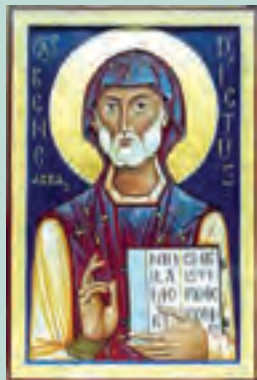




# CR Festival

*Living with St Benedict*



We invite you to join us for the CR Festival Day celebration at Mirfield. This year CR Festival Day will be on **Saturday 6 July**, preacher: **The Rt Revd Michael Ipgrave**, Bishop of Lichfield.

CR Festival Day will be preceded by a reflective **study afternoon** on Friday 5 July with our Companions (CCR). All are welcome to join in with this, particularly if you are interested in joining CCR.

Following the CR Festival Day Midday Eucharist, and lunch, you are invited to walk the **Stations of the Benedictine life**. This is the opportunity to hear from the Brethren and others about the Benedictine tradition and its influence on the monastic pattern and everyday life.

## Friday 5 July – CCR Day

Arrivals from the morning onwards.

- 12noon Sung Mass of the Dedication
- 1.15pm Lunch
- 2pm **Reflective Study Afternoon**
- 4pm Afternoon Tea with Brethren
- 5pm **Silent Prayer in the Community Church**
- 6pm Solemn Evensong

## Saturday 6 July – CR Festival Day

- 10.30am Welcome talk from the Superior
  - 11.15am Presentation
  - 12noon Sung Mass with Sermon
  - 1.30pm Lunch
  - 2.30pm Stations of the Benedictine life
  - 4pm Exposition & Benediction
  - 5pm Solemn Evensong
- (refreshments available throughout the day)

## CR Festival Lunch:

2-Course Festival Lunch (inc. Tea & Coffee) costs £8.00, and meal tickets for day guests are available to book through the Guest Department.

### Menu:

- Home-made lasagne
- Peppers stuffed with sun-dried tomatoes and risotto (V)
- Mixed salad
- Freshly baked bread rolls**
- Rhubarb and apple crumble

## Weekend Accommodation:

Accommodation (including meals) for two nights:

Book with our Guest Department:

- Standard Single £100
- Single en-suite £115
- Double en-suite £180

Twin rooms also available.

Email: [guests@mirfield.org.uk](mailto:guests@mirfield.org.uk)

Telephone: 01924 483346

# CR

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## Lighthouses

On a day when the clouds burst and a roaring wind flung down relentless torrents of rain, I found refuge in the tiny parish church of St Leonard in Speeton on the Yorkshire coast. The church stands on the cliff between Filey and Flamborough Head and is well worth a visit. The solid oak door, held by a small iron hook, withstood the battering wind. Once inside, the silence was a powerful contrast to the dramatically howling storm.

I've known this kind of silence elsewhere – at the mountain-top at Montserrat, in a hospital room as my mother died, by the moving waters of St Winefred's Well, and in the Church of the Resurrection at Mirfield. I think of it as a 'pregnant' silence. It has a quality of waiting, of stillness, forbearance. It offers the invitation to 'Come, and see', to step into sacred space and listen.

The silence at Speeton felt womb-like. It brought a sense of being embraced and held by Love.



*Speeton Church*

On the day I visited St Leonard's, the church was full of stunning displays for the annual Flower Festival which this year took the Rainbow as its theme. Willow hoops interwoven with flowers hung from the beams. Beautiful creations of rainbow colours lay on window ledges and at the altar. God's covenant was portrayed in buds and petals and leaves, and made sentient by fragrance. Adding to all this beauty was a kettle, some disposable cups and the means of making hot drinks for anyone visiting the church, and a sign saying 'Welcome'. It felt like a very Ignatian experience. All my senses were being 'fed'. And, as is often the case in Ignatian contemplation, there was *more*. For on the wall was an inscription

thanking ‘The Mirfield Fathers’ for their donation of pews when they relocated from the Hostel of the Resurrection. What a surprising and inspiring connection! The dark pews in Speeton church are hand-adzed, polished smooth as glass by hands over many years and wonderfully tactile. Used these days by a handful of parishioners the pews are still appreciated by those who pray here, or who just sit and rest here and absorb the silence.

This unexpected link with Mirfield led my thoughts to the current CR appeal for prayers for vocations to religious communities. When I have recently joined in this network of prayer, images of beacons and lighthouses have emerged. Within



*Speeton Church Interior*

reach of the beams from the white tower of the Lighthouse at Flamborough (see cover photo), the little church at Speeton stands bravely on eroding cliffs, with a dwindling community of worshippers, but continues to shine in its own way and spreads the light of Christ. When I am not at Mirfield I think of the Community of the Resurrection and of that particular house of prayer, as a Lighthouse, a source of light that will guide me home. And I give thanks for the dearly loved CR brethren who, by their vocations, keep God’s light burning.

**Maggie Jackson**

## John Neville Figgis CR (1866-1919)



**N**eville Figgis was one of the most brilliantly gifted members of the Community of the Resurrection in its early days (he entered the Community in 1896). From 2nd- 4th April this year, at the request of the Community, a public conference was held at The Mirfield Centre to commemorate his rather tragic and premature death in April 1919, and to continue to reflect on some of the issues that concerned him, especially questions of political and religious pluralism that he presciently raised in his important book *Churches in the Modern State* (1913). So the conference was entitled: 'Churches in a Pluralist World: A Centenary Conference on The Theological Legacy of John Neville Figgis CR (1866-1919).



Brilliant historian, political philosopher, theologian and preacher, John Neville Figgis, C.R., was one of the great minds of the early twentieth century, active on both sides of the Atlantic. Although Figgis died before the worst manifestations of twentieth-century totalitarianism, he was implacably opposed (like his mentor Lord Acton) to all forms of authoritarianism and absolutism and this passion drove much of his writing and preaching. Figgis favoured a broadly distributist and bottom-up view of authority that respects the integrity of individuals and of the communities and institutions that make up civil society, including the Church. Figgis can be seen as a prophet of modern pluralism.

The conference aimed to combine a critical retrieval of Figgis' thought with constructive reflection on the mission of the Church in our present pluralistic world. Figgis' main work of ecclesiology was *The Fellowship of the Mystery* (1914). By interacting with his thought we aimed to refresh our own vision of how the Christian Church can respond to contemporary challenges.

The speakers were (in alphabetical order); the Revd Professor Paul Avis (Durham and Exeter Universities; Convener); Professor William (Bill) Cavanaugh (DePaul University, Chicago); the Revd Canon Professor Mark Chapman (Ripon College Cuddesdon and University of Oxford); Professor Elaine Graham (University of Chester); the Revd Canon Dr Andrew Grosso (Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Columbia, South Carolina); the Revd Dr Jeremy Morris (Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge); the Revd Professor Ephraim Radner (Wycliffe College, University of Toronto); the Revd Canon Dr Peter Sedgwick (former Principal, St Michael's College, Llandaff); the Revd Canon Dr Stephen Spencer (Director for Theological Education for the Anglican Communion).

I am currently exploring the possibility of publishing the papers in a revised and expanded form.

The conference joined the Community, students and guests in church for the Daily Offices, Compline and Mass. The conference was grateful for the welcome given by Fr Oswin on behalf of the Community and for the excellent administrative support provided by Beth Harper.

**Paul Avis**

## Religious Communities and Politics

We are all scratching our heads today about politics, here and in many parts of the world. The conference about Neville Figgis CR in April (see previous article) threw some intriguing light on this. There is growing interest in what Figgis had to say about Christianity and politics, and I was particularly struck by the reflections of Professor Bill Cavanaugh from Chicago. He and other speakers explained how for Figgis a healthy society needs 3 levels:

1. The people,
2. “Intermediate groups”  
(the local community, clubs, interest groups, the churches etc),
3. The State.

In Figgis’ time intermediate groups were disappearing. Today, local community can only be found in patches and doesn’t always amount to much, clubs and friendly societies have nosedived (see Robert Putnam’s book *Bowling alone*), and what is left is the all-powerful state dealing directly with the people. Furthermore, the state deals not with communities, but with individuals. So each of us has a relationship with the law of the land, and the nation’s administration and government, only as the individuals that we are. A succession of popes from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards have recognized this process: Pius XII came to say that, with the disappearance of intermediate groups, “now there remains only the individual and the state”. People no longer look to the churches, or guilds, or the local social network for support, provision of what they need, and protection – we all expect it to be done by government and the public institutions it oversees.

Bill Cavanaugh in his talk showed how the state has in fact replaced God. We look to it for everything – for support, for justice, for all the things we need in life. And the state presumes its role is to control all of these things. Here, by the state, I think we can mean the government, which passes laws, which are passed on to the justice system and other entities like the NHS, which then work more or less to implement them. As we all look to the state for everything, it becomes difficult to believe in God, because the state can outdo God in so many respects. I think this is one of the secrets to understanding the decline in churchgoing. So, according to Figgis, we are not a religionless society – the state has become our religion. To this we have to add big business and mammoth organizations like Google and Amazon.



This booklet (28pp) costs £2.50 + postage from [bookshop@mirfield.org.uk](mailto:bookshop@mirfield.org.uk)

# JOHN NEVILLE FIGGIS CR



A Centenary Memoir

Government tries to regulate them, but it also depends on them, and ends up joining with them at the top of the pyramid.

I found this interesting, not least for the ways it affects religious communities. The state does not deal with communities but individuals. It cannot recognise that we in CR are a family. That affects things like hospital visiting, proving our identity (we don't have standard things like utility bills and bank accounts) but also our internal life. The modern world seeks to bring legality into more and more aspects of life, in a way that can be anathema to monastic life. St Paul said that Christians should not take their disputes to a secular court. Now Religious Communities are required to follow procedures that our common life, by its nature, deals with in a different way. For instance, we have to introduce policies which, while good in most other spheres, are legalistic and contractual, as inappropriate with us as in any normal family. You don't normally turn to the law if you have a dispute with your spouse. There was a notorious case a few years ago where a community of nuns were not allowed to look after their elderly sisters because that part of the town was not designated for elderly care homes, and so the community had to move. I give these examples just as an illustration of the way the modern state, even if it tries its best to be flexible, as it often does in Britain, expects people to fit its boxes.

We have to wonder whether Figgis was not right in saying that the modern notion of the nation state is in the long-term unsustainable. It presumes individuals rather than communities, and has encouraged today's excessive individualism and loss of community. Human beings were made for community, but many of the population are trying to live the life of a human being without it, their proper context, and so we feel increasingly insecure, without orientation, and behave in ways that are not conducive to flourishing.

The insecurities in us that follow from this are now coming out in the politics of the nations. Partly this is because nation-states fail to be God for people. It can't be done. We want the state to do everything for us, but it won't work. We were made for God. And so the state continues to leave us increasingly dissatisfied. In such a situation Religious Communities need to stand firm on their principles, but this goes for all other Christians as well. We need to ensure that the Church continues to be one of the few surviving "intermediate groups" between the nation's government and the individual. In other words, the Church needs to be strong, and it needs to have standards on which it will not give way. Standards about its own life, about the commitments of its members, and about what it is to be a human being in a world where many false and inadequate ideas are swirling around about what it is to be a

human being. This doesn't mean not being open and prepared to learn. That is vital. We will all be aware of the current humiliation of the Church at the hands of secular society, because of its failure to protect vulnerable people from abuse. So we are not talking about a kind of defensive tribalism. Figgis saw intermediate groups not as fortresses, but as being in dialogue. And his key insight is that such groups ought to be where the life of the nation is. The place where everything ought to be buzzing and "real" for us ought to be in the intermediate groups. The state's role is simply to "create the conditions for social groups to coexist harmoniously".

There is a slight caveat here: the church can't simply understand its own self as an "intermediate group", a sub-group within the encompassing state, for the gospel is larger than the state, in its geographical extension and in its greater understanding of what life is about.

Figgis has a lot to say about the culture of targets so dominant today, where people in many walks of life, such as teaching or the NHS, feel they are policed rather than trusted. Even, as I am hearing all the time, for clergy this is so today. The target-mentality does achieve positive results in keeping people on their toes, but it loses by depriving people of initiative and the free exercise of their native imagination and ability to think on their feet. Our modern world is like a long, narrow cart laden with good things. Governments keep loading more helpful things on the front end, not realising that down at the other end of the cart it is pushing other good things off, including old habits and values which have until now been important parts of what it is to be human beings together. You simply can't have everything. Freedom and imagination have been replaced by contracts and contractual relationships. This has helped deal with many abuses, but at a great cost. Figgis imagines a world where the collaboration of human beings "is not merely a matter of contract; ... It has the marks of mind and will which we attribute to personality; ... This corporate life and personality grows up naturally and inevitably out of any union of [people] for permanent ends, and is not withheld or granted at the pleasure of the state ...".

Most of us probably don't feel a call to change the constitution! Whatever you believe about what Figgis says, however, it is pretty clear from the New Testament that the Church's place within society is to be an "intermediate society" in dialogue with the world around it, open to what it can learn, but clear that its task is to be strong in the Lord who is greater than any society, and the main source of that strength is its worship, its prayer, and its love of people.

**George CR**

## St Matthias Trier – Annual Visit

As a completion of the celebration of our 50 years' brotherhood together, the Abbot of St Matthias Abbey Trier and the Prior of their Sister monastery of the Huysburg in Eastern Germany, Br Ignatius and Br Antonius, came on a few days' visit in May. The German brothers were interested to talk about mission, and so we took them to visit the Franciscans' Priory in Leeds, where Bros Benedict and Michael Jacob told them about the life of SSF and how they engage in mission and service of the needy. The visitors were very impressed, and one said they found the approach more spiritual than what they are used to in Germany where Religious minister amongst people in need. Back at Mirfield, we ourselves talked with them about the ways in which CR engages in mission, both further afield, and here at Mirfield. Our vicar, Maggie McLean, came round and explained about the Church of England's programme of *Reform and Renewal*, and its positive and negative aspects. The Germans were surprised to see how centralized this all was, something that would not be possible in the Roman Catholic Church in Germany, which is broken up into smaller units in a country whose organization is federal.

They enjoyed a visit to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, but were even more eloquent about what they found at Mirfield, in our church, and in our worship.



Left to right: Antonius OSB, Philip CR, Ruel (an ordinand from Barbados staying with us for a month, seconded from the Community of St Anselm at Lambeth), John CR, Ignatius OSB, at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park.



At the end of the visit we prayed together at Evensong prayers we had written together to mark our partnership of 50 years (the texts are in the Epiphany edition). It is not easy to sustain a relationship between two communities that are hundreds of miles apart, and yet by the grace of God it flourishes with a real sense of being brothers together.



## A Worldwide Conference of Religious Communities



On 27 May I set off heading for a conference at St Paul's University, Limuru, near Nairobi, Kenya, for a conference organised by the Anglican Communion, of members of religious communities from around the world (UK, Myanmar, Korea, Solomon Islands, Cameroon, Zimbabwe, New Zealand, France) plus several Kenyan theologians, one Brazilian and an Egyptian, and also the former Bishop of Sherborne, and our old friend Stephen Spencer. It was the third of three meetings of TEMAC (Theological Education for Mission in the Anglican Communion) discussing the three priorities Archbishop Justin announce on becoming Archbishop of Canterbury, on the theme 'Prayer and the Renewal of the Religious Life'. The Archbishop of Canterbury arrived for the final two days, and in a powerful lecture to an expanded audience started with the history of CR. For the Kenyans present this world-wide array of religious brothers and sisters opened their eyes to something they had not experienced before; speakers from the audience left an impression of a country ripe for the founding of religious communities.

I want to say something about Brother Emmanuel osb, Prior of the *Congregation des Compagnons de Saint Benoît* in Cameroon. He was trained in the Roman Catholic Church for the priesthood. This included 3 years in France, in Lille. He was ordained deacon, but for complicated reasons felt unable to follow a path mapped out for him. He asked for time out to reflect. During that time he came to know an Anglican priest, and became an Anglican. He was ordained priest, and asked permission to form a Benedictine community, which was granted. Br Emmanuel went to south Cameroon, and started his community in that year. For the last 12 years they have lived in rented accommodation in the town of Ebolowa. They work the small amount of adjacent land, and from selling the produce they are able to pay the rent. They are living four to a room, and are desperate to have a building of their own, where they can live the life properly. What they need is not a building, but land on which to build something themselves. There are now 12 professed brothers, 5 novices and 4 postulants – he says that in Cameroon vocations



are abundant. There are few Anglicans in that part of Cameroon, and no priests or parishes – he was forced to choose that area because life is cheaper. They have good relations with the local Roman Catholics and Protestants, and people come to the services, many of them Roman Catholic, most of them having to stand outside, hearing Mass through the window.

In his presentation to the conference Br Emmanuel related how the Brothers combine their monastic life with work amongst the needy, especially “unschooled children, orphans, some of whose parents have died from AIDS, homeless people, outcasts, juveniles with a risk of delinquency, with a view to their academic, professional, social, and family insertion. Promoting information and the prevention of STDs and HIV/AIDS”. Their long-term aim is to found a medical centre.

We are trying to think how we can help. The main thing he is asking for is an anchor in the form of some kind of relationship with another community in the Anglican Communion, and for help with formation of novices. He and his brothers only speak French, which is one problem, and the other is that either they would need to come to a community like us for part of their training, which is impossible with present immigration policies, or that someone from here goes to Cameroon, but the long-term formation needed would require too long a stay. Skype isn’t accessible for remote teaching, so we are left scratching our heads. We are hoping Lambeth Palace will be able to help get a Visa for Brother Emmanuel to pay a visit to Britain as the next step.

Everyone present was impressed by the heroism of Emmanuel’s community, and in this conference we were also inspired by each other, in the sense that as far as religious communities go, the Anglican Communion has something to show that may be small in numbers but very much alive.

On the way back to the airport, the University driver told me the climate had gone haywire – the rainy season hadn’t happened, people’s crops had failed, and many didn’t have enough money to pay their children’s university fees. Numbers were therefore going down, and he feared for his job. The University is impressive, originating from a college founded by the Church Missionary Society, and its equally impressive Vice-Chancellor came to all our sessions. Climate change is affecting everybody, and needs our prayers and our action.



*Br Emmanuel*

**George CR**

## Burnham Abbey



**C**R has had a relationship with Burnham Abbey over many years. The Abbey, not far from Slough, was founded in 1266 by Earl Richard of Cornwall, brother of King Henry III, in thanksgiving for the end of the Barons' Wars, and his release from the Tower of London. He decided it should be a house of Augustinian Canonesses, and sisters came from Goring Priory to make the new foundation. Houses of nuns were perforce houses of prayer, as no nun was allowed to do active works outside a convent in the later Middle Ages. Augustinian canonesses were founded to pray for the work of the Canons Regular, but also in particular at Burnham to pray for Earl Richard and his family. This life of prayer was centred on the recitation of the Divine Office. It is impossible to give an exact timetable, but they rose at midnight to sing Matins and Lauds, and then returned to bed in the common dormitory until daybreak and the recitation of Prime; the other offices, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline, were sung at intervals throughout the day, with a Chapter meeting and one or 2 Masses in the morning. As well as this, the business of the Abbey had to be carried on. The ideal number of nuns in Augustinian houses was 12 and, bearing in mind that there might be one or two sisters in the infirmary, and the youngest still training as novices, most of the nuns must have held responsible posts, for besides the Abbess, Prioress and Mistress of Novices there was usually a Treasurer, Chantress, Sacristan, Cellarer, Fraterer, Infirmarian and Almoner. Only women of "Gentle birth" could become nuns at this time, and in

a rural area like this it would mean that they either belonged to the aristocracy or the local gentry. The choice before a woman of this class was between marriage or a convent, if indeed her father allowed her a choice. That being the case, here at Burnham all the manual work was done by servants. This situation inevitably had disadvantages, and there were certainly women in convents who were misfits, who must have been as much a trial to themselves as they were to their sisters. One example is a note made in 1339 that two nuns at Burnham had been transferred to Goring Priory for the peace and quiet of the house.

The Abbess was usually a person of standing in her own right, and enjoyed a considerable amount of freedom. Once she was installed she held office until she died or resigned, and ideally she needed to be an able administrator as well as a person acceptable to the nuns. The convent's money came from rents from lands which they held, and the trouble was that estate managers could be dishonest, which lowered their income.

We have a much more vivid picture of life within the convent in the twenty years before the dissolution than at any other time, thanks to the survival of records of visitations made in 1519, 1521 and 1530. The fullest is that of the John Longland, Bishop of Lincoln in 1521. He was a reforming Bishop intent on raising standards in convents and monasteries. The proceedings were reported in detail, and for a moment the scene comes alive.

The Bishop entered the chapter house (what is now the Chapel), where the Abbess, Margaret Gibson, presented her credentials in the presence of the other 11 nuns. The Bishop then preached to them in English, after which the Abbess was required to show him the various title deeds. This being done, the Bishop



proceeded to examine the sisters one by one to find out what was amiss in the house. The complaints against the Abbess were that she allowed the nuns to get up at different times to say the Night Office, and then took some of her favourite nuns to her private room, where they stayed instead of returning to the dormitory at once. Anne Belfield was obviously a difficult person, as at the previous visitation there were complaints that she wouldn't give the nuns new clothes and shoes when they needed them. Now it was complained that instead of eating in the refectory with the other nuns, she took her meal to her room and ate it there. Another complaint was that some nuns couldn't read or sing, and there were other complaints too. At the end of the visitation the Bishop drew up his injunctions to correct anything that was wrong or slack.



There was another visitation in 1530 which showed the community had made a real effort to reform, but this availed them nothing, because in 1539 the convent was dissolved, and the lead from the roof of the church and any valuables were sent to London of the King. The nuns were given a small pension and had to go and live with any relatives who would have them. The dire effect the dissolution of religious houses had on the local community is shown in FM Prescott's book, *The man on a donkey*, and more recently in Victoria Glendinning's book *The Butcher's daughter*, which is a very good read. The Crown in the case of Burnham Abbey leased out the house, buildings and 626-acre estate to one of the King's favourites, but in 1563 Paul Wentworth obtained the lease and converted the Abbey buildings into a private house, levelling the church and the guest house down to the ground. In 1692 the Earl of Jersey obtained the lease,





and as he had no interest in living there, the Abbey became farm buildings and was allowed to decay. The Crown finally sold the whole estate in the 1830s and a John Pocock bought the site of the Abbey and 300 acres of surrounding land to make Burnham Abbey farm. The Abbey buildings continued to deteriorate until 1914, when the farm was sold again, and a gentleman builder, James Bissley, a member of the Church of England Society, bought the 10-acre site and restored the east range, surrounded by 4 acres of land. By this time the refectory and the mediaeval infirmary were just ruins.

In July 1915 the Bishop of Buckingham consecrated the altar and celebrated the Eucharist, and early in 1916 Mother Millicent Mary, who was looking for a home for her small community, came to view it, and in her words, “we came, we saw, and it conquered”. She had started the Society of the Precious Blood for the members to work among factory girls in Birmingham, but gradually came to see that the vocation of her community was not to a life of active parish work, but to a life of prayer. She had a great struggle to start with, both financially and because numbers dwindled, until only she and sister Dorothy were left, and it was not until the mid-1920s that numbers began to increase. During this time of suffering mother Millicent had come to see that within the life of prayer the Community’s vocation was that of intercession, and her aim was that a perpetual watch should be kept day and night in the Chapel in front of the Blessed Sacrament. This in fact has never proved possible, but until recently the whole day has been covered, and varying parts of the night. Nowadays it is just part of the day.

In 1957 there were sufficient sisters to found a house in what was then Basutoland, and they became linked to the Community of the Resurrection in South Africa, praying for that country particularly, in the grip of apartheid, and indeed Fr Aelred Stubbs CR lived with them for a time.

In the last hundred years the life has evolved as it has in other communities. In the beginning, strict enclosure was kept to protect the life of prayer, and hospitality was severely limited to 2 guests staying in the guest house, and one quiet-day person in the sitting room, with a sister to look after them. But the needs of the world around us have grown since then. The Abbey sits between the A4 and the M40, with planes flying over our heads from Heathrow, and the pressures on people living in this area are considerable. Therefore in 2010/11, with our decreasing numbers, we were able to give over a third of the east range to guests, and opened up to them the walled garden. Groups and individuals are coming in increasing numbers, and they appreciate and are affected by the peace and quiet, and what this place, soaked in prayer, has to give them. Now we are only a few mostly elderly sisters living the life of prayer as best we can, and we wait on the Lord to show us the future.

We are very glad to have had the support of brethren of the Community of the Resurrection over the years, beginning during the Second World War when Fr Frank Biggart CR became Warden, and for the last 14 years we have had Fr George Guiver as our Community Counsellor. Thank you, CR!

**Jane Mary SPB**





## What use is the liturgy?

*Prayer is more than the order of words, the conscious occupation  
Of the praying mind, or the sound of the voice praying  
And what the dead had no speech for, when living,  
They can tell you, being dead : the communication  
Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living.*

(T.S.Eliot. *Little Gidding*)



**T**here is an integrity in worship which mirrors the ontology, the ‘beingness’ of God. Indeed it is worship that instils integrity in us, it is what we were created for and is the source of our being.

*‘The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him for ever’* (Westminster Catechism).

‘Use’ with regard to liturgy does historically relate to distinctive traditions of liturgical texts, such as those of Milan and Salisbury, in this sense it is more about meaning than manipulation.

The liturgy is a source of altruism as it is directed to the God who loves us because he does and requires no reason to do so. *‘He hath loved us, hath loved us, because he would love,’* wrote Charles Wesley. Not to recognise this risks misinterpreting what we mean by grace just as in a previous age the medieval church thought it had the monopoly on God’s activity as a product to be exploited.

It might be thought that the relationship between worship and mission is being sent out to bring people ‘in’, rather than being sent out to discover in the people and places we go to the grace we know and experience in worship,



and are able to name it so, and help others discover it in their lives. If ‘the Lord was adding to their number those who were being saved’ among the earliest Christians, clearly the call to discipleship was attractive.

Something is seriously out of kilter when the liturgy becomes utilitarian, ‘a means to...’ do this, that or the other. Just as we risk treating creation as something to use, and in the process it will not be long before we regard people as utilitarian, even contributors (or not) to the parish share.

In a culture which has ‘getting on’ and self-promotion at its core, Christian worship is something totally foreign as it does not fit with the ‘me’ or ‘selfie’ agenda, or the coercion to comply with other grand narratives or plans. Much of the ‘me too’ outcry and the recent Google protests signify a culture in which people are often used (and abused) as a means for distorted ends. We will not really get on track with the dignity and value of each individual unless we can see them, however defaced, in the light of being made in God’s image and likeness. This is recognised by one Catholic writer:

*Once we have become what we have received (Augustine) we can enter into the second movement, going from the interior to the exterior, “journeying, building, confessing”, to borrow an expression from the first homily of Pope Francis.*

*All this leads to the conclusion that liturgy is most certainly not a tool, an object to be manipulated in search for evangelical effectiveness. But although liturgy, as Fr. Bouyer said, is a “thing of the sanctuary”, it is not for all that foreign to evangelisation. On the contrary the liturgy is its source and summit. However, it can only fulfil its proper role if we respect its true character and steer clear of the temptation to instrumentalise it. (J-C Nault)*

The last thing that the liturgy is then, is a coercion to compliance, even with what God demands. It is not a corporate exercise in toeing the line, even of making sure we are doing what the Church (or bishop) might require. Authorised texts exist to mirror and establish meaning, the core doctrines of our faith. The nearest we get to the heart of worship is reflected in the Orthodox liturgy:

*“Thine own of Thine own, we offer to Thee, in behalf of all, and for all” (Elevation of Gifts)*

We can recognise the tendency to directive instrumentality of the liturgy in all traditions. Andrew Lyons perceptively recognises it in his own Methodism:

*Once the liturgy becomes instrumental for other ends (i.e., cannot be appreciated in and of itself), then it loses its fundamental raison d'être. How and why does this liturgy have a fundamental raison d'être, and how can it be seen to be the primary form of worship for Methodists?*

*As Methodism has tried to use worship as an evangelistic opportunity it has moved away from the idea of celebrating the mystery of Christ.*

*Some attempt to make worship more interesting, more entertaining or more relevant in the belief that this is all that is required. They postulate that people will be drawn into church life and faith if worship changes. Change in worship practice is then dominated by an instrumentalist view of worship. My own view is that this is wrong liturgically but also is simply wishful thinking.*

Worshippers in our churches might not consider that they give voice to the praise of God (and lament) on behalf of all creation; from human minds and tongues offering God vicariously what is due from all creation. We give it human voice. This has been largely forgotten in the pressure to think of worship as for ourselves.

A Church which is utilitarian with people makes us shudder, and many of us may have horror stories to tell of such instances which have marked lives and in some cases excluded people from the church. If our worship and sacramental practice is utilitarian it may well reflect how we are elsewhere in our corporate life.

Churches can have an obsession with numbers, particularly with regard to membership, so that we seem constantly to rethink how we may calculate this. 'What do we want people for?' rather perhaps, 'How can we enable people to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ?'



Augustine was clear that ‘You are what you receive’. This might lead us to have more care how we recognise and relate to Christ among us. Whatever our own theological perspective we can recognise how manipulative people’s desires, even good ones, can sometimes be.



The primary characteristic of worship is perhaps best seen in what we know of love. Love needs no reason. ‘I love you because’ or ‘in order to’ is not its nature. Love simply loves, simply, often unreasonably; adoration of the source of love and life and being, of the One who is, has a gifted quality. Unfortunately this is sometimes suffocated by extraneous desires and ephemera and our eyes are kept from seeing even a glimpse of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The cult of celebrity masks the vacuity of much human interaction and it is small wonder many people either have problems with their own self-worth or an exaggerated sense of their own importance. Confusion as to how they relate to value, meaning and purpose relates intimately to a lack of a sense of the transcendent.

Perhaps our media-saturated society has taken fully on board celebrity adoration and forgotten the true nature of worship. Constant advertising urges people to ‘be like....’ and if we are not like them we are somehow defective or not ‘on message.’ The church too has often taken this on board. Unless we are complying with the next great plan or ecclesial strategy or bright idea for universal church domination, however beguiling it may appear, clerical careers may suffer.

The question of the utility of worship has implications far beyond the sanctuary; if doing as we please and what makes us happy are the criteria for the meaning and content of worship, we end up worshipping ourselves. It is deeply related to the current ecological crisis in which the heavens and the earth are regarded as utilitarian, as being up for grabs to anyone who might wish to turn a commercial profit, as the Orthodox theologian Elizabeth Theokritoff indicates:

*The underlying problem here seems to be a focus on an ‘end product’ on our own private agenda for what we want to accomplish given time. Are we moved to glorify God when we see sacks of our rubbish destined for the landfill ?*

*Is God’s wisdom and providence in creating plants even for the harshest climates best glorified in pea green lawns maintained regardless of the cost in water, fertiliser and pesticides ? There are no formulae for producing answers. But once we recognise that in every action there is*

*concealed something of the mystery of our Life in Christ, then we stand a better chance of asking the right questions. The physical reality of the sacrament is able to convey a spiritual reality precisely because the physical creation is in itself a mystery of God's love.*

Thomas Merton once intuited of Gethsemani, that the praying community was vicariously the very soul of America. This might appear the slightly naïve perspective of a prospective new recruit, but was a conviction he held all his life.

I had wondered what was holding this country together, what has been keeping the universe from cracking in pieces and falling apart. It is this monastery. (There must be two or three others). Abraham prayed to the Lord to spare Sodom if there should be found in it one just man. The Blessed Mother of God, Mary Queen of Heaven and of Angels, shows him daily his children here, and because of their prayers, the world is spared from minute to minute, from the terrible doom. This is the only real city in America – in a desert...



What might appear to an outward eye and ear as the mundane chanting of the monastic office is but the long deep echo of the salvation of the world. There in the beating heart of the liturgy was what keeps the world in being, what keeps the world suspended, spinning on its axis, and us with it; not gravity, but grace.

**Kenneth Carveley**

## Ordinary Kids

When the editor asked me for a Tariro article for this issue of the “CRQ” I was stumped. What could I say that I haven’t said before before? Everything about our young people seems so ordinary. And yet that is the marvellous thing: they are ordinary and yet because they are ours, they are extraordinary. Everything about them is delightful.

So when I arrived in February I found two of our teenage boys had messed up their school work quite badly. They had tried to cover this up by falsifying their reports. That was naughty and resulted in long hours of conversation and some punishment. Yet it was rather marvellous, too, because it brought us closer to the boys and they saw that we were willing to spend time with them



sorting out their problems. Actually, not surprisingly, one of the problems turned out to be teenage hormones. Girls had become a major distraction. That is pretty normal! To give them credit both boys were honest about their faults and really do seem to be trying to put things right. I hope my visit in September will show better results.

Then in April the rural youngsters, about thirty of them, came together for a few days of mixed counselling, talks, fun and practising English. Our new Chairman is an energetic retired headmaster and seems to have established a really good rapport with them. He asked them to write down their needs for us to consider. Some were predictable. They wanted more pocket money (because ‘prices are going up’) and nice clothes to wear in the holidays. What teenager doesn’t want more pocket money? They also asked to spend more holiday time doing interesting things like having camps, or getting extra lessons (would any English teenager ask for that?), or visiting places of interest in Zimbabwe. Some asked for counselling which is pleasing as it shows that the counselling we have been giving them has made them see the need for it. They mentioned the need to deal with bullying at school, and poor resources in the schools. Edwin and Mr Runyowha are looking at ways of meeting these needs. It will cost money (everything does in Zimbabwe!) so we will have to go at it slowly. But it is so good they felt able to ask and so nice for us if we can help.

When I was in Zimbabwe in September Liberty Sigauke, a 14 year old boy told me he had given up soccer because “It’s boring. I would much rather read novels. Can you get me some exciting stories?” So I did. I collected lots of novels from friends in Harare and was able to give them out to the youngsters. They like good adventure stories which stretch their imaginations and also improve their English. Interestingly, Enid Blyton books – the Adventure series and the Secret Seven remain favourites despite their completely different settings.

Other nice things happen. An English lady recently come from England offered to take three of our older girls for a week. It was a brilliant success. They loved the comfort of her very







nice home. Their English improved enormously and so did their confidence. Two more girls will go and stay with Sue shortly. I wish we could find someone to take some of our boys.

All this happens against a background of country wide disasters. In January there was a bad outbreak of government sponsored violence with many deaths. People were saying Mnangagwa is worse than Mugabe. I'm not sure about that but he is no saint. Some things in the currency front had improved but there are still massive shortages, and prices can be exorbitant (£80 for a large jar of imported coffee, if you are mad enough

to pay that). It is now official that electronic money is only a third of the value of real US Dollars which puts us in a good position as we can get hold of real dollars, but is very tough on local people who can't. Suddenly for them school fees have doubled.

Then there was the cyclone. The country had been suffering from drought and we prayed for rain. We got a cyclone which tragically killed about 60 people in Zimbabwe alone, washed away houses, roads and bridges, destroyed a lot of the crops that had grown in the East of the country but came too late to save the drought stricken crops in the centre. So food shortages get worse, fuel is difficult to find, prices are very high, corruption in politics is bad and there are stories of rising crime and police torture once again. Why do I so much love going there? Well the people are marvellous. It is almost a joke in Zimbabwe to say "We make a plan". As each new problem emerges we make a plan to cope with it. Zimbabweans of all colours are very inventive and resilient and life goes on. On my last day in Zimbabwe, when I picked up some of the latest Brexit news I nearly refused to get on the plane. Zimbabwe is so much more fun.

**Nicolas CR**

## How the light gets in



*Church of the Light, Osaka, Japan, designed by Tadao Ando.*

***There's a crack, there's a crack in everything;  
That's how the light gets in.***

**T**hese words come from a song called *Anthem* by the late Leonard Cohen, the celebrated Canadian singer/songwriter. I can't claim to know much about his work, but these words stuck in my mind. And the more I thought about them, the truer they seemed to be, especially from a Christian perspective.

Nature, God's creation, often reveals how true the words are. Think of a gloomy day. Dark clouds have hung about all day, when suddenly, towards evening, they part to reveal a red/gold light which fills the sky until the sun finally sets.

Or we go into the garden in the last days of winter, when it seems that Spring will never come, and notice that through a crack in the bare earth, a snowdrop has miraculously pushed its way upwards towards the light.

Perhaps the deepest understanding of 'how the light gets in' can be found in Gerard Manley Hopkins' poem *God's grandeur*, particularly in the last six lines:

*And for all this, nature is never spent;  
There lives the deepest freshness deep down things;  
And though the last lights of the black west went Oh, morning at this  
brown brink eastward, springs—Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
world broods With warm breast and with ah! bright wings.*

Personal experience can also bear witness to the truth of Leonard Cohen's words. Everyone goes through dark periods in their lives, when we have to tread our own 'via crucis', having no option but to walk through 'the valley of the shadow...' And yet, by the grace of God, through a hitherto unnoticed 'crack', a ray of light, of hope, has shown through - the light of Christ, the light which no darkness has ever overcome. William Cowper, the poet, suffered from depression throughout his life, yet managed to write a poem entitled *Light shining out of darkness* That poem is best known by its first line, 'God moves in a mysterious way', a hymn in which the 'cracks' are certainly in evidence:

*Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never failing skill, He treasures up his bright designs,  
And works his sovereign will.*

*Ye fearful saints fresh courage take  
The clouds ye so much dread Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head.*

*Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust him for his grace;  
Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face.*

There can surely be no darker place than Calvary on the day of our Lord's crucifixion. *Matthew* tells us 'from midday darkness fell over the whole land, which lasted until three in the afternoon.' And the physical darkness was mirrored by the spiritual darkness expressed in that terrible cry, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' But, as Jesus breathed his last, there were suddenly 'cracks' aplenty. 'The curtain of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom, the earth shook, the rocks split and graves opened.' The old dispensation was ended; the new was about to dawn. In *Matthew's* account of 'the third day', the light is first manifested to the women by the, angel who rolled away the stone (making another 'crack') 'His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow.' But they were very soon to see the risen Lord himself. For them, as for us, as Paul puts it, 'the God who says, "Out of darkness light shall shine", has caused his light to shine in our hearts, the light which is the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'

Leonard Cohen knew what he was singing about!

**Geoffrey Rider**

# Companions' News

## RIP

Timothy Forbes Adam  
Marjorie Moorhouse  
Violet Thompson  
Marjorie Tarran

## New Companions

Chris Davidson  
Dennis Le Seuer  
Myfanwy Hess  
Mzwabantu Magadla

## Branches of Companions

Companions are widely scattered around the country though there are a few hot spots. Branches do exist and they come and go. When we moved from Pocklington in East Yorkshire to Scalford in Leicestershire, we missed the fellowship of meeting up. Being further from Mirfield was also a downside to our move south.

So it was that I decided to start a new group for the East Midlands. Two things seemed to be essential. The celebration together of the Mass and a shared meal. The location was another problem but easily solved. Lincoln cathedral has a daily Mass at 12.30, coinciding with that at C.R. it also, like many cathedrals, has a place to have lunch. With the help of the Companions Office, Companions in the area were circulated with the proposals and the Branch was formed. We meet regularly and share our experiences.

The cathedral is pleased to welcome us, and we enjoy the ambience, usually very different from our own parish church. If you are a Companion and would like to set up a Branch, then I can recommend using a cathedral as a starting point. There will likely be a service going on around noon, so booking is not a problem. Even if there isn't a café, there will certainly be one nearby. All you need to do is share with other Companions the chosen date and to reach them, the Companions Office is only too willing to help. If you choose to meet regularly, then this can be advertised, but enquirers can always contact Fr John who will help.

So, if you don't have a Branch and would like to meet up with fellow travellers on this pilgrim journey which is our life, set one up. It is easier than you think!

**Paul Taylor**

## “If possible there should be some kind of involvement in a secular organisation”

When explaining this Rule to probationer Companions I always point out how such involvement is an opportunity to proclaim the world made new in Christ. With his permission I pass on to you a passage from the report of a Probationer Companion which gives us a very clear and moving example of such an opportunity:

One of the additional commitments I took on as a result of reflecting on how I might fulfil the Companions’ rule of life was to become involved in a secular organisation as a means of living out and witnessing to the Christian life. In response to this prompting I started work as a volunteer one morning each week at a local charity shop supporting the work of a local charity, *Catching Lives*, which works with homeless people in Canterbury. My work in the shop continues to be a blessing to me. Quite unexpectedly getting to know my fellow volunteers has led to several occasions when I have been able to witness to my faith in response to their questions. I was particularly touched and privileged to be asked if I would say prayers at a vigil which was held on the street outside the shop in memory of Kevin, a sometimes homeless man who often sat outside the shop and became well known to us and to the immediate local community. Along with some of his friends and local residents we gathered one evening at the spot where Kevin used to sit; we lit candles, laid flowers and his friends spoke movingly about him.

A Companion



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## Book Review

**Seven Types of Atheism** by John Gray. 2019, 170 pp.

ISBN: 9780141981109. Published by Penguin Books. Price: £9.99.



Contemporary atheism, John Gray argues, is ‘continuation of monotheism by other means’. This statement captures the central thesis of a concise and highly readable book that brings intellectual clarity to the atheism-religion debate. Gray presents evidence from a range of disciplines to support his assertion that ‘If you want to understand atheism and religion, you must forget the popular notion that they are opposites.’ In common with the best of popular philosophy books, Gray’s clarity of thought and skill with the pen leaves the reader feeling like a well-nourished intellectual giant! And Gray is no stranger to the concept that illusion might contain some sort of redeeming significance.

Gray identifies and examines seven kinds of atheism (that are by no means mutually exclusive), basing the structure of his book on Empson’s *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, which is an exploration of ambiguity in language and richness of meaning in poetry, and declares that while he is repelled by the first five types of atheism that he identifies, he is drawn to the last two: ‘atheisms that are happy to live with a godless world or an unnameable God.’ It would be a spoiler to list the seven kinds of atheism – read the book! At less than (just!) £10 a copy it is great value for money. If you read no other book on philosophy this year, read this one.

Justice cannot be given to the extraordinary, given its size, breath of this book by my attempting any form of summary in this short review. It is enough to say that Gray deftly supports his thesis with entertaining examples from science, philosophy, ethics, history, religion and politics that we would be well advised to be familiar with if we intend to offer a meaningful voice in the topical contemporary atheism-religion debate. All our favourite thinkers have a contribution: Plato, Jesus, Paul, Augustine, Mill, Russell, Nietzsche, Rand, Darwin, Huxley, Haeckel, Hume, Fukuyama, Kant, Voltaire, Mesmer, Trotsky, Marx, Kurzweil, Bockelson, Hitler and Dostoevsky among many others, not to mention the numerous ‘isms’ that have been generated by their thoughts – and often accompanied by mass genocide.

Gray skilfully undermines the certainty with which the proponents of the various types of atheism evangelise their faith. Perhaps consider using this book as the basis for a group discussion? It will certainly encourage people to think about belief and meaning, and the wonderful ambiguity of existence. And Gray certainly loves the intellectual comfort of ambiguity. He finishes the book with: ‘Contemporary atheism is a continuation of monotheism by other means. Hence the unending succession of God-surrogates, such as humanity and science, technology and the all-too-human visions of transhumanism. But there is no need for panic or despair. Belief and unbelief are poses the mind adopts in the face of an unimaginable reality. A godless world is as mysterious as one suffused with divinity, and the difference between the two may be less than you think.’

**Andrew Wakeham-Dawson**

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*The Lighthouse, by Nicolas de Stael; lithograph belonging to the Community*