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Cover: The carved head of Blessed Hugh Faringdon, last abbot of Reading Abbey, on the inner gateway at Reading Abbey.

Contents

From the Abbot

When I wrote last year's letter, we had experienced the pandemic for nearly a year, and its threat to society and the individual. I reflected then on how it had changed everything, especially in terms of human communication. We are now a year on, and still it is in evidence, absorbing our attention, and now a different strain is engulfing us, despite the record vaccinations administered. It is worth reflecting for a moment, even with the virus still present and rampant, on how our world has changed in the past year. A major development has been the adoption of new and more customer-friendly forms of telecommunication, such as Zoom and Teams, which have allowed us to travel less and reduce the need to appear in person in many meetings. A year or so on, I, like many others, now have "Zoom fatigue", feeling overwhelmed by the invitations to yet more meetings than we have ever hitherto experienced. Many have found attendance at these virtual meetings tiring and lacking the intimacy and informal engagement found in personal meetings. Endearing mannerisms are not easily highlighted on Zoom!

At the end of 2021, many of us were hoping to be able to return to "real" meetings with our friends and family. Our experience of the past year has made us come to realise the value of being with someone in person and rejoicing in his or her singularities, which are not so obvious on the screen. Just when we all thought we would slowly return to normality, with the help of vaccinations, a new variant appeared which has provided its own challenges. I have been careful to keep optimistic, and over the past two years to look to a brighter future, but I sense this new variant of the virus has created a general depression in society at large, dashing hopes and optimism. I sense also that this third wave of the virus has created a new set of circumstances. Having earlier endured lockdowns, unemployment, restricted travel and social gatherings, people now seem to have become more introverted and closed in on themselves. This has had two effects.

First, it seems that this mood has led to a growing incidence of young suicides, to the murder of an impressive MP, to terrorist attacks and very sad stories of abuse, such as the discovery of newly born babies abandoned in bags and in parks. Furthermore, the plight of huge numbers of immigrants at borders and at sea was not so much in the national news a year ago, nor were many in this country so aware of the effects of climate change. All these stories presented to us in the news

seem – at least to my mind – to be more frequent than in the past. They point to the appearance of extreme forms of behaviour in a time of rapid change, and to a radical instability which might cause the loss of our identity and a deep uncertainty.

Secondly, however, the current introspection produced by the virus has also provoked a deeper seriousness among many. Not that this has produced instant religious conversions, but it has meant that many have become more thoughtful about basic questions and meanings surrounding human life. It has encouraged a deeper and longer view of what earlier generations called "the eternal verities." To some extent this change in mood has accompanied a programme of discernment which the monks at Douai have been engaged in over the past few months and which seeks to encourage us to think of where we are, where we are going, and where we want to be. A bigger world has been glimpsed by some, where there are no comforting frontiers, no easily accessible consolations. Some might find this hard to endure, others will experience a puncturing of their self-confidence, but, in a way, it is a profoundly spiritual mood, and not something many of us had felt so tangibly a year ago.

So often, the Church's liturgy accompanies our human path. Advent lightens the darkness ahead on that path, Christmas is about hope fulfilled in time and place, and now we are on the way to the Second Coming promised by Our Lord. We hear lots about this Second Coming but it is not easy to countenance this cosmic event in which the hope of a universal peace is promised. Much of our story today remains incomplete, hard, incomprehensible, and discomforting, but defines us as an in-between people living in the middle state, between Our Lord's first coming in poverty and hardship, and his second coming, which will see hope fulfilled. We have known Bethlehem, and see Jerusalem ahead. St Paul was aware of this when he wrote: "We ourselves have the first fruits of the Spirit, and groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies" (Romans 8).

GEOFFREY SCOTT OSB

Celebrating the Ninth Centenary of the Founding of Reading Abbey

In 2021, tempered by covid restrictions, Reading celebrated the ninth centenary of the founding of its great monastery by Henry I. It began life as a priory, obedient to the abbot of Cluny, who at the time was Pons of Melgueil. Another Cluniac monk, Peter, was appointed as Reading's prior. He brought with him several of his brothers from Burgundy, and was joined by more from Lewes, Cluny's leading house in England. It is doubtful whether this was the same Peter who succeeded Pons, and who is known to us as Peter the Venerable.

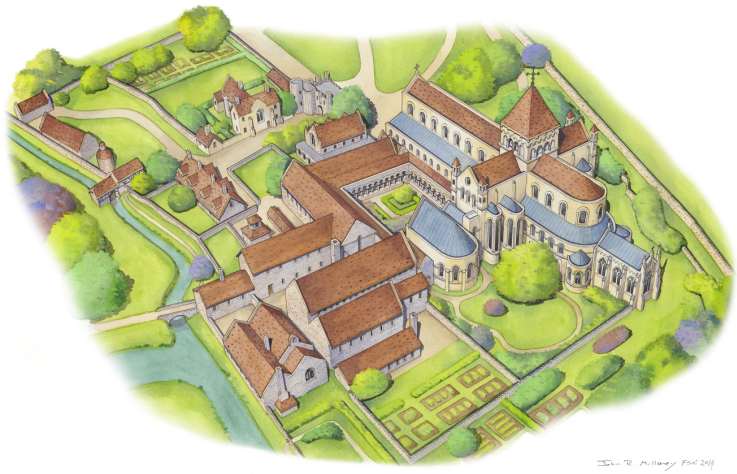

Fig. 1 Conjectural image of Reading Abbey, based on archaeological and archival evidence © John R. Mullaney

Work soon began on building the monastery, which followed the typical, and by then established, Cluniac style. The design was engineered to fulfil the dual purpose of a Cluniac house: to cater for the needs of visitors, especially pilgrims, the sick and the infirm, and to enable the community to pray for the souls of the dead. This was primarily achieved through elaborate liturgical actions, known as the

Opus Dei, "the work of God," such as the Mass, chanting the Divine Office and, most significantly, the recitation of the Office of the Dead.

In this article I shall be looking at some of the major events held in Reading, as it celebrated the abbey's ninth centenary. I will also examine the extent to which they conveyed the original raison d'être of the abbey to a modern audience, giving an understanding of that "dual purpose" which underpinned Cluniac Benedictine spirituality. Regarding the latter I shall be using two main sources. The first is not directly connected with Reading. As we know that Reading was initially a Cluniac foundation, it is only right that we should use Cluny as one source. Specifically, I will be using the Cluniac *consuetudines* (customaries) of St Bernard, with particular reference to Chapter 24, "De Obitu fratris et sepulta" (On the death and burial of a brother).[1] Many readers will be familiar with this, and possibly with Paxton's commentary, *A Medieval Latin Death Ritual*.[2] My second source is probably less well known. It is from Professor Brian Kemp's last work, *Reading Abbey Records: A New Miscellany*.[3] Publishing it shortly before his death, Kemp analysed a thirteenth-century account of the annual and, on a lesser scale, monthly, commemoration ceremonies at Reading, held on the anniversary of Henry I's death. Kemp had come across this document accidentally in the British Library. Although it relates to Reading, it had lain hidden in the Westminster Abbey records. What it reveals is the continued close liturgical connection, at least up to the mid-thirteenth century, between Reading, which had become an independent royal monastery in 1135, and the Cluniac congregation in Burgundy.

In both cases, the importance of the liturgy was closely identified with the holy space in which it was enacted. Though this may seem obvious to those steeped in the Benedictine tradition, the Opus Dei and the liturgy did not feature significantly in the many talks, symposia and discussions surrounding the celebrations. These tended to concentrate on the physical archaeology of the remains of the abbey or, on such questions as where Henry I was actually buried, on the significance of the ruins to the townspeople today. One outstanding, and most interesting, lecture, exemplifying this approach, was given by Tim Tatton-Brown, the eminent archaeologist and architectural historian. His *tour de force* enthralled the audience and gave a most comprehensive overview of the archaeology of the site. It culminated in the reasons for his opinion concerning the exact location of Henry's tomb, possibly the most frequently asked question concerning the abbey.[4] Another issue, commonly raised, is whether Reading was a

Cluniac monastery. As the liturgy, the Opus Dei, was central to the life of the monks, the answer, to a great extent, is to be found in discovering what we know of this at Reading.

Twelfth-century Benedictine liturgical custom depended on the interpretation of the Rule of St Benedict. Different communities, or groups of communities, developed alternative interpretations. The Cistercians, for instance, emphasised the physical aspect of "work" in the injunction *ora et labora* (pray and work). As mentioned, the Cluniacs focused on chant, the Divine Office, and especially on the daily singing of the Office of the Dead, considering this to be divine work, the Opus Dei.

It should be said that, in common with the mindset of the day, the monks at Reading would have viewed their whole life, its daily routine, the music, the art and architecture as an integrated entity. They would not have understood why we separate out the study of the architecture of the abbey from its daily routine nor, within this latter, why we should examine music in isolation from the sharing of food and hospitality towards the poor or pilgrims. All too often today, consideration of the Opus Dei is restricted to the liturgy. It may, in the minds of those holy men, have been a "distinct", but it was not a "separate", aspect of the monastic calling. The words of the psalms that they had been chanting would have been ringing in their ears as they cared for the sick, fed the needy of the town, and welcomed pilgrims from near and far.

I will start by commenting upon Reading Abbey's architectural style: the focus of many events during the celebrations. Interest in this was due, in part, to the extensive conservation programme on the ruins undertaken during the preceding few years. Despite lockdown, they were open to the public, with newly installed explanatory notice boards placed strategically around the site and, indeed, around the town. These give some basic information about the abbey and the ruins. Unfortunately, there are some errors, such as where it is stated that the chapter house was so called because it was where a "chapter of the Bible" was read each day. This should, of course, read "a chapter of the Rule". Another board implies that placing young boys in the monastery was the norm. In fact, Reading Abbey's Foundation Charter discouraged the induction of young boys.[5] By the late twelfth century the practice of investing oblates, to use the official term, had almost completely disappeared throughout the whole Church. Possibly the least forgivable error, considering the interest in Henry's final resting place, is that the date of his burial is incorrect. Despite these mistakes, what is

undoubtedly true is that the conserved ruins, and the new signage, brought to the fore a consciousness of the abbey's existence, and interest in the life of the monks.

The architecture of Reading Abbey was integral to its religious life. It was built in the basilican Romanesque style: a nave with two side aisles, giant order pillars, robust rounded arches, and a central tower over the chancel. We know about the tower because of a reference in the annals of 1208, which tells us that on St Gregory's Day (12 March) that year, "a dark whirlwind swept round the entire church of Reading; then came a sudden flash of lightening, which flew round the tower of the church."[6] We do not know whether there were towers at the west end. However, it would appear that the medieval chronicler was inferring that there was only one tower at this time. It needs to be stressed that the westerly extent of the nave has never been definitively established. What we do know is that the great west entrance gave access to two side aisles and a nave. These are in a ratio of 1:2:1. This is a common feature of medieval cathedral churches, and follows the belief in mathematical symmetry, reflecting divine perfection. Cassiodorus, the sixth-century imperial administrator and polymath, universally revered throughout the Middle Ages, refers to "number being that which governs all things."[7]

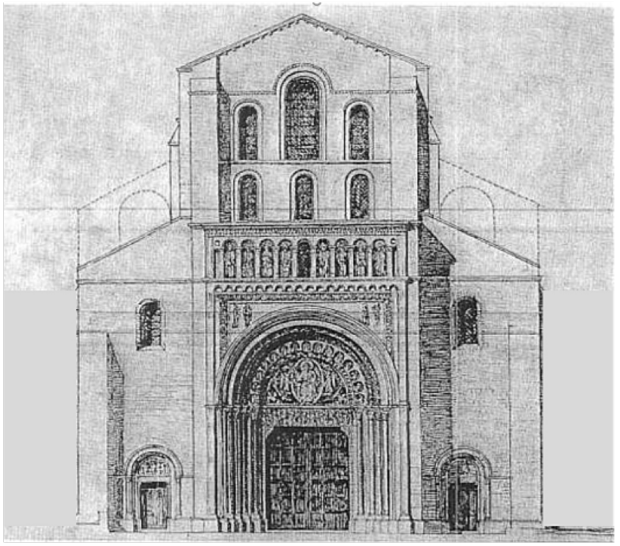

Fig. 2 Conjectural representation of the west façade of Reading Abbey, based on that of Cluny III from a drawing by K. J. Conant

The visitor and pilgrim, on entering the church, would have looked eastwards up the nave to the people's altar. This would, most probably, have been placed against a rood screen, so called because it was surmounted by the holy rood, the depiction of the crucifixion. There is no archaeological evidence as to its exact location at Reading, but it would be fair to surmise its existence somewhere just to the west of the crossing.

Again, although there is little evidence, it is most likely that the windows would have been glazed with richly coloured stained glass. "Divine Light" was central to the theological cosmology of the age. Writing in the second half of the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas comments on the nature and mystery of light.[8] The symbolism, and even the power, of the colours as refracted and reflected through the spectrum, constituted a continuing theme in medieval spiritual works.[9] Colour was not restricted to the window glass. It was present everywhere. The walls, ceilings and pillars would have presented the visitor with a kaleidoscope of vibrant pigments. Some would have been decorative, at least to our eyes, but even here the colours would have been symbolic of some virtue or divine attribute: red, for instance, representing "godhead." Much would have been representational, with scenes from the Bible and the lives of saints.

The visitor would have been expected to progress up the north aisle, visiting various shrines and praying, until arriving in the north transept. Here there were two large apsidal chapels. We do not know if they were dedicated to any particular saints, but this would be a fair assumption. The remains of one such chapel lie behind St James' church.[10] Most important is the surviving column base, the most intact on the whole abbey site. The high quality of the masonry can be judged by looking at the close jointing of the stones.

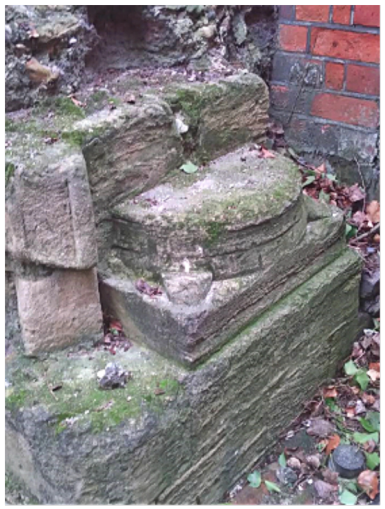

Fig. 3 Pillar base, north transept, Reading Abbey © John Mullaney

Having visited these altars, the pilgrim would then have passed behind the chancel, by means of an ambulatory, round to the south transept. After 1315, with the addition of a Lady Chapel, in the new decorated gothic style, to the east of the chancel, it would have been possible to visit this holy space. The abbey itself was dedicated to Mary and St John, the figures who traditionally appear in paintings of the crucified Christ and on top of rood screens.[11]

One devotion that we know about in the liturgy at Reading was that of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. The abbey was founded at the height of the Immaculist debate, and we know that Henry I requested (and obtained) that the feast of Mary's conception be celebrated "solemniter" at Reading Abbey, rather than just as a minor observance. However, Hugh of Amiens, the first abbot, was aligned with some of the more eminent theologians of the day in being opposed to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which tells us something about the king's personal piety in this instance. The dedication of the abbey to Mary was perhaps less conventional than might have been assumed, and probably informed the spiritual life at the abbey during Henry's lifetime. The dedication to St John also places the abbey under the sign of the holy kinship, which Wace's *Conception Notre Dame* was disseminating in the vernacular for the first time towards the end of the first half of the twelfth century. By the end of that century, however, the leading theologians had been successful in expunging Immaculist prayers from lectionaries, and at Reading, as elsewhere, the doctrine probably only survived in private devotion.[12] Whatever the precise status of this feast, and its duration as a solemn liturgical day, one item of international importance does survive, and that is the carving of the Coronation of the Virgin [*facing page*] on the remains of a pillar capital. It most probably came from the abbey, though discovered at Borough Marsh, a mile or so down-river from Reading. This prestigious work of art is one of the earliest carved stone representations of this devotion in all Europe.[13]

While making this journey round the abbey, the visitor would have been listening to the sound of monks chanting. Following Cluniac rites, the singing of the Divine Office would have been heard for most of the day, and even much of the night. It would have been accompanied by the scent of incense, mixed with the warm odours of burning beeswax from the many candles that lit the church and its shrines. The ritual, as reported in the mid-thirteenth-century account concerning the commemoration of Henry I's death, describes the elaborate ceremonial,

the processions and services, in great detail. Once more, the modern reader is struck by the vibrancy of the occasion, as we read of the richly embroidered copes, the elaborate vestments worn by the monks, and the hangings which decorated the whole church.

Fig. 4 Coronation of the Virgin © Chris Widdows

The abbey's most prestigious relic was a mummified hand, believed to be that of St James the Greater. We know that there was an altar dedicated to St James. This is recorded in a late twelfth-century document known as the *Miracles of the Hand of St James*.[14] Miracle XIII tells how, one Christmas, a young man was cured of lameness and in gratitude spent the night at the altar of St James, in front of the picture of the saint. It has been suggested that the large apsidal chapel in the south transept would have been a fitting place for this altar. We do, however, read in another miracle, number XVIII, that the hand was placed on top of the pulpitum. It is likely that the relic, in a richly jewelled reliquary, would have been kept in a safe place for much of the time, and taken in procession on special occasions, including placing it on the altar dedicated to the saint.

During 2021, the Confraternity of St James arranged for the mummified hand, held at St Peter's Church, Marlow, to be brought to St James' church for a week.

Fig. 5 The reputed hand of St James in St Peter's Church, Marlow

The history of this item has been well documented.[15] It is certainly not the hand of the apostle, as radiocarbon dating places it between the ninth and the eleventh century. It was discovered when the first gaol was being built, in the late eighteenth century, hidden in an iron casket in the walls of the abbey. This may indicate that it had some special significance to whoever secreted it. Was it hidden at the time of the Dissolution, by monks determined to preserve this, their most sacred relic? If so, although not a genuine sacred relic, it is an important part of the history of the abbey and so of the town of Reading. Its status in the monastery can be judged by the fact that an image of the hand appears on some of the seals of the abbey.[16] Just how close this association with St James remained, even after the Reformation, is demonstrated by a seventeenth-century account which refers to the "Abbey of St James."[17] Its significance today is the part it is playing in the renewed interest in pilgrimage. The "hand" symbolises a link between the ancient abbey and the revival in the concept and practice of pilgrimage: an interest that transcends religious beliefs. St James is the apostle of pilgrimage. The work by the Confraternity to establish a route from Reading towards Compostela in Spain, is not just a revival of an ancient tradition. It is also in tune with the spirit of the modern world, as several television programmes have shown us. In these, celebrities "of all faiths and none," as the phrase goes, walk together on pilgrimage, often discovering more about themselves and gaining a deeper insight into their lives.

Returning to the time of the abbey, having moved down the south aisle, visiting shrines on the way, the pilgrim would then have left the church, exiting by the west entrance. This was not the only activity for the lay visitor. Although St Laurence's was the main church provided by the abbey for the townspeople, along with St Mary's and St Giles', the nave of the abbey would have seen many large gatherings. We do not know its exact dimensions, but it must have covered an area of about 3500 m^2 (37,500 ft^2). At the time of its construction in the twelfth century, it was one of the largest in England, and could have

accommodated well over 2000 people.[18] Whether it ever saw such numbers, we shall never know.

Whatever the size of the congregations, we do know that on major feast days the church would have been hung with the richest draperies, the floor would have been covered with a fresh layer of reeds and, during the services, bells would have been rung both inside and outside the church.[19] The monks would have processed from the chapter house into the church, maybe first circling the garth in front of the west front, now the westerly section of the Forbury Gardens. The procession of maybe 100 monks, the celebrants in highly decorated copes and other vestments, and the abbot in his mitre and bearing his crozier, would have been surrounded by acolytes carrying candles and thurifers spreading sweet incense. The choir monks would have chanted or sung psalms as they entered through the great west door, and then processed up the centre of the 13.5 m (41 ft) wide nave to the people's altar, surmounted by its rood screen.[20] This is where public Masses would have been celebrated. Alternatively, for monastic services, the monks would have paired off through the two doors on either side of the people's altar, and would have been lost to sight of the laity in the nave. The monks would have then processed through the single door of the pulpitum into the chancel, where they would have filed into their places in the choir stalls, facing each other in three rows. The abbot would have gone to his throne on the right-hand side of the choir, possibly immediately on entering the chancel. Whether this was the exact siting of the abbot's stall at Reading, we cannot tell. It is possible that this was elsewhere in the choir; maybe there was also a ceremonial throne, just before the great open space, or presbytery, in front of the high altar.

Fig. 6 York Minster pulpitum, early 15th century. Photo: Richard Croft, Wikimedia commons

The location of the abbot's throne is important in helping determine the position of Henry I's tomb. There are only a few records hinting at where the tomb was situated in the chancel, but one of them states that it was "in the myddest of the high choir" and another, in Latin, says that the abbot's seat was "next to," or "very near," Henry's tomb.[21]

What we do have is the account of the ceremonial that took place each year to commemorate the death of Henry I. This is not a detailed instruction manual of every aspect of the liturgy; rather, it is a directive of where this particular liturgy fits into that which would have been familiar to Cluniac monks for an important vigil and day of remembrance. It prescribes how and when certain actions should take place, the processions and their composition and, most importantly, the psalms to be sung. It also describes what to us may seem non-liturgical elements, such as the draperies to be used and the special meals, including details of the food itself, to be provided for the poor of the town.[22] It is when we remember that the Opus Dei encompasses the whole life of the monastery that it makes sense to place these details in a "liturgical manual."

During 2021 many of these aspects of abbey life were reflected in a series of video interviews by the mayor of Reading, Councillor David Stevens, with specialists in their fields. This was under the aegis of the Friends of Reading Abbey and Reading Museum. The first took place just before Christmas 2020. The topics covered ranged from the stone carvings, the reasons why Henry chose Reading, and the life of the monastery. One was presented by Lindsay Mullaney, whose book, *Henry and his Abbey*, is the only work available that specifically examines Henry's relationship with the town. John Painter, secretary of the Friends of Reading Abbey, explored the concept of Reading as a royal abbey, and Mathew Williams, of Reading Museum, spoke about the impact of the abbey on the town. In another, the bishop of Fulham, the Rt Revd Jonathan Baker, gave a perspective from the religious angle, looking at the Reformation and how Reading Abbey fitted into this story. The final interview was with Dr Peter Durrant, chairman of the Friends of Reading Abbey, which consisted of a guided walk around the ruins, with stunning digital reconstructions, created by Chris Forsey, of what the abbey may have looked like.[23]

The Chapter House, one of the largest in the country, is the most complete part of the ruined abbey.[24] It consists of the remains of a single-span barrel-vaulted building. Its four sides are more or less intact, though the roof has gone. Many events, from plays to concerts, now take

place in this space. Over a period of three days, around the date of the 900th anniversary, various aspects of the religious life of the town were portrayed. One of these saw three monks from Douai Abbey explain to the audience what Benedictine spirituality means in today's world and how it relates to the time of the monastery. The headmaster of Blessed Hugh Faringdon School, Simon Uttley, gave a short address about the Christian values the school promotes in its pupils, and a representative number of these asked questions of the monks. Located as it was in this main meeting hall, which for 400 years was at the centre of monastic life and discussion at Reading, let alone where Parliament met, this proved an informative and emotional occasion.

Fig. 7 Reading Chapter House, looking west © John Mullaney

One of the highlights of the year was Reading's annual Waterfest. This presented an opportunity for the townspeople to come together in the conserved ruins, to find out more about the abbey, or just simply to enjoy themselves.[25] Another highlight was the production in the Chapter House, by Rabble Theatre, of a play about the last abbot of Reading, Hugh Cook Faringdon. It was written by Beth Flintoff, who had previously written plays about Henry I and his daughter Matilda. A major source for the new play was the book written by Chris Darbyshire about the trial of Abbot Hugh. As a retired judge, he brought his legal mind to bear on this much-debated aspect of the last days of the abbey.[26]

Following a public vote regarding a carving to commemorate the anniversary, to be placed on the Inner Gateway, a bust of the last abbot was chosen [*right*], receiving more than 40% of the ballots. According to the Reading Museum website, "Comments from voters choosing Hugh Faringdon stated their choice would contribute to 'righting the wrongs of the past' and that the last Abbot of Reading needs 'recognition'."[27]

JOHN MULLANEY

NOTES

1. Marquard Herrgott, V*etus disciplina monastica* (Paris, 1726), p. 190.
2. Frederick S. Paxton, A Medieval Latin Death Ritual: The Monastic Customaries of Bernard and Ulrich of Cluny (Missoula, 1993).
3. Originally from Westminster Abbey, the manuscript is now British Library, Additional MS 8167, f. 200r-v): in Brian Kemp (ed.), *Reading Abbey Records: A New Miscellany* (Reading, 2018). The account covers the ceremonial, both on the day itself, and on the day before, the vigil. That it was a solemn commemoration, liturgically speaking, is demonstrated by the fact that the Office of the Dead was sung with full ritual. But it was also a time of celebration, with special feasting for both the monks and for "thirteen poor people," who were to be fed in the *aula* (hall) of the abbey. The manuscript is not a detailed account of every part of the liturgy used to commemorate Henry's death. It is rather a list of instructions written, most probably, to clarify matters where there was room for alternatives and doubt. It gives instructions on procedure during the two days of the king's commemoration: that is on the eve, or vigil, and the day itself, namely the 31 November and 1 December. For more details, contact the author.*

4. https://research.reading.ac.uk/engagement-and-impact/900th-anniversary-of-reading-abbey/
5. The foundation charter, in Latin: Brian Kemp (ed.), *Reading Abbey Cartularies*, 1 (London, 1986), p. 34ff. In English: J. B. Hurry, *Reading Abbey* (London, 1901) p. 151ff.
6. Kemp, *Reading Abbey Records*, 3, p. 21.
7. Author's translation.
8. *Summa theologica*, Pars I, q. 67, aa. 1-4.
9. For example *De Iride*, by Robert Grosseteste, who was consecrated as bishop of Lincoln at Reading in 1235.
10. St James' church, designed by A. W. N. Pugin, was opened in 1840. It lies immediately to the north of what would have been the north transept of the abbey. For more details, contact the author.*
11. See foundation charter, in Kemp, *Reading Abbey Cartularies*, 1, p. 33.
12. Information from a paper presented by Professor Françoise le Saux at a study day organised by the University of Reading in 2021.
13. John Mullaney, "The Stone of the Coronation of the Virgin:" see the Friends of Reading Abbey website (www.readingabbey.org.uk), or contact the author.*
14. The full text in Latin, with an English translation, is in Kemp, *Reading Abbey Records*.
15. For an account of the history of the hand, see Lindsay Mullaney, *Henry I and his Abbey*, ch. 25.
16. Brian Kemp, "The Seals of Reading Abbey", *Reading Medieval Studies*, 14 (1988), pp. 139-62; http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/85217/
17. Augustine Baker, *Apostolatus Benedictinorum in Anglia* (Douai, 1626). For more details, contact the author.*
18. While writing this paper I looked at various ways of calculating potential numbers of people to area. This website offered one such estimate: https://www.confpeople.co.uk/free-venue-finding/room-capacity-calculator.
19. Details may be found in both the *Vetus disciplina* (see n. 1) and in the Commemoration of Henry I's death: British Library, Additional MS 8167, f. 200r-v, as found in Kemp, *Reading Abbey Records*.
20. For more details, contact the author.*

21. The relevant text from the Commemoration document reads *ingrediatur abbas ad sedile suum iuxta tumbam super pavimentum ex parte australi* ("the abbot is to proceed to his seat by the tomb upon the pavement to the south side"). The English text dates to 1532, when Thomas Benolt, Clarenceux King of Arms, made a heraldic visitation to Reading. For more details, contact the author.*

22. See n. 3.

23. Friends of Reading Abbey: http://www.readingabbey.org.uk/, including "Mayor of Reading – Video Talks."

24. For a detailed study of the Chapter House, contact the author.*

25. A record of some of the main events can be found on the Reading Museum website: https://www.readingabbeyquarter.org.uk/visit/2021-900th-abbey-anniversary.

26. Chris Darbyshire, *Hugh Cook Faringdon: Last Abbot of Reading* (Reading, 2018).

27. See https://www.readingabbeyquarter.org.uk/visit/2021/new-carved-head-for-abbey-gateway

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Who's Afraid of the Antichrist?

IF THE READER IS CATHOLIC, the odds are overwhelmingly in favour of your answer to the question posed in the title (*pace* Edward Albee) being, "not I." A classical Protestant is more likely to have at least some sense of apprehension at the mention of Antichrist, while someone from one of the myriad of exotic post-Reformation denominational offshoots will probably have a lively sense of the imminence of the Antichrist, or even his present immanence, and seek to identify him (and it is invariably him). Yet it remains an obvious enough fact that for the vast majority of Catholics, and mainstream Christians more generally, the Antichrist does not figure in their conscious faith.

'Twas not ever thus. Indeed, at certain times in the history of Christianity an acute perception of the imminence, if not actual presence, of the Antichrist was a marked feature of Christian thought and preaching. So much so, that in time the relatively sober biblical references to Antichrist were left behind in the florid flights of speculative theology that developed from them. Only in relatively recent times has Antichrist ceased to be part of mainstream Christian reflection and teaching, along with much of what is vital in Christian eschatological teaching, such as judgment and hell.

However, the abandonment of Christian teaching on Antichrist, leaving aside other neglected elements of essential eschatology, is an impoverishment of Christian faith and witness. A proper appreciation of the Christian teaching on Antichrist offers two particular rewards for the modern faithful Christian: subjectively, in a better spiritual understanding of the self; objectively, in a better understanding of the Church and its fraught existence in the world of today.

Entire books have been written on Antichrist, with a small resurgence quite recently, and there is neither room nor cause here to reproduce their level of detail.[1] Instead, what follows will be a summary of the biblical sources for Antichrist, a brief outline of the development and application of the teaching on Antichrist, and the valuable relevance of a mature and faithful appreciation of Antichrist for both the Church and individual Christians today. The insights of modern Catholic thinkers like Ivan Illich and Giorgio Agamben, and the prophetic witness of Pope Benedict XVI in his last great papal act, will guide the reflection here. The conclusion might surprise you.

ANTICHRIST IN SCRIPTURE

Explicit references to Antichrist by name in the Bible are few. Several scriptural passages have been interpreted as referring to Antichrist, in such a way as to develop and reshape the direct scriptural revelation.

The term *antichristos* is found only in the First and Second Letters of St John. In 1 John 2: 18-26, the term is first encountered, as St John warns his readers that

> it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore, we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that not all are of us. (vv. 18-19)

For St John, Antichrist is not a future individual but a present plurality. Moreover, "antichrists" are not figures external to the Church community but apostates from within it: they were with us, but not of us. There are echoes here of Christ's teaching on the coexistence of weeds and wheat in the Church (Matt 13:24-30), the weeds unavoidable until the harvest. A little further on the apostle defines Antichrist: "This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son" (v. 22b). The reason the apostle must speak of such as these is made clear as well: "I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you" (v. 26).

Towards the end of his first letter the apostle expands on his purpose in describing Antichrist:

> Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore, they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. (1 John 4: 1-6)

In the Johannine perspective the teaching on Antichrist has less a future application and more a present one, and it relates to the integrity of Christians' faith in Christ as the incarnate God. This is the absolute fundamental of Johannine faith, an article of faith that is accepted only

by those who are truly "from God;" those who teach anything contrary are "from the world; therefore, they speak from the world, and the world listens to them." Thus, the teaching of St John has an ecclesiological purpose: to identify the wheat of the true Church and its faith, and so to avoid following the error of the weeds allowed to coexist with the wheat, but only until the great Harvest on the Last Day. The teaching on Antichrist in the Johannine understanding is intimately related to a practical Christian duty to practise discernment.

In his second letter St John briefly reiterates the essence of his teaching again:

> For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. (2 John, 7)

The apostle concludes this brief letter by warning the faithful against those whose teachings about Christ depart from the witness of the apostles such as himself. The fruit of Antichrist is deception into error about who Christ is and what that means for humanity. Again, discernment is implied as the remedy to the wiles of Antichrist.

Antichrist as an individual and future/eschatological figure, on the other hand, has been inferred from St Paul's writings half a century earlier. St Paul never uses the term *antichristos* in his second letter to the Thessalonians, but his references to the "man of lawlessness" and the "son of destruction" have been traditionally interpreted as referring to the same personal force for deception identified in the Johannine letters. In fact, one wonders if St John is not interpreting and applying St Paul's futurist teaching to the Church's present situation in his day. After all, by the time St John was writing his letters, the expectation of the Lord's second coming as imminent was increasingly yielding to a less chronologically literal understanding of the last times, as the indeterminate period between the Lord's Resurrection and his Second Coming. The longer the time of waiting, the more opportunity for the faithful to be deceived and go astray. In his later period St Paul himself was increasingly aware that the Second Coming need not, and probably would not, be soon:

> Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every

> so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you, I told you these things? And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore, God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thess 2:1-12)

There is a lot to explore in this passage, too much for this paper, but it suffices to say that the essential point in our context is the inevitability of deceivers appearing in the body of the Church, who will claim an authority equal to the apostles. Equally inevitable is the sad fact that some, even many, will be deceived by this force, which is satanic in origin and purpose, opposing the revelation of Christ, seeking indeed to displace Christ himself—*the* Truth—with something counterfeit and poisonous. This 'mystery of lawlessness' is highlighted by St Paul for essentially the same reason as St John: to identify where the true Church is by the integrity of its members' faith in Christ. By means of "power and false signs and wonders" the faithful will be distinguishable from the "perishing" among their brethren in the Church who accept the counterfeit out of "pleasure in unrighteousness." Again, the weapon against the counterfeit of truth is discernment.

From her earliest days, the Church has had to deal with false brethren. Both St John and St Paul are at pains to impress upon their flocks that the Church on earth is not a community of the perfect, but as divided within itself as it from what is without; between those who are of the world and those who are of God. Both apostles warn the infant Church that not all that glitters is gold, and that the fools' gold will deceive those whose faith is too insubstantial to allow them to discern truth from error. The central issue is the authentic understanding of who Christ is and how he can be known, and by what authority this understanding is established. The divergence in detail between the two apostles' expositions of the phenomenon of Antichrist established an ambiguity that will be extravagantly developed over the coming centuries.

ANTICHRIST ELABORATED

It was inevitable that, with so much more leisure to meditate now that the End was not likely to be soon, Christian thinkers would investigate in greater detail the identity of Antichrist as a consequence of their more urgent duty to clarify the identity of Christ. The development of Christology was based on who Christ is not, as much as on who he is. Although there was a danger in saying too much about the nature of Christ (divine, human, or both; created or eternal; and so on), there was much less danger in speculating on the nature of Antichrist. Moreover, the historical development of what we might call Antichristology waxed in times of great historical crisis, as an attempt to understand if not explain such crises.

The demands of space require only a brief treatment of the history of Antichristology, for it is the contemporary relevance of Antichrist that is the ultimate focus here. For all that, some swift sketch of the essentials of Antichristology must be made if the seriousness of its insight for today is to be appreciated fully. From the perspective of the modern, "enlightened" and more secular mind of today, Antichristology might appear to be the sort of arcane and exotic doctrinal side alley best left untrodden. Yet, for a very long time indeed the development of Antichristology was very much mainstream.

As Christian thinkers and preachers began to apply themselves to discovering and understanding the Christian revelation recognisable in the whole sweep of Scripture, so too Antichrist began to be seen in its midst. The apostles' warning against deceivers did not derive from them alone. Our Lord himself had warned that "false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens to lead astray, is possible, even the elect" (Matt 24:24; Mark 13:22), though these false ones are not termed *antichristoi* but *pseudochristoi*. However, recognizing an identity between antichrists and false-christs was inevitable.

Even though it does not once mention Antichrist by name, the book of the Apocalypse was soon held to make significant reference to Antichrist, a reasonable inference since it was ascribed to the same John who wrote the two letters that do name Antichrist. Since the Apocalypse offers the most detailed presentation of eschatology in the New Testament, it was natural to expect to find Antichrist in this great dramatic vision of the End. Moreover, the Apocalypse being rich in allusions to the Jewish scriptures, it was inevitable that Jewish eschatology would be seen to be the prophetic seedbed of Christian

eschatology. The identity of the Son of Man, as Christ often referred to himself, was anchored in the book of Daniel's depiction of an eschatological-messianic figure of the same title. The Apocalypse of St John is, in many ways, an expansion of the eschatology of Daniel in the light of Christ. The Son of Man in both Daniel and the Apocalypse is ranged against anti-messianic beasts described with luridly symbolic detail. Since the beasts of Daniel were symbols, on one level, of real historical tyrants, so too the beasts of Apocalypse came to be seen as having an equally historical application. Zeal in attempting to pin down the concrete identification of these symbolic figures would lead many a Christian down alleys of increasingly febrile speculation.

Going forward, Antichrist has always had a place both in Christian eschatology, and Christology. The leading contemporary antichristologist, Bernard McGinn, points to Antichrist's significance for our richer understanding both of the evangelists' Christ as Son of Man and the Pauline Christ as Second Adam. Emerging from such an understanding is a greater appreciation of the role of evil in human history, from beginning to end. Its real importance lies not in any assessment of cosmic, supra-human evil in the figure of Satan, but in comprehending the native human susceptibility to cooperation with evil, even after the Resurrection of Christ and among Christ's elect. Evil can have no effective power in the world without human connivance, and Christians are not automatically immune from being deceived into the service of evil.

This does not entail dualism, but a recognition of the opposing forces which have constantly attracted the human person throughout history. The force opposed to Christ only has success due to humanity's greatest gift, and achilles' heel: free will. We are free to choose God or evil, life or death. Since evil is a deceiver, its deception must be exposed to view so that the wrong choice can be evaded. It is not coincidental that the term "heresy" comes from the Greek *hairesis*, referring to something that has been chosen. Heretics make a choice to depart from truth. Success in following truth relies in large measure on exposing such erroneous choices. To be anti-truth is to be anti-Christ. While the victory of Christ has been achieved in eternity, for us in created time and space—in history—it is still being played out. In the context of the Christian assertion of human dignity it is fundamental that in this cosmic drama human beings are not mere spectators, but voluntary actors.

It is no surprise, then, that in Christian history the task of exposing evil and error, and understanding them, has taken up so much time and

effort, especially in times of crisis. Light shone on evil enables us to refocus our attention on the source of that light. With this in mind we can appreciate properly the developments in Antichristology over the last two millennia. Thus, when some early Christians began to identify their persecutor Nero as Satan incarnate, in an exercise of simplistic parallelism to the Incarnation of God in Christ, Christian thinkers were spurred to refute it, and in so doing enrich our understanding of God, Satan and humanity. While evil inevitably shares a certain symmetry with God, it can never have an equality. Satan cannot become human since that power belongs to God alone. Satan is a deceiver, and his creativity cannot extend beyond the counterfeit. So, to have any power in this world Satan must adopt as his agents human beings created by God, beguiling human individuals with counterfeit truth and blessings into abusing their greatest gift and sharpest vulnerability, free will. Antichrist is not a demon, but is of necessity human. Adam blamed Eve for tasting the forbidden fruit, and Eve blamed the serpent. Genesis makes it clear that both Adam and Eve were responsible for their sinful choice and expelled from Eden. Temptation is not compulsion, and if they who were in paradise, in God's immediate presence, could fall to temptation, our inherent vulnerability to temptation is all too comprehensible, as also the urgency of our need to resist it.

From this point the work of theologians was fertile. A swift survey of significant contributions to Antichristology will suffice to give a sense of its varied texture. St Polycarp († 155), who had known the apostle John, set forth in his letter to the Philippians a Johannine view of Antichrist as being the plurality of apostates and heretics, namely those who deny the Incarnation and the Cross of Christ. St Irenaeus († c.202), who had heard Polycarp preach, embraced the symmetry of evil with the divine, teaching in his *Against Heresies* that Antichrist would recapitulate all evil just as Christ recapitulates all good, and that just as there will be a second coming of Christ, the *Parousia*, so too there would be a *parousia* of Antichrist. In this he diverges from the Johannine Polycarp, seeing Antichrist as a single, eschatological figure, not the phenomenon of apostasy played out among the many who had already gone astray in their faith. Significantly, Irenaeus makes no use of the letters of St John in his treatment of Antichrist.

Polycarp and Irenaeus might be seen as the fathers of the two major tendencies in antichristological thought that would follow: Antichrist as an ever-present phenomenon in the life of the Church embodied in many, not in a single individual; and Antichrist as a future, eschatological individual whose advent would herald the End. Another

leading antichristologist, Philip Almond, maintains that the "legend" of the Antichrist begins with Irenaeus.

It is galling to have to omit so much of the colour of the development of Antichristology. Marking its significant moments must suffice. As noted earlier, the figure of Nero († 68) attracted a great deal of antichristological attention. With the rejection of Nero as an incarnation of Satan, speculation in a Church still largely expecting an imminent *Parousia* shifted to Nero as Antichrist, given his role as the first great persecutor of Christians. In this approach the Johannine texts are set aside and the books of Daniel and the Apocalypse become the preferred references. Since both present a rudimentary eschatological timetable, in which types of Antichrist clearly modelled on historical figures persecute and oppress the faithful, it was inevitable that Christians would try to interpret their present tribulations in the light of the mysterious eschatological symbolism of these two books. Here another complication in the development of Antichristology emerges: the Antichrist as an identifiable eschatological individual, but not so much a deceiver as an oppressor. This would have its own consequences in later centuries

The *Testament of Hezekiah* (c. 70-175) mixes the ingredients yet another way. Here Antichrist is a future phenomenon, but not an individual oppressor. Rather Antichrist would be the plurality of Christians who would constitute a sign of the fast-approaching End in their forsaking of Christ's teaching, choosing to love the world, and their status and prosperity within it. Their worldliness would diminish their Christian fidelity and witness. It would be an emasculated Church of few, if any martyrs, almost indistinguishable from the world.

In these early sources we find the primary types of the antichristologies which would follow, variously mixing as they do the presentist and futurist timings of Antichrist with the individualist/pluralist and deceiver/oppressor attributes of Antichrist. It was a complex network of speculation which offered great scope for varied development.

Other landmarks in the development of Antichristology merit noting. Hippolytus († c. 235) was the first to attempt to put a date to the various eschatological events in the Apocalypse, though he was also the first to reject categorically the idea of Christ's *Parousia* as imminent. He taught an individual eschatological Antichrist of the deceiver type. Tertullian († c.220) was the first to integrate fully the Pauline figure of the restraining force in 2 Thessalonians with the evolving narrative of

the individual Antichrist, identifying the restraining force with the Roman Empire. For Tertullian the Roman Empire was a necessary evil that forestalled the coming of the Man of Lawlessness/Antichrist. While the Empire was in place the *parousia* of the Antichrist would be delayed; and since the Antichrist's coming was in no way to be sought for, the Empire was acceptable as a lesser and relatively tolerable evil. The embracing of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine († 337) saw apocalyptic excitements cool significantly. The Empire suddenly changed from being a tolerable evil to being a positive constituent element of what would be called Christendom.

Origen († 337) added a dollop of Platonism to Antichristology. Significantly, he was the first to articulate an acceptance of both the Antichrist to come and Antichrists already present. While he accepted the Antichrist as a future historical figure, his interests were more Johannine, seeing both Christ and Antichrist already present in each individual Christian. St Jerome († 420) went in a similar direction, accepting a future individual Antichrist as well as present Antichrists in the persons of all founders of heresy.

St Gregory the Great († 604), in his *Moralia in Job*, had a sophisticated Antichristology. The End would clearly be nigh when the Church could no longer wield the spiritual power with which Christ had endowed it. He also accepted Antichrist as both a future historical figure—Jewish and the chief hypocrite—as well as a present phenomenon in the Church, secretly present in the hearts of unrighteous Christians, who weaken the Church's spiritual power. Gregory went beyond merely holding in balance futurist and presentist interpretations, asserting also that Antichrist had been present in the world since the Fall. Gregory was adopting the insights of Tyconius and St Augustine who saw the Church as a bipartite body; but more on them below, as their insights are crucial. Gregory left us some striking antichristological imagery in describing the unrighteous and hypocrites in the Church as the testicles of Antichrist, sowing the seed of corruption among the faithful.

With the reformer Pope Gregory VII († 1085) we find in full bloom the conflation of pluralist and individualist manifestations of Antichrist, and presentist and futurist timings of Antichrist's activity. Antichrist was now becoming a rhetorical tool to demonise one's opponents. Gregory's enemies repaid the honour in kind, identifying him as Antichrist, or at least Antichrist's limb. This was not the first identification of Antichrist with a pope; at the Synod of Rheims in 991 Arnulf accused the immoral John XV of being Antichrist. Papal

antichrists would become a regular feature of anti-papal polemic, deriving from St Paul's Man of Lawlessness who teaches falsehood from within the temple of God.

Gerhoh of Reichersberg († 1169) identified both the emperor and corrupt clergy as Antichrists, and held that the future individual Antichrist would be the consummation and completion of all the Antichrists within the Church throughout its history. St Hildegard of Bingen († 1179), also reflecting her times, approached the subject of Antichrist through the lens of Church corruption, in particular sexual corruption, and endured rather than enjoyed the raw vision of the Antichrist being born from the Church's vagina.[2] In Hildegard's understanding, Antichrist would attack virginity and teach unchastity as natural. The clergy of her day, rampantly corrupt in this sexual sense, she saw as precursors of Antichrist.

The controversial abbot Joachim of Fiore († 1202) was also affected by the ecclesiastical corruption and turmoil of his day, and looked forward to a golden era for the Church after the defeat of the eschatological Antichrist. In the struggle leading to this victory, the popes were identified with Isaiah's Suffering Servant, assailed constantly by manifestations of Antichrist in the present. Joachim's Antichrist is a collective, both plural and individual, with the final, eschatological Antichrist to be a false pope.

The advent of the Franciscans, and their conflict with the papacy, injected even more vigour into Antichristology, especially in the identification of the papacy with Antichrist. Peter Olivi († 1298) taught a double Antichrist, *mysticus* and *magnus*. The *Antichristus mysticus* was identified with the body of evildoers within the Church; the *Antichristus magnus* he identified with the emperor. This twofold Antichrist would culminate in a final *Antichristus mysticus* in the Christian realm, who would be a pope, and an *Antichristus magnus* in the non-Christian realm, which he identified with Islam.

The Avignon papacy only fuelled the papal identification with Antichrist. By the mid-fourteenth century Franciscan Antichristology had developed into a settled if ambivalent shape. Along with the expectation of a final papal *Antichristus mysticus* was an expectation of a papal *Pastor Angelicus* to follow him, to be followed by the persecutions of the final *Antichristus magnus*. This century and the next were marked by numerous and, needless to say, failed predictions of the eschatological Antichrist's arrival. These attempts can be seen as a barometer of the storms assailing the Church of the day.

The coming of the Reformation era, starting as early as Wycliffe in England and the Hussites on the Continent, marked a sea-change in Antichristology. Identification of Antichrist with individual popes would give way to identifying the False Teacher with the papal office itself. The Reformers' conception of Antichrist was more exclusively religious, with the tyrannical tyrant oppressing the Church from outside yielding to the false teacher and his hypocritical minions inside the Church. Not surprisingly, the chaos of the Reformation brought chaos to Antichristology, and the beginning of the decline of its polemical impact. The Reformers were initially united in a presentist identification of the papacy with Antichrist. As they turned on each other, however, they began to include opponents among fellow Protestants in a widening identification of Antichrist. At the height of the Reformation the concept of Antichrist had begun to lose clear content and increasingly became a generic term of polemical abuse.

Unsurprisingly, the Reformation extinguished any momentum within the Catholic Church to identify popes with Antichrist. In Counter-Reformation thought, as exemplified by the Jesuit St Robert Bellarmine, Antichrist was increasingly seen as an eschatological individual whose arrival was postponed to the distant future. As a result, Antichrist would become a remote, even unreal figure for Catholics. In the religious sphere he remained as the bogeyman of Protestant polemic. In the secular sphere, which became increasingly detached from the religious during the Enlightenment, Antichrist lived on as a term of opprobrium in polemical propaganda. Thus, the French Revolution was the work of Antichrist, and Napoleon was Antichrist, as was Napoleon III. Emptied of meaning, Antichrist would endure mainly as a vacuous label in polemical rhetoric.

ANTICHRIST AND THE CHURCH OF OUR DAY

The reduction of Antichrist to a polemical trope would be followed by the disappearance altogether of Antichrist from mainstream Catholic catechesis and discourse. It would be foolish to consider this as a species of the legitimate development of doctrine. Abandonment is not development. Antichrist as a biblical doctrine cannot be willed into oblivion by neglect. In fact, recovering Antichrist in Catholic discourse has a great deal to offer, not least a sobering yet steadying insight into the life of the Church, especially in time of scandal.

The impetus for this conviction came from reading *The Mystery of Evil: Benedict XVI and the End of Days* by the Italian political philosopher

Giorgio Agamben. This short and deceptively readable monograph begins with the abdication of Benedict XVI as pope, acknowledging its obvious similarity to the papal abdication of Celestine V in 1294. Both popes cited physical incapacity as the immediate motive for their abdication, but Agamben looks to the sources that quickly identified a more fundamental reason for Benedict's "great refusal" as lying in his "indignation 'at the barratries and simonies of the [papal] court'." [3]

For Agamben [*right*], Benedict's act was a courageous attempt to expose modernity's lost awareness of the distinction between legitimacy and legality. The rise of legal overreach in institutions is, for Agamben, the result of their failure to comprehend and embrace the source of their proper legitimacy. Legitimacy cannot be authenticated by the making of regulations, and the modern reliance on the use of regulation betrays a loss of legitimacy. In other words, the loss of legitimacy in today's institutions cannot be remedied by the "hypertrophy of law," and an increasingly excessive reliance on enacting regulations to deal with every challenge merely betrays "the loss of all substantial legitimacy." Be it in Church or state, the attempt to legitimate power by acts of law is vain. This attempt is an excessive tendency to institutionalization, and Agamben obliquely implies that such an attempt has a totalitarian odour about it.

Agamben's conclusion is that "a society's institutions remain living only if both principles [ie legitimacy and legality] (which in our tradition have received the name of natural law and positive law, spiritual power and temporal power, or in Rome, *auctoritas* and *potestas*) remain present and act in them without ever claiming to coincide."[4] It is in this light that Benedict XVI's abdication is so important, and it is better to let Agamben explain it himself:

> This man, who was at the head of the institution that claims the most ancient and pregnant title of legitimacy, has called into question the very sense of this title with his gesture. In the face of a curia that, completely oblivious to its own legitimacy stubbornly pursues the motives of economy and temporal power, Benedict XVI has chosen to use only spiritual power, in the only way that seemed possible to him, namely by renouncing the exercise of the vicarship of Christ. In this way, the Church itself has been called into question to its very root. [5]

At the risk of over-simplification, Agamben's fundamental point is familiar: that the Church's proper legitimacy is not secular but spiritual, and thus her legitimate sphere of authority and activity is spiritual, not temporal or economic. She lives and acts in the world, but she is not of this world. Of course, this is not to say that the Church can have nothing to say to the world: the Gospel is directed to the conversion of the world. However, the mission of the Church will only bear fruit in the world if she remembers that her legitimacy lies in heaven, not on earth; in the divine, not in the human; in the gospel, not pragmatic rationalization. The Church cannot address worldly problems by the exercise of worldly power in the service of worldly ends, but only by teaching and acting with the spiritual authority that comes from her divine legitimacy ordered to her supernatural end. The Church witnesses to God before the world, and has the legitimate authority to do so; and such witness implies and requires a willingness not to try to compel the world, or to play the world at its own game.

Agamben justifies his reading of Benedict XVI's motivations by reference to a paper published by the pope, as the rising theological star Joseph Ratzinger, in 1956, with the disarmingly and deceptively dull title "Reflections on Tyconius's Concept of the Church in the Liber regularum." This paper, seen from our contemporary perspective, could justifiably be called prophetic, both in the popular and in the proper Christian senses of the word. It is here that Antichrist returns to mainstream Catholic attention.

Tyconius († c.390) was an intriguing theologian of moderate Donatist tendencies who never formally parted from the Catholic Church but was excommunicated by the Donatists, a material heretic to whom St Augustine († 430) was nevertheless indebted in his great work, *The City of God*. Tyconius wrote a treatise on biblical interpretation known as the *Liber regularum*, in reality a treatise on the Church. Of the seven principles it sets forth, the second and seventh are important for our purposes here: "On the Bipartite Body of the Lord" and "On Satan and his body," the latter being Ratzinger's particular focus.

In *The City of God* Augustine developed a philosophy of history by which western thought was significantly influenced, especially on matters of good and evil, suffering, and free will. For Augustine, defending Christianity against the charge that its displacement of traditional pagan religion caused the sack of Rome in 410, saw history in

terms of a perennial conflict between the Earthly City and the City of God, between Satan and God. The citizens of the City of God are devoted to living by divine truth; the citizens of the Earthly City are focused on the cares and pleasures of the passing world. Augustine applied this insight ecclesiologically, recognizing an *ecclesia permixta*, a Church in which citizens of both cities were to be found.

Ratzinger allows more of Tyconius' ecclesiology than Augustine, a committed anti-Donatist. Tyconius finds a description of the Church in the famous phrase in the Song of Songs 1:5, *fusca sum et decora* (rendered more familiarly in the Vulgate as *nigra sum sed formosa*), "I am black and (*or* but) beautiful." Whereas Augustine is at pains to delineate the two cities whose citizens mix together, Tyconius sees the Church as one city with two sides, one marked by sin (*fusca*) and the other by grace (*decora*). In other words, the Church is one Body with two parts, the good and the wicked, and is simultaneously the Body of Christ and the Body of Antichrist until the Last Judgment. Tyconius' teaching maintains the essential unity of the Church in the face of the imperfection of its members. This coincides with the Lord's teaching on the necessary coexistence of the weeds with the wheat until the harvest.

Ratzinger concludes that "(f)rom this it follows that the Antichrist belongs to the Church, grows in it and with it…" Ratzinger's implicit acceptance of Tyconian Antichristology is not inconsistent with Augustine's in that it is pluralist and presentist, though still working towards an eschatological culmination. What is particularly important for today is that Ratzinger's retrieval of the Tyconian ecclesiology that informed Augustine's allows the modern Catholic to make sense both of what appears to be an arcane and obsolete doctrine, and the perennial scandal of a Church whose members remain so tragically sinful. As the Body of Christ, seen in its members who strive to live by grace, the Church is supernaturally beautiful. In its members who live by the standards of the world, it manifests the swarthy, earth-hued countenance of the Body of Antichrist. The two cannot be separated until the Last Judgment. Until then, the devout must bear with the dissolute within the Church, the sacred with the worldly. Until the End the only way to mitigate the presence and influence of all that is Antichrist within the Church would be by the witness of the faithful, and the repentance and conversion of the worldly.

Now we are in a position to appreciate Agamben's assessment of the significance of Raztinger's action, as Benedict XVI, in abdicating from the papacy.

Whereas in the early Church the Roman Empire was seen as the force that restrained the coming of the Pauline Man of Lawlessness/Antichrist, Tyconius saw the restraining force as the Roman *Church*. Until the great separation of the two bodies that make up the Church on earth, the Church in holding them together postpones the Last Day. This is the working of St Paul's "mystery of lawlessness," the presence now of the Lawless One/Antichrist within the Church, leading to an eschatological culmination when Antichrist is prised apart from the Body of Christ.

Agamben nods with tantalising brevity to another recent thinker to enrich his understanding of the "mystery of lawlessness" in the Church. Ivan Illich († 2002) was an Austro-Croat priest and theologian, and sharp social critic. After a spell as a parish priest in a poor area of New York's Manhattan, he was made vice-rector of the Catholic University of Puerto Rico before his dismissal in 1960 for taking controversial stances on social issues. He moved to Cuernavaca in Mexico, where he founded a missionary training centre following modern missiological principles. He became an active social philosopher and critic of modernity, leftist but not of the Marxist-Utopian type.

Illich [*right*] was a proponent of de-institutionalization. Not to be confused with anti-institutionalism, his approach was one that sought to tame institutional growth and overreach, an almost natural tendency in most institutions, and its dehumanizing effect. His principal focus was on schools and medicine. His critique encompassed the Church also, under the ancient Latin maxim, *corruptio optimi pessima*: "the corruption of the best is the worst [corruption]." For Illich, this serves as a definition of St Paul's "mystery of lawlessness" (in Latin, *mysterium iniquitatis*), which he locates in the tendency of the Church towards ever greater institutionalization as a perfect society, unwittingly offering a model for the modern totalitarian state.[6]

While Agamben does not explore Illich's thought any further, he has in fact alighted on a source of particular insight. There is an unmistakeable correlation between Illich's description of ecclesial institutionalization and what we might loosely call secularization in the Church. Or, more germane to our purpose, it aligns with the Earthly City of Augustine's thought, and the *fusca* side of the Church that Tyconius

identified as the Body of Antichrist. With institutionalization comes a power dynamic which, when adopted by the Church in the world and within the Church, "perpetuates her inability to witness to that which is specific in her mission."[7] Accommodation, pragmatism and the exercise of power are not Gospel precepts. The preaching of the Cross, teaches St Paul, is "foolishness to Greeks," an affront to worldly logic and its ordering to self-preservation. Illich maintained that in the Western Church after Constantine the only way to "step outside of the world…[was] by becoming a monk." The Greek Church allowed the freedom of choice to be a monk or to be a Gospel fool:

> The Western Church, in its earnest effort to institutionalize this freedom, has tended to transform supreme folly first into desirable duty, and then into legislated duty…this inversion of the extraordinary folly that became possible through the Gospel represents a mystery of evil… [8]

The Church of our time is more and more entangled in the bureaucratic demands of a world more intricately institutionalized than it has ever been. Her accommodation as an institution to the demands of the secular state has meant that little of her life and teaching is left unaffected, from sexual morality to the nature of the human person, sexual identity, the value of human life, educational practice, and even the composition and activity of her priesthood. An over-institutionalized Church is prey to being directed by and subsumed into the world in the form of the state. The Earthly City dominates the City of God, the *fusca* overwhelms the *decora*, the Body of Antichrist runs rampant over the Body of Christ.

These insights from days ancient and modern offer us a more insightful understanding of the trials of the Church in our day, from declining affiliation among the baptised to the scandal of sexual abuse among the clergy. The Church is ever beset by the *corruptio optimi pessima*. The mission of the Church is to shape and guide the world by the gospel; her highest-order corruption is manifest in the world's growing ability to shape and direct the Church by imposing on her the chaos of its transient ideologies. In practice their influence is experienced as a relentless assault. In frustrating the Great Commission to the Church from Christ, these forces are essentially Antichrist.

TWO CONCLUSIONS

The recovery of Antichrist in Christian thought, using the insights of Tyconius and Augustine as mediated by Ratzinger, Illich and Agamben, offer two insights (among probably more) into the Church and her situation today.

The first relates to the astounding, and to many still inexplicable, act of Benedict XVI in abdicating the Chair of St Peter. In Agamben's view, Benedict's great refusal is an act of primarily eschatological importance. Specifically, Agamben highlights the "'great *discessio*,' the great separation between the wicked and the faithful—between the Church as body of the Antichrist and the Church as body of Christ—which must happen at the end of days."[9] He sees Benedict's abdication as a prophetic act distinguishing the *decora* from the *fusca* Church. In other words, in the midst of a rampant *fusca* Church—revealed especially in sexual and financial misconduct, doctrinal confusion, the relativization of truth that undermines the Truth, liturgical turmoil, the preference of the shepherds to manage the institutional Church rather than shepherd the flock of the faithful, and the precipitous decline in Catholic life and practice—Benedict did not employ the temporal weapon of institutional and legal power, but the eschatological weapon of legitimate spiritual authority to distinguish the *decora* Church—the body of Christ—from the *fusca* Church, and thus to expose to the naked eye the Body of Antichrist that is the unhappy property of the Church until the end of time. An enemy seen is an enemy that can be fought.

Agamben notes that Paul's teaching in 2 Thessalonians about the Mystery of Lawlessness concerns not so much the end of time, but the time of the End, the post-Resurrection Church in the world as she journeys to her eternal goal. There is solace for us in the episode of the apostles' fishing boat buffeted by the waves of the stormy lake, calmed only by the word of Christ, its occupants feebly faithful, terrified though never in real danger, Peter able to walk above the waves as long as his eyes and heart were fixed on Christ. This journey to the far shore is both eschatological and temporal, experienced in time but ordered towards eternity. The End is both future and now. To quote Agamben again, referring to the only other work of Tyconius that survives, though only in part:

> And one of the theses of Tyconius's Commentary on the Apocalypse, which Benedict XVI knows very well, was precisely that the prophecies of the Apocalypse do not refer to the end of days, but to the condition of the Church in the interval between the first and second coming, which is to say in the historical time which we are still living out. [10]

So, Benedict's "great refusal" is shown as prophetically oriented to the eschatological *discessio*, the separation of the *fusca* Church from the

decora, the wicked from the righteous, the weeds from the wheat, that which is of Antichrist from that which is of Christ. It is a reminder, says Agamben, that the Church would never survive

> if it passively defers to till the end of days the solution of the conflict that tears its "bipartite body" apart…the problem of what is just and unjust cannot be eliminated from the historical life of the Church, but must inspire in every instant the awareness of its decisions in the world.[11]

In other words, for the Church to act legitimately as Christ's Body it must realise that the end of the world is always nigh. This awareness will always be a fruitfully disruptive force in her own life.

Our second conclusion derives from the first. Just as Benedict XVI refused to wield worldly power to fight evil in the Church but chose instead the eschatological authority of evangelical witness, so too the role of the individual Christian in the Church of today lies not in temporal or secular system and method, but in the use of the native spiritual authority shared among all the baptised in lives of authentic Christian witness and fidelity, no matter how poor the witness of the pastors of the Church.

Augustine can help us here. As a convinced Johannine in his Antichristology, he is more interested in the present manifestation of Antichrist than the eschatological one. He sees Antichrist already present in the Church in the persons of heretics, schismatics and apostates. Antichrist will be evident not so much in their words as in their deeds. After all, not all who cry "Lord! Lord!" will enter the Kingdom, but only those who do the will of the Father (Matt 7: 21-23). Thus, the Church embodies Antichrist throughout time, a sacrilegious but inevitable "real presence" in the temple of God. It could be any one of us. So, Augustine concludes of the individual Christian that "each person ought to question his own conscience, whether he be an antichrist."[12] This, we can conclude, is the duty of every Christian.

A LAST WORD

Historically, reflection on Antichrist has followed pairs of complementary, not contradictory, tendencies: future and present, individual and collective, an oppressor from outside the Church and a deceiver or false prophet within it. All have shone some light on the mystery of Christian witness within an imperfect Church on earth, dwelling in the midst of a world estranged from God. The doctrine of Antichrist, so fluid yet so enduring, has relevance today as we seek to understand the fallible witness of a Church infallible in her teaching, and the chaos of the modern world.

Agamben has shown that the great refusal of Benedict XVI was a courageous act of eschatological authority over temporal power. In this he models a principle for every faithful Christian, to make one's personal stand, at the proper time, for the supernatural over the temporal, for spiritual authority over earthly power, for truth over deception, for liberty over oppression, for Christ and against Antichrist. It is a refusal to be complicit in the *corruptio optimi* that is the playing-out of the mystery of lawlessness in the Church. It is a gesture of witness that can only be made by those who have searched their own hearts to discern whether they are complicit in the corruption of the Church's legitimate authority in preferring the demands of the world to the commands of the Gospel. Each of us is a player whose acts make a real difference in the Christian drama in history, however small and futile they might seem.

Illich also rejects the prevailing tendency. The Church exists in and for the world, not to accompany it in its narcissistic and self-serving meanderings, but to lead it forward along the path that is narrow and straight, to Truth, to the Kingdom. The Church must both embrace and renounce the world, and this is the perennial existential tension that marks the life of the Church. There is danger when the Church grows too large, too institutionally inert, too temporal, too self-referential, too self-serving, too self-preserving. This is when the body of Antichrist is given scope to predominate in the Church, when the *fusca* obscures the *decora*, when the wielding of power exceeds the exercise of legitimate authority, when the secular dominates the sacred, when the institution overshadows the Gospel.

When her proper focus on preparing for the End gives way to an obsession with prospering in the now, the Church has begun to exist primarily for herself and not for Christ. This is the *mysterium iniquitatis*, the *corruptio optimi pessima*. The struggle against this tendency always involves individual Christians, from pope to pauper, in their actions more than words. That is to say, the struggle for the Body of Christ against the body of Antichrist begins with, and in, you and me.

If you are not afraid of Antichrist, maybe you should be.

HUGH SOMERVILLE KNAPMAN OSB

NOTES

1. Two fascinating studies which have informed this paper are Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of Human Fascination with Evil* (San Francisco, 1994), and Philip Almond, *The Antichrist: A New Biography* (Cambridge, 2020). A fascinating fictional account of Antichrist, subtle and compelling, and combining the elements of deception and megalomania, is Charles Williams, *All Hallows' Eve* (London, 1945). Equally fascinating is the speculation on Antichrist to be found in the 1899 work of the Russian philosopher Vladimir Solovyov, *War, Progress, and the End of History: Three Conversations Including a Short Story of the Anti-Christ* (trans. Alexander Bakshy; Great Barrington, 1990).
2. The dominant tradition, however, was that the Antichrist would be born by Caesarean section.
3. Giorgio Agamben, *The Mystery of Evil: Benedict XVI and the End of Days*, trans. Adam Kotsko (Stanford, 2017), p. 2.
4. Ibid., p. 3.
5. Ibid., p. 5.
6. Ibid., p. 11.
7. Ivan Illich, *The Powerless Church and Other Selected Writings, 1955-1985* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 2018), p. 138.
8. Ivan Illich & David Cayley, T*he Rivers of the North of the Future: The Testament of Ivan Illich as told to David Cayley* (Toronto, 2005), p. 58.
9. Agamben, op.cit., p. 12.
10. Ibid., p. 14.
11. Ibid., p. 15.
12. St Augustine, *Homilies on 1 John*, 3:4. https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/170203.htm [accessed 22/2/22]

James Walsh & Two Portraits of English Martyrs by Dom Pedro Subercaseaux

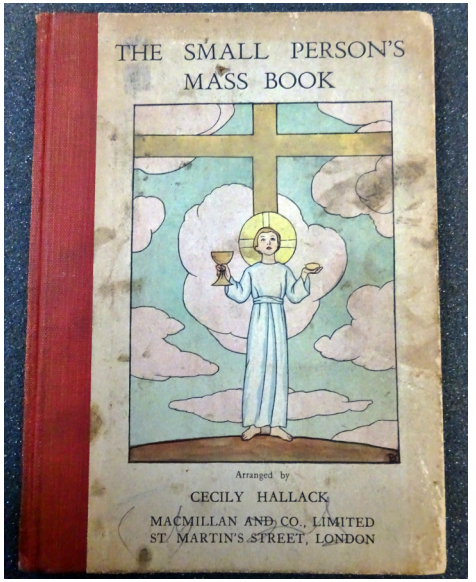
THROUGHOUT HIS LONG LIFE, James Walsh (b. 1909) was one of the most important twentieth-century benefactors to Douai. He had been in the school between 1914 and 1920, and soon began donating books to its Ward Library. From 1928 he became active in the Douai Society, holding many official positions, including the presidency in 1948. He had tried his vocation as a seminarian at the English College, Rome, and taken a doctorate, but decided against pursuing his studies for the priesthood, turned to accountancy, and married. In 1934 he contributed to a fund for the new choir stalls in the recently completed abbey church. Further gifts followed, including donations to the abbey church window appeal. He also acted as treasurer of the appeal for the new monastery. A large legacy left in his will helped to kick-start the appeal for the completion of the abbey church. For the school, he contributed new rugby posts, and it was James who introduced the school to the game of real tennis. There is a record of the "gargantuan" tea he provided in the cricket pavilion for the entire school in 1945.

In 1934 James rescued from bankruptcy the popular Catholic weekly newspaper, *The Catholic Times*. He went on to be appointed its editor in 1937, as well as managing director of the Catholic Publishing Company. During his twenty-five-year involvement with *The Catholic Times* he sent many review copies of new books to Douai; they were reviewed in *The Douai Magazine* by members of the community. In 1938 he joined the papal court as a Privy Chamberlain of the Sword and Cape; after being formally introduced to Pope Pius XII, he took his turn working in the Vatican. James was present in St Peter's for the promulgation of the dogma of Our Lady's Assumption in 1950. Earlier, in 1945, he had been invested as a Knight of St Gregory in recognition of his work for the relatives of British soldiers killed in the Second World War. Thanks principally to James, the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, a papal order of knighthood, was revived in England in 1954, with James as First Lieutenant. It soon numbered many Old Dowegians among its members. He died on 7 October, 1989, and his obituary by Fr Godric is to be found in the 1989/90 issue of *The Douai Magazine*.

This article relates to the beginning of James's association with *The Catholic Times* and the cult of the English Martyrs, 54 of whom had been beatified on 29 December 1886. By 1934 two of that number, Thomas More and John Fisher, were well on the way to canonisation—on 19 May 1935—and James sought to play his part in popularising devotion to all the martyrs. This involved distributing free calendars bearing reproductions of paintings of some of the martyrs on their way to execution. These became widely known. Less well known was the painter of the original watercolours, the Benedictine artist Pedro Subercaseaux.

Subercaseaux was the son of a Chilean diplomat in Paris, Ramón Subercaseaux Vicuña. He and his brother, Luis, were educated at St Edmund's, Douai from 1892-5. Louis became Chilean ambassador in a number of European countries, while Pedro studied art in Berlin, Rome and Paris. In the early 1900s Pedro became a cartoonist for a Chilean newspaper. He married and, while in Italy with his wife, Elvira Lyon Otaegui, he painted a popular series of watercolours illustrating the life of St Francis of Assisi. In their romantic portrayal of expressive simplicity and intense feeling, these illustrations have close similarities with the two Douai English martyr watercolours. The *Vida de San Francisco de Asis* (1910) went through a number of editions. Pedro and Elvira had no children and, by a mutual agreement, she entered a convent and he entered the French Benedictine community of Solesmes, which was at that point in exile at Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight. After Solesmes had returned to France, Pedro remained at Quarr and became a founder of the new community established there. In due course he became an illustrator of the devotional works for young Catholics by Cecily Hallack (1898-1938). These included *The Small Person's Mass Book* (1934), with watercolour illustrations signed "Pedro Subercaseaux-Errázuriz, O.S.B." His watercolour accompanying "The Credo" is illustrated opposite.

In 1938 Subercaseaux became a founding member of a new Benedictine community of Santisima Trinidad de Las Condes in Chile. He continued painting while a monk in Chile and died there in January 1956. Much of his artwork has survived, most notably the *Descrubrimiento de Chile por Diego de Almagro* in the Congress Chamber of the former National Congress building in Santiago, but also other works in Chile and a number of reredos panels for altars in the crypt at Quarr Abbey. Fr Gregory Corcoran of Quarr contributed an article, "Dom Pedro Subercaseaux (1880-1956): Artist and Monk," to *The Douai Magazine* of 2017.



The Chilean art historian Verónica Griffin Barros published a biography of Subercaseaux in 2000, *Pedro Subercaseaux: pintor de la historia*. Since then she has been alerted to the existence of his two original English martyr portraits at Douai by Nicolás Meneguello, a young Chilean who is a member of the Manquehue Apostolic Movement and has visited Douai. According to Ms Griffin Barros, while at Quarr Dom Pedro entered a competition organised by a London publishing house to commemorate in 1934 the 400th anniversary of the execution of the first Catholic martyrs in the reign of Henry VIII. This must refer to James Walsh and *The Catholic Times*. Fr Pedro won the first prize and copies of his compositions were printed and circulated nationally in the two calendars.

The two paintings at Douai illustrate the martyrdom of John Houghton, prior of the London Charterhouse, and his companions, and the martyrdom of Thomas More. They are two of a number of martyr portraits which appeared in the 1930s, prompted by growing devotion to the English martyrs. Ushaw College, for instance, has a magnificent altar panel of the martyrs of the north of England, which was executed around 1935 by Geoffrey Webb (1879-1954), and dedicated to Fr William H. Brown, then rector of the college. Webb, incidentally, was the artist behind the painted baldacchino over the old high altar at Douai Abbey. Some decades later, in 1968, during the period leading up to the canonisation of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales in 1970, Daphne Pollen (1904-86) painted this group of all forty martyrs surrounding the scaffold.

Subercaseaux's first martyr portrait at Douai depicts the martyrdom of the three Carthusians and two Bridgettine friars. It is signed and dated by the artist "1934," and so predates the canonisation of More and Fisher in the following year. There are a number of near contemporary engravings of this event, but Dom Pedro has used his imagination to enhance the drama. After torture, court hearing and sentencing, John Houghton, prior of the London Charterhouse, Augustine Webster, prior of Axholme Charterhouse in Lincolnshire, and Robert Lawrence, prior of Beauvale Charterhouse in Nottinghamshire, were taken from prison in the Tower of London, fastened to hurdles and dragged through the streets to execution at Tyburn by being hanged, drawn and quartered. They were accompanied by Richard Reynolds, a Bridgettine monk from Syon Abbey, Isleworth, and John Hale, a secular and parish priest of Isleworth. This took place on 4 May 1535. Subercaseaux shows the group of prisoners being prepared for their journey to the scaffold, with the Tower in the background, beyond the arch. There are no women

Above: The martyrdom of the Carthusians
Below: Sir Thomas More leaves the Tower

present, but a number of men: one consoling Houghton, behind him an interested and well-dressed old man, and opposite these two, a disputant on horseback, attempting a last word. The calendar with this painting attached, published by James Walsh, has a printed title "1535 The Breaking of the Storm 1935," highlighting the fourth centenary.

The second watercolour by Subercaseaux depicts Sir Thomas More leaving the Tower of London. He had returned to the Tower after his trial in Westminster Hall on 1 July 1535. Five days later he went under guard from Tower Wharf to martyrdom, being disembowelled at Tyburn. He was met at Tower Wharf and was embraced, taken by the neck and kissed by his favourite daughter, Margaret (Meg). The original painting is signed and dated 1935. The copy published by James Walsh in his calendar lacks any additional title. Margaret was accompanied by Margaret Clement, More's adopted daughter, and John More, More's son, and these are probably the two characters shown on the far right-hand side of the picture. More is surrounded by a company of the guard with halberds and bills. Behind him is the clerk of the court and the masked hangman. On a stake the pallid head of Bishop John Fisher is identified by a notice, "John Fisher Traitor." Fisher had been executed at Tower Hill on 22 June 1535. His head was stuck on a pole on London Bridge, but because it appeared so lifelike, it was thrown into the Thames a fortnight later, and replaced with Thomas More's head. On the left-hand side of the painting is a ship's mast and a view of the Thames through the archway.

The two original paintings came to Douai after James Walsh's death in 1989, being deposited here by Fr Godric, an executor of James's will. James was a great friend of Abbot Sylvester Mooney and it is quite likely that the abbot put James in touch with the artist, the connection being the artist's time as a pupil at St Edmund's College, Douai, in France.

GEOFFREY SCOTT OSB

Rome in the Time of Pandemic

Even those of us converts not attached to the Ordinariate can feel pride regarding where we have come from, and in our fellow travellers. St John Henry Newman, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and G. K. Chesterton were not only converts, but three of the finest writers England has ever produced; evidence that the English Mission has not only borne fruit but has already produced some trees. One characteristic which so many converts seem to share is enthusiasm. Even Hopkins, who of the three suffered the most for his decision, remained deeply in love with the faith he had espoused, and tried to express that love in his poetry, even when he could not do so by the witness of a joyous life: "My winter world, that scarcely breathes that bliss | Now, yields you, with some sighs, our explanation."

Equipped with such resilience, if not Hopkins' lyricism, I moved to Rome in October 2020 in order to train for the priesthood, still in the glow of my own sacramental honeymoon. I had served nine years as an Anglican minister and had simply fallen in love with the Catholic Church, her writers, saints and sacraments. And here I was, all the lonely deliberations no longer just in my head but manifesting themselves in my changed physical surroundings. For my first few months in Rome there were no tourists or outside pilgrims allowed in the city, as the lockdown dragged on. The basilicas remained open, but pilgrims were few and local, and you could easily find yourself standing alone next to apostolic bones or paintings by Caravaggio. I was, and am, imperfect enough not to have been completely thrilled by this arrangement, and I started to consider Rome my private playground, in love with every tabernacle and confession box I came across. Here follow some of the highlights from that time which remain with me.

Walking into St Peter's early on my day off from seminary, as sunlight poured in through the giant doors behind me, I made out scattered priests celebrating Mass at altars around the vast basilica. Only then did I hear people singing which, after seven months of pandemic restrictions, was like water in a desert. A group of forty or fifty Polish clergy, religious, and lay people had gathered around the tomb of St John Paul to celebrate his feast day, and they were clearly not going to be prevented from singing. To hear those Polish hymns, in that place, and to see the guards—who could spot a lowered mask from a hundred

paces—leave them alone, was to wish then and there that one was Polish too.

I am open when it comes to relics, and Catholic Rome is of course built on them. I see no reason for allowing the undoubted existence of some medieval forgeries to make one think that all relics are medieval forgeries. The Church in fact has wonderful nuances of language to allow for the possibility that this thorn, that nail, or those steps, might have been involved in Our Lord's Passion…or might not have been. The only thing that binds is faith in the Passion itself. That said, to crawl up the Santa Scala, entertaining the mere possibility that these were the actual steps of the Praetorium which Jesus walked up to meet Pilate, was somehow enough; at least it was for me. In fact, it struck me as one of the most plausible of the great relics. After all, you might conceivably have been able to palm off the emperor's mother with some inauthentic nails…but a whole building, and a prominent and Roman-built one at that? Either way, I cried.

Attending evening Mass at San Clemente with the Irish Dominicans and being ushered into the choir with only two other visitors, I realised that we were first going to launch into the Rosary in Italian, at a time when the Rosary in English was still enough of a challenge. Furthermore, I had no beads with me and was in danger of falling into a convert's I-feel-like-a-fraud funk, when one of the friars, sensing my discomfort, stood up, walked across the choir, and handed me the beads that I still use to this day.

When I walked into Santa Maria Maggiore for the first time, in the company of a Protestant exchange student, the whole place—especially the golden mosaics in the apse—was lit up like a jewel box in the late afternoon sun. I have been there several times since, and it has never looked quite as splendid as it did that day. In the crypt beneath the main altar I was dutifully kneeling for a while before realising that the wooden object I was staring at was purportedly nothing less than the manger that launched a billion Christmas cards, a relic sent by the patriarch of Jerusalem in the seventh century, and which had already been venerated in this church for two centuries when King Alfred the Great visited Rome. On our way out, both of us dazzled, and me clumsily trying to talk of Our Lady, we looked up and saw the column depicting Revelation 12: "Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman, robed in the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." It is hard to express the cumulative impact of these moments.

Stepping out of Santissima Trinità dei Monti, at the top of the Spanish Steps, one evening, I stopped to enjoy the quiet vista, knowing that lockdown was coming to an end. Rome's schizophrenia of holiness and empire was all laid out in front of me and, buoyed by the Adoration I had just left, I entertained the thought that I had been witness to an interlude in the battle for this city's soul, a battle of which Newman once spoke, and an interlude in which the saturating forces of worldliness had been momentarily checked. Compassion told me that the restauranteurs, taxi drivers and hoteliers also needed to eat, and for them at least I was glad when I heard the first brash American voice at the Metro station a few days later. People were coming back, and I was going to have to share my city. But it was alright, I thought, because Rome and I knew each other by now, and no one could take our honeymoon away from us.

TOM HINEY

Louis George Redmond-Howard (1884-1949)

Louis George Howard was born on 10 May 1884, the son of Louis and Dorothy (née Redmond) Howard. The elder Louis Howard was described by his son as "an English Australian" from New South Wales. Dorothy was the sister of the Irish nationalist and leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party John Redmond (1856-1918). The party had split in 1890 following Parnell's affair with Kitty O'Shea, and Redmond was the first leader after its reunification. John Redmond seems to have followed his sister in marrying an Australian of Irish descent, a woman called Joanna Dalton.[1] The Redmond siblings included another brother, Willie Redmond, who later became an MP and served in the British Army, and another sister, who became a nun in the Order of Marie Réparatrice (a religious order founded by Émilie d'Oultremont in 1857).[2] The younger Louis was born in Paris, as is stated in his entry in the clothing book of the common novitiate of the English Benedictine Congregation at St Michael's Priory, Belmont.[3] It is not clear why his parents were living in Paris, though there was an indirect Parisian connection in Louis' cousin George Moore (1852-1933), the controversial avant-garde novelist and poet from a wealthy Irish family, who had lived in Paris from 1873-76.

Louis' mother died when he was quite young. He would talk briefly about this, without much detail, indicating that, on her death, he became an orphan, but gave no indication about what had happened to his father. He was brought up by his uncle, John Redmond, adding the name Redmond to his own. Louis once described John as being "an Irishman without a sense of humour."[4] In his uncle's family, Louis made a close friend in Willie Redmond, John's eldest son (the Redmond family was not inventive with names, it seems).

REDMOND-HOWARD AND DOUAI

Louis was educated by the monks of St Edmund's in Douai, from 1893, aged nine, until 1899, and again from 1901 to 1902. In the school he distinguished himself as a vigorous debater, as indicated by an incident in the summer term of 1899:

> Notwithstanding his youthfulness, he had no inclination to show the white feather; the manuscript was rather frequently en évidence, but

Above & below: Louis Howard at St Edmund's, Douai

altogether, Uncles Redmond, J. and W., might hail him as the rising hope of those unbending Parnellites.[5]

Louis gave a hint to the reason for his absence from St Edmund's in 1899–1901, because he went briefly to the Jesuit school at Clongowes, in Clane, Co. Kildare.[6] Clongowes was the school to which the Redmond family often sent their sons. There John Redmond had been "taught by precept and by example the lessons of truth, of chivalry, and of manliness…[and] that the highest duty of a gentleman was in every circumstance of life to play the game."[7] Throughout Louis' school career he seems to have remained close to Fr Bede Ryan OSB. Ryan was a pupil in the school at old Douai (1876-82) and subsequently joined the community. The young Louis' time in the school coincided with Fr Bede's term as first prefect, between 1887 and 1901. In this capacity he created the Parliament (the school debating society), the Ward Library, and introduced compulsory mortarboards. In 1894 he founded *The Douai Magazine*. Later he was prior of St Edmund's in Great Malvern, when Redmond-Howard was a junior monk there. After the community transferred to Woolhampton in 1903 he served in various parishes. He retired to Douai Lodge and lived there until his death in 1944. His portrait was painted by Thomas Derrick in 1942, and was remembered as a cultivated individual who taught the importance of Christian civilization. The Douai Abbey Library contains a copy of Redmond-Howard's *The Ballad of Rahere the Jester*, with the author's dedication to Fr Bede, "who taught me the Douai Spirit."[8] Redmond-Howard's obituary in *The Douai Magazine* in 1949 mentions their continued friendship, though the former pupil had lost contact with Douai Abbey many years previously.[9]

On 3 September 1902, Louis George Redmond-Howard was clothed for St Edmund's in Douai, taking the religious name Athanasius, at the community's dependent priory in Great Malvern, and was professed there in July 1903. In the previous June the Douai community, which had been expelled from France, settled at St Mary's College in Woolhampton, and became known as Douai Abbey. There was a report on Br Athanasius from his time at Belmont by the novice master, describing him as "sufficiently pious but at the same time is still wanting in energy and attention in choir duties." In addition, Athanasius was reckoned to be rather self-opinionated, but open to correction.[10] It is interesting to note that Br Athanasius was an immediate contemporary of Br Alban Harrington in the novitiate, but when Br Alban was approved for first profession, Br Athananius was held back for further testing.[11] Br Athanasius' solemn profession took place in 1906. At the

High Mass on 8 December 1906, Br Athanasius and Br Alban were solemnly professed by Abbot Stanislaus Taylor at St Edmund's Priory in Great Malvern, where the Douai novices went to continue their formation and studies after their novitiate year at Belmont. Present at this profession ceremony were his uncle and aunt, John and Joanna Redmond.[12] However, Br Athanasius was soon released from his vows and left the community. He appears rarely in the community annals. In 1907 he is mentioned as being present with the other juniors for the community retreat, but for the remainder of that year is absent from the record.[14] The struggles that led to him leaving the community were hinted at in the visitation report of Abbot President Aidan Gasquet in 1907. Br Athanasius had requested to be released from his vows. This had been denied by the abbot, but Gasquet commented that it should not be opposed.[14] There is no hint of scandal. Rather, there seems to have been something more akin to a request that was not in keeping with his vows. While the precise reason for his departure from the religious state is unknown, since entries for the last two months of 1907 are lacking, we can be certain that he left around this time. His contemporary in the novitiate, Br Alban Harrington, was ordained to the diaconate in December 1908 without any mention of Br Athanasius, which suggests he had left the community before this date.[15]

On 2 November 1909, when he was aged 25, Redmond-Howard enrolled as a law student at Trinity College, Dublin. What is of interest is that, in the admission record, his school is listed as Clongowes, the Jesuit school near Dublin which he attended briefly, not St Edmund's in Douai. In 1916, as we shall see, he gave his address as Lincoln's Inn, but by September 1919 he was working for Cross Atlantic Newspaper Services at 184 Fleet Street. That was noted in connection with the termination of his temporary honorary commission in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve.[16] He had been an honorary lieutenant since October 1918, when the First World War was all but over.[17]

LITERARY CAREER

In terms of major publications, Redmond-Howard's literary career had two phases. In the first, he wrote several books on Irish affairs, mostly concerning Home Rule and Ireland's place in the British Empire. Then, as the national and international situations developed, with most of the island of Ireland becoming independent, he broadened his scope, trying his hand at factual subjects, from the legal aspects of car ownership to the history of hospitals, and fictional ones, from a ghost

story to detective stories. The focus here will be on a selection of his works with the common thread of Empire running through them.

Of all Redmond-Howard's published works, the most numerous are about Ireland and its relations with Britain and the Empire. His earliest book was *John Redmond, the Man and the Demand: A Biographical Study in Irish Politics* (1910, reissued 1912). At the time of writing its subject was still alive. By way of explanation, Redmond-Howard states that this biography was written without any request from his uncle but with strong encouragement from those who knew him, notably the writer and publisher Wilfrid Meynell (1852-1948), who had been a fellow student with Redmond at Clongowes, and who also had links with Douai through Fr Ignatius Rice OSB. The main themes that Redmond-Howard explores in this book are the early life of his uncle, his entry into politics after leaving Trinity College, and his being called to the bar at Gray's Inn. It was a career path with which Redmond-Howard was familiar from his own experience of Trinity and the Inns of Court. Where the nephew's career diverged was the Douai connection, but there is an allusion to it in the biography, when he refers to the monks of St Edmund's being expelled from France, and having a friend in the British Parliament in the person of John Redmond, who gave a speech defending their right to the property in Douai as being of English origin and therefore out of the French government's jurisdiction. Later in the book Redmond-Howard records that one of the most important political virtues he learned from his uncle was the love of one's country, describing it as a sacred thing which led to the breaking down of obstacles between races and peoples. He emphasised that "races do not exist for the Empire, but Empire for Races," and added that John Redmond knew and indeed loved, the British Empire and saw that the Irish were essential for the building up of the colonies, which would eventually become independent. Redmond-Howard believed that the best imperialist was a Home Ruler, and that John Redmond

embodied the most perfect ideals of British and Irish democracy.[18] Redmond recognised that the histories of Britain and Ireland were interwoven, but that the British had failed to understand the Irish situation time and again. He believed that an Irish parliament elected by the Irish people for Irish affairs should be rightly subject to an imperial parliament in London, which would set the relationship between Ireland and England right.[19]

Redmond-Howard's other publications at this period were squarely on the Irish Question. In *The Last Speech of Robert Emmet. A Recitation in Verse* (1911) he recalled the young leader of the United Irishmen, whose rebellion and attempt to establish an Irish government in 1803 quickly led to his trial and execution. In 1912 he addressed the central question of Home Rule. Going back to the causes of the problem, he asserted that the Act of Union of 1800, which united Ireland to the rest of the United Kingdom, was based on panic resulting from war and revolution, and that it was contrary to British constitutional precedent, which supported strong local government under imperial parliamentary jurisdiction. The Empire was crucial to his thinking and he argued—as did others—that Home Rule would produce good citizens of the Empire. Redmond-Howard feared that Protestant Unionists would object that "Home Rule means Rome Rule." It was not unfounded. However, he was also critical of the nationalist tradition of the "political priest." In support of his argument, he cited Bishop O'Dea of Galway, asserting that an educated Catholic laity would mitigate this tradition of clerical involvement in politics. This would enable a civic sense of Irishness, very much along the lines found among the French-speaking Catholics in British-ruled Canada.[20] The counter-argument was epitomised by Fr John Fahy (1894-1969), who advocated the medieval privilege of the exemption of the clergy from civil prosecution, which was still included in The Code Canon Law of 1917.[21]

Redmond-Howard returned to these matters in another book, *The New Birth of Ireland* (1913), in which he argues that in a Home Rule Ireland neither Protestant nor Catholic should fear secular government, or indeed honest and well-meaning criticism, and that the widest possible sense of Irish patriotism would provide equilibrium for the diverse groups that made up the Irish nation.[22] These publications ended in a different genre altogether: drama. The most remarkable thing about *An Irishman's Home: A Topical Play on the Ulster Crisis* (1914) is that it was a collaboration between the nephew of John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, and Harry Carson, son of Sir

Edward Carson (1854-1935), leader of the Irish Unionist Parliamentary Party and John Redmond's great adversary.

The outbreak of war in 1914 offered tremendous literary opportunities. In 1914-15 Redmond-Howard edited the series *The Nations of the War*, in which each of the major powers and its people is introduced in a different volume. He also provided the preface to *"How Germany Crushed France:" The Story of the Greatest Conspiracy in History* (1914), the English translation of a novel by Adolf Sommerfeld, in which Paris is taken by the invading Germans and France divided between Germany and Italy (which had not yet entered the world war). In 1915 an anonymous author brought out a similar satirical work of German self-criticism, charting the fictional invasion of Britain, with battles at Croydon and elsewhere, and the German commander Paul von Hindenburg's final entry into London. In reality, the war dragged on and the invasion did not happen. One of the aims of this novel was to show how depraved a ruler the Kaiser was, and that ultimately he would have to answer to his own people for his failings. Again, Redmond-Howard edited and provided the preface to the English translation, *Hindenburg's March into London* (1916). He is advertised as the author of the "Life of John Redmond," and his address is given as Lincoln's Inn.[23]

Meanwhile, Redmond-Howard's thoughts and opinions on Ireland were tested by Sir Roger Casement's attempt to gain German military support for Irish independence, and by the Easter Rising in 1916. On Casement he brought out "a character sketch without prejudice" in 1916, and his thoughts on the rising in *Six Days of the Irish Republic* (1916). He regarded the Declaration of Irish Independence, made at the General Post Office in Dublin, as an undignified document when judged by common sense, and nothing more than a utopian outburst. Despite the rising being utopian, he believed it to be an imperial problem in an Irish context. He argued that the claim of the British Empire to be the defender of small nations was weakened by the perception of oppression at home, as was the case with Ireland. For him the problem of Irish history lay in the fact that political rebellions in Ireland were seen either as acts of treachery or the acts of patriots, without much in between.[24] Redmond-Howard's views were countered by James Connolly (1868-1916), a trade unionist, co-founder of the Irish Labour Party in 1912, and a leader in the Easter Rising, for which he was executed. He argued that Redmond-Howard's viewpoint was flawed. Home Rule, in Connolly's view, would mean that the Irish working class would become even more dominated by the Irish capitalist class, in the name of patriotism. The transfer of the political power from London to

Dublin would accomplish nothing if class relations were not first dealt with.[25] Redmond-Howard continued to respond to the evolving situation with regard to Ireland, in *Fifty Points Against Partition* (1917) and *Ireland, the Peace Conference and the League of Nations* (1918).

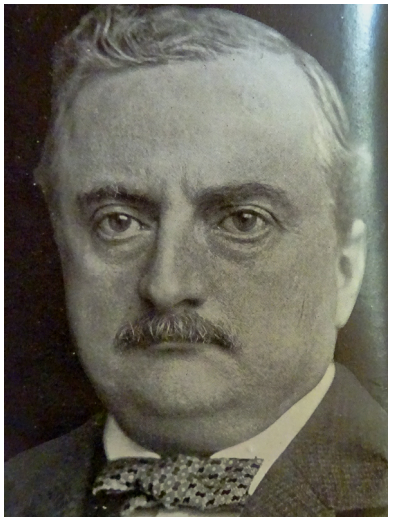
With Ireland partitioned, and most of it free from British rule, Redmond-Howard needed new subjects. At first he kept it political, with *The Case for Colonial Representation in Parliament* (1923), a work betraying his Australian heritage, and then something that reflected his legal studies, *The Law of the Car and Every Motorist's Own Lawyer* (1924). By this stage M. R. James (1862-1936) had been publishing ghost stories for two decades and a report in *The Douai Magazine* for 1924 indicates that Redmond-Howard had also tried his hand at the genre.[26] It reported that he had sold a short story called "The Black Ghost of Douai Abbey" to a Welsh newspaper, and the editor thought it important enough to give it a few paragraphs. The details were likely to have come from Fr Bede Ryan, or perhaps from one of the Douai monks serving the missions in South Wales. The article shows some appreciation of the story but also disappointment, because Redmond-Howard is critical of Prior Oswald O'Neill (prior in Douai from 1883-99). The story was based in St Edmund's school at old Douai, which Redmond-Howard knew from his schooldays. It centred on the appearance of the ghost of the lay brother Benet White. The real Br Benet White had been a novice at Ss Adrian and Denis at Broadway in Worcestershire, the successor to Lambspringe Abbey near Hanover, which had been suppressed in 1803. On the advice of Fr Adrian Hankinson OSB, Br Benet left there and joined the community at St Edmund's in Douai, in France, where he had been educated as a boy. He was professed at Douai as a lay brother in 1840. White was a popular figure at St Edmund's school, known to many generations of boys. He had a reputation for concocting rather bland and inedible food using "resuscitated viands," but redeemed himself with his cooking on high days and days out. He died in 1896 at the community's country retreat at Planques.[27] Louis was a pupil at St Edmund's at the time and seems to have fallen under the spell of this monk, so much so that he decided to write about him in story form more than 20 years later. According to the review of the story in *The Douai Magazine*, the day after Br Benet's death at Planques, his ghost appeared in the monastery to the story's main protagonist, a young man named Scotchy. He reported the appearance to the disbelieving superior, modelled on Prior Oswald O'Neill and portrayed in an unsympathetic manner. In the end, Mass was celebrated by the superior for Br Benet's soul and the apparitions ceased, giving the story a pious

twist. The author might have chosen not to mention Douai when he enrolled at Trinity College, but his experience there was sufficiently enriching to inspire his fiction.

When Redmond-Howard moved into the longer genre of the novel, it was the golden age of murder mysteries and detective fiction. His titles reflect this: *Siege of Scotland Yard* (1929), *The Dilemma of Death* (1935), *Radio Blackmail* (1936), *Murder was Never Bolder* (1946). Taking *The Dilemma of Death* as an example of his output in this period, what comes through most forcefully is how he continued to fictionalise his personal experiences. The story involves a student of law, a Catholic family, a "Benedictine friar," an Irish commercial traveller and a murder trial. More specifically, the principal plot follows the tale of a young man called Gerard Montgomery, who has been recently called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn. He was of Australian extraction and had a mysterious past in the colonies, which was the cause of concern to those around him in England. This leads to a love triangle between Montgomery, a landowner's daughter and a village doctor. Through his main protagonist Redmond-Howard conveys a sense of what it is like to be an outsider. This was a theme throughout his life. He seems to have felt himself to be a stranger in a succession of contexts. As we have seen, he moved from St Edmund's in Douai to Clongowes, returning to Douai to join the monastic community, only to leave a few months after his solemn profession. He went on to Trinity College, but left before taking his law degree. There is no doubt that *The Dilemma of Death*, like so many of his stories, was influenced by his personal history and is consciously autobiographical.

In the early 1930s Redmond-Howard collaborated with Canadian-born surgeon Alva Delbert-Evans on two books about the British Voluntary Hospital Movement, *The Romance of the British Voluntary Hospital Movement* (1930) and *The Future of the British Hospital Movement* (1932). This movement developed in the aftermath of the First World War, in an attempt to show that the health of society could be improved by better health services. The book was influenced by the Local Government Act of 1929, which abolished workhouses and placed health services under local authority control. The authors call this "the patriotism of peace." Redmond-Howard's Benedictine roots are in evidence in a chapter on the role of monasteries in the development of western medicine, emphasising Chapter 53 of the Rule of St Benedict.[28]

Redmond-Howard and Delbert-Evans also collaborated on a couple of plays, *The Making of England: A Cavalcade of Empire* (c. 1936) about Edward I, and *Sheridan of Drury Lane* (c. 1938), the former published with a preface by the actor Cedric Hardwicke. More closely related to the two hospital volumes is a poem by Redmond-Howard entitled "The Ballad of Rahere the Jester," about the founder of St Bartholomew's Hospital in London.[29] In the published version (1931) the author stresses his indebtedness to some distinguished Catholic cultural figures of the period, such as Wilfrid Meynell, the artist Frank Brangwyn (1867-1956), Old Dowegian, poet and biographer William Canton (1845-1926), as well as Fr Ignatius Rice, who by then was headmaster of Douai School. Canton also studied for the priesthood, but was never ordained and later became an Anglican.[30] The preface to "The Ballad of Rahere the Jester" was written by Henry Ainley (1879-1945), a famous actor of the day. These figures reveal the circles in which Redmond-Howard moved. As for the subject matter of the ballad, Rahere had already been addressed in nine stanzas by Rudyard Kipling and also inspired a few lines of verse by John Betjeman some decades later.[31]



John Redmond MP

Towards the end of his active literary life, Redmond-Howard wrote at greater length about the French Foreign Legion in *The Desert of the Damned* (c. 1937) and, in a much shorter work for private circulation, about the potential of contemporary technology in *A "Radio Bible." The Need of the Age* (1938). The shorter work is of interest because it argues that the British Empire, centred on the anointed monarch, was an important instrument for spreading the Christian faith and advocates an empire-wide radio station as a way to further this Christian mission, though not as a substitute for attendance at church. He explains that language of this proposed radio station should be in English, since this was the universal language of the empire, which was made up of various peoples with different languages. However, linguistic uniformity should not be matched by confessional uniformity, for the radio station should be non-denominational, making Redmond-Howard an early ecumenist. This reflected the

composition of his own circle, which included both devout and former Catholics, such as his cousin George Moore and William Canton, both of whom had renounced the faith of their fathers. There is even a link to another of Redmond-Howard's interests, for he describes the empire, embracing those of Irish heritage around the world, as one vast hospital movement for the "material redemption of mankind."[32] The model for this "Radio Bible" was all too clearly Vatican Radio, which had been founded in 1931 as a means of reaching a global audience. Neither radio nor, later, television provided a substitute for church attendance, making it all the more interesting to read Redmond-Howard's proposal during the Covid-19 pandemic, when live-streaming from churches has been positively encouraged.

CONCLUSION

Louis Redmond-Howard is relatively unknown in the grand scope of the history of the Douai community and its works. His significance lies in the fact that he was both a product of the school and a monk in the community for several years. He was brought up in a Catholic family in Paris, his father being Australian and his mother Irish. His mother seems to have died while he was young, and his father seems to have disappeared from his life. His link with St Edmund's Priory in Douai was as a pupil. He attended the school principally because it was anglophone. It was at St Edmund's that he developed friendships both within the school and the community that lasted for many years. He joined the monastic community after leaving St Edmund's school in 1902, was clothed in 1903 at the common novitiate at Belmont with the name Athanasius. He continued in his formation until solemn profession. He was noted for being rather self-opinionated by those in charge of his formation. Only a few months after his solemn profession, he left the community because of some difference that could not be resolved. It was from this point that his life took a rather chaotic turn.

However, one source of stability in his life was the friendship of Fr Bede Ryan OSB, who was a major influence on him in the school and in the monastic community. One of the other links he retained was a friendship with William Canton, another Old Dowegian, who rose to literary heights and supported Redmond-Howard in his subsequent writing career. Some of Redmond-Howard's publications have been discussed in the present article. One theme that can be traced in his non-fiction is an appreciation of the anglophone culture of the British Empire. He emphasised the cultural unity is gave to diverse peoples around the globe, as was seen in the Australia of his paternal ancestors and the Ireland of his maternal ones. His ideas regarding the empire developed out of respect for his uncle John Redmond, leader of the Home Rule movement from 1891 until his death in 1918, whose name he adopted. That connection gave the nephew a window into the world of active politics, with its passionately expressed opinions but often less than idealistic way of operating. If that was what impressed Redmond-Howard, then it may hint at the reason for the problems he encountered in the Benedictine novitiate, and the sense that he would never be able to conquer his own opinions and live in obedience to a superior.

AIDAN MESSENGER OSB

NOTES

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6. L. G. Redmond-Howard, *The New Birth of Ireland* (London, 1913), pp. 119-20.
7. C. O'Neill, *Catholics of Consequence, Transnational Education, Social Mobility and the Irish Catholic, 1850-1900* (Oxford, 2014), p. 47.
8. L. G. Redmond-Howard. *The Ballad of Rahere the Jester, etc* (London, 1931).
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17. UK Navy Lists, 1888-1970, pp. 1637, 1757.
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23. L. G. Redmond-Howard, *Hindenburg's March into London* (London, 1916), p. 19.
24. L. G. Redmond-Howard, *Six Days of the Irish Republic: A Narrative and Critical Account of the Last Phase of Irish Politics* (Dublin, 1916), pp. 5-6, 41-9.
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26. *The Douai Magazine*, July 1924, p. 124
27. Br Benet White's obituary, *The Douai Magazine*, May 1896, pp. 71-4.
28. A. Delbert-Evans and L. G. Redmond-Howard, *The Romance of the British Voluntary Hospital Movement* (London, 1930), pp.1-3, 35-6, 328.
29. See n. 7 above.

30. E. J. Thompson, rev. Nilanjana Banerji, "William Canton," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 9 (Oxford, 2004), pp. 965-6.
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Mindin' the Bees

Twelve miles from Douai Abbey, in the old section of the village churchyard of St Nicholas' Church, Stanmore, where

> Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
> The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep,[1]

there is a simple grave that is easily overlooked. Closer inspection reveals a blurry image carved in the centre of the headstone. As deformed and obscured as the accompanying text is by a century of patchy lichens, the image can, with some patience, be identified as a queen honeybee. It becomes more obvious when you know that William Woodley (1845-1923), buried here with his wife Annie, was a beekeeper.

As in the graveyard of an obscure hamlet, Mr Woodley's memory as a famous beekeeper has all but faded in the world of modern beekeeping. Only his "Notes by the Way" in the *British Bee Journal* for 30 years and his contributions to other Victorian journals preserve some vestiges of the reputation that caused him to be presented him to Queen Victoria at the height of his prominence. At the zenith of his craft he owned the largest bee farm in Britain, with 200 hives divided between sites at Stanmore and nearby World's End, and was a champion exhibitor of section honey. Though forgotten today, he represents an interesting junction in the history of British beekeeping, marking the fission of primitive skep beekeeping by cottagers, and industrial beekeeping in modern frame-hives, which was invented in the mid-nineteenth century. In many ways he epitomised the rise and fall of modern beekeeping, with special reference to our native black bee. He belonged to the last generation to keep native British bees before they were all but exterminated between 1904 and 1918 by a mysterious phenomenon known as "Isle of Wight disease." He also saw the beginnings of the many problems now endemic in

beekeeping: the increase in bee diseases and pests, the growing importation of foreign stock, and the decision to manage bee parasites with chemicals. Within his story we can trace the origins of many contemporary problems in beekeeping. History, they say, repeats itself. Certainly in beekeeping the times remain the same.

William Woodley was born in Oxford on 9 March 1856. At his mother's death, when he was seven, he was sent to live with his aunt at Stanmore, in Beedon parish, on the edge of the Berkshire Downs. It was a hamlet typical of many, populated largely by cottage labourers employed in agriculture. In the custom of the cottager economy, his aunt kept bees in traditional straw-woven skeps, which had been used for centuries since their arrival in Britain with the Anglo Saxons. During the summer swarm season young William was given the job of "mindin' the bees,"[2] or watching for signs of swarming, so that the beekeeper could catch the swarms and house them in new skeps. This system relied upon swarming, the swarmed stock used to make a honey harvest that year, and the young stock in the parent skep allowed to build up and overwinter, to produce next year's swarm and harvest. Woodley's earliest experience of catching swarms was under the instruction of a blind bee-man. He "assisted the chief bee-man of the place—who, like the great Huber, was blind—in recovering swarms from tall trees, the boy mounting trees and being 'shown' how to manage by the directions called out from below by the blind old bee-keeper."[3]

Woodley became an apprentice grocer in Chieveley, before teaching himself watchmaking and establishing himself in that business. His natural inclination towards mechanical devices can explain his interest in bees. Bee colonies are super-organisms, as complex as watches; they are precision mechanisms, all their parts synchronised and carefully balanced. Woodley would not have appreciated this in the scientific way we are now beginning to understand honeybees' precise and subtle adaptations to local environments and conditions, or terminology such as "swarm intelligence," but the obvious parallels with horology held for him an intuitive fascination.

This happened at a time of intense social and economic change. In 1830 William Cobbett thought that "better times…are approaching" for the cottage labourer.[4] In reality, industrialisation meant that the cottager life was changing, as mechanisation replaced many traditional jobs, transforming customs, agriculture and rural life. There was a steady movement of population to towns and cities, and some even resorted to emigration. The point can be made with reference to the

Dorset button industry before our attention focuses on the decline of beekeeping. A button-making cottage industry developed between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries, the wives and children of agricultural labourers making standard buttons and more elaborate hightops, Dorset knobs and Dorset cartwheels. In 1841 Humphrey Jefferies invented a button-making machine. The effect on the button industry was devastating, contributing to the emigration of 16,000 Dorset families to the USA and Australia.

The traditional ways of country cottagers who worked for landowners, paid rent for their dwellings, grew fruit and vegetables for their own use, and had space to house skeps, were changing. Skep beekeeping was declining, but not only because of the increasing instability of agricultural work. Skeps were also disappearing because of the invention of the wooden frame-hive from the 1860s onwards. As the use of frame-hives increased, so did the incidence of foul brood, a bacterial disease of honeybees that was a particularly serious problem in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Even in the infancy of frame-hives the prevalence of foul brood raised discussion about the need for bee disease legislation.

It was in this context that the *British Bee Journal* was founded in 1873, initially as a monthly publication, then fortnightly from 1883, and weekly from 1886. Contributors and correspondents either defended traditional methods or regarded skeps as old-fashioned and impediments to the progress of modern apiculture. This is from 1873:

> we have every respect for the skep, box and tree trunk...but for the purposes of bee culture we strongly deprecate their use...We, however, strongly advise that the skep should be abandoned...[5]

In 1909 Harry Clarke of Allesley, near Coventry, anticipated "that in a few short years the old-fashioned skep would be superseded by the frame-hive in our cottage gardens, to the advancement of the industry."[6] The arguments for and against skeps and frame-hives were intimately connected with cases of foul brood, as mentioned in 1919 by "W.T.D." who had inherited five skeps from his father: "I took them over five years ago, and changed over to the frame hive. I had two hives but since changing over I have had to fight with disease. Foul brood has carried them off each winter."[7]

Alongside the journal, the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) was instituted in 1874, "for the Encouragement, Improvement and Advancement of Bee Culture in the United Kingdom, particularly as a means of bettering the Condition of Cottagers and the Agricultural Labouring Classes..."[8] In 1891 the BBKA amended its syllabus to include a section on foul brood. The BBKA began to appoint "experts" to inspect skeps and hives and for diseases. One such expert was William Herrod, allocated to Lancashire for eight weeks with a salary of £3 per week for enrolling new members to the BBKA and collecting subscriptions. On 10 April, 1896 Herrod cycled 40 miles, visiting ten beekeepers, examining 29 colonies in frame hives and one skep. He served as Secretary of the BBKA from 1906 to 1930.

Beekeeping was creeping towards regulation, inspection and legislation. The cottagers' economy and their skeps now risked extinction from modernisation, the high cost of the new frame-hives, equipment which poor labourers could not afford, and regulatory standards that could lead to the compulsory destruction of diseased skeps. Although his own bee farming was on a larger scale, this concerned William Woodley, who foresaw the disappearance of the skep and sympathised with the hardships of cottage labourers on poor wages. In 1898 he expressed his concern in "Notes by the Way:":"This is the chief source of income for the cottager, who still continues on in the old style of bee-keeping."[9] In 1911 he lamented: "Fifty years ago nearly every farmer kept bees in this district. Now I know of two farmers only who keep bees...The cottager beekeepers can be counted on the fingers of one hand in two or three villages."[10]

For Woodley it was not merely a sentimental picture of the rural cottagers and their bees, as evoked by Tickner Edwardes' book *The Bee-Master of Warrilow*:

> Among the beautiful things of the countryside which are slowly passing away must be reckoned the old Bee-Gardens—fragrant, sunny nooks of blossom, where the bees are housed only in the ancient straw-skeps..."[11]

Rather, it was a way of life that had remained unchanged for centuries, a rural economy that depended upon beekeeping. As Woodley explained, "in times gone by four or five skeps in a good season would produce enough to pay the rent."[12] He was sensitive to the demise of the cottagers and their skeps, seeing them as victims of social and economic casualties of industrialisation. The shortage of agricultural work, the loss of traditional crafts and skills and the loss of land tenure had all contributed to the increasing inability of the rural labourer to maintain the craft of the beekeeper:

> During the past twenty or thirty years, the agricultural labourer has been in the habit of changing his employer yearly, if not oftener, with

the result that he has ceased to be a bee-keeper.[13]

As Woodley was pointing out, the average cottager was not only finding it hard to secure tenure of land on which to keep their skeps, but they could not even begin to afford the modern frame-hives and their equipment. It was a far cry from the founding, philanthropic aims of the BBKA. When one considers that many of these cottager families owned bees as part of their livelihood, it is clear how many skeps disappeared alongside the process of industrialisation, with the movement of populations away from the countryside and the increasing difficulty those left behind had securing land for bee gardens.

In addition to the existing foul brood, the mysterious Isle of Wight disease first appeared in 1904. It went on to inflict substantial losses on Britain's bee population. Bee disease prevention legislation was proposed, but met with opposition, including from the Board of Agriculture, which deemed it an expensive sledgehammer to crack what they originally saw as a small problem. Woodley was increasingly outspoken in his opposition to Bee Disease Prevention Bills. In 1905, for example, he argued that most cases of foul brood were in "small apiaries."[14] Later, in 1911, he referred to such legislation as a "terror" to bee-keepers, "which will meet with our most strenuous opposition" as it attempts "to condemn the straw-skep to extinction."[15] Despite the weight of opposition to legislation from bee-keeping associations, Woodley and other owners of large apiaries were blamed for the spread of Isle of Wight disease by many beekeepers, such as this contributor to the *British Bee Journal* in 1916:

> I am satisfied we should not be in the position we are today had it not been for Mr Woodley and his friends; while our true friends of the BBKA were trying to get a Bee Diseases Bill passed, a few of these gentlemen of knowledge were giving their time and money and visiting the Board of Agriculture trying to defeat the bill.[16]

The following year George E.H. Pratt of Shropshire went further, blaming Woodley and others for "a serious injury upon the beekeeping industry."[17] In the meantime, Woodley's own apiary had been all but wiped out by Isle of Wight disease in 1915 and again in 1916, after which he began re-stocking with imported Dutch bees. This clearly had an impact on his views about prevailing practices in British beekeeping, prompting him to look beyond his usual concern for the cottage skeppists. On 16 December 1915 F. Rider quotes him from the *Record* of October that year, recommending "that we return to skeps as the only means of saving the remnant of the British bee."[18] By then Woodley was

nearing the end of his career, and his bee-farms at Stanmore and World's End never returned to their former size. He never recovered his reputation and gradually wrote less for the journal after the War, describing himself as a "scourged member of the craft."[19]

It was 1919 before the Government realised there was a pollinator crisis affecting food production and began a restocking programme with Dutch, French and Italian bees. Government intervention in beekeeping had begun, together with the beginning of imported bees, which would have new and unforeseen repercussions a century later. In its editorial of 13 November 1919, the *British Bee Journal* made its position quite clear, distancing itself from Woodley:

> One thing yet is lacking, ie legislation to eliminate, as far as possible, the menace of disease being spread by the ignorance, supineness, or cupidity of a few people...the Government are evidently convinced that it is necessary to protect those who are prepared to carry out bee-keeping on orthodox, and up-to-date lines.[20]

It is beyond the scope of this article to appraise William Woodley's judgement about the need for legislation to protect bees and beekeepers. From my reading through decades of the *British Bee Journal*, including Woodley's obituary, I have come to the view that perhaps he came to see the deficiencies of modern beekeeping and foresaw many of the problems that beekeepers are still debating: disease and pests, the need for hygiene, the sensitivity of honey bees, the question of whether they are wild or domesticated, the importation of foreign queens, and biosecurity. All these issues can be traced back to the introduction of the frame-hive. Woodley himself observed, tellingly, that he had never seen foul brood in a skep. The same, however, could not be said of the Isle of Wight "plague."

Perhaps William Woodley was short-sighted in resisting legislation, despite his laudable concern for cottage labourers, but even the definition of the "rural cottager" was changing, from the poor agricultural labourer towards the industrial cottager, such as Woodley's neighbour at Compton, a Mr Dyer, who worked as a plate-layer on the railways and kept his bees in modern hives. In my view, he was not the contradiction he first appears—seemingly a modern industrial beekeeper who championed a rather sentimental view of rural

cottagers and their primitive skeps. I see him rather as a modern beekeeper and entrepreneur in the tradition of the Industrial Revolution, with a typically Victorian social conscience and philanthropic nature. His obituary describes him as "a fine type of English character," and states that "[i]n his native village...the poorer people looked to him as a friend and counsellor."[21]

Moreover, he seems to have regretted the progress in beekeeping methods from which he had once profited as Britain's foremost industrial beekeeper. Perhaps it was the horologist in him that made him willing to abandon the mechanism of a faulty craft that he thought had to start all over again. Of all his "Notes by the Way," the one that epitomises him, in my view, is from June 1906. Here we recall that he was a Victorian who found himself in a time of flux. He first describes the ancient cottager superstition of "telling the bees" when their owner had died, and then goes on to question why beekeepers never complain about the nuisance of the motor car destroying bee gardens and forage in the hedgerows and the cutting of hedges so that drivers might see each other coming. The piece has a similar inner tension to Thomas Hardy's "The Darkling Thrush," a poem that sits on the cusp of transition from the Victorian age of optimism, hope and order, to the modern age of cynicism, scepticism and chaos. Both men even referred to their native region by the ancient Anglo-Saxon name of Wessex. Just as Hardy looks back to an era of hope and order in his nineteenth-century Wessex, so too does William Woodley, lamenting that all the old customs, like telling the bees, have died out along with the bee gardens and apiaries of Beedon village.

Paradoxically, in 1906, as though hoping against hope in the future, Woodley bought himself a Benz Velo, the first mass-produced motor car, perhaps displaying a vestige of the Victorian optimism in technology and progress that had helped him embrace watchmaking and industrial beekeeping. By then, with increasing belligerence among the European powers and the Isle of Wight disease beginning, he found himself, like Hardy, standing at the close of an age and the opening of another, one in which both poet and beekeeper desperately wanted to believe. Perhaps, again like Hardy, he too was losing faith in something, not religious faith, but faith in modern apiculture.

Today beekeeping faces its own challenges, though many are the same as a century ago. As I write, the government has amended legislation, making it mandatory for all beekeepers to inform the Home Secretary of the varroa mite in their hives. My local BBKA has informed

me that foul brood is back. The symptoms of Isle of Wight disease, finally identified in 1963 by Professor Leslie Bailey et al. as chronic bee paralysis virus (CBPV), are increasing exponentially here and abroad. There is also the issue of the growing importation of foreign queens; one in fourteen UK hives is now queened by an imported bee, while queens that should live four or five years struggle to survive beyond one or two seasons. This not only carries the risk of introducing new pests and diseases, such as small hive beetle and Tropilaelaps, but is exactly how varroa arrived in the early 1990s. Foreign bee imports continue destroying the genetic diversity of local stocks, flooding the landscape with male drones, whose traits are unadapted to Britain yet are passed on to local bees, producing "outbreeding depression" (loss of genetic fitness). This is driven by the desire for high-yielding bees, such as the Italian, and non-swarming Buckfasts—the latter now bred almost entirely abroad—or docile Carniolans, from Italy, Greece, Romania and Slovenia. This demand for increased honey crops and traits that suit the beekeeper are direct consequences of the modern frame-hive and the high level of beekeeper intervention required to manage them.

The western honeybee has many subspecies—Italians (*Apis mellifera ligustica*), Carniolans (*A. mellifera carnica*), Caucasians (*A. mellifera caucasia*) and others—making up a total globally of 28 genotypes. There are even subspecies in Cyprus (*A. mellifera cypria*) Crete (*A. mellifera adami*), Malta (*A. mellifera ruttneri*) and Spain (*A. mellifera iberiensis*), to name a few, and we now know that they are not just genetically unique (genotypes) but also ecotypes, intricately adapted to their particular environments, their unique traits able to function in Italy or the Balkans or even different regions of the same country, but unable to function efficiently outside the area where they evolved. For 150 years we have been mixing these subspecies, creating hybrids that now threaten the loss of each subspecies as a pure breed. This matters because we need them to maintain biodiversity. Moreover, we have created mongrels which struggle to adapt to varroa mites, the vagaries of our weather, pollution, modern farming, and habitat destruction, including the loss of 97% of Britain's wildflower meadows since 1945.

It is interesting to wonder how he might have responded today to what many see as the pressing need for legislation to stop the importation of bees from abroad. We know that he favoured "Ye olde Englishe bee," even using that spelling in adverts, and we know that in 1907 he wrote in the *Journal* to warn against hybridising bees with foreign imports. With his terrible personal experience of Isle of Wight disease and his preference for the native black bee *A. mellifera mellifera*,

I suspect he would now support the need for legislation. A growing number of beekeepers today, myself included, support the idea of using only locally-adapted bees, selected primarily for survival and then improved for the traits, such as docility, that beekeepers desire. The idea is that through natural selection over time only the traits best-suited to local conditions will survive—the *A. mellifera mellifera* genes latent in our hybrid stocks—producing a near-native bee and an ecotype suited to Britain. Surely Woodley would have approved of this, especially as it is in the interests of the small hobbyist who has now superseded the cottager, and in the interests of the blighted honeybee. Not least, I think he would have looked forward to a time when beekeepers in Britain might work again with a bee genetically related to that old native bee he preferred, beloved by his aunt at Stanmore, by the old blind bee-man, and by centuries of beekeepers before them.

Having researched the man, I find it a poignant experience to stand at William Woodley's grave and be reminded of Gray's epitaph:

> Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
> A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
> Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
> And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.[22]

Looking again at that deteriorating, half-obscured queen bee carved on his headstone, I see it now as a potent and moving symbol, not only of William Woodley's demise and subsequent obscurity, but of everything that has happened to the European honeybee since he and others abandoned the skep in favour of the frame-hive. As Woodley recognised too late, we cannot go backwards against the spirit of progress, but perhaps we might learn from the past, so that we not only go forwards, but do so in a different direction.

When beekeeping was revolutionised in the Victorian age it produced a swarm of modern beekeepers who settled upon the short-term goal of maximising honey production, unwittingly at a cost to their bees. Yet beekeepers—especially those old cottagers—all know that just as important as the honey-making swarm is the smaller stock left behind in the parent skep. It is there we find next season's queen; it is there we find the beekeeper's future. We might do well to rediscover that foundational principle of the blind old bee-man who first directed young William Woodley's bee-keeping among the skeps and swarms of Beedon. Then perhaps we might begin to see again with Mr Woodley what "Mindin' the bees" really means, that the best of beekeepers are

servants and stewards of their ancient and beautiful craft, rather than Bee Masters.

As things stand at the moment in beekeeping, we appear to have mastered very little. And yet, though we might feel "frail, gaunt, and small,"[23] as Thomas Hardy or William Woodley felt at the end, I am not without hope. Hardy's winter thrush offered something with its "carolings" that it had so little cause to make: a reassuring sense of hope in a bleak moment. Perhaps Mr and Mrs Woodleys' faint, indistinct queen, carved in her cell, is suitably deteriorated, symbolic of her damaged species. Yet enough of her remains intact, like our bees, to offer a vision of hope for a new kind of beekeeping. Standing by that headstone, I feel perhaps as Hardy felt when he heard the darkling thrush and faced an uncertain future:

> That I could think there trembled through
> His happy good night air
> Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
> And I was unaware.

GABRIEL WILSON OSB

NOTES

1. Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard."
2. "Early Years at Stanmore," www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUlnUBaE-w
3. *British Bee Journal,* vol. 37 (1909), pp. 441-2.
4. William Cobbett, *Cottage Economy: Introduction to the Labouring Classes of this Kingdom*, 1830.
5. *British Bee Journal*, vol. 1 (1873), p. 12.
6. Ibid., vol. 31 (1903), p. 411.
7. Ibid, vol. 47 (1919), p. 61.
8. The British Beekeepers Association, bbka.org.uk/Pages/Category/bbka-history
9. *British Bee Journal*, vol. 26 (1898), p. 226.
10. Ibid, vol. 39 (1911), p. 54.

11. Tickner Edwardes, *The Bee-Master of Warrilow* (London, 1907), p. 5.
12. *British Bee Journal*, vol. 39 (1911) p 54.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid, vol. 33 (1905), p. 149.
15. Ibid, vol. 39 (1911), p. 486.
16. Ibid, vol. 44 (1916), p. 136.
17. Ibid, vol. 45 (1917), p. 58.
18. Ibid, vol. 43 (1915), pp. 651-2.
19. Ibid, vol. 45 (1917), p. 30.
20. Ibid, vol. 47 (1919), p. 501.
21. Ibid, vol. 51 (1923), pp. 425-6.
22. Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard."
23. Thomas Hardy, "The Darkling Thrush."

The 850th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of Thomas Becket

THE MARTYRDOM of St Thomas Becket in his cathedral of Canterbury in the winter of 1170 shocked all Europe and led to an enduring interest in his life and career. Biographical accounts of him, and especially of his martyrdom, were compiled soon after his death and have been used by scholars down the centuries to examine the saint from various viewpoints and to produce different opinions of him, as saint, politician, careerist, nationalist, champion of canon law, fanatic, and in the twenty-first century analysed in terms of psycho-history as "always anxious and insecure by temperament."

J. Guy, *Thomas Becket: Warrior, Priest, Rebel* (New York, 2012), p.125.

THOMAS BECKET WAS BORN IN LONDON of a wealthy Norman family, and educated at Merton Abbey, Paris, Bologna and Auxerre. He specialised in law. He became archdeacon of Canterbury in 1154, the year Henry II became king, and Henry's chancellor in 1155. His friendship with the king led to him becoming archbishop of Canterbury in 1162. At this point he adopted a severe lifestyle and became more definite in his views about relations between Church and state. Becket championed the freedom and privileges of the Church. This led to tense relations with the king, which soon became bitter. Becket fled to France and remained there for over six years. Pope Alexander III failed to solve the acrimonious division between the two men. An uncomfortable peace was eventually achieved and, in 1170, Becket returned to Canterbury. But relations soon soured again and Henry, exasperated, famously asked his courtiers who would rid him of "this turbulent priest." Four barons agreed to do so. They came across Becket in his cathedral and murdered him. Becket accepted his death as a martyr "for the name of Jesus and his Church." The news of his death shocked Europe. He was canonised very quickly, in 1173, and his relics were translated in 1220 to the shrine behind the high altar in Canterbury Cathedral, which became the most famous pilgrimage centre in the country, while the rosette of chapels around the east of the cathedral became known as "Becket's Crown."

THE PRE-REFORMATION CULT

Becket's canonisation by Pope Alexander III took place at Segni, to the south of Rome. At nearby Anagni the cathedral contains a very large crypt chapel dedicated to Becket and a number of items related to him survive there, including this thirteenth-century Limoges enamel reliquary [*facing page*].

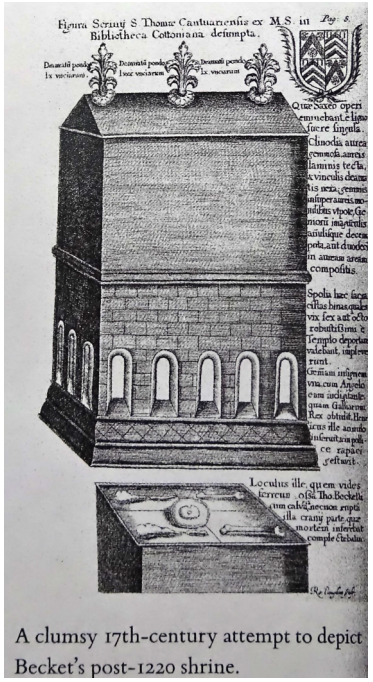
Altogether, more than 50 such reliquaries have survived form the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Many are designed as replicas of the original shrine and take the form of miniature metal chests on the sides of which the martyrdom is depicted in Limoges enamel. Together with the relics they housed, they were widely distributed throughout the Continent.

In a recent *Douai Magazine* I described the discovery of a different style of reliquary dating from around 1320, which came to Douai from Chipping Sodbury in South Gloucestershire, and which had possibly belonged to the Catholic recusant Paston family of Barningham, Norfolk, who had lived at Horton Court, not far from Chipping Sodbury. It is a rectangular panel containing fourteen relics separately wrapped in cloth, arranged around a Crucifixion scene. Three of the relics on the right-hand side of the Crucifixion belong to Becket, a surprisingly large number. One of them is identifies him as "Beatus (Blessed) Thoma," the other two "Sanctus (Saint) Thoma." Experts suggest that the reliquary may have been commissioned for the abbey church in Bury St Edmunds. It is now in Room 84 at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Becket's popularity remained in evidence throughout the fourteenth century. In 1362 a hospice for English pilgrims was opened in the heart of Rome and dedicated to the Most Holy Trinity and St Thomas. Later, between 1387 and 1400, Geoffrey Chaucer wrote the *Canterbury Tales*, in which a group of 30 pilgrims take what was by then the well-worn path from London to the saint's shrine at Canterbury. Two of the fourteenth-century archbishops—Bradwardine and Arundel—were called Thomas, as was Archbishop Bourchier in the fifteenth. By the time he died in 1486, the name had been given to the future chancellors of England, Thomas Wolsey and Thomas More, both of whom served another King Henry and the second of whom became another English martyr whose death shocked Christendom.

THE CULT'S REVIVAL AMONG ENGLISH CATHOLICS

The shrine at Canterbury was completely razed to the ground in the reign of Henry VIII, and all that is left today is a large open space. The king ordered all references to Becket to be erased from liturgical books. The story of Becket's martyrdom had a particular appeal to Catholics following the destruction of the shrine and the wider Reformation. In the figure of Becket, post-Reformation English Catholics saw someone who had a similar experience to themselves, first as an exile and then as a martyr. In 1579 the moribund English hospice in Rome was revived as a college for the training of priests for the English mission. Its chapel retained the dedication to St Thomas of Canterbury, thereby putting the college at the centre of a devotion to Becket which could not be practised in England. In 1581 the college's spiritual director, William Good SJ, and George Gilbert, a lay boarder in there, commissioned a series of frescoes depicting English martyrs. The artist chosen was Niccolò Circignani who, between 1581 and 1582, executed 34 narrative scenes, following advice from Good. The aim was to inspire seminarians who were about to be ordained priests and sent to England, where they faced persecution, imprisonment and execution. The frescoes, including that of Becket, also aimed to demonstrate the continuity of the Catholic faith in England, founded on the blood of martyrs, some of whom, like Becket and the martyrs of the Reformation, met their deaths on account of their opposition to the crown's policies. This collection included a narrative painting of Becket which showed the judgement of Henry II, the appeal to the pope, Becket's murder, and the fountain which sprang from where his decapitated head fell onto the floor of Canterbury Cathedral.



A clumsy 17th-century attempt to depict Becket's post-1220 shrine.

The original frescoes at the English College were destroyed during the Napoleonic period, but had been recorded in engravings by Giovanni Battista de' Cavalieri (c. 1525-1601) and published in his large illustrated book, *Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Trophæa* ("The Trophies of the English Church," Rome, 1584), a work designed as a response to the Protestant John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (first edition, London, 1563). It was on these engravings that the 1883 cycle of recreated frescoes was modelled [*right*]. The frontispiece of the *Trophæa* is that of the surviving reredos in the college chapel and shows Becket kneeling on the left-hand side.

English Catholics continued to show an interest in Becket, especially through the publication of books. One early, popular work was written by the exiled priest and theologian Thomas Stapleton (1535-98), whose portrait is found at Douai Abbey. His *Tres Thomæ* ("The Three Thomases") compares the lives of three saints called Thomas: Thomas the apostle, Thomas Becket and Thomas More. Becket and More, both chancellors of England, were martyred following their separate quarrel with kings. In 1612 Stapleton's text was published posthumously at Cologne. The copy at Douai Abbey came from the Earl of Sefton's library at Netherton, north of Liverpool, in the 1920s.

Another English author, Richard Lassels (1603-68), was ordained at Douai, France, and was sent briefly to England, before returning to France in 1638 to work for Cardinal Richelieu. He later worked as clergy agent in Rome, returning to France in 1658. He is well-known for his work on the Grand Tour in Italy, published posthumously in 1670. His work on Becket, *The Life or the Ecclesiastical History of S. Thomas archbishope of Canterbury*, was published in Paris in 1639 and is an abridgement taken from the *Annales Ecclesiastici* (Rome, 1588-1607) by Cardinal Cesare Baronio. Lassels' book is dedicated to Bishop Richard

Smith, whose portrait is in the guest refectory at Douai Abbey. It has a frontispiece by the French royal engraver, Grégoire Huret (1606-70)—a specialist in drawing architectural perspective—that shows Becket as a Tridentine prelate being murdered by Renaissance knights in a Baroque church. This same engraving, copied by Isabella Piccini, was used in Giovanni Battista Cola's *Vita di S. Tomaso* (Lucca, 1696), which shows how popular Becket remained on the Continent. Cola had met an English priest in Rome in 1690 and was impressed that the cult of Becket was still alive among the English after more than five centuries. The Jesuit library at Stonyhurst possesses a copy of Cola's book.

There was, however, less interest in Becket among English Catholics during the following two centuries, but in 1888 bones were unearthed by workmen in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral that sparked a revival of interest in the martyred archbishop. The usual story handed down was that in 1538, at the destruction of the shrine, Becket's bones were burnt and the ashes thrown to the wind. The discovery consisted of the bones of a tall, middle-aged man whose skull had been cleft by a sword. A national debate ensued, has been explored by John Butler in *The Quest for Becket's Bones: The Mystery of the Relics of St Thomas Becket of Canterbury* (New Haven and London, 1995), and continues to this day.

For an illustration of the cult of Becket in the twentieth century, we might in passing mention the portrait of him on the large illuminated scroll which was presented to the Douai community and school after their expulsion from France in 1903. It was presented to the abbot and community on 18 June, on their arrival at Charing Cross Station, where they were welcomed by members of the English hierarchy and Catholic aristocracy and members of the Douai Society. It depicts the saint in a mitre, pallium and pontifical Mass vestments.

An even more recent manifestation of interest in St Thomas Becket was the celebration of Vespers and Mass in his honour at Westminster Cathedral on 23 May 2016. The liturgy was celebrated in the presence of an ad hoc collection of relics brought from a number of European countries, most notably Hungary, and marked the beginning of a pilgrimage in which these relics were carried to Canterbury Cathedral.

GEOFFREY SCOTT OSB

Fr Ceolfrid Trehearne OSB, Martyr of Charity (1863-1897)

In the mid-nineteenth century, the English Benedictine community of St Edmund's at Douai produced four so-called "martyrs of charity." Their deaths were a result of working on the English mission in Liverpool, ministering to congregations who suffered and died from infectious diseases, notably typhus. By the end of January 1847 typhus fever had appeared in the city and spread rapidly. Of the ten priests who died in the epidemic, three were Douai monks: Fr James Francis Appleton (1807-47), who died at Stanbrook Abbey; Fr Austin Gilbert (1820-47); and Fr William Dale (1800-47). These three, with their confrères among the secular clergy, are depicted in a contemporary silhouette which was distributed widely in Liverpool. The monks were also commemorated in Liverpool by the erection of a new church, dedicated to St Augustine, which was opened in 1849 and known as "the martyrs' church." Its first rector, the Douai monk Fr Charles Francis Cook (1815-58), also contracted the disease and died of it, another martyr of charity. The church was closed in 1976. Another two Douai monks suffered severe health problems working in the city and died prematurely: Fr Romuald Demonchy (1810-55) and Fr Celestine Francomme (1823-62). At the end of the nineteenth century, yet another Douai monk, Fr Ceolfrid Trehearne, died prematurely working in the Douai parish of St Gregory's in Cheltenham, and has been called a latter-day martyr of charity. He is the subject of this brief article.

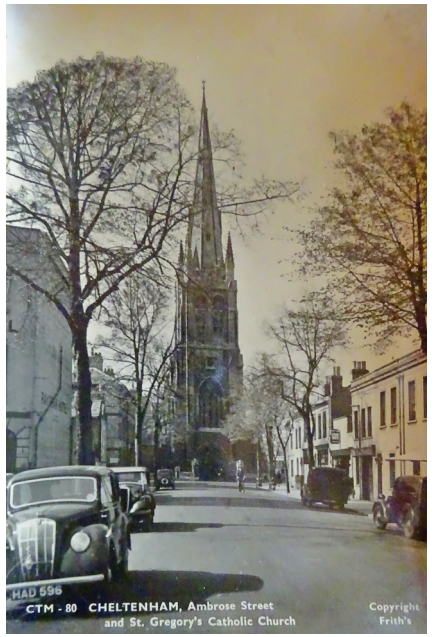
Edmund Stanislaus Trehearne was born in Isleworth in Middlesex on 27 December 1862. His father, William, was born at Ruthin in Wales and worked as a gardener. His mother, Mary Ann (née Canny), was from Ireland. At the time of the 1871 census Edmund was at home with his family, but soon went to St Michael's Priory, Belmont near Hereford, when he was only nine or ten. There he received the rudiments of a classical education and an introduction to the liturgy of the Church. He was small in stature and earned a nickname which

reflected this. In 1874, aged twelve, he moved to the school run by the monks of St Edmund's in Douai, France, and remained there until 1878, when he became one of the first—if not the first—student whom Fr Jerome Vaughan of Downside took with him to begin the new school at Fort Augustus, at the southern end of Loch Ness. He remained at Fort Augustus until early 1882, when he decided to try his vocation as a monk of Douai.

The common novitiate of the English Benedictines was at Belmont, where Trehearne was clothed in the habit on 3 September 1882, taking the name Ceolfrid, the Anglo-Saxon abbot of the twin monasteries of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, who had acted as ward to the young St Bede. Like other young novices, he read *A Manual of Devotions to Our Holy Father Saint Benedict* (London, 1861) by the Downside monk Alphonsus Morrall (1825-1911), who had been novice master at Belmont from 1861 to 1865. Ceolfrid Trehearne's copy is inscribed "Ad usum Brother Ceolfrid OSB 1883." At some point he also read Cardinal Manning's *The Divine Glory of the Sacred Heart* (London, 1873), his copy surviving and with his pencilled note on religious formation:

> Fr. Balthasar Alvares, St. Teresa's director, exhorted his novices to treat each other with as much deference & respect as if they were young princes, heirs presumptive to great Kingdoms, who had been brought together for a few days. All Catholics should be guided by this rule, for all are heirs to a great Kingdom & each should recognise the seal of royal dignity on the forehead of his brother.

He made his profession on 25 January 1884 and left Belmont in July 1886 to return to Douai. His profession chart is dated 6 February 1887. The "Grace at Meals" book (*Benedictio Mensae*) which he used at Douai, published by the English Benedictine nuns of East Bergholt in 1881, survives and is inscribed "Ad usum Br Ceolfrid 1/11/88." On 23 June 1889 he was ordained priest at Douai by Bishop Cuthbert Hedley OSB. Between 1887 and 1891 Fr Ceolfrid acted as "depositarian" or accountant at Douai. In 1893 he was sent to serve for two years as procurator (or bursar) at Belmont. For a short time he lived at Douai's dependent priory in Great Malvern, where the junior monks were taught theology. In February



1895, after the death of Fr Maurus Wilson, Fr Ceolfrid transferred to St Gregory's, Cheltenham, a Douai parish, as assistant to Fr Aloysius Wilkinson (1837-1907), who had been there since 1866 and whose record of service was duly was recognised when he became Cathedral Prior of Rochester in 1901. While in Cheltenham Fr Ceolfrid acquired a copy of the emblem book by Herman Hugo, S.J. (1588-1629), *Pia Desideria* (Holy Desires), published in Antwerp in 1636. It is inscribed "a[d] u[sum] Dom Ceolfrid Trehearne O.S.B., Cheltn. 96." During his time in Cheltenham he continued to visit Douai during his summer holidays. We know little of his personal interests except that he enjoyed entertaining as a conjurer and published a book of card tricks, a copy of which came much later into the possession of another Douai monk, Fr Robert Biddulph.

Fr Ceolfrid had been in Cheltenham only two years when he died, on 3 March 1897, from an attack of pneumonia. Even as the fever raged, he got up to take the Blessed Sacrament to a dying parishioner. That charitable act may well have determined his fate. He was aged 35 and had been a priest for only eight years. At his Requiem Mass, the Douai monk Fr Alphonsus Thomas stated that "the most remarkable thing about his life was, throughout the whole of it, he was always serving somebody else." Writing his obituary for *The Douai Magazine*, Fr Aloysius O'Leary noted that his zeal frequently made him go beyond discretion but that his premature death reflected something of the heroism of his life, for he had been notable in the amount of time he devoted to the sick and bed-ridden, and especially to the poor of Cheltenham. It was not on the same scale as the either the poverty or the epidemic diseases encountered by the monks who ministered in Liverpool, but Fr Ceolfrid nevertheless made an impact and was

declared to have "been made perfect in a short space." He was buried with Fr Maurus Wilson in Cheltenham cemetery.

The "kind and happy face" noted in the obituary can be seen in a photographic portrait taken in 1889, as well as in an oil painting now in Douai Abbey Library. The painting is in a frame decorated with roses and shamrocks, suggesting that it was commissioned by his grieving English father and Irish mother, together with the monogram of the young "martyr of charity" they had given to the Church.

RICHARD BARTON &
GEOFFREY SCOTT OSB

From Brambles to Bramleys

In the book of Genesis we read of God telling Adam that one consequence of his sin was that the earth would now be cursed, with thorns and thistles being the only plants it would naturally produce. As a new postulant asked to look after the potager (vegetable patch) and greenhouse at the monastery, I could not help thinking that the finger of the Almighty was pointing directly at Douai as He uttered those words. With limited gardening knowledge, and most of that confined to growing roses, my task looked daunting, several years of neglect having resulted in a completely overgrown kitchen garden, dilapidated cold frames and a weed-infested greenhouse. The suspicion that this task might come my way was raised on a previous visit to Douai, after which it was discussed with a green-fingered friend who, on the night before my entrance into the monastic life, kindly presented me with a book entitled *Allotment Month by Month*. Armed with what was to become my other bible, one sunny September afternoon I opened the new horticultural campaign.

The first task was to clear the potager. Situated on the former piggery, the soil was both fertile and well broken up. However, the excellent work that had been done several years earlier by Brs Gabriel and Damien, during their time in the novitiate, had disappeared under a sea of weeds, brambles and out-of-control plants, fruit bushes and self-set trees. A weed whose presence was nothing less than tormenting was the ubiquitous mare's tail, a very deep-rooted and persistent plant notoriously difficult to get rid of, which left me no alternative but to dig up the whole patch and start again. Over several afternoons, and with guidance from the expert eye of now-Fr Gabriel, the spade and shovel did their work and numerous trips to the bonfire with weeds and clippings started to show results. Many of the plants were healthy and only needed space and light to have a good chance of becoming productive, though others were beyond redemption. Edged beds and tiled paths were beginning to appear, gooseberry bushes—their thorns proving as sharp as ever—were pruned and moved to give them more space and light, and a transformation was under way. Encouraged, but rarely assisted, by passing monks and guests, after a couple of weeks I completed the job.

Now for stage two. Most gardeners make do with a small greenhouse, quickly crammed with seed trays or tomatoes; not so at Douai. With a

greenhouse the size of a small house, south facing and with running water, the opportunity for serious horticulture was at hand, the only problem being the jungle of weeds, more brambles and gardening detritus filling the whole of its floor space. So, with the help of an alongsider and the novicemaster, "operation napalm" began. Not wanting to use chemical weedkillers, our only option was to get on all-fours and work slowly from one end to the others, the gravel floor surface providing a penitential aspect to the operation. However, after a few hours, progress was encouragingly evident and, after we had spent few more days in a rather tropical environment, it was another job done. Along the north wall of the greenhouse were four large cold frames, again in a state of disrepair, full of weeds and—you've guessed it—brambles, along with rotten wood and wire covers. After the previous two tasks, this one was easy and by the end of October we were in business. Encouraged by our groundsman, Nick, I appreciated the fresh air and good exercise, and acquired sense of achievement. Everything in the garden was almost lovely.

Success does indeed have its own rewards. Fr Abbot mentioned that the library garden was also in need of some tender loving care and could that be added to the responsibilities of the now-new novice. Having a substantial pond and rockery, planted several years earlier by Fr Gabriel, this garden also suffered from serious neglect. Paths around the pond and through the garden were obliterated by yet more of those thorns and thistles (i.e. brambles) and the beautiful, tasteful arrangement of plants had been lost under a canopy of tree overgrowth and bindweed. Here the operation was more delicate: to preserve healthy but suppressed plants and encourage them to re-establish themselves by removing the rubbish choking their growth. Cutting back the tree canopy was fun; Nick often came to the rescue with his chainsaw, after which both of us had to drag huge boughs to the bonfire. Slowly paths began to re-emerge, the structure of the rockery re-appeared, and plants began to re-materialise. By then it was Christmas.

With the arrival of New Year thoughts turned to the choice of what to grow in the new-found earth and, armed with my allotment bible, I sought advice from both Fr Gabriel and Sarah, our cook, to see if we could grow a substantial amount of our own vegetables. Seed arrived, compost and trays were sourced, and I spent the colder months in the newly expansive greenhouse, slowly filling the benches with labelled seed trays and hoping for germination. In the meantime, the fruit trees in the grounds needed some serious pruning, nothing having been done for more than ten or fifteen years, according to Nick. Armed with the

stepladders and pruning saw, and after studying an especially useful online video, I assaulted the plum, greengage, quince, Bramley cooking-apple and two Windsor eating-apple trees. Using the well-respected gardening philosophy of "two choices: live or die," I began the dissection. Branches piled up and rather naked-looking trees emerged as the blue-anoraked monk flashed up and down the ladder. Yet again, helpful advice was forthcoming from nearly every monk passing by. It was a privilege to live in a community with so many experts on the art of pruning! Poor Nick filled several trailers with the off-cuts; the winter bonfires were spectacular. All that was left to do was to wait and see.

Spring arrived, along with lots of green shoots in the greenhouse. As the temperature rose, potting up was replaced by potting on and by mid-May we were all rewarded by an exciting array of potential vegetables and bedding plants. Soil well dug, manured, and weed-free, it was time to plant out broad beans, spinach, chard, carrots, runner beans, courgettes, rhubarb, sprouts, lettuce, chilli, tomatoes, cucumber, aubergines and—yes—watermelon, all of which grew furiously. At Sarah's request, herbs had been planted by the kitchen door. The refectory quad was planted with window boxes, adding a huge splash of colour, and several large, flower-filled pots adorned previously grey corners of the monastery, appreciated by the community and visitors alike. Fruit bushes flowered and were pollinated by our hard-working bees. All in the garden was more than rosy. We had certainly ploughed the fields and scattered. The next challenge was watering!

With invaluable help from the watering duo of Br Aidan and Fr Finbar, the courtyards were blooming, herbs were flourishing, and the vegetable patch was thriving; all the hard work was paying off. Learning on the job is never easy, but with book in hand and the guiding advice of Fr Gabriel, my sense of satisfaction was matched by the community's appreciation when meals were eaten outside during the holidays, in a refectory quad awash with colour. Then came harvest! Poor, patient Sarah smiled kindly as yet another wheelbarrow full of chard arrived at the kitchen back door, followed by floods of courgettes and mountains of runner beans. With additional help from some of the community, much of the vegetable harvest was used immediately or prepped for freezing, Fr Oliver even considering the provision of a freezer room for storage! Soft fruit was plentiful, both for Fr Gervase's jam-making and for some amazing puddings. Fresh figs, plums, and greengages appeared on the table for breakfast. Guests were treated to Douai rhubarb crumble and the menu on feast days regularly included dishes made exclusively from our own produce. All was safely gathered in.

As the gardening year came to an end and discussions started about which vegetables to grow the following year and what colour scheme to adopt for the flower planting, rumours of a strange flu-like disease began to filter through in the news and, suddenly, we were in lockdown. With our guesthouse closed, we knew that a significant source of income for the monastery had been curtailed and we would have to make savings where we could. Growing our own food became even more important. Building on the success of the previous year, the cycle began again and the greenhouse once again was soon filled with shoots of green and the new crops started to spring into life. Lessons learned from the previous year were put into place, crops rotated, different varieties tried, plants pruned, others moved, and the idea of opening up the monastery's borehole for watering purposes was explored. As we began our somewhat privileged lockdown, compared to so many, Fr Abbot asked us to consider taking on a project, since so many other activities had come to an abrupt halt and we all had a bit more time to offer. Two gardening projects sprung to mind: first, the enclosure garden behind the monastery certainly needed some attention, the brambles being rampant; secondly, the idea of "hot composting," by which all our garden and kitchen waste would be turned into compost. Both seemed not only opportune, but exciting.

The enclosure garden to the rear of the monastery is a large area consisting of sweeping lawns and several overgrown beds, surrounded by an area of woodland with a varied and spectacular planting of trees. During his time at the monastery Fr Alexander devoted considerable effort to planning and planting a wide selection of signature trees which have now come to maturity. A large pond was fed by rainwater runoff from the monastery buildings and abbey church, and the whole area was made private by a fence of yew, laurel and other screen-providing bushes. Gaps existed in the boundary and the first job was to close them to allow for full privacy and safety. Jobs only had to be mentioned to Nick and he was on top of them: posts and larch fencing were up in no time and a farm access gate installed. Our excellent local tree surgeons came and, following Fr Alexander's plan, walked round the estate. They took out some large self-set trees which were obstructing either the views or the growth of specimen trees. The felled wood was saved for later use in edging the plant beds and building a bug hotel at the rear of the garden.

The scourge of the brambles in this part of the garden was matched by the ubiquitous beds of stinging nettles, which were tackled by several days' worth of strimming, much to the annoyance of those monks

intent on taking an afternoon nap. This work gave immense satisfaction all round, as more depth was added to the view of the garden from the monastery, while showing off the trees to their full potential. Two new beds were planted, one with colourful azaleas and one with hellebores, both of which were planned to give some colour and focus to the garden. The pond, overgrown with brambles, was next to be tackled and several days were spent, with assistance from Br Aidan, chopping through the undergrowth, and lighting several bonfires to get rid of the brushwood, brambles, and trimmings from the overgrown dogwood. Slowly the pond began to appear in all its glory…and in all its horror. With an outflow that was seriously impeded, and the feeding pipes for the rainwater surrounded and obstructed by overgrown plants and old carpet, the only solution was to reconfigure the entry for the water and clear its outflow, not easy tasks. It took several days to unblock, strip out and rebuild the entry point for the pond, which involved contention not only with flora but also with a family of rats who had decided to make the water pipes their dwelling. With Nick's enthusiastic involvement, old broken slabs and existing cobbles were positioned to create a new waterfall, while old lintels and sleepers were used to form two small pools, from which the water descended into the main pond, the idea being to provide additional habitat for various water loving creatures. The success of this venture was obvious by the number of monks who could be seen standing by the waterfall in pouring rain waiting to see it in action.

With favourable comments on the pond and monks making use of the seating now placed around the water, it was decided that another area at the front of the monastic buildings cried out for attention. When the new library was built, the original plans included a low wall and water feature alongside the path that led to the library buildings. At the time the decision was taken not to build either the wall or the feature at that stage, but to use the space for a large bed of lavender. Unfortunately, the lavender was planted too close together and each autumn the collected leaves around the base of the plants led to many of them rotting. The impact of the plants was lost, leading to several bare patches, with weeds growing through what was left. The decision was taken to remove the lavender and replace it with gravel of a contrasting colour to the library and place large planters along the length of the building to provide a welcoming feature to this part of the grounds. Several of the lavender plants were found to be healthy and it seemed a shame to waste them, so a new bed was created in front of the abbey church, to provide a floral welcome to visitors driving in through

the gates. The lavenders were planted in the newly created bed, together with large alliums from the guest courtyard and a beautiful apricot-coloured narcissus called Replete, the idea being that these would give both interest and colour throughout the season. New eco-friendly weed-suppressing membrane was laid on the library bed, with Fr Terence and Br Aidan assisting in preventing the whole thing blowing away, before several tons of golden gravel arrived. Moving, barrowing, shovelling and raking the gravel was back-breaking work but the impact was immediate and spectacular. Once a couple of rain showers had revealed the true colour of the stone the whole area looked neater and lighter. All that was needed was to acquire several planters. The quest began, only to end rapidly when an internet search revealed the cost. Fr Oliver came to the rescue by taking for his Covid project the creation of five one-metre square planters by recycling old library shelves that had been in store for several years. Following the project on social media, friends and parishioners offered to sponsor a planter. With a trip to the local tree nursery, the job was completed, not only to the huge satisfaction of those who had been involved, but to the whole community.

Turning to compost, no garden is complete without its compost heap, and ours was no different, with three large compost enclosures built several years earlier by Fr Bernard using old pallets and planks. Their contents were not only of immense use in restoring the vegetable patch, but also in attracting rats. The wooden structures were coming to the end of their working life and three new sturdy recycled plastic compost bins were obtained and set on an existing concrete slab to provide better defence against the rodents. But what to do with the cooked food waste? Although not substantial, thanks to the resourcefulness of the kitchen staff and Monday's "left-overs" lunch, this waste had to be collected at cost by the local waste management firm. Surely there was a better way. Fr Gervase came across an article on the new phenomenon of hot composting, whereby all kitchen waste, paper, cardboard, and garden waste could be turned into nutrient-rich compost in a matter of months, simply by using an insulated bin to speed up the natural process of decomposition. After investigation, three such bins were purchased and the experiment began. Paper collection bins appeared in various places around the monastery and all our cardboard was separated with hardly any going into the waste collection bin. Each Friday afternoon the somewhat unglamorous task was undertaken of tipping out the kitchen waste, mixing it with waste paper and card, along with some wood chippings, and filling the bins.

The smell was delightful! After a few weeks the results were spectacular: decomposition was speedy and good quality compost was falling out from the bottom of the bins. To replicate this, the three existing plastic composters were surrounded by old insulation, but it proved not to have quite the same level of effectiveness. However, we were saving money on not buying soil improver, saving money on not paying for waste collection and, more importantly, making a significant contribution to the saving of the planet in playing our part in what Pope Francis had called the single most important threat to the safety and security of our global home.

As summer turned to autumn, the result of the previous year's pruning became evident in the abundance of apples, greengages, plums, and figs which graced the refectory table in various forms. Great fun was had picking and shelling peas, with several of the monks assisting. Gooseberry bushes were stripped, topped and tailed, and teams of other monks were set in production lines to prepare fruit for freezing and, with fingers brown from stoning fruit. The storage of our produce for future use once again ignited the discussion about building not bigger barns, as the Gospel records, but certainly bigger freezers. An apple peeling machine was even installed in the kitchen, which helped before it broke under the strain. Even the new peach tree gave us two fruits in its first year.

All of this would not have been possible without concerted community effort, from those who worked so hard to make it happen, as well as from those who were unable to help but willingly offered ideas, moral support, and appreciation. Nick, our amazing groundsman, was always ready and willing to help and would set to jobs with an energy and efficiency which was so encouraging. Sarah continued to smile, albeit weakly, as yet more produce arrived in the kitchen and talk turned to her next book, A Thousand and One Ways to Prepare Courgettes! There is nothing nicer

than sitting down to a meal which consists of vegetables grown on site, followed by a dessert with fruit from tress or bushes only minutes away. No food miles here! The knowledge that our recycling profile was significantly improved and that Douai was making a substantial contribution to self-sufficiency also provided a collective sense of satisfaction.

In St Mary's church there is an unusual window of Mary of Magdala meeting the Lord on Easter morning and finding him dressed as the gardener, as described by St John. He stands leaning on a spade with a sun hat on his head. Gardens feature throughout Scripture and it is right that they have always featured as a significant part of life in monasteries. To suggest that the resurrection of Douai's gardens had taken place over the last three years would be exaggeration, but the march of the brambles had certainly been overtaken by the production of Bramleys and so much more. There is a proverb which states: "If you wish to be happy for a day, marry a wife; if you wish to be happy for a week, kill a pig; if you wish to be happy for life, plant a garden." The hard work in the gardens did bring much happiness to individuals and to the community as a whole, and maybe that was the best fruit of all.

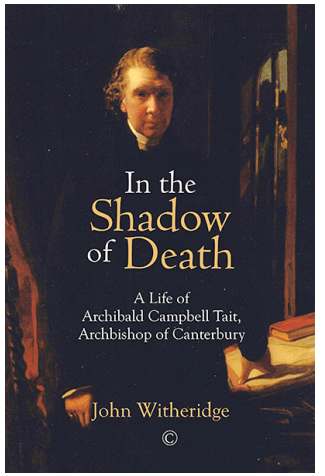
FR PAUL MADDISON

Book Reviews

John Witheridge, *In the Shadow of Death: A Life of Archibald Campbell Tait, Archbishop of Canterbury*, James Clarke & Co, 2021, pp.200, ISBN 978-0227177433 (h/b); 2022, ISBN 978-0227177440 (p/b)

JOHN WITHERIDGE'S BOOK provides an opportunity to revisit the Victorian phase of the long and continuing history of England's ancient, intersecting and problematical institutions: the public schools, the University of Oxford, the Church of England and Parliament. His research in the archives at Lambeth Palace and Balliol College, Oxford underpins a major reappraisal of his subject

This foray into the longest monarchy (bar one) in the English constitutional saga encompasses the rise to its height and early premonitions of the decline of the British Empire, as well as marriages, ambitions and preferments among ecclesiastical and political families, and the disruptive encroachment of change, imposed upon or initiated by its principal actors. All this confects a triple focus on politics, church and state, and university, against a zoom-lens foreground of domestic intimacy. In following the life of a fellow of Balliol, headmaster of Rugby School and archbishop of Canterbury, we are drawn into the interstices of Victorian political, ecclesiastical and social life.



Archibald Campbell Tait (1811-1882) was an outsider, a Scot who made it to the top of three Establishment institutions. He was born with a club foot, reconstructed by brutal and painful correction, and suffered early in life the death of his mother and brother, yet through the agency and encouragement of a devoted father, progressed successfully through the Edinburgh Academy and Glasgow University to win a scholarship to Balliol College. While he never forsook the discipline and rectitude of the Scottish Presbyterianism of his early childhood, he absorbed the influence of Scottish Episcopalian relatives,

orienting him to take up the liberal Anglicanism nourished by the arrival at Balliol of a clutch of the celebrated Thomas Arnold's pupils from Rugby School. This was the early 1830s, when Oxford was plunged into a concoction of intellectual exhilaration and turmoil by emerging religious factions, High Church and Low, and by strong personalities agitating for college and university reform.

Oriel College was at the centre of it all, with brilliant and opinionated young dons, the most famous of whom was John Henry Newman, pressing to make Oxford less a place of upper-class frolic and more one of devout and serious study. When Tait was elected to a Balliol fellowship, he joined the quest for academic reform and helped lay the foundations that would over time make Balliol the academic powerhouse of Oxford. These reforms were coincidental with the religious agitations fuelled by John Keble's Assize Sermon, preached in the university church in 1833, and the progress of the Oxford Movement that reached its climax in 1841 with the publication of Newman's Tract XC, pitted against the Arnoldian liberal Anglicanism to which Tait always adhered.

When the great Dr Arnold died unexpectedly in 1842, leaving the headship of Rugby vacant, it was Tait's precocious application, supported by 42 referees, many of them Arnold's former pupils, that was successful. He was 31 and in need of a wife. He married Catherine Spooner, who proved an admirable partner and bore him many children. Although Tait lacked the charisma and teaching genius of Arnold, he nevertheless sustained Rugby's development as the example of a modern public school, winning respect among all as a sound teacher and able administrator of equable temperament. While no one was likely to match Arnold's glamour, Witheridge rescues Tait from a lingering slur that his seven years at Rugby were totally in Arnold's shadow.

In the nineteenth century young headmasters could be rescued from the exhausting demands of running under-staffed and under-funded schools by seeking ecclesiastical preferment. Tait was openly ambitious in this regard. He was also uxorious, so when the deanery of Carlisle was offered him in 1849, with its promise of a capacious house for his expanding family and further scope for career progression, he accepted. Carlisle would also take him nearer home to Scotland. Both the cathedral and the city of Carlisle were in a dilapidated state, and here Tait was able to show his capacity to address social ills, identify with the hardships of the poor and offer them the Gospel tonic of hope. He was

also intelligent about the architectural challenge of rehabilitating the cathedral. But in 1856 disaster struck his large and happy family, when five of his children in quick succession succumbed to scarlet fever. Tait's own always-fragile health took a hard blow and, understandably, so did his commitment to Carlisle. The five little girls were buried together in a single grave in the village of Stanwix, just outside Carlisle, within sight of the cathedral. The grave is marked by a plain stone cross, on it inscribed (recorded on p. 74 of *In the Shadow of Death*), the words:

> Here lie the mortal bodies of
> Five little sisters,
> The much loved children of A.C. Tate,
> Dean of Carlisle
> And Catherine his wife,
> Who were all cut off within five weeks.

Witheridge gives Tait the sobriquet "Queen Victoria's favourite Archbishop of Canterbury." From now on, moved by the heart-rending sadness of the loss of his children, the queen steps in as Tait's guardian angel. She insists on his appointment as bishop of London in 1856 and later, in 1868, resisting Disraeli's intentions, as archbishop of Canterbury. In one more instalment of "the shadow of death," in 1878, Tait was to suffer the loss of his adult son Crauford, and then, soon after, Catherine, broken-hearted by the death of the boy who had somehow compensated for the earlier tragedy of 1856.

Witheridge recounts succinctly the myriad issues, ecclesiastical, social and political, that beset Tait from 1856 on, from delinquent clergy to controversies about liturgy, theology, and the relationship between Parliament and the national church. The drawn-out machinations that led to the Public Worship Act of 1874 and the fall-out caused by the publication of the liberalist approach to biblical interpretation espoused in *Essays and Reviews* gave Tait plenty of headaches and more than ample scope for his diplomatic and administrative skills. Projects he put in place to address social deprivation in the parishes while he was bishop of London show him as effective and innovative. While Witheridge is not uncritical of Tait's tendency in some matters to make up his mind without due regard to the obstacles towards its achievement, the overwhelming impression he projects is of a devout, calm, fair-minded, competent leader prepared to moderate his views in the light of mature experience. Tait is an ecclesiastical civil servant of the kind that can more or less make a state church work. The book is a study of principled leadership ready to compromise and weather the brickbats that visit the eirenic.

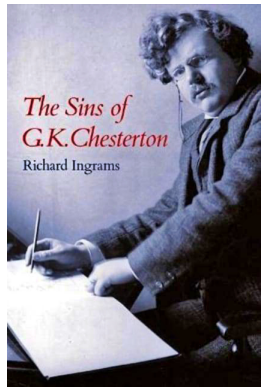
John Witheridge has already established his authority in this field in his study of Arthur Stanley, dean of Westminster and Tait's contemporary. He has a natural sympathy with his subject, having been himself a chaplain to the archbishop of Canterbury and headmaster of Charterhouse. He knows the territory. Eminent ecclesiastical historians such as Owen Chadwick have provided him with much of the material that is the necessary background to any assessment of a Victorian archbishop. What is both particularly valuable and engaging about this book is its setting of the family story of Tait as child and parent within his wider duties as dean and bishop. There are moments when Witheridge's picturing comes close to that of the master recorder of Victorian sadness, David Newsome, who tells with unforgettable pathos the story in *Godliness and Good Learning* of the death at school of Martin Benson, son of Tait's successor as archbishop. Infant, adolescent and young adult: the shadow of death was a frequently encountered experience among the Victorians, including Newman, Gladstone and the queen herself. And the Establishment institutions—the public schools, the University of Oxford, the Church of England and Parliament—continue as problematical now as they were then!

DR RALPH TOWNSEND

Retired Headmaster of Winchester College
& Advisor to the Douai Abbey Trust

Richard Ingrams, *The Sins of G.K. Chesterton*, Harbour Books, 2021, ISBN 9781905128334, pp.292, £20 (h/b)

AUTHOR RICHARD INGRAMS is well known at Douai, as a parent of a pupil in our former school, and as a regular worshipper and reader at the Douai Sunday Mass. In the introduction to his book, he notes that he is "immensely indebted to Abbot Geoffrey Scott of Douai Abbey who gave me the run of his magnificent library" (pp.10-11). Ingrams quotes extensively from the papers in the Douai archive of Fr Ignatius Rice OSB, Douai headmaster for almost half a century (1915-52), a friend of G.K. Chesterton who witnessed the latter's reception into the Catholic Church in 1922. Ingrams also consulted correspondence in the Douai archives of old Dowegian Edward Macdonald to Abbot Sylvester Mooney, some of which criticises G.K.C.



In this lucid and well-written book, Ingrams challenges the popular view of G.K.C as a saintly and serene character, recently considered as a candidate for canonisation, and instead presents a darker, more disturbing portrait, one which he writes was "deliberately concealed by Catholic commentators determined to preserve the image of Chesterton's essential innocence as a lovable Toby Jug figure." But, as Ingrams observes elsewhere, "it is a Toby Jug with cracks. And no halo." ("The crack in the Toby Jug", *Catholic Herald*, August 2021). Ingrams also takes issue with Chesterton's admirers, for creating the impression that "his Catholicism [was] the most significant thing about him" (p.3).

Ingrams' title for his book is immediately arresting. The principal "sin" with which Ingrams charges Chesterton is anti-Semitism, which he shared with his friend and fellow author Hilaire Belloc and with his younger brother, Cecil, and which proved to be a significant obstacle in considering G.K.C. as a candidate for canonisation. A campaign to promote this was led principally by Chesterton fans in North America, but following an investigation, the bid was rejected by the bishop of Northampton in 2019.

Much of Ingrams' book is taken up with the Marconi scandal, in which allegations were made in 1912 that prominent members of the then Liberal Government had profited from the knowledge that the government was about to issue a lucrative contract to the British Marconi company for the Imperial Wireless chain and had bought shares in an American subsidiary. One of the ministers implicated was Sir Rufus Isaacs, the attorney general, whose brother, Godfrey Isaacs, was managing director of Marconi. In the view of Ingrams, the subsequent scandal "was to dominate the political thinking of the Chestertons for the rest of their lives" (p.113).

The two Chestertons and Belloc were involved with a journal called *The Eye-Witness*, one of the objects of which was to inform the British public about political corruption. According to their exposé, the Marconi scandal represented not just a piece of shoddy insider trading but a Jewish conspiracy to corrupt national institutions. In the view of

Cecil Chesterton and Belloc, Jews such as Isaacs should not participate in government because, in the words of Ingrams, "their loyalty was to their own people, not to Britain." In a July 1922 article, Cecil Chesterton condemned Rufus Isaacs as "an alien, a nomad, an Asiatic, the heir of a religious and racial tradition wholly alien from ours. He is amongst us; he is not of us" (p.118).

Eventually, Godfrey Isaacs, brother of Rufus and managing director of the Marconi Company, brought a successful criminal libel action against Cecil, who was fined £100. Although not directly involved in the scandal, Ingrams notes that it obsessed Gilbert Chesterton "ever afterwards," and for the rest of his life he attempted to rescue his younger brother's reputation. 24 years later, in his autobiography, he predicted that in years to come the Marconi scandal would be seen as "one of the major turning points in British history." Ingrams makes the sad observation that whilst Cecil and Belloc congratulated themselves for standing up for what they saw to be right, "there is no evidence that either of them gave a thought to the one person who had paid the price for Marconi—G.K. Chesterton" (p.142).

The remaining chapters of the book make for sad reading, as they chronicle Chesterton's health problems, the death of his brother Cecil in a military hospital in France in 1918, the breakdown of the relationship between Gilbert and Cecil's widow, and the financial difficulties of the newspapers with which they were associated. In the last year of his life, Chesterton unwisely supported the action of Mussolini in invading Abyssinia and was roundly attacked for doing so, which, as Ingrams observes, must have caused him "acute distress" (p.218).

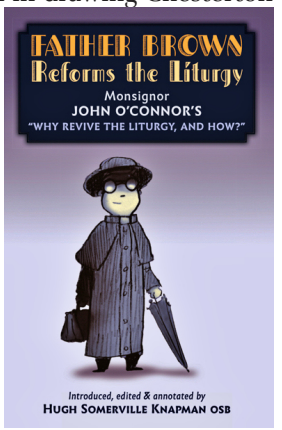
Ingrams highlights an important Chestertonian paradox: "with the exception of the Father Brown stories, Chesterton's books have never achieved the status of classics, yet he has remained one of the most frequently quoted of authors…" (p.242). Despite this, "a very heroic tragedy" is Ingrams' ultimate verdict on the life of his subject, yet he is keen to conclude that, "whatever his failings, they cannot detract from Chesterton's undoubted genius" (p.244). Perhaps, in his concluding paragraphs, Ingrams might have balanced his subject's sins by outlining his virtues in more detail. However, *The Sins of G.K.Chesterton* is a book that needed to be written, and Richard Ingrams is to be congratulated for doing so. His work will not be well received by Chesterton devotees, especially in North America, but as a portrait of the author and his times, it is among the best to have so far appeared.

An English Benedictine reviewer is bound to point out one small error in the text: Ingrams relates that Dom Aelred Watkin became "Abbot of Downside," when in fact he became a titular, rather than a ruling, abbot.

ALBAN HOOD OSB

Hugh Somerville Knapman OSB (ed.), *Father Brown Reforms the Liturgy: Monsignor John O'Connor's "Why Revive the Liturgy, and How?,"* Weldon Press, 2021, 96 pp., ISBN 978-1-989905-39-5 (h/b), 978-1-989905-38-8 (p/b)

As the title reveals, the authorship of the otherwise anonymous pamphlet "Why Revive the Liturgy, and How?" has been firmly established. Hugh Somerville Knapman has forensically presented more than ample evidence to trace the text to the pen of Fr (later Mgr) John O'Connor, parish priest, builder of two churches, and friend and inspiration to G. K. Chesterton, whom he received into the Catholic Church. He was his inspiration both in drawing Chesterton into the Catholic Church, and as the prototype for Father Brown; both "type" and "prototype" were great characters, with pronounced eccentricities.



Knapman has done splendid work editing and introducing the pamphlet and shows great ingenuity in dating the pamphlet as "almost certainly born in 1939," though it was possibly under consideration as early as 1928 (p.xxiv). Anonymity was certainly wise, since much of the content was controversial, whether concerning liturgical reform or other matters. O'Connor himself disliked the term "liturgical reform" (perhaps because it smacked of Reformation and Protestantism), preferring "revival." His distinct antipathy to all things Protestant is evident in "casual jibes" against them, and there was another at the expense of Jews (p.37, esp. n.64). The editor excuses the jibes as "lazy and unfiltered expression" for "private circulation" (n.64). There may be something in that, given the

manner in which he wrote on 9 August 1939 to Abbess Laurentia of Stanbrook Abbey:

> And how lacking is the tract in classical restraint and in logical order! It might then be as boring as most of our careful writers, and no one would get through it. If you want to scandalize any Pious Person by lending him this, you may have another copy, or even several. I put you in the Mass for tomorrow hoping that blood pressure will remit… (pp.xiv-xv)

He was clearly not writing to convince, but to outrage. However, that is not to say that the pamphlet can simply be dismissed as a peevish jeremiad, though there is a good deal of that too. What is most valuable is to see what O'Connor's thinking—taking on many ideas of the Continental Liturgical Movement—meant in practical parochial terms in the English context, particularly by setting those ideas side by side with the two churches he built, that of the Holy Spirit, Heckmondwike, in 1914-15, and Our Lady and the First Martyrs, Bradford, which was completed in 1935. Knapman explores the pamphlet in terms of it being a manifesto, realised architecturally in the latter building, most particularly in the central location of the altar.

Even as early as the church of the Holy Spirit, where the altar is very open and accessible, the relationship of the people to the altar was already clearly important to O'Connor. The style of the building was a rather staid, brick neo-Byzantine. On the other hand, First Martyrs, though remaining neo-Byzantine in detail, is a radical restatement, with the ribs of the octagon radiating out to create a perfectly centralised church with the octagonal sanctuary lit by an octagonal lantern.

There are many examples of visually and physically accessible sanctuaries contemporary with the Our Lady and the First Martyrs, such as St Alphege, Bath (1925) by Giles Gilbert Scott, Ninian Comper's St Philip, Cosham (1935-9), where the altar was in the midst of the congregation, and N. F. Cachemaille-Day's St Michael and All Angels, Wythenshawe (completed 1937). At this last, the plan was star-shaped and reputedly was first intended to have a central altar, but none of these churches was such a clear statement as First Martyrs. Of course, on the Continent the example of Otto Bartning's Round Church at Essen, built as early as 1929-30, springs to mind, but even there the altar is not as fully surrounded by the congregation. Like its priest, First Martyrs was uncompromising. The architect was the young Jack Langtry-Langton, who was evidently of one mind with O'Connor.

The combination of church and pamphlet, perhaps while the latter was still in draft form, had an immediate impact. Eric Gill appears to have been lent what may still have been a draft of O'Connor's pamphlet in 1938 (pp.xxiii-xxiv). Gill's Church of St Peter the Apostle at Gorleston-on-Sea was completed in 1938-9 and the position of the altar was at the crossing of a cruciform plan, allowing seating on all four sides. He produced his own manifesto as well, "Mass for the Masses," which owes much to O'Connor.[1]

Still, the purity of the conception at First Martyrs was also seen as a weakness. In 1960 Peter Hammond published *Liturgy and Architecture*, a landmark text where he wrote of this church:

> The unsatisfactory character of almost every church of this type is due to the fact that it stresses one aspect of the body of Christ—its organic, priestly nature—at the expense of the other. It fails to manifest the hierarchical gradation of functions within the worshipping community. This is likely to be the fatal weakness of any layout based on a central altar, though the advantages of such a plan as a means of emphasising the fact that all are participants in the eucharistic action are evident.[2]

The clarity of the layout of First Martyrs made it famous and Robert Proctor recently observed that "later, a Bishop of Leeds who knew the Bradford Church well was John C. Heenan—patron of another important centralised design as Archbishop of Liverpool."[3]

The liturgical thinking behind the pamphlet "Why Revive the Liturgy, and How?" may have had a lack of logical order and classical restraint, as O'Connor himself admitted, but it emanated from a deep love of the liturgy and its pastoral context, which was expressed perfectly in a consequent and logical form in his Church of Our Lady and the First Martyrs in Bradford.

REV ALAN DOIG

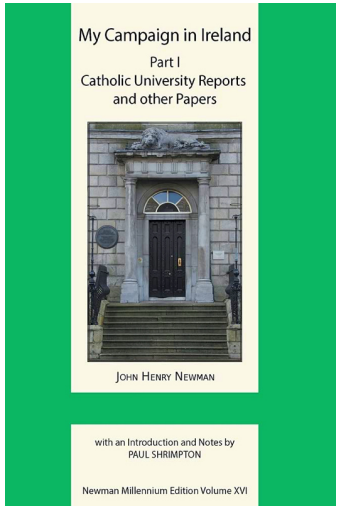
Author of A History of the Church Though its Buildings (*OUP, 2020*)

1. E. Gill, "Mass for the Masses," *Sacred and Secular* (London, 1940); nicely discussed by Knapman, pp. xxxi-xxxvi.
2. P. Hammond, *Liturgy and Architecture* (London, 1960), p. 41, where he notes (n. 9) that "the directives of the German Liturgical Commission explicitly condemn the circular plan with the altar in the centre of the building."

3. R. Proctor, in *100 Churches 100 Years*, edited by S. Charlton, E. Harwood and C. Price (London, 2019), p. 45.

Paul Shrimpton (ed.), *My Campaign in Ireland Part I: Catholic University Reports and other Papers, John Henry Newman*, Gracewing, 2021, pp.614 , ISBN 978-0-85244-409-2 (h/b)

St John Henry Newman's biographers, Wilfrid Ward (1912), Ian Ker (1988) and Sheridan Gilley (1990), cover the story of the great man's attempts to establish a Catholic university in Ireland in the space of a chapter or two. Paul Shrimpton himself, the editor of this substantial volume of Newman's reports and papers relating to this (for Newman) disappointing and frustrating episode, tells the tale at length in his *The "Making of Men:" The Idea and Reality of Newman's University in Oxford and Dublin* (2014). The contents of *My Campaign in Ireland Part I*, originally published privately in 1896 by William Neville, Newman's private secretary, and produced now as the sixteenth volume of the Newman Millennium Edition, give all the detailed back story (or at least much of it) to the summaries of the biographers.



We knew from Ward that by 1850 "the new secularist education was then suspected in the eyes of the Irish Bishops by reason of its results in England" and that Newman "did not share [the archbishop of Armagh] Dr Cullen's dread of the whole modern and liberal movement." Gilley points out that Newman's difficulties lay fundamentally "in the divisions among the Irish bishops: Cullen wanted a safely Catholic and denominational university; his archenemy in the hierarchy, John MacHale, Archbishop of Tuam...wanted a solely Irish university; and there were still bishops who looked wistfully to the non-denominational ideal of the state-funded Queen's College." As Ker says, "somehow Newman had to satisfy all three parties." Inevitably he failed to do so.

The documents included in this volume demonstrate above all else that Newman had throughout his adult life thought seriously about education, what it is and what it should be, and that he had a clear practical plan for the implementation of his doctrine of education for the Irish university. We can trace his reflections on knowledge through the *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, preached through the 1830s: theological knowledge is not without its dangers and practical knowledge has its own fruitful and useful ends, yielding revenue. In *Discussions and Arguments* (1911), a collection of Newman's expositions from the 1830s through to the 1870s, there is a continuing theme that secular knowledge is no sure vehicle of moral improvement. In *The Idea of a University* (1852) he asserts that a "smattering of knowledge" may be "a graceful accomplishment, but not education," "brilliancy without knowledge makes ephemeral books," and that acquisition of knowledge is not the same as largeness of mind. There were new kinds of knowledge that did enlarge the mind, and there was knowledge "void of philosophy:" "knowledge becomes science, or philosophy, when it is informed and impregnated by reason." Ignorance is the root of all littleness. These themes are treated in Discourse V from *The Scope and Nature of University Education* (1852), included in this volume, which is of particular value because Newman did not include it with the other discourses that make up the Idea of a University.

In the *University Sermons*, preached through the 1830s and 1840s, and more spaciously in *The Idea*, Newman points out that "liberal education makes not the Christian, not the Catholic, but the gentleman," and that it is not the end of liberal education to make men virtuous. A key distinction in his doctrine of education is that between useful knowledge and liberal knowledge: the former gives truth a practical power, the latter the apprehension of truth as beautiful. A university must teach particular knowledge, though transfer of particular knowledge is not its ultimate purpose.

Newman was a nineteenth-century liberal, but he was not a liberalist: he was emphatically anti-liberalist. Liberalism in religion, he explained in *Essays Critical and Historical*, means that scripture has no authorised interpreter and that dogmatic statements have no part of revelation. In *Loss and Gain* (1848) he exposes the difference between the idea of Christianity as a set of principles and Christianity as a set of doctrines. In *Sermons on Various Occasions* (1857) he rejects the notion that different religions are simply our different modes of expressing everlasting truths. In the *Apologia* (1865) it is the liberalists who are halfway to atheism, who had failed to recognise the necessary limits of

the liberal university reform he had supported, and who eventually drove him away from Oxford; their liberalism "was a theological school, dry and repulsive, not very dangerous in itself, though dangerous as opening the door to evils which it did not itself comprehend." In *Discussions and Arguments* he defines latitudinarianism as allowing that "where there is sincerity, it is no matter what we profess." In *The Idea* liberalism is "a rebellious stirring against miracle and mystery, against the severe and the terrible."

When it came to the practical task of creating a Catholic university in Ireland it was with clear principles of what a liberal university in the modern Catholic tradition should look like and feel like that Newman approached his work. The syllabus for a course in Catholic religious knowledge consists in what is desirable in an educated Catholic, which will keep knowledge of the natural and the supernatural distinct: to Catholics, revelation remains a matter of knowledge. If *The Idea* gives the impression that Newman's abilities were purely intellectual, merely abstract, the contents of *My Campaign in Ireland* make the necessary and essential adjustment. It should be remembered that during the seven years of his engagement in the university project he was constantly crossing the Irish Sea, forming the Birmingham Oratory in England and then battling with the myriad obstructions put up by Archbishop Cullen and his associates in Dublin. Newman had an astonishing capacity for hard work and impressive administrative abilities. Proof of this is abundant from pages 202 to 260 of this volume, where can be found his educational principles and objectives, a constitution for the university, a guide for faculty and student discipline, the structure of the academic year, rules for examinations, the syllabus itself and rules for professorial expenses.

Paul Shrimpton has prefaced what is really a reference book with an admirably clear and succinct overview of how this collection of documents lies behind a rather sad tale of mission unaccomplished and how it elucidates Newman as a Catholic educationalist. These documents also give insight into Newman's personality. We know that Newman was a complex character, a man for all seasons. The book's contents also confirm him as no pushover, ready to speak truth to power (as Dr Cullen discovered), but at the same time remarkably patient and long-suffering. They confirm him as a man of scrupulous conscience, an intellectual liberal yet a traditionalist, faithful to the Church yet ready to challenge its hierarchy and its clericalism. And they confirm his vision for a Catholic university education consistent with his ambitions recorded in *The Present Position of Catholics* (1851) for the vocation of

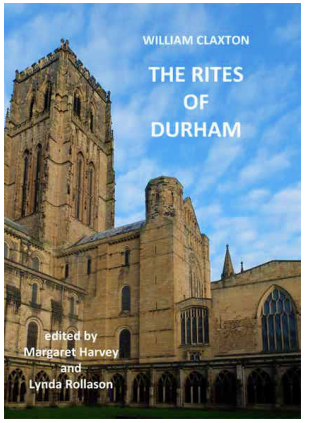
the lay person and the *sensus fidelium*. "I want a laity, not arrogant, not rash in speech, not disputatious, but men who know their religion, who enter into it, who know just where they stand, who know what they hold and what they do not, who know their creed so well that they can give an account of it, who know so much of history that they can defend it."

Shrimpton has edited this useful disparate material with exhaustive precision and provided a comprehensive index.

DR RALPH TOWNSEND

Margaret Harvey & Lynda Rollason (eds.), *The Rites of Durham, William Claxton,* Boydell & Brewer for the Surtees Society & the Catholic Record Society, 2020, pp.xviii+775, ISBN 9780854440825 (h/b)

THE WORK *THE RITES OF DURHAM*, here presented in a new critical edition, has hitherto remained anonymous. However, the editors have identified its author as William Claxton of Wynyard, an antiquary from Durham who died in 1597. *Rites* is datable to 1593-1597. It is primarily a guided tour round Durham's cathedral-priory as it was in the early sixteenth century. Other accounts in it describe Durham's ceremonies before the Dissolution and also its later spoliation, about which Claxton has inserted extra passages into his original text. One has also to consider that *Rites* is a work of Catholic polemic, as shown in its strong criticism of the ways in which the Reformation has allowed the cathedral's furnishings and liturgy to be destroyed and its Anglican chapter to retain the income from medieval endowments while trying to erase their benefactors' memory.



For polemical purposes, *Rites* is selective in its content. Thus *Rites* commends prayers for the dead, so anathema to strict Protestants, and emphasizes this point by careful recording of the burials in and near the cathedral. As to commemorations of saints, *Rites* repeated mentions of Marian feasts and images are significant; so too are its careful records of the different

saints to whom the cathedral's altars were dedicated. Moreover, *Rites* stresses the hospitality and almsgiving of the prior, implying a contrast with the absence of such generosity later in the sixteenth century. Indeed, the Puritanism of two deans and some others of the cathedral's Elizabethan chapter exacerbates *Rites* polemical tone. One can see how its main readership was likely post-Reformation Catholics, high church Anglicans and Civil War royalists.

As to the text's quality, Claxton, who attained his majority in 1551, was presumably born in 1530 and thus must primarily have had former monks and priory servants as his main informants. One such may have been Stephen Marley, subprior and later canon. Even so, one cannot necessarily take the text at face value because of Claxton's own lack of personal experience of the priory and of its ceremonies. For instance, his accounts of the Maundy Thursday ceremonies, and of monastic processions outside the cathedral, are incomplete. To judge by some of *Rites'* 13 extant manuscripts, others, notably Christopher Hunter (1675-1757), added material evidently unknown to Claxton, about events after the latter's death. Also, Claxton left his work unfinished at his death, to judge by textual doublets and confusions.

Great praise is due to the editors for their exceptionally learned and well-annotated introduction and commentary which frame the text of *Rites* in this edition, as also for the provision of five appendices, a 37-page bibliography and a 22-page index. Furthermore, Harvey and Rollason clearly describe their editorial method. There remain only a few points needing clarification. For example, they omit to mention that the 1951 restoration of Bishop Beaumont's brass accords with *Rites,* as also that the place which Bishop Skirlaw chose for his tomb was one of the most favoured places in a church, since it symbolized the right hand of God the Father, and that the legend of the appearance of a cross beneath a stag's antlers occurs in other contexts than the finding of the Black Rood of Scotland, kept in the cathedral. In particular, this is the legend of St Eustace, later identified with St Hubert also. One significant error is that "orders of priesthood" on page 425 should read "orders of ministry."

In short, however, this is a mighty work of scholarship, expensive but not overpriced, edited with care and, indeed, love.

FR NICHOLAS PAXTON
Priest of the Diocese of Salford

Obituaries

DAVID FARMER, 1923-2021

DAVID FARMER was born in Ealing in 1923 to a devout Catholic family, one of seven children. When he was two years old, his parents moved to Bagshot in Surrey, where they established the first Catholic parish and built an oratory in their back garden. It was to prove the start of a spiritual and religious life which encompassed over twenty years as a Benedictine monk, followed by a distinguished academic career in medieval history and hagiography.

Since his death in February, I have been spending time arranging his papers. They have provided an insight into the thoughts, ambitions and devotion of my late father. He was prolific in his scholarship, but also keen to ensure that his learning could be passed on to others wherever possible. This passion to impart learning can be seen in many places: his regular articles in *The Tablet*, his frequent lectures to generations of students at Reading University over a 20-year history, and in countless talks to village groups, church gatherings and history societies. His great craft was the ability to summarise complex, detailed lives into (relatively) short concise contributions. It is seen most prominently in *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, a magnum opus of hagiography, which still sells at an impressive rate, as he frequently pointed out.

In reflecting on his life, however, I have been struck by four strong themes.

Faith. David's Catholicism was central to his essence. He was born a Catholic, and his Catholic faith remained hugely important to him, until the end. He joined Quarr Abbey as a young adult, a life which prepared him well for spiritual contemplation, and perspective. He was probably one of the best prepared for the lockdown restrictions in which we have found ourselves. His attempts to leave the community were difficult, and left him with a healthy scepticism for the Church as an institution, but, unlike many whose faith would have been challenged, if anything it strengthened his commitment to God.

Wherever he was, he participated fully in parish liturgy and life. He sang, read, played the organ, sat on committees. He was not afraid of the parish priest, and took his responsibilities as a Catholic very seriously, fuelled by a deep faith. I have encountered several rather challenging letters to bishops and, indeed, to a former abbot of Douai, on many

subjects, including congregational participation in worship. He—and my mother Ann—took very seriously the promises of Vatican II to allow the laity to play a greater role. In later life, he took that commitment into a new space, establishing the Pangbourne branch of the St Vincent de Paul Society, to provide help and support to the vulnerable and isolated. He took to the task with a sense of purpose and commitment, fuelled by his faith.

Scholarship and Pedagogy. Everyone who met David was struck by his intelligence. Professor Henry Mayr-Harting wrote to me: "David was a very fine scholar, learned, measured in his judgements, in no way polemical but with obvious religious devotion in his interests and his whole tone." I do not think there is any doubt that the *Dictionary of Saints* was David's defining work, and his pride and joy. In his last few days, I read aloud a number of the entries to him, and was able to reflect on the scale of the contribution he had made to hagiography. And, of course, in addition to his learning was his love of teaching. Sometimes this was formal, as hundreds of history students at Reading University in the 1970s, '80s and '90s, along with adult education groups, can attest. But it was also informal—a few words here or there about, perhaps, a Saxon settlement or a particular saint.

Family. Of course, to us, David was a brother, father, uncle and grandfather. He was part of a large family and kept connected wherever possible, taking great enjoyment in conversations with his brothers and sisters, and not always agreeing with them of course! As a father, he was present, occasionally stern, but always supportive, proud of us when we achieved our degrees and of other significant occasions. As a grandfather, he delighted in a little mischief, proffering a glass of wine to the teenage Ben.

Community. Wherever he was, community was important to David: his monastic community, his academic community, his family community, and his local community. As the years drew on and his world became confined to the house, he had another community, that of the carers who looked after David, but also "cared for" him as a human being. We thank them and so many people in caring professions, especially at this time. Community was important because, as many people have remarked, David was sociable. His interests were broad, including in sport and especially cricket. He was a "stalwart wicketkeeper" in the University Staff vs Students match at Reading.

David was interested in politics, history in the widest sense, and travel. A keen European, he loved France, Italy and Spain, but was

always curious, undertaking a trip to Zimbabwe in his eighties. He also had a great interest in the Royal Family. And, of course, he enjoyed and appreciated wine, especially red wine. Our Sunday trips to the pub as a family would include the polite but firm request for a "large glass" of Merlot or Bordeaux.

His commitment to faith, scholarship, family and community were the key values of our family life. May he rest in peace.

PAUL FARMER CBE
David's Son, & Chief Executive of MIND

IN MEMORIAM—DAVID FARMER & WILLIAM ABEL PANTIN (1902-1973): PUPIL & PROFESSOR

DAVID FARMER , who died at his home in Pangbourne in 2021, aged 98, was a long-standing friend and parishioner of the Douai community. His brother Peter was educated at Douai School. David was married at Douai and, with Ann, his wife, and two sons, Paul and John, was active in the Douai parishes of Burghfield and Pangbourne. More than most of us, David was imbued with the Benedictine spirit, and has a grandson called after the saint. As a young man, he tried his monastic vocation at Prinknash and Quarr Abbeys and these monasteries instilled in him a deep appreciation of Gregorian chant. He was ordained at Quarr in August 1949, but became unsettled in regard to his vocation and, after some time at St Benet's Hall, Oxford, decided to pursue an academic career which focused on Anglo-Saxon and medieval Benedictine monasticism. When he was born in 1923, the Rule of St Benedict was still thought to be by the saint himself. It was not realised that the Rule was derived to a large extent from an earlier monastic rule called the Rule of the Master. David accepted this newly discovered provenance and, throughout his life, the Rule of Benedict remained his guiding light. Most of his published work related to the Benedictines or figures associated with them. He occasionally glanced towards St Hugh of Lincoln, his patron, or the Carthusians. David's work was mostly about people as individuals; he was less interested in art, buildings, archaeology, institutions or historical trends.

As to his strictly Benedictine works, in 1959 David published an article on a monk's view of Purgatory. Two years later came his first major work, *The Monk of Farne: the Meditations of a Fourteenth-century*

Monk (London, 1961), about a Benedictine hermit of Durham cathedral priory who lived on the island of Inner Farne, surrounded by seals and puffins. David edited the text, which was translated by the Benedictine nuns of Stanbrook, notably Dame Frideswide Sandeman, who remained a life-long friend of David. When I became chaplain at Stanbrook Abbey in 1994, David drove me there to visit Dame Frideswide, and cooked my first meal, an omelette, in the chaplain's house. The manuscript of the monk of Farne's meditations had been discovered by David's supervisor, Mr William Abel Pantin, in 1944 and the complete text was published in Rome by David in 1957. Billy Pantin and David Farmer had formed a closer academic friendship when David lived at St Benet's Hall, Oxford, between 1959 and 1960. A new edition of the meditations of the monk of Farne appeared much later as *Christ Crucified: and Other Meditations of a Durham Hermit* (Leominster, 1994).

David returned from Oxford to Quarr Abbey in 1960, and continued to live the monastic life there until 1962, when he became chaplain at the Catholic boarding school of Redrice, near Andover. He seems to have been struggling with his monastic vocation by this date. He left Redrice in 1965, and returned to Oxford, to Linacre College, where he continued his association with Pantin. Pantin believed that the entry of the medieval monks into the universities produced a new type of monk, and one example of this was the Durham monk Uthred of Boldon, whose career and writings became a shared interest between Pantin and David, and about whom both wrote extensively. By the time of his second spell in Oxford, David had met his future wife, Ann. They were married at Douai Abbey in 1966, by which time he had gained a position as Reader in Anglo-Saxon history at the University of Reading. Among his colleagues there, Dr Brian Kemp was the historian principally interested in Reading Abbey, but David was critical of him for being too parochial in his understanding of Benedictine monasticism. As a scholar of monasticism, David succeeded earlier twentieth-century monastic historians who included Dom David Knowles of Downside, and Pantin, an oblate of Ampleforth. All these were interested in the prayer and spirituality of the Black Monks. David came onto the stage when some professional academic historians were beginning to take an interest in monasticism but were less interested in the prayer life of monks. Knowles, Pantin and Farmer were, by contrast, distinguished by their appreciation of monastic spirituality.

At Reading, David began to develop a reputation as an able scholar of Anglo-Saxon history. In 1968 he edited a facsimile of Bodleian MS Hatton 48, the earliest extant copy of the Rule of St Benedict, for the

series "Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile," taking over the project from Dr Bertram Colgrave, who died in January 1968. The volume was dedicated to the abbot and monks of Quarr. During his years at Reading his Benedictine interests expanded from Bede, surely a sort of Benedictine, to the monks of the Middle Ages, and on to the present English Benedictines. A short article on a manuscript of St Cuthbert's life, traditionally thought to have been owned by St Margaret of Scotland, was published in 1978 and was followed by other articles on monastic history. In 1980 the 15th centenary of St Benedict's birth in 480 was celebrated by monks and nuns nationally, and David contributed by editing a series of Benedictine biographies written by monks and his students at Reading. The volume, *Benedict's Disciples* (Leominster, 1980), included a foreword by Cardinal Basil Hume and two chapters were contributed by monks of Douai: "St Cuthbert and St Wilfrid" by Fr Edmund Power and "Three Seventeenth-Century Benedictine Martyrs" by Br Geoffrey Scott. A second, and enlarged, edition of *Benedict's Disciples* (Leominster, 1995) was published 15 years later and included two further chapters by Douai monks: "The English Benedictine Mission and Missions" by Fr Geoffrey Scott and "Archbishop Ullathorne" by Fr Alexander Austin. In his preface David acknowledged the contribution of Abbot Gregory Freeman of Douai, who had died in 1989, for "his encouragement to the enterprise from the beginning." In 1981 David lectured to the English Benedictine History Symposium on the historical influences on the early English Benedictine Congregation, concentrating on the sources preserved in the *Apostolatus Benedictinorum Anglorum in Anglia* (Douai, 1626). Having taken St Hugh of Lincoln as his patron on his clothing as a novice at Quarr, David decided to specialise in St Hugh. With the Oxford medievalist Decima Douie, he edited *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis: the Life of St Hugh of Lincoln* (Oxford, 1985) in two volumes. Two years later he contributed a chapter on the cult and canonisation of the saint in a series of essays on St Hugh, edited by Henry Mayr-Harting, an Old Dowegian.

David's most influential work, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, was first published in 1978. It is dedicated to his wife Ann and their sons, Paul and John. It had its beginnings in a collection of index cards housed in a shoe box which David began when he was at Quarr, following the prompting of Fr Joseph Warrilow, a monk of Quarr. As a result of the *Dictionary*, David became the most eminent hagiographer in England and his Dictionary is to be found in many sacristies, used by priests checking before Mass the facts of various saints' lives. It is also of great value to church historians, who appreciate its pithiness, brief

bibliographies and occasional humorous anecdotes. The *Dictionary* is published by Oxford University Press, which celebrated its success by honouring David with a commemorative dinner.

In 1993 David's knowledge of the cults of English saints was recognised when he was invited to investigate the collection of bones supposed to be those of Douai's patron saint, Edmund, King and Martyr. These bones had been transported from the basilica of Saint-Sernin in Toulouse, which claimed they were authentic, having been taken to Toulouse by French troops after the battle of Lincoln in 1217. The veneration of these relics reputedly saved Toulouse from the plague in 1628. After a request by Cardinal Herbert Vaughan in 1901, some of the relics were transported from Toulouse to Rome and then to England, to be enshrined in the new Westminster Cathedral, St Edmund having been patron saint of England before he had been superseded by St George during the Crusades. The entry of the relics into England caused a storm of protest from scholars who doubted their authenticity. This was led by Montague Rhodes James, the Cambridge historian and author of many popular ghost stories. To avoid further embarrassment, the bones never reached Westminster Cathedral but were deposited in Arundel Castle with the permission of the Duke of Norfolk. David's reputation stood so high that he was chosen to be a member of a committee which examined the relics. He was later persuaded by Fr Geoffrey of Douai to give a paper on his research at the English Benedictine History Symposium in 1994, which was entitled "New Light on the Cult of St Edmund of East Anglia." He acknowledged that the relics at Arundel derived from bones belonging to a number of bodies. They remain at Arundel. The relics of St Edmund now at Douai Abbey, which include a fragment of bone and two teeth, come from the Toulouse collection.

In 2002 Ann died, and her Requiem Mass was celebrated by the abbot in the abbey church, before her burial at Whitchurch. David managed to keep going with his research and moved from Whitchurch to an apartment at Pangbourne, enjoying a magnificent view of the Thames and the Chilterns. He coped well with serious illness, from which he miraculously recovered. In his retirement he concentrated on updating his *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, concentrating on the many saints newly canonised by Pope John Paul II and bringing out the revised fifth edition in 2011, to coincide with the beatification of Blessed John Henry Newman by Pope Benedict XVI. His last of his many bequests to Douai Abbey library was a magnificent leather-cased facsimile of the Book of Hours of Queen Maria of Navarre (1329-1347),

which was executed by the Spanish painter Ferrer Bassa in 1340. It was given to celebrate the community's 400th anniversary of foundation in Paris in 1615, on the Solemnity of St Edmund, 20 November, 2015, and came with a note from David: "In memory of this anniversary and plenty of others to come. Ad Multos Annos. David Farmer."

GEOFFREY SCOTT OSB

✢

ALLAN KONYA, 1935-2021

ALLAN KONYA was a long-time parishioner of the monastery parish of Woolhampton, and with Sonia his wife for 62 years, was an active member of the congregation there, both enjoying their role as welcomers at the Sunday 9am Mass.

Born in Hong Kong to a Hungarian father and a South African mother, and raised in South Africa, he graduated in architecture at the University of Pretoria in 1958, and taught that subject there from 1967 to 1980. His alma mater recalls that through his teaching at the university he helped form architects who are now highly influential in South Africa. Though when he was studying to be an architect the modernism and brutalism of such figures as Le Corbusier, Oscar Niemeyer and Mies van der Rohe were in the ascendant, Allan looked more to architects like Frank Lloyd Wright, whose outlook he adapted to suit South African conditions. Allan's style has been described as "romantic functionalism," which eschewed unrestrained embellishment but sought to maintain beauty and a humanistic ethos in designing buildings to be be used by human beings.

He practised as an architect in South Africa until 1980. Arguably his most significant work was St Peter's Seminary (1964) in Hammanskraal, outside Pretoria, which was a seminary for the training of black priests in what was then a South Africa still firmly under the grip of apartheid. The seminary has been described in the South African Catholic Journal *Southern Cross* as "an icon of the quest of black people to be free." It was St Peter's that gave the famous anti-apartheid campaigner Steven Biko a platform to be heard, whose tragic death at the hands of apartheid security forces in 1977 sparked international outrage.

St Peter's was of simple architectural form but was embellished with rich patterning that reflected the local context and culture, combining

concrete with red granite, copper and laminated timber beams, which was built with a high level of craftsmanship. In 1967 it received the Award of Merit from the South African Institute of Architects. The seminary was closed in 2008 and now houses the Law Clinic of the University of Pretoria. The home he designed in 1968 for his young family at Hillcrest in Pretoria is also considered one of his finer works, and is now the subject of a preservation order through the South African Monuments Guild.

Allan and Sonia left South Africa in 1980 with their son Steve, in response to the sudden death on active duty of their elder son Mark, who had been "conscripted into a conflict they despised in the service of a system, apartheid, they loathed," to quote the eulogy given at Allan's funeral. The rapid move entailed significant sacrifices for the family. Having moved to England Allan in time partnered with the noted British architect Philip Jebb, working on projects for the National Trust, the Landmark Trust and Sir (now Lord) Anthony Bamford.

Rivalling his work in architecture was Allan's work in writing and publishing, first with the Architectural Press and later his own publishing house, Archimedia Press. His most successful and influential publication was on the Finnish sauna, in a work of 1973 that has been updated and republished well into the 21st century. He also wrote the influential *Design Primer for Hot Climates* for the Architectural Press. Later works included memoirs and Greek recipe books! It is regrettable that his eminence as an architect was not adequately appreciated in his new homeland, though this fact is certainly a testament to his personal and professional humility.

Though in his last years Allan endured one or two of the sharper ailments of age, these did not dim his interests nor his devotion to his family and faith. He died of a heart attack on the night of 16 February 2021. May he rest in peace until the Resurrection.

HUGH SOMERVILLE KNAPMAN OSB

✢

JOHN CAMPBELL, 1927-2021

JOHN ATTENDED ST CUTHBERT'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, moving on to Rutherford College, before attending Durham University, where he read Spanish and Latin American Studies. On graduating in 1947 he was appointed to the staff of St Mary's Grammar School, Darlington, to start a "new to the school" course in Spanish, and to teach French. While there, he organised and ran school holiday trips to Spain. This involved taking trains from Darlington to London, crossing the Channel, and more trains through France to Spain, which was a major undertaking in post-war Europe. There were many memorable incidents, including one which involved him acting as interpreter for an American tourist who had fallen ill after eating "some fungus dish." Translating the Spanish text book's list of potential consequences—failure of the liver, kidneys etc—was a stomach-churning experience. The incident stayed with John, and he never touched any dish containing "fungi" thereafter. In 1962 he moved to Douai School, where he was head of the Modern Languages Department, teaching Spanish and French. He also had a role as regional examiner in oral Spanish for one of the examining boards. Outside the classroom he played and organised tennis and ran debates. In the staff room he was a regular contributor at the daily crossword table, and soon organised a staff bridge group. He also played bridge for a local club, where he won several trophies.

After 25 years teaching at Douai, John took early retirement at 60 and soon filled his days with golf, tennis and fishing. He had always fished, first on the Tees in Darlington, and then took up fly fishing when he came to Douai. This he took seriously, initially fishing the Kennet and various lakes locally, and travelling west to the Wye and the Usk, and north to the Tweed at Coldstream. The Tweed provided him with a lasting memory. Fishing late one evening he called for help to land a "large one." When finally landed, it turned out to be two salmon, one on each fly. He also joined the Salisbury and District Angling Club, which provided him with access to the many chalk streams in the South. He was still fishing two years ago.

He was an active member of the S.V.P. at his local church, where he also sang bass in the choir. For many years he volunteered to deliver meals on wheels. He leaves behind his wife, two sons, six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

ALAN LLOYD

✢

Community Chronicle 2021

JANUARY

The new year began with the nation, and the world, still coping with the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. Fr Finbar returned from attending his sister's funeral in Ireland, and had to self-isolate in the monastery. The resident community's emergence on Epiphany from the holiday period entailed only minimal changes such was the quiet life then prevailing.

Just before Epiphany Fr Gregory (Maddison) left the novitiate and returned to the diocese of East Anglia. We wish him every blessing. His reflections on working in the monastery gardens can be found in this edition of the *Magazine*.

Another victim of Covid, John Campbell died in Reading. He had been a master in our former school for 25 years from 1961. The funeral was conducted by Fr Peter. His obituary can be found in this edition of the *Magazine*. May he rest in peace.

A few days later we learned of the death of Rina Gradwell, the sister of the late Fr Nicholas. She was 103! May she rest in peace.

This month saw the Covid vaccine rollout reach Douai, with the brethren getting their first doses.

On 24 January Fr Abbot, assisted by Fr Oliver, began the canonical visitation of Worth Abbey. Due to the Covid restrictions, the visitation was conducted remotely via Zoom.

The same week the community began discussion on the Elliott Report on safeguarding in the Catholic Church in England and Wales, which presaged significant changes to the Church's safeguarding structures.

At the end of the month the American independent safeguarding consultancy Praesidium granted accreditation to Douai Abbey. This means our safeguarding policies and practices were found to be consistent with recognised best practice. We are grateful to those who have helped us to meet these standards, especially our Safeguarding Lead, Kate Burke.

FEBRUARY

On 2 February another of the late Fr Nicholas' siblings passed away. Peter died in Italy just short of his 95th birthday. May he rest in peace.

On 8 February Frs Abbot and Oliver closed the visitation of Worth.

Given the current state of the energy market as this *Magazine* goes to press, it was with remarkable prescience—or good fortune at any rate—that this month Fr Oliver began investigating the feasibility of converting the monastery heating from oil to ground-source pumps. Using a renewable energy source, it is also much less expensive to run. The library is heated in this way and is always a comfortable place to be.

On 12 February a long-time parishioner at Douai and eminent medieval historian, David Hugh Farmer, died in his home at Pangbourne He is best known to a wide readership as the creator and editor of the *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, which has run into many editions. Tributes to him can be found in the obituaries section of this *Magazine*. May he rest in peace.

Towards the end of the month two cameras were installed in the abbey church to allow for the discreet streaming of some of the community's liturgy each day, for those who could not get to Douai but still wanted to share in the community's worship of God.

This year's annual conventual chapter had to be Zoomed on 24 February due to Covid. Because of the Church regulations issued to adapt formal community meetings such as this to the needs imposed by Covid and the requirements to safeguard the integrity of voting procedures, the usual election of community councillors was postponed.

MARCH

On 4 March Fr Abbot led the burial rites for David Hugh Farmer at Whitchurch.

This month a donation button, supplied by the firm Dona, was added to the monastery website. This makes the process of sending small (or large, for that matter) donations much slicker and quicker.

After a long period of enduring Covid, the abbey church reopened for public Mass on 14 March, though subject to the conditions set by the government and the bishops to ensure the gradual return to worship went smoothly and safely.

Fr Hugh's book, *Father Brown Reforms the Liturgy* was published this month by the Canadian publisher Arouca Press, in conjunction with the monastery's own imprint, Weldon Press. Fr Hugh has edited and annotated this engagingly opinionated tract, which had been published anonymously in the late 1930s by Mgr John O'Connor, an old Dowegian and the inspiration for Chesterton's fictional sleuth, Father Brown. A review of the book can be found in this *Magazine.*

In the second half of the month it was Douai's turn for a quadrennial canonical visitation, conducted by the Abbot President and the Abbot of Downside. Normally the non-resident brethren would come in to meet with the Abbot President, but Covid meant that their interviews had to be conducted by Zoom.

On 26 March Fr Abbot gave the blessing at the swearing-in of the new High Sheriff of the Royal County of Berkshire, Willie Hartley Russell, who lives a couple of miles from Douai at Bucklebury Manor. The abbot will serve as the chaplain to the High Sheriff. Mr Hartley Russell was very generous in supporting the repairs to those windows in the abbey church damaged by a storm in 2019.

The next day Br Aidan made his first profession of monastic vows in the abbey church, and was clothed in the monastic cowl. Simple profession, as it is often called, lasts for three years and leads up to perpetual solemn profession. The ceremony had been delayed so that changes to Covid restrictions would allow his mother to be present. *Ad multos annos!*

APRIL

Fr Gervase celebrated the diamond jubilee of his priestly ordination on 9 April, Easter Week. He has been and remains a model of monastic observance and still contributes actively to the life of the monastery. The community marked the event with a festal meal and a lovely cake by Sarah in our kitchen. But this was not all for Fr Gervase. 12 days later he celebrated his 85th birthday. *Ad multos annos!*

In the middle of the month came the announcement of the appointment of Fr Gabriel as parish priest of the monastery parish of Woolhampton from July, in succession to Fr Peter, who now takes on other roles in the monastery.

A committee was established to explore ways of giving effect to some of the insights and desires emerging from the community in its reflection over the the last few years on the community's liturgical practice. Chaired by Fr Paul, the other members are Frs Abbot, Peter and Hugh.

April was a quiet month, though the community did begin to revise its Covid protocols in line with developments announced by the government and the bishops.

MAY

One of Fr Oliver's Covid projects came to completion in early May when he completed cleaning the carving of St Benedict outside the entrance to the monastery. A work by David John, it was commissioned for the 1500th anniversary in 1980 of St Benedict's birth.

Fr Edmund Zoomed in from Rome on 17 May to share with the community the work of the agenda committee preparing for the EBC general chapter, at that stage still due to be held at Douai in October.

On 18 May, the monastery guesthouse re-opened, on a limited basis, for the first time since first closed by Covid. We had a small number of resident guests in the first few days after re-opening.

The feast of Pentecost on 23 May was a busy day for Fr Abbot. Apart from the customary pontifical Mass that morning, he was on deck in the afternoon to confer the sacrament of Confirmation on young people from the parishes of Woolhampton and Wash Common.

The community watched a video of the meeting of the religious superiors of England and Wales with Fr David Smolira SJ, which outlined the imminent changes in safeguarding structures for members of religious orders and congregations, including the creation of the Religious Life Safeguarding Service, under whose supervision Douai will soon fall.

With some sadness, on 27 May the community farewelled Fr Terence Richardson, a monk of Ampleforth who had been living with us the last few years. He has been assigned to Ampleforth's missionary monastery in Zimbabwe. His calm and equable presence in the community was much appreciated by us and we wish him every blessing in the vastly different clime and culture of Zimbabwe.

At the end of the month Fr Abbot ventured to the North West, the first foray there for some time, staying at Ormskirk and catching up with Frs Godric, Boniface and Hugh, as well as meeting with Archbishop Malcolm of Liverpool.

While up north Fr Hugh was able to deliver to Fr Abbot the crozier of our confrere, Archbishop Benedict Scarisbrick OSB, which had been restored through the good services of Ormsby of Scarisbrick. The crozier seems to be modelled on a crozier from Anchin Abbey, outside the town of Douai in Flanders which was our home from 1818 to 1903. It is most likely that it was made on the occasion of Scarisbrick's appointment as bishop of Port Louis in Mauritius. Fr Abbot received it in time to use it on the solemn feast of Corpus Christi at Douai.

JUNE

Our greenest monk, Fr Oliver, acquired an electric car—a Renault Zoe—for community use in early June. This required the installation of a charging point in the monks' carpark. Since so many of the community journeys are local, the electric car should have a healthy impact on our carbon footprint.

From 7 to 8 June Fr Abbot was at Worth Abbey for the blessing of its new abbot, Fr Mark Barrett.

The rest of the week saw a number of seminarians from Allen Hall in London on retreat at Douai to prepare for their imminent ordination. On 26 June Fr Oliver attended the ordination as priests of four of them at Westminster Cathedral.

In mid-June we were able to welcome back cataloguers to the library for the first time since Covid struck.

On 19 June Fr Abbot visited the restored gateway of Reading Abbey in Forbury Gardens to see the recently carved head of Bl Hugh Faringdon (see cover). This was part of the celebrations marking the 900th anniversary of the founding of Reading Abbey by Henry I. That

weekend also marked the first anniversary of the terrorist attack in Forbury Gardens.

The same day Frs Godric, Boniface and Hugh attended the Liverpool archdiocesan synod, postponed from last October due to Covid. Covid still had its effect as the synod had to be held by Zoo, quite a feat with 400 in attendance.

On 24 June Fr Abbot celebrated Mass for the feast of the Birth of St John the Baptist in the medieval gatehouse of Colchester Abbey. Colchester, whose titular patron was St John the Baptist, had been one of the great Benedictine houses of England until despoiled and dissolved by Henry VIII in 1539. This was the first Mass offered by a Benedictine at the abbey since 1539. The gatehouse is all that remains of the monastery. Its last abbot, Bl John Beche, was martyred in the abbey grounds.

JULY

On 6 July February's truncated annual conventual chapter was finally concluded as the Covid restrictions had eased enough for the non-resident brethren to attend in person. This meant the annual election of abbot's councillors was able to be held. For some of the non-resident brethren it was the first time back at Douai for more than a year.

A memorial Mass was held in the abbey church the next day for David Hugh Farmer, celebrated by Fr Abbot. Afterwards a number of the community joined the other mourners for lunch in the pavilion in Douai Park.

On 12 July the newly-formed Discernment Committee, comprising members of the abbot's council, met with Fr David Smolira SJ to plan the year of discernment leading up to the scheduled abbatial election in May 2022.

Three monks from Downside stayed at Douai from 13 to 16 July as part of that community's process of finding a new home.

A group of the Knights of Malta stayed at Douai on retreat from 17 July, being led by Mgr John Armitage. The weekend before Fr Hugh had led a group of Knights and Dames on a day of recollection at St Augustine of Canterbury's Pugin shrine church in Ramsgate.

AUGUST

On 9 August the resident community revised the Mass rubrics to reflect the changed situation of the pandemic.

The next day Fr Abbot drove to Fishguard in Wales to visit Fr Richard, who is the parish priest there.

Four young Dominican friars stayed at Douai on 13 August, part of their pilgrimage from Cambridge to Oxford in commemoration of the first arrival in England of the their order 800 years ago.

More monks from Downside stayed at Douai in the second half of the month as part of their discernment process.

On 23 August all the community was present to launch its year of discernment, led by Fr David Smolira SJ.

August is a holiday month for the community, and thus is invariably quiet. It ended with the community's annual retreat, this year led by Bishop David McGough.

SEPTEMBER

On 3 September the community finally was able to celebrate a public Requiem Mass for Frs Bernard and Louis, long-delayed by Covid. About 100 family, old boys and parishioners were present.

Following the Requiem Fr Abbot headed to the North West to induct Fr Hugh as parish priest of Scarisbrick at the Sunday Mass, after attending a reception with parishioners in the presbytery garden the day before.

Fr Abbot attended the Mass to mark both the 130th anniversary of the founding of St John's seminary at Wonersh on 7 September. Sadly, the occasion also marked the seminary's closure.

On 11 September Frs Abbot and Oliver attended the abbatial blessing of Abbot Mark at Worth Abbey.

The first concert in the abbey church since lockdown took place on 16 September, a delayed performance from the Newbury Spring Festival by the choir Tenebrae. The church was booked out.

The same day Fr Abbot conferred Confirmation on 60 girls at St Mary's School, Ascot, assisted by Fr Gabriel.

The latter half of the month saw the arrival of an icon written by John Coleman in 2017 for the Retreats Association, depicting Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well. It was on display in the Lady chapel of the abbey church till 16 October, when there was a day of recollection on the theme of the icon, led by Abbot Christopher Jamison.

Bishop Philip and a number of the Portsmouth clergy came to Douai for their annual retreat from 27 September.

The same day Fr Chad Bolton from Ampleforth was at Douai to audit a meeting of the Douai community on questions relating to the future of the English Benedictine Congregation.

On 29 September the community celebrated Fr Boniface's diamond jubilee of profession and Fr Finbar's 79th birthday. *Ad multos annos!*

The next day Fr Abbot was in the midlands, inspecting the work on the restoration of the parish hall at our parish at Alcester with Fr Paul, and then conferring Confirmation on young parishioners at our neighbouring parish of Studley with Fr Benedict.

OCTOBER

On 1 October Fr Edmund celebrated the 50th anniversary of his clothing in the habit. *Ad multos annos!*

The same evening Frs Abbot, Godric and Oliver attended the Douai Foundation's Gala Dinner at the Savoy Hotel in London, which attracted almost 200 Old Dowegians and friends of Douai.

Fr Abbot celebrated two Masses at Winchester College on 3 October, conferring Confirmation on 20 boys at the second Mass.

On the same day Fr Hugh concluded the annual retreat he had led for the nuns at St Cecilia's on the Isle of Wight.

On 8 October Fr Abbot attended the Judicial Service for judges and magistrates held in St James' Catholic Church, on the site of Reading abbey, for the first time. Bishop Philip Egan of Portsmouth was the

celebrant, and Fr Abbot the preacher. Involving three processions, each with trumpet fanfares played by Douai parishioner Howard Rowntree, it was a grand occasion.

Fr Abbot attended, as the High Sheriff of Berkshire's chaplain, a memorial service in St Mary Butts in Reading, to mark the life and work of the late Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. May he rest in peace.

The resident community "celebrated" on 18 October the first church clean by the community since Covid began.

The same week Archbishop George Stack of Cardiff was at Douai with a number of his clergy for their annual retreat.

On 23 October Bishop Philip conducted a pastoral visitation of the parish of Woolhampton.

Fr Boniface returned to Douai from Ormskirk on 30 October, from where he received a fond farewell.

At the end of the month Fr Finbar was back in Ireland for the funeral of another of his sisters, Carmel. May she rest in peace.

NOVEMBER

On 9 November, Fr Abbot headed up north, first to Scarisbrick, where the presbytery is being renovated, and then on to Ormskirk. The next day he returned to Douai via Oulton Abbey in Staffordshire, where he chaired a meeting of the Oulton Abbey Trust.

On 13-15 November, Fr Abbot visited Fr Alban at the Catholic Chaplaincy in the University of Cambridge. He celebrated Mass and preached to full congregation in the chapel on Remembrance Sunday.

On 16 November, Fr Abbot celebrated pontifical Mass for the staff and students of St Edmund's College, Ware, on the feast of St Edmund of Abingdon, the college's patron. About 600 attended and the saint's relic was venerated by the faithful.

Fr Abbot was present on 19 November at St James's, Spanish Place, in London at the solemn profession as a Knight of Malta of Fra' Richard Berkeley-Matthews. *Ad multos annos!*

The next day was our patronal feast of St Edmund, King and Martyr. Mass was at noon and the organist was Dr John Rowntree, who joined the community for lunch. Fr Alban brought a group from Cambridge for the day, which included the parish priest of Our Lady and the English Martyrs' church in Cambridge. Later some of the community were able to watch Archabbot Jeremias Schroeder's Zoom presentation to members of the English Benedictine Congregation on the subject of Benedictine congregational identity. Archabbot Jeremias is abbot president of the Sankt Ottilien congregation.

On 24 November, Fr David Smolira SJ led a second community plenary discernment day at Douai as part of our year of discernment.

At the close of the month came the news that the monastery's imprint, Weldon Press, was successfully registered as a trademark with the UK Patent Office, thanks to the generous professional services of Deacon Christopher Walters of Jersey. This means the exclusive use of this name by Douai is protected in law.

DECEMBER

On 1 December, Fr Abbot accompanied Willie Hartley Russell, the High Sheriff of Berkshire, to visit Grendon and Springhill gaols in Buckinghamshire. They met the governor, and a number of staff members and prisoners, and were impressed by what they saw at both institutions.

On 7 December the Abbot President led Douai's post-visitation review, meeting separately with the abbot, the abbot's council and then the whole community.

Another post-Covid milestone was reached on 12 December when the community was able to hold again its customary service of Advent music and reflections in the abbey church with the Douai Abbey Singers.

However, Covid was not done with the community just yet. The outbreak of the Omicron variant saw the return of some restrictions to the monastery.

Even so a relatively normal Christmas was able to be celebrated, even if with reduced numbers in church. Fr Hugh came down from Scarisbrick on Boxing Day to spend a few days of rest with the community. He arrived just in time for an outbreak of Covid among the resident community, five of whom ended up struck down, a couple of them experiencing significantly more symptoms than the others. Thankfully, none of the brethren required hospitalisation. The outbreak provided some extra work for Br Christopher, the infirmarian, and his assistants. Fr Hugh's stay at Douai was extended to Epiphany as a result of the outbreak.

All's well that ends well, as the saying goes. However, little did we realise what early 2022 would bring the world. But that is a story that must wait till next year's *Douai Magazine*.

HUGH SOMERVILLE KNAPMAN OSB

Monastic Community

Rt Rev Geoffrey Scott, abbot since 1998, is also librarian and archivist. He teaches church history at Blackfriars Hall, Oxford and is President of the Catholic Archives Society, annalist of the EBC, and member of *The Douai Magazine* committee. (Professed 1967)

Very Rev Benjamin Standish is prior, assistant priest in Woolhampton parish, and assistant guestmaster. (Professed 1990)

Rt Rev Finbar Kealy is abbot emeritus and Cathedral Prior of Canterbury. (Professed 1962)

Rt Rev Edmund Power is titular abbot of St Albans. He teaches at Collegio Sant'Anselmo in Rome, and also serves as Roman procurator for the English and St Ottilien Benedictine congregations. (Professed 1972)

Fr Gervase Holdaway is subprior, director of oblates, organist, baker and jam-maker, and manager of our bookshop. (Professed 1955)

Very Rev Godric Timney is Cathedral Prior of Worcester, and parish priest of Ormskirk (Lancs). He is also Episcopal Vicar for Religious in the Liverpool archdiocese. (Professed 1963)

Fr Boniface Moran is assistant director of oblates, organist, and chaplain to the Douai Society. (Professed 1961)

Fr Peter Bowe directs the monastery's pastoral programme. (Professed 1962)

Fr Austin Gurr serves as parish priest of Andover (Hants). (Professed 1969)

Fr Oliver Holt is bursar and guestmaster, sits on the abbot's council, and is the community's liaison with the Douai Society. (Professed 1969)

Fr Alexander Austin is the parish priest of Stratford-on-Avon (Warks). (Professed 1976)

Fr Francis Hughes is the parish priest of Kemerton (Glos), and serves on the Marriage Tribunal for Clifton diocese. (Professed 1982)

Fr Richard Jones is the parish priest of Fishguard and St Davids (Pemb), and edits the annual *Ordo* for the EBC. (Professed 1984)

Fr Alban Hood is on the editorial committee of the *Douai Magazine.* (Professed 1986)

Fr Paul Gunter is parish priest of Alcester (Warks), and sits on the abbot's council. He is also serves as liturgy secretary for the bishops of England and Wales. (Professed 1987)

Fr Benedict Thompson serves as parish priest of Studley (Warks). (Professed 1994)

Br Christopher Greener is infirmarian and is involved in the pastoral programme. (Professed 2000)

Br Simon Hill serves as properties' manager, and assistant to both the bursar and the infirmarian. (Professed 2001)

Fr Hugh Somerville Knapman is parish priest of Scarisbrick (Lancs) while pursuing doctoral studies, sits on the abbot's council, and is publisher at the Weldon Press, and webmaster. (Professed 2002)

Fr Gabriel Wilson is parish priest of Woolhampton, and keeps our bees and poultry. (Professed 2008)

Br Aidan Messenger is in the juniorate and is reading philosophy and theology at Blackfriars, Oxford. (Professed 2021)

☞ *This list does not necessarily include all of the work undertaken by members of the community.*

ACCREDITED BY
PRAESIDIUM
2021-2025

Ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus

THE DOUAI MAGAZINE

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