



Alleluia!	3	<i>John Gribben CR</i>
A Tale From the Bidding Room	4	<i>Bill Hines</i>
Streaming Tears	6	<i>George Guiver CR</i>
The Book of Strange Preachers	7	<i>Steven Haws CR</i>
Irenaeus: Becoming God's Handiwork	11	<i>Ryan Green Nov.CR</i>
Ecumenism at an Italian Monastery	15	<i>Oswin Gartside CR</i>
A Sacramental Sparrow	18	<i>Maggie Jackson</i>
Christophorus	19	<i>George CR</i>
Poems and Trees	20	<i>Roger Barker</i>
Book Reviews		
<i>Animals in Heaven? A Catholic Pastoral Response to Questions about Animals</i> by Terry Martin	22	<i>The Revd Canon Nathan Mulcock</i>
<i>A Powerhouse of the Spirit</i> by William Barham	25	<i>Fr Michael Sparrow, Obl. CR</i>
<i>Letters of Herbert Kelly SSM and Dorothy L Sayers</i> by Scholastica Jacob	28	<i>Robert Mercer CR</i>

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Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!



The auction is over, almost everything is gone. It was a wonderful day. The atmosphere was jubilant. Everyone seemed to be very happy and there were many satisfied customers. A Mirfield auction is not just a big sale - it is a social event, a day out, a meeting place for old friends, entertainment, a day when the world meets the Community.

This one seemed special to me. There were some great

bargains, some stunning items from wind-up mice to angel screens, from a pair of old boots to a gorgeous High Mass set. A good time was had by all! For the week following I kept falling asleep every time I sat down and sometimes even standing up. But this great event couldn't have happened without you. You the multitude who came to spend and support, you the army of willing helpers, brethren, Companions and friends, those who quietly encouraged and prayed in secret. I want to thank my brother George for all his support and encouragement and for an Oscar-winning performance on the day. Paul Hatfield and his team were amazing at lifting, shifting and delivering. The kitchen staff kept everybody happy and sustained by their usual high standard of service and cheerfulness. The bursary team were brilliant. Thanks to all who kept watch over the lots ensuring that everything remained safe, tidy and clearly visible. Special thanks must go to Daniel, the new kid on the block. I think that he was the best holder-upper of lots

that we have ever had.

Thank you to everyone who donated items. Here I must make special mention of St Paul's Parish Church, Easthorpe in Mirfield's main shopping street. This grand old church has closed its door as a church for the last time and we are grateful to Mr Tim Grace the church warden, and to St Mary's Parish Church, for the gift of so many items from St Paul's that ensured the success of the auction. There are a few things still to be disposed of, but my hope is that they too will have gone by the time you read this. The total of pre-auction sale plus the sales on the day totals £10,000 +

Thanks be to God and thanks to you all.

John CR

A Tale From the Bidding Room

Over the past decade Father John and his brother George have staged a number of successful charity auctions for the Community and it was a pleasure to be present for the latest event during August. A large crowd assembled on the day and there was lively bidding for almost all the lots with some £10,000 being raised for Community funds. Inevitably there was something of a bias towards ecclesiastical vestments and fittings amongst the offerings but also any number of oddments like silver, china and Matchbox toys to be acquired.



My own particular enthusiasm lies towards the old book world and I was

intrigued by a French edition of the liturgy of the Anglican church published in 1688 by Everingham. This translation of the 1662 prayer book had originally been prepared by Jean Durel, a Jersey cleric who became Dean of Windsor in 1677 . The translation was used by Anglican churches in the Channel Islands, the Savoy chapel and other French communities and appeared in several editions over the next century. Robert Everingham (1645-1705) was a London printer at Seven Stars, Ave Mary Lane in the later years of the 17th century and seems to have produced a variety of religious and secular texts.

However, there was more information to be acquired about the former owners of the book. Just inside the rear cover was an ink signature for Jane Turner, dated 1693. Inside the front cover was a label for Kirkleatham Library and underneath this an earlier hidden bookplate for one Cholmley Turner. The Turner family had links to the area going back to the beginning of the 17th century and a previous Jane Turner was a cousin of Samuel Pepys. William Turner served as a Mayor of London and endowed a Hospital or Almshouses for poor people in the Kirkleatham community in 1676. These are still operating today. William also left money for a Free School in the estate, established in 1709, and this was turned into a museum and library by his successor and great nephew Cholmley Turner around 1730. He donated many books to the library and presumably this was one of them. Cholmley served as an MP for Northallerton and later for Yorkshire between 1715 and 1747 and seems to have been a wealthy man as a result of his land and mining interests. There are a number of important Grade 1 buildings on the estate that were paid for by him, including a mausoleum to his son Marwood who died on the European Grand Tour in 1739 aged only 21. Cholmley Turner died in 1757 but his endowments live on today.

The daily Examen from the Mirfield Companion Pocket Book tells us to “Pay attention to small things. God is in the details”. Perhaps this trivial offering provides some demonstration of this truth?

Bill Hines

Streaming Tears



If you regularly watch our streamed services, you will unfortunately have been having a bit of a difficult time over the last two or three months. We hope we are now getting somewhere in settling it all down again, but the scale of the difficulties needs some explanation. First, we were having more problems with Facebook, and so moved over to YouTube, which proved more of a challenge than we had expected. We appealed for the necessary 50 people to subscribe to our new YouTube page, and 50 viewers pulled that out of the hat in 24 hours. Then we found you had to use a laptop, because to use a tablet or phone you need 1,000 subscribers. As the person operating it is for the most part a brother sitting in choir, there would be no way of hiding its presence. Then at the same time we started having trouble with the app we were using. You need one of those to be able to put pictures on the screen, and text and do a lot of other useful things. Perseverance didn't pay, and in the end we moved over to another app. Each time you do that a huge amount of work is involved in getting to know it and discovering what it can do. We paid a subscription but found it was undependable, and now we can't get them to reply to our emails asking for a refund. We just felt that we needed an expert for a bunch of monks who have neither the time nor the expertise to cope with all of this, and then, just like that, God sent one. Ian Rons has done a lot of work designing software and researching solutions and giving us advice. He says he enjoys this, as it makes a change from doing things like designing software for the cameras on the heads of police dogs. We are now using an app which seems to be reliable. There is nothing you can do about human

error, and monks being head-in-the-clouds people, the necessary pressing of this switch or that button is going sometimes forgotten, or believed done when it wasn't. However, it seems now to be becoming plainer sailing. There will be improvements as we go along, and Ian has also started working on an app which you can download to your phones, which will give you the texts of each service on your phone at the time it is being streamed. We realise our books can be a bit puzzling. Thank you, everybody, for your patience. For our part, it's wonderful to be able to share our worship with others, and also to hear of the ways it is helpful.

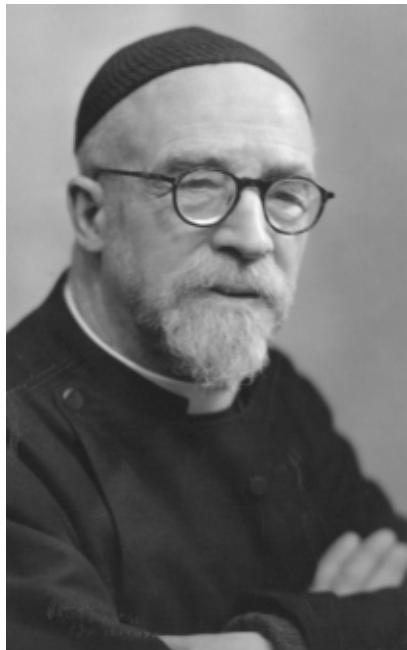
George CR

The Book of Strange Preachers

Parish Churches are required to keep a register of services taking place within their churches and I imagine the same applies to Cathedrals and chapels in schools, colleges and similar institutions. The Register would include the type and number of services taking place ie: Eucharist, Mattins & Evensong, the number of persons attending, the names of the officiant at such services including the preacher. I wondered if there were other churches that also had a guest book for visiting clergy in addition to the Parish Register? One parish has a specific guest book with the rather unusual title of "The Book of Strange Preachers." The Church of S. Michael and All Angels in Croydon has such a book that has listed so-called "Strange Preachers" since 1918. No one seems to know where the title came from. Having been invited as one of the "Strange Preachers" on two occasions, the book offers a fascinating account of the various preachers invited to preach in S. Michael's which almost reads like a Who's Who in the history of the Anglo-Catholic revival in the Church of England. Having perused the book, I noticed the number of Religious who were guest preachers who would be unfamiliar or unknown in most churches; perhaps that is what made them "strange?" Edmund Seyzinger CR was the first Mirfield Father (as far as we know) to preach in S. Michael's in 1918. His preaching seems to have made such an impression with the congregation and clergy that he returned to preach on nine other occasions until 1948.



St. Michael's



Fr Aidan Cotton CR

What is extraordinary about “The Book of Strange Preachers” is that sixty Religious representing seven communities of men are listed in the book. The Mirfield Fathers take the lead with 33 brethren's signatures, followed by ten Cowley Fathers, five Kelham Fathers, eight brethren of OGS (Oratory of the Good Shepherd), two monks from Nashdom, one priest from Oxford Mission to Calcutta, and one from the Oxford Mission Brotherhood of the Epiphany.

One of the earliest links between the parish and the Community at Mirfield came when one of the curates decided he had a calling to the Religious Life. Father Aidan Cotton was curate of S. Michael's, Croydon from 1907 until January 1909 when he arrived at the House of the Resurrection, Mirfield to test his vocation. He was clothed as a novice on 10th January that year and professed on 14th January 1911. In 1923 he returned to his title parish of S. Michael's to preach. That same year Walter Frere CR Bishop of Truro was also invited as guest preacher. Aidan who by now was working in South Africa managed to return to preach on two more occasions in S. Michael's in 1928 and 1948. Charles Gore, CR's founder and later Bishop of Oxford preached in 1929, three years before his death in 1932. In 1933 Victor Shearburn CR preached.

One other Prelate Brother would also grace the pulpit of S. Michael's: former Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak, Rupert Mounsey CR in 1937.

Other notable Mirfield Fathers include Elwin Millard CR, Robert Baker CR, Wilfrid Shelley CR, Cyril Bickersteth CR, Waldegrave Hart CR, Cyprian Rudolf CR, Geoffrey Curtis CR, Simon Herdson CR, Mark Tweedy CR, Andrew Blair CR, Gabriel Sanford CR, Benjamen Baynham CR, Aidan Mayoss CR.

Mention should be made of Father Eustace Hill CR who was Headmaster of S. John's College, Johannesburg from 1922 to 1930 when he returned to London and preached in S. Michael's in 1934. The following year he returned to South Africa and in 1938 withdrew from CR. Among some of the well-known mission priests from Cowley were Father Mark Gibbard SSJE, Father Walter Fitch SSJE,

Father Christopher Bryant SSJE, Father Terrance Manson SSJE, and former Superiors Father David Campbell SSJE and Father James Naters SSJE.

Only five Kelham Fathers had been guest preachers, among them were Father Alfred Kelly SSM in 1924 brother of Herbert H. Kelly, founder and first Director of the Society of the Sacred Mission, and Richard Rosevere SSM, Bishop of Accra in 1969. The Oratorians of the Good Shepherd lists John Thorold OGS having preached first in 1960 followed by John Davidson OGS in 1967 and 1969, George Tibbatts OGS and Eric Mascall OGS in 1971. Father Tibbatts was a former Superior of the Oratory who also wrote the first seventy-five year History of the OGS. Henry R. T. Brandreth OGS was guest preacher in 1973, followed by George Braund OGS in 1975 and Ken Mason OGS in 1978, Bishop of the Northern Territories in Australia. Dom Bernard Clements OSB was guest preacher in 1938. Professed in the Benedictine Order of S. Benedict at Pershore Abbey in 1923, he became Vicar of All Saints' Church, Margaret Street in 1934, becoming the first monk appointed in the parish.

S. Michael and All Angels Church in Croydon was founded in 1874, and a wooden chapel built on the site. In 1880 the foundation stone was laid for a new church which was completed in 1895. Although the “Book of Strange Preachers” was begun in 1918, it would be noteworthy to know if other “strange preachers” preached in S. Michael's prior to 1918 and if by chance their names appear in past issues of the Parish Magazine. The Vicar of S. Michael's, Father Tim Pike CMP tells me that there are old issues of the Parish Magazine in their archives that just might reveal a few more “strange preachers.” It would also be interesting to know if any Mirfield, Cowley or Franciscan (SSF) Missions took place in the parish.

Steven CR



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Irenaeus: Becoming God's Handiwork

It has been a real joy for me since I have joined the Community of the Resurrection to spend time in study, particularly in revisiting some of the theologians of the early Church. One such theologian is Irenaeus who writes in the second century. Like all of the New Testament writers, Irenaeus does not see theology as some abstract, doctrinal system, but he writes out of urgent pastoral concern for the Church of God. He is a first of all a polemicist who argues against the Gnostics, a subversive and secretive grouping of elite Christians who were seeking to re-cast the faith of the Church by driving apart what the Church was attempting to hold together.

In Book I of his *Against the Heresies*, Irenaeus presents us with an image of the truth of faith as a beautiful mosaic of a king 'created by a skilful artist out of precious stones.' This royal image has been deliberately smashed and reassembled in a parody of a jigsaw to present an image of 'a dog or a fox,' with the claim that this new picture is the real truth [Book 1.8.10]. Irenaeus accuses the Gnostics of performing this iconoclastic action, those who propound a doctrine 'which the prophets did not proclaim, the Lord did not teach, and the apostles did not transmit.' For Irenaeus these Gnostics can only present a skewed and partial picture of the truth because their imaginations are too narrow to hold the whole of it in view. They cannot believe that the God of the Old Testament has anything to do with the God of the New; they refuse to believe that a good Creator God would have anything to do with this dark and dangerous world; they fail to see that Jesus Christ could have taken on our embodied humanity and suffered with us; and, finally, they see the spiritual and the material only in terms of conflict and division. But in refusing to see that it is the same God who is at work in the entire story, they have only succeeded in breaking up the truth into fragments and dashing to pieces any coherent picture of humanity itself.

Throughout his works - his magisterial *Against the Heresies*, and his much shorter, *On the Apostolic Preaching* - Irenaeus seeks to put back together this shattered image. He does this by presenting his readers with a beautifully coherent and elegantly harmonious defence of the faith. First he contrasts what he terms 'the Great Church' - public, universal, visible, accessible - with that of the Gnostics who follow a narrow way with a secretive, guarded mystery, accessible only to the elite few. Painting with broad brush strokes, he writes of the church 'dispersed throughout the world to the ends of the earth' receiving from the apostles 'the faith in one God the Father almighty, "who made heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them," and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, incarnate for our

salvation, and in the Holy Spirit, who through the prophets predicted the dispensations of God' [1.10.1]. This vital faith ties creation and redemption together and holds God and humanity in a creative relationship in which the Incarnate Word of God becomes the visible sign of both as the glory of God and the image of humanity.

Irenaeus sees the Church as an organic unity and even if 'the languages in the world are dissimilar, the power of the tradition is one and the same.' Dispersed across the world, 'among the Celts, in the Orient, in Egypt, or in Libya,' these scattered communities are really one and they 'diligently guard the faith' as if they lived in 'one house,' had 'one soul and heart' and spoke 'with one mouth' [1.10.2]. The church's proclamation is not some esoteric mystery revealed by abstract philosophies or secretive myths, rather 'the tradition of the apostles, manifest in the whole

world, is present in every church to be perceived by all who wish to see the truth' [3.1]. Irenaeus roots this faith in the episcopal succession emerging from Rome. He sees the Church in Rome as the 'greatest, most ancient, and known to all, founded and set up by the two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul' [3.2]. The list of the Bishops of Rome is an impressive one, but Clement deserves special mention as one who 'had seen the apostles and met with them and still had the apostolic preaching in his ears and the tradition before his eyes.' The apostolic faith, handed down from bishop to bishop in Rome and in all the other churches is alive with the vitality of the Risen Jesus and the dynamism of his Spirit, and it has been passed on hand-to-hand and face-to-face, publically and visible to all. In this way, Irenaeus offers Catholic coherence in the face of an aggressively atomising and secretive Gnosticism.



So what is the content of this faith? What Irenaeus calls 'the economy of God' relate to God's action concerning human beings. This divine economy begins in

the glory which the Word shares with the Father before the creation of the world, and culminates in the glorification of the Incarnate Son by the Father, a glory in which human beings come to participate in beholding it. Irenaeus sees the whole of humanity in Adam, young and inexperienced, attempting to grasp at the promise of life before he was ready to receive it. But even as 'God hated the one who seduced humanity... he gradually felt pity for the one seduced' [3.23.5].

Irenaeus has a nuanced theology of death. However much death impoverishes and diminishes humanity, it is not finally a judgement of God, but rather is a limitation on sin, to prevent Adam's juvenile rebellion from having eternal consequences. If humanity's life becomes temporary, then so does the effect of sin. As Irenaeus himself says, 'This was God's generosity. He allowed man to pass through every situation and to know death and then come to the resurrection from the dead, and learning by experience that from which he had been liberated, might always be grateful to the Lord, having obtained the gift of imperishability from him, and might love him more, for "he to whom more is forgiven loves more"' (Luke 7.42-43) [3.20.2].

Irenaeus radically extends and deepens Paul's Adam Christology, 'for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ' (1 Corinthians 15.22), transforming it into a sweeping historical drama of cosmic proportions. Just as Adam was 'taken from the earth and fashioned by the Word of God, it was necessary that the Word himself, working in himself the recapitulation of Adam, possessed a like origin' [3.21.10]. Sin comes about through the disobedience of the one man, and through that sin, death, but Christ's obedience produces 'the fruit of life.' But Irenaeus goes further than Paul. Indeed, the image of God seen in Adam is nothing less than the image of the Word himself, only at this point a hint and a sketch of what was to come, and, in time, Christ himself becomes his own 'handiwork,' allowing himself to be shaped by God in order to bring Adam to salvation through his own patient obedience to the Father. The Virgin Mary also joins in this extraordinary work of recapitulation, taking up and redeeming Eve's ancient story, 'for what the virgin Eve had bound by her unfaith, the virgin Mary loosed by her faith' [3.22.4].

For Irenaeus, the capacity to learn and to grow is what defines humanity and its relationship to God. In Book IV, he directs our attention to the correct relationship that should exist between humanity and God. 'In this God differs from humanity: God makes, humanity is made. He who makes is always the same, while those who are made have a beginning, a middle and an end, and ought to receive growth' [4.11.2]. Irenaeus casts this potential for choice and growth in a positive light. If humanity understands this dynamic properly and keeps

themselves supple in the hands of God, allowing themselves to be shaped by his divine purpose, 'so they, being in God, will always advance towards God.' It is important to stress here that throughout his writings, Irenaeus emphasises the materiality of humanity, he frequently uses the word 'plasma' (handiwork) to describe the human being and constantly talks of humanity in terms of flesh. In a beautiful passage he writes about the necessity for us to retain our plasticity and to yield to God's shaping and creative work: 'If, then, you are the work of God, await the hand of your fashioner who does all things at the due time... Offer him a soft and pliable heart and retain the shape which your fashioner gave you' [4.39.2-3]. In the end, though, it is Christ's recapitulation of humanity that makes this advance possible. 'In his love... he [the Father] is always known through the One through whom he created everything. That is his Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, who in the last times was made man so that he might join the end to the beginning, that is, humanity to God' [4.20.4]. And this Christological completion of all things brings a wonderful symmetry and fulfilment to the work of God, 'like a well-composed and harmonious melody' [4.20.7]. Jesus Christ is the one who 'shows God to humanity and humanity to God, preserving the invisibility of the Father so that we would not become a despiser of God but would always have a goal toward which to advance, and at the same time making God visible to us through his many "economies" so that we might not be totally deprived of God and perish.' And this leads Irenaeus to his wonderful conclusion, 'For the glory of God is the living human being, and the life of humanity is the vision of God.' This living human and vision of God is no one else but Jesus Christ himself, the Incarnate Word of God, in whom heaven and earth find their meaning and have their being.

Ryan Nov.CR

Ecumenism at an Italian monastery

*The 31st Ecumenical Conference on Orthodox Spirituality
at the Monastery of Bose.*



I attended this in the first week of September. It has been some years since a brother has been, but CR has been keen to renew links with Orthodox churches and monasteries and also with the brothers and sisters (about 40) at Bose. Bose is a stunning contemporary monastery built around an old hamlet in the foothills of the Alps, not far from Turin.

There were participants from Russia, Egypt, Armenia, Albania, Greece and one from Ethiopia, as well as many from Italy and other Western nations. A member came from the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity of the Vatican. There was Br Jean-Marc of the Taizé Community, who proved to be English and a former student at Hereford Cathedral School. And a good number from Romania, including from Iasi: Fr Adrian who has stayed at Mirfield and the redoubtable Mother Maria-Magdalena, whom I had visited in Iasi and whose favourite holiday spot proved to be Grasmere. There were many fascinating and unexpected

conversations.

Four Anglicans came: as well as Fr Oswin, Bishop Michael Lewis, retired Bishop of Cyprus and the Gulf, who co-chairs the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue, Canon Daniel Burton, CR's preacher on Festival Day this year, and the veteran of these events, Canon Hugh Wybrew. At 90, he was not the oldest participant – one of the speakers, Professor Ewa Wipszycka, an eminent professor in the papyrology of Christian Egypt, is 93.

The topic under consideration was St Antony of Egypt, from the 4th century, sometimes called 'the father of monks' (and he lived to 105). The Prior of Bose, Fr. Sabino, is himself a Syriac scholar, and the organisers were very pleased how many monks, men and women, attended. We looked at Antony's theology and the pattern he set for the Christian path of prayer as trust in God - in his own words through his letters, in the famous biography written by St Athanasius shortly after his death, and in the sayings of the desert fathers collected maybe 100 years later. We saw pictures of the places he lived, and how his image has been portrayed in icons over the centuries.

One of the most amazing experiences of the conference was the opportunity to read and discuss one of Antony's letters with Samuel Rubenson of Lund University, the Professor who had researched them and found them to be authentic letters of Antony. The Antony whom we came to know through this conference was no unlettered peasant, living out of sight, or largely a literary invention, but a man from a significant town, familiar with the theology of Alexandria as it had developed in the wake of Origen and one who guided his



The four Anglicans

fellow desert monks, teaching discernment of spirits and advising on the construction of significant monasteries. And, by meeting each other, we learned afresh how St Antony remains a figure of unity between East and West at the fountainhead of recorded monastic life.

May God bless the fruits of this gathering in deepening understanding between the churches.

Oswin CR



A Sacramental Sparrow



It should have been an Owl, according to belief.

A Barn Owl with powerful wings
and wisdom in its eyes.

A bird whose stillness, when perched,
owns the attentiveness of an awesome God,
or a Buddha perhaps, deceptively sleeping,
transcending all in contemplation,
a silent counsellor for troubled souls.

But now, when wise listeners are absent,
it's not the Owl's attention I call upon,
nor any God or mystical mentor.

It's a single Sparrow who sits on the bird-bath,
dipping its beak into the water of life,
watchful of bigger birds who try to displace it.
Vitality clothed in a flutter of feathers.

Winged immanence communing with the world.

Maggie Jackson

Christophorus



In August we hosted the Christophorus Conference, welcoming brothers and sisters from Germany, Lithuania and Poland, from a variety of Christian traditions, including Lutheran and Roman Catholic. This conference was named after our late Brother Christopher Lowe CR, who died in 2001. He used to work clandestinely in Eastern Europe under communism, helping both Roman Catholics and Protestants to found courses, retreat houses, and occasions for meeting together. Out of all that was born the biennial Laski conference, meeting in the place of that name. Christopher was greatly loved, and they are surprised to hear from CR that we didn't find him easy to live with, not least because he never told us anything about what he was doing, and wouldn't accept cooperation from other brothers, but often it's our uneasy character-traits that enable us to do the things we do. His legacy is fairly amazing, and when he died they renamed this biennial conference after him. At its last meeting however there was a feeling that the wind had gone out of its sails. Then this year, meeting in Mirfield, the conference went incredibly well. It was centred around the theme of 'hope' – what was it we were hoping for for the future of the religious life in Europe, and how does liturgy and prayer bring us into contact with that hope? Perhaps the greatest sign of this hope was the deepening of friendships we had together. The Group shared a day trip to Durham with a visit to St Anthony's Priory and the Cathedral,

where the welcome we received and the liturgies shared made a great impression on the participants. Back at Mirfield, the Community laid on a celebratory lunch in thanks that day for the 50 years' anniversary of Christophorus, with a renewed hope of more to come.

George CR

Poems and trees

Of the many things that make England our 'green and pleasant land' and which spurred Browning to pen the lines: "Oh, to be in England now that April's there," perhaps the most outstanding are the woods and trees which grace our beautiful countryside. Of course there are the wild flowers that grow along the roadside and in the fields, and the wild life too. But these things, enchanting though they are, have a more ephemeral and transient quality, whereas the awe-inspiring majesty of the oak, the elm, the plane and the beech tree seem to convey a spiritual quality of constancy and peace – a sense of aristocratic grandeur – of lasting permanence and protection. The lady-like silver birch has a charm all its own, while the lazy weeping willow shadows the amusing antics of Ratty and Mole. The stately poplars and firs seem to add to the company a quality of uprightness and virtue – all conspiring together in a gentle compliance of gentle beauty.

But, even in other parts of our world, trees clothe the earth with gifts of beauty, continuance and usefulness. The towering giants of the Congolese and Amazonian jungles offer shelter for a myriad species of wildlife in their treetop haunts, while the carefully cultivated eucalyptus of Southern Africa, the United States and Australia provide visual relief from the barren scrub and sun-bleached plains. The sparsely-leaved acacia of the African high veldt offers the panting buck a refuge of shade and for the drowsing lion a canopy for his slumbers. Possibly the joker in the pack is the ridiculous baobab. This comedian appears like an enormous turnip which has been uprooted and thrust back head first into the ground with its roots waving frantically in the air. But the big daddy (or perhaps the big granddaddy) of them all must surely be the Canadian redwood, which often lives for well over 2000 years and stands like a huge colossus soaring as much 115 meters into the air with a girth at its base of around 25 metres.

Trees fulfill numerous functions in the world of nature – a lookout-post for the raptors, a haven of peace and security for many animals and birds, sometimes a place of rest for the big cats, as well as providing a bounteous larder for countless



Watercolour by Robert Barker

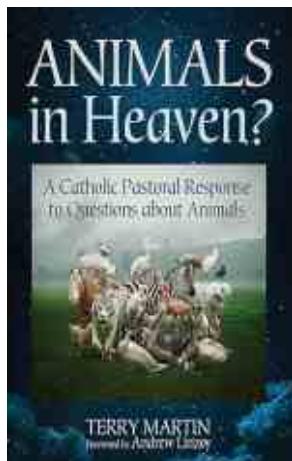
species of animal, avian and insect life. And for our feathered friends the tree may oft "in summer wear a nest of robins in her hair."

And, after the brilliant fashion show of colour and couture displayed in the summer our trees, even in late autumn, present a patterned network of sculptured beauty; while in winter they conjure up a stately lacework of patterned branches. Or, on entering a forest after a fall of snow, one is confronted by a winter wonderland of dazzling white – a crystal palace of delicate and silent beauty. The effect of the snow is to create a reverential stillness similar to the sensation one has on entering a place of worship – a Cathedralesque feeling of stepping onto holy ground. And the fine tracery of intricately latticed patterns on ice-bound twigs and billowing pillows of white on snow-laden branches create a scenic magic no artist could ever hope to capture. Throughout the whole year our trees present a kaleidoscope of changing colour and form, creating a tapestry of arboreal splendour. And if we stop for but one moment to contemplate this wondrous gift of nature we realise at once the obvious truth that, though: "Poems are made by fools like me, ... only God can make a tree."

Robert Barker

Book Reviews

Animals in Heaven? A Catholic Pastoral Response to Questions about Animals, Terry Martin, Oregon, Wipf & Stock, 2024



Good for Catholics and Cat-Holics

After twenty hours of lessons, my driving instructor declared that I was unteachable and he could not 'in conscience' take any more money from me. True, I was sluggish on the main roads and quite the chicken in traffic, but when the instructor learned I was a priest, he would intersperse his instruction (unprompted) with directions like: 'Dogs are so loving aren't they. I loved my dog, will I see my dog in heaven? Also, you've missed the turning, how did you manage that?' If only I could have handed this book to him back then, I may have had a chance of not being such a lousy driver.

My instructor is far from the only person who has ever badgered me about the relationship of God and animals, and it is a fact that human and animal lives are deeply interwoven and this is reflected in the scriptures. Yet, apart from the occasional pet blessing, many churches never touch on the subject. This is something this book seeks to engage with. With a mixture of anecdote, gentle discussion, and a genuine warmth towards all creatures great and small, the author seeks to encourage the average churchgoer to pay more attention to the rest of the animal kingdom and even see our relationships with animals as a way of better understanding both ourselves and God.

The author is clear about the scope of this book; it draws from experience rather than theory, and it addresses questions in a pastoral rather than systematic way. Bookworms seeking an in-depth exploration of these questions must fish elsewhere. Yet this does mean the book is disciplined, building its case from sources that any general reader, especially a catholic one, can read and ponder for themselves: the Bible, the catechism, papal teaching, and the lives of the saints. It is an inescapably Roman Catholic book, with chapters devoted to the Mass, the Catechism, the attitude and relationships of animals to those alpha primates, the popes. It is refreshing to read a writer who treats these sources and genuine

authorities to be followed rather than respected, rather than the Anglican habit of treating them all as conversation partners equal to oneself at a genteel (and in this case vegan) dinner party. The pious legends of St Francis of Assisi are, perhaps predictably, the bee's knees, while gentle, even sheepish, criticism is reserved mainly for the writings of 'the dumb Ox' St Thomas Aquinas. Not even being one of the 'Dogs of the Lord' (Domini canes) wins him any favours.

Yet a protestant should not be dissuaded, for it invites readers to ethical and theological reflection, to widen their focus when they think about God as both creator and saviour and query our tendency to draw the circle rather narrowly around our own species. As it prompts reflection on God's true relationship to all his creatures, it also challenges us to think about our own relationship to creatures, in what we eat and wear, in the blood sports and industrial farming that humans practise, in the environments we destroy, and in our personal relationships to our pets and pests alike, and how a different vision of creation can be found in our reading, our liturgy and our prayer.

Above all, it is an appeal to be more *humane*. We don't have to radically redefine Christian teaching to care about animals; rather, we do it because our own human vocation is to imitate God in His compassion, His mercy, His kindness, and His provision, which is exercised in relation to everything that exists. Inspired by a vision of a 'peaceable kingdom' that draws on Isaiah 11, where the wolf dwells with the lamb, we are encouraged to anticipate this heavenly life in the here and now. Should one be tempted to balk at the acknowledged and shameless sentimentalism of the author's own writing, he highlights an impressive and persuasive number of saints and thinkers through the centuries who have made the same connection; cruelty and indifference are not marks of Christian behaviour. Neither do we need to feel soppy butterflies when we look at animals to acknowledge that gentleness towards others better imitates Christ than callousness.

There were, however, a few points that bugged me. There is sometimes a tendency in the book to treat this more humane approach to animals as a progressive step over the hierarchical view of Aquinas. Yet I do wonder whether Aquinas, in his woollen habit, leather belt and shoes, writing his thoughts with a feather pen and ink derived from tree galls formed by wasps, perhaps by the light of a beeswax candle, was somehow less attuned to his relationship with the animal world. Instead, I think he recognizes that whether it's the medieval ox pulling the plough or contemporary rodents being studied to better understand human psychology, or even in beloved companion pets, we humans have a relationship to

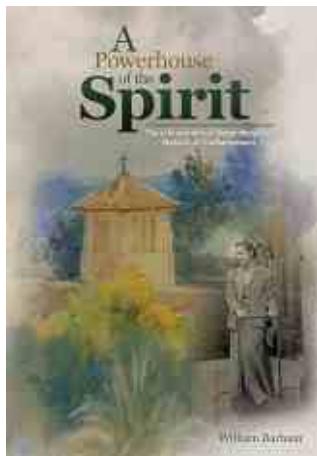
animals that is simultaneously dependent and controlling. Our modern machinery obscures this fact of human history, but this technology so far has mostly proved even more efficient at destroying ecosystems and wiping out whole species, another reality the book doesn't dwell on.

I suppose I wish this book had embraced a more pastoral perspective in the other sense. Leaving aside the factory methods of agribusiness, the farmer can embody a relationship to animals both solicitous for their welfare but also practical towards the brutal realities of nature, where death is very much a respected part of life. A rural viewpoint might allow for a more nuanced discussion about balancing human needs and ethical responsibilities towards animals, especially given how much agriculture shapes the worldview and metaphors of Scripture. Acknowledging this view for instance, allows us to recognise there is rather more to say about animal sacrifice in this agrarian society than simply commenting on animal suffering, as this book does.

Yet I don't wish to sound ratty or give the impression that this book has made a pig's ear of these questions. It is difficult to come away from this book without being convinced that when Jesus commends us for serving 'the least of these', it truly is partly a matter of literal sheep and goats. It is a book that dispenses with technical language to give a direct and approachable discussion about these matters that is careful not to ruffle feathers. Anything that allows Christians to consider the wider relationships of God, creation, and self is to be welcomed. To return to my driving instructor's question of whether all dogs go to heaven, I won't let the cat out of the bag with answer, but the vision of heaven in it does leave open the tantalising possibility that all humans might be saved although Fr Terry does not go the whole hog to this conclusion. Yet heaven knows, if we can dare to hope that animals are worthy of God's eternal love, we might find similar grounds to be not quite so beastly towards our fellow humans too.

Nathan Mulcock
Birmingham cathedral

**A Powerhouse of the Spirit:
The Life and Art of Sister Margaret Watson of Grahamstown,**
by William Barham (Makhanda, South Africa. NISC (Pty) Ltd, 2024.)
ISBN: 978-1-991458-07-0 Available on Amazon and from Waterstones.



The great 'holy garage' that was the Church of Christ the King, Sophiatown, completed in 1934, and where Mirfield brethren laboured zealously for almost three decades, had a very plain interior until 'a nun came to paint frescoes on the chancel arch'. Canon Wilkinson, in his Centenary History, gives this information but leaves the identity of the artist hidden (p.227). William Barham, in the book under review, reveals that it was Sister Margaret from Grahamstown.

Sister Margaret was something of a discovery for the author himself. The flyleaf of the back cover tells us that he had been writing a biography of the potter

Dorothy Watson, and in researching her family came across her eldest sibling, Margaret Watson. They were a clerical family. Her father was Rector of Starston in Norfolk when Margaret was born, the first of ten children. When Margaret was fifteen they moved to Cambridge, where her father took responsibility for St Edward's Church alongside his main work as a Divinity lecturer at St John's College. In her early twenties, Margaret spent some time in France training as an artist. In 1907, one year after her father's death, Margaret left England and travelled to Grahamstown to become a volunteer worker at St Peter's Home.

St Peter's Home was the Mother House for the Sisters of the Community of the Resurrection of our Lord, which had been founded in 1884 by the fourth Bishop of Grahamstown, Allan Becher Webb. In his previous diocese of Bloemfontein, Webb had founded the first Sisterhood in Southern Africa, the Community of St Michael and All Angels, in 1874. Why did he create a completely new Community instead of linking the new work with the old? There would have been practical considerations: Bloemfontein and Grahamstown were located in different political jurisdictions – a Dutch-speaking republic and a British colony; and travel between the two centres was difficult because they were not yet linked by railways. The principal reason would have been Webb's conception of the place of Sisterhoods: they should be under the direction of the local Bishop as part of the Diocesan structure. We learn quite a lot about CR Grahamstown from William

Barham's book: he had access to the Community's Rules, Chapter Minutes, Journal, and correspondence. The Community had grown fast and by the time Margaret Watson arrived the total of professed and novices numbered 71. The work had expanded also and Webb's diocesan restraints were soon left aside for missions in far flung places.

Margaret Watson was admitted as a Postulant in 1908 and unusually continued as a Postulant for twenty-one months before going to England on a nineteen-month trip. During the latter period she completed a course in fresco painting with the well-known artist E. Reginald Frampton. Did she have a prolonged inner struggle between her desire to be an artist and the call to give up everything for a life in religious vows? She returned to Grahamstown and a fortnight later was clothed as a Novice. After profession in January 1914 she was sent to a branch house, St Monica's Home of Refuge in Queenstown (Eastern Cape), and set to work in the laundry. The heavy work and the heat led to a breakdown in Sister Margaret's health in 1921. A local farmer, Donald Hart, whose sister supported the work at St Monica's, invited the Sister to recuperate at his farm. When he learned that she had been an artist, he wrote to the Superior in Grahamstown, saying it was an 'awful waste' not to use her gifts, and asked permission to buy artists' materials. So equipped, Sister Margaret spent many hours outdoors painting landscapes while her health gradually recovered. It was a turning point.

In 1922 a proposal was made to paint the ceiling of the apse in the Chapel of St Mary and All the Angels, which served students of the Training College run by the Sisters. The Superior at once recalled Sister Margaret from Queenstown and entrusted the task to her. Work began in October 1924 on a fresco depicting at its centre Our Lady holding the Christ Child, surrounded by angels. Progress was slow because of the need to get the paint mixture to the required temperature and, after many hours working from the scaffolding platform, it was not until 1928 that Sister Margaret was satisfied with her product. It was the first of many commissions beautifying chapels and churches. We observe that, with the exception of the Church of St James at Sidwell (Port Elizabeth), all the early paintings were for missions or institutions where CR Sisters were working, including St Peter's School, Bulawayo, the Grace Dieu Training College in the Diocese of Pretoria, and the Church of St Francis Xavier in the north end of Port Elizabeth. Under wise Superiors, the Community encouraged her art.

Fr Carl Runge CR travelled from Rosettenville to conduct the Sisters' Retreat in Grahamstown in 1938 and shortly afterwards the Mother Superior received the request from the CR brethren for Sister Margaret to beautify the Church of

Christ the King in Sophiatown. A vast fresco was proposed, necessitating scaffolding high above the chancel arch. The first stage of the fresco was completed in August 1939, and the whole work in 1941. It transformed the garage-like interior, and attracted a photo and enthusiastic report in the Johannesburg Sunday Express. Soon many more requests for Sr Margaret's work were received, from places as far apart as Pretoria, Maseru in Lesotho, Zululand, and the Transkei. She always made a preliminary visit to see the church or chapel and to assess what was required. Some of her works were very large oil paintings: that for Nqutu in Zululand

measured 30 feet across by 10 feet high and was painted in five panels. For St Mark's North End in Port Elizabeth she used three panels for a painting 8 ½ ft by 8 ft. Much smaller were three panels for the altar of the chapel at St Gabriel's Home, Bulawayo. Dedicating the restored building in June 1945, Bishop Paget of Southern Rhodesia described it as 'this power-house of the Spirit' out of which lives would go forth dedicated to the service of God. The Bishop's words provided the author with the title for his book. All Sister Margaret's works were well received, with the exception of her last commission, a 6 ft by 5 ft canvas for the Lady Chapel of Grahamstown Cathedral. She worked at it for six years and was 79 years old when it was installed at Easter 1958. Considered inappropriate for its setting, it was covered over for a time before being removed to a village church after just two years in place.

There are a few small mistakes. Among them, on p.98, the Cowley Fathers took over St Cuthbert's Mission, Tsolo, in 1904, not St Augustine's; and on p.174 the Modderpoort-based community which founded the African brotherhood called the Company of the Servants of Christ, was the Society of the Sacred Mission. There is a typographical error on p.26, because Bishop Webb and Cecile Isherwood reached Grahamstown in November 1883, not 1893; and another on p.145, Fr Runge led the Sisters' Retreat in January 1938, not 1928. Brief and to the point as it is, the mid-morning Office is called Terce, with a 'c', and is never Terse, as on p.44 and p.56.



Christ the King, Sophiatown

These, however, do not detract from this interesting book. The author is to be thanked and complimented for his work, which reveals something of the contemplative personality and prayer of the artist whose (mostly unsigned) works adorned many churches and chapels, and encouraged the growth of devotion among their congregations, to the glory of God. The book is profusely illustrated, and it is good to have recent colour images of six of the Sister's paintings, still fulfilling their intended purpose.

Wondering about Sister Margaret's largest and greatest work, in the Church of Christ the King, Sophiatown, this reviewer made online searches. The fresco suffered some vandalism while the building stood empty in the mid-1960s, and later was whitewashed over and is no longer visible. A city of Johannesburg website suggests that 'the mural sits quietly beneath the whitewash, waiting for the restorers' brushes and scalpels to return it to its former glory'. Let's hope it may be so.

Michael Sparrow, Oblate CR

(Author of *Nuns Across the Orange: A history of the pioneering Anglican Community of St Michael and All Angels, Bloemfontein.*)

The Letters of Herbert Kelly SSM and Dorothy L Sayers 1937 – 1950
ed. Scholastica Jacob, 2024, Society of the Sacred Mission. 152 pp. £11.99.
ISBN 978-1-067286-0-0.



One picks this up expecting fireworks. Two formidable personalities with sharp minds and sharp tongues will surely put on a good display? But no, this temperate correspondence is for mutual society, help and comfort. Fr Kelly is coming to the end of his life and feeling something of a failure; she is at the height of her powers, writing popular murder mysteries and the radio play *Man Born to be King*.

Those who've known parish priests and missionaries trained at Kelham, and seen the Society's own work in Lesotho and South Africa, can not accept that Fr Kelly was a failure. Ms Sayers is famous for claiming never to

have had any religious experiences, yet her meditations on the Bible are devout enough. For instance, she asks her correspondent, "St Peter had a mother-in-law. How about his wife? What did she think about it all? The mother-in-law was healed. Was Peter glad to see the old lady restored, and does this indicate a happy domestic atmosphere? Did he merely do the right thing by his wife and regret the result? This would make a pretty good radio comedy, though not for Children's Hour. Why are so many of the disciples just names, with no characters attached to them? Maddening from the dramatist's point of view. What a pity Our Lady has so little to say apart from the first scene or two." I myself, thanks to the character Dorothy Sayers imposes on Doubting Thomas in "Man Born", can not shake off the notion that he's a Cockney barrow boy.

I have an idea that Ms Sayers also corresponded with our Superior Raymond Raynes, and that they amused themselves with a fantasy about a joint contribution to *Punch*. Sadly I can not find a reference for this. Can any reader of the "Quarterly" help? Ms Sayers certainly had a calendar of her own: St Supercilia of Paris, patron of pedants; St Lukewarm of Laodicea, patron of caterers; Wishmas day on December 25.

Robert CR



Young giant redwood near the church

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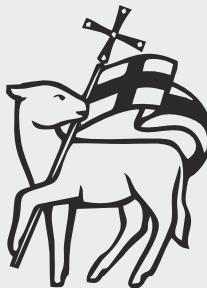
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