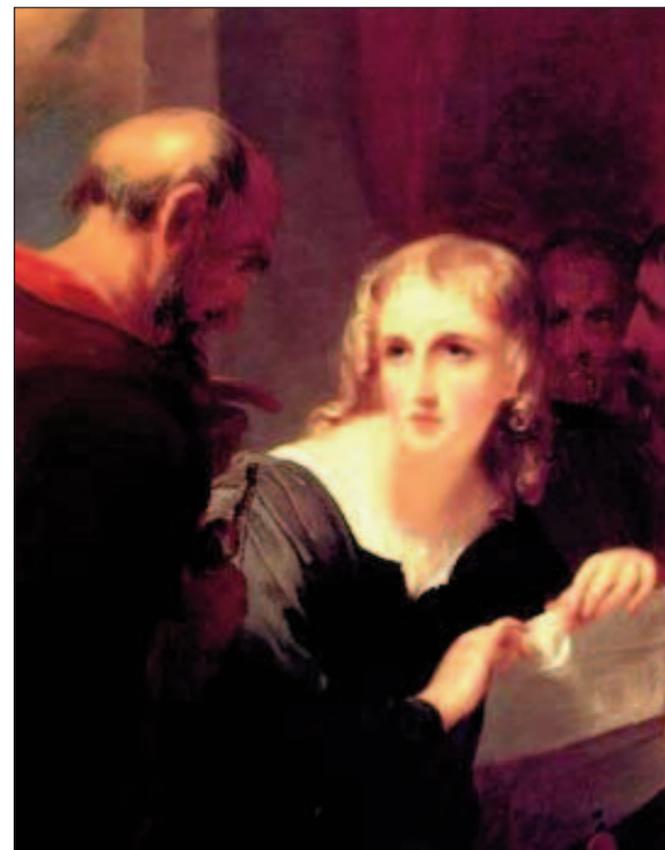
The Merchant of Venice is regarded as difficult to stage in our day, because of the anti-Semitic attitudes it reveals. When later on in the speech, Portia points out to Shylock that if

justice were the only course 'none of us / Should see salvation,' Shakespeare's contemporary audience would hear an endorsement of the officially held preconception about Judaism – that of a legalistic and unforgiving faith. The character of Shylock – greedy, heartless and obsessed with his own ill-fortune – as well as his language, which is studded with physical and animal imagery, would also have confirmed their prejudices. Yet as we would expect, Shakespeare is much more subtle than that. Shylock's well-known and moving speech in which he declares (surprisingly, in prose) his shared humanity with the other characters – 'I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections... passions... If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?' – is often cited as an example of Shakespeare's more 'modern' attitude. Certainly, it forces the audience to see the villain of the piece in a sympathetic light. But again, Shakespeare is more subtle even than that. For Shylock's next line comes as a shock: 'And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?'

Although this could be seen as a knock on the head for any sympathy we might have begun to entertain, it can equally well be regarded as criticism of the Christian characters, who for all their poetic espousal of 'mercy', have treated Shylock with the same hatred and desire for revenge as he treats them. As he says in the same speech: 'The villainy you teach me I will execute.'

Christian hypocrisy

Shylock's criticism of the hypocrisy of Christians goes beyond individual characters and extends to the state – his defence of the barbarity of the bond he has drawn up with Antonio is the Venetian custom of using slaves as property: 'Because you bought them.' Shakespeare here speaks beyond his age in a remarkable way; and wisely perhaps he does not elaborate upon or labour the point. It is a subject he brings before us again in *The Tempest*, where the half-monster Caliban – having abused the initial kindness of Prospero – is treated as a slave to serve him, although he has sufficient humanity to dream, imagine, speak and plot. *The Merchant of Venice* is a comedy, and the audience is expecting to see fair dues for the villains and heroes. In a way they do. But Antonio is made to suffer: having asked Shylock for mercy once, he knows what the answer will be. As he tells his friends, 'you may as well use question with the wolf / Why he has made the ewe bleat for the lamb'; and he arrives at court in the certainty that it will be the last thing he does. His suffering has a beneficial effect upon him, though. When we first meet him, he is restless and grumpy – the Elizabethan audience would have recognised it as 'melancholic' – and describes himself as a 'want-wit... having much ado to know myself.' In court however, he reaches some sort of self-



knowledge and its accompanying peace, saying 'I am a tainted wether of the flock, / Meetest for death; the weakest kind of fruit / Drops earliest to the ground, and so let me.' In a similar way, Prospero, divesting himself of his super-human powers at the end of *The Tempest*, is forced to face all facets of his true nature, and to own Caliban as part of himself: 'this thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine.' Such mercy towards oneself is possibly the most difficult.

Just as the advertised mercy of the Christians is not all it's cracked up to be, so Shylock's justice is riddled with holes. The basis of the bond is one of passionate hatred rather than reason and balance; and fuelled by irrationality, he has failed to think it through. Portia is able to cleverly use his own arguments against him: as stated in the bond, he is entitled to take a pound of Antonio's flesh, but nothing else is mentioned, so he may not spill any blood.

Despite the flaws both within the characters and the state, we do see some approach to real mercy being shown to Shylock at the end of the trial. According to the law, the Duke of Venice is entitled to have him, an 'alien' who has threatened the life of another, executed. But he lets him off. With the same magnanimity, Antonio releases him from the forfeiture of half his goods for his lifetime. As always there are stings in the tail: his money must be left to his daughter and the Christian with whom she has eloped; and he himself must convert to Christianity. Unsurprisingly, he feels suddenly unwell, and does not hang around to say thank you.

In every one of his plays, Shakespeare creates a complete world – it is no accident that he called his theatre The Globe – and all the people in it; like Prospero, he is a sort of God. His great genius is to show us the ways in which all of the characters – even the villains – are like us. He invites us to see them with mercy, as much as with judgement.

Continued from page 15

Happily, there were no untoward incidents. However, one elderly lady who had injured her ankle elsewhere was assisted by stewards and St John's Ambulance personnel. She was cared for over a period of an hour and half awaiting an ambulance that took her to hospital for treatment.

Carol Services presided over by Cathedral Chaplains were also organised by and for other organisations and also required some stewarding input. These included services for the staff and families of Land Securities (Developers of the Victoria Business District), the John Lewis Partnership, and the teachers, parents and pupils of Woldingham School.

Finally, we came with great expectation to the Christmas Day Masses that attract many more worshippers and visitors. Commencing with the First Mass of Christmas at 6.00pm on Christmas Eve, followed by the Vigil and Midnight Mass and the 10.30am Solemn Mass, both celebrated by Cardinal Nichols, and the 12 noon Mass, the schedule is a demanding and rewarding opportunity to participate in the Christmas liturgies which conclude with Vespers and Benediction at 3.30pm. To enable these liturgies to be conducted with reverence and dignity it is the duty of the stewards to oversee the various processions and ensure that the distribution of Holy Communion for large numbers is facilitated with as little stress as possible.

Everyone involved devote much time to preparation, attending and making sure that all of these events are conducted in the manner appropriate to the celebration of Christmas in the mother church of the Diocese. Such service inevitably involves sacrificing many hours and preparations required for spending Christmas with families and friends. Only when the ceremonies are over can all relax and reflect with some satisfaction on the contribution made to serving God and the Church, enabling so many others to experience the joy celebrating the Birth of Christ.

Patrick J Somerville is the Cathedral's Stewards' Coordinator.

St Dominic's Preachers of God's Mercy

The 800th Anniversary of the Dominicans

Br Tony Lees OP

I consider it truly providential that the Dominican Jubilee to celebrate 800 years of the Order of Preachers should overlap with the Jubilee Year of Mercy. St Dominic's life was characterised by the practise of mercy and, ever since, his example has inspired men and women to follow him in the Order as Preachers of God's mercy.

St Dominic's legacy to the Church is an Order that at its best faithfully lives its motto of *Veritas* (truth). St Dominic realised that the truth was not merely something that we know, but a way of living which saves. He was acutely aware of how many people, even within Christendom, had not properly heard this saving truth and, motivated by mercy, he desired to share this truth with as many as possible. He saw the lie in any attempt to oppose mercy to truth. Pope Francis expresses this same insight when he says: 'The Church condemns sin because it has to relay the truth: "this is a sin". But at the same time, it embraces the sinner who recognises himself as such, it welcomes him, it speaks to him of the infinite mercy of God. Jesus forgave even those who crucified and scorned him.' Mercy does not ignore sin, nor does it reject the sinner.

Felt compassion and acted

The accounts of St Dominic's life are not as full as one would wish, but we learn from them of a hugely impressive character, worthy of emulation. One surprising element of his life is just how reactive it was; there was no single pivotal moment of divine inspiration in which the shape of his life's mission and the Order became clear to him. We observe a man continually reacting to changing circumstances, and always with mercy and fidelity.

St Dominic was born in the small Spanish town of Caleruega in the early 1170s. At an early age, he was marked out by his parents for a clerical career. Even before the foundation of the Order, whilst he was still a university student in Palencia, we see mercy manifesting itself in his life. There was a severe famine and people were dying of hunger; so Dominic sold everything he owned, including the books which were so precious to him, to provide for the needy, saying, 'I do not want to study dead skins, while people are dying of hunger'. He saw need, felt compassion, and acted.

Similarly, we know that while he was in Rome in 1217, liaising with the Pope on what form the Order would take, he would regularly go and visit the recluses who lived in appalling conditions in the old walls of Rome. This calls to mind Pope Francis's visiting of the slums and his constant and necessary refrain that nobody is beyond the mercy of God. As he says, the Church must take God's mercy to these people now, not wait for them to take the initiative. This is precisely what St Dominic would go on to do.



Living the message radically

Travelling with his Bishop while still a Cathedral Canon of Osma, St Dominic became aware that, in certain parts of the Church, there was a chasm between what the Church preached and how its clerics behaved. He saw that the answer was not to water down the teaching, but to live it more radically. He was prepared to undertake whatever hardships were necessary to bring the mercy of God to sinners and saw that it was going to be necessary to be increasingly like the Apostles. He had not sold his books in Palencia because he had renounced learning. Nor was his decision permanently to leave his position as a Canon in Osma because he no longer wished to live in one place. Rather, because he saw so much suffering due to sin, he was moved to do something different from what the Church was currently doing.

His compassion for sinners would often result in him spending nights before the Cross, weeping and crying out to the Lord to have mercy on sinners and he was often heard beseeching the Lord, 'What will become of sinners?' People were starving for truth and he was determined that they should hear it and he desired that they be converted through love, not coerced by force.

It is worth returning to those books he sold in Palencia briefly. We can be sure that when money was available he would have bought books again, and he always travelled with St Matthew's Gospel and the Pauline Epistles. From the very outset he wanted the Order to be present in the major university cities. He wanted his friars to be well-educated; for to live as a Christian we must know what Christianity is. Theology is an effort to listen attentively to what God has to say to us, and we do well to listen because He knows us better than we know ourselves and He loves us better than we love ourselves. Theology is at once doctrinal and practical and we cannot separate the two aspects. The truths of dogmatic theology do not fall away in the pastoral realm. Christ is at once Truth and Life and we cannot separate our knowledge of Him from our life in Him.

Mercy is not a miscarriage of justice

St Dominic would have recoiled at the notion, held by some, that mercy is nothing more than an absence of justice, whereby the fullness and grandeur of mercy is reduced to the notion of doing nothing in an instance where, but for compassion, there would have been punishment. This is a false notion. God's gratuitous mercy is not a miscarriage of justice. God's mercy is active and not a feeling which suspends action.

Over the course of his life, it became increasingly clear to St Dominic that the Church required a permanent preaching mission bringing the truth in love where there is error. As Cardinal Nichols has written, we all long 'for the embrace of mercy, the love that accepts us as we are, and, at the same time, calls us to become what we are made to be.' Christian love is demanding because it asks us to do awkward things. Most of us, I hope, would be happy not to stone someone committing adultery. The tough part in our current day and age is inviting them to stop sinning even if on some level they seem happy.

This to me is a great challenge for today's Dominicans and the Church at large. We need to make the cliché of 'Love the sinner, hate the sin', a reality. Too often, the Church's teaching is heard as condemning people, and undoubtedly on occasion, I have spoken the truth in a way divorced from love, at which point it ceases to be the Truth, who is a person and who is Love. At the same time, as Archbishop Charles Chaput points out, we cannot abandon truth, for while, 'truth without compassion wounds and repels; mercy without truth is a comfortable form of lying.' Speaking the truth, even when it is uncomfortable is a proof of our love. Yet that truth will only really convince when it is felt to be motivated by love. This was the motivation of St Dominic's life and we are called to make it ours in this Jubilee and beyond.

Throughout 2016 the Dominicans are celebrating a Jubilee Year marking the 800th anniversary of the founding of their Order. Br Toby Lees OP is a Dominican based at Oxford.

Poetry Corner: Part I

What Goes Around (Comes Around)

Knock, take off your shoes and come in.
These walls won't save you but if you read their writing well
They might just let you stay the night, tonight.

On a night like this even the moon's afraid to shine
Make sure our doors are marked with the sign
As all locks and chains will fall at the very whisper of His name.

Pick up your heels
All your stains now show
There'll be no place to run tonight.
All you've denied have come back to claim and to remind you:
What goes around, comes around.

Michael, Gabriel and Rafael are armed for the fight.
He who was once fourth now stands on the other side.
There'll be no prisoners taken on either side in the end.

All your drugs won't buy you peace of mind.
They will sniff out guilt with sword and mace.
The poor will be made poorer and
The rich rewarded for their might.

Pick up your heels
All your stains now show
There'll be no place to run tonight.
All you've denied have come back to claim and to remind you:
What goes around, comes around.

For all its torrid, twisted tales that I cling to,
We've run out of wood, my dear
But I will not burn the Bible.
The streams will overflow with blood and wine
To the rivers they will run and they will find
All will be invited to partake and
Those who will not drink, will drown.
All you have lost will never be found again.
The sands have run out
It is too late to begin to
Make up for the dying light in your lamp.

Pick up your heels
All your stains now show
There'll be no place to run tonight.
All you've denied have come back to claim and to remind you:
What goes around, comes around.

At the stroke of twelve the temple veil will tear.
The sky bathed in red will weep for those who fought to
Ascend their temples and their thrones and pedestals of gold.

At first light I smell the ash and the smoke.
Those now dead were never alive to begin with
And I hear in triumphant song those who dared to live.

Pick up your heels
All your stains now show
There'll be no place to run tonight.
All you've denied have come back to claim and to remind you:
What goes around, comes around.

For all its torrid, twisted tales that I cling to,
We've run out of wood my dear
But I will not burn the Bible.

Dwight Pereira

This month, Poetry Corner continues on page 33.

Events for the year ahead



Christina White

Oremus, like a well-oiled machine, demands copy deadlines a good month in advance so the Friends' page for February is being written in early January, with the rain still falling and the events list yet to be finalised. This is however a year of anniversaries – 2016 marks the 400th anniversary of the death of the Bard and it's also the 300th anniversary of the birth of Capability Brown. If the rain ever stops falling we might be able to consider a trip to an English country garden...

In the diary already for 2016 is a visit to Chichester Cathedral for the celebration of a Catholic Mass to mark the feast day of St Richard of Chichester. The European Galleries at the V&A are now open and our resident art expert, historian and polymath – Paul Pickering – will be giving an evening tour of the highlights on Friday 18 March. Mary Maxwell and her parish team have generously taken up the reins this year for the St Patrick's Event on Saturday 12 March so please, do support them. The Black Velvet Band will be returning with more toe-tapping tunes.

Candlemas on Tuesday 2 February traditionally marks the end of Epiphany which is a reminder to me to formally

thank all the marvellous people – customers, helpers and patrons – who made the Christmas Fair such a storming success. I am delighted to report that the event made over £7,000 and money is still coming in as we sell the remainder of our lovely handmade lavender bags – now on sale through Clergy House reception. Maureen Beck is the shining star behind the lavender bags which scented many a Christmas stocking on 25 December. Our thanks must go to her specially for such a lovely, fragrant contribution to the Fair.

I am loathe to mention Christmas again so soon, but if you have unwanted Christmas presents, decorations or anything with a festive vibe, please deliver to Clergy House reception. I have cleared storage in our cupboard so we have room for 'stuff'. We really were very moved by the lovely donations which we received and which contributed so magnificently to the total raised. Thank you again.

At the time of writing we were trying to finalise a Spanish-themed event for early March. Details will be in the Cathedral newsletter and the Friends' newsletter which will be posted to members later this month.

Finally, Fr Alan Robinson, parish priest at the lovely Corpus Christi in Covent Garden, has asked me to pass on details of a forthcoming fundraising event for The Corpus Christi Covent Garden Restoration Appeal. Followers of the work in progress will know that Fr Alan has worked tirelessly to bring his gem of a church back to life with some really beautiful restoration of marble, gilding and decoration.

The event, a gala concert with sparkling wine and canapés, will be held on Friday 19 February 2016, 7.00pm for 7.30pm, at 49 Queen's Gate Terrace, London SW7 5PN. The concert is being hosted by Sir Vernon and Lady Ellis and will be compered by John Gilhooly OBE. Musicians Ailish Tynan, Benjamin Appl, and James Baillieu will be performing. Fr Alan says that the programme will include songs and duets by Mendelssohn, Schubert, Brahms, Rubinstein and Britten. Just the ticket to brush off the winter blues. Tickets are £95; bookings should be made via vernon@vef.org.uk

Forthcoming Events

Saturday 12 March: St Patrick's Celebration. Westminster Cathedral Hall 7.00pm to 10.00pm. Hot supper and music from the Black Velvet band. Tickets £15.00

Friday 18 March: Highlights of the New European Galleries 1600-1800 at the V&A with Paul Pickering. Our evening tour will begin at 6.00pm. Meet in the museum's main foyer 5.45pm. Glass of wine and nibbles to follow. Tickets £14.00

How to contact us

- Write to: Friends' Office, 42 Francis Street, London SW1P 1QW
- Call: 020 7798 9059
- Email: friends@westminstercathedral.org.uk

Registered Charity number 272899

Bringing Christianity into the Classroom

Joanna Bogle

Just over a quarter of a century ago, a nationwide project, based on the study of the New Testament, was launched for secondary schools across Britain. It was the brainchild of an ecumenical group, bringing together Christians from the mainstream Christian denominations.

The Schools Bible Project, as it came to be called, started in a fairly modest way. The group launching it was called the Order of Christian Unity, and had been founded back in the 1950s by a Methodist living in Hampshire, Mr Ernest Tapp, who gathered together some friends in a prayer group. The priority at that time was to foster ecumenical goodwill.

In the 1970s, the prayer group expanded and took on a wider focus under the chairmanship first of leading Catholic laywoman Lady Lothian, and later of the retired Anglican Bishop of Norwich, Dr Maurice Wood. Projects here at home in Britain were tackled and there were conferences on religious education, and on other current issues of Christian concern. As the name 'Order of Christian Unity' sounded a little puzzling, it adopted the working title Christian Projects.

The group flourished, and today its main focus is on religious education in schools, offering pupils a chance to learn about Jesus Christ. Trustees include Baroness Cox, and the winners of our annual Schools Bible Project now come to Westminster each Autumn to receive their prizes from her at the House of Lords.

The Schools Bible Project has a simple focus: pupils are invited to imagine themselves present at one of the great events in the life of Christ, and to write about it as if they had been actually present. A selection of specific events from the New Testament are chosen each year, and a brochure sent to every secondary school in Britain. Entries pour in, and a team of judges reads each one. Prizes are then awarded and a group of volunteers works hard to pack and post them. Some of Britain's large comprehensive schools send 300-400 entries, and so win a number of prizes. In 2015, we chose C S Lewis' *Mere Christianity* as the prize, and were able to order an attractive new paperback edition from a good publisher.

In addition to these prizewinners, a small number of really outstanding essays win main prizes, including cash awards for the schools (£500 for the first prize). These young winners, with their parents and teachers, come to London for a tour of Parliament and a formal presentation of their awards.



There is a link with Westminster Cathedral. Some years back, these awards were presented by Cardinal Basil Hume at Archbishop's House, and the young winners had a tour of Westminster Cathedral. Over the years, we have also had Award presentations at Lambeth Palace (Dr George Carey) and at the London headquarters of the Salvation Army. Currently, as indicated, we are welcomed by our Trustee Baroness Cox for a tour of Parliament, and tea at the House of Lords.

There is a sort of myth surrounding religious education in Britain: a vague idea that Christianity is banned from the classrooms of our schools, except for specially church-linked schools. This is not the case: an understanding of the basics of Christianity is part of the standard RE curriculum. Pupils have a right to know about Christ: such knowledge is an essential part of any well-rounded education.

A couple of years ago, we held a Thanksgiving Service to mark 25 years of the Schools Bible Project. Cardinal Vincent Nichols sent a special greeting, and an ecumenical service was held at St Margaret's, Westminster. As I write this, brochures are going out to schools for the 2016 Project. It is a real privilege to be chairman of Christian Projects, and a joy to work with so many people of goodwill to make the annual Bible Project flourish each year.

Many of the essays are of a really high standard, showing evidence of fine teaching by dedicated teachers, and enthusiasm on the part of the pupils. Some are really moving: pupils write about the healing of the blind man, the raising of Jairus' daughter, or of Mary Magdalene's encounter with the Risen Christ with real feeling and a sense of reverence and awe. Of course, we also get some howlers: Pontius the pilot (can they really imagine there were airplanes back in the days of the Roman Empire?) or, this past year, of Joseph using his mobile phone to enquire if there was any room at the inn...

The key to the project is its simplicity: it suits pupils of all abilities, it offers a specific challenge, and the brochure sets out clear rules, deadlines etc so that teachers are able to get on with the work without extra paperwork.

Want to know more? Send a stamped addressed envelope to: Schools Bible Project 2016, Christian Projects, St Stephen's Vicarage, Cressingham Road, London SE13 5AG.

Joanna Bogle DSG is a writer, broadcaster and journalist.



Photo: Bernd K / Wikimedia Commons

Those Were The Days... A Junkers to London

Mgr Vladimir Felzmann

Once the victory celebrations were over, my father Dr A Felzmann – the ‘A’ signified a name which was perfectly fine when he was born in 1909, in what was then a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but which had become somewhat of an embarrassment by 1945! – flew to London in November ‘45.

In London, Dr Adolf Felzmann became the First Secretary at the Czechoslovak Embassy – in those days situated at the north end of Grosvenor Place – from the windows of which we could admire the victory parade on 8 June 1946, as it came from Marble Arch down to The Mall to Hyde Park Corner.

We – my mother, my two sisters and our recently born brother John – flew to London on 2 April 1946.

The London plane that day was a Junkers 52: a three-engine machine with its unusual, corrugated-duralumin, metal skin – just like the one in the Clint Eastwood and Richard Burton film *Where Eagles Dare*.

Facing forward, there were rows of seats on the right-hand side, with a corridor on the left. One of the windows on the left had a sliding hatch. Being almost seven, I wanted to test out our speed's wind-pressure, which I did. Well, that is until the co-pilot came down and told my mother to order me to pull my arm back in, as the extra drag was veering the plane off-course!

Posting letters from a Junkers 52

So, to pass the time on the flight, Jarmila – my older sister – and I wrote bad words on sheets of paper which we folded and posted out through that window. Czech words like ‘knickers’ and ‘bum’ were bound to offend and hurt those nasty Nazis a few hundred feet below. That's how low we flew! No need for cabin pressurisation.

Our first stop was Frankfurt. The shattered-building skyline, the steel-plank runway, as well as the spearmint chewing gum given to me by a USAF GI, gave me my first and, for many long years, only contact with German soil.

Then on to Brussels. As we were approaching to land we could see a plane, with a dislocated wing, at the end of the runway. We were told that the previous day, as this plane was about to take off for London, the wing had fallen off. Luckily no one was seriously hurt. But the passengers had to get to London and fast. Naturally, they all climbed aboard our plane – with their luggage. All the seats had been taken in Prague. But in those days ‘health and safety’ had not yet been invented, so that was no problem.

Seeing people's faces

The new passengers stood in the corridor, as I was soon to see people on the underground doing, but holding on to our seats and the ribs supporting the corrugated fuselage. Being thus rather overloaded, we skimmed a few, very few, hundred feet over the white cliffs of Dover. We could easily see the faces of people waving at us. Excited, all too soon, we landed at Croydon: London's civilian Airport.

Then by an embassy car on to Putney where we initially stayed as paying guests in a house on Lytton Grove. Soon, very soon, we moved to Gwendolyn Avenue and the parish of St Simon Stock, where, within a year, and instructed by Fr Tanner, I received my First Holy Communion.

On my arrival in England, the only English I had was: ‘I love to go to sleep to cinema.’ Being – as was made very clear as soon as I went to school – a BF (‘bloody foreigner’), I was motivated to learn my new homeland's language – fast! This was so I could blend in rapidly into London's cultural scenery. That I did. To prove it, I am still here and with no broken bones, writing in English.

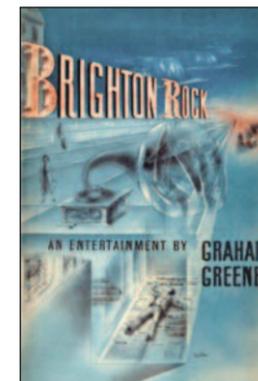
As the song goes, ‘Things ain't what they used to be.’ Maybe, just as well. But it was fun.

Mgr Vladimir Felzmann is the Diocesan Chaplain for Sport and is the Chief Executive of the John Paul II Foundation for Sport (jp2f4s).

Sin, Suffering and a Stick of Rock Greene's Brighton Rock

Tim Ruocco

Following on from the last ‘Catholic novels’ article, *Brighton Rock* is another book by Graham Greene which is strong in its Catholic themes. The story takes place in the coastal town of Brighton and centres on the devious character of Pinkie Brown, an up-and-coming gangster. Although this novel is based on the life of organised crime and various other forms of delinquency, Greene provides insights throughout the novel which are relevant for Catholics today.



The plot centres on Pinkie's adolescent descent into crime. He commits murder, treachery and manipulation, and Greene highlights his apparent sociopathic tendencies throughout the story.

The first half of the book concentrates on Pinkie's pursuit of Charles Hale, who betrayed a former gang leader. Pinkie eventually murders Hale and his alibi is put in jeopardy by an unsuspecting waitress, called Rose.

Pinkie then devises a plan to maintain his secret by pursuing Rose romantically. Both Pinkie and Rose are Catholic, and this plays an intrinsic part in the novel as Rose feels it is her duty, when she falls in love with Pinkie, to marry him. Pinkie, though, enters into marriage purely for self-preservation – knowing that Rose could not testify against him if they were married. This form of deceit is one of the many sins he commits.

Representing evil

Pinkie represents evil, but sees himself as ‘more sinned against than sinning’ – thinking that he has been corrupted by sin as a result of bullying as a child. His constant need to be respected jars with his lack of care for others, despite needing their approval. ‘The poison twisted in the boy's veins. He had been insulted. He had to show someone he was a man.’ This gives a clear outline of the vanity and selfishness that, coupled with his criminal acts, make Pinkie the embodiment of a sinful man.

He does, however, show a slight redeeming quality in the way he reflects and, to some extent, understands the gravity of his sins. ‘It didn't matter anyway... he wasn't made for peace, he couldn't believe in it. Heaven was a word: hell was something he could trust.’ Pinkie's belief in Hell coupled with his estranged faith means that he is haunted by an angry, punishing God – he is not one drawn by the idea of mercy. In this sense, he understands his sinfulness but at the same time refuses – or cannot accept – the thought of absolution, and therefore rejects this fundamental aspect of his Catholic faith. Not being in a state of grace, yet

another theme that runs through the novel, Pinkie believes that he is already damned – has he lost hope, and has decided to be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb.

In contrast, the character of Ida is very important in the religious context of the story. Despite not being a Catholic herself, she represents goodness as she tries to protect Rose from Pinkie's control. She is suspicious of Pinkie after she had a run-in with Hale before the former murdered him. Some suggest that Ida plays the role of a guardian angel in the way that she is ever watchful over Rose – yet another Catholic connotation. Just as Lucifer was cast down from heaven by God, Ida symbolises the force that looks to cast Pinkie out of society due to his misdeeds.

A culmination of a loss of faith

Pinkie's suicide at the end of the novel forces the reader to confront yet another Catholic theme. The gangster is by this time wrapped in paranoia. With a rival gang taking control of the town's racetrack racket and Ida's continuous questioning, Pinkie decides it's time to leave Brighton for good. He has but one task before he departs, Rose's murder. He tricks his unwitting bride into a suicide pact and, as a result of her love for him, Rose complies. She is saved at the last moment when Dallow (Pinkie's right hand man) tips off the police as to Pinkie's whereabouts. Rose is stopped from shooting herself but Pinkie, in fear, throws himself off a cliff.

His suicide is a clear culmination of his loss of faith. This can be seen as a temptation by Pinkie, as he gives into fear by ending his own life rather than facing justice for his crimes. Falling from a cliff is symbolic not only with the Fall of Lucifer but Pinkie's own, personal, spiritual fall from a holy life he might have had.

Rose, heartbroken, looks to God and the Church as a way to sustain a life without Pinkie and the horrors she suffered at his hands. Despite still protesting her love for her husband, a Confessor talks to her about salvation for all people and she is left with hope for her departed spouse. These two polar endings for both the main protagonists is a clear indication of Greene's own ideas on faith and add to what is a gripping, dramatic and ultimately painful tale.



Photo: Eric Hossinger / Flickr / Wikimedia Commons

Capital Cuisine: ¡España en Victoria!

Iberico Victoria
68 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6SQ

I have gradually become an aficionado of this mini chain. On my first visit to their Portland Place location a few years ago I was a bit put off by a rather haughty server, but subsequent visits to that location and several to the Farringdon location have won me over.

This was my first visit to the Victoria restaurant, and it was a very pleasant one. I took some of the *Oremus* team to a working lunch. The décor was bright, even on a dreary day. This was mid-December, with Christmas lunches obviously in full swing. Very crowded and very loud, but the high ceiling allowed much of the din to swirl above us and we enjoyed good conversation, despite being at a large table in the middle of the busy room.

The dishes were up to the usual Iberico standard, which is a good one for tapas and specials. Dishes arrived at rather irregular intervals due to the peak time and full house, but with the wide variety of selections that worked well for us. In the rush, one dish never arrived at all. (We left more than satisfied, despite that.) Iberico offer the 'classic' Spanish tapas, done well, and a wide enough range of options that will suit most palates. Several vegetarian options made it possible for everyone at the table to make some choices. Pricing is fair by



London standards for the portion sizes. The moderate wine list is a well-chosen range of Spanish selections at reasonable prices, with something for most budgets.

Some small caveats. Iberico train their staff to direct customers toward certain dishes and wines, assuming most customers have limited experience with Spanish cuisine and drink. While this can be helpful, if one is conversant with Spanish food and wine it may take a few exchanges with the server to aim them toward being a partner and not a director in making good choices. Victoria was no exception. But that was soon sorted and we had a pleasant experience thereafter.

In short, a very good experience and a bonus to find yet another good restaurant in Victoria. *Stan Metheny.*

Cathedral History

A Photographic Record

Ash Wednesday – 15 February 1956

In this photograph, taken on Ash Wednesday, 15 February, 1956 Cardinal Bernard Griffin is seen receiving the ashes from Mgr Gordon Wheeler, the Cathedral Administrator. This turned out to be Cardinal Griffin's last year of life.

Before the liturgical changes which followed the Second Vatican Council, the Imposition of Ashes took place before the Mass, rather than after the Gospel as is the case nowadays. Also, the priests standing either side of the throne are wearing chasubles folded at the front. These were worn instead of the damaltic and tunicle by those exercising the ministry of deacon or subdeacon during the seasons of Advent and Lent. This remained the custom until it was abolished by Pope St John XXIII in the early 1960s. The origins of the folded chasuble are unknown, but may have been designed for ease of movement at a time when the chasuble was worn by all ranks of the clergy. In the early centuries all chasubles were of a fuller design and it made sense for deacons and subdeacons to have freer movement of the arms, so as to facilitate the moving of items on the altar and sanctuary during Mass.

Additional information: Assistant Priest in cope, left of stool, Canon Francis Bartlett, Sub-Administrator; Assistant Deacon next to Cardinal: Fr John Porter Familiarii; right of throne: Mgr Derek Worlock, Mr Anthony Bartlett and Cross Bearer, Fr Robin Whitney. MC Facing throne: Fr Peter Lowry.

Paul Tobin



Guild of Our Lady of Warwick Street

Please join us every Tuesday at 6.30pm for the Holy Rosary at the Shrine of Our Lady of Warwick Street.

Intentions are for the Conversion of England and for the poor and homeless of London.

The Shrine of Our Lady of Warwick Street was erected in 1877 by Decree of Pope Pius IX and the image is modelled on that in the Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in the Rue du Bac, Paris.

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Time: Every Tuesday evening at 6.30pm

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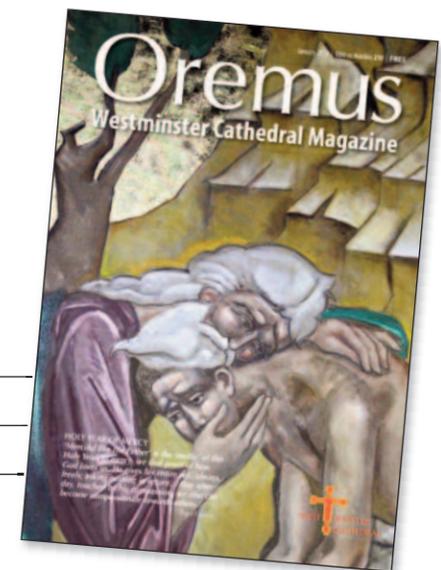
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Roman Basilicas

St Paul's Outside the Walls

Donato Tallo



Situated a short distance from the centre of Rome and south of the Vatican, six stops from Termini station on the city's metro B line, the Papal Basilica of *San Paolo fuori le Mura* (St Paul's Outside the Walls) stands tall and proud as a true witness to the Catholic faith.

St Paul's is one of the four major papal basilicas of Rome along with St Peter's, St John Lateran and St Mary Major. It is a very holy and special place that no visitor to the Eternal City should forget to visit. The basilica is rich in beauty and stunning architecture and is very much a place of pilgrimage and prayer, which welcomes many visitors from across the world.

Founded by Constantine the Great in the fourth century, the basilica of St Paul's has a long and interesting history and underwent a great many changes during the reign of Pope St Gregory the Great (590-604). It is home to the tomb of the Apostle Paul and is served by a faithful community of Benedictine monks who reside in the adjoining monastic abbey. The presence of a monastic community dates back to the reign of Gregory the Great, but it was in fact Pope Gregory II who established a stable Benedictine community at the abbey. One of the most significant aspects of the basilica's history in the last few centuries is the fire of 1823, after which a major period of reconstruction began.



On 25 January 1959, Pope St John XXIII announced the convocation of the Second Vatican Council from the abbey at St Paul's. There is a beautiful and insightful museum at the basilica which, along with the monastic cloister, is open to visitors. The museum explores the role the basilica played during the Second Vatican Council, in addition to exploring the life and history of St Paul's Outside the Walls in general.



Giant statues of St Peter and St Paul stand tall either side of the main arch inside the basilica. These two Princes of the Church were indeed true and faithful servants and followers of Our Lord. Metaphorically speaking, our faith should be symbolic of those statues standing tall and proud, and all of us should seek daily to be living stones striving to be good ambassadors of Christ to the world.

The basilica has an inspiring baldacchino standing above the high altar and a wonderful apse with a mosaic of Christ flanked by Saints Peter, Paul, Andrew and Luke which is beautiful when illuminated. The 'Chains of St Paul', which are said to be the chains used to bind the Apostle while he was held as a prisoner in Rome from 61-63 AD, are displayed below the high altar and are venerated daily by the many people who pass by. Portraits of the popes throughout the centuries are portrayed around the vast upper walls of St Paul's.

No visit to Rome would be complete without a visit to *San Paolo fuori le Mura* and I would greatly encourage all visitors to Rome to visit this holy and very special place. It is very much a living church that has preserved many aspects of its rich and varied history and as with the other three papal basilicas of Rome it has a lot to offer visitors and an interesting story to tell.



© Donato Tallo

The Presentation of the Lord

The Feast of Candlemas



Matthew Macjewski (Year 6)

The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple is celebrated on 2 February. It is the next great feast after Christmas and the Epiphany; we call it Candlemas for short. In the celebration we light candles blessed by the priest. We do this because they remind us of Jesus the Light of the World. Candlemas is a celebration full of light and the candle is a symbol of guidance pouring forth its gift of light.

On the feast day, we remember when Jesus was 40 days old and was taken by Mary and Joseph to be blessed as a first born son by the priest. All good Jews would have done that and made a sacrifice to God in the Temple. It's interesting that Joseph brought two doves which is the simplest offering. This means that there will be a greater sacrifice made by Jesus himself on the cross in the future.

The Feast of Candlemas takes us away from the Christmas season and points us towards Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

There are two very interesting characters in this story, which is only found in St Luke's Gospel. Simeon was a very old man who was led by the Holy Spirit to the Temple and waited for the Messiah to come. He was also a priest. Anna spent day and night praying to God in the Temple also waiting for the Messiah to come. They both represent the Old Testament and the longing for the Messiah to come amongst the Jewish people. Both of them recognised Jesus as the Messiah and Saviour.

When Simeon saw and held the baby Jesus he thanked God and said, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy

salvation, which thou have prepared before the face of all people. A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people, Israel.' This prayer is known as the 'Nunc Dimittis.' The Song of Simeon is said or sung at every night prayer in the Catholic Church during Compline.

The Feast of Candlemas was originally known as the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin. The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, as it is now known, is an ancient celebration. The Church in Jerusalem observed the feast as early as the first half of the fourth century.

During the Mass, candles are blessed and lit and carried in procession. The Church always uses beeswax candles because it's the best quality wax. The Church always uses the best quality material to praise God.

The Feast of Candlemas is very beautiful with the lit candles moving in procession through the church. At my church, the celebration makes me feel full of brightness, hope and joy. As the prayer of the Mass says, 'O God... sanctify with your blessing these candles which we are eager to carry in praise of your name, so that, treading the path of virtue, we may reach that light which never fails. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.'

Matthew Macjewski is a Year 6 pupil at St Vincent de Paul Primary School, Westminster.

The Miraculous Medal



It was on June 24th, 1881, the feast of St. John the Baptist, that Our Lady was reportedly first seen, on that now famous mountain, known as Podbrdo, overlooking the parish of Medjugorje.

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February
2016

'Ask Christ to help you become happy. I obey Christ. After Christ's example, I forgive my persecutors. I do not hate them. I ask God to have pity on all, and I hope my blood will fall on my fellow men as fruitful rain.'

St Paul Miki, Martyr. Feast: 6 February



The Month of February

The holy season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on 10 February. This season is sometimes viewed with dread – a time of penance and pain, adding to the gloom and depression of the last days of winter. But Lent should be a time of great expectation and renewal, a time of holy discipline and, therefore, inner joy – we are called to be holy people; called to deepen our friendship and intimate union with Christ. We enter the desert with him not so much as those mourning a tragic loss, but rather as those mourning our folly and the emptiness of our former lives, our sins and all those things that we leave behind in order to truly find the Lord. In that sense, this penitential season is a supremely happy one, for it is the 'favourable season', a period in which we control the body and perform those works of mercy in the service of God and neighbour that lead to freedom and growth. For Christians, what could be better than that?

Holy Father's Intentions

Universal: That we may take good care of creation – a gift freely given – cultivating and protecting it for future generations.

Evangelisation: That opportunities may increase for dialogue and encounter between the Christian faith and the peoples of Asia.

Tuesday 2 February
THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD
Blessing of Candles at all Masses
The Year of Consecrated Life officially closes today.

10.30am Mass cancelled
11.00am Mass to Close the Year of Consecrated Life, celebrated by the Cardinal
5.00pm Vespers (*Men's voices*)
5.30pm Procession and Solemn Capitular Mass (*Full Choir*)
Missa quarti toni *Victoria*
Videte miraculum *Tallis*
Senex puerum portabat *Victoria*

Wednesday 3 February
Sts Laurence, Dunstan and Theodore, Archbishops of Canterbury
The Blessing of St Blaise (throats) will be given after all Masses.

Friday 5 February (*Friday abstinence*)
St Agatha, Virgin & Martyr

Saturday 6 February
St Paul Miki and Companions, Martyrs
2.00pm Lourdes Mass, celebrated by the Cardinal
6.00pm Visiting Choir: Amici Coro

Sunday 7 February (*Ps Week 1*)
5th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
Day for the Unemployed
9.00am Family Mass
10.30am Solemn Mass (*Full Choir*)
Mass in G minor *Vaughan Williams*
Laudate Dominum *Dupré*
O sacrum convivium *Hassler*
Organ: Toccata Preston
3.30pm Solemn Vespers and Benediction (*Full Choir*)
Magnificat primi toni *Victoria*
Great is the Lord *Elgar*
Organ: Evocation II Escaich

Monday 8 February
Feria or
St Jerome Emiliani *or*
St Josephine Bakhita, Virgin
Day for Victims of Human Trafficking.

Tuesday 9 February
Opening of Exhibition in St Joseph's chapel

LENT STARTS

Wednesday 10 February
ASH WEDNESDAY (*Fast & Abstinence*)
Imposition of Ashes at every Mass
1.05pm Mass attended by Deaf Service
5.00pm Vespers (*Men's Voices*)
5.30pm Solemn Mass and Imposition of Ashes (*Full Choir*)
Missa XVIII Plainsong
Miserere mei Deus *Allegri*
Emendemus in melius *Byrd*

Thursday 11 February
Lent feria or
Our Lady of Lourdes
World Day of Prayer for the Sick

Friday 12 February (*Friday abstinence*)
3.00pm Stations of the Cross for the Deaf
6.15pm Stations of the Cross (follows immediately after the 5.30pm Mass)

Saturday 13 February
Lent feria
3.00pm RCIA Rite of Election with the Cardinal
4.30pm Side chapel: Latin Mass Society Low Mass

Sunday 14 February
1st SUNDAY OF LENT (*Ps Week 1*)
10.30am Solemn Mass (*Men's Voices*)
Missa XVII Plainsong
Infelix ego *de Rore*
Ad te igitur *de Rore*
3.00pm RCIA Rite of Election with the Cardinal

Monday 15 February
Cardinal Wiseman's anniversary (1865)

Friday 19 February (*Friday abstinence*)
3.00pm Stations of the Cross for the Deaf
6.15pm Stations of the Cross (follows immediately after the 5.30pm Mass)

Saturday 20 February
6.00pm Visiting Choir: Chichester University Chamber Choir

Sunday 21 February
2nd SUNDAY OF LENT (*Ps week 2*)
Collection: Lent Fast Day Offerings for CAFOD
10.30am Solemn Mass (*Full Choir*)
Missa Emendemus in melius *Palestrina*
Scapulis suis *Malcolm*
3.30pm Solemn Vespers and Benediction (*Full Choir*)
Magnificat primi toni *Lassus*
Absterge Domine *Tallis*

Monday 22 February
THE CHAIR OF ST PETER THE APOSTLE

Tuesday 23 February
Lent feria or
St Polycarp, Bishop & Martyr
Closing of Exhibition in St Joseph's Chapel

Friday 26 February (*Friday abstinence*)
3.00pm Stations of the Cross for the Deaf
6.15pm Stations of the Cross (follows immediately after the 5.30pm Mass)

Saturday 27 February
12.30pm Mass celebrated by Cardinal
2.30pm Lady Chapel: Banneux Notre Dame Mass
6.00pm RCIA First Scrutiny during Mass

Sunday 28 February
3rd SUNDAY OF LENT (*Ps Week 3*)
10.30am Solemn Mass (*Full Choir*)
Mass for five voices *Berkeley*
Ad te levavi *Whyte*
Super flumina Babylonis *Palestrina*
(Full Choir)
Magnificat primi toni *Viadana*
Like as the hart *Howells*

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.

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/

Poetry Corner Part II

Offer it Up!

It's cold and you are lazy
There is work and there is you
The great procrastinator

So leave the oven alone
Take the iron and the board
Your boredom notwithstanding

How often in your life
There are these signal moments
Private opportunities

Prayer as an unseen act
Nobody is watching you
Be your own motivator

Though you can't be bothered
There may be some inside help
Always believe in angels

'Physician heal thyself'
So, Catholic, feed thy soul
Each day by the grace of God

Take up your board and iron
Address the pressing matter
That you may offer it up

Alan Frost

Poetry corner is in two sections this month. Another poem may be found on page 23. If you would like to submit a poem, or poems, for consideration, please send them to oremus42@gmail.com or, by post, to:

The Editor
Oremus
Westminster Cathedral
42 Francis Street
London
SW1P 1QW.

From the Registers

Baptisms

Vajk Lazar
Elizabeth Salib
Rosie-May Gee Bernard
Emily Randall
Aurora Marin Incorpora
Jacob Simara Lister

Westminster Cathedral – Social Media

Westminster Cathedral is 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).

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.

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.

Westminster Cathedral

Cathedral Clergy House
42 Francis Street
London SW1P 1QW

Telephone 020 7798 9055
Service times 020 7798 9097
www.westminstercathedral.org.uk

Cathedral Chaplains

Canon Christopher Tuckwell
Administrator
Fr Alexander Master
Sub-Administrator & Precentor
Fr John Ablewhite, *Registrar*
Fr Michael Donaghy
Fr Gerard O'Brien
Fr Brian O'Mahony
Fr Martin Plunkett
Fr Michael Quaicoe

Sub-Administrator's Intern

Francis Thomas

Also in residence

Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Victories

Music Department

Martin Baker, Master of Music
Peter Stevens, Assist Master of Music
Alexander Pott, Organ Scholar

Cathedral Commercial Manager

John Daly

Cathedral Facilities Manager

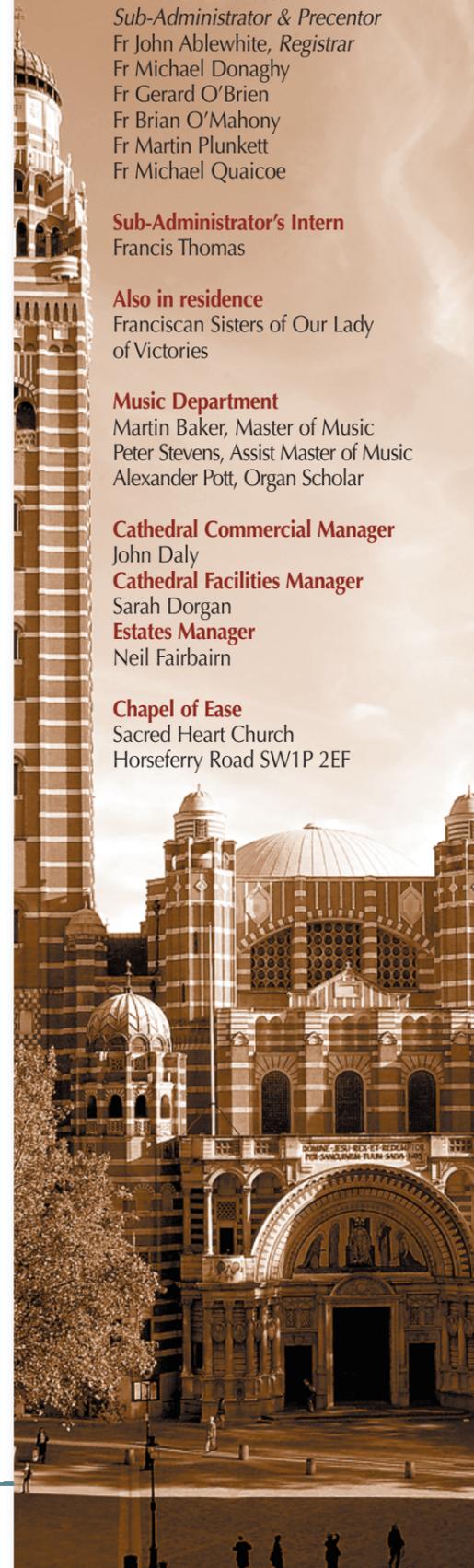
Sarah Dorgan

Estates Manager

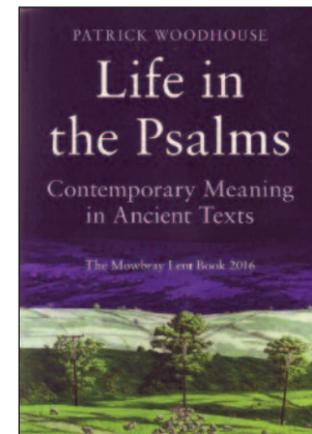
Neil Fairbairn

Chapel of Ease

Sacred Heart Church
Horseferry Road SW1P 2EF



Living Texts: The Psalms in Lent



Life in the Psalms
Patrick Woodhouse
Bloomsbury (Continuum)
£12.99

Charlotte McNerlin

A very valuable spiritual exercise is to use the season of Lent to read, or reread, the Psalms. One of the difficulties with just opening the Bible every day and reading a few Psalms is that they originate from a very

different culture to our own, so are not always easy to appreciate in full. In this year's Mowbray Lent Book, *Life in the Psalms*, Patrick Woodhouse helps us to delve into both the original purpose of the Psalms and the relevance they retain for us in today's world.

Woodhouse doesn't make any attempt to cover all the Psalms and there is no rush to get started. The suggested plan is to use the days following Ash Wednesday to read through the first three chapters of the book, which invite us to become aware of the different types of Psalm. They appear to be a random collection, but can be seen as telling a story in five books: 'Israel's story from the time of King David (Book I) through to the return from exile (Book V).' However, while this approach can tell us what the Psalms were to the people of the time, we also need to consider what they are to us today. The power of the Psalms is that they are living texts which, being shot through with divine presence, have held many meanings for many people and our task is to discern their meaning for us.

After this introduction there are six weekly themes: Pilgrimage, Prayer, Wonder, The Way, Hope and, for Holy Week, Suffering. For each weekday a Psalm is provided and this is followed by a broad reflection covering both its origins and its challenges for us. In conclusion there is a prayer for the day.

Realistically, of course, we cannot be certain of the origins and so, on Wednesday of the first week, we read that verse 1 of Psalm 133 'may have originally come from the practice of brothers living together in the patriarchal home'. The reflection continues to challenge how we deal with the digital age which can result in us all being very connected, but also very lonely because we do not actually meet people.

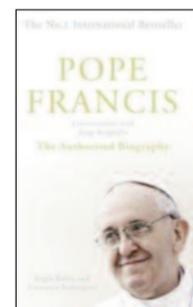
On Tuesday of the second week the reflection for Psalm 123 is headed 'Mercy within mercy within mercy' a term used to identify God by Thomas Merton, who was singled out by Pope Francis during his visit to the United States. The prayer for the day is 'Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us.' Earlier, on Monday of the first week, Psalm 122 begins 'I was glad when they said to me, Let us go to

the house of the Lord'. Pope Francis has invited us all to enter the house of the Lord through a Holy Door; perhaps a Psalm to recite and reflect upon during a Year of Mercy pilgrimage?

Most of the Psalms included in the book are relatively short, but Psalm 119 (the longest Psalm) is an exception and is presented in three sections. A feature of this particular Psalm is that it is one of a few which are classified as alphabetical. When reading alphabetical Psalms it is impossible not to be aware that some of the poetic beauty must have been lost in the translation into a language which has a different number of letters! It is likely that other beautiful features have also been lost in translation. Woodhouse helps us to overcome such difficulties and enables us to apply what we learn this year to future visits to the book which has been used for both liturgical and personal prayer throughout three millennia.

Charlotte McNerlin works in Clergy House.

Conversing with the Pope



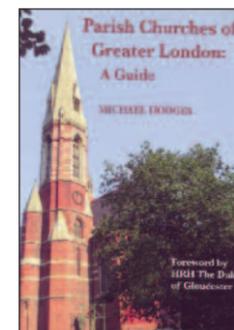
Pope Francis: The Authorised Biography
Sergio Rubin and Francesca Ambrogetti
Hodder & Stoughton
£17.99

Fiona Hodges

The structure of this book is not, on the face of it, strictly that of a biography of a famous person. It is not a chronological listing of its subject's birth and career to date and there are no footnotes, or references to correspondence or conversations. Some biographies like to present their subjects in a particular light; changing times or adding fresh details. This is not the case here, because the authors have instead transcribed the conversations they had with Jorge Bergoglio over a period of two years, when he was the Archbishop of Buenos Aires. As such, there is almost a feeling of hearing him speak, and an awareness of the conversational flow of the meetings.

Pope Francis is now so familiar a figure that it is easy to assume everything is known of him that can be. Yet his working life in a variety of roles within the Church had, until he became Pope, been spent in Argentina, with his first visit outside the country to Colombia in 1970. Later that year he visited Europe, and he is disarmingly diffident about his linguistic capabilities in the book. The authors describe him as 'soft-spoken, with profound content', but he comes across as a pretty good listener, too. A Vatican specialist has described him as 'shy, reserved, of few words' but there is plenty to read and consider in these conversational interviews, ranging across all sorts of topics.

We learn about the political and social context of the land where he was born and brought up. Argentina has had something of a chequered history but it is his country, and as he says, 'I'm a homebody. I love my home. I love Buenos Aires.' To say much more would spoil the book but I should add that there is a selection of photographs showing not only the Pope and his family but also pictures of his life and work when he was archbishop, so that we gain quite a rounded impression of this thoughtful, busy, intelligent man.



An Invaluable Resource

The Parish Churches of Greater London: A Guide
Michael Hodges
Heritage of London Trust
446pp, £25

This fascinating book is obviously the fruit of a long and consuming labour of love. Being the first comprehensive guide to the churches of Greater London, it is also a most invaluable resource – one that will surely appeal to many *Oremus* readers.

The Parish Churches of Greater London: A Guide covers churches in all the 32 boroughs of London, apart from the City, which, as the author explains, has 'been more than adequately covered by other books.' As such, one senses that Michael Hodges greatly enjoyed researching this guide, as the task led him to parts of Greater London which he had never before set foot in – his love of churches is matched only by his excitement at finding new ones in uncharted territory.

The churches covered are divided by borough, with each location being placed in its historical context by a brief introduction. There then follows a chronological gazetteer of first Anglican and then Catholic churches, highlighting some wonderful buildings, dating from the Middle Ages to the present day. Not all churches are covered, though, and Hodges himself admits that the 'occasional gem' may have been left out. Regardless, around 420 churches are detailed in this volume, with interesting facts about these places of worship being brought to our attention – ranging from quirky architecture and fascinating anecdotes to important monuments and beautiful stained glass.

The Parish Churches of Greater London is illustrated with over 1,340 colour photographs taken by the author. Despite not being a shutterbug himself and not having taken a photograph 'since I laid down my Brownie 127 at some stage in the late 1960s', the photos are good. Also, not being a professional photographer adds to the overall enthusiast's feel of the book, which is part of its charm. Another appealing aspect of the guide is the fact that Hodges communicates his passion in a way similar publications rarely manage to do. It seems to belong both to a happier by-gone age, while also being rooted in, and indebted to, the technological advances of our time – such as digital photography. For that, as well as for producing such an interesting, informative and necessary guide, the author is to be highly commended. *DP*

The Parish Churches of Greater London may be obtained from Michael Hodges (michael.jeremyhodges@gmail.com) at a cost of £25 plus £4.50 for postage and packing. It is also available online.



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