

The
CHRONICLE
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Cover illustration: Spring blossom by the West Range.

The Editor is grateful to everyone who has contributed to the production of this edition of the Chronicle.

THE LAST SUPPER - A PUZZLE RESOLVED OR A PROBLEM CREATED?

Canon Wilfrid Browning

In the heart of the Mid Wales border county of Radnorshire, the little hamlet of Discoed became internationally known for its exhibitions of local artists. In April 2013, I was walking along the lanes near Presteigne when I noticed a signpost pointing not just to Leominster and Hay-on-Wye but intriguingly to "The Last Supper"!



It was of course irresistible: would the artists' interpretation relate in any way to the puzzles of Leonardo's famous work in Milan (*above*), where the hands of Jesus are laid flat on the table and the whole group are *sitting* (which they were not, but *reclining*, as correctly translated in the KJV and RV [John 13.23])?

The Discoed artists do not resolve this interesting puzzle, but above all do not indicate awareness of the biggest puzzle of all – the nature of the meal itself: was it the Passover (Mark 14.12) or a day *before* the Passover (John 18.14, 28etc)? The puzzling contradiction has attracted Biblical scholars, even if most of their own congregations settle into their traditional rites of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday without really noticing the contradiction between John and the Synoptists (Matthew, Mark, Luke).

The contradiction was highlighted by several German scholars, especially when their books were translated into English in the 1960s. Joachim Jeremias' *Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (1966) listed numerous details in the narratives of Mark, Matthew, Luke and Paul (1 Corinthians) and was well received. It was evidence that the Last Supper was indeed a Passover meal, notwithstanding the absence of mention of a Passover Lamb. This meal was not itself 'the first Eucharist', inasmuch as a Eucharist celebrates the Lord's death and resurrection. But it was not unreasonable to designate it as describing the institution of the Eucharist (Mark 14.22 ff.).

However, the Synoptists' account of a nocturnal trial before the Sanhedrin was dismissed by E. Kaseman and others as unbelievable. He therefore accepts that the meal was Jesus' farewell in the company of his disciples; John (who

sets the Last Supper before the Passover) is a corrective and to be preferred! Jesus died when the Passover lambs were being slaughtered in readiness for the meal that evening. This was a farewell meal: Jesus washed the disciples' feet and Judas slipped out 'into the night' (John 13.50).

For years, I used to suppose that John had made a theological shift in order to bring out for his generation the Christian belief that Jesus was the True Passover Lamb of sacrifice, much as he moved the Cleansing of the Temple from the climax of Jesus' ministry (Mark 11.15) to its beginning (John 2).

I chanced one day in Paris to discover Mademoiselle Annie Jaubert's book on the Last Supper, *La Date de la Cène* (1957), which altered one's understanding of this ancient problem. Her radical suggestion, based on acquaintance with the Dead Sea Scrolls and the archaeological discoveries at Qumran where most were written, was that Jesus was following not the official Temple calendar but an ancient and local one, according to which Jesus' final meal would have been held on the Wednesday.

Mlle Jaubert's reconstruction of events was also noticed later by Pope Benedict XVI; but it was criticised as being incompatible with archaeological evidence and was later refined by a Cambridge scientist, Professor Colin Humphreys, with a wealth of research into the various calendars available in Jerusalem in the first century. In *The Mystery of the Last Supper* (CUP, 2009) Professor Humphreys argued that Jews were divided about the calendar, between those familiar with a background of the Exile in Babylon and those who retained the original Egyptian lunar calendar in use at the time of the Exodus, c. 1250 BC. So in the old calendar of ancient Egypt, which used a 'morning to morning' day, Passover lambs were slaughtered on Nisan 14 and there followed the Passover meal and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. But when the official Jewish calendar in the Temple was changed to the 'evening to evening' day the lambs were slaughtered on Nisan 14 but in the evening it became Nisan 15 and time for the Passover meal.

This ancient problem of the calendar suggests the Passover Meal and the Last Supper were not the same event. The theology of John is that Jesus spilt his blood when the lambs were being slaughtered for the Passover meal (as also Paul in 1 Corinthians 5.7) and that the Last Supper was on the night before the Crucifixion when Jesus was betrayed, as Paul in 1 Corinthians 11.23. Despite the ambiguity of historical evidence, the Johannine theology of Jesus Christ as the Passover Lamb has passed into Christian culture over centuries causing, the boundaries to blur into one all embracing celebration, hence the triumphal hymn of Eastertide: *Pascal triumph, Pascal joy* (NEH 104).

The alarming practical consequence of this is that it could be argued on the historical evidence that there was no Eucharist on the Thursday evening of the first Holy Week; and therefore that if we require our liturgies to correspond to the historical events of the first Holy Week, we shall have to make changes.

But, given the accumulated wealth of Christian inheritance and the remaining uncertainties of the historical evidence, would it not be madness to alienate ourselves from the past centuries of devotion in order to follow in such reconstructed 'footsteps' of the Incarnate Lord?

Canon Wilfrid Browning, Editor

MEMORIES OF A YOUTH LOST

Fr George Ridding

D-Day June 6th 1944

The Regiment drove down from our training area in Northumberland to the Essex seaside, Frinton-on-Sea. There we found Sherman tanks lined up on the sand; with inflatable sides and a rear propeller; (amphibious, if the water was calm). For ten days we practised steering the tanks on a lake in sunny weather; and then we did sea landings, by day and by night. We learnt how to use submarine escape apparatus in a deep tank (hazardous). All this in case a second Normandy landing was needed. But when General Patton's rapid advance after landing south of the bridgehead threatened the German's rear and forced them to retreat, General Montgomery forced a general German retreat westwards. So we were sent to Normandy as an ordinary Armoured Recce Regiment to replace the 2nd Northants Yeomanry, decimated in Monty's breakout.

We passed through the district of cider orchards, strangely untouched by the fighting. The farmers, just glad to be free, were hospitable (was it calvados in the coffee, or coffee in the calvados?).

Then to Caen, along roads lined with broken carts of refugees and carcasses of horses and cows, bulleted and bloated, in an all-pervading stench of decay, to a lifeless city of empty streets. Caen was a hub of railways and roads, heavily bombed by Allied planes. ["Anyone for bombing tonight?" WAR – WHAT A WASTE.]

General Patton's rapid advance from the south forced the German Army to retreat in disarray to avoid encirclement. We followed them through France and Belgium with only a few skirmishes. We enjoyed being greeted in every town and village with flowers and cheers as we passed through.[Freedom is only truly valued when it has been lost.]

After the Allied failure at Arnhem to end the war, the Germans consolidated defence along the Rhine river system and fought hard rearguard actions until rain and mud stopped the action. Our holiday drive across the Low Countries was over.

During the rapid advance discipline was maintained. The colonel held troop leaders responsible for mechanical failures in machines and moral failures in his men. One of my troop had lapsed. I was not at the time the troop leader, who was either Munro or Bruce, both of whom had already been killed. There were very few breakdowns mechanical or moral, a tribute to the regimental esprit.

During the winter lull, we were billeted in farms and cottages of surprisingly uncomplaining owners. Christmas was traditional. We feasted on several weeks of rations, and were served by officers.

We were tired of "rations", all food in tins. But only once had we lived "off the land" in the friendly countries – the day we took post in a deserted farm. The owner had fled the fighting, and only the pigs were left behind, starving. Our troop's gunner was, by trade, a butcher.

Two troopers lightened the boredom of waiting by going on a private expedition to a deserted village by the river. Unfortunately, it was not completely deserted. A German patrol picked them up; particularly difficult, one was the Squadron barber.

In the waiting for Spring, mud and snow severely disrupted spit and polish; but readiness was still required. Gun-greasing and engine-testing went on. We were pulled back into Belgium to be given new tanks, with bigger guns, faster engines and a sloping-sided turret to deflect shells. These were always a snag – the sloping sides of the turret made it impossible to tie on our bed-rolls and the little aids to comfort (bottled fruit etc.) we had picked up on our way.

An armada of gliders with their Dakota tugs announced the crossing of the Rhine. We soon followed, crossing the River on Bailey bridges, wobbly, but safe. Soon after crossing the river, one squadron surrounded German soldiers in a corn field. The Germans stood up to surrender and walked towards us. Suddenly two shots were fired by a German, which killed one officer and wounded another as they stood to receive the surrender. Battle resumed.

Germany was quiet, deathly quiet. Foot soldiers cleared the towns and villages; and “shopped”. Theirs had been the sweat and blood. The Germans retreated into the forests which seemed to cover most of the land and were ideal for defensive action. Our advance was slow and arduous. Troop One had no casualties and collected one Military Medal.



One night shells fell on our laager[†]; noisy, but we were safe. We always dug a trench, lined it with the tank cover, put in our bed rolls and backed the tank over the hole. Next morning an apologetic Gunner officer called. Someone in his battery had laid his gun on the wrong co-ordinates.

May 8th was VE day; but did everyone know that? We kept watch until it became clear that the last fragments of the German Army knew about the surrender. (We could not celebrate VE day.)

The final day came for writing off missing personal equipment as 'lost in action'; compass, binoculars, side-arms, *and our youth*, all lost in action.

WAR – WHAT A WASTE!

[†] laager: a temporary defensive position of wagons or tanks

RUSSIA - FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Canon Michael Moore

During the 1970s I was privileged to work at Lambeth with Archbishops of Canterbury as their "Foreign Secretary". I made several visits abroad on their behalf, mostly to Eastern Europe. My first visit to the Soviet Union was in April 1973, by train from Warsaw where I had been taking Easter services for the English-speaking congregation. What follows is a diary I kept at the time of first impressions. It contains a clergyman's interest in the local railway. (And there had recently been an outbreak of smallpox in London.)

Thursday, April 26th 1973: Eventually we slipped across the frontier into Russia. The clock moved forward two hours, and this new day had begun, and with it the main part of my journey.

The only evidence at first of our change of country was our farewell from the Polish Customs and our welcome from the Russians. The Poles had only a cursory look at us, brief that is, not maledictory. They collected my currency statement, which I had carefully preserved.

Then the Russians arrived. They came in groups, wave after wave, each interested in something different. It was intriguing to hear Russian for the first time natively. I did not try to be too bright in the language. It did indeed need a lot of practice.

They went through all my luggage closely, looking at every book to see whether it was in Russian. They did not mind the Scriptures I had, as all were in Latin script. There was much checking of visas and asking of questions about my visit. Even my taciturn Pole, who had heard my answers to his compatriots, was able to help me a little in Russian; but I did not feel that he really liked to speak it. What really caught the Russians' interest was my coming from London: when had I last been there? I did not elaborate that I had been sprayed at Warsaw airport in the meantime. It was not that I might import Christianity from Lambeth to Moscow. "It is your smallpox which really interests us." All the particulars of my recent injections were noted (and sent on ahead, as I was later to learn.)



At last they were satisfied. Humanity could be left alone. And now the train could be taken apart. There began an intricate technical operation, which went on for about two hours on and off. That meant four of the journey gone, and we were still at Brest (*left*), with the Russian letters of its name picked out in coloured bulbs, as though it was Christmas.

There was much shunting to and fro. Gradually we worked our way across the station and into a huge hangar. What would happen next? Clock forgotten, I stood at the end of our carriage and watched. The Polish attendant came and watched too, and we talked in a mixture of Polish and Russian.

The carriages of the train were separated one from another. Each was positioned between two huge jacks (*see right*). One by one they were lifted bodily off their bogies. Then the Polish-sized bogies were all shunted together and towed away. The carriages were braced up between the jacks. Then there was a lot more whirring of wires, and a gantry crane passed overhead. I could see that we were held up above two sets of



rails, the one between the other, both now empty. Some more bogies came along on the wide rails, Russian size. Two sets stopped under each carriage, one at each end. Quietly, imperceptibly, the carriages were jacked down on to them. Then the carriages were run together again. There was more complicated shunting, and we were ready to proceed.

I rejoined my Pole, who was still reading philosophically. We lay down on our bunks to await the dawn. (He in fact stayed on his almost until we arrived in Moscow.) The train trundled off again into the night. It never did reach more than a stately trot.

I must have slept a little, but all the time I seemed to know what was happening. Sometimes we were jogging forwards. Sometimes we stopped - Old Testament progress. One time when I came to myself, it was getting light. I looked out at a station. Russian country-folk were clambering across the lines. Some were getting on. Some were going to work. No-one hurried. It was just a small way-side place, a nice-looking main building of the station, a few small box-like houses, trees and fields, very flat and rather misty. I lay down again.

Still in what would usually be the early hours, we started to approach a city. There was much commotion on the train, an opening and shutting of doors, people carrying cases. I went out into the corridor. Fields were giving way to houses, streets appeared and larger buildings, some huge blocks of plain East European flats, chimneys and factories, single-decker buses - trolleys and motor - crawling about like squat caterpillars over the cobbles. Minsk. The first Russian city that I had seen anything of. Minsk. We came into the station. A Russian train, larger in every way than any I had ever seen, had just arrived from Moscow. It seemed fairly full of soldiers. I collected a glass of tea from the Polish attendant, had a wash and breakfast, and a leisurely shave on my battery razor, which I had bought for just this occasion.

The train lumbered on through the day. Occasionally we passed little villages. I looked in vain for village churches. Sometimes we saw peasants working in

fields, but usually we were passing through woods, even forests. Sometimes I thought of a Russian folksong, "My Barren Acres".

As the day wore on we moved steadily eastwards and a little north. I plotted our progress from the names of towns: Smolensk, Orsha, Vyazma, and Mozhaik. Moscow would be next.

We drew into the Byelorussian Station in Moscow and came to a final halt at 4 p.m., exactly on time - as always. We had been coming into the capital city long before that. Our progress along the ever-multiplying tracks and through suburban stations became ever slower and more stately to befit a notable occasion. And it had begun to rain.

I stepped out on to the platform, a case in each hand, almost into the arms of two Russian matrons, not in uniform. Whether they were actually medical I shall never know: one clutched a telegram and the other was perhaps there to watch. News of the plague had gone before me. I looked around but could see nothing of Raymond Oppenheim [the American Anglican chaplain in Moscow]. Interrogation began. They were very nice about it. They wanted to know where they could find me - if an epidemic broke out - and whether I felt at all ill.

Raymond met me as I made my way towards the exit. He was to be my constant guide for nearly a fortnight. It seemed to me he had put on weight. His progress through Russian circumstances was always to remind me of a battleship ploughing through a rough sea. The black Volvo with its rear windscreen wiper, warmth and easy seats, awaited us, easy to see in a Russian street. It was mild and wet. There was more traffic than I had expected, and crowds coming and going on the pavements. Not many of them were shoppers. We got into the car for the first of many times, and Raymond began the first of many briefings. His knowledge of Russian life seemed vast already. He was for ever imparting information, whether on Churches or the system of "razvorot", the Russian road rule of effecting a manoeuvre by U-turns, so that you end up going in the opposite direction. How far does this reflect a style of life?

The Oppenheims live in a diplomatic block in the south-west suburbs of the city near the gigantic University building, one of the seven "wedding cakes" of the capital - a unique Soviet phenomenon, which appears in imitation in a few of the East European capitals as palaces of culture. Diplomats are not encouraged to fraternise with local people, and the particular block in which we were to find ourselves was protected by a Soviet guard, and could only be approached from the back under the guard's surveillance. It was a large block, hundreds rather than tens of families, and most of them, judging from the children playing outside, were Arab or Indian. We were met inside by Winifred, a good contrast to Raymond, and two cats. The flat was two in one but rather short of bedrooms. I would have my own bathroom, but I would sleep in the drawing room. I discovered that Raymond was an avid collector of Orthodox Easter eggs, so that the egg I had brought from Czechoslovakia was very welcome. Orthodox liturgical music soon started to float from the hi-fi, a taste of treats to come ...



RETURN-ED TO EAST GRINSTEAD

Fr Robert Raikes

Allowing for the 4 minute journey on the Southern Railway train into East Grinstead, the Bluebell Railway is now on our doorstep.

In March 2013, after 55 years, the line which is now 11½ miles long, was reconnected to the main line to London Victoria and is much more accessible; resulting in an increase of over 30% in the number travelling on the railway in the last year.

With more carriages needed to take the additional passengers and the longer line travelled, more powerful engines are required. Thankfully it has also meant an increase in revenue and has enabled the restoration of larger locos. Each cost many thousands of pounds to restore and bring back into service. The railway has some 30 or more engines ranging in age from those built in the 1880's to the 1950's.

There is a fascination about steam which spans the generations. Visitors to the railway travel from all over the country. Volunteers too travel long distances into work and come from all walks of life. Some are in full-time work and come on a day off. Others are retired. There is some paid staff but 600 or so are volunteers. They are needed for the safe, efficient, smooth-running of the railway. Many have more than one job: guards, footplate work, overhaul of locomotives, catering, trackside clearance, signalling, booking clerks, carriage restoration, station staff and guides on the train. (I am involved with the last three of these.)

In June the Friends of the College are arranging a visit to Sheffield Park National Trust Gardens travelling back on the railway. In July we go by train to Kingscote station for the annual Bluebell Songs of Praise with neighbouring churches of the deanery.



Station Staff at East Grinstead

FOOTNOTE

From 1855 Sunday excursions were run and one local curate urged intending passengers to listen to the Church bell rather than the railway bell. However, John Mason Neale, Warden of Sackville College from 1846- 1866 was an enthusiastic supporter and passenger on the new line. On the Sunday after the opening he preached a sermon which compared the new railway to Isaiah's prophecy: 'Every valley shall be exalted ... and the crooked shall be made straight'. He received a message that there was an engine at the station and he might have a ride on it to Three Bridges - and the journey took 12 minutes, 'Just fancy that! And riding on an engine was unspeakably delightful' (from A G. Lough's 1975 biography of Neale, p 102). *Ed.*

THE WALK

Mrs Jenny Tingle

The glorious morning beckoned me.
"Come, feel the warmth, see all the colours."

The double-cherry in full bloom – the tree
of fluffy white petals reminding us
of spring brides and fruitful pickings;
apples and cherries, plums and pears.

A blue flash of colour heralds the bells,
a day or two and the carpet will come 'neath the trees,
a joy to behold of green and blue – Welcomed
by a chorus of birdsong,
each adding to the drama of spring.
A cuckoo, a thrush and a woodpecker all bring
their different song, as I walk round the path, the ring
of sound telling me of new arrivals to feed.

On banks, stars of yellow primroses greet me
drawing my eye to smaller flowers,
the violets an invitation to smell
the perfume of the beautiful little plants.
I sit on the chair absorbing the warmth,
watching the birds flying to feed hungry babes,
and see a kyte swirling in the currents of air.
I'm glad I took a walk around the path I love.

[Mrs Jenny Tingle has been a resident of the College since 2008, and is the convenor of the monthly Poetry Group.]

WALKING WITH GOD ON VENUS

Mr Richard Ghail

The following article first appeared in the parish magazine of St Mary's and All Saints', Putney as a sequel to a piece about theology and science, and is reproduced here by kind permission of the Editor.

By way of introduction to my article about 'walking humbly with God as a scientist', I was asked the following questions:

In the Bible, God punished humans for building the Tower of Babel, (for their presumption to do without him, for their lack of humility in wanting to overstep the mark). Are we overstepping the mark? How does space exploration differ from building the tower of Babel?

I was surprised. I have never heard anyone make such a comparison. I imagine that what underlies it is the 'Dolly the Sheep' question of where the boundaries of science should be. However, science, like money, is strictly neutral. It is a specific approach, or method, for finding out how things work. What we do with that information is where faith enters the equation. Knowing how to build the Tower of Babel was not 'overstepping the mark'; building it in defiance of God was.

My experience in 'walking with God on Venus' is that the more scientists discover about the universe, the more humbling they find it and the more aware they are of just how special and fragile is life on Earth, human beings included. It is my conclusion that to discover more about God's creation is to discover more about the awesomeness of God, and to appreciate all the more his humility in taking human form to love us.



My own walk starts one afternoon in the long hot summer of '76 - I came running home from school, eagerly awaiting *John Craven's Newsround*. It was my sixth birthday, and Viking had just landed on Mars. The first images from that other world revealed a boring flat plain covered in boulders. It took my breath away.

Twenty years later I was sat around another television set, this time at Broadcasting House in White City, seeing the first images returned by Pathfinder - another boulder! Out of the window, Mars glowed a dull orange in the night sky. It was an extraordinary experience, working through the night at the BBC in support of its Pathfinder programming, briefing Patrick Moore and host of presenters. But from there, I went directly to Southwark Cathedral to read the Gospel with the Bishop at a service for those of us exploring ordination. Both experiences were humbling, both awesome, in the true sense of that word: both experiences made me worship God.

But how is it that I came to be involved both in a Mars landing and a cathedral service in the same 24 hours?

A SERVICE OF HEALING

Canon Wilfrid Browning

With the arrogance and ignorance of youth, I and several Anglo-Catholic contemporaries at school, were inclined to mock when we passed a church with somewhat overconfident invitations of welcome to services of healing. This struck us as an alien and unattractive culture, an attitude reinforced in later life when I was severely taken to task by a middle-aged worshipper in a similar church because in a sermon I had criticised people who asked God for a parking space. She told me this is exactly what she did. And that she was always answered! Even as my theology developed I continued to question an interventionist concept of God. A God who was at my beck and call to answer all my petty queries and spurious wants.

However, in the 1950s I would read stories of some astounding cures in reports in the *Kentish Independent*, our local newspaper. News items described large and hearty hymn singing and even at this distance, I can recall the name of their star preacher. But later, I was given a much deeper insight into healing ministry soon after I became a Priest-in-Charge of an 'Urban Deprivation Area', where the neighbouring parish spread out into the countryside on which had been established an isolation hospital.

The previous Priest-in-Charge had been a frequent visitor during a notorious smallpox epidemic when many visitors refused even to enter the town. But he spent many hours there, and particularly with a youngish patient seriously affected by this disease. I was myself a witness to a healing service in the ward and later was told of so remarkable an improvement that the priest developed a wider ministry of healing.

More recently I heard about the monthly services of healing which brought much peace to a fairly turbulent parish. Their new Priest-in-Charge had previously been an ordinand on a Diocesan Course I had founded, but which did not include healing ministry in the curriculum! However I was assured of the peace and thanksgiving that were the fruit of those courageous services of healing in what had been a divided congregation.



Such were my inherited experiences when, following extensive prayer and consultation the College chapter last October acceded to a request for three provisional services of healing in the Upper Chapel after the 10.30am Eucharist on three Wednesdays in November 2013, January and February 2014. On the 5th February I myself felt moved to attend along with other residents.

How did it seem to me in the light of my limited experience?

First, I felt grief that our world was not as it was meant to be by God: endless court cases of corruption; war escalating in Crimea; an ambiguous witness of the Church. However as the service proceeded this sense of sadness diminished, and as the oil was used to anoint the participants, grief began to be superseded by grace, a sense of calm and peace and surrender to God, trusting with Lady Julian that 'all shall be well'. Then I had recollections that,

in the healing miracles in the New Testament, Jesus' works were followed by a message; that the banishment of suffering created a special responsibility. It could be described as social, political and economic. "Get up and walk" - Be part of the community [*John 5.8*] ; or Peter's injunction to the cripple outside the Temple [*Acts 3.6*] (but, surprisingly, not Mark's Bartimaeus [*Mark 10.31*]). The sufferer's new responsibility must be shared and supported by the community as the Spirit breaks down the former isolation of the patient.

The College service, led by three priests, with the sacramental oil previously blessed on Maundy Thursday by the Bishop [*James 5.14*], all contributed to a moving service. Afterwards it was reported a resident who had been particularly prayed for had improved and an intended operation had become unnecessary.

Happily, these 11.15 am monthly healing services are to be continued as a regular part of the college experience, drawing on various forms of healing services published by the Guild of St. Raphael.

DIVINITY'S TRANSCENDENT SKY

Canon Hugh Wybrew

The following article is part of a longer paper delivered to the College Theology Group in May.

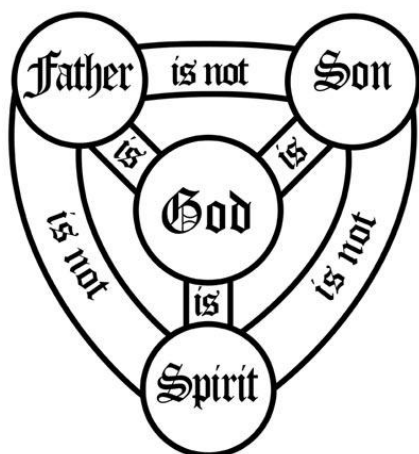
While I was secretary of the Anglican-Orthodox Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, Fr Robert Murray SJ, an expert on Syriac Christianity, was present at one of its meetings. I have not forgotten the moment when, after a brief pause in the discussion that followed the talk, a quiet voice came from the corner where Robert Murray was sitting. It said, 'I've reached the age when the four gospels are sufficient for me.'

That relates to something I have wondered about for some time: why did Christianity become such a dogmatic religion? It began as a Jewish sect, and Judaism is not particularly dogmatic. Yet quite quickly Christianity developed complex creeds, the fruit in part of doctrinal disagreements and disputes. Those disputes, and the doctrinal definitions that were meant to resolve them and establish sound doctrine, caused major divisions among Christians. Some of them still serve to keep the Church divided.

Christian doctrine stems from the experience of the first disciples of Jesus. As Jews they believed in one God, the LORD. The LORD had made himself known in the history of the Jewish people and through the insights of the Jewish prophets. Gradually it had become clear to the Jews that the LORD was not one god among many, but was the only God, the creator of all things and the Lord of history.

When Jesus came on the Jewish religious scene, he impressed those who heard him as one who spoke about God with authority. But what exactly was his relationship with God? For Christians, Paul gave the fundamental answer in his second letter to the Corinthians: *God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself* [2 Cor 5.19]. It took the Church some three hundred years to find a doctrinal formula to safeguard that basic Christian experience.

The Council of Nicaea in 325 established that Jesus the Son of God was *homoousios*, consubstantial with the Father: 'of one substance' or 'one in being'. In 381 the second ecumenical Council in Constantinople declared the Spirit also consubstantial with the Father, and so with the Son. An experience of the Spirit was an experience of the Son and so also an experience of the Father.



The distinctive Christian doctrine of God as Trinity was meant to safeguard the fundamental experience of Christians. But it raised a difficult question: If Son and Spirit were both one in being with the Father, how could that be reconciled with belief in one God? It could seem to outsiders that Christians worshipped three Gods. Fourth-century theologians adopted and adapted current Greek philosophical terms to define God as one *ousia*, or substance, and three *hypostases*, or Persons. There is only one God because the Father is the source of divinity.

So far so good: doctrine had been formulated to safeguard experience.

But there was already a fly in the doctrinal ointment. The doctrine of God as Trinity was formulated in terms adopted from Greek philosophical thought, even if they were adapted for Christian purposes. But not all Christians thought in Greek. There was the Syriac East as well the Greek East and the Latin West.

That became important in the doctrinal disputes of the 5th century about the person of Jesus Christ. How could he be both fully human and at the same time the Second Person of the Trinity? In 431 the Council of Ephesus defended the term '*theotokos*' applied to Mary, of which 'Mater Dei' or 'Mother of God' is not a very precise translation. The term was meant to protect the divinity of Jesus Christ, but some Christians found it unacceptable. It seemed to them to emphasise Jesus' divinity at the expense of his humanity: they wanted to defend both. After 431 they formed the Syriac-speaking Church of the East, or rather the family of churches we call Oriental Orthodox.

By the end of the fifth century the Church was well and truly split. It is only in recent decades that theological discussions between both Eastern Orthodox and Western Churches and the Church of the East and the Oriental Orthodox Churches have led to a recognition that we all share the same faith in the person of Jesus Christ, only we *express* it in different terms. Love has begun to prevail over dogmatic definitions. Doctrine is important when it safeguards basic Christian experience. When it takes off on its speculative own, it needs to be reminded of its subordination to Christian living and loving, its subordination to the gospel, to the teaching of Jesus.

I have often wondered how anyone could think that we can know anything about the inner life of the holy Trinity. The scriptures seem clear that we can know only as much about God as he has revealed himself in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. St John, in his first letter, is clear that knowledge of God comes by love and not by reason: *No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is perfected in us.*

I recently came across the poem *Divinity* by George Herbert (*right*) which goes nicely with Robert Murray's remark with which I began. In his excellent book on Herbert, 'Music at Midnight', John Drury introduces it with these comments:



"The 'spheres' in the first verse are the celestial globes, found in the libraries of the learned, which mapped the heavens. 'Epicycles' in the last verse are the smaller circles, set on the great circle of the heavens, in which the planets move; they were marked on celestial globes. A 'clod' in the first verse is a yokel. Everything we need to know to be saved is clearly put in two italicised line: love, watchful prayer and doing as one would be done by. Those commonplaces, and participation in the sacraments, are all that is required. They are followed, in lines 19 and 20, by sarcasm directed against mystery-mongers and complexity-lovers."

As men, for fear the stars should sleep and nod,
And trip at night, have spheres supplied;
As if a star were duller than a clod,
Which knows his way without a guide:

Just so the other heav'n they also serve,
Divinity's transcendent sky:
Which with the edge of wit they cut and carve,
Reason triumphs, and faith lies by.

Could not that Wisdom, which first broached the wine,
Have thickened it with definitions?
And jagg'd his seamless coat, had that been fine,
With curious questions and divisions?

But all the doctrine, which he taught and gave,
Was clear as heav'n, from whence it came.
At least those beams of truth, which only save,
Surpass in brightness any flame.

Love God, and love your neighbour.
Watch and pray. Do as ye would be done unto.
O dark instructions: ev'n as dark as day!
Who can these Gordian knots undo?

But he doth bid us take his blood for wine.
Bid what he please; yet I am sure,
To take and taste what he doth there design,
Is all that saves, and not obscure.

Then burn thy Epicycles, foolish man,
Break all thy spheres, and save thy head.
Faith needs no staff of flesh, but stoutly can
To heav'n alone both go, and lead.

IN PURR...GATORY!

(Why God created Dogs and cats)



A newly discovered chapter in the Book of Genesis has provided the answer to the question; "where do pets come from?"

Adam said: "Lord, when I was in the garden, you walked with me every day. Now I do not see you anymore. I am lonely here and it's difficult for me to remember how much you love me."

And God said: "No problem! I will create a companion that will be with you for ever and who will be a reflection of my love for you, so you will love me even when you can't see me. Regardless of how selfish, childish or unlovable you might be, this new companion will accept you as you are and will love you as I do, in spite of yourself."

And God created a new animal. And God was pleased. And the new animal was pleased to be with Adam and wagged his tail. And Adam said: "Lord, I have already named all the animals in the Kingdom and I cannot think of a name for this new animal."

And God said: "No problem! Because I have created this new animal to be a reflection of my love for you, his name will be a reflection of my own name, and you will call him DOG."

And Dog lived with Adam and was a companion to him and loved him. And Adam was comforted. And God was pleased. And Dog was contented and wagged his tail.

And after a while, it came to pass that Adam's guardian angel come to the Lord and said: "Lord, Adam has become filled with pride. He struts and preens like a peacock and he believes he is worthy of adoration. Dog has, indeed, taught him that he is loved, but perhaps too well."

And the Lord said: "No problem! I will create for him a companion who will be with him for ever and will see him as he is. This companion will remind him of his limitations, so he will know that he is not always worthy of adoration."

And God created CAT to be a companion to Adam.
And Cat would not obey Adam.
And when Adam gazed into Cat's eyes,
 he was reminded that he was not the Supreme Being.
And Adam learned humility.
And God was pleased.
And Adam was greatly improved.
And Dog was happy.



And the Cat? Well, he couldn't care less on way or the other.

*Anon.
Found by Fr Michael Johnson*

THE 2014 PATRONAL FESTIVAL SERMON

The Rt Revd Mark Sowerby, Bishop of Horsham

It is always a particular privilege to be invited to speak to a company of people who hold in common the experience of priestly ministry, either from the 'inside' as it were, or from the intimate proximity of having been married to a priest. Those of us who labour, even now, in licensed ministry - and come here to share in your worship - are bound to salute you and to honour you for the work that you have done and for the foundations you have laid for us to build upon. On behalf of the Church of which you are members and in which you continue to bear witness, I warmly reiterate our thanks.

No one knows better than you, I fancy, what a challenge it is to say anything remotely new on a patronal festival. Surely the years have seen a procession of preachers wring out of the appointed lections everything that can possibly be said about Saint Barnabas - and when the scriptures appear to have been exhausted - have they not raided every legend or myth into the bargain?! I am guessing that over the years this college has heard learned expositions on the terms 'Son of Encouragement' and 'Son of Consolation.'

Doubtless, some of my predecessors on this occasion have been a good deal better read than I, but I doubt if anyone has yet quoted from Christopher Loveless' excellent book on the saints of the Anglican calendar; it is entitled *Strange Eventful History*. Fr Christopher, presently the Vicar of Warnham, near Horsham writes the following about Barnabas:

We have seen how Saul was not exactly welcomed with open arms into the Christian Church. Some doubt was natural; very few groups would welcome a notorious persecutor into their inmost councils without suspicion. Saul was sponsored by a remarkable man, Joseph of Cyprus, known to all the Christians by his nickname, Barnabas, Mr Helpful.

So here we are commemorating the earliest of the 'Mister Men'!

Fr Christopher's piece on Barnabas concludes:

His tomb can still be visited, but as it is in the Turkish part of the island, there is no local Christian community to tend it. A caretaker will unlock the gate for you to descend into the little vault and will sit on the steps and smoke while you look at the unmarked, un-honoured slab which marks the resting place of the man whose generosity of spirit determined the very name by which he is remembered.

It is upon that generosity of spirit that I should like us to dwell for a few minutes this afternoon.

Scripture records for us not only the generosity of a man who sold land and gave the proceeds to the Church, but also the generosity with which Barnabas stood by Saul to commend him to the first Christians to encounter him after his conversion. Barnabas, no less than they, must have been aware of Saul's reputation as a persecutor of those who followed The Way. Barnabas, like them, would once have been in Saul's firing line - at least until his conversion.

It was Barnabas whose generous heart was ready to recognise, to acknowledge and to trust the change that had happened within Saul. He was ready to encourage the wary Christians to accept Saul and to encourage Saul in his evangelistic mission – not least by calling upon him to share in his own ministry. What an encouragement he must have been to both!

Each of us needs encouragement at some time or another – to be given new courage, to feel supported and emboldened, to have our confidence renewed or restored. Each of us needs encouragement to overcome reticence, timidity, diffidence or downright fear; to recover from failure, criticism and low morale. All of these will otherwise hold us back in prayer, in bearing witness and in evangelism. Reticence, timidity, diffidence: each of them is a kind of fear and, as we know, the only thing utterly to cast out fear is love.

What any encourager needs for those he or she wishes to encourage is love. Barnabas loved Saul and wanted his gifts to be released; he saw the possibilities in this converted man and he loved him for them. But Barnabas also loved the Church and wanted her to receive Saul's witness and ministry. It was his love for both that made him 'Mr Helpful'.

The Church of England, no less than the Church in Damascus or Antioch or Cyprus, needs encouragement – to be filled with a new courage in the face of its difficulties. It is all too easy for us to criticise, to find fault, to complain, to mourn for what it used to be or what it might have been. Whatever disappointments or annoyances we might harbour with the Church, she is more likely to respond positively to encouragement than to our criticism.

It is a great temptation, these days for people to look for some kind of clever plan, strategy or initiative to grow the church in numbers and in social engagement. The cleverness of this plan or that in search of the right structure, the right evangelistic technique or formula, the right process or right theology and hermeneutics, is the stuff of many contemporary books – and as scripture reminds us this afternoon:

*Many books and much study of them is a weariness of the flesh.
[Eccles. 12.12]*

It is as if spreading the Gospel is some kind of intellectual riddle that needs to be worked out - and once it has been worked it out, - all will swiftly fall into place, filling pews and churches as well as hearts and minds. I believe there is no such universal panacea, no such plan or scheme that on its own will short-circuit the call of the Christian community to live lives that speak distinctively of Jesus.

Jesus asks his followers to be light and salt. If light goes dark and salt loses its flavour, then there is nothing distinctive of which to take notice and nothing that has a distinctively different flavour to everything else.

Living life as a follower of Jesus of Nazareth is distinctive, very distinctive, in a society where his influence seems to have declined. But, of course, living a distinctively Christian life is costly too. It risks ridicule; it demands generosity with our money, our time and our talents; it demands sacrifices of all kinds ... and living such a life of course demands courage.

It takes courage to be sacrificial: to miss out on things that always clash with worship; to miss out on things that cost more than our stewardship allows; to make ethical decisions in the shops; to be laughed at as credulous, gullible or pathetic; to put other people first. It takes courage to put our hope and trust in a God we cannot see and whom we glimpse, at best, through a glass darkly.

It takes encouragement – and that was the gift of Barnabas.

There is no more powerful motivation than that of being loved, valued and encouraged. Love emboldens us and gives us courage. We dare to do things when we are encouraged by someone who loves us.

I remember being asked to take the wedding of a lady who had had a stroke whilst still in her 30s. She used an electric wheelchair to get about and had done so for some years after every kind of support, therapy and treatment. Her bus-driver boyfriend adored her; he loved her and encouraged her as no one else had done. Patiently he encouraged her and emboldened her to stand and begin to move her legs. It was shaky and slow and nerve-wrackingly anxious, but *she walked down the nave of the Church* to be married. It reminds me of what Paul has to say to us in 1 Corinthians 13:

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is the powerful ingredient that makes all the difference to our efforts. What was it that emboldened that lady to walk after years of immobility? I believe she was loved back to life and health. It was love that encouraged her in such a way that eventually she could walk down that long nave.

Love motivates us in our relationships with friends and with family. Love emboldens our work and our mission. Love emboldens us to face the challenging phases of life – failure – tragedy – bereavement – illness and yes, death itself.

You are perhaps familiar with that poem which describes the movement from earthly life to the next in terms of a ship setting sail.

It concludes:

*And just at the moment when someone at my side says,
'There she goes!'
there are other eyes watching her coming,
and other voices ready to take up the glad shout:
'Here she comes!'*

Being loved through life and death is the greatest encouragement any of us could hope for ... but it is also our privilege to offer it and so, like Barnabas, to be sons and daughters of encouragement.

May God continue to bless us as we encourage and embolden one another along life's journey of faith and hope - with love.

INTERCESSION AND INCARNATION - A CHRISTMAS HOMILY

Better late than never, but I have to admit that it has taken me until now really to reflect on the deepest reason for giving gifts at Christmas.

I was brought up with the understanding that it was Jesus' birthday, and, as you give birthday presents and you couldn't give one to Jesus in person, we all gave each other one to celebrate it. It's OK as far as it goes, but it's pretty thin.

As time has gone on, I have seen our gifts as a way of sharing our celebration of the beginning of the culmination of God's redemptive plan for the world. But that, too, is only part of the point.



Of course I have been presented with countless images of the birth of Jesus, but it has been praying in this chapel, with its wonderful picture of the Nativity of Christ on the gallery screen (*left*), that has brought home to me more than anything else the obvious truth: *when we give a gift to celebrate Christmas, we are following God's example.*

We give because God gives. That is why God loves a cheerful giver – not, as countless PCC treasurers have suggested, because cheerful givers usually give more than grudging ones, but because cheerful givers give as God gives.

Giving joins us with the activity of God. It makes us more like him. Perhaps the truth that we are made in God's image has to do with this, especially as it is of his own self that God gives in sending his Son. Of all creation, humanity is the most able to be generous, generous with our selves.

We often talk of God's gifts as "talents" – things we are entrusted with so as to make the best we can of them. We are usually referring to particular aptitudes or characteristics that we can see in individual people and that we realise are God-given. What has struck me with special force during this Advent is the way in which God gives gifts not only to individuals but also to communities. There is something mysterious in the fact that, whether the individuals are obviously gifted or not, a community can reflect something of God's generosity in a way that goes beyond anything that might be attributed to the group of people in it. It really is a case of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts.

What I have discovered in a new way as a result of needing eye surgery is the astonishing gift that God has given to us here. If I may presume to say it, *never underestimate the power of the prayer of this community.*

I say that because it usually feels much the same as always when we are about our worship here. Sometimes it can feel even routine. What none of us as individuals can ever know is the extraordinary effect that it has on those whom we hold in our intercessions. It goes far beyond our experience here, even if it were possible to add together all our individual appreciation.

I have often thought it strange that something that sounds as simple as prayer can often be so difficult. But that must be because what I see is only the little bit at my end. Prayer isn't small at all; it is a great work. Having felt the power of it from this community I am no longer surprised that it can be hard-going to engage in.

What I have learnt this Advent is that *intercession is inextricably linked with the Incarnation.*

It brings God into earthly things in a way that is beyond my ability to articulate without falling into theological difficulty, but which I know to be true:

- The astonishing gift of God in the birth of his Son is not the limit of the mystery of Christmas.
- The joy of giving, as a way of joining in the generosity which is at the heart of God, is not the full extent of our celebration.
- When we are at prayer, however unremarkable it may feel at times to us, we are touching the astonishing incarnational fact that God, in his humility, engages willingly in the detail of our lives. And, as Paul says, *Faithful is he who calls, and he will do it.* [1 Thessalonians 5.24]

When you turn to leave the chapel and pass under Jackson's wonderful portrayal of the Incarnation and thank God, as we always do, for the birth of his Son, I invite you to reflect on the way in which God encourages us as a community to be like him: to be generous, not only in our dealings with each other but with the gift of prayer that he has given us as a body. And never to underestimate its extraordinary power.

From time to time I receive messages of thanks from all around the world for our prayers, expressing the belief that it is our intercession that has enabled amazing things to happen. I shall never sit lightly to them again.

In our celebration of the Incarnation, let us be generous with this gift that God has seen fit to give us. Like the coming of God into the world which we celebrate again, it is greater than we shall ever be given to understand.

The Warden

HOMILY AT A CONFIRMATION

Bishop Alan Chesters, Sub-Warden of the College

Miss Danielle Little, a young member of the College Staff, received the sacrament of Confirmation in the College Chapel on 7th December 2013.

This is a very special occasion - special for Danielle as she comes to be confirmed and very special for this College community. I am always cautious about claiming something is a first but it is certainly many a long year, if ever, that someone expressed their desire to follow Christ by being confirmed in this chapel. After all most who come here have been confirmed for over half a century! We rejoice that Danielle's faith has been nurtured among us and assure her of our prayers.

Unlike words such as 'Baptism' and 'Eucharist', Confirmation is a simple word used in everyday conversation 'I confirm' simply means 'I mean it'. However, like the proverbial penny this sacrament of Confirmation has two sides. Firstly after careful prayer, thought and preparation Danielle has come here this morning to confirm that she wishes to be a living, committed Christian person, following the Lord Jesus. She was made a member of the Church at her baptism and now she confirms for herself the promises made by her godparents: that she will seek to reject all that is evil and is sorry for those sins, words and actions which have been unloving; that she wishes to follow in the way of Christ; and that with us and the whole Church she believes that, in his Love God creates, in Jesus God saves us from our sins, and with the gift of his Holy Spirit God inspires and strengthens us for good.

Those of us who have tried to be that loving, giving and forgiving person a follower of Jesus should be, know that being a Christian is not easy - for sign of our faith is a Cross. We may not be called to the kind of persecution Christians suffer in some parts of the world, but Christians are frequently ridiculed in the media. We have different values from many of our friends and neighbours and, let us be honest, it is not always easy to forgive others - to go the extra mile, to share our faith in the way our Lord would have us do. We need help and this why the second part of Confirmation is so important.

In this service, as we all pray and I lay hands on you Danielle, God confirms his love for you, his desire that you will live in his way. The Holy Spirit gives you grace - the strength to live as a Christian. It is not a soft option. But remember this: God does not just give you this gift for today; he is there *always* for you if you will allow him to be. He will not force his love on you, but whenever you turn to him, 'tune in', we might say, in prayer, he will always welcome you, love you and sustain you.

And to help us in this work of a lifetime, Jesus gave us the Church - not the buildings but the people - to support us. You must make time in your busy life, as we all must, for worship, to receive Holy Communion, to read your Bible, pray and to join in the life of the local church, wherever life takes you, using your gifts among them.

Today, Danielle, as you confirm your desire to follow Lord Jesus, God confirms his love for you by the gift of the Spirit and we pray that strengthened in this way you may know God's presence, joy and peace all your days.

ADDRESS AT THE REQUIEM FOR MRS SALLY THOMAS

"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."
[Jn.20.29]

I am a man under authority. Sally made it very clear that she did not want a eulogy. In fact she told my wife that she would rise up in the middle of these proceedings and castigate me if I didn't do what she wanted! There is to be no suggestion, she said, that we are burying a saint.

But I cannot ignore the fact that we are here to give thanks and pray for a lady of an extraordinarily deeply held faith. Even more, someone who was profoundly longing to bring others to the same faith, and desperately concerned for the reputation of the Church when she saw people within it behaving in ways that she thought undermined its reputation.

Sally was determined that the faith that she held so firmly should be brought within the reach of anyone and everyone. She was thrilled beyond words when one of our young refectory staff came to faith within the College community and was confirmed here. She lost no opportunity to care for all of them as they passed through the College on their way from school to university and beyond, taking a real and genuine interest in how each was doing.

And of course she was driven by her love of the Lord to nourish her family in that same faith. They say you can judge the spirituality of a parish by the number of vocations it fosters. If the same can be said of families, the fact that Sally's family already boasts three currently serving priests in addition to her late husband tells all that need be said about how effective her sharing of the faith has been.

But this is not the focus that she would have wanted from me. She told me once that she was greatly impressed by the words of a priest who said simply, "If I really believe that Our Lord is present in the Eucharist, how can I stay lying in bed and not go to meet him there?" That drove her to be more regular than most of us in coming to Mass in the chapel here, and it makes it entirely right that we are commending her into the hands of the Lord she has served within the context of the Sacrament that she received so regularly, and even on the very morning of the day she died.

Here we are, about to gather around the altar and hold out our hands to receive God's gift of his Son, given without strings or conditions, for us to be fed in our inner lives. And as we do so we pray that Sally is gathered into the worship of the Church in heaven along with all those who have sustained her along her journey, especially the priest who taught the faith to her in Coventry and her beloved husband Bill.

She, and we if we are bold enough, are among those to whom Jesus refers at the end of his rehabilitation of St Thomas. "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Sally was certainly one of those, and lived to make others the same. But she was realistic enough to know that faith doesn't come easily to many, if any at all. It can be hard work, often

rewarded only with times of seeming dryness and aridity. Yet rarely did she allow herself to vary from the practice of the faith that she believed.

I have been called upon more often to accompany people through their grief over her death than I usually am, even here in the College. Not only residents, but staff have been touched by the profound sense of loss that we all feel. Certainly her close friends of her own age, but also the young members of the staff in whom she took such a personal interest, have been struggling to come to terms with the fact that she is no longer with us, even though we were talking to her so soon before she left us.

It is a tribute to her love of people. And it was very noticeable that even those who found her views difficult to accept were in tears when the news became known. No doubt this is because, when she disagreed with people and said so in ways that she might have put differently if not in the heat of the moment, she still cared about them.

In the end what we are here to celebrate is the life of someone whose love of our Lord and his blessed Mother was so great that she longed for anyone and everyone to share what she had found.

"Do not doubt but believe." Those words of Jesus to Thomas sum up Sally's attitude to all with whom she had to do. And if sometimes people were less than appreciative, that didn't alter her determination that they should still be prayed for in the hope that they would come to find what she had found.

It is the fact of the Resurrection, of the coming of Jesus to his friends in the upper room and in the Eucharist, that inspired Sally to soldier on through the extraordinary difficulties that her health imposed on her, knowing that he would not only be there to meet her at the end, but was alongside her on the way.

That is what she would want me to concentrate on today: not that she had found something wonderful in the faith, but that we can too, and so can those whom we meet who have not yet realised it. We and they can be among the blessed who have not seen and yet have believed. It just takes someone to be the instrument through whom it happens.

Sally was such an instrument for many, with an especial gift among the young. But much more did she long for others to become the same kind of instruments, means by which the faith can be shared and passed on to the next generation among whom the Lord looks for his evangelists.

And before she carries out her threat, I am not trying to paint her as a saint. Just a godly lady who loved her Lord, the Church she found changing around her, and the people among whom she lived, with such great generosity.

Let us thank God for her and all that she achieved for him;
let us thank him for her friendship, her love and her care, even at the times when she expressed it so strongly that others could not understand;
and let us pray for grace, not to follow her example but to be among those who have not seen and yet truly believe.

It is all that she would want us to do. And me to say.

The Warden

HOMILY AT THE REQUIEM FOR FR JOHN ADAMS

Introduction

"I am convinced that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." *[from Rom. 8.38-39]* What a fitting text for John. It would be wrong to suggest that his life was nothing but adversity and tragedy, but he certainly experienced these things a great deal. Yet he remained, or perhaps because of them became even more, a person of deep faith and remarkable joy.

Ministry and Marriage

He himself told me proudly that he was born in Blackheath and was moved with his family to Southern Rhodesia while he was still at school. He did well, but not long after he finally left school at Bulawayo he became seriously ill and nearly died. That experience was to influence him profoundly. He developed a sensitivity to others' suffering that many people here will have appreciated, and he was deeply influenced by the priest who visited him regularly. He was ready to acknowledge that it was these visits that awakened in him his own sense of vocation.

He was proud to show me a photograph of himself with the group of ordinands with whom he was made deacon in 1956. After serving his Title, during his time as Rector of Shabani, he was to become one of several priests who have lived here who have had the responsibility of building a new church.

It was after that post that he returned to England to widen his experience and during three years here he married Brenda, before returning to Africa. Tragically, illness was to afflict her also. Because of this they were unable to have children, and she died in 1975. So the later years of John's ministry, culminating in a spell at the Cathedral in Salisbury, were spent as a single man again.

Character and hobbies

Yet, remarkably, John was gifted with a joyfulness that we here have all seen. His life was rooted in the conviction that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

He took delight in many things. He was a great traveller while his health allowed, and sometimes even when it didn't. He dined out more than once on the story of how he was gathered up on a station platform after a fall resulting from a diabetic coma, and recovered consciousness in a London hospital.

His hobbies ranged from philately to photography and from railways to music. All his interests seemed to give him the opportunity, if not the need, to collect

... in astonishing volume. His room was variously seen as an Aladdin's cave and a health and safety risk.

And always he was generous with the things he gathered round him. He was delighted to produce for me a 1912 plan of Dormans Station which showed Warden's Lodge on it. He provided CDs to supplement the programmes of *Music to the Ears* long before the College CD library had been established. Of late we have also enjoyed DVDs from his collection, ranging from Gilbert and Sullivan to Handel's Messiah.

Spirituality

His awareness of the love of God was especially evident when he was conducting services. Nothing was too big or too small for his intercessions, and if sometimes they felt a bit extensive, that was a measure of his concern for those whom he held in his prayers. Nowhere was this more evident than in his distress at the sufferings of the Church in his beloved Zimbabwe.

This concern was apparent, too, in his dealings with people here from day to day. Only recently, when Warden's Lodge was broken into, he suggested to me that there should be a rota of house-sitters to fight off any returning burglars, with himself as the first member.

I don't think John would have described himself as a visionary. But everything he did was as someone who knew God because he knew Jesus. He clearly took to heart Jesus' words to Philip.

And when he talked with me about Brenda's death, it was very much in the faith that the Lord had gone to prepare a place for her, and in due time for him also. Although we at the College did not have the privilege of knowing her, we can rejoice in the promise that they are re-united in the worship of heaven.

Conclusion

As we commend John with the untroubled hearts that Jesus encourages, let us give thanks for the life and ministry of this faithful priest, a man of sensitivity, prayer, generosity and joy.

And especially, let us give thanks for the truth of which he was so convinced: that nothing can separate him and us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

The Warden

THREE SAINTS AND A CAMERA: A SERMON FOR TRINITY SUNDAY

The Reverend C J P Williams

The Feast of Trinity Sunday was made popular in England by its association with Thomas Becket who was consecrated bishop on this day in 1162. It was around this time in the summer of 597 that Augustine landed in Kent, dispatched by Pope Gregory to re-found a Church in England. It was also in the summer of 735 that the Venerable Bede died in his cell singing, 'Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit'. All three understood God in their own way, and their particular experiences of God can help us understand the mystery of the Trinity.

They express themselves in different forms. Bede: monastic scholar, translator and historian; Augustine: devoted missionary and Church leader; and Becket: defender of the Church and martyr for Jesus. They remind us that we all experience God differently and live out our faith in a variety of callings, each contributing to the dynamic whole that is the wealth of Christianity. Like Augustine, Bede and Becket, our personalities influence the way we see, understand and experience God and therefore live out our Christian faith.

In those summers of 597, 735 and 1162 there were only oral and written records of famous events. Today we have also the technology of the camera to aid our memories of what we have seen and experienced. Photographs provide a wonderful record, reflect a reality, a pleasant reminder of many special occasions.

The camera itself can help us 'make sense' of the Trinity, that well known conundrum, three-in-one and one-in-three. If we think of the different lenses of a camera as aspects of God and our faith, then the wide-angle lens is like God the Father; the close-up or telephoto like God the Son; and the zoom lens like God the Holy Spirit.

Some of us are Father-centred Christians who have a wide-angle cosmic perspective, seeing God in the raw natural otherness of sea, sky and mountains. Yet this same sense of awe can also mislead us to experience God only as utter authority, making an unknowable and exacting parent, aloof and unforgiving. One who is omnipotent, far from us, untouchable, maybe even unpleasant or to be feared.

Father-centred Christians need the Son to reveal the Father's gracious parenting, to bring God closer as the love, grace and self-giving of the Son. The Son also provides a pattern of obedience born out of love that gives us a warm yet robust and healthy relationship with the Father.

Father-centred Christians also need the Spirit to confirm them as God's sons and daughters. Without the Spirit, the perfect model realised in Jesus becomes impossible to emulate. The Spirit works with and in us to enable us to reflect better an image of the Father and the Son.

As the Father provides this wide-angle view, so the Son offers a close-up or telephoto perspective for Jesus-centred Christians, for whom a personal relationship with their Lord is the foundation of their faith. Jesus brings the Father within a human frame, and his life, death and resurrection are clearly God's saving action for humankind.

Jesus-centred Christians however can separate Jesus too easily from his relationship with God the Father and run the risk of treating him simply as a spiritual leader. These Christians need the Father in order to re-connect with the cosmic scope of God's creative work. If they lose this aspect of faith, if God the Father is ignored through over-familiarity with the Son, then they may lose touch with the mystery of God that Jesus sought to reveal to us.

Jesus-centred Christians also need the Spirit if they are not to be handcuffed to the letter of the Scriptures. They need the Spirit to release them from a misplaced adherence to the literal words of Jesus which can lose the general principles to be found in his teaching. The Spirit promises to equip us to continue the ministry of Jesus in ways that are appropriate to our present day, life and culture.

Then there are also Spirit-centred Christians, those who relish the immediacy of experience above intimacy with the person of Jesus or the otherness of the Father. They have neither the wide-angled perspective of the Father-centred Christian, nor the telephoto perspective of the Jesus-centred Christian. But the Spirit provides the zoom lens which makes it possible to encompass both the cosmic otherness of the Father and the particular essence of the Son.

Spirit-centred Christians celebrate the Spirit for the exuberance of life it brings, transforming the tired and predictable and bringing the joy and vitality which enlivens dull and routine Christian living. However they can become so absorbed in the quest for religious experience and the more exuberant and showy gifts that they lose the essence of both the Father and the Son.

Spirit-centred Christians therefore need the discipline of the Father if their spiritual experience is not to dissolve into divisiveness or spiritual elitism. They need the Father to incorporate them into a universal family. They also need the down-to-earthness of Jesus the carpenter, who knew the ordinary as well as the majestic, if they are not to become rootless and detached. They need the reality of Jesus crucified to avoid the excesses of spirituality which fail to reckon sufficiently with suffering, failure and tragedy. They need the Father and the Son to teach them that the Spirit's most characteristic work is to form relations of love as exemplified in the Father and the Son.

In whatever way we most naturally come to God, we each need the other aspects of the Trinity to provide a more complete and whole picture of God. We need our varieties of discipleship, as diverse as Becket, Bede and Augustine, to be Church. We preach the Gospel with our lives, by our words and by our deeds; by what we are, by what we say and by what we do.

Next time you use your camera this year to record a special event or a special day in your life, let it remind you of the Trinity. If we can better grasp this three-in-one and one-in-three, we will be better able to live its whole dynamic reality, which is our Christian faith.

Thanks be to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Revd C J P Williams is a member of the Friends of the College and a non-stipendiary priest in the diocese of Hereford.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

NEW RESIDENTS

Miss Myrtle Hall	8 November 2013
Fr John Vine	2 December
Fr Brian Anderson	9 January 2014
Fr Basil Hobbs	21 January
Fr David and Mrs Hope Haggan	3 February
The Revd Sr Frances Cocker	12 February
Fr David Wells	12 May
Miss Irene Kell	19 May
Sir Hugh Beach	9 June

MOVED AWAY

Fr John Worsfold	23 September 2013
Fr John Hathaway	11 November
Fr John de Sausmarez	7 December
Fr David Swain	12 February 2014
Fr Ed Bennett	13 May
Fr David Williams	25 July

THOSE WHO HAVE DIED

Mrs Maggie Patey	29 October 2013
Fr Reg Bartle	7 November
Fr John Adams	4 January 2014
Fr Christopher Leigh-Hunt	3 February
Mrs Rosina Levinson	6 March
Mrs Sally Thomas	22 March
Mrs Sheila Mantle	26 July
Mrs Elizabeth Maybury	28 July

✠ May they rest in peace and rise in glory

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