

The  
**C**HRONICLE  
of  
The College of  
**ST BARNABAS**

2016



## **FOREWORD**

The previous three editions of the *Chronicle* were generously edited by Fr Wilfrid Browning. I remain grateful to him for the dedication he gave to the task and was saddened when he decided that the time had come for him to relinquish it. It did not prove easy to replace him.

However, when they arrived at the College in January of this year, I was delighted that Fr Frank and Mrs Yvonne Gough readily agreed jointly to take on the role of Editor. We are greatly indebted to them and I hope you will find in the pages that follow both inspiration from the stories and articles and an insight into the vigour with which life is lived here.

It is a particular privilege to have permission from Lambeth Palace to reproduce as our leading article the sermon preached by the Archbishop of Canterbury when he came to celebrate our Patronal Festival with us.

*The Warden*

## CONTENTS

4	The 2016 Patronal Festival Sermon	The Archbishop of Canterbury
7	Editorial	Fr Frank and Mrs Yvonne Gough
7	'The St Barnabas Home for Retired Clergymen's May Day Celebrations'	The Warden
8	A Way into Orthodoxy – Mrs Vima Webb	Editors
9	'Glory to God'	Fr Rowland Webb
11	Europe – Its origins and opportunities	The Very Revd John Arnold
14	From troubled Northern Ireland – Fr David and Mrs Hope Haggan	Editors
15	A New Lease of Life	Dr Dorothy Hewison
16	The Company of Mission Priests	Fr Michael Shields
19	Pastimes Co-ordinator – Mrs Sue Alfrey	Editors
19	The Model Railway Group	Editors
20	Poetry Group	Mrs Ann Burden
20	Residents v Friends	Fr Frank Gough
20	The Art Group	Mrs Ann Burden
21	Theology Group sessions	
	<i>Addresses:</i>	
22	The Dedication of the Magnus Organ	The Bishop of Southwark
24	Reflections on an Advent verse	The Warden
26	The Requiem for Mrs Jane Bould	Bishop Alan Chesters
28	The Requiem for Bishop John Waller	Fr David Durston
30	Comings and goings since the last issue	

Cover illustration:

*The St Barnabas Home for Retired Clergymen's May Day Celebrations*  
by William Isaacs (see page 8)

## The 2016 Patronal Festival Sermon [Acts 9<sup>26-31</sup>]

The Most Reverend Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury

**I**t really is a privilege to be here. It's a privilege because of what you represent; a privilege to be in a place of care, of reflection, of study and of development. I hope I'm not going to stretch the passage from Acts too much by suggesting that one of the key questions that Paul and the disciples are dealing with is the question of *identity*.



It's an issue with which you will realise I have a certain familiarity, when I recently discovered my identity was different from what I had always assumed. It wasn't an exceptional story; there are probably other people here who have had similar experiences. A clever newspaper reporter discovered that the person who had brought me up and whom I thought was my father, and who thought he was my

father, was not in fact my father at all but someone completely different. It led to all kinds of interesting discussions. Underlying it of course was the issue of 'Who are we? What defines who we are? What makes us who or what we are?' In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the trouble with that is it turns too easily into an obsession with who I am and how I make myself be what I want to be; how I create my own identity.

We need to remember the context of Acts 9. There had been a very severe outburst of persecution, with which Paul, then Saul, had been heavily involved. The disciples and the apostles had been scattered, some staying in Jerusalem but others scattered over most of what we would now call the Levant and as far as Mesopotamia. At the same time, the Church had suddenly grown in unexpected ways; it had grown in Samaria, it had grown with the Ethiopian eunuch and it had grown with some gentiles. You can imagine the emotions of the small Jewish Christian Church in Jerusalem when Paul appears back: he comes into a context when that Church will be asking itself "Who are we, who are we as The Church?" – a question that many of us ask today. "Are we", they would have said to themselves, "Jewish? We thought we were Jewish but the Jewish authorities don't seem to think we are Jewish at all; in fact they keep trying to tell us that we are syncretistic; we brought in Samaritans, the heretical ancient enemies."

As always happens when there is persecution, there would have been many in the Church who said, "It must be because we have done something wrong". One of the characteristics of the victims of cruelty of all kinds is that they blame themselves for being victims. They assume "it's *my* fault".

The Church in Jerusalem would have been asking themselves, "Who is this Jesus character?" They hadn't yet fully worked it out although they knew this was someone who had transformed the world. Secondly, they would be asking, "What are forgiveness and salvation in practice? Can Jesus really do all

that stuff?" And confronted with their persecutor their third question would be, "Who is this man? We know his history, we know his character – he is brilliant, he was a great scholar in Jerusalem before he shot off to Damascus – but now he comes back having treated us very badly and says he is one of us. Can God's forgiveness reach out as far as him? Is he included? Is it possible to make him one of us? Is God the kind of God who does *that*? Surely the God we read about in our scriptures right through the Old Testament is one who defeats enemies, doesn't incorporate them, doesn't include them."

We face similar questions today. I had a particularly unpleasant letter from a very senior cleric which illustrated the question that Anglicans, and in fact every single denomination and Church that I have come across, are asking – "Are we a big tent or are we a little holy gathering? Are we the select who keep to ourselves only those who are really perfect?" The big issue which we continually face, and which every denomination is facing with equal ferocity at the moment, is that around changes in the understanding of human sexuality. When someone with same-sex orientation comes in, the question is asked, "Who is this? Is this someone whom God can include or not?" There are wildly different views all around the world and even within the Church of England, and in fact in most congregations. It's not only Anglicans who are facing this.

There is in every church a real tension about how we cope with this in a world in which, because of communications, because particularly of smartphones, tablets etc, we now have communication but we don't have *relationship*, and therefore we can't look at each other in the eye and love each other as we see Christ in each other. That's the great benefit of community.

So the Church today finds itself, as it has throughout history, with this same tension about the nature of God and the kind of Church that God calls us to be. It's even more severe in the world around us, where the loss of a sense of the eternal story of God has gone so deep that *we are who we make ourselves to be*. And the only way to do that safely is to shut out all those who challenge us, who make us feel uncomfortable. That gives an infectious insecurity which leads us to hate, vilify and demonise the other. This affects most of all the very young and the older. It affects those groups particularly because so much of the value that is ascribed to people depends on what they do. Therefore if I am too young to do very much, I have very little utility, I'm not intrinsically very valuable; or if I am older and retired, well, "It's just a waiting room for heaven," as someone said to me quite recently. We had quite a robust discussion about that!

Which is why the College of St Barnabas is so good. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it started by taking those retired clergy found in workhouses, the very definition of those whom the society at the time had discarded as having no intrinsic worth. It continues to care for those whom the world may see like that but whom God sees as experienced and wise. And it gives them the same value as every other human being.

That takes us to Barnabas the Apostle. He knows the story of Paul, but he does not judge in categories but in the reality of the person he sees in front of him. He looks at Paul and loves him. All of us hate it when we are pigeon-holed, when we are categorised, when we are put in a particular box, even if it's right. Barnabas is to be celebrated, not because he's nice to Paul, but because he's *real* about Paul. He understands the intrinsic reality of the man he is dealing with, and values him. Barnabas knows the Lord Jesus Christ and recognises that he brings change at any age, in any place to any person. He brings possibilities for the future that are infinite at all stages.

It's not always obvious. Paul was a person who in every circumstance, everywhere, always started arguments. He would have been a nightmare in a community – let's be honest about it. He would have been arguing with everyone and setting them right! But Barnabas sees what God is doing. He has a world view that is deeply embedded in who Christ *is*, and that shapes his understanding of the human beings he deals with. He takes a personal risk by bringing Paul in, the risk of everyone there ostracising him and saying, "If you're hanging out with that guy, we don't want to hang out with you". It's very hard to take a risk. For most of us, our tribe in the Church, the group in which we feel most at home, is our support and our security. But when that becomes true in the Church, the tribe is our deceit and our danger, because we lose sight of the wealth that God pours into the Church in God's foolishness, giving to people, whom we know to be quite unsuitable, the riches of the gifts of the Spirit. So Barnabas says to us, "Stop, listen, reach out, be confident that the God who created the Church and calls each Christian has the Church in his hands." That confidence is what enables us to hold on.

In far worse circumstances than in this country, a week ago I was in Cappadocia with the Ecumenical Patriarch, making a sort of pilgrimage round the churches that had been abandoned in 1924 after the Treaty of Lausanne and the Greek-Turkish war. He goes once a year, and we had a service in an abandoned church. Nobody worshipped in it except when he went, and because he can't visit them all every year, nobody had been there for perhaps 90 years. As we commented to each other afterwards, the church might have been abandoned by human beings, but it was not empty. As we came together as pilgrims and worshipped, it was full of the Holy Spirit of God.

We worship the God who raises Jesus Christ from the dead. The Church, whatever its situation, is in the hands of the God who does resurrection as a matter of course. And so identity starts with God; and hope starts with God; and confidence in the future starts with God. It is demonstrated here as you live out a community of love. It's a huge challenge, but in a community that has Christ at its centre there is that great ending of Acts 9. That beautiful last verse talks of the Church having peace, of being in unity, of working together, of growing and of the Lord drawing to the Church those who are being saved. It's a lyrical passage to which we should come back in hope and expectation. They have the comfort of the Spirit, they have peace, they have growth.

May God bring us, in the Church of England and the Anglican Communion and his people around the world, to that same place of peace, hope and growth.

## Editorial

**A**s comparative newcomers to the College of St Barnabas, we realise that we may be regarded in the same light as the unlucky individual who was required to "teach his grandmother to suck eggs". We hasten to add that we have not found our task to be in the least unsavoury! But we do realise that there may be hidden mistakes and inconsistencies in our presentation of the *Chronicle*, having, as we do, such distinguished predecessors. We are extremely grateful that members (and others) have been so encouraging and helpful, to such an extent that we have more than enough material for one edition. If anyone feels that we have overlooked their contribution, be assured that it will be submitted for the next edition.

We hope, therefore, that those who read this Journal will be stimulated and fascinated by the varied lives and experiences contained herein. We thank all those who have contributed in any way and we hope that it will have encouraged those who have not to put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboards) so that we all may share in the many aspects of life that this College embodies. Some might even want to respond to what has been written in this issue. So, letters to the Editors, please!

Mrs Yvonne & Fr Frank Gough

### ***'The St Barnabas Home for Retired Clergymen's May Day Celebrations'***

[see front cover]

**T**he College first became aware of this extraordinary picture when we were sent an email with a photograph of it by someone who had seen it in an exhibition in Cornwall. The exhibition featured works by the Absurdist School of painters to which the artist, William Isaacs, belongs.

When we had tracked him down, we sent Mr Isaacs a picture of the College, thinking he might like to see 'the real thing'. He responded by saying that he had never heard of the College before, but had invented the subject of the painting simply as a humorous idea. In fact, his first thought had been to portray retired policemen, but he had decided that clergy would be more amusing! He is saving the police idea for another picture ...

Having learnt about the College, Mr Isaacs was delighted to give us permission to reproduce the painting and generously presented the College with a framed full-size copy which now hangs in the main corridor.

In response to the enthusiastic demands of the Residents, the painting became the illustration for the 2015 College Christmas card, and our framed copy has become a regularly admired landmark when people tour the College.

## A Way into Orthodoxy

Vima Webb has travelled across the world to reach the College of St Barnabas, with many stops in between! She was born in a small town in south-west Australia called Yarloop in the Jarrah forest. It is not surprising, therefore, that her father worked for a timber company, though he died when Vima was only fourteen. Her mother was a devout Anglican and a lover of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Her daughter was taken regularly to church and the worship stimulated the imagination of Vima, an only child. She and her mother moved away from Yarloop when Vima was eighteen. By then, the timber industry was in decline for various reasons, including the fact that disease was destroying the trees. After World War II, Yarloop started to mine bauxite, Australia being a main producer of aluminium. Sadly, the town was almost completely destroyed in a bush fire earlier in 2016 though it seems that the people have voted to rebuild it.

Vima trained as a nurse in Western Australia but left at twenty-five when her mother died. In a trip that took almost four years, she crossed the Pacific Ocean, passing through the Panama Canal on her way to the UK where she had already made arrangements to join the Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service. She arrived here in July 1963 and duly enlisted at Plymouth. After that, she travelled a great deal all over the world, including Gibraltar and Hong Kong. She spent ten years in the navy and by then had met Rowland, a naval chaplain. She left the navy in order to marry and continued her travels with him to such places as Singapore and, nearer home, Edinburgh, Plymouth and Portsmouth. When he was away, she had her cats to keep her company!

Church was always important to Vima who, as a child, was proud to be a Herald of the King, then a youth movement in the Anglican Church of Australia. One of the questions to which she could not find an answer concerned Mary, the Mother of God, despite discussing this with her mother. Mary, she felt, came to the fore at Christmas but was largely ignored for the rest of the Church's year. She read a great deal on the subject and needed to find real spiritual freedom with regard to it. It was, therefore, fortuitous that Fr Rowland became Vicar of Burnham-on-Crouch in Essex. While she had been exposed to Orthodoxy in Australia, there being many Greek immigrants in her area, she had not been drawn to investigate its teachings and worship. In the 1960s, Vima began to attend the Patriarchal Stavropegic Monastery of St John the Baptist, founded in 1959, near Tiptree, a place most famous for its jams [edible, not traffic!]. She continued to do so for sixteen years, finding a depth in the Orthodox response to Mary which she felt was absent in the Church of England. Vima was formally admitted into the Orthodox Church by Metropolitan Kallistos at Oxford in 1994. However, she realised gradually that she knew nothing of Orthodox parish worship and this feeling became so strong that she eventually started attending worship at a new parish in Holborn – the Dormition of the Mother of God – which was formed soon after the death of Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh. Meeting in the Guild Church of St Andrew, Holborn, it is part of the Orthodox Parish of Russian Tradition in Western Europe under the Omophorion of His All-Holiness Bartholomew, the Ecumenical Patriarch.



The words of Archimandrite Lev Gillet are apt:

“O strange Orthodox Church, so poor and weak with neither the organisation nor the culture of the West, staying afloat as if by a miracle in the face of many trials, tribulations and struggles, a Church of contrasts, both so traditional and so free, so archaic and so alive, so ritualistic and so personally involved; a Church where the priceless pearl of the Gospel is assiduously preserved, sometimes under a layer of dust; a Church which, in shadows and silence, maintains above all the eternal values of purity, poverty, asceticism, humility and forgiveness; a Church which has often not known how to act but which can sing of the joy of Pascha like no other.”

Mrs Yvonne & Fr Frank Gough

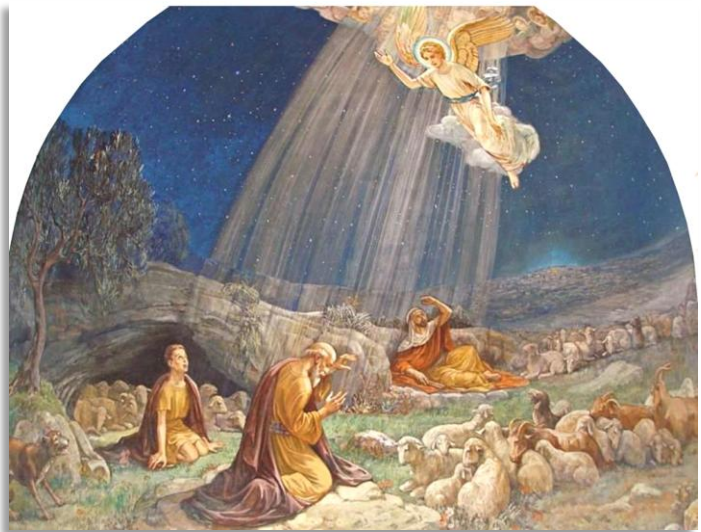
*[We are delighted that Vima is allowed to remain in Communion with the See of Canterbury and can therefore be a full member of the College. – Warden.]*

### **‘Glory to God’**

*[This article, to encourage the use of Welsh hymns in private meditation, is a rough translation of one written in Welsh for the parish magazine of Borth in Cardiganshire by Fr Rowland Webb.]*

**T**he first ever Nativity carol beginning with these words, was sung by a heavenly choir to shepherds and included the last three words, ‘in the Highest’. The moment is beautifully portrayed in the Church of the Shepherds’ Fields in Bethlehem (see right).

What we must remember is that we too are created to sing, with the whole creation, our Creator and Saviour’s praise.



These praises are offered in many ways, not least through hymnody, but reality says that we must understand what the words are conveying, that our praise may be voices that are at one with the authors and composers. Fortunately, I am able to call to mind some of the old Welsh hymns to aid my meditation, carefully looking at the words:

Grant me thy peace beyond all earthly knowing.

or the words,

O my blessed Jesus, my weak soul’s only friend.

‘only friend’ - it would be worthwhile meditating on these words alone.

Here, as we recall our Saviour's love for us, we must remember the whole of creation and that creation sings the praises in its own way whilst awaiting its redemption.

There are many hymns that can be used as aids to meditation, hymns that are able to draw us closer to our Redeemer and deeper into that silence which encompasses our prayer and contemplation of our Saviour's loving suffering:

In the garden, beneath the weight of our sins,  
our Saviour was burdened  
until sweat and mingled blood  
in droplets fell to the ground.

or perhaps the following:

Memories of the righteous Jesus,  
the handsomest of persons,  
on a heavy and uncomfortable evening,  
sweating in the garden.

What loving agonies borne for us sinful children.

There are, of course, other hymns for our use, glorious in context for meditation and seeing the glory of our God and Creator, such as:

Round the Lord in glory seated,  
Cherubim and Seraphim –

ending in the glorious cry: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord.

All the praise of earth and humankind seems to be summed up in a hymn written by the Revd Rhys Nicholas:

To you belongs all honour, Holy One.  
Life's purpose can be found in you alone;  
your word sustains and moves in every sphere,  
O Mary's Son, in you the far is near;  
to you belongs the praise creation sings  
and I behold your glory in all things.  
The Alleluia has possessed my soul.  
To you, O Christ, I give my praises all.

In truth, we have here the whole of the praise of the Sanctuary and, giving ourselves wholly to our Creator, we receive the greatest of blessings to be found in the universe. In truth, we should be able to sing:

Come, O Gracious Lord,  
come to our hearts,  
draw from the strings of our lives  
praise to your wondrous being.  
All praise to you through all generations,  
heaven and earth uniting  
to praise your Glorious Name.

## Europe – Its Origins and Opportunities

The Very Reverend John Arnold

*The following paper was delivered to the Theology Group in October 2015, before the referendum to decide whether the United Kingdom should remain in the European Community.*

*What is Europe?*

**W**hat is this Europe of which we speak? Unlike Africa, North and Latin America, Antarctica and Australasia, it has no clear geographical identity. What makes it anything other than a complex peninsular at the western end of the Eurasian landmass? It is impossible to answer this question without invoking the concept of Christendom.

Modern Europe is the area which had been contiguously Christianised by the end of the middle ages – before the great discoveries and the opening up of sea-routes to other continents. And it is the continent which ‘discovered’ the rest of the world, rather than *vice versa*. Why that should be so is an interesting question. Though diverse in languages, tribes and nations, it was unified by a single Church and a single faith. Even schism between Eastern and Western Christianity and the fragmentation of the Western churches at the Reformation did not destroy belief in the underlying unity of European culture and civilization and a sense of its distinctiveness from the rest of the world.

The Christianisation of Europe goes back to Saint Paul, in whom “Rome, Hellas, Zion all combine.” It was the impact of an originally Asiatic faith, which was to provide an embryonic Europe with a new identity when the political and cultural unity of the Græco-Roman world disintegrated. North Africa and the Asiatic parts of the Roman Empire fell away as a result of the rise of Islam; Ethiopia and the Malabar coast of India were cut off from contact and almost from memory, while Ireland, Scotland, Northern Germany, Scandinavia, the Baltic and the eastern Slav lands, which had not been in the Empire, became part of Europe as a result of missionary expansion. By conversion to Orthodox Christianity in 988, on the eve of the schism between East and West, Russia became European rather than Asiatic with incalculable consequences lasting to the present day. The establishment of the Eastern boundary of Europe in the Ural was the work of geographers as late as the eighteenth century.

Modern Europe is the result of a heady mixture of the remnants of empire, the vigour of barbarism and the influence of Christianity, the three ingredients that go to make Africa so full of potential today. Many Europeans do not now believe in Christianity; there are many more Christians in other parts of the globe and there are many immigrants and some converts to other world faiths in Europe. Major attempts in the twentieth century, however, to replace Christianity as the spiritual and mental guide of Europe, either by neo-paganism in its Fascist form or by atheism in its Marxist-Leninist form have failed. We may well be the first continent in history to belong not only to a post-Christian era, but also to a post-atheist one. Can such a continent be saved? How does such a continent relate to others? And how should we in Britain relate to it?

## *Universality and Particularity*

It is in the letters of St Paul that the complementary nature of the particular and the universal is treated and it is by him that it is expressed most articulately. At different times and for different purposes he emphasises his identity not only as a Jew but more specifically as of the tribe of Benjamin and a Pharisee, not only as a Roman citizen but also as a Greek-speaker from Tarsus. These things, however formative and useful they may be, he accounts as of little worth compared with being 'in Christ', that is to say, reconciled through the Cross of Christ to God and to his fellow human beings. He it is, so proud of his multiple identities on earth, who also claimed that 'our citizenship is in heaven.' [Philippians 3<sup>20</sup>] The particularities of nation, race, language, party and citizenship are to be valued not for the ways in which they cut us off from others but for their ability to form personalities and characters that are capable of making mature relationships with others. For Paul human beings are put in a right relationship with God not by nation or race, language or culture, gender or social status, but by meeting grace with faith, that is to say by responding with trust to love. This does not mean the repudiation of other relationships (except with idols, which are non-entities), nor does it mean the loss of other identities. It does mean their enlargement and transformation.

The implications for contemporary anxieties about identity are clear. No one should be asked to exchange their identity as British or English for an identity as European. This pattern can be traced to the writings of the Venerable Bede [673-735], which were equally responsible for the development of an English national self-consciousness and for the insistence that the destiny of the English was continental rather than insular. For him the underlying point at issue at the Synod of Whitby [664] was whether the English, by their adherence to the customs of the Celtic Church, would be condemned to languish forever in a provincial backwater, or whether, by becoming part of the wider Western Church, they would be integrated into a potentially universal culture and civilisation. It was not that everything Celtic was wrong and everything Roman right. On the contrary, he could not hide his admiration for the piety and effectiveness of Aidan, Oswald and Cuthbert in Northumbria compared with the vacillation and tactlessness of Augustine in Kent.

However, if the English were to receive the blessings of belonging to a wider world, they would need, for example, to adopt a common date for Easter, which was the equivalent then of accepting directives from Brussels now. Bede, who lived to see the beginnings of the extraordinary contribution paid (or rather repaid) by the English to the continued conversion of Europe by missionaries and scholars like Willibrord and, a little later, by Boniface and Alcuin.

This two-way traffic of influence and enrichment, of values and insights, accompanies trade and commerce and is not less important. That is why the European churches said in the *Charta Ecumenica* [Strasbourg, Easter 2001], 'The Churches support an integration of the European continent. Without

common values, unity cannot endure. We are convinced that the spiritual heritage of Christianity contributes an empowering source of inspiration and enrichment for Europe...'

### *The pan-European perspective*

The Churches are clear that the scope of the Community must be pan-European. It cannot and must not be a reincarnation of Western Christendom or the Holy Roman Empire. Eastern Europe is every bit as European as is Western Europe. Indeed the Greeks, whose relationship with the rest of the European Union has been fraught from the start, may claim to have the best title of all. Meanwhile, the underlying problem of the relationship between Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Europe remains unsolved; and it is insoluble at the level of politics and economics alone. All the historic Orthodox lands wish to benefit from the financial, social and political advances of the West, but they have not had the experience of the long march through the Renaissance, the Reformation and especially the Enlightenment, which made them possible.

The pillars of the European Union – the rule of law, pluralist democracy, human rights and religious freedom – require spiritual and cultural as well as political and economic convergence, or there will only be, as there is with Greece, a dialogue of the deaf. Bede was active well before the disastrous schism between East and West in the eleventh century and he wrote appreciatively of the contribution made by Archbishop Theodore to the establishment in the *Ecclesia Anglicana* of provincial, diocesan and parochial structures that have lasted to the present day. Bede wanted his fellow countrymen to adopt Roman practices, but he took it for granted that Rome was in communion with Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople. For him, integration into Western Christendom did not mean the acceptance of limitation and narrowed loyalties, but rather a way of being in communion and fellowship also with Eastern Christendom and with churches and communities in Africa and Asia, in fact with the whole inhabited world in so far as it was known in his day.

### *Europe and the wider world*

Two things which the churches will continue to contribute from their Judaeo-Christian heritage will be the note of universalism and a sense of the provisionality of all intermediate structures and institutions, which can be found in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the New Testament. The *Charta Ecumenica* goes on to say, 'At the same time we must avoid Eurocentricity and heighten Europe's sense of responsibility for the whole of humanity, particularly for the poor all over the world.'

Britain, which retains special links with the United States of America and with the worldwide Commonwealth, is well placed both to benefit from a whole-hearted commitment to the European project and also to contribute to the development of its vision and values.

## From troubled Northern Ireland to leafy Surrey

One of the interesting things about the people who live in this College is the variety of experience that emerges in conversation. The lesson this teaches us is that we should not take individuals at face value, especially in old age. Great riches are usually hidden under the surface and it is a privilege to have some of these revealed to us. The editors found this fact to be true as they chatted to Hope and David Haggan.

David was born and brought up in Belfast. He joined the RAF to train as a pilot but, being too young by a few months, he went to St Andrews to study history. After his short stay there, he was posted to Oklahoma for training but the war ended before he could start active service. That part of the United States had ideal weather for flying, with none of the peculiarities of the UK. David found the USAF much more friendly than the RAF - all ranks used the same mess and so avoided the "toffee-nosed" attitude he found in the RAF!

After demobilisation, David attended Queen's University, Belfast, where he read law and then trained as a solicitor. He met Hope at Capernway Hall and they married in 1950. Hope was born at Winscomb near Bristol and worked as a medical secretary. They lived in various rented flats in Belfast. David worked in private practice in Ballymena before joining in the civil service and Hope became a legal secretary. Later, David became the Crown Solicitor in Belfast which entailed prosecuting terrorists during the troubles. During this time, they had a son and daughter.

In 1970, they came to live in England, settling first at Buckland and then moving to Reigate. David transferred to the civil service in London, going on to the staff of the government's law officers and worked for the Attorney General. Having ceased to be a solicitor, he was called to the bar at the Middle Temple. Their children live in the south-east of England. Their son was also called to the bar at Middle Temple and is now a QC practising in criminal law. Their daughter was a teacher and a maths editor.



David had become a Reader while they lived in Belfast and continued his ministry in this country. They attended the Heath Church at Reigate, part of St Mary's parish. On retirement, he studied with the Southwark Ordination Course and was ordained in Southwark Cathedral by Bishop Ronald Bowlby. He continued at the Heath Church as an NSM until he was into his eighties when he finally retired from active ministry. They moved to the College two years later in February 2014.

Mrs Yvonne & Fr Frank Gough

## **A New Lease of Life**

Dr Dorothy Hewison

All of us at the College have already confronted the trauma of giving up the independence of our own homes and moving. As Alan and I look back on our previous life, it seems to have been idyllic. It would, however, have been unsustainable as our years increased and our health diminished. In 2014, now both of us in our eighties, it was time for us to move on. And so we came to the College of St Barnabas.

One of the ways that human beings use to find about anything, whether in the realm of science, philosophy or the conventions of the community, is to ask questions. To do this we need to find the right words. There must be a sense of the appropriateness of the questions and a mind sufficiently uncluttered to receive the answers. I ask myself why we arrived to take up residence here without a clear picture of the life before us.

When we visited for the first time, despite the fact that we had been interested in the College for some years, we were very naive about the day-to-day life here. Fantasy began to give way to reality as our questions were answered. To some extent, we had found the right words and were ready to get rid of the false picture we had been creating. On the other hand, we were visitors and not quite sure that we should be accepted as residents. Hence, questions that we might have asked were left unanswered.

For example, even when we had become part of the community we were curiously lacking in a true picture of how the cloister residents were expected to cope with medical needs. There was also the question of transport. We were trying to envisage life in the future but failed to realise that the twice-weekly taxi involved a lot of walking and only an hour to spend in the town. We were strangers to the area so had no inkling of the cost that could be involved in getting to appointments at hospitals miles away. These were not immediate problems for us but we should have taken these factors into our decision-making. There were certainly enormous gaps in our understanding of the practicalities of the life before us. But, because we are human beings and our actions are not totally governed by balance sheets, we had, by the end of the first visit, begun to be aware that, if or when we were offered a place, we should be ready to burn our boats.

On our second visit we were considerably helped by the very great kindness shown to us, especially by Pam Waller and her late husband Bishop John. Our picture of the community grew as we slotted in information about laundry collection, rubbish disposal and flat cleaning. At the same time, we had a glimpse of the human warmth and spiritual riches we could expect to encounter at the College. But still there was the 'if' acting as a brake on our questioning. There was still the big question, 'Would we be accepted?'

Are we happy here? Yes! Of course, there are compromises to be made. There is a daily pattern including bells to announce mealtimes, against which I rebel every now and then. There are none of my favourite shops within easy reach. The food we would choose to have is not always available. Some cloister residents still find medical arrangements problematic. There is less support than I had expected for those living in sheltered accommodation with the business of making appointments and attending hospitals a distance away. Hospitals, like airports, can be scary places for those whose sight and hearing are diminishing. Living independently, some of our fellow residents have to go there alone. Many

still rely on family members to escort them, as they would have done when living on their own.

So what makes us happy? From the first, we felt the warmth of the community. This business of growing old in the knowledge of God's presence is a shared experience. Holy Communion at the start of each day has made us very much aware of our fellow residents, their needs and their commitment. We have an added joy in that we live in a beautiful place. Every day, wherever we look and in whatever weather, we are surrounded by something beautiful. Where else could we enjoy the rabbits without worrying about the garden? Where else could we walk out of our home into the woodland without encountering the traffic first? Where else, I wonder, would we be cared for daily by courteous and kindly people who have served the College residents for many years? Where else would we have daily contact with highly intelligent young adults who put their personal concerns to one side as they serve at table like professionals?

Here at the College we can go on growing as human beings, even as we live through the breakdown of health, the dying and finally die. Despite those aspects of life here we find less than ideal, our experience has reinforced the confidence with which we came. The questions of yesterday have given way to the knowledge of today. Every day we find ourselves saying, 'Thank you'.

### **The Company of Mission Priests**

Fr Michael Shields CMP, Sub-Warden of the College

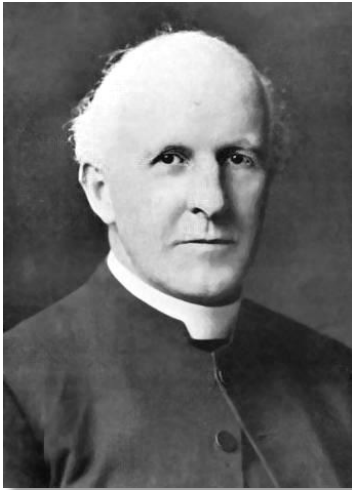
**A** few years before the Great Fire of London, a great Frenchman died in Paris. He was St Vincent de Paul. At his funeral in 1660, the preacher pointed out that, through Vincent's labours and those of his co-workers, in a time of civil war and famine in France, hundreds of poor people had been aided, many thousands of sick cared for, ten thousand abandoned children rescued from certain death, and more than a thousand missions had been preached in the rural districts then neglected by the Church, while 200,000 had attended teaching retreats in Paris.

St Vincent had worked to improve the standards of the priesthood and had influenced some thirteen thousand ordinands through retreats organised for them. He had founded two new religious communities, the Daughters of Charity (sisters whose task it would be to care for the poor, the sick and children) and the Congregation of the Mission (priests committed to the evangelization of those who knew little or nothing of the Gospel). Both these communities continue their work to the present day in very many parts of the world, as do many other communities that owe their inspiration to St Vincent's work. In the Anglican Communion these include our own Anglican Sisters of Charity who were founded in 1869 – though, sadly, they are now much reduced in number, and can be found only in Plymouth – and the Company of Mission Priests, founded as late as 1940.

In 1940, in the early months of World War II, the Church of England was faced with a crisis of manpower and money. There had been evacuation of adults as well as children from cities and towns thought likely to suffer air raids. Many more clergy were needed to minister to them in the areas to which they had gone, while there were more clergy left behind in the evacuated areas than



were needed or could be paid for. Different solutions were proposed but none found official favour. Finally, three of the Church of England's religious communities came up with a possible solution inspired by the example of St. Vincent's work in France: a body of Mission Priests, who would be unmarried and therefore available to minister where they were needed and who could be sustained by less than the usual clergy stipend.



The idea appealed to the Archbishop Cosmo Lang of Canterbury (*left*) and he sent a letter to all the clergy asking that some should consider becoming Mission Priests, not only to cope with the immediate wartime emergency, but to provide for effective ministry in the future in "the housing estates which threaten to become new centres of heathenism".

Not many responded. But then, as it turned out, not many were needed, for the immediate crisis was soon over, as a great many of the adult evacuees returned home. Yet some young priests were attracted to the ideal set out in the appeal. As a result, the Company of Mission Priests (CMP) came into being on 2<sup>nd</sup> April

1940 when the first members were received into membership by Father Percy Wigram SSJE, who had been appointed Warden by the three founding Communities. By 1944, the Company had 26 members, 19 working around England and the rest in Africa or as Chaplains to the Forces.

The Company never grew large but it has continued ever since to serve both Church and people, primarily in the large housing estates and inner-city areas of England but also, for many years, overseas, especially in Guyana and Madagascar. Sadly, the ordination of women to the priesthood in 1994 caused more than half of those who were then members to withdraw and join the Roman Catholic Church, leaving only sixteen as Anglicans. But in the providence of God, this led to a renewal of the Company's life and, through a 'coincidental' encounter, to a much closer fraternal relationship with Vincentians in the Roman Catholic Church with whom CMP now works together closely on spiritual and social issues in the organisation "Vincentians in Partnership". At the time of writing this article there were 34 CMP priests in full membership, with some enquirers and associates in work.

Those who join CMP commit themselves to observe simplicity of life, to remain unmarried so long as they are members "and in all personal relationships to exercise that care which befits priests leading dedicated lives", to share in the common life as much as possible through regular meeting, prayer and recreation, to consult the Warden and Council about changes of work, and to observe a personal rule of life based on St Vincent's instructions.

At one time CMP was known primarily for its clergy houses, where two or more priests lived together economically, making it possible to staff needy parishes and missions more generously than would otherwise have been possible. But because of the shortage of clergy, the needs of the dioceses are now different, and so clergy houses have ceased to exist, and CMP priests at present all work separately, though, as far as possible, sharing some elements of common life through local Chapters.

But the demise of the clergy houses created a problem for CMP priests reaching the stage of needing to retire from full-time ministry. Many in the past just moved to another CMP parish and clergy house where they worked as honorary assistants, as much as they could, until age and infirmity required further care. Those who have retired since the demise of the clergy houses have also naturally wanted to continue some form of community living and have found this in different ways.

I myself had never lived alone until I retired – having always shared my life with other resident priests in a clergy house, with my invalid mother until she died, and sometimes with students too, and a resident housekeeper. So when the time came to retire from full-time ministry, I looked for some way of continuing some form of community living. I found this first at Bromley College, which was founded in 1666, the actual year of the Great Fire of London. Here the residents, known as Collegians, live in individual flats but share some degree of common life, worshipping in the Chapel and meeting for social functions in the Common Room, but catering for themselves and doing their own shopping, laundry and so on. When I first lived there the College had a qualified nurse acting as Matron and emergency alarms, but gradually, during my time there, circumstances forced a change to fully independent living, with assistance, when it is needed, having to be called in from social services, and Collegians having to move out to residential or nursing care elsewhere when no longer able to look after themselves.

This change of provision, together with seeing its effect in the lives of others, and the process of ageing and infirmity in myself, prompted me to seek to make the move to fully residential living here in the College of St. Barnabas, where, thankfully, there is provision of such care as one may need for the remainder of one's life. Here, I can say, I have found just that balance of common living and personal privacy which well corresponds to my slightly introverted personality, together with the essential daily worship which I need. It is good to have here, too, another and more senior member of the Company of Mission Priests in residence: Canon Roger Davison (see *right with the Archbishop during his visit*), now to be found on our nursing floor after having spent the whole of his life as a priest within the Company.



Meantime, the work of the Company continues in England and, at present, overseas only in Hong Kong. Day by day we pray for one another by name, while those who are able meet together as often as possible for prayer, consultation, recreation and worship, and we all come together once a year for our General Chapter, supported by our Bishop Visitor, who is currently the Bishop of Chichester. Those who join us, or who work with us in our parishes, spend time at the Mother House of the Vincentians in Paris, to learn about St Vincent de Paul and to absorb the principles which governed his work to make the Gospel better known, to raise the standards of the clergy, and to serve those who are poor and in need for body, mind or spirit.

## Pastimes Co-ordinator

*Did you know that we have one of these in the College? If you did, what does the job entail? As newcomers, the editors sought to find answers to these and other questions:*

Our PC is Mrs Sue Alfrey (*right*). She works mainly on the Nursing Wing, enabling residents to further their interests or start new ones. She has helped one person to spin and weave wool and flax. With others, she has encouraged them to start a scrapbook or assisted with some knitting. She is willing to help with any craft or hobby that residents wish to follow – within reason! She also accompanies people to hospital and takes them for walks in the grounds. The hard surface paths around the main buildings enable residents with mobility difficulties to move around the grounds. She would love to have a similar path that would enable her to take residents into the woods. Sue has also organised special theme days (a Dickens afternoon was particularly successful) and some residents made items for a stall at the Friends' Autumn Fair. Sue has organised popular visits by Anita, with her PAT dog, Peggy. (PAT stands for "Pets As Therapy".)



Sue has lived in Dormansland most of her life and was a teaching assistant for eight years. She began to feel a need to move on to a different job, preferably one that would enable her to use her own interests to help others. She was thrilled to be given the opportunity to work at the College and sees it as a vocation – that God has called her to this place. Sue worships at the Baptist Chapel in Dormansland and also sings in a choir called Choirpower. As well as her interest in crafts she owns two dogs. She and her husband have two vintage caravans, one of which (a 1962 Airstream) they tow for their holidays.

## Model Railway Group

Over the last year, Roger Hawkins has mooted the idea of having a working 00 gauge model railway for use by the residents and friends of the College. His friend Margaret found a new Hornby set in the Queen Elizabeth Foundation charity shop and then purchased a 6' x 4' board able to be stored upright in his room with the track attached. Gradually new and second-hand items were bought from model shops, together with gifts and additions from charity shops. In the winter months at her house in Caterham, scenery and model buildings were added ready for bringing the layout back to the College.

As a temporary arrangement, it was agreed that the layout could be housed in the Fiction Library and placed on the billiard table, provided that the tabletop was made available for the weekly Friends' shop and for the playing of billiards and snooker. The Bursar hopes to come up with a suggestion for a permanent home for the layout so that it can be extended.

Many members come to the open afternoons – usually on a Tuesday – and it has been good to see members from the Nursing Wing brought down for a therapeutic experience as well as visitors staying in College joining us. Our thanks go to all who support the group, to all who have given financial help and to those who work the trains. Special thanks go to Roger Hawkins, Alan Spray and Jean & David Letcher, the committee members.

## Poetry Group

The College supports a thriving Poetry Group which meets once a month on the second Wednesday from 3 pm to 4 pm. The Reference Library has provided a congenial meeting place for many years and until recently we have been grateful for the calm, knowledgeable leadership of Jenny Tingle.

My role as the new facilitator has been to encourage the love of poetry, trying out various themes and poets such as The Ages of Man, John Betjeman, William Blake, R S Thomas, Rudyard Kipling, Ted Hughes and John Donne.

Most people dip into their own poetry books for ideas. We also have an excellent library with a good poetry section (Reference 281) where residents can search for material to share with the Poetry Group.

Mrs Ann Burden

## Residents v Friends – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016

The Friends of St Barnabas won the annual putting match for the Loomes Trophy against the College by 5 matches to 2; Messrs Tony Parker, John Sykes, Steve Pollock, Tony Dean and Dr Tim Taylor won for the Friends, with Frs Michael Burden and Roger Hawkins winning for the College. Mrs Ann



Burden had the lowest round at putting for the College, Mr John Sykes for the Friends. The College won the croquet match for the cup presented by Miss L C van den Bremt, with Frs Roger Bould and Robert Raikes beating Fr Peter & Mrs Marrion Cole and Mrs Ann Walters.

Fr Frank Gough

## The Art Group

The Art group has been part of the College scene as far as I can remember - and further back ...

All three of our tutors, Yvette, Angela and now Michelle have had a background of study at Tobias College of Art and Therapy. Each has brought her own particular interests. Emphasis has been on colour and form where realism emerges into interesting and beautiful creations, using different media: watercolour, pencil, pastel, oil and acrylic.

The group has evolved over the years into a thriving enjoyable experience, gingered up by a diverse membership – and cups of tea; trips to places in the countryside, recently to a bluebell wood. The outcome was a frieze in watercolour. Another memorable outing took us to the River Eden, a joyful occasion supported by scones, Pimm's and painting! We recently visited Tudeley parish church near Sevenoaks with its unusual and beautiful stained glass windows by the Jewish artist, Marc Chagall (1887-1985). The following week we produced "stained glass" pictures, which were hung in the Common Room windows. Our latest visit was to a lavender farm near Tonbridge.

Our current tutor, Michelle, is a great asset to the College. New members are always welcomed into the mix.

Mrs Ann Burden

## Theology Group Sessions

### 2014

- August            Prebendary Russell Bowman Edie on "*Male Spirituality*"
- September        The Revd Imtiaz Trask on "*The Work of Release International*"
- October            General Sir Hugh Beach on "*Just War?*"
- November         The Ven Peter Townley, Archdeacon of Pontefract  
on "*The Shape of the Church to Come*"

### 2015

- January            The Rt Revd Nigel Stock on his work as Bishop at Lambeth
- February – March  
Lenten Addresses given by Sr Meg Evening  
on "*Entering the Desert*"
- May                Fr John Gayford on "*The Background to St Marks Gospel*"
- June                "*Religious Communities in the Church of England Today*"  
a symposium chaired by Fr Michael Shields
- July                The Revd Kathryn Percival, Vicar of Lingfield  
on "*The Parish – present, past and future*"
- September        The Right Revd Christopher Hill on "*Christian Unity*"
- October            The Very Revd John Arnold  
on "*Europe – Origins and Opportunities*" (see page 12)
- November         Canon Michael Moore on "*The Life and Times of Bishop Gore*"
- December         The Right Revd Norman Banks on "*The Spanish Mystics*"

### 2016

- January            Mr Kevin Crook on "*The Work of the Mission Aviation Fellowship*"
- February – March  
Lenten Addresses given by Canon John Laird  
on "*The Nourishment of Faith*"
- April                Fr Philip Warner, Rector of St. Magnus the Martyr, London Bridge  
on "*Ministry in the City*"
- May                The Right Revd Stephen Platten on  
"*Pope Paul VI and Christian Unity*"
- July                The College's Franciscan tertiaries presented the film  
"*Finding Saint Francis*", directed by Paul Alexander

## Sermon at Evensong with the Dedication of the Magnus Organ

The Right Reverend Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark

*On Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2015 the new chapel organ was dedicated by the Bishop. Made by Magnus Organs of Poland, this wonderful new instrument was made possible by two generous bequests, a number of smaller gifts and a major grant from the Friends of the College.*



*'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.'*  
[Matthew 6<sup>28</sup>]

The way in which Jesus speaks of the glory of Solomon suggests not the eternal, ineffable, glory of God but something much more transient and impermanent.

The glory of Solomon – with all its wealth and magnificence so admired by the Queen of the South – the glory of Solomon did not last. The spices, cedar wood and precious metals which adorned his household and the temple he built, where are they now? 'Consider', says St Matthew: think about this, ponder and weigh in your hearts and minds, what was, when all is said and done, the glory of Solomon?

Matthew is insistent about this; this really is something to think about. His word, 'consider', is a command, an order, not merely a suggestion. Jesus, and St Matthew is clear on this, is resolute that we should reflect on the passing of earthly glory and turn instead to all that lies beyond, to the essential eternal mystery of the glory of God. The transience of all that we behold and value in this life with its essentially material dynamics will all, as we know for certain, come to an end. Should this be sobering in a College and community such as this one dedicated to St Barnabas and not in any way lacking in a deep appreciation, awareness and apprehension of divine wisdom?

The lilies of the field of which Matthew speaks are the field flowers of a Galilean spring: wild lilies, crocuses, anemones, which burst forth in glory with the coming of the vernal warmth but which are gone within weeks, days, even

hours. These are glorious. For these we receive by the pure and generous, almost *redundantly* generous, gift of God. These attract nothing in themselves. We cannot keep them. They do not last. They will be seen once, perhaps twice. And yet they are the most marvellous sign of the abundant provision of God for and in creation.

And so for us. We are not to seek our own glory, glory for ourselves, but merely seek in all things, in each and every encounter, to point others beyond ourselves to God. And the lilies and flowers of the field are signs given to us by God which will, if we pay attention, if, as Matthew says, we *consider* in obedience to the command of Jesus, lead us to the divine. They of course need attention in the manner of any living thing which is to flourish as God intended. And above all, they, like us all, need to consider.

In all that we do as Christians in our daily lives, we should consider, where or what is the glory in that which we undertake? You see, it often does not matter if what we do is here today and gone tomorrow. But it *does* matter that what we do points to God and not to ourselves, that any glory is a reflection not of us but of the glory of God and his enduring abiding love. This is also true of our worship and those things which so enrich, deepen and enhance our worship, including the wonderful God-given gift of music and the sound in this Chapel of the mighty organ - appropriately named the Magnus Organ - which I shall dedicate shortly. The offering of music in divine worship, like the lilies of the field, is also something of the moment, uniquely and wonderfully so, and similarly glorious.

In August my good friend and former colleague, John Scott, died suddenly. He was an inspirational musician, moving in 2004 from St Paul's Cathedral, where he had been Organist and Director of Music for nearly fifteen years, to St Thomas's Fifth Avenue in New York. He had a deep Christian faith and insisted that Bach's motto 'Soli Deo Gloria' (Glory to God alone) which Bach wrote at the end of all his sacred compositions, should be carved into the new organ case at St Thomas's. It is in that same spirit I will dedicate the Magnus Organ.

'Consider', says Jesus. 'Consider' records Matthew. Let it be so for us all. 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these'.

Consider this splendid Magnus Organ. Consider our own course through the brief span of this life. Let us see the glory of God in the transience of all that is of our making and in the eternal splendour of all that is of His doing. And wherever the Lord calls out glory in your life or in mine, may it be our prayer that we will know always that all good things come from Him and that in God alone do we and all people find our true and everlasting glory.

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*The inaugural celebrity recital was given by Dr David Flood, Organist and Master of the Choristers of Canterbury Cathedral, on 8 April 2016.*

## Reflections on an Advent Verse

The Warden

Some years ago I was given a book of verses for Advent. It's called *Expectant* – a word that has a range of meanings, more than one of which are applicable to the season of Advent and inform the poetry in the book by Jim Cotter. When I read through the book it was a delightful surprise to find that these new Advent verses were based on the same format as the hymn *O come, O come, Emmanuel*.

Even before I knew of its significance, I had always been moved by that hymn with its metrical paraphrases of the great Sarum antiphons. So you can imagine how special it was to find myself as an ordinand caught up in the great Advent liturgy, built around the antiphons, that is celebrated in Salisbury Cathedral. To be given a book with that heritage brought it all back, and I found them an enjoyable collection, reading them as a sort of literary Advent calendar with one for each day of December leading up to Christmas.

That, I confess, was all I had done with them, until this year I decided to dust them off and re-visit them. In the author's preface he suggests a whole range of ways to use the verses in prayer, one of which was to learn each one by heart and allow it to work away in the subconscious throughout the day. To begin with I was surprised by how difficult it was to get them to 'stick'. In the end I didn't get through to the 24<sup>th</sup>. But that wasn't because I gave up; it was because one verse in particular wouldn't leave me alone.

Working on the basis that *lectio divina* is about living with a text and allowing God to speak through it for as long as he needs, I stayed with this one verse which became more and more precious as Advent unfolded. As good poetry does, it began with one apparent meaning, but has gradually revealed more layers as the season has moved on.

O come, O come thou wisdom strange  
from deep within God's womb, to range  
the earth at midnight's hour of fears  
to make us wise beyond our years.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Our God shall leap  
with light that rouses us from sleep.

It began for me as a startling new interpretation of the opening antiphon – *O Sapientia* – O Wisdom, that camest out of the mouth of the most high ...

At first, it was the womb imagery stood out – the wisdom of God, traditionally thought of as a feminine image from the book of Proverbs, being given birth from the very being of God. It turned the story of the Nativity on its head. In welcoming the Christ, we are welcoming the Being of God from deep within God's self. To think of God somehow also giving birth in the Incarnation, of releasing from his being the divine essence that was enshrined in the human form given birth by Mary, made the co-operation between God and humanity more astonishing than ever.



As I lived with the verse, I loved the idea of God's strange wisdom "ranging" the earth. It felt rather like the Spirit of God moving over the face of the waters [Genesis 1<sup>2</sup>], or perhaps the mighty forces "ranged" against Elijah's enemies on the hillside and which he prays for his servant to see. [II Kings 6<sup>17</sup>] The thought of Wisdom moving about in the world, the Being of God at large in Creation, is a good corrective to the sentimentality that so easily surrounds the Christmas story, inspired by the innocence of a cuddly baby rather than the purity of the divine.

But it was the *time* for this ranging that somehow got into me and wouldn't let go. "O come, O come, thou wisdom strange from deep within God's womb, to range the earth *at midnight's hour of fears ...* "

Here is the poet plumbing the depths of what St John of the Cross named the Dark Night of the Soul: those dreadful moments that come in the night (metaphorically or literally) when God seems far away, or not present at all. The miserable consequence of the distance between God and humanity, not of space or time but of *essence*. This leads to what John Hick has called the 'epistemic distance' – the gulf of understanding that is between us and God that will always be, because we are not God but are so other than he is.

We all know that light and darkness are used symbolically of good and evil in John's Gospel. But the darkness that the poet is relating to here seems to me not to be the darkness of evil, but the darkness that comes in the night of the soul – that terrible paralysis of the spirit that by its very nature prevents us from overcoming it by our own efforts or prayers. And the Wisdom that Christ brings into that terrible place makes us "wise beyond our years". This is not understanding that we can teach ourselves, it is not experience that we can gather over time. It can only come as a gift from the one beyond all years, the One who is the Beginning and the End, who has not only experienced the isolation of Good Friday but also known the restoration of Easter.

So now, when I read "*The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it*" [John 1<sup>5</sup>], I don't only think of the triumph of Jesus over the evil of the world, but of his overcoming the darkness of those moments of aridity, doubt and isolation that can afflict us all, even the greatest of the saints.

The verse ends "*Rejoice! Rejoice! Our God shall leap with light that rouses us from sleep.*" On the face of it, that might not sound very Christmassy, but let us thank God that, even in the darkness of midnight's hour of fears, the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem brings light, hope, and joy – like awakening from a nightmare.

And all in response to a simple invitation from the heart that the poet invites us to make our own – "O come, O come, thou Wisdom strange".

## Homily at the Funeral Requiem for Jane Bould

Bishop Alan Chesters

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."* [1 Peter 1<sup>3</sup>]

Those stirring words from St Peter's First Letter, express better than any words of mine, the spirit which our sister Jane, nurse, devoted wife, loving mother and friend to so many, would wish us to have as we come to give thanks for her life, for the many gifts God gave to her and for allowing us to have a part in her life.

Given Jane's very strict instructions about what might be said in the address at her requiem I am reminded of the funeral of a relative of mine in Stoke on Trent in the Lichfield Diocese in which Jane and Roger spent so much of their married life. The officiating minister having for more than 20 minutes spelt out in great detail the life of the departed, the cousin sitting next to me wearily whispered, "When it comes to my funeral, Alan, I shall expect those present to know me already!" Jane wanted no eulogy but that rather, as we commend her soul into His safe keeping, the glory should be given to God her creator and redeemer.

It means therefore that as we surround Roger, Christopher and Catherine with our loving sympathy and prayer, each of us, with them, must recall personally those memories of Jane's life which made us wish to be here this morning. Perhaps I can encapsulate her life with a personal anecdote. When, five years ago, Jennie and I arrived at the College of St Barnabas, Jennie was placed to sit next to Jane in the Refectory. Since Jennie was partially sighted and Jane was deaf in her ear next to Jennie, conversation was not exactly easy, yet I well remember how one day returning from lunch Jennie, clearly encouraged by her daily encounters with Jane commented, "You know, I think Jane Bould is a true Christian." You may be relieved to know that this was not intended as a considered judgement on the rest of the members of the College but an heartfelt observation of the deep faith and its practical outcome of one who had faced and was daily facing many challenges in her life.

Sad though it is for we who are left, for Jane her death is surely a glorious release from the demands of this mortal life, not least those which advancing years and infirmity bring, into the arms of her Lord and Saviour. As Ecclesiastes reminds us, there is 'a time to be born and a time to die'. For Jane, nourished in her preparation for death as in her long life by word and sacrament, supported by the prayers of Our Lady of Walsingham and countless others whose lives she touched, that time had come.

With confidence we commit her to her Maker and Redeemer, to the Lord whose judgement of her will be with mercy, for we have His promise that any who come to Him will not be driven away. At the heart of the Christian faith is that Cross through which Christ triumphed gloriously over death. In His resurrection lies our hope that this life is but a part of God's wondrous creation. Beyond it the dust from which we are formed will be transformed into something more glorious for God.

'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who by His great mercy has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.'

At the College, Jane came to be part of a community where that hope in the Risen Lord is at the heart of its life. Through the worship offered here day by day in this chapel where Jane now rests, that hope is proclaimed and sustained in word and sacrament. The busyness and responsibilities of our youth and middle years behind us, we need to remember that Christ the Bread of Life is not only with us to nourish now but that on the last day He will raise us up. Christ is the Bread of Life for now and for eternity.

That faith and hope in Christ, the One who died that we might have life, inspires and encourages each of us to be the loving, giving and forgiving person He calls us to be. In her youth Jane believed that she was called to be a nurse and, having trained, to work overseas caring for sick children. God had other plans and other ways in which she with Roger would share His love for others. In the time which is left to us God calls each of us, whether in this college community or wherever we live, to use what we have – our prayers, our time, our resources – in His service, seeking to share His Love with those around us and beyond.

We thank God for Jane. We pray for the repose of her soul and that Roger and her family may know the Lord's presence at this time of parting. As she desired at her Requiem may we with St Peter from the depths of our being proclaim: 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ', for in Him alone lies our hope of the life which is eternal.

## **Address at the Requiem for Bishop John Waller**

The Reverend Canon David Durston

I first met John when he was Rector of Harpenden. A member of the congregation had persuaded him to invite me to preach at the Eucharist on Sunday and, on the Saturday evening, I went round to the Rectory to meet him. We got into a conversation about 'How do you make worship feel real to people?' We were talking about sharing the Peace. I said something like "Perhaps one Sunday we should say to people 'Go and share the Peace with somebody you find it difficult to get on with.'" There was a pause and then John said, "But what if half the congregation all went to the same person?" and we both fell about laughing. It was the start of a friendship that lasted nearly forty years.

I then went to a parish in Lichfield Diocese, and within a year John came to the diocese as Bishop of Stafford. He was chairing the diocesan Board of Ministry when I became Adult Education Officer for the diocese, and for a time I was working with John in the Board of Ministry and with Pam who was Diocesan President of the Mothers' Union in training Deanery Leaders.

The brief biography of John and the various appointments he fulfilled on the back of the Order of Service will tell you of his years of service as a priest, of his consecration as a bishop and of the dioceses in which he served, of his concern for Africa and its peoples, of his work with the Mothers' Union and the Franciscan element in his spirituality.

But what it cannot convey is the quality and depth of his ministry. His deep love and compassion for people found expression in his pastoral care. It was a love and compassion that was deepened by his own experience of pain and grief. When our parish in West Bromwich celebrated its centenary I invited him to come and preach. At that time we had two mothers on the PCC who had children with learning difficulties, one relatively mild, one very severe. I knew about Susan so I knew John had that experience in his own family, and I asked him if he would be willing to visit these families in their homes, pray with them and bless the children. It was very moving to go with him to these homes and to see his love and care for these children and their families in his ministry to them.

Those same gifts of love and compassion which so many people in his parishes experienced, and which we knew in the diocese when he was bishop, were nourished in the life of his family and enjoyed by his children and grandchildren. You, his children, you his grandchildren, will know how richly God has blessed you in the love of your father and grandfather, and your mother and grandmother.

Among the papers John left is a copy of the first letter he wrote in the Lichfield Diocesan Magazine after becoming Bishop of Stafford. It is a very moving expression of his faith in God and, although it was written over thirty years ago now and things have moved on a long way since then, it still reads as a very perceptive understanding of God's call to the Church.

"The longing for change for change's sake" he wrote, "is no more than a symptom of discontent and an unpreparedness to face the reality of the present. The Christian approach to change is totally different. It starts and finishes with the conviction that new life is preceded by death. Allowing something to die is not defeat and is not to be feared, for it is the only way forward to the new life which is given. I do not pretend that such experiences of death and surrender are easy. They are usually painful, but that is to be expected for they are part of the Way of the Cross. I do not deny that most of the time most of us cling to the old and familiar and try to avoid the death of those things we have cherished even when they are outworn but that also is to be expected for our faith is imperfect."

John then goes on to speak about his hopes for the Church, and though this was written thirty years ago, they show how perceptive a person he was.

"My present hope is grounded in the signs of death and new life that I see in the Church over the last thirty years:

The death of an undue emphasis on roles and status and false understandings of authority ... and the gift of a new recognition of our humanity, a wider sharing in ministry and an acknowledgement of that which is authoritative in its own right.

The death of a triumphalist view of the Church ... and the gift of sight that God is not contained in the Church but is at work in His world in many ways which still surprise us.

The death of much spirituality that was based on duty and led to much sense of failure and guilt ... and the gift of a freedom in the Spirit which allows individuals to discover a new and wider spirituality containing but not contained by the riches of the past."

These hopes give us an insight into John's faith in God and the character of his spirituality. For John, death and new life were part of a single whole. Without death there can be no resurrection. Death is the only gateway to the life that is to come.

He knew that death is usually painful. It is part of the way of the Cross, the way that Jesus of Nazareth walked and which he invites us to follow. And for those that are left behind, the loss and the letting-go of grief are bitter and painful too.

John knew that the new life is something that is given to us, God's gift to us, a gift that can never be earned but only received as a gift. He knew too how wonderful that gift of new life is, the new life of the resurrection, which God gives gladly and generously to all His children.

So we say farewell to John, a faithful servant of the Lord, who has gone to receive the gift of new life that the Father has in store for all who love Him.

## COMINGS AND GOINGS SINCE THE LAST ISSUE

### New Residents

Canon John Laird	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2014
Fr John Allen	28 <sup>th</sup> September
Sr Margaret 'Meg' Evening	23 <sup>rd</sup> October
Fr William Burman	12 <sup>th</sup> November
Mrs Shielah Wren	12 <sup>th</sup> November
Fr Rowland and Mrs Vima Webb	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2015
Canon John Fowles	24 <sup>th</sup> June
Fr Basil Matthews	25 <sup>th</sup> September
Mrs Muriel Lander	30 <sup>th</sup> September
Mrs Elizabeth 'Beth' Gough	1 <sup>st</sup> October
Fr Frank and Mrs Yvonne Gough	11 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
Canon Paul Rose	16 <sup>th</sup> January
Fr Geoffrey Blackwell	25 <sup>th</sup> February
Fr David Williams	Returned 1 <sup>st</sup> March
Fr Alex Brighthouse	8 <sup>th</sup> April
Mr John Trueman	9 <sup>th</sup> May
Fr Barry Thorley	18 <sup>th</sup> July
Fr George Wood	22 <sup>nd</sup> July

### Moved away

Bp Alan Chesters	4 <sup>th</sup> September 2014
Mrs Joan Turnbull	30 <sup>th</sup> May 2015
Fr David Fysh	17 <sup>th</sup> February 2016
Fr David & Mrs Jean Letcher	9 <sup>th</sup> August
The Revd Isabella Landreth	24 <sup>th</sup> August

## Those who have died

Mrs Norma Simpson	30 <sup>th</sup> August 2014
Bp Mark Wood	28 <sup>th</sup> September
Fr Michael Tingle	12 <sup>th</sup> October
Mrs Jean Sharpe	28 <sup>th</sup> November
Fr David Pope	11 <sup>th</sup> December
Fr Piers Golding	14 <sup>th</sup> December
Fr Bill Turnbull	25 <sup>th</sup> December
Fr John Allen	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2015
Fr Frank Andrew	3 <sup>rd</sup> May
Fr David Gray	4 <sup>th</sup> August
Mrs Jane Bould	21 <sup>st</sup> August
Bp John Waller	3 <sup>rd</sup> September
Fr Basil Matthews	3 <sup>rd</sup> December
Miss Sylvia Jessup	21 <sup>st</sup> December
Fr Basil Hobbs	17 <sup>th</sup> February 2016
Mrs Shielah Wren	3 <sup>rd</sup> March
Fr Geoffrey Blackwell	11 <sup>th</sup> March
Fr Alex Brighthouse	23 <sup>rd</sup> May

✠ May they rest in peace and rise in glory