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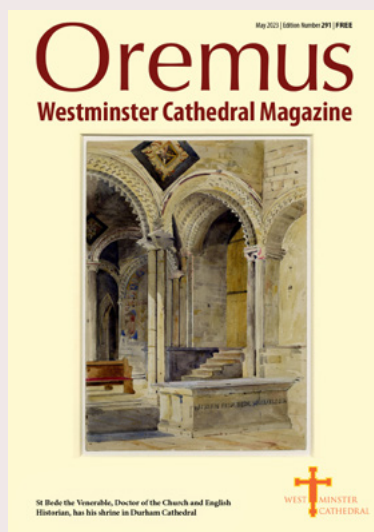
Oremus

Westminster Cathedral Magazine

On 17 June in 1873, Westminster Diocese was consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; we also honour the Immaculate Heart of Mary.



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Oremus, the magazine of Westminster Cathedral, reflects the life of the Cathedral and the lives of those who make it a place of faith in central London. If you think that you would like to contribute an article or an item of news, please contact the Editor.

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by Vicente López Portaña. See page 4



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Doing God in Downing Street

The Catholic Union



The Union will be hosting a webinar with Fr Mark Vickers on his book, *God in No 10: The Personal Faith of the Prime Ministers, from Balfour to Blair*. The online event will feature a discussion between Fr Mark and Catholic Union Deputy Director, James Somerville-Meikle. People taking part will also have the opportunity to ask questions.

The webinar is taking place on Tuesday 20 June, from 6.30-8.00pm. It is free to attend and open to everyone, but people will need to register (see below) in advance in order to receive the link to join the talk. *God in No 10* is an account of the personal faith of the 20th-century British Prime Ministers. The book was launched by Charles (Lord) Moore at an event in Parliament last year and has received excellent reviews since its publication, including from *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Tablet*.

Mark Vickers read History at Durham University and practised with one of the City law firms. Having studied for the priesthood at the English College in Rome, he was ordained for the diocese of Westminster in 2003 and is currently a parish priest in West London. The webinar builds on the Catholic Union's proud history of leading public discussion on Catholic matters, including the annual Craigmyle Lecture and a new 'Pub Talk' series which started earlier this year.

Fr Mark comments: 'I once thought my future lay in politics. God, however, had other plans, and I have no regrets. Researching and writing the book allowed me to combine two passions: faith and politics. Surprisingly, no one had ever covered the Prime Ministers' personal faith. There are many



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surprises challenging received wisdom: sceptics and seances in the early 20th century; and increasingly devout Christians in the later period. I look forward to sharing my findings on this Catholic Union webinar.

More information and a link to sign up for the event can be found here: <https://catholicunion.org.uk/eventslist/webinar-god-in-no-10/>

Details of the book can be found on Amazon here: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/God-Number-10-Personal-Ministers/dp/0281087288>

The Front Cover Image

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Consecration of the Diocese to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the cover features a painting (1829 – 1831), of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary by Vicente López Portaña. This image (now held in the Museo Diocesano de Arte Sacro in Orihuela, Spain) forms part of the donations made to the Real Monasterio de la Visitación de Santa María by its founder, the Infanta Doña María Francisca de Asís de Braganza y Borbón. The concept is original to the artist. Various versions on the same theme are known by him, this painting being the most complete from an iconographic point of view.

Two spaces are differentiated, in juxtaposition: the upper part as a reflection of the divine, and the lower part as a representation of the earthly. The celestial world is characterized by the circular composition based on cherubs and little angels. On the left, they are carrying the symbols of the Passion and Death of Christ: the cross, the spear, the nails, the thorns, the chalice with the Holy Eucharist, vines and the pelican feeding its young. To the right, they carry Marian attributes: the star, the flowers, the face of Christ and the moon. The set of cherubs and angels frame the second halo, in which Christ's crown of thorns and the Virgin's crown of flowers are intertwined.

Inevitably, the focus of attention is on the Sacred Hearts, endowed with the corresponding iconography of Jesus and Mary. On the right, the heart presents the Marian attributes: the flowers and the crown. On the left, the heart shows the crown of thorns and the cross, all enveloped in golden light.

As for the lower part referring to the earthly world, the three angels hold the divine viscera and the seven flaming hearts. Between them, a walled city can be seen, crossed by a lake, which can be interpreted as the union between Heaven and Purgatory. As a last notable element, the snake with the apple makes reference to sin.

Fr John writes



Dear Readers of *Oremus*

The theme of family appears in a number of pieces this month. Most clearly we saw this at the Annual Matrimony Mass, which fills the Cathedral year by year; please read the homily which the Cardinal preached. Not all families are, of course happy. One that was somewhat unusual was that of the Rossettis,

'radical romantics' as the Tate Gallery calls them in its latest exhibition, for which I hope that the review printed here will whet your appetite. Not so long ago, the Pre-Raphaelites were neglected or ignored; indeed, Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber did us a favour by collecting their pictures at a time when no one else was interested in buying them.

The news media are presently circling repeatedly around questions of how migration should be handled and the Archbishop of Canterbury found himself roundly criticised after he spoke on the subject in Parliament. Pope Francis has now issued a message on Migration for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees and I reprint it here so that it may inform our thinking; it is noticeable that he begins each paragraph with a scriptural text.

As the sacramental programme draw to their completion, with the Parish First Holy Communion and Confirmation Masses, as well as the diocesan Mass for New Catholics, so we need also to be aware of the students at school and college facing exams and questions about the future direction of their lives. I have included a piece about how one Catholic family faced this important moment within the very particular context of Chinese life and expectations.

One person who lived a life about as far away as possible from even late 18th century bourgeois norms was Lady Hester Stanhope; I trust that you will be entertained by the account of her life, which will be concluded next month. The 18th century also gets a look-in through the *Crown to Couture* exhibition, which is reviewed this month. 'If you have got it, flaunt it' seems to have been that century's motto, so not a time that different from our own in demonstrating the chasm between the rich and the poor.

Finally, I have included notice of a book which may be helpful to those supporting family members who suffer with dementia. It also challenges us all in the Church to ensure our corporate awareness of a largely hidden need which yet affects so many.

Fr John Scott

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Not exactly the classic simple Little Black Dress!

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***Crown to Couture* at Kensington Palace**

Genevieve Muinzer

Paying homage to the world of textiles, sewing and couture, Kensington Palace has burst into a riot of beautiful garments, dresses and suits, headpieces and accessories for men and women alike. In the eye-popping exhibition *Crown to Couture*, Historic Royal Palaces pays tribute to the great court and red-carpet outfits of the 18th, 20th and 21st centuries, and in so doing emphasises the roles they have played in politics, social commentary, campaigning, business and the media, not forgetting the mere wish of stars just to look stunning before their peers. As HRP curator Polly Putnam said at the opening: ‘There has been no greater time than the 21st century for incredible red-carpet clothes. And historically there was no greater time for incredible clothes than the 18th century!’ Names like Oscar de la Renta, Louis Vuitton, Vivienne Westwood and many more cry out from the displays, contrasting with those of the 18th century when the designers and dress makers have long been forgotten from the public memory.

Kensington Palace, with its magnificent stairways and William Kent ceilings that echo baroque Roman palaces, is the perfect setting for this extensive display. The exhibition was inspired by the red carpet Met Gala, but its cleverness shows you, through outfit after stunning outfit, that far from being shallow, high fashion objects can make bold social statements. Yes, they can be funny; yes, they can be outrageous, but they can also be political, and can also call out moral slogans that compel the onlooker to rethink

their values. While the 18th-century styles didn’t go to quite the extreme lengths of the 21st century, in their own way they also had important points to make, too. Furthermore, upon closer examination you realise that their styles were not ephemeral or transient, and that those 18th-century influences can still be seen in some of the red-carpet outfits of today.

Most importantly, you are impressed by the people who have sewed the outfits, have woven the fabrics, made shoes and hats, created accessories, and who have painted the designs – all the people whose work is too often overlooked by the attention-grabbing designers. All these people, many of them women, have been valuable members of the British workforce for centuries and an essential part of the economy.

Today the UK’s fashion industry is worth £26 billion and contributes 800,000 jobs to the economy, making it the UK’s largest creative industry. Textile and fashion exports alone are estimated to be worth over £6.5 billion. For more than 50 years Historic Royal Palaces has paid tribute to the workmanship of British textile workers and designers by carefully collecting important uniforms, dresses and other ceremonial items of clothing in such a way that the collection is pre-eminent and of considerable national and international importance. It contains 10,000 items of historic dress from the 16th century to the present day, providing information about the history of clothing, life at court, British ceremonial

traditions and the lives of key historical figures. The collection items of clothing that represent 400 years of royal fashion, including items worn by George III, Queen Victoria, Princess Diana and Queen Elizabeth II.

In *Crown to Couture*, amazing outfits made for Lady Gaga, Beyoncé, Timothée Chalamet and Edward Enninful mix happily with corseted dresses and embroidered suits from the 18th century. It's easy to forget that these 18th-century dressers could be quite the peacocks too, and that the men were often just as colourfully and elaborately dressed as the women! At that time, entry to soirées was not necessarily granted by embossed invitations but by the beautiful attire of the wearer. The grander their sartorial appearance, the more assured they were of admission: their clothes were their invitation cards. Josiah Wedgwood, the china manufacturer, was anxious to be seen out and about, as was the portrait painter Thomas Gainsborough, in the hope that it would promote their talents and finances, just as media celebrities do today. And 18th-century politicians and their ambitious wives eagerly sought admission to society events to exert their influence in the way 21st-century politicians, influencers and writers currently do.

'Just as the designers of today dress celebrity royalty for important public events, Kensington Palace was home to the original red carpet of the Georgian court,' Polly Putnam continues. '*Crown to Couture* will demonstrate the similarities in the fashion "rules" set out by high-society designers, drawing fascinating comparisons between the present day and the 18th century, when the palace was at its most busy, exciting and politically and culturally important.'

The pride of HRP's collection is the Rockingham mantua, a very wide 18th-century dress that is supported by whale-bone hoops and embroidered with fine silver thread. Made of silk satin brocade and silver trim it is believed to have been worn by Mary, Marchioness of Rockingham, the wife of Prime Minister Charles Watson-Wentworth, 2nd Marquess of Rockingham. The sheer weight of silver made it the ultimate statement dress of its time, one that screamed wealth and power. It would have been the wonder of the 18th-century fashion world and would have made very plain to British society that the Marquess was a man to be reckoned with, to be able to afford a dress like that for his wife.

Some of the outfits reflect the ostentatious craziness of the red carpet and make you laugh. Like Katy Perry's chandelier dress – she could never sit down in it without instantly being taken to the hospital – but you admire all the workmanship in those cut-glass crystals. There is the beauty of Audrey Hepburn's ivory coloured dress from her first movie *Roman Holiday* that she re-wore when she won the Oscar for best actress. Then there are the thought-provoking outfits like Emma Watson's gown made out of used, recycled wedding dresses from Oxfam shops; the singer Lizzo's dress emblazoned with the words VOTE that pleads with the younger generation to exercise their right to vote; or the Vivien Westwood dress of 2008 that criticises governments and police forces for the length of time those arrested are held in custody without being charged.

The exhibition is a fabulous, amazing journey that makes you admire anyone who can artfully wield a needle and thread.

Crown to Couture runs until 29 October 2023 and is included in the admission fee for Kensington Palace.

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If you would like to become a Companion of Oremus, see page 2

Free to Leave, Free to Stay

Dear Brothers and Sisters

The migratory flows of our times are the expression of a complex and varied phenomenon that, to be properly understood, requires a careful analysis of every aspect of its different stages, from departure to arrival, including the possibility of return. As a contribution to this effort, I have chosen to devote the Message for the 109th World Day of Migrants and Refugees to the freedom that should always mark the decision to leave one's native land.

'Free to leave, free to stay' was the title of an initiative of solidarity promoted several years ago by the Italian Episcopal Conference as a concrete response to the challenges posed by contemporary migration movements. From attentive listening to the Particular Churches, I have come to see that ensuring that freedom is a widely shared pastoral concern.

'An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said: "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him" (Mt 2:13).' The flight of the Holy Family into Egypt was not the result of a free decision, nor were many of the migrations that marked the history of the people of Israel. The decision to migrate should always be free, yet in many cases, even in our day, it is not. Conflicts, natural disasters, or more simply the impossibility of living a dignified and prosperous life in one's native land is forcing millions of persons to leave. Already in 2003, St John Paul II stated: 'as regards migrants and refugees, building conditions of peace means in practice being seriously committed to safeguarding first of all the right not to emigrate, that is, the right to live in peace and dignity in one's own country' (*Message for the 90th World Day of Migrants and Refugees*, 3).

'They took their livestock and the goods that they had acquired in the

land of Canaan, and they came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him (Gen 46:6).' A grave famine forced Jacob and his entire family to seek refuge in Egypt, where his son Joseph ensured their survival. Persecutions, wars, atmospheric phenomena and dire poverty are among the most visible causes of forced migrations today. Migrants flee because of poverty, fear or desperation. Eliminating these causes and thus putting an end to forced migration calls for shared commitment on the part of all, in accordance with the responsibilities of each. This commitment begins with asking what we can do, but also what we need to stop doing. We need to make every effort to halt the arms race, economic colonialism, the plundering of other people's resources and the devastation of our common home.

'All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need (Acts 2:44-45).' The ideal of the first Christian community seems so distant from today's reality! To make migration a choice that is truly free, efforts must be made to ensure to everyone an equal share in the common good, respect for his or her fundamental rights, and access to an integral human development. Only in this way will we be able to offer to each person the possibility of a dignified and fulfilling life, whether individually or within families. Clearly, the principal responsibility falls to the countries of origin and their leaders, who are called to practise a good politics – one that is transparent, honest, farsighted and at the service of all, especially those most vulnerable. At the same time, they must be empowered to do this, without finding themselves robbed of their natural and human resources and without outside interference aimed at serving the interests of a few. Where circumstances make possible a decision either to migrate or to stay, there is a need to ensure that the decision be well

informed and carefully considered, in order to avoid great numbers of men, women and children falling victim to perilous illusions or unscrupulous traffickers.

'In this year of jubilee you shall return, every one of you, to your property (Lev 25:13).' For the people of Israel, the celebration of the jubilee year represented an act of collective justice: 'everyone was allowed to return to their original situation, with the cancellation of all debts, restoration of the land, and an opportunity once more to enjoy the freedom proper to the members of the People of God (Catechesis, 10 February 2016).' As we approach the Holy Year of 2025, we do well to remember this aspect of the jubilee celebrations. Joint efforts are needed by individual countries and the international community to ensure that all enjoy the right not to be forced to emigrate, in other words, the chance to live in peace and with dignity in one's own country. This right has yet to be codified, but it is one of fundamental importance, and its protection must be seen as a shared responsibility on the part of all States with respect to a common good that transcends national borders. Indeed, since the world's resources are not unlimited, the development of the economically poorer countries depends on the capacity for sharing that we can manage to generate among all countries. Until this right is guaranteed – and here we are speaking of a long process – many people will still have to emigrate in order to seek a better life.

'For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me (Mt 25:35-36).' These words are a constant admonition to see in the migrant not simply a brother or sister in difficulty, but Christ himself, who knocks at our door. Consequently, even as we work to ensure that in



Rest on the Flight into Egypt by Caravaggio (1597)

© Doria Pamphilj Gallery, Rome

every case migration is the fruit of a free decision, we are called to show maximum respect for the dignity of each migrant; this entails accompanying and managing waves of migration as best we can, constructing bridges and not walls, expanding channels for a safe and regular migration. In whatever place we decide to build our future, in the

country of our birth or elsewhere, the important thing is that there always be a community ready to welcome, protect, promote and integrate everyone, without distinctions and without excluding anyone.

The synodal path that we have undertaken as a Church leads us to see in those who are most vulnerable

– among whom are many migrants and refugees – special companions on our way, to be loved and cared for as brothers and sisters. Only by walking together will we be able to go far and reach the common goal of our journey.

Rome, St John Lateran, 11 May 2023

FRANCIS

Prayer

God, Father Almighty, grant us the grace to work tirelessly for justice, solidarity and peace, so that all your children may enjoy the freedom to choose whether to migrate or to stay.

Grant us the courage to denounce all the horrors of our world, and to combat every injustice that mars the beauty of your children and the harmony of our common home.

Sustain us by the power of your Spirit, so that we can reflect your tender love to every migrant whom you place in our path, and to spread in hearts and in every situation the culture of encounter and of care. Through Christ our Lord.

Exhibition: *The Rossettis* at Tate Britain

Lucien de Guise

At first sight, what could appear more Roman Catholic than the Rossettis? Should they even have that rather English 's' at the end of their surname, as they are already plural in Italian? The most astonishing thing about this exhibition is the variety of Rossettis. Dante Gabriel and sister Christina tend to get all the attention, but there were others; and there were the honorary Rossettis-by-marriage as well. They deserve an exhibition as a whole family. The contents will please those with a love of pre-Raphaelitism and the myth of bohemianism. Those who aren't so inclined will enjoy the poetry of Christina Rossetti.

The element that features more than might be expected is religion. Some of it even has a Catholic feel to it. This was a family that threw itself into British life, and what could be more appropriate to the aesthetics of the Victorian era than some High Anglicanism? As their father was a Catholic political exile from Italy and their mother an ardent Anglican, the religious dynamics of the family had to be complicated. Indeed, everything about Dante Gabriel and his three siblings is complicated. No wonder the visitors to this exhibition seem to spend more time looking at the captions than at the works of art. There are a lot of both. There are also 'sound domes', which recite some of the poetry for which Christina, especially, is so well remembered. Brother Dante Gabriel couldn't decide whether to become a poet or a painter. At 16 he was already quite a bohemian. Looking beyond the mainstream, his favourite artist was William Blake, a rare master of both poetry and the visual arts.

I cannot imagine there has ever been a more thorough examination of the early Dante Gabriel. There are numerous sketches on display, offering insights into the formative thoughts of the young artist. If it is not his own poetry providing the inspiration, it is someone else's. Apparently the whole family, including art critic William Michael and nun authoress Maria, was addicted to Edgar Allan Poe.



Collaborating with Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Elizabeth Siddal sketched *Last Farewell Before the Crucifixion* while her husband created a work with a similar theme, *St John Comforting the Virgin at the Foot of the Cross*.



Elizabeth Siddal was the model for her husband's *St Catherine*, which confusingly portrays the saint being painted by a medieval artist.

At the same time, we are introduced to the circle that surrounded the family. It comprises mainly the big names of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, although there are also some less well-known but intriguing individuals. Highlighting those religious complexities is the case of James Collinson. This Pre-Raphaelite brother was so enamoured of Christina that he converted from Catholicism to Anglicanism to win her heart. An engraving by him *The Child Jesus* gives an indication of where his interests lay. He returned to Catholicism and gave up on Christina. He was unusually committed to his faith, while the Rossetti women were almost fanatical about their High Anglicanism. Maria became an Anglican nun and died young. Collinson's religious convictions led him to resign from the Pre-Raphaelites after John Everett Millais' *Christ in the House of His Parents* raised a storm of protest. He later trained to become a Jesuit priest, but once again changed his mind.



The Beloved remains one of Dante Gabriel's more contentious works.

One essential Pre-Raphaelite painting that is not on display at this exhibition is *Christ in the House of His Parents*. We have to settle for a print while the public can continue to admire the colourful painting in the non-paying space upstairs at Tate Britain. Millais was among the many members of the Brotherhood closely connected with the Rossetti clan. Some married into it. Others, like Collinson, gave up on both the family and Pre-Raphaelitism.

The complexities apply as much to the Rossettis' work as to their lives. They were restless souls in search of answers to life's big questions. Spirituality was important, but above everything was love. The full title of the exhibition is *The Rossettis: Radical Romantics*, which sums up their priorities. The Rossetti siblings lived in a revolutionary era, with at least one truly revolutionary parent. The Brotherhood's ideals were a road to reform. In art, the aim was to overcome the spirit of the Royal Academy and its 'soulless self-reflection'. Their work does still stand out, despite looking rather less radical than it must have done in the 19th century. The social themes are not quite as apparent either. The role of women was vital in executing the work as well as modelling for it; and then there are the causes relating to the plight of females in their era. Elizabeth Siddal comes across more significantly than ever, as an artist, poet and model (most memorably in Millais' *Ophelia*). If only she had not died at 32.

Her husband, Dante Gabriel, developed similar substance-abuse habits to Siddal's but lived 20 years longer. During those two decades the widower managed to pack in more romance and eccentricities. I did not spot any pictures of the wombats that the nature-loving artist kept as exotic pets, although the Tate owns a delightful sketch by William Bell Scott of Dante Gabriel with one of these engaging beasts in his lap.

What the exhibition lacks in wombats, it makes up for with other fabulous beasts and a variety of dramatic-looking models. The dragons are little mentioned by the curators, who make some

interesting points about the class system in Victorian Britain. It appears that Dante Gabriel, in particular, was revolutionary in casting working-class models in some of his compositions. It would be hard in the 21st century to recognise the background of any model once they have been transformed into a Venus figure inspired by Titian. Charles Dickens might have seen through it, though. He was the harshest critic of that Millais painting mentioned above. For a man with a social conscience, it's hard to imagine this appraisal of Christ's mother spilling out of Dickens' pen: '...a woman so hideous in her ugliness that she would stand out from the rest of the company as a Monster, in the vilest cabaret in France, or the lowest gin shop in England'.

Dante Gabriel was an early exponent of racial diversity - in one painting at least. *The Beloved* features African, Jamaican and Roma participants in a biblical scene. He was clearly more comfortable with his regular models.

As it is his work which takes up most of the exhibition space, there is more to see than paintings and sketches. The Aesthetic movement was his next step after the Pre-Raphaelite movement. Going beyond fine art, he and his circle were much occupied with textiles, ceramics, jewellery and furniture. It was an entire 'look' they were going for, and they found inspiration in what used to be called the 'Orient'. This is where the Tate lurches towards unthinking political correctness. Having been the co-curator of an exhibition on Orientalism at the British Museum, I am certain that trigger warnings are unnecessary in this section of *The Rossettis*. Even those few who have waded through Edward Said's laughable but celebrated assessment of Orientalist art — one paragraph within a largish book — should be able to brush off this Tate alert: 'While "orientalist" fantasies inspired literature and art, they stemmed from the same imperial ideas of British superiority that were used to justify invasions and interventions in other nations'.

Better, then, to ignore many of the info panels and concentrate on looking at the works themselves, filled with fantasies that are mainly from Western Europe. Perhaps Westminster Cathedral could well be next with an 'Orientalist' trigger warning, inspired as it is by prototypes from the eastern Mediterranean?



Dante Gabriel was inclined to quasi-religious subjects such as The Wedding of St George and Princess Sabra.

The Chinese Experience: Rooted in faith, family and community

Fr Dan Troy

China's state examination for senior high school students is seen a major event in life, not only for the students, but also for their extended families. As Lily Zhang awaits the results of her recent exams, the news that will arrive very soon is seen by her and her family as what may decide many aspects of her life in the years ahead. As is the case with about ten million other students of a similar age in China, the shared hope for many students is that a suitable place at a good university will be secured, each point from the recent exams increasing the possibility of receiving a place in the most desired third level courses.

As I shared the New Year meal with the Zhang family at Hongwei village near Wuhan, Lily's uncle mentioned that she was preparing for the June exams, this leading to the customary discussion about how her studies were progressing and what university place she would like to receive. During the conversation a number of family members emphasized that they would be praying for her during the months ahead, a reflection of how the family's faith over several generations is a deep support to them.

On occasions like this, many families in China like to refer to the number of generations prior to themselves who have been members of the Church, this aspect of family history providing genuine affirmation for them in the face of the multiple challenges that they face on a daily basis. Lily also commented on her hopes for what might happen following the exams.

Those discussions during the meal took place in a simple room with a bare concrete floor, the room opening out through wide double doors to a street of similar simplicity and colour. It was also mentioned by one member of the family that doing well in the state exam is like a double-edged sword. Good results in the state exams lead many people to receive a good place in university, possibly leading to well-paid jobs, the better jobs usually removing them further from the possibility of returning to their humble places of origin.

In general, the villages of China and the surrounding farmland are places where employment is available, but is poorly paid. These are also the places where the possibilities of education for the next generation are more limited than what is available in the bigger population centres. Recent years have seen rural student numbers decline significantly, with many schools being amalgamated. Even in rural areas where a well-established family business might provide a secure future for the next generation, the big city often holds a stronger attraction for the younger generation, even though the new life in the city can burden people with trying to secure a place to live in a setting where property prices have risen exponentially over the past 20 years.



Students leaving Jilin City Experimental High School Exam Site, 2020

© BoyuZhang 1998

When I spoke with Lily's uncle on the phone earlier this week, he mentioned that she will soon receive the results of her exams, the detail being mentioned that the results will be available immediately after midnight of the particular day in question. While Lily will be the first to see the exam results, it is likely that the entire family will share in the news soon afterwards. During the following few days, the possibility of a university education will receive their full attention. Like the other students on a similar journey in China, Lily's future will be influenced at some level by what the next few weeks will bring. Part of what is in the balance is the question of how it will affect her long-term connection with the place she calls home.

Irrespective of what will unfold during the next few weeks, it is likely that each New Year celebration in the years ahead will still see her return to the village of Hongwei, the bond with the home area being one that has endured for hundreds of millions of people in China all through the changes that have seen so many people leave the rural areas in favour of the larger centres of population. For Lily, there will also be the benefit of the enduring Catholic faith of her family that has seen several generations of her own people face so many deep challenges in recent decades, an affirmation that their trust in God will see them step once more into an unknown future with hope, open to what may emerge for the next generation.

Fr Dan Troy is a member of the Missionary Society of St Columban who lives in China. This piece was first published a year ago and, while it shows the pressures on students experienced in many other countries, it also demonstrates the importance of generational awareness and faith in the Catholic Chinese context.

Martyrs aid Reconciliation



John Newton

During a meeting last month with the head of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Pope Francis announced that he would be adding Coptic martyrs killed by Daesh (ISIS) in 2015 to the Catholic Church's calendar. Daesh beheaded the men in Sirte, Libya, video-recording their executions and posting the footage online. Of the 21 Coptic Christians, 20 were Egyptian and one hailed from Ghana. The video published by the terrorist organisation showed the men praying as they died. The pronouncement that the 21 men would be added to the Martyrology - the list of Saints and Blesseds arranged according to the anniversary of their deaths - was made on 11 May during a meeting between Pope Francis and Coptic Orthodox Pope Tawadros II at the Vatican.

Pope Francis told Pope Tawadros II: 'These martyrs were baptised not only in water and the Spirit, but also in blood, blood that is a seed of unity for all followers of Christ. I am pleased to announce today - with the agreement of Your Holiness - that these 21 martyrs will be included in the Roman Martyrology as a sign of the spiritual communion that unites our two churches.'

At the meeting in the Vatican Library, Pope Tawadros II and Pope Francis exchanged gifts. When presented with his present, Pope Francis said: 'I have no words to express my gratitude for this precious gift of a relic of the Coptic martyrs killed in Libya on 15 February 2015'. This is the date on which they will be commemorated in both the Roman Martyrology and Coptic *Synaxarion*, the Orthodox equivalent to the Roman Martyrology. Pope Tawadros was given a relic of the fourth-century Egyptian martyr St Catherine of Alexandria, who is venerated by both Churches.

When Pope Francis met Pope Tawadros II for the first time a decade ago, in May 2013, he underlined how the suffering of the martyrs could bring Christians from different denominations closer together. Quoting 1 Corinthians, 12:26, he said: 'If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together. This is a law of the Christian life, and in this sense we can say that there is also an ecumenism of suffering - just as the blood of the martyrs was a seed of strength and fertility for the Church, so too the sharing of daily sufferings can become an effective instrument of unity.'

Pope Tawadros II visited Vatican City to mark the 50th anniversary of the meeting between Pope St Paul VI and Pope Shenouda III in 1973, which was the first meeting between the heads of the two Churches since the fifth century. The head of the Coptic Orthodox Church said: 'Reconciliation and unity require a long journey, and this is happening after 15 centuries of separation'.



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A Short History of Patrick Rogers

Interview by Natasha Stanic

This interview is reprinted from the November 2008 edition of Oremus. As readers will see, the late Patrick Rogers came to the Cathedral as a volunteer after early retirement and set about learning all he could. The result was, not least, three authoritative books on Cathedral history, the marbles and the mosaics, which constitute a permanent resource, as well as a treasure trove of articles which your editor is only too happy to mine. After Patrick's death, the Cathedral was grateful to receive all his papers as a further gift to this building which had so absorbed his interest. I conclude this article with a short piece of verse found with his papers.

Patrick Rogers is a familiar face around the Cathedral. He is a reader, he is a guide, and he writes books about the Cathedral. When his first book called *Westminster Cathedral – From Darkness to Light* was published in 2003, Rebecca Thomas wrote an article for Oremus about Patrick's skills as a professional researcher. A few weeks ago his second book on the beauty of the Cathedral marbles was published. In the chapter entitled 'Exploring the Quarries – A Personal Odyssey' Patrick himself tells us of his amusing adventures during the years of research. But there is another side to his character – he is a very private man. This time he allowed us to have a glimpse of that other self.

Patrick grew up in a large Catholic family. His parents bought a house on the outskirts of Folkestone in the mid-1930s, but then the war came and in 1940 the Germans were only 20 miles away across the Channel. So the family was evacuated by taxi to Rhos-on-Sea in North Wales where Patrick was born in 1944.

I am sure that, having seven siblings for company, you have some happy memories of your childhood.

Yes, I have. After the war, we came back to Folkestone and the family home. The back garden ended in a wall and beyond was a valley with cows and a stream at the bottom that wound through pasture and the Star and Garter wood down to the sea. My main memories are of 'going over the wall' to wander and explore the countryside beyond. We had the valley to the east and west, the sea to the south



'Where eagles dare' – a favourite image from the top of the tower

and the North Downs to the north. We were allowed to run freely and it was a wonderful place to run wild!

The rustic idyll probably came to an end when you went to school.

Yes. First I was sent to St Mary's Convent School, which at that time was still run by nuns, then to Westbrook House Preparatory School and, at the age of 13, I went to Dover College. There was little emphasis on academic results then and I could pursue my extramural interest in acting (Troilus in Troilus and Cressida, no less!), in shooting (eventually becoming Captain of the Shooting VIII) and in the Combined Cadet Force (Company Sergeant Major). Needless to say that I got a very ropy C, D, E in A levels.

While at school and indulging in these catholic interests, did you have any idea at all what you wanted to do in life?

My father and many of my relations served in the army and a great-uncle was a Catholic chaplain to the forces. Directly across the valley from our home was Shorncliffe Camp, occupied by the army from Napoleonic times. I was often up there to watch what was going on and was determined to be a soldier like my father. But this was not to be because at prep school I had had a serious accident that ruled out a career in the regular army. After school, I was commissioned lieutenant in the Territorial Army, but I soon realised that I had to choose another full-time profession.

Did you find a career that was at least partly associated with the life of a soldier?

I joined the War Office as a civilian executive officer, but immediately discovered that the interesting jobs went to graduates. So, with the help of my



In the Queen's Regiment of the Territorial Army, 1969



Patrick and an abandoned column in the Mons Claudianus Roman quarry of the Egyptian Eastern Desert, 2006

departmental head, I enrolled at night school for a Diploma in Government Administration that was the equivalent of a pass degree. By working really hard for the first time in my life I did it in a year and then went up to read Politics and Sociology at the University of Kent at Canterbury. I enjoyed my university years immensely and was given the opportunity of staying on to do research. But at the same time the Ministry of Defence (the former War Office) also offered me a research job. So after much soul-searching I chose the latter.

Did you find your Civil Service work monotonous or was there enough variety to encourage you to pursue your zeal for active research?

It was only monotonous at the end of my career. Before that I was able to travel and was given a lot of leeway to decide which areas to focus on and how best to set about it. I studied the Middle East, China, the Soviet Union and Argentina. Two years after joining and for the next four years I was attached to the Home Office in Northern Ireland. Finally, back in London, I worked for four years on South and South-East Asia in the Cabinet Office, researching, analysing and assessing security and political developments.

At the age of 41 you had two heart attacks, the second one massive, and were advised to retire early. It must have been a terrible shock.

It was. After six months in and out of hospital I left the Cabinet Office for the Ministry of Defence and a 'low stress' job, but the stuffing and drive had been knocked out of me. I had reached the

rank I had always aimed for and was no longer enjoying the work. The obvious thing to do was to take the pension and gratuity and retire on medical grounds.

Then you joined Westminster Cathedral as a volunteer. Who or what guided you towards this new career?

At first I thought I might be a guide for the National Trust, but Ham House, my nearest building, closed for extensive renovations just as Bishop Pat O'Donoghue established the Cathedral Guild of Volunteers in 1991. I think I was the second person to step forward. Four years later, when I was asked to write for the *Cathedral Bulletin* (now *Oremus*) I started my research on the history of the Cathedral, its marbles and mosaics. The research techniques are essentially the same as when I was employed by the government – knowing where information can be obtained, assessing the reliability and probability in the light of any supporting or opposing evidence, and being prepared to travel, ask questions and see for yourself; completing a jigsaw puzzle after having only been given half the pieces.



Exploring rugged territory in New Zealand, 2005

I am sure there is another project in the pipeline. Would you like to tell us about your plans for the future?

Something I have been thinking about would be an assessment of how far the Cathedral really is early Byzantine in style, and last year I went out to Istanbul specifically to study the early churches there, some of which are of course in ruins. But there is a kind of nostalgia that keeps on drawing me back to marble quarries. A new area, about which I know little, would be Egyptian quarrying and transporting techniques. So next stop Egypt.

Unfinished In War

*This then must be the only end; to fall
And rest before the end has come.
In lonely peace to lie beneath the sky,
Untroubled by the tawdry cares of men.
To fall while unafraid is for the best;
Still grasping life with hope and ruthless love,
To pump a crimson spring into the dust,
Of future breath, and dreams that will not come.
While age and prudence yet are far away,
Thus youth is torn apart to soak the ground;
Unwithered yet, unwise and reckless still,
Surprised to find the world so far away,
Surprised to see no more the dusty grass,
Still wondering tiredly why surprised to die.
Untarnished thus to leave the raucous stage,
While greedy bluebottles scurry and suck,
Scribbling a wet and wavy epitaph
Across a hardening crust of scarlet life.
To fly before the ever present ache
Of aged failure and hopelessness;
To leave behind a hazy dream of gold,
Of swaying greenness and pulsating heat,
To fall thus headlong, still with senseless hope
Back into the sweet nothingness of peace.*

The Curious Life and Times of Lady Hester Stanhope

The career of Lady Hester Stanhope had, you might say, its ups and downs. She started life at the top as the favourite daughter of the wealthy Lord Charles, 3rd Earl of Stanhope; was impoverished and orphaned at 27, after her father succeeded in giving away his fortune out of sympathy for the French revolutionaries of 1789; became within one year the official hostess of the Prime Minister of England, William Pitt the Younger, her uncle; was thrice disappointed in love, and fled England, never to return, at the age of 33; was crowned, according to her own account, 'Queen of the Desert' as successor to Queen Zenobia of Syria in the ruined city of Palmyra; and finally died alone in poverty and squalor in her palatial retreat in the Lebanese mountains, its entrance mortared shut against her hordes of creditors.

Lady Hester came by her eccentricities honestly, for Lord Charles, her father, besides flinging his patrimony to the winds and destroying his coat of arms wherever found, in revolt against his own nobility, was an established 'oddball' from an early age, refusing to send his sons to school, sleeping with the windows open and without a night-cap, and working at menial jobs that dirtied his patrician hands. His daughter showed her breeding when, still a child and curious about France, she climbed into an empty boat on the English Channel and started rowing east. It was the shortest voyage of her life – she had gone about six yards before being caught – but nevertheless portentous, because it is only because of her infatuation with the East that she is today remembered.

As a young woman, Lady Hester was very attractive to men – vivacious, witty, a good talker in a society that loved conversation, and although not beautiful, tall, slender and dark-eyed. Those charms became the currency of English high society when, after her father died in 1803, she went to live in Walmer Castle with her uncle, Pitt, who became Prime Minister in 1804. Now 28, Lady Hester was at the zenith of her career. Pitt loved her for lack of a daughter; English nobility loved her for her consummate ability as a gracious hostess, and a succession of men loved her for position, and perhaps, even, for herself. It seemed to Hester Stanhope too good to last. And she was right.

She was just recovering from being jilted by Lord Granville Leveson Gower when Pitt died, leaving her nothing but the deathbed wish that Parliament, in regard for his services, might see fit to bestow on his impoverished niece a modest livelihood (Parliament responded with a sumptuous – for then – pension of £1,200). Soon thereafter she became engaged and disengaged, to the Hon. William Noel Hill, but quickly rebounded into the affections of Sir John Moore, England's commander-in-

chief in Spain and Portugal against Napoleon's forces. In 1808 he was killed, her name on his dying lips, and shortly afterward one of her brothers was shot dead in the same campaign. Grief over the loss, in rapid succession, of five men she had loved, drove her from the London which now contained only bitter memories. She went first to Wales, then in 1810 left England never to return. She was 33.

Lady Hester set sail for the Mediterranean accompanied by her private physician, Dr Charles Meryon, and in Gibraltar added to the party a 20-year-old Englishman named Michael Bruce, who soon became her avowed lover, to the immense chagrin of Dr Meryon, who fancied the role for himself. By the time Lady Hester's expedition reached Corinth in Greece, its personnel had swollen to nine people, representing five nationalities, which gives some idea of the purchasing power of £1,200 per annum in those far-off pre-devaluation years. If she had any purpose beyond getting away from it all, it was the wildly hare-brained one of pushing on to Constantinople, winning the goodwill of the French Ambassador there and, after obtaining a passport to France, proceeding to Paris through Hungary and Germany. Lady Hester then intended to ingratiate herself into the confidence of the Emperor Napoleon, discover the mainsprings of his character and mind, and return to England where her information would provide the basis for his overthrow by her mobilised countrymen. But the British Minister got wind of her plan, and with the indignant caution of most diplomats, sabotaged all her preparations. There was nothing for her to do but leave. She embarked for Egypt.

The week's trip took nearly two months, with time out for a shipwreck during a storm off Rhodes. Ashore, she took refuge in a rat-infested windmill and, while she was waiting for another ship to remove the party, she adopted the male attire that she affected the rest of her life. She earnestly believed it was typically oriental but, being of her own design, it was actually closer to Regent Street Tunisian, and when the local gentry was not stifling laughs at her expense, she was, says Dr Meryon, generally mistaken for a young Turkish bey 'with his moustachios not yet grown'.

In February 1812, two years after it had left England, the motley party reached Alexandria, where the English members set about learning Arabic and Turkish. The East was in her blood, its combination of mystery, romance, mysticism, hardship, fatalism and fanaticism having captured her English soul as it was to capture so many of her countrymen in future decades. But enough of the British aristocrat remained for Lady Hester to pay a call in Cairo on Muhammed Ali, ruler of Egypt,



Lady Hester Stanhope in 'Eastern clothes'

as a courtesy between equals, before the fleas and flies of her temporary home in Damietta drove her out of the humid Nile Delta to the relative haven of the Palestine hills.

Arriving in Jaffa, she at once set to the task of obtaining a safe conduct across the bandit-infested countryside to Jerusalem. She quickly discovered that it was the goodwill of Shaikh Abu Ghosh, the bandit-in-chief, that had to be secured. With that combination of guts-and-guile that characterised all her dealings with her fellow man, she went directly to the Shaikh's camp, talked his ear off and bribed him handsomely, then told him that she would hold him personally responsible for the welfare of her caravan. The amused – perhaps bemused – old man pocketed the money, gave his word, and kept it by keeping the competition at arm's length while Lady Hester made the grand tour of the Holy City then proceeded to Nazareth, Acre and other little-known cities that were but biblical words to the West whence she came.

By the time her caravan approached the foothills of Mount Lebanon, the English woman had largely disappeared. In her place was a mannish figure who wore a species of male clothing, smoked a bubbly narghila, and could swear at her mule drivers in three languages. The hospitality – to her already fevered mind it seemed homage – she was accorded by the Levantine people, to whom a generous reception of guests and travellers is an article of faith, convinced her that in the Orient she had at last discovered a race of man which truly appreciated her aristocratic bearing, lineage and inherent superiority, which

the English had recognised so fleetingly during her uncle's day of power. Like many who followed her, Lady Hester had all too humanly confused hospitality with awe and servility, toleration with submission, and acclaim with admiration. And to the end of her days she never discovered her mistake.

While passing through Sidon she received an invitation, doubtless motivated by curiosity, from the Christian Emir Bashir, suzerain of the Druzes, to visit his palace in the Lebanese mountains at Deir el-Kamar. She prepared for instant departure, for the Emir controlled the reclusive sect that had split from Muslim orthodoxy in the 11th century and now wielded a stern law of its own in its mountain strongholds and, as such, was to her an intensely romantic person. Dr Meryon was, on the other hand, rather hesitant. 'They say,' he wrote uneasily in a letter home, 'he is a very good man. It is true he blinded his three nephews and had his prime minister strangled ... but these things go for nothing in Turkey.' Lady Hester, as usual, overrode her physician's fears, and they departed for the mountains, travelling light, with only their most necessary possessions carried on the backs of 22 camels, 25 mules and eight horses. As she had known all along, everyone had a marvellous time, and Emir Bashir extended a standing invitation to visit his domain for as long as she wished.

But bearding despots in their lairs is habit-forming, and Lady Hester now conceived the idea of visiting the Pasha of Damascus, a city then implacably hostile to outsiders, particularly Europeans and women, and consequently but rarely visited. She made her usual frontal assault on her objective: she asked for – and received – an invitation from the Pasha himself, then entered the city on horse-back (Christians were forbidden to ride a horse within the city walls) – and unveiled. 'The people gazed at us,' Meryon said later, 'and all eyes turned towards Her Ladyship. Many saw at once that it must be a woman, but before they could recover from their astonishment, we had passed on ... followed by a few boys only ... to the Christian quarter.' Perhaps the Damascenes thought her 'afflicted of Allah' – insane – as well she might have been, and refrained from violence, for in the Arab world the insane are considered under divine protection. At any rate, during her Damascus sojourn the townspeople congregated around her house every day to observe her mount her horse, and when she entered the crowded suq everyone rose – perhaps to get a better look – and Lady Hester nodded graciously, and proceeded on her way with the air of a great lord surveying his dominions. It was very heady fare.

One accessible 'forbidden city' remained: Palmyra, near the oasis of Tadmor, the seat of Queen Zenobia's ancient desert kingdom east of Damascus that had once defied Rome. The despot in this case was the Bedouin Emir of the 'Anazah' and, typically, she practically demanded to be invited – successfully, of course. And she went alone, except for two guides, to the Emir against whom all had warned her, predicting nothing but evil from the encounter. On arriving she stood before her host and said: 'I know you are a robber and that I am now in your power. But I fear you not. I have left behind all those who were offered me as a safeguard ... to show you that it is you whom I have chosen as such.' The Emir was captivated.

to be concluded next month.

Post-Covid Return

The Pandemic inevitably meant that we did not see faces otherwise well-known to us over long periods of time, years indeed. Many have come back and others still are, although we find ourselves often wondering if someone we knew previously has actually fallen victim to Covid without our knowing of their death. On a lighter note, two previous piazza regulars have been spotted again; or are they a new generation of churchgoing ducks?



© Diocese of Westminster

Choir Outreach 1 – Berkshire

For a century the Jesuits provided secondary education at Beaumont College in Old Windsor until its closure in 1967. However, whether by design or chance, its feeder Preparatory School, St John's, Beaumont, survived and flourishes to this day. A week before the visit to the Cathedral of the Southwark choristers, the St John's Chapel Choir came to the Tuesday evening Mass. They did not sing the whole Mass, but observed from the back row of the choir stalls and then joined the Choristers in singing the Communion motet. Their Director of Music emailed later to say: 'Many thanks again for a lovely afternoon for our boys.'

Choir Outreach 2 – Lambeth

The (mixed) choristers of St George's Cathedral, Southwark, with their clergy, made it across the river to come and sing the Tuesday evening Solemn Mass with our Westminster boys. As the image shows, the Master of Music pointed the way in more than one sense.



© Diocese of Westminster



'Daddy is marching for the King'

All praise goes to the one out marching in the light rain of Coronation Day as well as to the proud family who braved the wet and the crowds to make sure that everyone else knew. Cathedral Chaplains, alas, were more tempted by the TV coverage and buffet lunch of Clergy House Common Room.

© Mazur/bbc.org.uk



Prayer Station

The practice of having a prayer and candle focus at the west end of the Cathedral at appropriate times of the year has proved successful and did so again, as many came in to express their prayer for the King and Queen Consort and for the good estate of Great Britain during the new reign.

The Walk of Faith

Representatives of local Faith Communities came together with the Lord Mayor of Westminster for a 'Coronation Walk of Faith', which started from the piazza. It is not clear whether the pigeon captured in the image was coming down to join the Walk or simply performing a fly-past.





The Cardinal's MC moonlights as wedding photographer

In Praise of Matrimony

Cardinal Vincent Nichols

Every year, in our celebration of this Marriage Mass in the Cathedral - such a happy and joyous occasion - we hear the account of the Marriage Feast of Cana. Each year our diocesan pilgrimage to the Holy Land includes a visit to Cana, an opportunity for those married couples present to renew the vows first made on their wedding day. On each of these moving occasions, there are also people for whom the moment is marked by sadness and no little pain: those who have never had the children for whom they longed, those whose loving spouse has died, those whose marriage has not endured. Today, here, as we gather to celebrate the sacrament of marriage in our Catholic life, let us have in our prayers all we know we carry such burdens in their hearts.

The narrative of the wedding feast at Cana has the action of God as its focus. For this reason the event is described as 'the first of the signs that Jesus gave'.

There are many aspects to this rich sign of God's love and providence, made visible in Christ Jesus. But there is one aspect I would like to stress. It is this: the provisions made for us by the Lord reach far beyond the provisions we make for ourselves. Here this is illustrated in the provision of wine. A superabundance is provided by the Lord, an abundance that goes far beyond the intentions of the wedding planners. And that wine stands for all the good things which are so essential for our peace and joy: the mercy of God, the willingness to forgive and accept forgiveness, the sense of purpose that sees us through difficult and confusing times, the gift of new life that lifts us outside of ourselves, the gift of love, sometimes hard to find yet often overflowing. These are the gifts that we celebrate today, just as those newlyweds in Cana were astonished at all they unexpectedly received. Here too we can recognise and remember that so many

of our blessings come to us through the intercession of our Blessed Mother. Let's never forget to turn to her.

Today is a great day for remembering, for looking across the years - be they comparatively few, like ten, or rather longer: some couples here today are celebrating 50 or 60 years of marriage, one or two even longer. I am sure you recall so many moments of joy, as well as those moments of tension and struggle at which we may now even smile a little. But today is also a day for looking forward. Let me put it like this: in the provisions made for us by the Lord the best is yet to come! I was once given a sharp lesson in the purpose of marriage by a young couple preparing for their wedding. The husband-to-be stated his intention very clearly. 'What I want above all,' he said, 'is to help this woman I love with all my heart to get to heaven! And I hope she will get me there too!' Yes, this is the ultimate provision made for us by the Lord: the

invitation to the eternal feast of heaven which is so often described as a celestial marriage feast. This is the hope and the vision that can endlessly nurture your love for each other.

The Sacred Scriptures have many ways of describing this future. One is so appropriate for today. The vision of heaven is described 'as beautiful as a bride all dressed up for her husband'. Now, gentlemen, this is something you really do understand! The vision of beauty and goodness that filled your heart as you stood at the altar is only a beginning! The best is yet to come, promised to us as long as we keep our hearts open, longing, penitent and loving. The first reading of our Mass this afternoon echoes these great themes. It tells us that already, in Christ, we exult with joy and rejoice in God's promises because already we are clothed 'like a bridegroom wearing his wreath - his garland - like a bride adorned in her jewels'. Yes, the great promise of the beauty of heaven is already begun in our lives even though its fulfilment still lies ahead, in the hands of the Almighty.

The action of God in our lives, though all the blessings God brings, is also expressed in this reading from Isaiah: 'For as the earth makes fresh things grow, as a garden makes seeds spring up, so will the Lord make integrity and praise spring up in the sight of the nations.' Integrity and praise. These are the fruits we seek to bear. Every action of ours that is marked by integrity is a work of witness to the presence of God in our world. Think of the opposite of integrity: double talk, dishonesty, manipulation, deceit, even sharp practice, these are the things that undermine the integrity that gives witness to the Holy Spirit.

Similarly, every action that is generous and praiseworthy is a witness to the goodness of God. The opposites are also clear: constant conflict and bickering, false claims of innocence and superiority, promoting our own importance rather than that of the Lord. These are the spirit of the anti-Christ which take away the peace and

confidence of hope that marks a true way of living. They are not unfamiliar in our culture and ways of life. But our witness is to something different!

In one of the most moving passages of the Book of Revelation, God says 'See, I am making all things new' and the riposte comes, 'It is already done' (Rev. 21:5-6). This is our joy today: that you recognise and give thanks for all the goodness 'already done' in your lives, in your marriages, in your families; and, secondly, that you truly grasp that the best is yet to come. What lies ahead is the complete fulfilment of all that, here and now, we grasp only in part, yet knowing that, in God's mercy, all will be fulfilled. So, I say: happy anniversary to you all, to each and every one. And I say, live today in the light of the great promise yet to be fulfilled! Get each other to heaven! The best is yet to come. Amen.

This homily was preached in the Cathedral on Saturday 13 May for couples celebrating significant wedding anniversaries.

I Pledge Allegiance ...

David Boyle

The Archbishop of Canterbury encouraged British citizens to pledge allegiance to King Charles at the Coronation on 6 May. It was an interesting proposal on several levels and could raise many a thought-provoking question. There was once a time in the history of these lands when a person could lose their head for not pledging allegiance to a King or Queen.

Who or what is a King? Is he a member of society who should have an overarching authority upon the body politic or a leader who should make important decisions on behalf of the poor? Is he a man of power or a man who has the wellbeing of his subjects at the core of his politics?

We know that power and authority are often a benchmark for loss or suffering because (more often than not) social power is the precursor of wealth and riches. Under the Roman Emperor Gaius Octavianus, and while being sentenced

by Caiaphas, our Blessed Lord was once asked about the kingship by Pontius Pilate. The first question Pilate asked Jesus was: 'Are you the King of the Jews?'

Quas primas, the first encyclical of Pope Pius XI promulgated on 11 December 1925, established the Feast of Christ the King as a response to an increasingly secular and nationalist world. The encyclical warned of manifold evils in the world as men were thrusting Jesus Christ and his holy will 'out of their lives'. If nations did not submit to the rule of its Saviour, there would be no prospect of lasting peace among nations. Christ the King could reign 'in the hearts of men', because he is very truth, itself a response to Pontius Pilate's famous question.

When I think about the context of truth in the Kingship of Christ I can more easily identify a real context for allegiance, because that form of allegiance also has a propensity to enlighten the hearts of men to an extent that they will invite the Lord



Pope Pius XI, Achille Ratti

back into their lives and acknowledge human folly. It is an allegiance that ultimately leads to the full dignity of the human person.

If I were a man of authority then, I would encourage the peoples of these lands to pledge their allegiance to the Kingship of Christ because it alone can re-establish integrity to our humanity and create peace among nations. Any other form of allegiance will only serve to enhance secularism and selfish interest.

In retrospect: from the *Cathedral Chronicle*

Musings and a Procession

What seems mere chance has taken many thousands of our race to the great city of Cologne since the Armistice was concluded, and without doubt most of them were greatly surprised that their text-book geography did not coincide with the facts. Surely Germany is a Protestant country? France is Catholic, and Belgium too, if you will. But Germany, so we learnt at school, is Protestant. Yet in Cologne, the capital of Western Germany, and the centre of the British occupied territory, there is no Protestantism to be seen. If it is a Protestant country, you would never guess it in Cologne. There are some thousands of Protestants in the city, but the life of the place is Catholic, and the atmosphere is truly religious.

This is best seen on any Sunday in summer. Taking a morning walk from the beautiful cathedral through the city you will always find one quarter or another bedecked as for a fete. Flags of every description are seen, triumphal arches are in evidence, branches of trees, flowers and foliage are used in decoration, and a carpet of leaves fills the street. Altars are erected at prominent points of vantage, and the whole district bears a wonderful and joyous appearance. The business parts of the town no less than the residential join in this Sunday festivity. The shopkeepers place holy pictures in their windows. A crucifix and candles at least find a place everywhere. The citizens, rich and poor, artisans and professionals, vie with one another in beautifying their part of the city on this particular Sunday of the year, for there is to be a procession of the Blessed Sacrament in their parish.

The parishes of Cologne take turns thus honouring the Most Holy Sacrament. Every Sunday in summer in one parish or another there is such a procession. In London, when we have an outdoor procession, we beg the assistance of all the parishes in the neighbourhood. Our public acts of faith are so fine and so large because our parishes unite for the purpose. In Cologne it is not so; it is just a parish affair. All the guilds, confraternities, societies, clubs, and, indeed, every parish organisation is in evidence, brought together this once a year when the Blessed Sacrament is carried in triumph through the district. As the singing is heard in one street, and the children are coming towards you at the head of the procession, you

can see, if you look in another direction, that the women have strewn leaves in the road to prepare the carpet over which the processionists will walk.

At the altar in the square, near where you stand, a halt is made. A motet is sung by a large choir of men. The beginning of the Gospel according to St John is chanted by the deacon; the blessing of the parish is given with the Blessed Sacrament; and with a hymn of joy the long line of devout parishioners moves on its way bearing with them the Lord of Glory. So with hymn, and chant, and rosary the praise of God is done.

This weekly event of the summer in Cologne is perhaps the greatest surprise to the visitor to that great capital. Protestant Germany may be, according to our text-books, but Cologne is Catholic, and this much must be said of the whole Rhineland. Its religion is a fine thing. It is a reality in the lives of the people, and because they are so deeply religious their love and worship go out in this public way to the Blessed Sacrament as to the centre of all things.

.....

Varia

Frequenter of the Cathedral have no doubt observed that the spirit of spring cleaning has made a sudden visit, drastic in its results, to the Cathedral. At the very entrance ample material was found to hand upon which to operate with the usual disturbance and swift expulsion of haggard, old bad habits and customs. In other words, the promiscuous mass of poster announcements and in – and out-of-date – notices, that have long disfigured the Cathedral frontage and porch, have been banished. And following upon this sad, but satisfactory, clean sweep, a decree has gone forth that special notice boards shall be erected upon which alone extraneous announcements may be made. In view of what has been said elsewhere on the matter of good printing, we greatly hope that some check will also be put upon the hideous typography of many of the posters that often disfigure the Cathedral and its precincts.

from the June 1923 Westminster Cathedral Chronicle

Accompanying People with Dementia

Fr John Scott

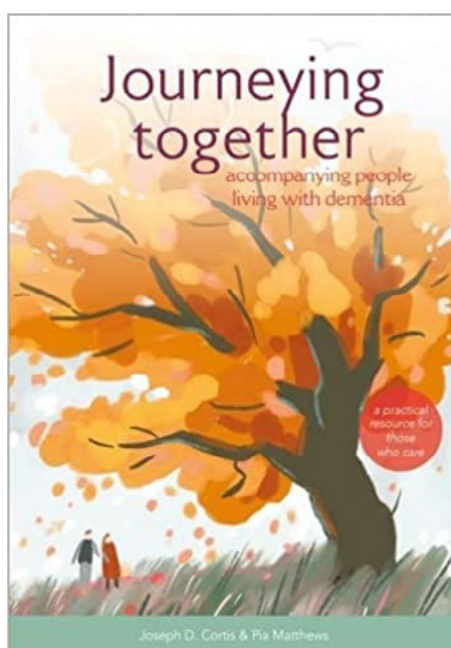
Journeying together – accompanying people living with dementia: a practical resource for those who care, Joseph D Cortis & Pia Matthews; Redemptorist Publications, Chawton 2023; paperback pp 196; ISBN 978 - 0 - 85231 - 629

What's in a name? When I first encountered dementia in the early 1970s, it was in the form of Alzheimer's disease, then rather strictly defined as pre-senile dementia. By the time of a second close encounter in the early years of this century, Alzheimer's had become, so the Death Registrar told me, a catch-all term for all varieties of dementia; and that seems to continue in popular parlance. However, the authors of this book stay solidly with the term dementia, as embracing the whole range of conditions that may arise.

The book's genesis is in the 2017 establishment of Caritas Leeds, with working groups examining a range of social issues. Historically, dementia has hidden largely from public view, in hospitals, care facilities and private homes where sufferers retreat into a new and isolating world and carers battle to straddle the world of everyday life and that changing world of the one for whom they care.

A key concern, then, must be to shed some light into this darkness and two themes emerge:

first, accompaniment requires attentive listening both to carers and sufferers; secondly, our approach should offer: 'an opportunity to reflect on human dignity and the sanctity of life from conception to its natural end' (Bishop Marcus Stock in his Foreword). That attentive listening is illustrated in a number of accounts of families and individuals who have had to learn how to face dementia in all its stages – for it is a developing condition where coping strategies that work well at one point may then suddenly fail as the dementia progresses.



On the positive side, particularly for those in the earlier stages, there are plenty of suggestions for how to structure care both in the home – 'memory boxes', conversational strategies – and social activities ('memory cafes'). Above all is the need for appropriate interaction and the avoidance of distress, maintaining the sense of human dignity; thus a series of tips counsel: Agree with the person's feelings – never argue; Redirect – never reason; Distract – never shame; Reassure – never lecture; Reminisce – never say 'remember'; Repeat – never say 'I already told you'; Say 'Do what you can – never 'you can't'; Ask – never command; Encourage – never condescend; Reinforce – never force. Chapter 3 is thus termed 'Living well with dementia', but has to be followed by 'And at the end'. The book has already looked at legal matters when clarifying the implications of the Mental Capacity Act and Chapter 4 goes on to stress the importance of having considered how to create the best environment and treatment for the person approaching death: family, friends, careworkers, doctors, nurses and clergy can all usefully be involved

in such conversations, to ensure support and confidence as much for carers as for the patient.

Chapter 5 studies the law about Mental Capacity further and goes into Powers of Attorney, where an individual's affairs are managed by others on their behalf and Advanced Treatment Directives – decisions made at an earlier stage of diagnosis may, of course, need to be revisited as dementia progresses.

How, then, can the Church help? Obviously by our being aware of her members with dementia and by enabling their participation in parish life to the extent that they wish to, although progression will likely lead to greater withdrawal from corporate activity. The authors note: 'As a dementia develops, the person's relationship with God continues in ways we cannot know. The person with a dementia may reach a time when they are living fully in the present moment. What gifts can we learn from people at this stage of life?' In Chapter 7 on the Sacraments they acknowledge that behaviours can challenge our normal expectations – 'sometimes there can be a realistic fear that a person will spit out the Host' – yet a person living with dementia 'cannot be judged as unable to understand and appreciate the spiritual dimension of their life'.

Whilst a large aim of this book is increasing Church and community awareness in and beyond the diocese of Leeds towards becoming 'dementia-friendly', individuals and families will certainly find it a useful resource in facing a person's diagnosis of dementia. That said, for those who have lived as carers, the book can provide sharp and painful memories:

'I only I had known / said or not said that / taken that hard decision ...' But this book is timely, should do good and is recommended.

Tales of the English Martyrs

From the scaffold speech of St John: 'I have learnt that the sum of the only true Christian profession is to die. This lesson I have heretofore in my life desired to learn: this lesson I come here to put in practice by dying, being taught it by our Blessed Saviour, both by precept and example. Himself said: "He that will be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me". Himself exemplary practised what he recommended to others. To follow his holy doctrine and imitate his holy death, I willingly suffer at present; this gallows, "looking up," I look on as his Cross, which I gladly take up to follow my dear Saviour. My faith is my crime; the performance of my duty the cause of my condemnation.'

The Head of St John Southworth



The Month of June

The Holy Father's Prayer Intention:

For the abolition of torture:

We pray that the international community may commit in a concrete way to ensuring the abolition of torture and guarantee support to victims and their families.

Thursday 1 June

Ps Week 4

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE ETERNAL HIGH PRIEST

Friday 2 June

Friday abstinence

Feria

Saturday 3 June

St Charles Lwanga and Companions, Martyrs

4pm Monthly Low Mass

(Blessed Sacrament Chapel)

Sunday 4 June

THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

12pm Solemn Mass (Full Choir)

Byrd – Mass for three voices

Byrd – Tribue Domine

Byrd – Te deprecor

Organ: *Tournemire* – Triptyque (L'Orgue mystique XXVI)

4pm Solemn Vespers and Benediction

Palestrina – Magnificat quarti toni

Byrd – Gloria Patri

Organ: J.S. *Bach* – Fugue in E flat (BWV 552)

4.30pm Mass for the Deaf Community (Cathedral Hall)

Monday 5 June

Ps Week 1

St Boniface, Bishop & Martyr

6.45pm Friends' Talk: St Titus Brandsma (Cathedral Hall)



St Boniface baptizing and being martyred, from the Sacramentary of Fulda

The Cathedral is open from 7.30am and closes in time for 7pm.

Monday to Friday: Morning Prayer 7.35am, Mass 8am, Mass (Latin, unless there is a Funeral) 10.30am, Confessions 11.30-12.30pm, Mass 12.30pm *, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 1.15-4.30pm, Benediction 4.30pm, Confessions 4.30-5.30pm, Sung Vespers 5pm (Latin, Choir, except Tuesday, English, Cantor), Solemn Mass 5.30pm (Choir, Tuesday: Boys' voices, Wednesday: Men's voices).

Saturday: Morning Prayer 7.35am, Mass 8am, Mass 10.30am (Latin, Choir), Confessions 11.30-12.30pm, Mass 12.30pm *, Confessions 5-6pm, Sung Vespers 5.30pm (English, Cantor), Sung Mass 6pm.

Sunday: Mass 8am, Sung Morning Prayer 9.30am, Sung Mass 10am, Confessions 10-12.30pm; Solemn Mass 12noon (Choir)*, Solemn Vespers and Benediction 4pm (Choir), Confessions 5-6.45pm, Sung Mass 5.30pm, Mass 7pm.

For full opening and closure times of the Cathedral and for confession and service times during Holy Week and the Easter Octave, please see flyers available from the Cathedral or consult the Cathedral diary on the website.

* Live streamed via the Cathedral website

Tuesday 6 June

(St Norbert, Bishop)

5.30pm Chapter Mass

Wednesday 7 June

Feria

1.15pm Lunchtime Concert:

Simon Johnson (Westminster Cathedral)

Thursday 8 June

Feria

5.30pm Patrons of the Sick and Retired

Priests' Fund attend Mass

Friday 9 June

Friday abstinence

Feria

(St Ephrem, Deacon & Doctor; St Columba, Abbot)

8am – 6pm NHS Blood Transfusion Service in Cathedral Hall

Saturday 10 June

Blessed Virgin Mary on Saturday

10.30am Solemn Mass of Ordination to the Diaconate

6pm Victoria Choir sings at Mass

Sunday 11 June

CORPUS ET SANGUIS CHRISTI – THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

12pm Solemn Mass (Full Choir)

Byrd – Mass for four voices

Mendelssohn – Lauda Sion

Byrd – Ave verum corpus

Organ: *Messiaen* – Offrande et Alleluia final (Livre du Saint Sacrement)

4pm Solemn Vespers and Benediction

Anerio – Magnificat quinti toni

Dupré – O salutaris hostia

Organ: *Tournemire* – Fantasie Paraphrase

(L'Orgue mystique XXVII)

Monday 12 June

Ps Week 2

Feria

Tuesday 13 June

St Anthony of Padua (Lisbon), Priest & Doctor

Wednesday 14 June

Feria

1.15pm Lunchtime Concert:

Stephen Pinnock (Canterbury)

6.30pm Friends' Quiz Night with Fish and Chip Supper in Cathedral Hall

Thursday 15 June

Feria

5.30pm Vigil Mass of the Sacred Heart

Friday 16 June

No Friday abstinence

THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS

5pm Solemn Second Vespers

5.30pm Solemn Mass (Full Choir)

Berkeley – Missa brevis

Palestrina – Improperium expectavit

Organ: *Buxtehude* – Toccata in F (BuxWV 157)

Saturday 17 June

The Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Sunday 18 June

Ps Week 3

11th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

* Day for Life

12pm Solemn Mass (Full Choir)

Byrd – Mass for five voices
 Rossini – O salutaris hostia
 Organ: *Reger* – Hallelujah! Gott zu loben (Fugue)
4pm Solemn Vespers and Benediction
Palestrina – Magnificat quarti toni
Guerrero – Surge prope
 Organ: *Couperin* – Offertoire sur les grands jeux (Messe pour les Couvents)

Monday 19 June

Feria
 (St Romuald, Abbot)

Tuesday 20 June

St Alban, Protomartyr

Wednesday 21 June

St Aloysius Gonzaga, Religious

1.15pm Lunchtime Concert:

Carolyn Craig (Westminster Cathedral)

Thursday 22 June

Ss JOHN FISHER, Bishop, and THOMAS MORE, Martyrs

* Those who suffer Persecution

5.30pm Vigil Mass of the Nativity of St John the Baptist



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In Cambridge, St John Fisher keeps a watchful eye on the University

Friday 23 June

Feria *Friday abstinence (ends at Vespers)*
 (St Etheldreda, otherwise Audrey)
5.30pm Vigil Mass of the Nativity of St John the Baptist

Saturday 24 June

THE NATIVITY OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

10.30am Solemn Mass of Ordination to the Priesthood (Cardinal Nichols)

Byrd – Mass for Four Voices

Victoria – Descendit Angelus

Mozart – Ave Verum Corpus

Organ: *Widor* – Final (Symphonie VI)

6pm Sung Mass of St John the Baptist (Westminster Schools Singing Programme sings at Mass)

Sunday 25 June

Ps Week 4

12th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

12pm Solemn Mass (Full Choir)

Lassus – Missa Bell' Amfitrit' altera

Williams – Ave verum corpus reimagined

Organ: *Dupré* – Preludio (Symphonie II)

4pm Solemn Vespers and Benediction

Incertus – Magnificat primi toni

Hassler – O sacrum convivium

Organ: *Alain* – Variations sur un theme de Clément Jannequin

Monday 26 June

Feria

5.30pm Vigil Mass of St John Southworth

Tuesday 27 June

ST JOHN SOUTHWORTH, Priest & Martyr

5pm Solemn Second Vespers

5.30pm Solemn Mass (Full Choir)

Palestrina – Missa brevis

Byrd – Iustorum animæ

Organ: *Elgar* – Finale (Sonata in G)

Wednesday 28 June

St Irenaeus, Bishop & Martyr

1.15pm Lunchtime Concert:

Dewi Rees (Westminster Abbey)

5.30pm Vigil Mass of Ss Peter and Paul,

Apostles (fulfils Obligation)

Thursday 29 June

SS PETER and PAUL, Apostles

5pm Solemn Second Vespers

5.30pm Solemn Mass (Full Choir)

Palestrina – Missa Tu es Petrus

Palestrina – Tu es Petrus

Organ: *Vierne* – Final (Symphonie III)



Ss Peter and Paul Church, Rumenka

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Friday 30 June

Feria

(The First Martyrs of Holy Roman Church)

5.30pm Vigil Mass of the Dedication of the Cathedral (said, with the Metropolitan Chapter and the College of Chaplains in attendance)

Key to the Diary: Saints' days and holy days written in **BOLD CAPITAL LETTERS** denote Sundays and Solemnities, **CAPITAL LETTERS** denote Feasts, and those not in capitals denote Memorials, whether optional or otherwise. Memorials in brackets are not celebrated liturgically.

What Happens and When

Catholic Grandparents' Association

Hinsley Room,
 Second Sundays 12-3.30pm

Charismatic Prayer Group

Cathedral Hall,
 Fridays 6.30-9pm

Divine Mercy Prayer Group

St Patrick's Chapel,
 Sundays 1.30-2.30pm

Filipino Club

Hinsley Room,
 First Sundays 1-5pm

Guild of the Blessed Sacrament

Blessed Sacrament Chapel, Mondays
 6.15pm

Guild of St Anthony Lady Chapel,

Tuesdays 6.15pm

Interfaith Group Hinsley Room,

Third Wednesdays 2-3.30pm

Legion of Mary

Hinsley Room,
 Monday 1.30-3.30pm

Nigerian Catholic Association

Hinsley Room,
 Fourth Sundays – 1.30-2.30pm

Oblates of Westminster Cathedral

Hinsley Room,
 Fourth Sundays 2.30-4pm

Padre Pio Prayer Group

Sacred Heart Church,
 First Thursdays 1.30-3.30pm

RCIA Group

Vaughan House,
 Tuesday 7-8.30pm

Rosary Group

Lady Chapel,
 Saturday 10-10.25am

Walsingham Prayer Group

St George's Chapel,
 First Tuesdays 2.30-4pm

Yoruba Association

Hinsley Room,
 Third Sundays 1.30-3pm

CATHEDRAL HISTORY – A PICTORIAL RECORD

The 50th Anniversary of the Laying of the Foundation Stone Friday 29th June 1945

Paul Tobin

Just over nine weeks after the end of the Second World War, the Golden Jubilee of the Laying of the Cathedral Foundation Stone by Cardinal Herbert Vaughan (Archbishop of Westminster 1892 - 1903) was marked by Pontifical High Mass on Friday 29 June 1945, celebrated by Archbishop Bernard Griffin (Archbishop of Westminster 1944 - 1956). This was followed by a *Te Deum* intoned by the Archbishop in thanksgiving for the preservation of the Cathedral from serious damage during the war.

The red vestments worn by those taking part are the set made by A F Grossé of Belgium for Cardinal Francis Bourne (Archbishop of Westminster 1903 - 1945) in 1928, consisting of a full Pontifical range that included six copes, four of the matching ones worn by the book and bugia bearers, seen kneeling at the throne together, along with mitre and crozier bearers, who are facing one another on the marble floor. The remaining two copes were more elaborate in style and worn by the archbishop and whoever was the Assistant Priest. Often this would be the Cathedral Administrator as the senior priest in attendance.



In the accompanying picture the Assistant Priest can be seen to the left of the two kneeling bearers who traditionally were seminarians from either St Edmund's Seminary, Ware or St Joseph's College Mill Hill.

The figure to the Archbishop's right is Fr Cuthbert Collingwood, as Master of

Ceremonies; he was to succeed Mgr Martin Howlett as Cathedral Administrator in 1947. Mgr Howlett currently holds the record as the longest serving Cathedral Administrator, having been in post for over 41 years!

Sources: *The Tablet* 30 June 1945
Image: *Illustrated London News*

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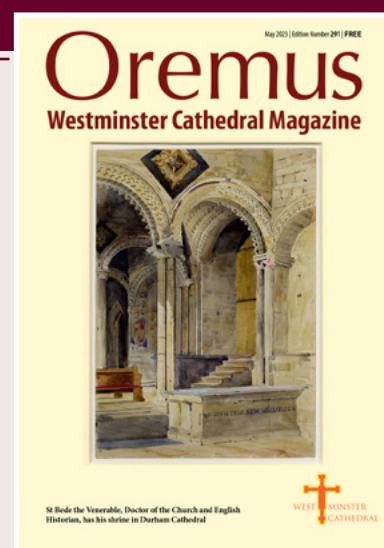
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Hymn

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830 – 1894)

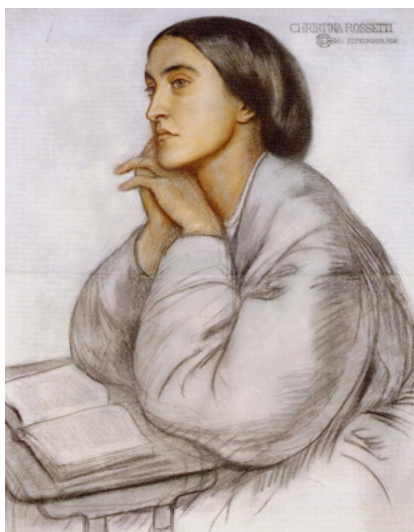
My Lord, my Love! in pleasant pain
How often have I said,
'Blessed that John, who on Thy Breast
Laid down his head.'

It was that contact all divine
Transformed him from above,
And made him amongst men the man
To show forth holy love.

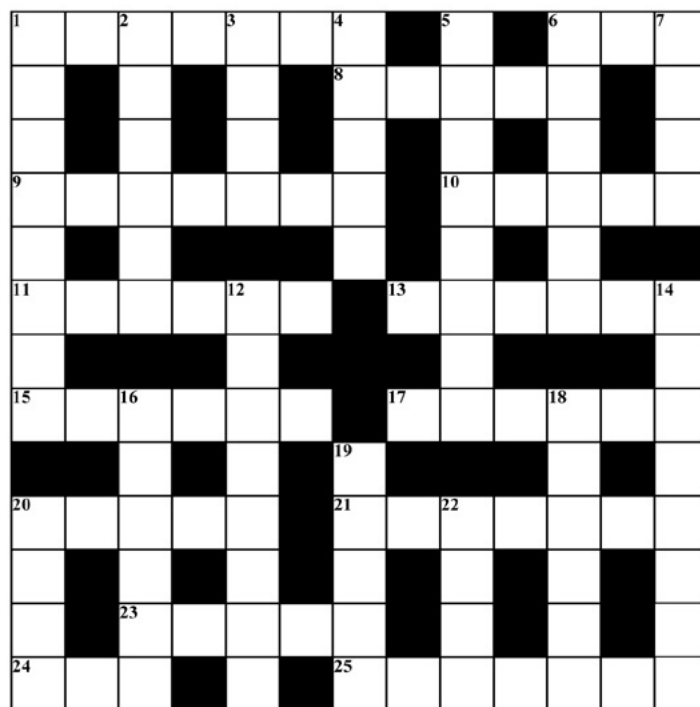
Yet shall I envy blessed John?
Nay, not so verily,
Now that Thou, Lord, both Man and God
Dost dwell in me:
Upbuilding with Thy Manhood's might
My frail humanity;
Yea, Thy Divinehood pouring forth
In fulness filling me.

Me, Lord, Thy temple consecrate,
Even me to Thee alone;
Lord, reign upon my willing heart
Which is Thy throne:
To Thee the Seraphim fall down
Adoring round Thy house;
For which of them hath tasted Thee,
My Manna & my Spouse?

Now that Thy Life lives in my soul
And sways & warms it through,
I scarce seem lesser than the world,
Thy temple too.
O God Who dwellest in my heart,
My God Who fillest me,
The broad immensity itself
Hath not encompassed Thee.



Christina Rossetti



Alan Frost June 2023 – No. 111

Clues Across

- 1 'Great' Pope who gave his name to sacred chant (7)
- 6 Turn up with number for play on words (3)
- 8 Prophet appearing with Jesus and Moses at the Transfiguration (as per Douai Rheims version) (5)
- 9 See 24 Across
- 10 Reminder of a saint, of different classes (5)
- 11 Dynastic rulers at the outset of Catholic Persecution (6)
- 13 Not fair in making judgment (6)
- 15 Name of the only English pope (6)
- 17 & 25 Across: People making dangerous sea journeys hoping for acceptance on English shores (6,7)
- 20 With Romulus, mythological founder of Rome (5)
- 21 Personal testimony of events in bank? (7)
- 23 Means of communication formerly called a 'wireless' (5)
- 24 'Thanks be to God', response in Latin (3,7)
- 25 See 17 Across

Clues Down

- 1 'The Place of the Skull', where Jesus was crucified (8)
- 2 Saint to whom the Cathedral campanile is dedicated (6)
- 3 'Urbi et ----', papal address and blessing (4)
- 4 Leavening agent for ordinary bread (5)
- 5 Attacks on London in the Blitz of WW2 (3-5)
- 6 One hundred and fifty in OT Book (6)
- 7 & 14 Down: Prayer of St Simeon at meeting the infant Jesus in the Temple (4, 8)
- 12 Piece of music by Gershwin, or Liszt perhaps (8)
- 14 See 7 Down
- 16 St Oscar -----, Archbishop assassinated in 1980 in El Salvador (6)
- 18 The famous Museum and Art Gallery in Paris (6)
- 19 Greek island associated with Ariadne in Richard Strauss opera (5)
- 20 'The Great ----', the Cross hanging above the Cathedral sanctuary (4)
- 22 Ceremonial cloak used in processions, famous example from Syon in the V & A museum (4)

ANSWERS

Across: 1 Gregory 6 Pun 8 Elias 9 Grathas 10 Relic 11 Tudors 13 Biased 15 Adrian 17 Asylum 20 Remus 21 Account 23 Radio 24 Deo 25 Seekers
Down: 1 Golgotha 2 Edward 3 Orbi 4 Yeast 5 Air-Raid 6 Psalms 7 Nune 12 Rhapsody 14 Dimitris 16 Romero 18 Louvre 19 Naxos 20 Road 22 Cope

To submit a poem whether by yourself or another for consideration, please contact the Editor – details on page 3.

The Feast of St Peter and St Paul



Henry, Year 5

On 29 June, we come together in our Catholic community to celebrate the Feast of St Peter and St Paul. In this article I would like to share with you some interesting facts about both of these saints and the reason why and how we celebrate this important event in the Christian calendar.

St Peter, also known as Simon Peter, was born in Bethsaida. He had a brother called Andrew and was the son of Jonah and Joanna. Jesus turned Peter's name to *Petros* which means rock and that showed that he was level-headed and trustworthy. He was one of Jesus' 12 disciples, although we know more about Peter, it was his brother, Andrew who knew Jesus first and became Jesus' first apostle.

Peter was a fisherman and first met Jesus who was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, and saw Peter and his brother Andrew. They were fishing in a lake and Jesus told them: 'Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.' They left their nets and followed him. Peter spent his life spreading the word of God and encouraging people to be baptised as Christians. He was particularly involved in converting Jews to Christianity.

Around that time there was a man called Saul who would persecute the early Christians. He was a strict, well-educated Jew and made it his mission to persecute the early Christians. However, one day he was travelling from Jerusalem and saw a bright light and heard the voice of Jesus telling him to stop and follow him instead.

At this point, he changed his name from Saul to Paul and spread the word of the Lord. This was dangerous role and he faced terrible hazards, becoming shipwrecked many times, as well as trouble from robbers and wild animals. Paul made sure to spread the message of the followers of Jesus and continued to convert people to Christianity until his death.

Both Peter and Paul were executed, it is said, ordered by Emperor Nero, who blamed them for spreading the news of Jesus. Peter is said to have died in AD 64 at the age of 68 and Paul is said to have died at a similar time at the age of 60.

Both men were made saints and 29 June became the day when their lives are celebrated. It is known as the feast day of St Peter and St Paul. The Catholic church believes that Peter was the very first Pope and that the main reason for many people becoming Christians when the Church first began was due to Paul. Paul is now buried in the Papal Basilica of St Paul outside the walls. Peter is buried in the Vatican Basilica in Rome.

We celebrate this important day, honouring the lives and service of these two men as they sacrificed themselves for believing and spreading the word of God. It is a holy day of obligation in most Catholic traditions which means that it is a day on which the faithful must attend Mass.



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