

CR

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST 2020

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Life in the Open, Life Enclosed

Il of the birds, insects and butterflies on the previous pages have been seen in our grounds (one or two flying over, or heard but not seen) in the last few weeks. Joanne Nicholson, one of our second-year students, has been keeping an eye on our wildlife and sending us regular reports. A little before going to press Jo wrote:

"After a quiet few weeks for the grounds' wildlife the last few days has seen a flurry of activity with the return of our sub-Saharan migrants. Firstly a lone swallow was spotted over the orchard, a species which have been known to regularly nest on the site. Then much to my great excitement a number of swifts arrived a few days later. An incredible species that spends most of its life in the air, landing only to breed. This was followed today by a huge group of house martins down over the river. The last two summers I have seen all 3 species in the grounds so do keep



looking skyward. I have also been pleased to hear that some tree-creepers have been spotted. They often go quiet in the springtime, so glad to know they are still around. I find the best time to spot them is when their young have fledged. Their incredibly high-pitched call can give them away."

A week later there was more to report:

"I was excited to get my first glimpse of a fledgling. A baby magpie near the Bilson building: I first encountered it peering over the edge of its nest as it looked down at me. The following morning I discovered it running up the path towards Upper Church looking very odd, having yet to grow its long distinctive tail. Since then I have heard numerous cries of baby birds coming from nests hidden around the grounds. Hopefully in the coming days there shall be more around. It is a good opportunity to see birds up close as they are often unperturbed by humans while so young. Though always wise to be mindful of protective parents.

The thrushes also seem to be very active at present, with the song thrushes singing loudly from the trees around the college buildings and the somewhat larger mistle-thrush playing around in the orchard. There have also been

large numbers of goldfinches in this part of the grounds with their delightful chattering noise, which is encouraging.

The pair of buzzards spotted a number of weeks back seem to have now returned. It may be that they are both hunting for their young if they are getting ready to fledge. I also spotted a lone kestrel on more than one occasion - it has been a little while, so it's reassuring that they are still around."

None of them show any sign of being locked down. Going from outdoors to indoors it would seem strange not to report on the human beings on the site as well, during our time of enclosure. There is not a lot to report. The Community are living in strict isolation as a family unit, with the much-appreciated help of minimum staff, and everything else is closed down. A small group of nine students have been living in separate isolation at the College since Holy Week. The College decided they wouldn't take part in any of our liturgical celebrations because of concerns about breaching the *cordon sanitaire*, and that has been a strange experience for all of us – members of each community on the site wave and exchange distant words as we occasionally stumble upon each other in the grounds, among the birds, butterflies and greenery.



As you will know, the Community have been streaming all of our services, for which there is a large following. Much of our work has continued via electronic media, especially Zoom, and, as many have found, life is as busy as it is in normal times. The experience on the whole is simply one of continuing to live what we are here for. It was good to be able to celebrate Holy Week together for a change, and being a full community in choir without any being away is a really good

experience. We are aware in our prayers all the time of those who are struggling and suffering in all manner of unexpected situations, and also aware of the upheaval going on in society and in the human spirit at this time. It reminds us of Walter Frere's words which we heard recently in a reading from his little Commentary on the CR Rule, about being "the Lord's remembrancers".

The College summer term started as planned, but via electronic media – apart from the small student group here, the rest are scattered all over the country. It has been particularly difficult for those due to leave this year – suddenly losing the experience of Holy Week together, and not meeting as a group ever again, or marking all the traditional preparations and farewells prior to ordination (whenever that might happen).

Our prayers for you and for all – and gratitude to all those who make company with us in prayer, on electronic screens, and within the invisible fellowship of the heavenlies.

George CR



Supper at Pentecost

Love, a Park Bench and a Painting

n a bench by a seafront is a small metal plaque which reads, "In cherished memory of John, husband, lover, father of my children, and very best pal." That's a fine account of marriage. Were I to say to the widow who placed that plaque there, "Don't fuss about your wedding ring which is only a piece of metal, don't be owned by what you own," she could with justification kick me on the shins. "John put this ring on my finger. It represents 60 years of love and joy."

Life is full of things which, far from being symbols of mammon, are almost sacramental, which speak to us of God and His people. Some things, such as relics, are treasured not for themselves but for their associations.

If you have been in the Guest Parlour at Mirfield you would have seen the portrait of John Keble painted by George Richmond. The same artist painted the well-known portrait of William Wilberforce, M.P. for Hull, who led the successful campaign for the 1833 emancipation of all slaves in the British Empire, and who is remembered in several Prayer Books. I have not seen the latter portrait, only prints of it, but my reaction to it is the same as the reaction to the Keble portrait, "Goodness shines out of him. I hope to meet him in the hereafter."

In his 1935 biography of Gore, Canon Prestige of St Paul's Cathedral, tells the story of the frame around the portrait. It was made from an oak tree felled in 1849. Within its trunk was found embedded the head of an arrow. It is alleged that the tree was the very one against which St Edmund, King of East Anglia, had been martyred. Viking invaders had tied him to the oak and used him as a target for their bow and arrow practice.

In 1883 George Richmond gave his Keble portrait to John Henry Newman, who therefore wrote: -

George Richmond Esqr R.A. June 3.

I am ashamed of having come away from London without having secured your precious gift. My excuse is the great spaces which separate London homes and the whirl of the metropolis.

If you will allow me, I will send a friend to receive and send me what I value [so] very highly.

I want your signature on the back as one link in the chain of transmission, as I think after my time of what I may call its sacred frame going to persons who will be sure to value it for the sake of a great English Martyr, and for your sake, for Keble's sake, and, I trust I may say, my own.

Also, may I ask your acceptance of a book or two of mine, all I have to give, as a sort of memorial of my gratitude to you.



Newman later gave the portrait to Charles Gore who was then founding Principal of Pusey House: -

The Oratory, Birmingham, Novr [14]

Dear Mr Gore,

In the prospect of the Feast of St Edmund King and Martyr. Amen.

I am bold to ask you to accept from me a picture of Keble made sacred by a relic of a Saint and Martyr.

As the likeness of a very dear Friend, I welcomed it when received from dear Mr Richmond, and have gladly guarded it since that time. But in spite of my personal affection for the original, I have not thought I could consistently leave it to my brothers of St Philip Neri.

It has struck me from your own relation to my other and equally dear friend Pusey, that I may gain in your House in St Giles's place for the picture, and thus in our Lord's words you will be receiving the just in the name of the just, and a disciple in the name of a disciple.

Excuse me if I have said anything rude or unacceptable in this request. Believe me dear Mr Gore Most truly Yours

John H. Card. Newman

Gore thanked Newman: -

From Pusey and House on the Eve of St Edmund, 15 Nov.

However great the value which the picture of Mr Keble would in any case have had for us, it is increased tenfold by having belonged to you and been prized by you and coming from you – and by its having attached the sacred relic of which you speak.

Canon Liddon of St Paul's Cathedral wrote to Gore: -

Indeed I do congratulate you and the Pusey House on such an acquisition and such a letter. It brings you within the lines of what I always think of as the heroic age. How the perfect and inimitable grace of courtesy which characterizes the Cardinal's writings survives— even the test of dictation.

Father Harold Ellis CR who died in 1970, claimed to have read all the letters of Newman so far published. Of course I have culled the story from the letters. Might the portrait and its frame be thought of as treasured relics? Such associations! Should they be in church with a lamp in front of them?

St Edmund. St John Henry Newman. John Keble. Charles Gore. When and if you are next in the Guest Parlour, you might think in front of the portrait, "I commit to the unity of all baptised believers in the next world and in this." Or put in another way: "I believe in the communion of saints."

Robert Mercer CR

The Raising of Lazarus

In the *Week of Simple Offices* published by the Community the readings for Saturday evening conclude with the story of the Raising of Lazarus contained in John 11.28-44. John's gospel provides the only biblical account of this event, the third resurrection miracle performed by Our Lord, although it has excited comment from many theologians over the years, and also attracted much artistic representation, notably by Sebastiano del Piombo, Caravaggio, and Rembrandt. The del Piombo version, originally painted as an altarpiece for Narbonne Cathedral in 1517-19, now hangs in the National Gallery, and was indeed the first work catalogued by the new gallery back in 1824. The Caravaggio version was executed around 1608/9 for the church in Messina in Sicily where he was seeking refuge at the time, and is now in the museum there. Rembrandt first painted the story around 1630, at a fairly early stage in his career, but then prepared an etching based on this work in 1632. He returned to this theme in 1642 with another engraving, rather different in tone and content from the earlier version. The original 1630 painting is now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

A copy of the 1642 engraving turned up unexpectedly in the Archives of Aberystwyth University Library a few years ago, amongst the papers of George Powell, a local landowner and literary figure, linked to Algernon Swinburne and others. It is now retained with the collections of the local School of Art for safekeeping.

It has been suggested that Christ has been depicted a healing figure in this later work. Sister Wendy Beckett saw the earlier version as showing a weary magician rather than a triumphant saviour!



It is interesting to speculate that the 1642 engraving may have been prompted by the illness and later death of Rembrandt's beloved Saskia in that year. Rembrandt's work often seems to have relied more on New Testament themes from this date, taking on a more sombre tone. The image clearly shows the cave, with the stone laid to one side. Martha and Mary are prominent in the composition and Lazarus emerges from the tomb with a cloth around his face.

There will doubtless be much further academic discussion of Rembrandt's intentions in creating this revised engraving in years to come. Was he seeking to link Saskia's demise to the biblical promise of resurrection, or simply experimenting with compositional or lighting techniques in his work? For believers the discussion is perhaps beside the point that Our Lord had given physical demonstration of the possibility of our resurrection through this miracle. It is likely that the events in Bethany contributed directly to the increased pressure among the Jews and Pharisees for action to be taken to remove Jesus from the scene (John 11. 45-53). But again as believers we may take our guide from the final prayers in the Saturday Evening office and ask – "Come to visit us, O God, this night, so that by your strength we may rise with the new day to rejoice in the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord".

Bill Hines

References: Those interested in more on the 1630 Rembrandt painting may wish to visit: https://collections.lacma.org/node/238402https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The Raising of Lazarus (Rembrandt)

Why Believe in the Resurrection?

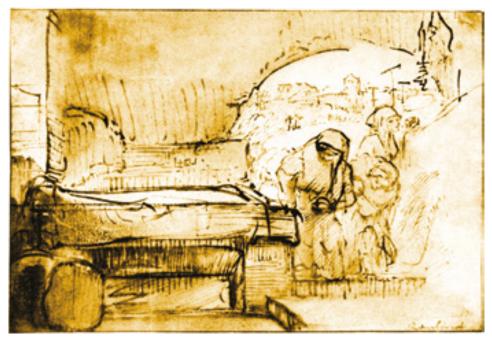
t's difficult for us today to believe – all this about a man being resurrected from the dead. How can I believe that? If a non-believer asks us about it, we might shuffle from one foot to the other.

The problem is that we seem to think we are presented with a story and we've got to find a way of swallowing it. We tend to assume that belief in Christ rising from the dead asks us to screw ourselves up into believing that this happened. We assume we have to make a leap and say OK – I believe it, then. In fact that's not a good place to start at all. Think of music. You hear somebody's description of some beautiful music – from the description can you say you like the music? Impossible – you need to hear it. Even if you wanted to believe what the person was saying, you won't in fact enjoy the music at all, unless you actually hear it. What is the music of the Resurrection? Where do we hear it?

First of all, it's there in life – in life all around us all the time, and all we need to do is recognise it. For example, last year I met a nun whose small community of sisters spend their time rescuing trafficked girls from the Mafia. They set up safe places for them to go, which they can run themselves and so take responsibility for their lives. This work is full of terrible risks, but these nuns are full of a joyful businesslikeness that for me is one of the characteristics of life in the Resurrection. What is the Mafia, compared with the Resurrection of Christ? That is one example of the risen Lord playing his music in the church, the music of a confidence that is simply joyful love.

Is this a monopoly of Christians? Not at all. We have enough examples of it before our eyes at the moment – the dedication of so many NHS staff in our hospitals, in the face of suffering and danger to life. Christ is present wherever people are living selfless and loving lives. Where love is, there is God. The Resurrection is about the very well-springs of life abundant.

What does the Christian story have to add, then? Firstly, the gospel puts a name to this wonderful thing in human lives. It anchors it in a person, Jesus Christ our Lord. Once you have the name of a thing or a person, you can begin really to get to know them. Names open doors. The gospel takes off the wrapping and shows this music in people for what it truly is. When we hear it, when we take more notice of this wonderful thing to be found everywhere in daily life, the



Rembrandt: The women at the tomb

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gospel opens our eyes to see there the Lord. The Acts of the Apostles depicts a community of apostles and believers intoxicated with the Resurrection. This is more than simply something about a body being resuscitated – it's an explosion of life at its most abundant.

There is an ancient belief that when Christians gather as the Church to worship, a veil is taken away. It's as if we heard our neighbour's music faintly through a door, and now, here, in worship, the door is opened. We can see the Name that goes with all that is beautiful and inspiring and cheering in people's lives.

Why do I believe in the Resurrection? I believe because of the beauty of a selfless love that can naturally and cheerfully well out of people, and give a vigour to their selflessness which speaks of the deepest sources of life. But I can only take the leap of believing because I have heard the music. I believe in the resurrection of the Lord because of what I find in Christian worship. I believe because of the Paschal Vigil. This ancient service, and all the liturgies of Eastertide, say everything. They ring in my ears and spread a perfume in the mind. Then I go to the stories in the gospels about the empty tomb, and I see - it all rings true, with the pure clarity of a bell. I have heard the music, and now I read the stories describing it. The authors of the Gospels and the Epistles in their funny and slightly muddled way are wanting to show why it is that there is this utterly glorious thing. This glorious Mystery of the Resurrection is inseparable from these events – the women at the tomb, the disciples meeting the Lord again. They are trying to tell us of their excitement, that all they hoped for about life is real. Death is overcome, Christ is not dead, he has Risen. Whatever life can throw at us, this music dwarfs it. Whatever darknesses we are plunged into, this light dispels them. I believe because I have been taken hold of and made alive. So never despair – never be downcast – never lose God's gift of joy, (which has a great tendency to produce a sense of humour). The resurrection of Christ, the empty tomb, his appearances to his followers, have effected a permanent change in things. They have changed how everything is, and how everything looks. They are our new pair of glasses. We can now look at something like the selfless love of neighbour that has been brought out in many people and communities during lockdown, and in them we see the Lord inviting us to recognize him and respond in Alleuias, and, ultimately, in the eucharist. We have every reason to be so grateful. Christ is risen. Alleluia.

George CR

Drawn to Eastern Places



Hagia Sofia, Istanbul

There are some places in the world which gain a firm grip on our imagination years before the opportunity of visiting them ever presents L itself. Until earlier this year, two such places in my own mind were the city of Beirut and the monasteries of the Egyptian desert. Both had begun to insinuate themselves into my imagination shortly before my first trip to the Middle East back in 2012. Having been given the opportunity to spend a year in Jerusalem, one thing I had not lacked for as I prepared to depart was recommended reading. Not only, it seemed, did everyone have an opinion about the politics of the Middle East, they generally had a 'necessary' book on the subject to share with me as well. By far the best and most memorable of these (mostly bad) books were Robert Fisk's Pity the Nation: Lebanon at War (2001) and William Dalrymple's From the Holy Mountain (1998). It was Fisk's extraordinary account of the Lebanese Civil War that first turned my attention to the country's beleaguered capital city (once the 'Paris of the Middle East') and I had been keen to visit ever since. Visitors to the Egyptian desert, on the other hand, have not generally been moved to compare it to Paris. This, in fact, was precisely its appeal to its early monastic inhabitants, to many of whom I had first been introduced by Dalrymple back in 2012, but whom I had subsequently come to treasure

through the incomparable *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (1975). And there was one further reason why I was keen to see this great cradle of monasticism just now: I had just received an invitation from the Community of the Resurrection to test a vocation with them as a postulant. So a two-week trip to the Middle East with my brother — taking in Beirut, Cairo and the Egyptian desert, via Istanbul — seemed just the ticket for February 2020.

Istanbul (alias Constantinople, alias Byzantium) was our first stop. We were quite pleased to have managed to book some accommodation with a roof terrace, but nothing prepared us for the spectacular view of the city it would afford us. Waking up to the sight of ships sailing up the Bosphorus, with the great church of Hagia Sophia across the water and all the bridges lined with fishermen, is an experience I will never forget. We stayed in Istanbul just long enough to see the great 'museums' (i.e. churches) of Hagia Sophia, Hagia Irene and the Chora Church, as well as many of the mosques, and to bask in some the city's wonderful bath houses. Our most intriguing and unexpected discovery, however, was a somewhat understated room in the Topkapi Palace (the traditional residence of the Ottoman Sultan) called the 'Destimal Chamber' (literally, the 'napkin'

room) in which we encountered a rather astonishing collection of relics, including a pot that belonged to Abraham, the staff with which Moses parted the Red Sea, a turban that belonged to Joseph the Patriarch, the sword of King David and scrolls belonging to John the Baptist. Not bad for a napkin room.

Beirut was an altogether different prospect. Unlike Istanbul, whose riches are immediately obvious to any visitor, Beirut is the kind of place you have to walk around for a few days before you get a proper sense of its character and interest. Aesthetically, the city is quite difficult to get a handle on initially. Of course there are the bullet-riddled ruins that everyone associates with Beirut, most notably the bombed-out shell of the 'Holiday Inn' that was the centre of the so-called 'Battle of the Hotels' during the civil war. But the few buildings of this sort that remain have usually been



Scars of War

allowed to do so only as memorials to the violence. Much of the rest of the city has, for someone who grew up in the immediate post-conflict era, a pleasingly dated mid-90s swankiness about it. From the outset, however, I was on the lookout for quite a different set of cultural markers. I wanted to know if there was anything left of the glamour of French Beirut, that is, Beirut as it was under the French Mandate of 1923-1946. The early signs were not promising. To begin with, the only vestiges of French influence we could discover were a few bilingual road signs. However, on Sunday afternoon we found ourselves, quite by chance, in a wonderful little restaurant called 'Onno' and this turned out to be just what we were looking for. Not only was the food superb (including sparrows in a sticky pomegranate sauce) but we happened to be sat across from two large Lebanese families (whom we soon concluded were Maronite Christians having their Sunday lunch) whose convivial back-and-forth, across several generations, shifted effortlessly between Arabic and French. The food, the desultory ambience, the snatches of French conversation, all helped along by a bottle of Lebanese wine — and we were about as close to French Beirut as we were likely to get.

But there was another Lebanon we were keen to see something of, the Lebanon of contemporary Middle Eastern politics and that meant one thing only: Hezbollah. In Beirut we had seen very little evidence of the (in)famous Shia militia and political 'party of God'. I had, however, been told of a place in the (Shia-dominated) south of the country that was rather coyly described to me as a "Hezbollah theme park". Despite having no clear means of getting there, a Hezbollah theme park seemed far too good an opportunity to pass up, and so on our last day we enlisted the services of a local taxi driver and made our way to what was in fact called the 'Tourist Landmark of the Resistance' in the village



In the Hezbollah theme park

of Mleeta. With a flight to Cairo to catch later that day, we made sure to arrive as the gates were opening, to the evident bewilderment of the staff, who promptly ushered us into a large auditorium for a history lesson on the group's ongoing war with Israel. From there we were guided through a network of turrets and tunnels built into the hillside, all heavily armed and staffed by waterproof-clad Hezbollah manikins. The site is built around a huge display called 'The Abyss' in which various pieces of captured Israeli military equipment (including a Merkava tank with its gun tied in a knot) are sucked down

into a kind of vortex. Despite being practically deserted it was undoubtedly an impressive (and evidently expensive) facility, though theme park it was not. There was however one small nod to the earlier billing: a 'face-on-a-board' manikin with a hole for your face in which you could have your photograph taken as a Hezbollah militant.

I have never been to India, but it was Mumbai that I thought of when we first arrived in Cairo, such was the chaos of noise and traffic just about everywhere we went. On our first morning we thought we would ease ourselves into the maelstrom with a trip to the Coptic museum. About five hours later we emerged utterly dazzled, neither of us having been remotely prepared for the treasures we would find within. Foremost among these was the museum's mesmerising collection of Coptic iconography, including a much-reproduced image of St Antony and St Paul the Hermit I had long admired without having the faintest notion of its whereabouts.

Not surprisingly the call of the desert was all the stronger after this. Once again, though, we had transport problems. The monasteries of the Wadi al-Natrun can only be accessed by the desert road between Cairo and Alexandria and there were no buses. Our only option was to hail a taxi and trust to my pidgin Arabic. Needless to say, the driver had no idea what I was talking about, but he seemed game enough for an aimless journey into the desert and it wasn't long before we were standing before the huge fortified wall of the Monastery of St



Bishoy. It is something of a disappointment, having devoted years of imaginative labour to these places, not to be able to describe them without reference to *Star Wars*, but in truth this is probably the surest way of evoking the gnomic domed buildings that are typical of the great monasteries of the Egyptian desert.

At St Bishoy we were fortunate enough to have arrived during a celebration of the liturgy and so to hear the sound of Coptic pulsating through the monastery church. Alas, with others to visit, we couldn't afford to linger. On returning to our taxi we were slightly alarmed to find a large number of policemen gathered around the car in animated conversation with our driver. I was at a bit of a loss to follow the finer points of this exchange, but once we were all back in the car he assured that everything was fine. Driving out of the monastery, however, we couldn't help but notice that we had acquired a police escort. This did not bode well. Trying to remain optimistic, we reasoned that perhaps the police were simply going our way and had kindly offered to chaperone our driver to the next monastery. It was when we emerged from this second monastery to find them all still waiting for us that we began to get worried. Whatever the situation was, we felt sure it was liable to end with us either in a cell (and not the monastic kind) or paying a hefty sum of money for their trouble. Fortunately it was our driver and his car they seemed most interested in and when the party had reached the main road they disappeared (in true desert fathers style) as abruptly as they had appeared.

Feeling as though we had entered into something of the mysteries, as well as the riches, of the world of the desert fathers, we pressed on to the final monastery and it was here that we made our greatest discovery. Having been greeted at the door by a monk who spoke very good English, we were asked whether we



would like a tour, during which it was disclosed, to my great delight, that the monastery contained the relics of Abba Moses, one of the more notable desert fathers of the *Sayings*. And so it was with immense gratitude that I was able to leave the desert, the country and the region, bound for West Yorkshire, assured that the great Abba Moses will at least have had no trouble *hearing* my requests for his prayers, whispered, as they were, into his very ear.

Charlie Annis

Lockdown in India



Te flew to India on 9th March. With hindsight it is easy to say we shouldn't have gone, but at the time the advice was to carry on as normal. Apart from a brief health declaration there were no formalities on arrival and we began our holiday being driven around Amritsar by Arjun a friendly tuk tuk driver who also took us home to meet his family. They and their neighbours gave us a warm welcome and after refreshments we spent some time taking photographs of them all. We continued by car, with our driver Samarpreet, into the Himalayan foothills to Dharamsala (home of the Dalai Lama) and Shimla, a former British Hill Station.

By the time we reached Chandigarh we read that a lockdown was beginning back home and Bruce had an email from Beth at the Mirfield Centre saying we needn't hurry home as his Quiet Day on 3rd April had been cancelled with the rest of their programme. Some sights in India were now also closed, but we continued to an overnight stop in Haridwar, where we were told that they had to summon a medical team to assess us. They took our temperatures and asked a



Arjun & family

few questions, then said we were free to go. The following day (Sunday) was to be a trial lockdown with all travel forbidden, so we took the decision to abandon our holiday and head for Delhi as our airline had a flight in the early hours which we hoped we might catch.

About half way there our driver received a phone call instructing him to return us to Haridwar. He argued but they threatened that if we carried on we would be stopped by the police and he would be arrested. So we set off on a nearly three hour journey back to a guest house that the Indian government had taken over as a quarantine centre, arriving about 10.00pm, where we were greeted by two armed policemen, one of whom was quite aggressive. We were taken



The Guest-house

to a room and they tried to lock us in, but Bruce managed to get hold of the key before they could. That first night caused much anxiety, but we did get some sleep as we were exhausted.

On Sunday morning a doctor came to see us and explained that we must remain in quarantine in our room until we had been in

India 14 days. The room was basic with hard beds and poor water pressure, and meals were left on a table outside as no one would come in, and we then had to put the rubbish into black refuse sacks which remained outside our room as no one would collect them. We had no adapter to fit the plugs to charge our phones and iPads (which contained our books), and the Indian SIM in Jan's phone had run down so we could only make local calls. There was WiFi but it was weak and extremely slow. Downloading emails was OK but anything like streaming music was a non-starter.

Wednesday On were given a Certificate that we had completed our quarantine and were symptom free, and were told that we could now walk in the grounds, which were reasonably spacious, and at the front well kept with beds of colourful flowers. At the end of the drive were armed guards ready to tackle us if we decided to try and escape. One day was brightened by the arrival of a kingfisher to investigate a water-filled trough in the grounds, while on another day we discovered a goat's leg and a dead snake.

We felt we should try to give some structure to our day with two walks, an episode of I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue (which Bruce had on his phone) and even



A kingfisher not found at Mirfield

a Bible study on Revelation. Along with daily prayer, Sunday mass together, and messages and prayers from CR Brethren, as well as family and friends, we managed to keep ourselves sane. We borrowed an adapter from one of the staff enabling us to charge things up, and Shubum, who spoke reasonable English, helped us top up our SIM enabling us to make international calls again. He had a beautiful smile and was very kind to us during our stay.

We felt we must try to move to a hotel near Delhi airport, since stuck here we would be unable to take a flight should one become available, but India was now in total lockdown, and we were unable to travel. The British High Commission Facebook page assured us they were working to get British subjects home and we sent in a form by email with our details. On the Thursday the doctor said she could arrange a taxi with a pass to take us to Delhi, but it never materialised and the following day someone more senior told us that no such pass was available.

By Friday (the day we were meant to be going home) we were getting short of medication, so we texted the doctor and she said she would arrange it, and the following day it appeared. We were also getting short of clean clothes, so some washing needed to be done. On Saturday we were invited to go down to the dining room for lunch where we were joined by a young French couple (the only others there), who we had talked with earlier in the grounds. They told us that their Embassy had arranged transport the following day to take their nationals to Delhi, and had arranged two flights to Paris. They had asked if we might join the coach and this had been agreed.

We had had too many disappointments by now and hardly dared believe that we might be making progress, but on Sunday morning a taxi took us to the rendezvous where a fleet of 4 coaches transferred us to a hotel at Delhi airport where they had even negotiated preferential rates. Meals were still on a tray in our room as restaurants were closed, but we were allowed to come and go as we pleased and could walk on the roads around the hotels complex, which were deserted of traffic and lined with well maintained flower beds.

We did ask about a place on one of the French flights, but we needed permission from our High Commission and it was impossible to get through to them on the phone. Then on Wednesday a couple of coach loads of Finns arrived at the hotel and told us they had a flight home the following day, and if there were spaces they would be able to be booked on the Finnair website. Not only did we find seats available, but we could book a connecting flight to London which meant we would only transit in Helsinki and never officially enter Finland in case they had any quarantine rules. We felt we must take this chance so we booked it, and early the next morning set off for Helsinki. On arrival there was what seemed a slightly redundant announcement asking us to respect social distancing in the airport; this after spending 7½ hours crammed in a completely packed plane. Our flight to London departed an hour and a half later and a family member came to Heathrow to pick us up with the agreement of our MP, with whom we had been in contact. We arrived home, tired, but relieved, nearly 24 hours after leaving our hotel that morning. One final problem remained in that our car was at Manchester airport, to which we had intended to return, but another family member took Bruce to pick it up.



Christ Church Shimla

We continued to get updates from the British HC in Delhi and it was a full week after we got home before they organised their first rescue flight. Yet how hard can this be? On the news we see hundreds of planes standing idle at our airports, their crew furloughed and paid by the government, yet they seemingly could not organise any of them to fly to India to rescue British people. It isn't as if these flights are charity – we had to pay for our tickets at a higher price than we had paid for our original flights – and the planes were guaranteed to be full and thus presumably a useful earner for our government and the airlines involved. In some ways we were fortunate, being in the right place at the right time and we seized our chances when they were offered to us, but despite the High Commission 'working day and night' to get us home there were still Britons stranded in India over two months after lockdown began.

We remain thankful to the people who cared for us during our quarantine, and to the French and Finnish Embassies for their kindness, but overall it was an experience we would not particularly want to repeat. Of course we returned home to our own lockdown, but at home you do have your familiar things around you.

Bruce & Jan Carlin

FESTIVAL DAY

Festival Day will be celebrated on Saturday 11th July. This is also St Benedict's Day, which is a happy coincidence for us who live the Benedictine life. We do not know what restrictions on movement will be in place then but we have to assume that we can't have our usual hundreds of guests. Instead services and some talks will be streamed as is already happening. Some talks may be pre-recorded and made available in a way that is yet to be revealed.



The basic timetable is as follows:

Friday 10th July

4.00pm Silent Prayer in the Community Church

5.00pm Talk from Fr John CR for the CCR but open to all

6.00pm Solemn Evensong (live stream)

9.15pm Compline

Saturday 11th July

10.30am Talk about the Community by Fr Oswin Gartside CR
11.15am Talk on Benedictine life by Fr Nicolas Stebbing CR

12.00 Solemn Mass. Preacher: The Rt Rev Mark Sowerby, Principal

of the College.

1.30-4.00pm Talks by Brethren.

4.00pm Exposition and Benediction

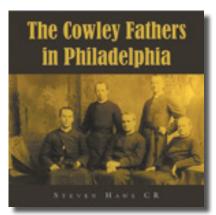
5.00pm Solemn Evensong

The Community's online worship and streaming for Festival Day can be accessed on: https://www.facebook.com/CoRMirfield/?ref=bookmarks

Full information can be found on our website: _ https://mirfield.org.uk/

Book Reviews

The Cowley Fathers in Philadelphia. Steven Haws CR. Author House. 2020 ISBN 978 1 7283 9102 1 (sc) £41 but special price £25 from the CR shop.



Brother Steven was born in Philadelphia in the USA. When he was twenty he saw a notice advertising 'High Mass and Procession' at St Clement's Episcopal Church in the city centre and decided to attend. He was captivated and transferred his membership from the parish he used to attend. For the next twelve years he became a regular member at St Clement's, was elected a member of the Vestry, looked after the church book shop and was parish archivist. In 1989 Steven came to England

and joined the Society of the Sacred Mission of which he became a professed brother. In 2000 he transferred to CR with the agreement of both communities. He visits his parents in Philadelphia every year and has frequently preached at St Clement's Church. Bro Steven has been at pains to ensure the historical accuracy of his record, which is fully noted. The American publishers have produced an attractive book with quality paper, large print and many photographs.

Brother Steven tells the story in considerable detail of an American Episcopal urban parish in the second half of the nineteenth century. In particular, he describes the work of the Mission Priests of St John the Evangelist (SSJE) known as the Cowley Fathers, from the parish in Oxford where Father Richard Meux Benson founded them in 1866. From 1876 to 1891, the Cowley Fathers staffed St Clement's parish in Philadelphia. It was only a short period but their influence was profound and lasting.

St Clements Church opened for worship in 1859. It was huge with a two hundred foot spire and built to hold over a thousand people but it was no architectural gem. At first, it was surrounded by fields but gradually streets and houses replaced them. Towards the end of the Cowley Fathers' tenure Brother Maynard SSJE personally decorated the apse, ceiling and walls of St Clement's with frescoes in the style of G.F.Bodley, under whom he had worked as an apprentice.

The first two rectors of St Clement's were able men whose teaching and practice conformed to the norms of the Protestant Episcopal Church. This

changed when in 1869 Hermon Griswold Batterson became rector and began teaching the congregation doctrines and practices typical of the Oxford Movement and Anglo-Catholicism. The diocesan bishop, William Bacon Stevens, strongly opposed Batterson. Brother Steven traces in detail the struggle between the bishop and successive rectors of St Clement's for seventeen years until the bishop died. The congregation and the Vestry, whom they elected annually, were supportive of their clergy and determined that no one would dismiss them. The record of the extraordinary ministry of SSJE at St Clement's and throughout America shows why.

In his first year as rector, Dr Batterson arranged a Week of Prayer to be conducted by Father Oliver Prescott who was a novice at Cowley. After his final profession in 1870 he returned for a short period to St Clement's. The next rector, Father Theodore Riley arranged a second mission at St Clement's led by Father Grafton SSJE, assisted by Father Rivington SSJE from Cowley. Father Grafton was an American who had made his profession at Cowley with Father Benson in 1866. He became Rector in 1872 of the Church of the Advent in Boston, which was in the care of the Cowley Fathers. When Fr Riley resigned, the congregation at St Clement's knew of the Cowley Fathers and decided to invite them. Eventually in 1876 the Vestry appointed Father Prescott SSJE. Thus St Clement's passed into the care of the Society of St John the Evangelist. It proved to be a memorable and remarkable era.

Two novices from England assisted Father Prescott and the notable preacher Father Maturin SSJE also joined the staff. All wore black cassocks, lived together very simply in the Mission House, saying the daily Offices and following the rule of the Society. The Mission Priests worked extraordinarily hard. Apart from sermons, the many guilds and Bible classes were given frequent instruction as well as the large, 700-strong Sunday School. To this was added retreats and individual spiritual guidance. The fathers also led missions and retreats in parishes all over America. In 1885 they undertook eight such events, nine in 1896.

Before he joined the Society Father William Hawks Longridge, just a year after he had been ordained priest, came to Philadelphia to be headmaster of the short-lived Collegiate School of St John the Evangelist. In 1880 he went to Cowley and after profession returned to St Clement's in 1883 and stayed for another eight years. He later became famous for introducing to the Church of England the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola. His brother George was a co-founder of the Community of the Resurrection and our Superior from 1913 to 1916. In 1880 the All Saints Sisters of the Poor established a branch house in the parish.

Father Maturin was rector from 1881 to 1889 and the parish flourished: the considerable debt on church properties was cleared, many new guilds were

established, each with a chaplain who gave regular instruction. A club for working men was organised. A medical dispensary was opened, which later became St Clement's Hospital.

In 1884 communicant members numbered 737. During that year there had been 662 services of Holy Communion and the total number of communions was almost 10,000. The church was crowded for the two services on Sunday evenings. The rector was assisted by his confreres, Fathers Convers, Field, Longridge and Sheppard,

Father Longridge was the scholar and helped with the guilds and other groups requiring instruction. Because he had the best voice he often presided at High Mass and Solemn Evensong. He organised the acolytes in a Guild of St Vincent, who had an annual retreat and a two-week summer holiday. Many parishioners asked him to hear their confessions and to give them spiritual direction. His unusual concern was for the provision of a proper burial for those who could not afford it. A Burial Society paid for the funeral, while the servers attended the funeral and kept watch beforehand.

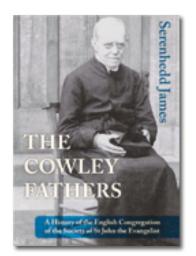
Father Charles Neale Field was professed at Cowley in 1881 and in the following year joined the staff of St Clement's as Superintendent of the Sunday School. He soon established the Guild of the Iron Cross for men who promised to resist the sins of intemperance, evil talking and impurity, and encourage others to do the same. The Guild attracted many members and eventually spread in parishes all over America.

On May 11th 1889 a dam wall broke in the city of Johnstown in western Pennsylvania. The flooding and fires claimed 2000 lives and destroyed 1600 homes. Father Field and other members of the Guild of the Iron Cross were among the first to go to do heroic relief work in Johnstown. Their efforts won universal respect and gratitude.

In 1887 Father Maturin was granted leave of absence from the parish but in May 1888 needed a further period of complete rest. The demands of parish ministry, as it had grown during SSJE's care, had left him totally exhausted. He resigned as rector in 1889 and returned to Cowley. Eight years later he was received into the Roman Catholic Church. When the *Lusitania* was torpedoed he gave his life-jacket to another passenger and went down with the ship.

Father Duncan Convers followed Father Maturin as rector. He was an American who had known St Clement's from before he joined the Society. He was an eloquent preacher, popular with both young and old. Poor health necessitated his resignation in 1891. The Society decided that their Mission in Boston needed to be strengthened and so the remaining brethren had to withdraw from Philadelphia.

Crispin Harrison CR



This is a superb book, fascinating throughout, thoroughly researched and beautifully written. It is a must-read for anyone with an interest in Nineteenth-Century Church life, Catholic Anglican Life, or Anglican Religious Life. It describes the life and work of the Society of St John the Evangelist (SSJE) founded in 1866: the first Anglican community of men to survive since the Reformation. For most of its life it was regarded with respect, honour and even a degree of awe by Catholic Anglicans and fellow religious. Most of us felt we could not live up to their standards but we were very glad they were there. It was a real grief when the Society came

to an end in England. SSJE continues in a somewhat different mode in the USA but that story is only told here in its earlier phases.

Having said that, Dr James has had a huge problem on his hands trying to get such a mass of material together into a single book and keep it readable. He has succeeded magnificently, but there is a lot that hasn't been told. There is much that really deserves further research. For instance:

If you ask what the Society actually did in UK you could say it was simply sermons, retreats, parish missions and individual counselling. We in CR have done all that and know how demanding it is, how styles changed, how mistakes were made and how, very often amazing fruits were observed. This in itself would be a fascinating story, particularly useful for the story of mission in England (remembering that they were Mission Priests first and foremost.) Who were the fathers who engaged in this work? What was their influence on other Religious?

It was sometimes said that the Cowley Fathers were 'Carthusians at home and Jesuits abroad' – two opposite ends of religious life. They were noted for their spirituality, their deep commitment to prayer, their wise counsel in the confessional. What was all this built on? What kind of spirituality did they have? Fr Longridge was highly regarded, even amongst Jesuits, for his knowledge of the Ignatian Exercises, but what else did they offer? They were, in fact, very secretive about these aspects of their life. Tractarian Reserve was deeply embedded amongst them. Catholic they were but not Roman Catholic, and they were very hurt when any brother became a Roman. As is remarked

on below, the solitary nature of their life at home probably contributed to their demise.

SSJE did a great missionary work in India and South Africa. Reading the accounts in this book, one is constantly amazed at that Victorian energy, building schools and churches, raising money, living in appalling conditions, especially in South Africa when the only transport was donkeys and oxen. But as a missiologist myself I want to know much more. Did they learn the local languages as a good missionary should, or did they rely on interpreters and just stumble through the liturgy? Some in South Africa certainly spoke good Xhosa. What about India? Were they utterly hostile to African religion or did they realise then that compromises must be made, new understandings sought? Was Fr Slade the only Father to try and bring Hindu insights and disciplines into Christian life? It would be fascinating to know what the local people in the Transkei, Cape Town and India think now of the Cowley Fathers who left them decades ago.

Then there is the character of their Founder, Father Benson. Like his master, Dr Pusey, he is a very ambivalent figure. He was learned, passionately committed to the Gospel of Christ, a hard-working and effective parish priest. He was a man of very deep prayer and he wrote things about Religious Life and God which can speak directly to us today. He himself lived with such an intense awareness of God he seems to have had no need of his brethren. He seems to have had little real relationship with most of his Brethren; his treatment of them sometimes bordered on abuse. He almost destroyed the Society by his obtuseness and dictatorial ways and it was only the courage of Fr Page in confronting him on this, and forcing him to resign, which saved the Society in 1890 and gave it a future. Fr Congreve, by contrast, was everything that Benson was not: gentle, lovable, world-affirming. (A biography of him is being written by Luke Miller.) It is one of the tragedies of SSJE that the hand of Father Founder dominated the life of the Society in England for all its existence and probably contributed to its demise.

That death of SSJE is deeply depressing for all of us who care about the Religious life in the Anglican Communion and of course to those of us who live it. They were so good, so holy, so prayerful. In their last decades their leadership, particularly Fr David Campbell and Fr Christopher Bryant (lovely men, both of them, whom James, sadly, misrepresents), tried very hard to update the Society and change it to fit a new century and a very new society. Basically they failed. It is easy to criticise in retrospect. One suspects that a large part of the Society were not willing to change and resisted what Fr Campbell and Fr Bryant were trying to do. They refused, for instance, to call each other by Christian names (something CR has always done) even

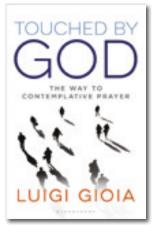
though their bishop encouraged them to do so. But they did do the things all of our Communities did. They modernised their liturgies, said Mass facing the people, introduced new ways of making retreats. It seemed at the time (the Sixties and Seventies) to be very exciting and good, but it didn't last. And to be honest, none of us in the Religious Life at the moment can claim that our attempts to meet a very new world have been very successful. SSJE has gone. CGA has gone. Nashdom has gone. SSM and CR are a shadow of their former selves. Are we on the way out too? Even Roman Catholic orders die out after a period of time. Communities are like people; there is birth, growth, maturity, decline and death. Sometimes a community finds a way to dodge the bullet and discover new life, but there is no obvious formula how this is done.

Dr James has his own axe to grind. He clearly thinks SSJE's removal of its Bodley altar was an act of vandalism which precipitated the Society's decline. He is also contemptuous of the work of David Campbell and Christopher Bryant trying to bring the Society into the modern world. This is unfair. Staying in their ossified past with all its faults was not an option that could have brought new life to SSJE. All liturgical enthusiasts make the mistake of thinking their own favourite liturgical form, modern or ancient, will bring salvation. One remembers the high hopes we had in the Sixties that a liturgy in modern English, facing the people, would bring the young into church in their droves. It had no impact. Yet churches that clung to their pre-Vatican 2 ritual also found their congregations melted away.

The story of SSJE is one that our own Community (and others, of course) should meditate on. Are we also just a generation away from our end? Do we get the same things wrong that they did? Is it simply God who decides who will live and who will die or do we have a part to play in that? My own belief is that the formula for survival is both very simple and very difficult. It is the love expressed in the Sermon on the Mount. We need to love each other, show care for each other, listen to each other every day. That is actually what the Rule of St Benedict tells us. Without that we shall die through a lack of love. And of course, as St Benedict puts it, we must 'prefer nothing whatever to Christ'. Most of us find plenty of things, our own comfort, for instance, that we prefer to Christ. We don't have the right to pass judgement on SSJE but we can use their example to pass judgement on ourselves. And if this injunction to love sounds too simple an answer to the problems of Anglican Religious Life, we have to remember that Christianity itself is simple. It is just hard to do!

Nicolas Stebbing CR

Touched by God: The Way to Contemplative Prayer – by Luigi Gioia, ISBN: 9781472951007



The benefits of easy reads are so often superficial and short-lived. Thankfully, this book is not always an easy read. Its title could lead the inquisitor to expect to find within its pages a step-by-step guide into contemplative prayer, the like of which fills the bookshelves of numerous bookstores up and down the country. Open its pages, however, and one is pulled into a deep reflection of the nature of God, human beings and the two-way interplay that exists between the created and the creator. A little perseverance suddenly finds the reader diving into a rich exploration of ancient wisdom and holy scripture, uncovering the depths of the Father's love

and its evocative calling upon the core of the soul.

In the introduction, we hear of how Luigi started off from a point of staunch atheism determined to prove Christianity wrong. He aggressively delves into the well of ancient wisdom and scripture to try and find evidence to back up his position. Instead, what he finds is God!

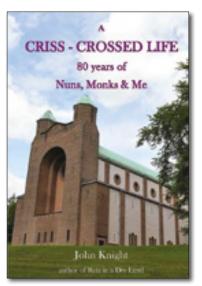
Having found God, he is then absorbed in the task of knowing God more fully. He becomes determined to deepen his prayer life. His prayer and his studies take him on a journey into the heart, finally coming to the age-old wisdom that God is only truly to be met in stillness, silence and contemplative reflection.

At points, this reads more like the writings of a Church Father than a contemporary contemplative. And this is not surprising given the author's journey of faith and the paths he has walked to discover God in the stillness.

But this is not a self-indulgent narrative of experiential ponderings, far from it. This book carefully intertwines human emotion, ancient wisdom, scripture and narrative. It doesn't teach or show its readers how to pray, but instead it draws the reader into a journey into the very heart itself. It is as if we, his companions, are turning the very same dusty pages of ancient tomes that Luigi himself has been turning and discovering the same soul-deepening wisdom along the way.

Fr Rob Parker-McGee

A Criss-Crossed Life. 80 years of Nuns, Monks & Me. *John Knight*. Onley Publishing 2020. \$8.99. Available from the CR Shop. ISBN 9781999599591 With an introduction by Father Robert Mercer CR.



This is a light-hearted, easy-to-read book with some black-and-white photos. Father John Knight looks back through his long life and recalls the influence in particular of monks and nuns on him. In his early years he wanted to be a medical doctor like his father but in his last year at school felt God's call to be a priest like his uncle, Archbishop Alan Knight of the West Indies. His earliest memories are of visits to the CR's mission at Penhalonga, which was near their home in Umtali, Eastern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). At the mission he met CR fathers and sisters. They belonged to separate communities, the Community of the Resurrection for men and the Community of the Resurrection of our Lord for women.

Sister Pauline CR stayed with his family for a holiday. Once when she was getting into their yacht she slipped and fell with a great splash into the water. She was rescued but all her clothes had to be washed and dried. He remembers with delight seeing them drying on the line as they could see the numerous petticoats worn under sister's habit. Sister Pauline was a famous artist who taught Job Kekana wood carving. Later Mr Kekana came to Johannesburg and stayed for a while in the CR Priory at Sophiatown where he carved a beautiful statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which I remember in our chapel at Alice in the Eastern Cape.

When John was a small boy Father Leo Rakale CR came to stay for a holiday, and this was the beginning of John's life-long friendship and admiration of Leo.

John and his two brothers went to St John's College in Johannesburg. The CR Fathers had long left the school but their influence was powerful and still is! Bishop James Nash CR, a great headmaster, still has his crozier in the beautiful chapel and the school staff room is still called 'the Community Room'.

I first met John and his friend Jerome Satterthwaite, also from Rhodesia, when they came to Leeds University. We were all students at the Hostel of the Resurrection and after graduation went on to study for the priesthood at the

College in Mirfield. I agree with John that it was a very happy time and he gives it plenty of space in his book. I recall that in a Greek class at Leeds on a hot, sunny afternoon, John and Jerome were sprawled across their desks fast asleep. They would not have dared do that if Professor Davidson had been the lecturer. John recounts that when he and Jerome were driving in the Lake District, the driver would fold his seat down and lie out of sight, while still controlling the car. The passenger would give the driver coded instructions for turning the wheel, changing gear, braking and so on, much to the shock of oncoming traffic seeing an apparently driverless car coming towards them.

After three years at Leeds and two at Mirfield John and Jerome returned to Rhodesia to be ordained and begin parish work. Before he left he went to London to stay with the Skipp family. Peter Skipp was a student with us at Leeds. Tragically, he was killed when his motor bike had a head-on collision with a lorry when he was coming back to Leeds for the beginning of term. Peter had invited John to stay with his family in the holidays. John got a vacation job as a Rolls Royce Chauffeur. He tells a fascinating story of his journeys and passengers.

John and Jerome were ordained priest in Gwelo Church in 1962, where John was serving as the curate. Jerome was assigned to serve at Bulawayo Cathedral. After two years in Gwelo John met Jill Bradbury and they were married in 1963. After three years at Gwelo John had to move and was invited by the Bishop of Mashonaland to care for seven country parishes but also to find means to save 300 diocesan primary schools from financial disaster. He was appointed Administrator of the whole school system for seven years and succeeded in establishing it on a sound financial basis. It was a remarkable achievement.

A new diocese of Manicaland was created and John became the Dean of its cathedral in Umtali. He and Jill were again close to Penhalonga and also to another Mission and School run by the Sisters of the Holy Paraclete, whose mother house is in Whitby.

For a second time John was called upon to use his administrative gifts for the benefit of others. All this while in Zimbabwe civil war raged with Christians themselves divided about what was moral and what was not. A particularly savage massacre of Pentecostal missionaries occurred some miles out of town. A politician led a mob into the cathedral to disrupt Sunday worship and to molest members of the congregation. But daily prayer was offered in the cathedral for both sides in the conflict.

In four other books John tells about different aspects of his ministry and life, not least about his enthusiasm for pilgrimages to St James, Compostela. He also tells of his intense experience of our Lord the Spirit, who has enabled him to

persevere with joy. But this volume concentrates on his friendships with nuns and monks like Bishop Anselm Genders CR and Father George Sidebotham CR.

Despite his wife's debilitating illness and the up and down years of the bush war in Zimbabwe, this short book is a happy and entertaining read. Former students of Hostel and College are likely to appreciate it.

Crispin Harrison CR



Another book produced by the Community and edited by our brother Robert CR, a sequel to the *Long and the Short and the Tall*, has just been published: it is a Mirfield Bedside Book called *In Concert Sing*, and will be reviewed in the next issue by a former student of the College who is now a Parish Priest. It can be described as, to quote Margery Kempe (1373-1433), "full merry in heaven". CR Bookshop price: £7 (p&p £1.70)

Please direct all materials, enquiries and comments to the editor, Fr George Guiver CR, at gguiver@mirfield.org.uk

Articles for consideration should be sent at least 5 weeks before the issue date.

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www.mirfield.org.uk

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