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Oremus

Westminster Cathedral Magazine



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On 3 February the diocese of Westminster keeps a feast of three Archbishops of Canterbury, Ss Laurence, Dunstan and Theodore, whose images are among those of the English saints clustered on either side of the Cathedral's main doors.

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Uncovering the Hidden Past

Fr John Scott

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS: Discovering Catholic England,
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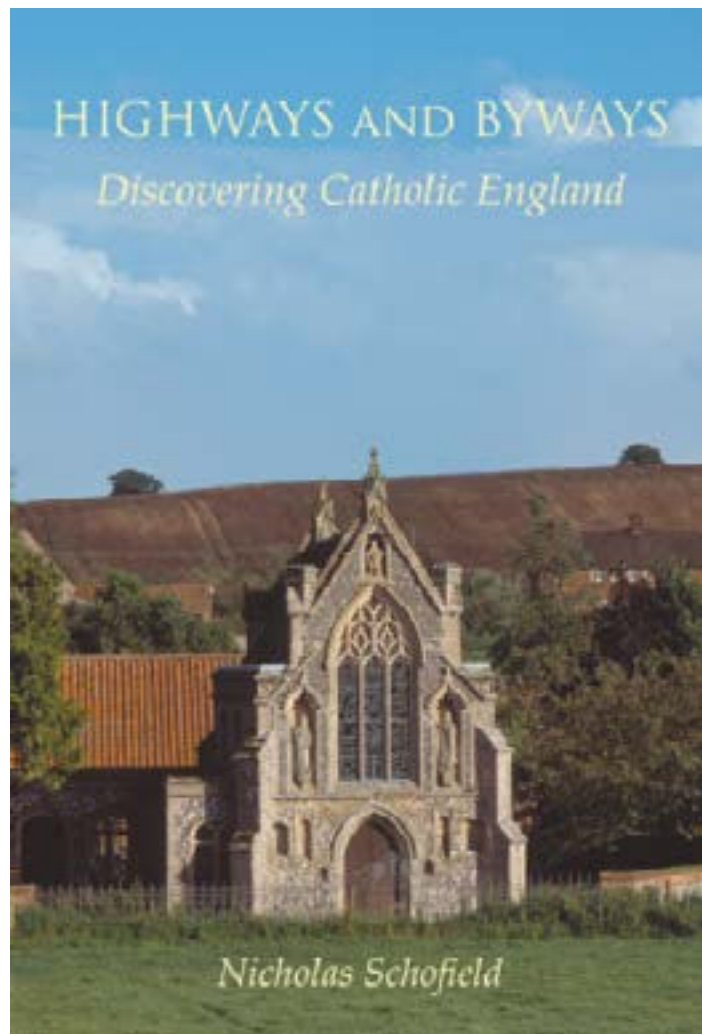
A childhood experience of the late 1950s and early 1960s was a Sunday afternoon trip out into the country, if we were not visiting grandparents. Usually a picnic was involved, to be eaten in the gateway of a field (unlikely nowadays, as so many farmers have to fortify their fields' entrances with concrete blocks against fly-tipping). Updating this experience for modern times, Fr Nicholas has brought together a number of short pieces describing his use both of days off and holiday times when he has been to indulge his antiquarian interests to uncover many hidden traces of this country's Catholic past.

His advice is that the book 'is probably best dipped into rather than read from cover to cover', although, when comfortably ensconced on the sofa, an afternoon could happily be spent on the latter option. He apologises for many of the locations visited being within reasonable distance of his Uxbridge presbytery, but surely that simply emphasises how the Catholic past is all around us when we trouble to look?

In fact, the pieces do cover the whole country. Part of the interest lies in the juxtaposition of the unknown and the familiar. The story of the recreation of Buckfast Abbey is well known, but who remembered St Sidwell until Eamon Duffy brought her to light in his recent work on religious life in the Devon village of Morebath? Cornwall presents a positive plethora of holy locals: Ss Mawes, Levan, Piran, and then Brioc, Kew, Petroc and Tudy, each with their attached legends.

Of course, we are indebted, in a sense, to the Reformation for the closure of so many monastic houses and their conversion into houses, great or small on landed estates, where families who kept the Faith enabled the Church in England to hold on until immigration heralded the 19th century revival. Two different houses are Oxburgh Hall in Norfolk, always Catholic through the Bedingfield family and Milton Manor in Oxfordshire, which became Catholic in the mid 18th century, and is important for us at the Cathedral as the first burial place of Bishop Challoner, now interred in the Chapel of St Gregory and St Augustine: 'Anno Domini 1781, January 22. Buried the Reverend Richard Challoner, a Popish Priest and Titular Bishop of London and Salisbury, a very pious and good man, of great learning and extensive abilities' wrote the Anglican Rector in his Register.

It is good to see Fr Nicholas both giving balanced credence to legend and also disputing received Protestant interpretations. Such is the case with the notorious Boxley Rood in Kent, a crucifix whose features could apparently be manipulated by mechanical means. When seized by the Reformers, the monks claimed that the



mechanism was long defunct, which did not stop the Reformers' claim that the Rood was a fully functional device for fleecing the faithful. The conclusion? 'Rather than being a corrupt forgery, the Rood was part of the "new evangelisation" of the Middle Ages, using ingenious mechanics and the carnival atmosphere of a pilgrimage to bring people closer to the mystery of the Cross.'

We can finish back in the Cathedral, in St Edmund's Crypt, at Cardinal Manning's tomb. Though outwardly austere in appearance, he undoubtedly had a tender heart, having lost his wife after only four years of marriage and using her prayer book every day of his life, as he told his shocked successor, Cardinal Vaughan (a disaffected Cathedral Canon noted that the death of Mrs Manning was the worst blow that befell the English Church). Vaughan, not knowing what to do with Mrs Manning's prayer book, simply put it into the coffin, presumably to accompany the Cardinal into eternity.

Fr Nicholas has given us a book informative, entertaining and thought-provoking – more, please.

Fr John writes



For the second time COVID has attempted to sabotage the Editor's preparation of *Oremus*, so I ask your indulgence for any infelicities that may have crept in.

It seems to be a bumper time for exhibitions, so I have included three – one at Buckingham Palace's apparently yet to be renamed Queen's Gallery, with its excellent access offer

of year-long access if you get your ticket stamped onsite; another at the British Library pandering to our insatiable appetite for anything supernatural or marvellous; and the third at, surprisingly enough, the National Army Museum. Congratulations must go to the Curators of these and other institutions who work so hard to enable us to see reality beyond the limiting vision of our own times.

From our own times I include two pieces of disturbing information. From Australia we learn that the introduction of 'Voluntary Assisted Dying', supposed to reduce suicide rates, has, in fact, significantly increased them. What sort of a society is it where older people understand themselves to be such a burden on younger lives that suicide becomes preferable? This is in complete contradiction to the fundamental Catholic belief that every life in whatever circumstances is of infinite value (as I shall remind the other Chaplains, when recovered from COVID).

Meanwhile Oxfam has just produced a report on global wealth and inequality, featuring figures so large as to be unimaginable. Suffice it to say that rich are getting rich, much richer, at the expense of the poor. To put this into context, I have included extracts from Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium*, based on Catholic Social Teaching. Who really needs a billion dollars?

A wake-up call for some of us may be the piece on prayer from the children of SVP School, with their Morning Offering, Grace before Meals and Prayer at the end of the School Day. Would that we also might be as regular in our devotion.

Finally, two books this month: Lucy Beckett's novel *A Late Finding* is, for Fr Hugh, strong on indignation, but perhaps a little stereotypical in characterisation. For me, however, Fr Nicholas Schofield's *Highways and Byways* recalls childhood memories of when going out for an adventure in a motorcar was actually a pleasure.

I wish you all a blessed beginning to the Season of Lent.

Fr John Scott

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Holbein at the Tudor Court

Genevieve Muinzer

The inimitable Royal Collection Trust has assembled a superb exhibition of 100 pieces of artwork by Hans Holbein the Younger, and members of his circle in The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace. *Holbein at the Tudor Court* displays the largest collection of Holbein's work from the Royal Collection in 30 years.

Many of Holbein's portraits bring you instantly back to your school years and are immediately recognisable as either old friends or challenging adversaries who stared back at you from your history books. This adds to the piquancy of the exhibition where you are afforded the unique luxury of seeing many familiar names, such as Sir Thomas More, Anne Boleyn, the Duke of Norfolk, and their families in both formal and more life-like poses. While the final section of the show includes works by Holbein's successors, most notably the industrious Nicholas Hilliard and Hans Eworth, these other works merely serve to remind you that it is Holbein who is the more brilliant, the incomparable portraitist of his circle.

The exhibition charts the rise of Holbein's career, from his initial visit to England as a jobbing artist in 1526 to his eventual relocation to the country in 1532 where he rose to become not only the most celebrated portraitist of King Henry VIII's court, but among the greatest in Europe. Holbein's work reflects the tumultuous period of British history where heads were lost, and fortunes made, at the behest of King Henry during the break from the Roman Catholic religion.

Kate Heard, Curator of the exhibition, said: 'Holbein's brilliant success at the Tudor court was due to his mastery of his art. His exquisite drawings and paintings were made using the techniques he had learned as an apprentice, but his impressive skill with these traditional materials saw him celebrated by contemporaries, as he is still celebrated today.' It had been Erasmus, the Dutch theologian and philosopher who had sent letters of introduction to his friend Sir Thomas More, then Lord Chancellor, to vouch for Holbein's talent. Well placed socially and politically to serve as a mentor to the brilliant young portrait artist, More obtained several commissions for him: 'Your painter, my dearest Erasmus,' he wrote back to the Catholic philosopher, 'is a wonderful artist.'

Holbein's own religious background is obscure, and his survival in England depended on his working with the powers who were in favour. Born a Catholic, he had painted religious scenes for churches until the rise of Lutheranism meant that the need for religious art diminished throughout Germany and he sought work in England. He had possibly become a Lutheran, although he would initially have kept this quiet on coming to England. He was the King's painter, a favourite of Sir Thomas More until his execution, whereupon Holbein worked closely with Thomas Cromwell.



The enigmatic 'Ambassadors' portrait

His career burgeoned in a glittering ascent in England and his talent was widely vaunted. The exhibition includes portraits whose faces range from those of such an unsullied beauty that you instantly fall in love with them, to those bearing menace. You gasp or wince involuntarily at either the loveliness or censure in the faces, never wanting to meet the latter in even the most brightly lit thoroughfare.

The exhibition includes extraordinary drawings of members of the More family, young and old. You are also afforded the privilege of being able to view both the preparatory drawing of Sir Thomas More's famous portrait alongside the magnificent, completed painting. The undoubted stars of the exhibition are the drawings. They were the preparatory sketches for portraits that were never really meant to be viewed by the public. It is the complete naturalness of the poses that is so arresting. The unconscious ease of the sitters and the honesty of their expressions makes them unique when compared to the studied formality of painted portraits of that period. There are upwards glances, hooded sidelong appraisals, innocent entreaties, beautiful countenances, hard and unflinching gazes. It is sometimes difficult to believe that staring back at you from the frames are vibrant, iconic faces from history, not drawn last year but 500 years ago. The faces of Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour and Princess Mary come as a shock for appearing so human and un-staged.

Holbein selected his paper carefully, choosing papers with watermarks from France, Germany, and Switzerland. To reflect the right skin tones he would often paint one side of the paper in a pinkish hue and build up the sitter's face with chalks specially cut for the task. Unlike paint, they were easier and quicker to use and could be modelled with shading and enhanced more vividly by watercolour where necessary. The results are stunning, and despite the inherent fragility of the pieces, the centuries of conservation and continued preservation by Royal Collection Trust conservators must be loudly commended. Without special care or displayed in sunlight they would have faded into near invisibility, like ghosts.

Holbein's star began to fade with the death of Thomas Cromwell, who had become his supporter after the death of Thomas More. It was Holbein who painted the infamous portrait of Anne of Cleves that had been specially commissioned to attract the King. Luckily for Holbein, Henry VIII didn't hold him responsible for his ill-fated marriage that was annulled with much grievance, although Cromwell met his end. Holbein died of either the plague or an infection in 1543 at the comparatively young age of 45. Although the location of his grave is unrecorded, his brilliance lives on through his artwork.

The exhibition continues to 14 April, but the Holbein collection can be accessed on The Royal Collection Trust website: <https://www.rct.uk>.



Drawing of John More, Sir Thomas' son

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Realms of Imagination

Tim Segal

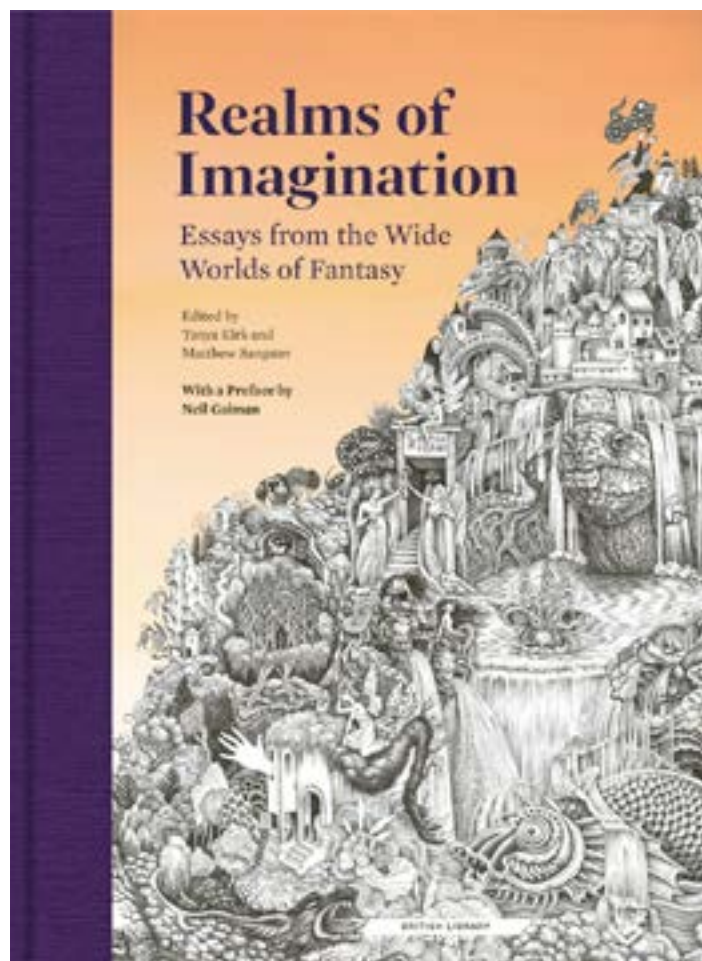
Fantasy and Magic are taking hold of our imagination, it seems, with commercial opportunism exploiting the opportunity. Not only is there the Harry Potter merchandise shop on Charing Cross Road, but two magical merchandise shops in close proximity, one at the western end of the Strand and the other at the northern end of Whitehall. The British Library's exhibition takes a look at Fantasy's long history. Ed.

Explore the world of fantasy at the British Library in the exhibition *Realms of Imagination*. See fantasy in its many forms as the Library brings together and displays books, literature, movies, videos, recordings, card games, video games and costumes to examine what 'fantasy' really is.

This exhibition displays items from a wide number of different backgrounds, periods, and regions to explore how the genre and world of fantasy has evolved over thousands of years. It looks at the many different manifestations of fantasy in human culture and takes you on a journey through humanity's collective creations that make world of fantasy. The exhibition includes works from J R R Tolkien, Ursula K Le Guin, Neil Gaiman, Mervyn Peake, Angela Carter, Terry Pratchett, Edgar Allan Poe, C S Lewis and Charles Dodgson (better known in these circles as Lewis Carroll).

Entering the exhibition, imaginatively split into different section, such as 'Gods and Monsters', and 'Portals and Worlds', you are immersed in an environment that is designed to resemble a mystical forest. There are vines and leaves hanging from the walls; there is stillness. You hear crickets and other forest animals. You feel the quiet while the busyness of the streets and world outside fades away.

First, you see books displayed in glass cases. The volumes bring together myths, legends, romances, histories, epics and fables from around the world. They transformed people's understanding of fairy and folk tales, creating a shared language of storytelling and source material for future fantasy creators. Prominent on display is the work of folklorist Andrew Lang, who edited and published 12 volumes of what became known as *The Coloured Fairy Books*, between 1899 and 1910. Poetry is also represented: *Queen Mab*, a



narrative poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley and *Goblin Market* by Christina Rossetti. According to the exhibition, 'Christina Rossetti insisted that *Goblin Market* was not a children's fairy tale poem, but this extraordinary work that draws on several literary genres, including fantasy gothic, children's literature, fable and fairy tale. The poem explores ideas of temptation, sacrifice and redemption.' Displayed beside it is *The Secret of the Commonwealth*, later published in 1893 as *The Secret Commonwealth of Fairies, Fauns and Elves*. The text derives from late 17th-century accounts given to the Reverend Robert Kirk, by his parishioners, of their beliefs about fairies.

The ballad of *Thomas the Rhymer* tells the story of how he was abducted by the Queen of Elfland. 'Seven years later, he is released to the human world with the gift of prophecy and "a tongue that cannot lie"'. Next to *Thomas the Rhymer* is *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, by J M Barrie. As the exhibition details: 'Scottish writer J M Barrie wrote four novels featuring Peter Pan, the boy who wouldn't grow up. Peter, stranded as an infant in Kensington Gardens, is eventually granted his wish to return home by Mab, Queen of the Fairies.' The exhibition goes on to state: 'Barrie's novel was influenced by his earlier stage play featuring Peter and is a good example of the cross-fertilization of fantasy between genres.'

Amidst the display of fantasy books there is a giant screen showing scenes from the movie *Pan's Labyrinth*. The 'faun' introduces himself and reveals to a little girl called Ofelia that she is in fact a princess, and daughter of the king of the underworld. Further on in the exhibition, there is another screen showing a green forest, further creating the ambience of a mystical grove. Sounds of birds chirping surround you as you look at the many works of fantasy. There is an absorbing video of Terri Windling, an expert on mythology, who discusses her views of fantasy. She states that it 'reawakens the sense of wonder'. 'It encourages us to look at the mysteries of the world.' She goes on: 'Forests are very common in fairy tales ... The danger in fairy tales is where you are tested ... You know with courage and a true heart that you will end up with a happy ending.'

The exhibition also includes an array of fascinating fantasy stories from other countries and cultures, and the international flavour of the genre is very well represented. There is Anancy Spider-Man, 'a trickster figure often depicted as a spider and ... one of the most important characters in West African and Caribbean folklore. Anancy is known for his ability to triumph over more powerful forces through his cunning, imagination, and wisdom. James Berry OBE, who came to Britain from Jamaica in the 1940s, wrote his own versions of the Anancy stories. It is quite phenomenal that in addition to the Spiderman series created by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko, someone else created a spider-themed character. Next to the Anancy Spider-Man is a device that lets you listen to Jamaican writer and activist Andrew Salkey discuss the traditional Anancy stories, passed down to him by his grandmother.'

The Middle East is also well-represented, with displays of books and illustrations from *The Arabian Nights*; *Tales of Sinbad* and many more, including *One Thousand and One Fantasy Pop Nights*, Qatar's first screen printed book. This remixes text from *The Arabian Nights* with imagery from Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani Museum in Doha.

Going north to Germany and Scandinavia, the Brothers Grimm have pride of place. Between 1813 and 1857, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm published seven editions of *Children's and Household Tales*, which were widely admired. Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales, consisting of 156 stories in nine volumes, have been translated into more than 125 languages. One of his most popular stories, *The Snow Queen*, has been widely interpreted on film.

No fantasy exhibition would be complete without J R R Tolkien. In a display case is Gandalf's staff, carried by actor Ian McKellen as the wizard in Peter Jackson's film adaptations of *The Lord of the Rings* (2001–2003). The movies brought Tolkien's work to new audiences who went on to read the books. Vivid illustrations abound of Helm's Deep, a location in Tolkien's world that he named Middle Earth. There is also a script that shows Tolkien making suggestions and changes to a proposed radio play of *The Lord of the Rings*. Sadly, the radio play was never made. Merchandising and games were enormously affected by Tolkien and there is a display of War Hammer fantasy models where men fight miniature orcs, goblins and trolls.

Elsewhere, there are the ancient texts that have influenced the fantasy world genre. In a display case is an old, stained text of the old English epic *Beowulf*. Next to this ancient story is a screen showing Ken Liu discussing his approach to fantasy writing, and his Dandelion series. He states that 'epic fantasy is defined by fantasy at its largest scale'. It deals with the 'fate of entire nations. Everything is large. It's a huge story.' He then discusses how his Dandelion series is concerned with modernity.

At the end of the exhibition is a collection of works of Oriental fantasy. In a glass display case there is *Dragon Ball* by Akira Toriyama. *Dragon Ball* was inspired by the *Journey to West*, a Chinese novel from the 16th century describing the monk Xuanzang's journey to bring Buddhist scriptures from India to China.

The exhibition shows how Fantasy has evolved into magazines, films, board and video games. A comprehensive set of Dungeons & Dragons magazines and games with a basic set of rules is displayed. To illustrate the film interpretations of Fantasy there is a small theatre with a screen in it that displays your own image. When you walk around the screen it adds all sorts of special effects, making your image look wobbly, water-like or ethereal.

In the portals and worlds section it displays Philips Pearce's *Tom's Midnight Garden*, in which a boy enters a magical garden when a clock strikes 13. Tom's midnight garden sits next to two anime books titled *Ascendance of a bookworm: I'll stop at nothing to become a librarian.*

Fantasy has also inspired costume design: on display are the costumes worn by Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev in the Royal Ballet's 1968 production of Tchaikovsky's *The Sleeping Beauty*. There are also award-winning costumes from the musical *Wicked*, designed by Tony award-winner Susan Hilferty.

When you make your way back to the grassy green entrance you realise that it is truly magical to journey through humanity's imaginative works and to be immersed in such brilliance and wonder. Come and venture beyond your imagination in the British Library's fantasy exhibition. Come and join in the quest and free yourself through fantasy!

The Exhibition ends on 25 February.

The Good, the Bard and the Ugliness of War

Lucien de Guise

The National Army Museum may seem like a long way from Westminster Cathedral in terms of content. Our chapels do, of course, honour the war dead in different ways. Whether it's the war dead of St Patrick's, St Andrew's or St George's Chapel, or memorials to Polish or Canadian airmen, there is an undeniable military element within our pacific surroundings. What we are missing is the regimental banners that proliferate in many Anglican cathedrals. Instead we have cardinals' *galeros* gently mouldering with time.

The physical distance between the Cathedral and the National Army Museum is a mere ten minutes on the 170 bus. The Catholic content there is minimal, but at least it's in the same diocese. It is an undiscovered treasure in so many ways and puts on some surprising exhibitions. Until September, there is a show about Britain's greatest poet-playwright. *Shakespeare and War* is a new look at the most written-about writer who has ever lived. What more could there be to say about the Bard? The Museum has taken an original approach that works well especially with its military mandate.

It turns out that Shakespeare had a lot to say about war, and said it so well that later commentators have often wondered whether he had been a soldier. We know enough about his life for that to be improbable. Instead, he was a very aware individual who would have picked up on the bellicose spirit of his time. As a result, his words have been co-opted by a wide variety of causes. Some might be warmongers, others pacifists.

Taking his writing out of context can provide splendid opportunities for propaganda. Among the first exhibits are items relating to the English Civil War. Puritan propagandist John Milton provides one of the first entries. It seems that King Charles I was so enamoured of



Oliver Cromwell with discarded theatrical props

Shakespeare's work, the Parliamentarians called the deceased writer the king's 'closet companion'. This is confirmed by a Second Folio that belonged to the King, with his notes written on it plus some alternative names for the plays. Next to this item is an image of Oliver Cromwell. The Lord Protector was on the same side as Milton and it shows in the lugubrious print on display.

It is at this point the visitor realises that the display is going to feature printed and pictorial material a lot more than objects in the round. For a museum full of every type of hardware from cap badges to full-size tanks and helicopters, it must have been saddened the curators to have so few of the usual inventory to tell a story. There is a Civil War sword from circa 1650, with very little literary impact. That is about all the weaponry we are going to see, so it is important to get up close to works on paper that are not always the most enticing; Cromwell, for example. Below the dictator's

image, however, are discreet references to his distaste for the world of actors, such as discarded masks that they would have used at the time. Under Cromwell, all theatres were closed for 18 years.

By the time the theatrical world had regained its popularity under Charles II, the causes had moved on. Shakespeare quotes were more often adduced as evidence of the destructiveness of war. Some conflicts are still thought to be more divisive than others. One poster for a play from 1680 was succinctly titled *The Misery of Civil War: A Tragedy*.

Working chronologically, the exhibition moves on to the new causes that emerged in the 18th century. No matter what the situation, admirers of Shakespeare were always able to find the *mots justes* to justify their viewpoint. The arrival of the two seminal happenings of the century had American patriots proving the oppressiveness of the British with quotes from republican-themed plays such as *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*. Marcus Brutus was cited as a true revolutionary worthy of the American freedom fighters.

The French Revolution brought out the same urge to bring Shakespeare to the assistance of any side which needed his wisdom. This initiative was not from the French revolutionaries themselves. Britain was divided in its views on the great happenings across the English Channels. George III and his allies – Pitt the Younger and Edmund Burke – are shown hunting down supposed sympathisers with the republican cause, including the Prince of Wales and Charles James Fox. The latter also turns up as a Macbeth-style witch gathered round a cauldron with fellow revolutionaries such as Joseph Priestly.

Shakespeare was at his most useful in direct military confrontations with the French. The speech before Agincourt made in *Henry V* would echo down the ages,



George III as Prospero vs a Satanic French creature



A departing soldier channels the energy of Henry V

including the Second World War. What could have been better than to bring it out against England's longest-term enemy? Other plays could be used in a less jingoistic way. To commemorate Nelson's defeat of Napoleon's navy at the Battle of the Nile, a commemorative print was titled *Prospero on the Enchanted Island*; Prospero is King George III, defending Albion from the diabolical forces of Caliban (the French), who is represented as Satan with a cockade.

When desertion rates rose during the Napoleonic Wars, it was Shakespeare to the rescue once again. A print showing a soldier saying farewell to his family aims for a stiff upper lip in the face of his distraught wife by bringing up 'our fifth Harry'.

There was as much negative propaganda as positive, with Napoleon providing most of the ammunition. A parody of Hamlet's soliloquy has a bedraggled Boney pondering whether to invade England:

To go, or not to go? that is the question;
Whether 'tis better for my views to suffer
The ease and quiet on yon hated rival,
Or to take arms against the haughty people...

Other conflicts produced a similar approach. *Macbeth* was always a popular choice, along with *Henry V*. Even the wars in southern Africa could be made relevant. One print shows soldiers foraging wood for campfires transformed into the Birnam Wood moving to Dunsinane.

By the time Germany had become the enemy, a more confusing picture arose. The propagandists of both King George V

and Kaiser Wilhelm were great admirers of Shakespeare. The Germans poked fun at the British by re-purposing Hamlet and introducing less well-known characters such as Bardolph, from *Henry V*. This cowardly drunk became Tommy Bardolph on German posters.



The Germanic interpretation of Shakespeare included 'Tommy Bardolph'

As the war progressed, the accuracy of Shakespearean quotes did not always proceed so smoothly. Taking Lady Macbeth's speech 'Stand not upon the order of your going, but go at once' out of context, it was turned into a plea for volunteers to fight.

Accompanying all the literary material are glimpses of life with a theatrical feel. Whether it was plays staged in internment or POW camps, or a video of wartime am-dram in Regent's Park, the Bard is never far from the British consciousness. As conflicts like the Falklands and Gulf Wars emerge, there is more discussion than propaganda. I would love to have seen a very young Kenneth Branagh playing the fifth Harry in 1984 at the Royal Shakespeare Company. It was, apparently, a very sombre interpretation of events in the South Atlantic. By the time we get into the 21st century, things have turned even grimmer as the concept of a Just War is questioned further.

The one question that does not seem to be asked is the one that has intrigued me and many others for some time: was Shakespeare a closet Catholic? It is quite possible, although it would not have affected his writing. It might mean that we should take some of his more extreme patriotic posturings less seriously though.



A young Kenneth Branagh and a war-weary Henry V

An Exercise in Com-passion

Fr Hugh MacKenzie

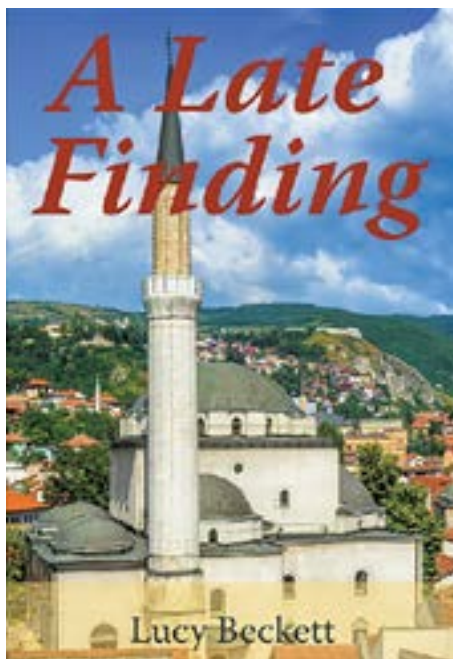
A Late Finding, Lucy Beckett; Gracewing, Leominster 2023; pp 387; ISBN 978 085244 144 2

This book is more a geo-political *cri de coeur* than a novel. It is a heart-breaking overview of recent catastrophic conflicts, shot through with negative judgements upon the involvement of Britain and the US. The 80-year-old protagonist, Clare, is familiar with prayerful worship at Mass and develops a new ("late") close friendship with a refugee from Sarajevo. She is a recent widow and has lost a soldier son in Afghanistan. Towards the end, prayer before a 'powerful' crucifix seems to bring out a link between her relentless com-passion for innocents from Kabul to Kiev and the passion of Christ.

Clare's many conversations add up to a relentless excoriation of western governments of recent decades. The fictional foils to this are two highly cultured immigrants and two highly ignorant Britons 'of a certain [upper middle] class and lack of sensitivity' (p.186), with whom Clare has significant interaction during the recent pandemic.

The former two are from places on the same latitude, at the heart of some of the recent wars, Val from Sarajevo and Hakim from Benghazi – representatives Clare implies of 'real Islam' (p.188). They tell their moving stories well and develop emotional links with Clare which carry the narrative along arrestingly.

The latter two Britons are caricatures, concretising all that Clare's apparent spinning of Guardian editorials is against. Her son-in-law is a Yorkshire Tory MP who increased his majority in Boris Johnson's 2019 landslide. He is introduced by his attack on Muslims, not fully quotable in this family magazine. Suffice to say: 'You can't trust them an inch. All of them' (p.35). His benighted state is never at risk of redemption in this novel, any more than his leader's. And Hakim's live-in, but fleeting, girlfriend was educated at the top private girls'



school, St Paul's, Hammersmith, and yet knows nothing about her boyfriend's homeland and is revolted when she discovers he's a Muslim.

Who could disapprove of refugees, especially the brave and deep Val and Hakim? Answer: English right-wingers 'of a certain class', at least their two representatives in this fiction.

One can't be sure that Lucy Beckett is committing the 'biographical fallacy' of using the characters to express her own strong opinions and experiences. In what is an engaging literary device throughout this novel, Clare has written a book very like this one. Catholic spirituality comes across, and Clare frequents her local Kensington Church Street parish and watches live-streaming from the Jesuits at Farm Street. She tells us she is 'no more than a newspaper reader, BBC listening old widow who knew only what she had collected from the most ordinary sources' (p.158). The 'ordinary' papers mentioned throughout are the Guardian and Observer. One feels that she averts her gaze whenever travelling along the Cromwell Road past the Brompton Oratory.

Clare's geo-political knife often cuts through alarming double-standards in recent *realpolitik*. We should surely have shared surplus vaccines with India. And she interweaves striking insight with not shying away from horrific events on the ground: '... the Serbs did not have the terrible guns and bombs the Russians have. If they did ... Sarajevo would have been as is Mariupol ... or as Aleppo'. Yet, followers of Boris Johnson or Donald Trump might wince at various fascist or Russian dictators appearing in the same or adjacent sentence to Clare's regular condemnations of their actions.

One can't of course expect our self-defined 'old widow' to give both sides of an argument. For example, left out is the fact that Putin invaded Ukraine before and after Trump's presidency but not during (though Obama and Biden are also on the receiving end of Clare's wrath on this occasion – the only time I think). And the aching gap left by her soldier-son killed in action provides a constantly affecting backdrop to all this analysis.

In the penultimate chapter Clare finds herself before an evocative crucifix in the new Stanbrook Abbey. For this reader this touched upon the spirituality of 'vicarious' suffering implicit throughout. Clare hypothesises that Pontius Pilate 'like almost everyone else these days ... thought no answer was possible' to his question 'What is Truth?' (p.372). But this late moment of challenge to the western relativism is dwarfed by the book's denunciation of Boris, Donald and their ilk. Yet it might be argued that these leaders, to the extent to which their actions have increased the trauma of Mediterranean lands, might be more a symptom of our relativist 'culture of death' than their unique moral responsibility. Indeed, never once does our Catholic heroine even allude to the holocaust of our own hearth and home, 'the biggest destroyer of peace' (St.Mother Teresa, 1979, on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize).

A Late Findings' cry from the heart is moving and thought-provoking. A worthy read. Yet Clare's 'ordinary sources' might have gained from a broader gaze.

A Solution that Worsened the Problem

Anscombe Bioethics Centre

New research published in the Journal of Ethics in Mental Health has found that the introduction of euthanasia and assisted suicide (EAS) has failed to reduce the rate of 'unassisted' suicide in Australia's State of Victoria. In fact, since the law came into force, suicide among older people in Victoria has increased by more than 50%.

This is despite the much repeated claim that '50 people a year' with a terminal illness were dying by suicide in Victoria because they did not have access to EAS, which in Australia is referred to together as 'Voluntary Assisted Dying' (VAD).

The author of this study, David Albert Jones, is the Director of the Anscombe Bioethics Centre in Oxford and Professor of Bioethics at St Mary's University, Twickenham.

On 5 December 2017, Victoria was the first State to legalise Voluntary Assisted Dying in Australia. A key argument that helped swing the debate in favour of a change in the law was made by the Coroners' Court to a committee of the Victorian Parliament. The Victorian Coroner John Olle described harrowing cases of people with terminal illnesses who had taken their own lives. The clear implication was that many of these suicides would not have happened if VAD had been available. He said this was happening at the rate of '50 cases per year'.

Olle's evidence was picked up by the Australian media at the time and was highlighted by Andrew Denton, founder of Go Gentle Australia in his campaign for the legalisation of VAD. In numerous articles, Denton popularised the Coroner's statistic of the '50 cases every year', sometimes rephrased as 'one suicide a week'. This argument was pivotal to the recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee and was invoked by most of those who spoke in favour of the bill in the Parliamentary debate including Jill Hennessy, the Minister for Health, and the Premier, Daniel Andrews.

What then has happened to suicide rates in Victoria since the law came into force in June 2019? Rather than seeing a reduction, there has been an increase in unassisted suicides, and especially among those aged 65 or over. These have increased from 102 in 2018 to 156 in 2022, according to figures from the Victoria Suicide Register.

Furthermore, while suicides increased among the elderly, who are more directly affected by VAD, suicides did not increase among those below the age of 65. The increase in elderly suicide was also much larger than the increase in elderly suicide in neighbouring New South Wales, which only implemented VAD in November 2023. These findings were published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Ethics in Mental Health.

There was no evidence of a reduction in suicide after implementing VAD. The study found that, rather than 50 fewer suicides a year among elderly people in Victoria, there was an

increase of 54 a year, i.e. one more suicide per week. The idea that VAD would help prevent 'one suicide a week' in Victoria was repeated in other States as each followed the example of Victoria in legalisation of VAD.

The example of Australia is sometimes invoked by supporters of a change in the law in the United Kingdom. It is important to acknowledge that a key argument in the Australian debate is not supported by the subsequent evidence. The introduction of VAD has not been shown to result in any reduction in conventional (unassisted) suicide.

It is essential that the debate over assisted suicide or euthanasia is based on evidence. The key question is not whether there are problems with the way that people are currently dying. Rather, it is whether a change in the law would make things better or worse. The experience in Australia is that offering people the chance to die by 'voluntary assisted dying' has not alleviated the problem of unassisted suicide in older people.



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Arts and Crafts

Patrick Rogers

The decoration of the Cathedral in the period 1912-16 was largely the work of members of the Arts and Crafts Movement, notably Robert Anning Bell and Robert Weir Schultz. Eric Gill was also associated with the movement, though he had distanced himself by the time he produced the Stations of the Cross in 1914-18. The work of these men is among the best in the Cathedral.

The Arts and Crafts Movement, originating in mid-19th century Britain with the ideas of John Ruskin, William Morris and others, believed that industrialisation and mechanisation dehumanised those involved and debased craftsmanship. The movement advocated social reform, individualism and creativity in art and design and a return to traditional materials and working methods. The Art Workers Guild, founded in 1884, provided a forum for architects, designers and craftsmen who supported these ideals. One of these, who subsequently became Master of the Guild in 1921, was Robert Anning Bell RA. Experienced in art, sculpture and architecture and a designer of stained glass, mosaics, fabrics and wallpaper, in 1900-01 he produced a 32ft by 10ft mosaic for the façade of the Horniman Museum at Forest Hill in London. Also in 1901 he presented a paper entitled *Notes on the Practice of Pictorial Mosaic* to the Royal Institute of British Architects in which he explained the practicalities of mosaic designing and making and praised the virtues of the direct method “as I cannot think that a good result can possibly be obtained by other methods.” He was Professor of Decorative Art at Glasgow School of Art when John Marshall, then architect-in-charge at Westminster Cathedral and a fellow Nonconformist, approached him.

In 1899 two designs, one by the Cathedral Architect, J F Bentley, had been produced for the mosaics of the Lady Chapel but at that time the Chapel was intended to occupy the position now occupied by the Blessed Sacrament Chapel and neither design was adopted. In 1908



Anning Bell's entrance tympanum mosaic

the walls of the Lady Chapel were clad with marble, and by 1910 Cardinal Bourne had decided on the Virgin and Child as an opus sectile altar piece and W C Symons had produced a sketch of a seated figure. But instead Marshall turned to Anning Bell who in 1912 produced a mosaic design portraying Our Lady standing and holding the Holy Child, which Marshall believed “would make the best bit of mosaic in the cathedral.” The cost was £120 (about £6,000 today). For the four niches set into the chapel walls Anning Bell designed mosaic portrayals of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, all Old Testament prophets who had foreseen the Incarnation. The predominantly blue mosaics were installed in 1912-13, under the supervision of Anning Bell and Marshall. The traditional, direct method was employed by the mosaicist Gertrude Martin, who had worked for George Bridge on the mosaics of the Holy Souls Chapel ten years earlier but had received her first commission as an independent master mosaicist in 1911. She returned to the Cathedral in 1921 to execute Anning Bell's designs for the mosaics in the twin alcoves in the

apse above the choir. These were finished the following year, again using the direct method.

Robert Anning Bell's mosaics in the Lady Chapel were generally praised but Cardinal Bourne himself was disappointed. Anning Bell and Gertrude Martin were among eight artists to produce designs for the Cathedral Stations of the Cross in 1913, but the commission went to Eric Gill who was determined to secure it and produced by far the lowest estimate. Nor did Anning Bell secure approval for his 1913 design for the Lady Chapel apse. But Bourne did agree that he should design the 24ft mosaic tympanum over the main entrance of the Cathedral. Bentley had provided a small sketch in pencil for this in 1895-96 and Symons, Frank Brangwyn and Professor Seitz had produced subsequent designs. But Marshall preferred Bentley's original, showing Christ enthroned and displaying His wounds, thus reminding us of the dedication of the Cathedral to the Most Precious Blood. On either side of Christ are the principal saints to which the Cathedral is dedicated – on the left St Peter with the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, together



Robert Weir Schultz's designs for the east and west walls of St Andrew's Chapel

with Our Lady, and on the right St Joseph carrying the lily of purity. Next to him is St Edward the Confessor with royal crown and sceptre, to whom the Cathedral tower is dedicated.

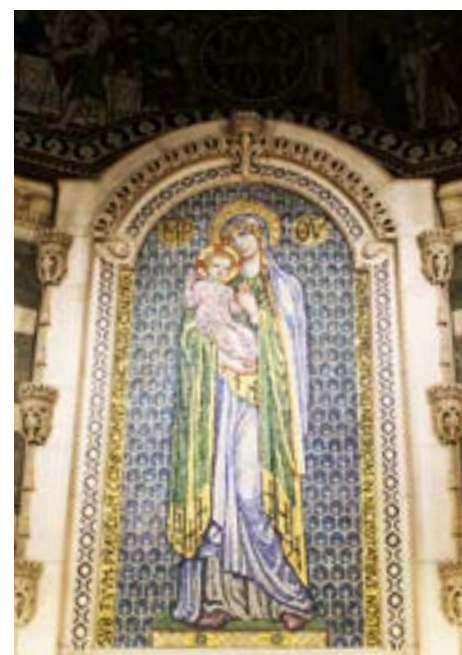
Marshall worked up Bentley's sketch in colour and the result appeared in the Westminster Cathedral Chronicle in March 1907. Christ is now shown fully clothed in red and white with hanging drapery behind the throne, Our Lady in blue and white, St Joseph in dull red, St Peter in russet and brown, and St Edward in purple, white and green. Both St Peter and St Edward are shown kneeling (a consequence of the reduced headroom at either side of the arch). Marshall's design was in turn very largely followed by Anning Bell in his own sketch of 1913, but the open book held by Christ showing the words (in Latin) 'I am the gate, if anyone enters by Me he shall be saved' (John 10:9) is a new theme, and the mosaic is considerably simpler and more austere, with more subdued colours. It is clear the Anning Bell devoted considerable thought to the mosaic, rejecting gold as liable to frost damage, and bright colours as too great a contrast with the drab brick and stone background, darkened by smog, coal fires and smoke from trains at nearby Victoria Station. The mosaic, grouted up to a level surface to ensure durability, was installed in 1915-16 by James Powell & Sons of Whitefriars, who also replaced the mosaics in the Sacred Heart Shrine at this time.

Meanwhile other members of the Arts and Crafts Movement were at work in St Andrew's Chapel. Robert Weir Shultz (RWS Weir after the outbreak of the 1914-18 War) was an architect and a pioneer in Byzantine studies. His chief client was the Fourth Marquess of Bute who arranged for him (together with W R Lethaby and Sidney Barnsley) to undertake overseas study tours of Byzantine architecture on behalf of the Byzantine Research and Publication Fund. On his return he wrote *Byzantine Architecture in Greece* together with Barnsley and in 1897 he produced a two part article entitled *Byzantine Art* for the *Architectural Review*. The Marquess, a prominent Catholic, had agreed to pay for the decoration of St Andrew's Chapel providing that Shultz designed and supervised this. His mosaic designs portray St Andrew himself, the cross of his martyrdom and cities connected with him – a fisherman born in Bethsaida, Bishop of Constantinople, finally crucified in Patras in Greece. Then the journey of his relics after being taken by the Crusaders from Constantinople in 1204 – to Milan, Amalfi and St Andrews in Scotland. Schultz's choice of marbles was criticised in the *Observer* as 'positively freezing in its colourless coldness' but the mosaics were generally praised, notably in *Country Life*. They cost £3,617 (about £150,000 today).

Besides Schultz himself, other Arts and Crafts colleagues who worked on the Chapel were: George Jack (the full-size mosaic cartoons), Thomas Stirling

Lee (crucifix and low relief wall carving), Ernest Gimson (brown ebony stalls inlaid with bone) and Sidney Barnsley (matching kneelers made nearly ten years earlier in 1923-4). Schultz's designs were approved by Cardinal Bourne in 1910 and the mosaics installed in 1914-15 by six mosaicists (one a Venetian) who had previously been working for Sir Ernest Debenham on mosaics for his department stores and private house at 8 Addison Road, Holland Park. Before that two of them had worked on Sir William Richmond's mosaics for St Paul's Cathedral. Directing the mosaics team in St Andrew's Chapel was Gaetano Meo, who had been Sir William Richmond's assistant at St Paul's and had also then worked for Debenham. They employed gold, red, blue and black slabs of mosaic material supplied by James Powell & Sons, though said to have been made in Venice, and the tesserae were cut and inserted by the traditional, direct, method into cement of the same composition as used at St Paul's Cathedral. The mosaics of St Andrew's Chapel include trees, shrubs, flowers, sheep and deer' reminiscent of the apse in Ravenna's Sant' Apollinare in Classe, and are outstanding examples of quality and craftsmanship, particularly the shimmering fish-scales (or 'golden clouds screening Paradise from earthly view') on the vault, and the arch soffits where 33 different birds perch amidst the foliage.

**A plover and a rabbit in the extreme corners of the west wall mosaic were removed in 1916, possibly because they were thought to be distracting from the main composition).*



Robert Anning Bell's portrayal of Our Lady in the Lady chapel

The Austerity of Cardinal Bourne, Washin

Philip Hodges

The ritual in the sanctuary was based on excessive outward signs of courtesy. Altar servers passing across the sanctuary and also the celebrant and his assistant would, on every occasion, bow obsequiously to both ranks of the clergy in the stalls. When the Cardinal presided this ritual would be augmented by a genuflection towards him. There was a surfeit of kissing of hands when any object was handed to the celebrant such as his biretta or the thurible.

At the Offertory when the Cardinal was celebrating Mass in state, his Master of Ceremonies would go behind a pillar and sample the altar wine to test it for toxicity – presumably his life was expendable. This secret little ceremony dated back to the notorious Borgias. In those days princes of the church, no less than temporal princes were subject to poison plots. Not many of the congregation would be aware of this quaint little *tableau sanitaire* taking place in prosaic Westminster, SW1.

When celebrating in state, the Cardinal would enter the cathedral by the West Door. He would be preceded by the mace, his processional cross, always carried with the figure of Christ facing him and by his *gentiluomo*, a splendid figure in court dress with a ruffed collar, black silk breeches, buckled shoes, cocked hat and sheathed sword. Behind him would be his chaplain and his private secretary. His scarlet train, fifteen feet long, would be carried by a young priest and all would kneel as he passed up to the sanctuary giving his blessing to the congregation as he did so.

The Established Church retains this type of display for the coronation or demise of a king and some of the remnants of similar ritual still remain in the High Court of the land. It is not

surprising that the excessive obsequious ritual as used in the Catholic Church tended to diminish its spiritual value. Cardinal Heenan once remarked that he was chagrined by the exaggerated display of fealty to a pontificating bishop as prescribed in the *Rituale Romanum*.

Francis, Cardinal Bourne was a very austere man. Consecrated bishop at an early age, he had been translated to Westminster from Southwark. Soon after his translation he demonstrated his fearless opposition to Herbert Asquith, the then Prime Minister, when the latter sought to veto a procession of the Blessed Sacrament through the streets of Westminster on the occasion of the Eucharistic Congress in 1908. In the exchanges between the two men, Cardinal Bourne emerged with great dignity.

By the time I knew him he had been at Westminster for many years. I never saw him smile. In my early teens I would be detailed among others to serve his Mass in his private chapel in Archbishop's House at 7.00am. I would pass through the library to the double doors at the end and press the bell. The door would be opened by an old Maltese butler and I would go up the grand staircase and along the corridor whose walls were adorned by oil-paintings of deceased prelates and a very gory *Martyrdom of St Sebastian*.

I would open the door to the Cardinal's chapel and confirm that he was there kneeling at a prie-dieu. I would then go to his tiny sacristy and make up the cruets of wine and water. The diminutive wine cellar had a low entrance over which was the legend *Humiliate capita vestra*, (i.e. Don't bump your head; the Latin text comes from the Deacon's instruction to the congregation

before a solemn blessing). When I returned to the chapel he would rise from the prie-dieu, ascend the steps to the altar and vest for Mass. From an ewer of water I would pour water over his hands and offer him a towel.

Having commenced Mass and finished the *Confiteor* I would take the maniple (a vestment now disused) and put it on his left arm. When the Mass was over we would recite the regulation English prayers, then obligatory, and I would assist him to unvest. Throughout the whole proceedings he would regard me as a lifeless robot – not a word would escape his lips or a smile alter his austere face. Indeed there was absolutely no signal that he acknowledged my presence. He would return to his prie-dieu and I would depart with relief that the ordeal was over. Some would say that this aloofness was an attitude he had unconsciously adopted because his middle-class background was not the same as that of his predecessor, Vaughan, who was patrician and more able to unbend. Of course he was a deeply religious man, learned and inscrutable and every inch a prince of the church when he spoke with authority and in a surprisingly soft voice with very precise articulation.

The occupant of the See of Westminster is regarded as spokesman for the Church in Great Britain. As such, Cardinal Bourne was a worthy representative both in strength of character and diplomatic adroitness. He was consulted by the Government not only as spiritual head of some four million British citizens but also a distinguished representative of a supra-national institution. He had a private seat high up in one of the tribunes on the south side of the sanctuary totally

g Choristers' Feet and Military Requiems

concealed from all except members of the choir. If he was present in his secret eyrie the message *Cave* (ie. Beware) *Frankie* would be whispered along the choir stalls.

The Royal Maundy as now carried out by the Monarch is an emasculated version of the Washing of the Feet performed by Christ upon His apostles. This ceremony has dwindled into the simple distribution of money to poor people. But the full ceremony called *Mandatum* was always carried out by the Cardinal on Holy Thursday afternoon in the centre of the nave and twelve of us 'freshmen' of the choirboys would be chosen to represent the poor. Needless to say our feet would be meticulously scrubbed beforehand.

We would assemble on a low platform dressed in cassock and a white Eton collar. After the singing of the Gospel describing the scene in the Upper Room we would be signalled to remove the shoe and stocking of the right foot and the Cardinal, vested in an alb and a white apron, would kneel before each one of us. Assisted by several ministers he would pour water from a large metal ewer on to the proffered foot, catch it in a metal basin and dry the foot with a towel. He would then bow down and kiss the foot. The 'humble-pie' of this foot-kissing must have been considerable.

This was a very imposing ceremony and was always attended by crowds of people who, on this special occasion, were admitted to the gallery running along each side of the nave. When it came to my turn I remember feeling almost naked when exposing my foot to this rubber-necking crowd and thought I might jump when the cold water was poured on my foot. With foreknowledge the MC always had the water lukewarm so there were no embarrassing scenes.

Cardinal Bourne was a friend and ardent admirer of Baden-Powell and his Boy Scout movement. He had a troop of scouts attached to the Cathedral called 'The Cardinal's Own'. In order to please His Eminence, our headmaster had formed a troop especially for the choir school which he proudly called 'The Cardinal's Household Troop'. Mgr Hall never did things by halves. He appeared in the playground in regulation shorts and scout's hat with its boot-lace backsliding. The Court of Honour was held regularly and at one of these, two boys were indicted as having told alleged smutty jokes in the dormitory, stories that today would be commonplace in juvenile gatherings. The code of punishment as laid down by Baden-Powell for this offence was that a cup of cold water should be poured down the sleeve of the miscreant's right arm uplifted. The two boys seemed to enjoy the fact that they had been found guilty, like insignificant nobodies who had been thrust into fame.

We were paraded in the playground in full view of the flats in Morpeth Terrace with the accused standing to attention in the centre without hat or neckerchief. Mgr Hall then appeared, not with a cup of water but a full watering can, the contents of which he took special care to empty down the sleeves of these foul-mouthed law breakers. Since they were wearing belts, the water spouted out of their shirts like a cascade from their waists. It must have been an astonishing sight for the non-paying onlookers in the Morpeth flats. I was horrified by this public 'field punishment' and the gross publicity which accompanied it.

As scouts we would tie the usual knots and memorise the 'Scout Law' if not actually carry it out. Once or twice we went to Wimbledon Common and did

some trekking, a sort of paper chase and would occasionally visit the Scout H.Q. in Buckingham Palace Road.

During the war only the small exterior Angelus Bell situated on the roof of the Lady Chapel would be rung. But on a night in December 1917 the great bell in the tower began to toll over the fog-bound blacked-out streets of Westminster on the instructions of the Cardinal and by agreement of Westminster Council. (The ringing of church bells was reserved as a warning of immediate invasion.) News had just come through that Field Marshall Lord Allenby had victoriously entered Jerusalem with his liberating army and the Cardinal regarded this as the happy ending of the last Crusade. We were quickly assembled in the Cathedral at 6pm with him to sing a solemn *Te Deum* in thanksgiving.

Our allies in the war, France, Belgium and Italy, nominally Catholic countries, all had commemorative services for their Dead each year in the Cathedral. On these occasions a catafalque or representation of a funeral casque would be set up in the nave covered by a heavy velvet pall and flanked by six bees-wax candles in gilded wooden holders six feet high. Soldiers in the appropriate national costume would be posted around the catafalque in attitudes of mourning. Normally the organ is the only instrument allowed to be used in liturgical services but on these occasions the Cardinal would authorise a military band to perform in the West Gallery which is now occupied by the Grand organ. We would sing Anerio's *Requiem* and the band would play suitable solemn music and provide a fanfare at the elevation of the Host. I remember how impressive was the sound of Chopin's *Marche Funèbre* as it rolled down from the West Gallery.



© Marcin Mazur

The Christmas Celebration

All music in the Cathedral has to be carefully rehearsed, so as to maintain standards in performance and this is particularly so for a major public such as the Christmas Celebration. Afternoon visitors were able to hear the finishing touches being adjusted at rehearsal, whilst visitors. In the evening included the two senior London Mayors, the Lord Mayor of Westminster and London Mayor Sadiq Khan.



Send!

For 12 years, Fr Hugh has been working on a doctoral thesis in philosophy, a subject which makes the *Oremus* editor's head hurt. After some teasing that the thesis would never be completed, it finally was and *Oremus* was there to record the moment the 'Send' button was pushed and the thesis submitted.

Simbang Gabi

Simbang Gabi (Filipino for 'Night Mass') is a devotional, nine-day series of Masses attended by Filipino Catholics in anticipation of Christmas, Wikipedia tells me. Originally intended as a practical compromise for farmers that started working in the fields before sunrise, this cherished custom eventually became a distinct feature of Philippine culture and became a symbol of sharing. Here at the Cathedral the sharing aspect was much to the fore, as the Filipino Club hosted a community party and meal for guests from all over London.



Blessing the Crib

The Crib at the west end of the Cathedral is a significant focal prayer point, especially when entering the building. Here the Dean blesses it at the beginning of the Christmas Vigil Mass.

Yorkshire Comes To Town

A number of years ago, the Cathedral supplied Ampleforth Abbey in Yorkshire with a monk, in the form of Edward Henley, a former Intern here (now Fr Ambrose OSB). For the Vigil Mass of the 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time, he returned to the Cathedral with the Abbey School Choir, who were accompanied by our Organ Scholar Chris Too, (back row, extreme right) himself an Old Amplefordian.



In retrospect: from the *Cathedral Chronicle*

The Imprisonment of Cardinal Mindszenty

Five years ago this day the world was shocked to learn of the arrest of Cardinal Mindszenty, Primate of Hungary. We were becoming sadly accustomed to the news of the arrest of bishops, priests and religious, yet up to that time the Communist authorities had hesitated to lay hands upon a member of the Sacred College.

From afar we had followed with admiration the courageous stand of Cardinal Mindszenty against the Communist persecutors of his country. Week after week, from the pulpits of his diocese, he had thundered denunciation of the attack upon his people. Realising that the time would come when he himself was silenced, he was determined that no one in the free world should be left in any doubt about what was happening in Eastern Europe.

Fearful lest, when the hour of his arrest came, his own words should be perverted and a false confession extracted from his lips, the Cardinal warned his people not to believe any statement attributed to him after his arrest. He was determined at all costs to shatter the gullibility of those who had played politics with Moscow and its subservient puppet governments.

The world might be blinded as to the reasons why a parish priest should be removed from his people. They might excuse the moves against hospitals and schools on the grounds of the State's interest in education and welfare. But he knew that he himself was to be the test case. He knew that he could not be arrested and tried without the attention of the entire world being drawn to that courtroom and without each responsible person in the West pausing to examine the question of religious persecution. Therefore he must state his position clearly.

In the course of an address given some months before his arrest he said: 'We Hungarian Catholics want peace. If we cannot find it we will turn to our hearts and pray till the evil passes. Truth always remains truth even if it is a lost voice and a lie remains a lie even if millions declare it and millions accept it.'

What happened to Cardinal Mindszenty between the date of his arrest and the date of his trial remains a mystery. Yet for all the confessions extracted from himself and his fellow prisoners, they alone emerged from the mock trial of Budapest without shame, without ridicule. Truth may have become a lost voice, yet it remained truth. The very fact of his arrest, the folly of his trial, helped to convince the free world, as nothing else before, of the diabolical nature of the Communist persecution of the Christian faith.

What fate would have befallen the Cardinal had the voice of the West not risen in protest none can tell. As far as we know he lives today a prisoner in Hungary. His example lives on. He remains an inspiration to his persecuted priests and people, a shepherd who would not abandon his flock, who would not buy his safety at their expense, and who today suffers with them.

Five years have passed, but we do not forget. Our protests against the events of that time grow no less with the passing of the years. There have been other arrests since then: the Primate of Czechoslovakia and the Primate of Poland have followed him into imprisonment. These great men were inspired in their stand by the example of Cardinal Mindszenty. For he achieved his object of awakening the world to the danger which besets us today. Cardinal Mindszenty is sure of a proud place in the history of the Church and his country.

Sermon preached by His Eminence Cardinal Griffin in Westminster Cathedral on Sunday, December 27th, 1953.

.....

Varia

Archbishop's House Party on January 10 was well patronised, and everyone seemed to enjoy it from beginning to end. The arrangements made for tea, the improved illuminations, and the general swing of the party, gave great credit to those who worked so hard to make it the success it was, both socially and financially.

We feel that, although by mentioning some others may think themselves forgotten, yet reference is due to Mr Sperati, for gratuitously undertaking the work of the illumination of the hall; the Pelican Press for kindly executing all the printing; the *Daily Mirror* for the visit of their famous pets; Mr Finlay Dunn for his voluntary entertainment; and to the following who kindly sent provisions etc.: Express Dairy Co., J. Lyons and Co., Veda Bread Co., Messrs Allen and Hanbury, Messrs Burns Oates and Washbourne, Messrs Francis Tucker, Messrs Glaxo, Mr Henry (floral decorations) and the Hotel Cecil (Christmas tree).

from the February 1924 *Westminster Cathedral Chronicle*

Reclaiming walking pilgrimages in England and Wales

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

Phil McCarthy is a man on a mission - to rebuild a culture of walking pilgrimage that has been somewhat lost in England and Wales. 'England is quite unusual in that pilgrimage was actually banned by Act of Parliament in 1538 by Thomas Cromwell,' says Phil. 'So we lost the shrines, very often the cathedrals, and we lost the religious infrastructure along the way.'

That's where Pilgrim Ways comes in. It's Phil's brainchild and is a digital resource that provides walking routes to key pilgrimage sites in each of our dioceses:

'My idea is to create a "pilgrim way" in each Catholic diocese - from the cathedral of that diocese to one or more shrines within the same diocese. So I've created a website which has all the routes on, and gradually I'm walking them and adding the directions so people can follow them easily,' he says.

When the Bishops' Conference Media Office spoke to Phil, he had just set off from St David's Cathedral in Cardiff, heading north for two Marian shrines, the first at Penrhys and the second at Abercynon, the Way of Our Lady of the Valleys. Phil said: 'The shrines are very interesting in different ways because the one at Penrhys is actually ancient. There was a holy well there and people visited in the medieval period, right up until the Reformation, when the shrine was destroyed and closed down and the statue itself was taken to London and burned. The Rosary Shrine at Abercynon, however, has a very interesting history. In 1926, a little boy was in the river and thought he was drowning. He said he was saved by a 'lady in blue' who he identified as the lady on the religious medallion he was wearing. Consequently, the area became a site of pilgrimage for local miners, particularly Irish and Italian



The National Shrine Church of Our Lady at Willesden

miners. When they were striking in 1928, they actually spent their time creating the shrine there, which was restored by the Archdiocese of Cardiff a few years ago. So two very interesting and very different shrines, one very ancient and the other quite modern.'

To access resources to assist in preparing for a walking pilgrimage in England or Wales visit Phil's Pilgrim Ways website. Worried about maintaining a solid connection to the internet in order to follow the routes? Don't be. Take the routes and maps with you on your phone:

'You can download GPX files and follow on your mobile phone. There are also 'Pilgrim Passports' for you to get stamped along the way and certificates at the end to show that you've done the walk. This very much parallels what they do at the Camino in Spain with the passports and the *testimonium* at the end.'

Deepening one's faith is the simple aim as, to borrow a Pope Francis phrase, within us all beats 'a heart in search of God':

'I hope these are routes, not just for Catholics to deepen their faith, but for everyone to experience pilgrimage within a Catholic setting. Really the title for the project, which is 'Hearts in Search of God', comes from a quotation from Pope Francis where he reminds us that pilgrims, whether old or young, sick or in good health, or just casual tourists, in all of us beats a heart in search of God - whether we're aware of the spiritual journey we're on or not. I think that's a marvellous image.'

Pilgrims Way: www.pilgrimways.org.uk/

The Westminster Way includes four shrines in total; of the Blessed Sacrament in Covent Garden; of the Tyburn Martyrs at Marble Arch; of the Most Holy Rosary at Haverstock Hill and of Our Lady at Willesden.

CATHEDRAL HISTORY A PICTORIAL RECORD

Sunday High Mass in the 1950s

Paul Tobin

With the number of Cathedral Chaplains numbering no fewer than 18, it meant that on most Sundays the back rows of the Choir Stalls in the Sanctuary were filled by those Chaplains who were not needed as Sacred Ministers for Mass (Celebrant, Deacon or Sub-Deacon and Master of Ceremonies). At that time both the Headmaster and Vice-Rector of the Choir School being priests, were also members of the College of Chaplains and took their turn at being Sacred Ministers, otherwise sitting in choir with their colleagues.

With such a number of Chaplains available, it meant that two teams of nine priests could be responsible for the celebration of High Mass and Divine Office on alternate weeks. However, on major solemnities that fell during the week, when either the Cardinal Archbishop or one of his Auxiliary Bishops was celebrating Pontifical High Mass or First Vespers of the feast, attendance of all Chaplains was expected. This was made abundantly clear by the weekly schedule displayed outside the Sacristy that simply read OMNES (i.e. all).

When the Administrator, Sub-Administrator and the Cathedral MC were attending in Choir, they would occupy the three stalls nearest the throne. From right to left in the picture in terms of seniority are Mgr Gordon Wheeler, Canon Francis Bartlett and Mgr Frederick Row; the first two were honorary members of the Chapter, hence their wearing the white fur *cappa*. Mgr Row is wearing the *mantellone*, a full length sleeveless purple garment, closed at the neck and opening at the front with large lapels. As Diocesan Master of Ceremonies



he was appointed a Privy Chamberlain to His Holiness, as had been his predecessors until the title was abolished in 1968 when Pope St Paul VI simplified the various ranks of monsignori. A year later the custom of Papal Chamberlains as they were now known, surrendering their honorific titles on the death of the pope was also abolished.

The last (to date) Cathedral Master of Ceremonies to be given a title was Mgr Anthony Howe, who was one of the few appointees made during the 33 day reign of the late Pope John Paul I in 1978.

Image: M McKeown copyright

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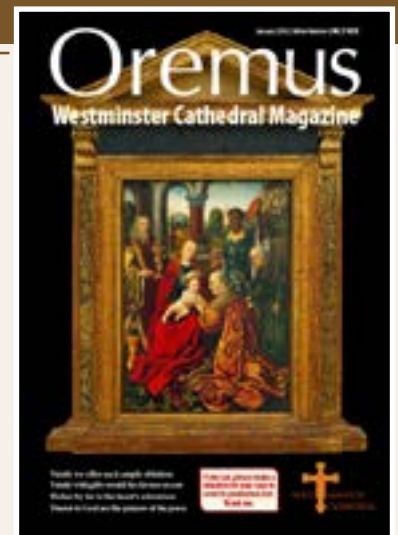
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Increased postal costs for overseas mean that annual subscription rates are UK £28; Europe £58; Rest of the world £75.

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Candlemas: The Offering (A Song of Simeon)

Eve Forti

Old Man, you've sown the years
 longing for the harvest, hoping
 for the green shoot to appear.
 Fragrant with perfection, He is here:
 wanting to be purified, waiting
 to be crucified.
 And His mother, offering her Lamb,
 gives Him to your open arms
 so you can finally die in peace
 knowing that the Promised One is born.
 In gratitude you will whisper
 that her heart will break.

Lent: Ash Wednesday

George Herbert

Welcome dear feast of Lent: who loves not thee,
 He loves not Temperance, or Authority,
 But is composed of passion.
 The Scriptures bid us fast; the Church says, now:
 Give to your Mother, what you would allow
 To every Corporation.
 It's true, we cannot reach Christ's fortieth day;
 Yet to go part of that religious way,
 Is better than to rest:

We cannot reach our Saviour's purity;
 Yet are bid, Be holy ev'n as he.
 In both let's do our best.

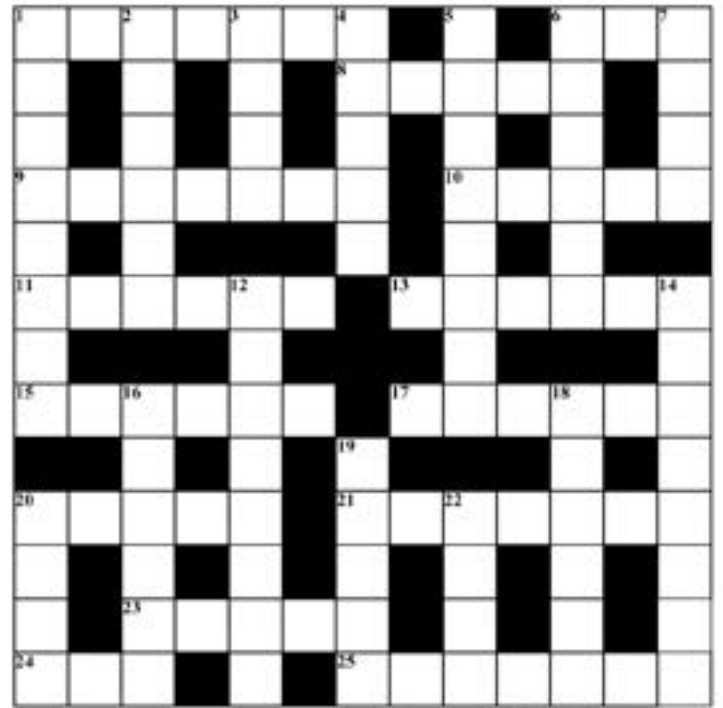
Who goes in the way which Christ has gone,
 Is much more sure to meet with him, than one
 Who travels the by-ways:

Perhaps my God, though he be far before,
 May turn, and take me by the hand, and more
 May strengthen my decays.

Yet Lord instruct us to improve our fast
 By starving sin and taking such repast
 As may our faults control:

That ev'ry man may revel at his door,
 Not in his parlour; banqueting the poor,
 And among those his soul.

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



Alan Frost February 2024 – No. 118

Clues Across

- 1 & 18 Down: He stands atop a pillar in Trafalgar Square (7,6)
 6 '--- Fawkes', associated with 22 Down (3)
 8 See 11 Across
 9 Sound of bells, sound of preparing potatoes! (7)
 10 See 20 Across (5)
 11 & 8: '-----', Mater Dei, Hail Mary in Latin (6,5)
 13 Anointing oil (6)
 15 Early Christian martyr of Rome, Greek Orthodox cathedral in Bayswater named after her (6)
 17 Planet of the solar system (6)
 20, 10 & 24: What VAT stands for (5,5,3)
 21 'A -----', singing without accompaniment (7)
 23 '----- Vires', action when corporation exceeds scope of its power (5)
 24 See 20 Across
 25 Afternoon performance in a theatre (7)

Clues Down

- 1 Musicians whose favourite Saint is David? (8)
 2 Get back as with Milton in his 'Paradise' poem (6)
 3 Form of passenger transport particularly associated with London (4)
 4 "I am the Alpha and the ----" Rev 22 (5)
 5 Descriptive of a clergyman or minister (8)
 6 Legendary Indian leader, Mahatma ----- (6)
 7 'New Scotland ----', Metropolitan Police HQ in Westminster (4)
 12 Fishing tools, symbolically linked with Britannia images (8)
 14 St Valentine's Day -----, notorious Chicago gangland killing on 14 February 1929 (8)
 16 With Castor, heroic mythological twins with ancient temple in Rome (6)
 18 See 1 Across
 19 William of -----, medieval Franciscan theologian with razor-like logic! (5)
 20 As a priest, prepare for Mass (4)
 22 'The Gunpowder ----', attempt to blow up Parliament in 1605 (4)

ANSWERS

Across: 1 Horatio 6 Guy 8 Maria 9 Pealing 10 Added 11 Sancta 13 Christ 15 Sophia 17 Uranus 20 Value 21 Capella 23 Ultra 24 Tax 25 Martinee
 Down: 1 Harpists 2 Regain 3 Taxi 4 Omega 5 Preacher 6 Gandhi 7 Yard 12 Tridents 14 Massacre 16 Pollux 18 Nelson 19 Occam 20 Vest 22 Plot

Tales of the English Martyrs

To help his devotion he caused a great hole to be digged through the wall of his church at Rochester, whereby he might the more commodiously have prospect into the church at Mass and Evensong times. When he himself used to say Mass, as many times he used to do, if he was not letted by some urgent or great cause, ye might perceive in him such earnest devotion that many times the tears would fall from his cheeks.



Bust of St John Fisher by Torrigiano

The Month of February

The Holy Father's Prayer Intention:

For the Terminally Ill:

Let us pray that the sick who are in the final stages of life, and their families, receive the necessary medical and human care and accompaniment.

Thursday 1 February

Feria

Ps Week 4

Friday 2 February

Friday abstinence

THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD

5.30pm Solemn Mass (Full Choir)

Victoria – Missa O magnum mysterium

Tallis – Videte miraculum

Byrd – Nunc dimittis

Organ: Dubois – Toccata



The Presentation, from Mysteries of the Rosary by Cornelis de Vos

Saturday 3 February

Ss Laurence, Dunstan and Theodore,

Archbishops of Canterbury

The Blessing of St Blaise on throats will be given after Mass

11am Mass for Consecrated Life

4pm Low Mass (Blessed Sacrament Chapel)

Sunday 4 February

Ps Week 1

5th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

12pm Solemn Mass (Full Choir)

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 (Choir) 12noon *, Solemn Vespers and Benediction (Choir) 4pm, 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, please consult the Cathedral diary on the website.

* Live streamed via the Cathedral website

de Padilla – Missa Ego flos campi

Tallis – Salvator mundi

Byrd – O salutaris hostia

Organ: Stanford – Toccata in D minor

4pm Solemn Vespers & Benediction

Marenzio – Magnificat octavi toni

Holst – Nunc dimittis

Organ: Tournemire – Diptyque (L'Orgue mystique XI)

4.30pm Mass for the Deaf Service (Cathedral Hall)

Monday 5 February

St Agatha, Virgin & Martyr

Tuesday 6 February

St Paul Miki and Companions, Martyrs

5.30pm Chapter Mass

Wednesday 7 February

Feria

1.15pm Lunchtime Concert

Thursday 8 February

St Josephine Bakhita

(St Jerome Emiliani)

* Day of Prayer for Victims of Trafficking and those who work to combat it

Friday 9 February

Friday abstinence

Feria

Saturday 10 February

St Scholastica, Virgin

2.30pm Mass for the Sick (Cardinal Nichols)

6pm Visiting Choir sings at Mass



St Scholastica in the St.-Maurus-Kapelle, Beuron (Donaul), by Gabriel Wüger

Sunday 11 February*Ps Week 2***6th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

* World Day for the Sick

12pm Solemn Mass (Men's voices)*Durufilé* – Messe cum iubilo*Victoria* – Laudate Dominum*Guerrero* – O sacrum conviviumOrgan: *Durufilé* – Toccata (Suite Op. 5)**4pm** Solemn Vespers & Benediction*Suriano* – Magnificat primi toni*Clemens non Papa* – Ego flos campiOrgan: *Vierne* – Cathédrales**Monday 12 February**

Feria

Tuesday 13 February

Feria

Wednesday 14 February*Ps Week 4*ASH WEDNESDAY *Fast & Abstinence*

(Ss CYRIL, Monk and METHODIUS,

Bishop, Patrons of Europe)

*Ashes will be imposed at all Masses***5.30pm** Solemn Mass (Men's voices)*Plainsong* – Mass XVIII*Whyte* – Miserere mei Deus*Whyte* – Cor mundum crea in me**Thursday 15 February**

Lent Feria

Friday 16 February*Friday abstinence*

Lent Feria

Saturday 17 February

Lent Feria

(The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order)

2.30pm Rite of Election**Sunday 18 February***Ps Week 1***1st SUNDAY OF LENT****12pm** Solemn Mass (Full Choir)*Byrd* – Mass for four voices*Malcolm* – Scapulis suis*Tallis* – O sacrum convivium**4pm** Solemn Vespers & Benediction*Palestrina* – Magnificat quarti toni*Byrd* – Miserere mei Deus**Monday 19 February**

Lent Feria

Tuesday 20 February

Lent Feria

Wednesday 21 February

Lent Feria

(St Peter Damian, Bishop & Doctor)

1.15pm Lunchtime Concert**Thursday 22 February**

THE CHAIR OF ST PETER THE APOSTLE

Friday 23 February*Friday abstinence*

Lent Feria

(St Polycarp, Bishop & Martyr)

Family Fast Day

Saturday 24 February

Lent Feria

6pm Victoria Choir sings at Mass**Sunday 25 February***Ps Week 2***2nd SUNDAY OF LENT****12pm** Solemn Mass (Full Choir)*Rubbra* – Missa in honorem Sancti Dominici*Byrd* – Infelix ego*Byrd* – Quid igitur faciam**4pm** Solemn Vespers & Benediction*Palestrina* – Magnificat primi toni*Byrd* – Ad te igitur**Monday 26 February**

Lent Feria

Tuesday 27 February

Lent Feria

(St Gregory of Narek, Abbot & Doctor)

Wednesday 28 February

Lent Feria

1.15pm Lunchtime Concert**Thursday 29 February**

Lent Feria

FROM THE REGISTERS 2023

The Data Protection Regulations prevent names being printed without consent; however, the bare numbers do give an indication of the Cathedral's pastoral activity during the year past.

Baptismsup to 1 year old: **24**1 to 7 years old: **24**over 7 years old: **6****Reception into Full Communion: 4****First Holy Communion**under 18 years old: **25**Adults: **4****Confirmations: 259**

includes Diocesan Youth and Adult Confirmations

Marriages: 17**Funerals in the Cathedral: 11**

The figures do not show funerals performed elsewhere, nor marriages prepared in the Cathedral but celebrated in another church.

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

Suffolk Churches Online

Diocese of East Anglia

A project to assemble all Suffolk church guidebooks online has been launched by the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust (SHCT) which celebrated its 50th anniversary in December 2023.

Suffolk, with Norfolk, has the greatest concentration of mediaeval churches in Europe - indeed the world - and over the years vicars, scholars and enthusiasts have documented the individual stories of these churches. Now for the first time those histories have been painstakingly collected, scanned and uploaded as a new 'Guides to Suffolk Churches Online', hosted by the Trust. Catholic churches St Edmunds in Bury St Edmunds and Sacred Heart in Southwold are already included and others are invited to join it.

'The churches think it is a fantastic opportunity, that it will bring people into their churches to look around,' said Lynda Aldred, Volunteer Co-ordinator for the project, and chairman of The Arts Society South East Suffolk. 'We've got guides which were written by someone who has since died and their families have been contacted and, without question, they say it is wonderful that their memory lives on. Some of the guides are very professional but my favourite guides are the older ones with hand-drawn covers, little staple rust marks, or those that have been typed on a typewriter with a dodgy letter!'



Holy Trinity, Long Melford is one of Suffolk's finest churches

There are already hundreds of Suffolk churches on the website and more will be added, including any denomination of church, chapel or meeting house that has a guide.

The Guides are available, without charge, via Suffolk Historic Churches Trust website: <https://shct.org.uk/guides-to-suffolk-churches>



Thank you to all those who are leaving a gift to our Cathedral in their wills or are considering doing so.

Gifts in wills make a real difference, whatever the size.

If this is something you would like to do, please use the following recommended wording:

Westminster Cathedral, part of the Westminster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trustee
Registered Charity Number 233699

'The Cathedral has meant so much to me during my life. I hope my legacy will help it continue its mission long into the future.'

Paul

If you would like to find out more or talk about the impact that you would like your gift to have, please contact Laura on the Cathedral's Fundraising Team:
cathedralgiving@rcdow.org.uk or call 020 7798 9058

The Rapacious Relationship between Rich and Poor

The EU's five richest billionaires increased their wealth by 76% since 2020, from 244 billion euro to 429 billion, at a rate of 5.7 million euros per hour. At the same time, 99 percent of the EU's population has become poorer. These findings are based on Oxfam's new report on inequality and global corporate power. The report also reveals that if current trends continue, the world will have its first trillionaire within a decade, but poverty will not be eradicated for another 229 years.

Inequality Inc.. published as business elites gather in the Swiss resort town of Davos, shows that seven out of ten of the world's biggest corporations have a billionaire as CEO or principal shareholder. These corporations are worth 9.3 trillion euros, equivalent to more than the combined GDPs of all countries in Africa and Latin America.

'This inequality is no accident; the rich ensure that corporations deliver more wealth to them at the expense of everyone else', said Oxfam International's Interim Executive Director Amitabh Behar. Since 2020, billionaires in the EU increased their accumulated wealth by one-third, reaching 1.9 trillion euros last year. Mirroring the fortunes of the super-rich, 22 of some of the biggest companies in the EU made 172 billion euros in net profit from July 2022 - June 2023. This is 66% more than their average profit for 2018 - 2021.

'Runaway corporate and monopoly power is an inequality-generating machine: through squeezing workers, dodging tax, privatizing the state, and spurring climate breakdown, corporations are funneling endless wealth to their owners. But they're also funneling power, undermining our democracies and our rights. No corporation or individual should have this much power over our economies and our lives - to be clear, who actually needs a billion dollars?' said Behar.

People worldwide are working harder and longer hours, often for poverty wages in precarious and unsafe jobs. The wages of nearly 800 million workers have failed to keep up with inflation and they have lost 1.4 trillion euros over the last two years, equivalent to nearly a month (25 days) of lost wages for each worker.

Against all this, Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* of 2013, urges the faithful to respond to the Gospel, reaching out to the poor and broken, ending injustice, and building peace. Some of its principles are:

37. Works of love directed to one's neighbour are the most perfect external manifestation of the interior grace of the Spirit...

48. We have to state, without mincing words, that there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor. May we never abandon them.

54. Almost without being aware of it, we end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people's pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else's responsibility and not our own. The culture of prosperity deadens us; we are thrilled if the market offers us something new to purchase. In the meantime, all those lives stunted for lack of opportunity seem a mere spectacle; they fail to move us.

57. I encourage financial experts and political leaders to ponder the words of the Church Father St John Chrysostom: 'Not to share one's wealth with the poor is to steal from them and to take away their livelihood. It is not our own goods which we hold, but theirs'.

177. ...at the very heart of the Gospel is life in community and engagement with others. The content of the first proclamation has an immediate moral implication centred on charity.

187. Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be attentive to the cry of the poor and come to their aid.

188. In this context, we can understand Jesus' command to his disciples: 'You yourselves give them something to eat!' (Mk 6:37): it means working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor, as well as small daily acts of solidarity in meeting the real needs which we encounter.

189. The private ownership of goods is justified by the need to protect and increase them, so that they can better serve the common good; for this reason, solidarity must be lived as the decision to restore to the poor what belongs to them.

191. In all places and circumstances, Christians, with the help of their pastors, are called to hear the cry of the poor.... Seeing their poverty, hearing their cries and knowing their sufferings, we are scandalized because we know that there is enough food for everyone and that hunger is the result of a poor distribution of goods and income.

201. ...none of us can think we are exempt from concern for the poor and for social justice....

203. The dignity of each human person and the pursuit of the common good are concerns which ought to shape all economic policies.

© Image: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Euro_coins_and_banknotes_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Euro_coins_and_banknotes_(cropped).jpg)

The Year of Prayer 2024

Carolina and Molly

In preparation for the 2025 Jubilee Year 'Pilgrims of Hope', 2024 has been designated a *Year of Prayer* by Pope Francis. It started in Advent.

There is a particular focus on the Our Father, and this presents us with a great opportunity to go back to the basics of prayer.

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

This is a very important prayer that we pray in Mass each Sunday and we also pray it together in our school regularly. We always pray in assemblies when we come together in an act of worship.

When we say this prayer together, it helps us to spread joy. In school, we are reminded that we may close our eyes when we pray as this helps us to focus on the words that we are saying because when we are praying we are talking to God.

Each day in school, we spend time in prayer. This enables us to come together and speak to God. In the morning, we pray our 'Morning Offering' where we say:

Good morning dear Jesus,
I give you this day, my soul and my body,
My work and my play.
All for you dear Jesus, all for you.
Amen.

We also say our 'Grace before Meals' prayer which we say together in our classrooms before lunchtime. The prayer is

Bless us, O God, as we sit together,
Bless the food we eat today,
Bless the hands that made the food,
Bless us O God,
Amen.

This is a prayer of thanks to God to show how grateful we are for having food and we also think about others who do not have food. It makes appreciate how fortunate we are.

At the end of each day, we also come together in quiet reflection to thank God for the day that we have had. During this time, we look at the cross in our Prayer Corners (there is one in every classroom) and we pray:

God our Father,



I come to say, thank you for your love today.
Thank you for my family and all the friends you give to me.
Guard me in the dark of night.
And in the morning, send your light.
Amen.

We are lucky as we are the parish school of Westminster Cathedral, so we often go to Mass in the Cathedral as well as having school Masses in our Hall and Class Masses with Fr Vincent and Fr Chinedu who visit our school regularly. All of these opportunities allow us to spend time in prayer.

We recognise that 2024 is a Year of Prayer and we are looking forward to praying more which will help us to become closer to God.



A. FRANCE & SON
INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC FUNERAL
DIRECTORS

*We have been entrusted with
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