

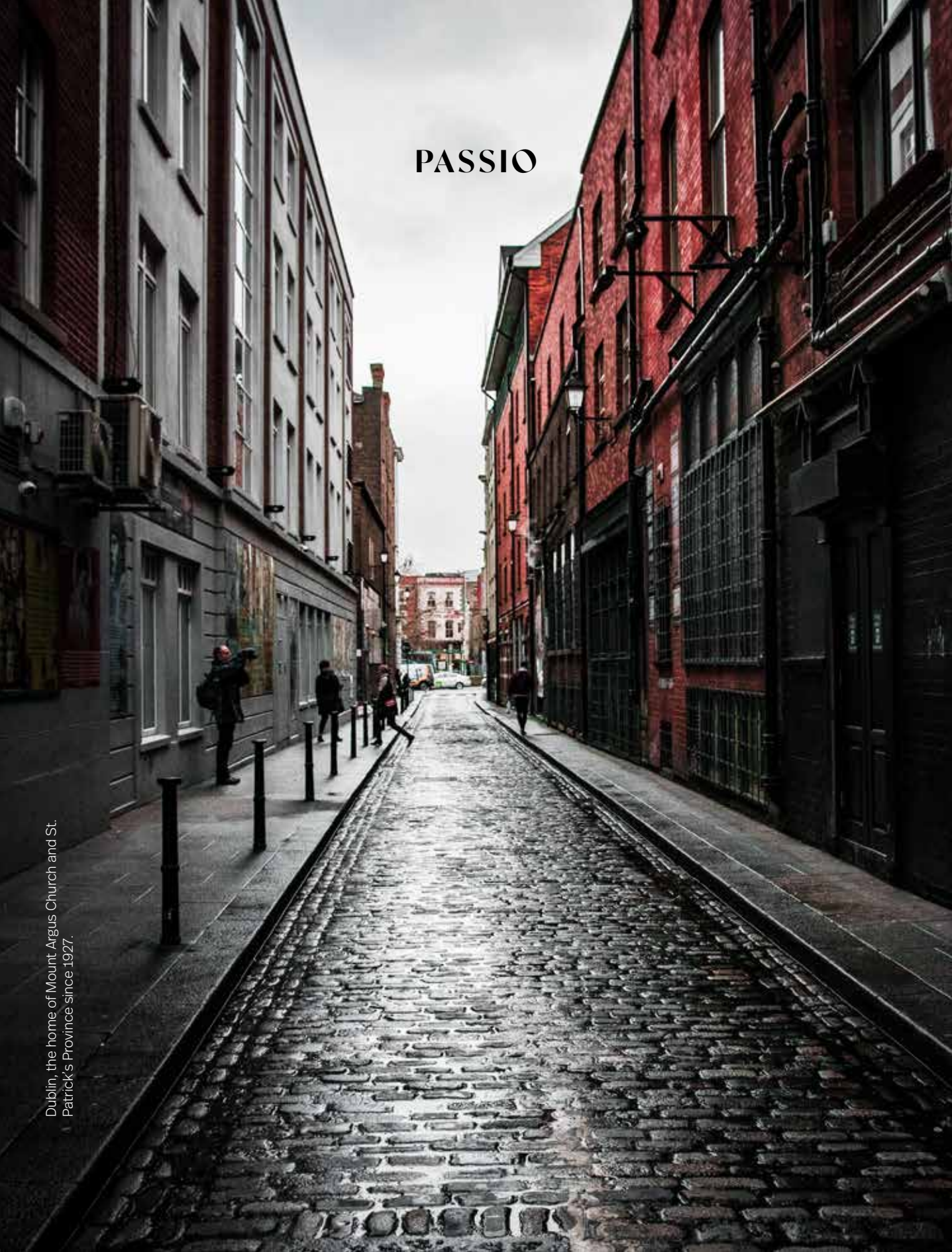
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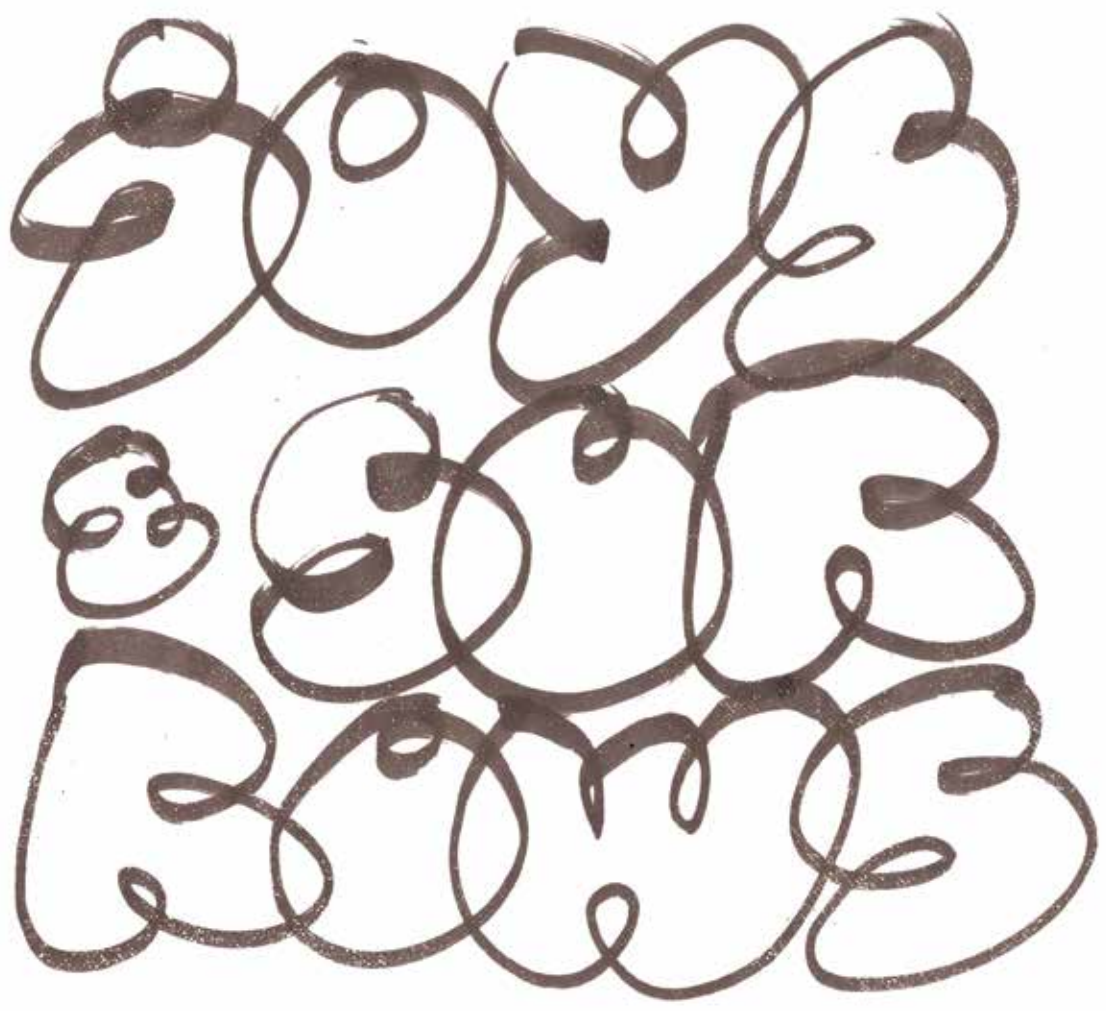
PASSIO

Dublin, the home of Mount Argus Church and St. Patrick's Province since 1927.



We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,
because we are inspired and energised by the memory of Your Passion,
and so we take action with the Crucified of today.

We share in the



of our brothers and sisters who are marginalised, and so we announce the Gospel of the Passion of Jesus the Christ.



Autumn 2022

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The following photographers are featured in this issue, having kindly made their work available under a Creative Commons Attribution license: Roger Marks, J.Hannan-Briggs, Herry Lawford, Chris Moore, West Midlands Police, Elvert Barnes, John Englart, Tim Welch, Vince Reinhart, Pacific Museum of Earth, Michelle Kroll, Carron Brown, Prayitno Photography

From the Editors

J

oachim Rego CP* recently reminded his fellow Passionists of the need to be contemplative-apostolic missionaries: “the twin poles of standing at the

foot of the Crucified contemplating the mystery and keeping memory of the Passion; and the consequent gaze and reaching out to the ‘crucified’ world with compassion and hope, arising from the power God’s love for the world exhibited in the Passion of Jesus.”

In our nation, public sentiment is spilling out into the streets—strikes across the public sector; rallies for political causes; and ever-inventive acts of nonviolent civil disobedience. Something about all this is apocalyptic—not in the popular sense of *disaster*, necessarily, but in the Biblical sense of a great ‘unveiling’. Our inner lives impacting the outside world; secret things being brought to the light, or so we might hope.

We are not all called to the same role in history. The late Passionist priest Fr Austin Smith preached caution when it came to activism, wary of a “terrible desire to manipulate, control God and the world.” Activist Fr John Dear, in the soon-to-be-republished *Sacrament of Civil Disobedience*, devotes two chapters to the importance of prayer and discernment ahead of action.

That all said, as we contemplate the signs of these current times, can we afford *not* to be moved to action on behalf of the crucified earth and its peoples in the name of the crucified one? We have to decide. In the end, Austin spent his life in service of the poorest in his community; John has been arrested over 85 times for nonviolent civil disobedience.



In these pages, we’re honoured to feature an extract from John’s *Sacrament...* ahead of its re-publication by our Lab/ora Press imprint (*Jesus the Nonviolent Resister*, p.36). Four protesters from different walks of life share the first time that they ‘crossed the line’ and risked arrest for a cause they believed in (*There Comes a Time to Cross the Line*, p.42). We see the very real costs being paid by a Madagascar community, fighting corruption and powerful mining companies (*The Price of Ilmenite*, p.15).

We talk to dancer, theologian, and therapist Claire Henderson-Davies about her performance piece *All Creation Waits* (*St Clare, Incarnation & The Material World*, p.52). And four different Passionist religious share their feelings and experience behind their monastic vows (*Four Vows*, p.70).

Whatever we are called to this season, may the Lord bring to completion the good work which he has begun in each of us.

—Paschal Somers and Chris Donald
Autumn 2022

*General Superior of the Passionists



p.20



p.63





p.52

CONTENTS

Province News

A New Coming Together	08
Spotlight	10
Fullness of Life	12

Partner Dispatch

The Price of Ilmenite	15
...and Counting	20
Building Back Greener	26
Life Re-Blooms in Cyprus	30

Reflections & Interviews

Jesus, the Nonviolent Resister	36
There Comes a Time to Cross the Line	42
St Clare, Incarnation & the Material World	52
Is Peace Possible?	60
Bricks & Mortar	63
The Power of Dreaming	68
Four Vows	70
The Last Word	76



p.42

A NEW COMING TOGETHER

County Down, near Tobar Mhuire

North Pennines, near Minsteracres

WORDS: JIM SWEENEY CP

●

After long thought and discussion, the Passionist family in England and Wales is becoming part of St Patrick's Province (Ireland and Scotland). James Sweeney, now Provincial of the newly integrated Province, reflects on the journey leading to this decision.

THE HISTORY OF the Passionists in the British Isles starts in 1841, when Blessed Dominic Barberi arrived in England. But St Joseph's Province, as we have known it, emerged a little later in 1927, when Ireland and Scotland separated to form their own St Patrick's Province.

For St Joseph's - as for St Patrick's - the next fifty years were a time of great missionary endeavour. Then, in the 1960s, Vatican II's challenge of renewal called forth many fresh, creative developments in Passionist life-style and ministry.

What becomes clear now, though, is the depth of the change that was overtaking religious life. The scale of decline in vocations showed a need for a radical re-think of the structures of our Passionist institutional presence.

The late John Kearns sensed this; at the General Chapter of 2018, told me St Joseph's was unlikely to be able to continue for long on its own and a discussion with St Patrick's would be helpful. The following year, we committed to embark on a process of discernment of a new structure of cooperation and solidarity, and were joined by the Holy Hope province of the Netherlands. Discussion continued through 2020, although hampered by the Covid lockdown. Things were brought to a head by John's sad death in March 2021.

It was a heavy blow to morale, for all of us but especially St Joseph's, and sharpened the sense of the province's limited capacity for self-governance. The Chapter in July decided against electing a provincial and council, but to seek integration with St Patrick's province as the most realistic way to continue its life and mission. St Patrick's Chapter the following week agreed, unanimously and gladly.

So we arrived to the General Synod in September 2022. On the agenda was a proposal to approve the 'suppression' - a horrible word - of St Joseph's Province, thus opening the way for its integration within St Patrick's.

Questions were raised. Were other possibilities explored? Could the whole Congregation have helped with the challenges? What are the prospects for St Joseph's houses continuing in existence? Is there a 'strategy' here, or just an 'ad-hoc project'? In the end, the proposal found favour, with all votes in favour and just one abstention.

While it's always sad ending a historic entity, and one with such a glorious history as St Joseph's, I was left with the conviction that we were dismantling a structure, a province, but certainly not closing down the Passionist life and mission of St Joseph's Province. The hope now must be to become one *renewed* as well as *integrated* Province of Ireland and Britain as we move forward to the future God creates. We're haunted still, and given hope, by the 'memory of the crucified'. ●



SPOTLIGHT

on LAZARUS & ABIGAIL CHAKANYUKA

The Community of the Passion is a dispersed community of women and men, finding together a new way of being Passionist.

Many of us identify strongly with the values of Passionist life; we find God in our encounter with, and commitment to, all those who are poor, powerless and suffering. At the same time, we're not seeking to become priests.

Instead we are committed to prayer with and for each other; we're exploring what a broader Passionist community can look like, together and in our individual lives.

Lazarus and Abigail Chakanyuka work for the organisation Positive Faith, and both are members of the Community of the Passion.

To find out more about the Community of the Passion, look here:

passionists.org.uk/community



Q. What one word would you use to describe yourself?

L: Selfless, I hope!

A: I'm a compulsive 'helper'.

Q. What one memory do you most treasure?

L: I treasure the times I went fishing with my father.

A: I remember the time when my father taught me how to peel a boiled egg.

Q. What advice would you give to your younger self?

A: I would give three pieces of advice: Never be confined in your thinking; remember that the sky is the limit; always think outside the box.

L: I'd say, life is a rollercoaster at times, but God's grace will see you through.

Q. What is the most important thing you've learned in the past year?

A: Well, during my study of Person-Centred Counselling, I've become familiar with the three co-conditions on which this is built: unconditional positive regard, empathy, and congruence.

L: Honestly I have come to a fuller appreciation of the Gospel, particularly where it speaks of God's provision for all creation.

Q. Red sauce or brown sauce?

L: Neither, thanks!

A: Um.. when push comes to shove, I'd opt for red. But I can live without either.

Q. How does your faith shape your work?

L: Faith plays a great role in my work because it encourages me to be honest, fair and diligent, especially in my dealings with others.

A: My faith makes my work a lot easier, actually; it teaches me that the most important thing is to serve people.

Q. If you could go anywhere in the world right now, where would it be, and why?

A: Ah, I would love to be in St Kitts in the Caribbean. It's a very tranquil place, and of course renowned for its beaches.

L: Exactly - the beaches are beautiful and clean, and the deep blue water is sparklingly clear.

“ FAITH TEACHES THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO SERVE PEOPLE . ”

Q. Which person (living or dead) would you most like to meet and why?

L: I'd like to meet Barack Obama. I find him to be a very charismatic figure.

A: I would choose Barack Obama too - because of his authenticity. Obama impressed me because of his humanity; he didn't hide behind his office as a politician.

Q. When did “God” become more than a word to you?

A: God became more real to me during 1982, when I worked as a supporting staff member of the Zimbabwean National Army.

L: For me, it would be during my first year at teacher training college, in 1972.

Q. What three items would you take with you as a castaway on a desert island?

L: I would take a lighter, a garden fork, and a copy of the Bible.

A: Definitely a copy of the Bible. I would take a supply of water, and something to cover me from the elements!

Lazarus and Abigail were talking to Paschal Somers.

Fullness

ILLUSTRATIONS: BENJAMIN HARRIS

Sadly, the year 2022 has seen the lives of three Passionist priests in England & Wales come to an end. Here, their contemporaries reflect on those lives, and what a 'religious' life represents as it reaches its end.

1	
Anthony Hale	by Jim Sweeney
b. 18 May 1944	d. 09 April 2022



I FIRST MET Anthony nearly sixty years ago, when he joined us at the Passionist student house in Dublin. We were, I think, (us Irish and Scots) struck by how very English he was! We still recall some of his particular habits of speech—fondly, I should say.

Following his ordination, Anthony immersed himself in pastoral work. He was always happy as a preacher. He had no difficulty putting words together; in fact, he was remarkably articulate. His other tasks at various times were as vocations promoter, Passionists students director in London, community superior and for many years, parish priest in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.

As a religious order priest, he was inevitably something of an outsider at times. Finding his role, his niche, seemed to be difficult for him, although he was always searching. But the years he spent in this Diocese were, I think, among his happiest. He felt very welcomed and valued by the bishops and the priests, and the people.

In the 1980s, he amazed us by moving as a missionary to Papua New Guinea, working with the Australian Passionists. He seemed the most unlikely person to take on the rigours of the missionary existence. He was always so particular and fastidious in his habits.

I had the opportunity of visiting him there; his mission was in the middle of the rain forest, no roads, no facilities, no running water but for the river. The only way to get to him was by the small mission plane, once in a while. The only way to talk with him was by a radio link – no internet or WhatsApp in those days. He lived in a simple wooden house, simply being present among the native community.

Our Superior General Fr Joachim, who worked with Anthony there in Papua New Guinea, recalled that “he felt deeply with people, and lifted them up with his humour and hearty infectious laugh. I always encouraged him, despite everything, never to lose that laugh!”

I remember Anthony telling me that he saw real need in the missions, much more than in these countries, so he decided he’d better “give it a go”. As simple as that. But I think it all followed from a call he heard. “Follow me” is the call Jesus makes. And he invites us to divest ourselves of our worldly goods, of our self-preoccupations, of our own plans – and follow him. Anthony rose to the challenge, responded to the call.

I think that’s the key to the religious life of Anthony Hale. He was able, even if just for a time, to overcome his own preoccupations and do something daring and out of the ordinary. It’s a lesson to take from the witness of his life. And he continued to do good with his life.

Fr Anthony died the day before Palm Sunday. We, of course, were about to start into Holy Week, to commemorate the Passion and Death and Resurrection of Christ - the great events that bring us salvation. And now already, Anthony was being drawn into that salvation, into its fullness of life, into the great mystery of God. We pray for him on that journey.



2

David Williams		by Nicholas Postlethwaite
b. 27 June 1941	d. 19 June 2022	

BORN IN CHELTENHAM, David Williams was proud of his Welsh family origins. He joined St Joseph’s Province and took Passionist vows in 1960. Before ordination in 1965, his studies took David to Ireland, where he developed life-long friendships with fellow Passionists in St Patrick’s Province. Later he spent time assisting the Passionist mission in South Africa and Botswana.

For some years, David went to the USA to study social sciences, in Boston. He returned with the skill and sensitivity to develop his ministry as a spiritual director and counsellor. Living in Otley, his reputation spread; it brought many people to his door seeking his guidance and support in pastoral and safeguarding practice, among other things. →

Throughout the years, David increasingly understood the contemplative focus of Paul of the Cross at the heart of his Passionist vision. David himself aspired ever more fully to seek into union with God. Countless people found in David someone ready to offer wisdom and encouragement as they continued their personal spiritual journeys. Friends wishing to remember him can do no better than open the pages of his book, *Under the Gaze of God*, and hear him declare

his conviction and gratitude for all the gifts he believed God had gifted to him.

Celebrating his Requiem Mass in Ilkley this year, we found David had already prepared in advance all details of his service. Among prayers, readings and music, he included a poem by Mary Oliver: its opening line reads: ‘My work is loving the world’ concluding with - “tell them all over and over, how it is that we live for ever.”

3	
Malachy Steenson	by Mark White
b. 2 May 1931	d. 31 July 2022



BORN IN BELFAST and coming to England in his teens to train for Passionist priesthood, Malachy never lost his love for his home city. At the height of the Troubles, he would go home for, as he used to say, “some peace and quiet.” His humour, his love for people, his compassion and his strong melodious voice were the hallmarks of his life.

Anyone who knew Fr Malachy knew at least two things: his passionate support of Everton, and his fondness for a smoke. We had the honour and the pleasure of having Archbishop Peter Smith with

us for Christmas lunch in 2018; as the Christmas pudding was broached, we noted a slight uneasiness in our guest. Fr Malachy recognised the signs. With an appealing look and a barely noticeable nod of the head, he got the message across. Malachy and the Archbishop withdrew conspiratorially to another room... from which the smell of Benson & Hedges soon emerged.

Malachy was a missionary, a retreat-giver, parish priest, hospital and school chaplain. A true Passionist with a great love for the Congregation. Very much loved, and very much missed. ●

London Mining Network



THE PRICE OF ILMENITE.

For over a decade, villagers in Madagascar have seen their lives and livelihoods affected by Rio Tinto's ilmenite mine. **Yvonne Orengo**, Director of the Andrew Lees Trust, describes the real costs being incurred 5,000 miles from Rio Tinto's London headquarters.



HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED
to serve the people of

Madagascar for over twenty-five years. Whilst building the Trust's poverty reduction programme on the ground, I lived in the south of the island and watched the Rio Tinto QMM mine evolve, directly witnessing the struggles experienced by local communities.

Our Trust's namesake, Andrew Lees, tragically died whilst researching the proposed mine in 1994. A renowned environmental campaigner, Andrew's legacy has continued with the Trust bringing international attention to the social and environmental impacts of the QMM mine on local communities, and undertaking multiple actions to hold the mining company to account, including amplifying the voice of local people through oral testimony, connecting communities with international human rights lawyers, and bringing community losses and challenges in front of investors at Rio Tinto's annual general meetings.

WORDS: YVONNE ORENGO
IMAGES: ANDREW LEES TRUST



Over the last six years, the Trust has been preoccupied with QMM's breach of an environmental protection zone and its contamination of local waterways where local people source their drinking water and fish for food.

Earlier this year, the mining basin of the Rio Tinto QMM ilmenite operation in Madagascar experienced its fourth reported mine tailings dam failure, followed by the appearance of hundreds of dead fish in the downstream lake. Due to concerns over water contamination, a fishing ban was put in place by the local Governor and locals were told not to eat fish from the lake.

Thousands of villagers lives and livelihoods were affected, exacerbating more than a decade of negative impacts on their subsistence fishing and loss of natural resources since the QMM mine began.



↑ Children gather around the fish catch.

← Fishermen out in a canoe.





← The QMM mining basin.

↓ Villagers gather at a local meeting to protest against QMM.

Rio Tinto denied responsibility for the dead fish, though later admitted they could not rule out a connection between the fish kills and their mine water, which contains heavy metals. The QMM mine basin water is high in aluminium and low in pH causing acid mine drainage (ACM), a well-recognised cause of fish kills. QMM mine basin waters also contains elevated uranium, and its decay product, lead, which have also been detected in downstream waterways, at levels 50 and 40 times respectively higher than WHO safe drinking water guidelines.

Since the majority of rural villagers living adjacent to the mine are dependent on these waterways for their drinking and domestic water, food and livelihood products, the overall impact has been reportedly a 40 % or more loss of income to villagers, with over 90% of villagers concluding the mine has only brought negative impacts to their lives (PWYP MG, 2022).

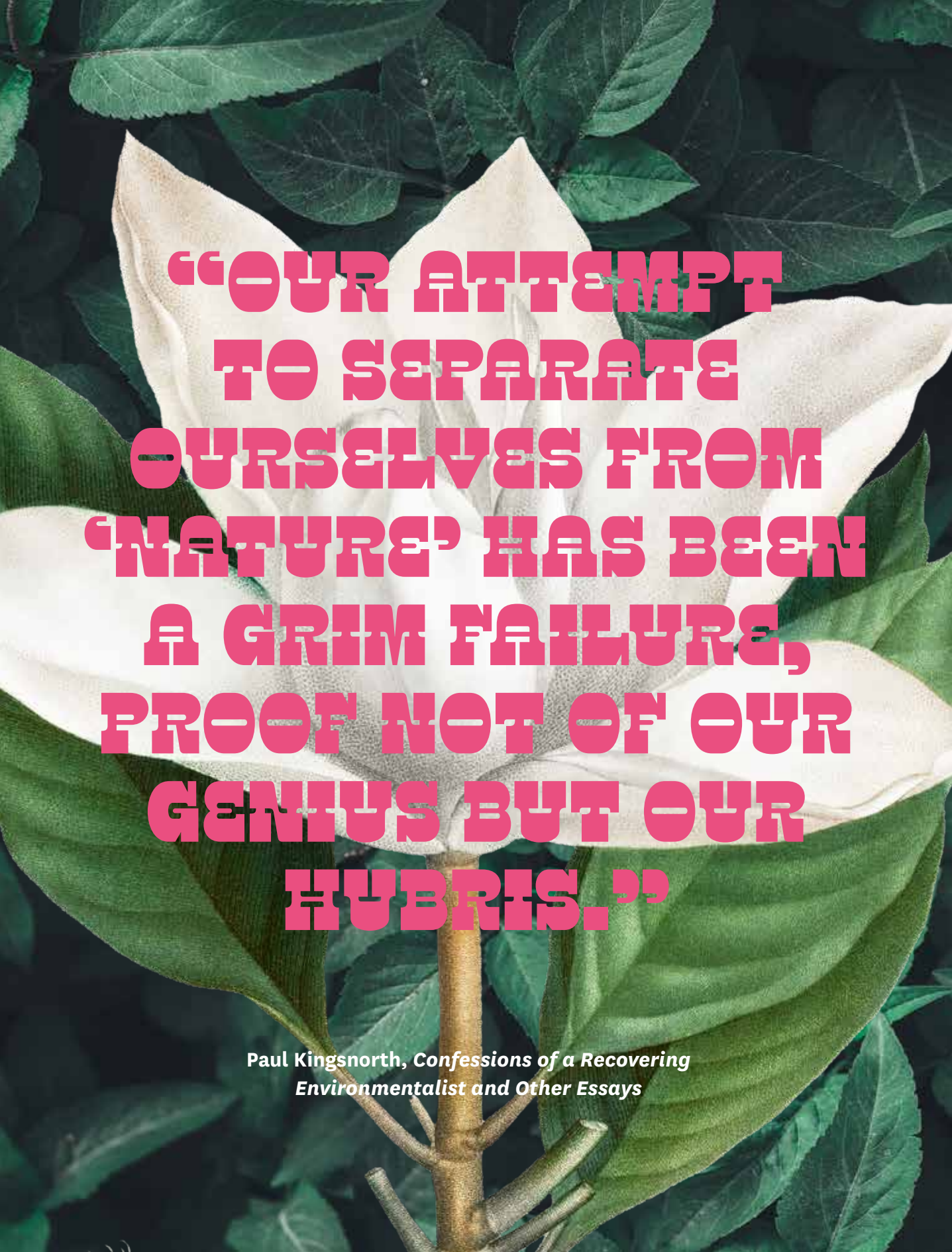




Madagascar suffers from weak governance, high levels of corruption, and a deficit of regulatory monitoring and compliance around extractives. The Rio Tinto/QMM mine is a joint partnership with the Malagasy Government and consequently the environment for holding the company to account when human rights abuses occur is extremely challenging. This year, suffering months of a fishing ban with no support for their survival, villagers were forced to take to the streets in protest, barring the mine access road and risking physical harm and arrest over weeks of conflict in order to demand their rights.

The Passionists provided emergency funds to support my research and advocacy work with the Trust to help bring these matters to international attention, exert public pressure on the company at the company AGM and in direct meetings with Rio Tinto's executive. Also, to provide much needed scientific analysis by the Trust's independent experts in order to support community claims and concerns around the contamination issues. We are hugely grateful to the Passionists for their timely support, which was vital to deliver this work. ●





**“OUR ATTEMPT
TO SEPARATE
OURSELVES FROM
‘NATURE’ HAS BEEN
A GRIM FAILURE,
PROOF NOT OF OUR
GENIUS BUT OUR
HUBRIS.”**

*Paul Kingsnorth, Confessions of a Recovering
Environmentalist and Other Essays*

BUILDING BACK GREENER

Green Christian's annual conference *Building Back Greener*, which took place in Birmingham on 7-8 October, explored the need for a new approach to economics.

PARTNER DISPATCH Green Christian

WORDS: RUTH JARMAN

Speakers surveyed principles for economics and consumption rooted in the Christian tradition, such as **sufficiency** and **justice**. They contrasted with then-Prime Minister Liz Truss's vision of "growth, growth, growth", at the Conservative Party conference—also in Birmingham. They underpin Green Christian's *Joy in Enough* project and *Plenty!*, a training programme aimed at churches and groups of Christians which was launched in June 2021.

Speakers included:



Paul Kingsnorth

Writer and former deputy editor of *The Ecologist*, who warned of grave societal threats posed by technology.



Christopher Southgate

Theology professor based at Exeter University, who gave an Introduction to his view of Green Theology with particular reference to climate change.



Molly Scott-Cato

Professor of Green Economics at Roehampton University and a former Green MEP, who spoke about the need for "system change, not climate change", and for an emphasis on well-being rather than continual and unsustainable economic growth.

In a series of workshops, participants considered Christianity's historic engagement with economic issues such as tax, debt, inequality, tenants' rights, consumption and the dignity of labour.

The *Joy in Enough* project team plan to take forward insights on the economy gained at the conference to challenge policy makers and church leaders to promote a new economy based not on ever-increasing consumption but on what Kathryn Tanner has described as God's "economy of grace".

In a post-conference statement, Professor Tim Cooper, a trustee of Green Christian and former researcher at the New Economics Foundation, said "an uncritical approach to economic growth does not align well with the teachings of Christ and the New Testament epistles, which warn of materialism and call for an ethic of sufficiency." ●



...and



WORDS & IMAGES: ALEX HOLMES



Counting

0

“DO BEES HAVE taste buds?” Negus, ever pondering, answers his own question: “I don’t think so.” Bees and wasps in uncountable numbers swarm around the fireside in the Eritrean camp, a frenetic swirl of perpetual motion drawn to the discarded food.

No one appears concerned, or to have been stung. “Look at their energy,” continues Negus. “I have none. I am tired. I want to go back to Africa to see my mother. I miss her. I’ve been in Europe for too many years.” Uncountable bees and wasps; the burden of uncountable lost years.

1

MOST SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS are of a lower magnitude. Nahom has been in the camp just one day. He’s youthful, smiling, and passionate about football. “I want to play for Chelsea.”

“Chelsea!” I laughingly groan. “There’s only one team, Manchester United.” “Sir Alex Ferguson, great manager, but what is ‘Sir’?” My explanation of the British honours system triggers further discussion.

“You know about Field Marshal Montgomery?” It’s the seasoned Eyob, an excellent English speaker, who’s been one year in Calais. I tell him that as a young school boy I marched in a parade and we all saluted Field Marshal Montgomery. “I love history,” he says. “Do you know there were 25 German Field Marshals in World War Two?”
→

THE TWO-LEGGED chair propped up on a tree trunk. The two camp kittens, 'Soldier' and 'Salam'. It's evening; the low sun casts long shadows across the campsite. Guys are sitting on blankets in the shade playing cards.

Emerging from the undergrowth, the kittens summon immediate attention and each is given a tin of tuna. Soldier needs no encouragement; Salam is more wary. Eyob gently loosens the compact tuna with a plastic spoon, and the reluctant kitten begins to eat with relish.

His meal over, Soldier playfully snatches at insects, then climbs first onto Maria, then onto Eyob. "Yesterday he fell asleep here-" he indicates the crook of his neck. "You want a cappuccino?" A saucepan of milk is gently simmering on the fire.

Using a stick, he scratches something into the skin above both his knees. He points to the first of the scratched symbols: "This is how you write 'one' in Ge'ez, the old Eritrean language." He points to the other - "and this is 'two'. How many sugars do you want in your cappuccino, one or two, or perhaps three?"





3

**‘THREE-LEGGED’
SHESHY.** It’s more than half a year since he was run down by a car and had his leg broken. He’s still using a single crutch. There’s a pained edge to his smile these days. Behind where he’s sitting, two paintings of the Eritrean flag hang on the fence that borders the camp; they’re surmounted by a small statue of Mary, mother of Jesus. A rosary hanging from her neck oscillates in the wind. The flag is composed of three triangles.
→

092

IT'S 'FOUR-LEGGED' Samer, Samer who fell from a lorry, who explains the flag. He points with one of his crutches at the upper triangle, a green triangle signifying agriculture. The lower blue triangle signifies the sea. The central blood red triangle has a 30-leaved golden olive wreath in it: the 30

years of bloodshed fighting for independence from Ethiopia.

Explanation over, Samer's attention is caught by Channa's skateboard. Undeterred by his lameness, he mounts the skateboard and using his crutches to propel himself, he disappears down the road.



NEGUS WATCHES FROM the fireside. Despite the summer warmth, he fixedly keeps on his hat to hide his receding hairline: "I'm getting old."

He's in a wistful mood, nostalgically remembering Africa. "In Europe, everyone is out for themselves, they don't care about other people. In Africa, we look out for each other. I hope society in Europe will

change. I watched a Charlie Chaplin film once and in his day it seems people did care about others.”

I ask him if he has any good memories of his uncountable years in Europe. “I have met kind people. I will always remember them. Do you know the song *Memories* by Maroon 5? It’s

my favourite song. Give me your phone!”

I pass him my phone. We sit side by side on the worn and polished tree trunk, in the setting sun. Los Angeles, the distant world Maroon 5 inhabit, is thousands of miles—and uncountable lifetimes—away. Yet we listen intently to Negus’s favourite song:



LIFE RE BLOOMS

From 2015-16 many Syrian refugees began migrating to escape war, persecution, loss of homes and employment.

Seeking peace and a new start in Cyprus, families arrived here in large numbers by boat: from Syria, via Turkey, or from refugee camps in Greece.

A small group of volunteers in Paphos, all women, decided to do something practical to help. Now, the Learning Refuge continues to expand at pace, taking on new initiatives and responsibilities in a bid to deal with the scale of need. ●



≡ CYPRUS

WORDS & IMAGES: MARY CHOJNOWSKI



We continue our daily work of distributing freely clothes and household goods and furnitures to all families in need.

We have formally agreed from September with Caritas International to distribute their food-bags to over 30 families monthly. With the Learning Refuge's unique knowledge of the Syrian community in Paphos, we source food and distribute bags mainly to arabic speaking families. The number of new requests, however, is increasing in 2022—and does include other communities: African, Ukraine, Kurdish and others.





Summer activities developed in a new way with the arrival of a large group of teenagers, unaccompanied minors, released on April from Pournara asylum-reception camp and relocated to a Paphos hotel: over 160 teens mainly from Africa: Somalia, Cameroon or Congo.

↑
The teens arrive Tuesdays and Fridays for afternoon lessons at the Learning Refuge, taking part in creative classes including sewing machine tuition, embroidery, mosaic, jewellery making and music; also guitar and piano sessions for a very keen group of boys.

→
Our aim is to engage the teenagers and volunteers in an art exhibition & music event, to encourage their participation and acceptance in the wider community.





We are in a collaboration with another Caritas project, Hope Farm, which aims to sustainably produce vegetables, and staples for better food-bags. We will be encouraging beneficiaries to become 'green' volunteers, and learn about sustainable farming methods.

Our close work with refugee and asylum seeker families often results in appeals for extra help from the community.

This month we aim to raise funds for a Somali mother of two, who urgently needs a new leg orthosis (brace). Last month, the Learning Refuge helped two women who were threatened with eviction. Cases are diverse, and these types of urgent situations are an increasing part of our work.



Over 25 volunteers now actively help at the Learning Refuge, and many other non active members who donate, raise awareness and help indirectly in valuable ways.



We continue efforts to make good supportive relationships with businesses, local charities, councils and churches. Our registration process is now being handled by a local lawyer, at the stage of tailoring the articles of association for a volunteer non-profit group.



↑
Greek speaking volunteers provide homework help for children struggling with their studies: an after school workshop also including art and play.

Due to a large rise in the number of single mothers in the community, we aim to start a mothers and babies group this October. Efforts are underway to recruit new volunteer helpers.

We are host members of a new initiative, PAPHOS Social Outreach forum—comprised of local churches and charities due to the increasing problem of homelessness in our city. Meetings begin this month to discuss new ways we can jointly deal with this dilemma.



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We continue to provide workshops twice weekly for a team of sewing mothers mainly Syrians who create fabric items for sale. The Learning Refuge offers these items for sale through fundraiser, fairs etc. Plans are underway for this year's Christmas events.





THE Y BIBLE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS
OF THE ORIGINAL TONGUES,
THE FORMER TRANSLATIONS
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AND H



MADE IN U.S.A.

SYNDICATE PUBLISHERS



Christians should be
troubsemakers,
creators of
uncertainty,
agents of a
dimension
incompatible with
society.

J A C Q U E S

E L L U L

FR JOHN DEAR

JESUS, THE NONVIOLENT RESISTER

“This book is a manifesto for ‘good trouble’ as John Lewis called it. John Dear has added to the library – to the Holy Mischief section.”

— **Shane Claiborne**, Foreword to *The Sacrament of Civil Disobedience* (2022)

Fr John Dear’s book, *The Sacrament of Civil Disobedience*, is being brought back into print by the Passionists’ publishing imprint, Lab/ora Press: freshly edited, with a rabble-rousing foreword by activist and author **Shane Claiborne**. Within, Fr John draws on the rich tradition of civil disobedience in the Christian faith, and outlines

a civil resister’s field guide for discernment, best practice, and even our approach to jail time. In this extract, Fr John introduces Jesus as the master of nonviolent civil disobedience: the truth-seeker and risk-taker prepared to face death for the cause of God’s reign of nonviolence.

Illustration by **Benji Spence**



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OHANDAS GANDHI, THE great twentieth century apostle of nonviolence, once wrote that “Jesus was the most active resister known perhaps to history.” Jesus was a peacemaker who time and time again broke the laws that oppressed people and kept them slaves to injustice. Much that Jesus did was nonviolent, illegal, provocative, civilly disobedient and divinely obedient. Jesus was a nonviolent resister; indeed, a steadfast practitioner of nonviolent civil disobedience—a troublemaker *par excellence*.

His entire life led up to the culminating confrontation with the powers of his day, symbolized in the oppressive cult of the Temple system. His civil disobedience in the Temple provoked the ruling authorities to arrest Jesus. They were afraid that his followers among the poor in the countryside would try to do likewise. So, he was imprisoned, tried, interrogated, tortured, and publicly executed by the ruling authorities. After his murder—through the legal channel of the death penalty—Jesus rose from the dead: another act in his series of nonviolent acts of civil disobedience to the imperial/religious authorities. His resurrection was nonviolent and illegal; indeed, totally outside of the law and its “principalities and powers.”

The evangelists are clear on this point: Jesus was unambiguous. His disciples tried to talk him out of going to Jerusalem, but Jesus would hear none of that. He went to Jerusalem, fully conscious of the implications and consequences. He would speak the truth, dramatically, symbolically, at the center of the culture of death. He would turn over the tables of that culture, if necessary, but he would speak. He would insist on the truth. He would be obedient to God’s will. He would make himself available to all.

He was willing to be rejected, willing to risk his life, but he would go and speak up for what was right. Jesus was a walking force of nonviolence. He was the living Spirit of the reign of nonviolence, walking amid the kingdom of violence. He lived the truth, and in his death, became Truth. His actions were the committed response of someone on fire with love and truth.

Thus, he was dramatic. He was symbolic. And he was willing to stand up to the principalities and powers and face every level of violence, including arrest, jail, trial, torture, and death by crucifixion. As a force of nonviolence, he would confront all these evils and overcome them through suffering love.

In trying to respond to this challenge, few followers of Jesus dare to take the road to Jerusalem in their own lives. This is understandable: the consequences are still as severe as in Jesus’ day—arrest, imprisonment, and, in some situations, torture and execution. Yet, following the leadership of Gandhi, Day, King and others during the twentieth century, a new strength has been given to Christians and truth-seekers regarding the road to Jerusalem: a way to re-read the Gospel through the eyes of nonviolence. What Jesus revealed was a Spirit committed to love and truth, and a way to live out that Spirit in a world of hostility and un-truth. Jesus’ life, words and actions are the way of nonviolent resistance.



Eleven Episodes of Civil Disobedience

1. Proclaiming the words of Isaiah in the Synagogue



2. Healing the Leper



3. Associating with outsiders



4. Healing on the Sabbath



5. Healing the Gerasene demoniac



6. Breaking the eating codes



7. Loving the enemy



8. The entry into Jerusalem



9. Turning the Temple tables



10. Resisting taxes



11. Resurrection

From this new perspective, this new hermeneutic re-learned from the court and the jail cell, the Gospel of Jesus reads as a manifesto of nonviolent civil disobedience to systemic violence and societal sin. It becomes clearer that the Gospel of Jesus commands active nonviolence. Everything in Jesus' life is seen as one illegal act of peacemaking after another.

Jesus was stubborn, insistent and determined: he would do everything he could, even if that meant going outside imperial and religious law, to reveal the reign of God. Once we understand the world as a reign of violence into which God is bringing forth God's reign of *nonviolence*, Jesus' life becomes a testimony of nonviolent civil disobedience as a way to challenge the kingdom of violence and death.

The Gospels portray Jesus as acting publicly to reveal the reign of God present in the world. They present a series of actions that build up to a crescendo in Jerusalem, where Jesus commits his greatest action: turning over the tables in the Temple; an act of peaceful, loving disobedience and truth-telling.

All his actions vary in focus and intensity; many are illegal and draw the ire of the ruling and religious authorities. But the three synoptic Gospels tell us it is the Temple action which leads to his arrest and execution. After his death, through the power of God, Jesus commits still another illegal act: he rises from the dead, and sets out inspiring people to the same series of subversive nonviolent acts.

His life is beyond our wildest dreams; but he says to us, "Believe it. Come, follow me as I turn over the tables of this culture of death." Jesus commands his followers to do as he did, to follow the spirit in the reign of nonviolence and its challenge to the kingdom of violence and oppression, even to the point of death, and then beyond, to resurrection.

JESUS WAS STUBBORN, DETERMINED: HE HE COULD, EVEN IF OUTSIDE IMPERIAL AND REVEAL THE REIGN OF

Jesus remained faithful to God. His execution was a political event, as the trial accounts show. The forces of the empire brought the full brunt of their legalized violence down on Jesus. They used their ultimate weapon against him: he was put to death.

Yet, as the scripture recounts, the world had only just begun to see his weapon of nonviolence. God raised Jesus from the dead, and this resurrection was the ultimate act of nonviolent civil disobedience. God disobeyed the imperial code of law which says that the empire has the last word: when someone is executed, according to imperial logic, that person is supposed to stay dead. According to the logic of God—the logic of nonviolence—suffering love and truth-telling always lead to resurrection and life.

On the first day of the week, when Jesus' women friends went to anoint his body, they found the tomb empty. A young man, dressed in white, told them not to be afraid, but to get the others and go to Galilee where they would find him.

Jesus had risen and gone back immediately to Galilee, to the outskirts of the empire, into the

land of the poor where he had started his nonviolent revolution. He was starting all over again! This time, his disciples would know the outcome: they would speak out publicly against the forces of oppression and injustice, risk arrest and death, and share in the resurrected life of the Christ.

The resurrection inspired the disciples to practice nonviolent civil disobedience towards the ruling authorities of the day, as a way of life. Shortly thereafter, the community of followers grew and multiplied and were martyred in large numbers by the imperial regimes. The resurrection gave them new life, hope, and the courage to continue resisting injustice and proclaiming justice for all.

The poetic story of Jesus' life, as told in the Gospel of John, ends with a resurrection episode of particular boldness. John's Gospel was written long after the others, perhaps seventy years after the death of Jesus. In the first account of Jesus' appearance to the disciples, Thomas was absent. When told that Jesus had appeared and offered them his peace, he laughed it off, saying, "I will

INSISTENT AND WOULD DO EVERYTHING THAT MEANT GOING RELIGIOUS LAW, TO GOD.

never believe it without probing the nail-prints in his hands, without putting my finger in the nail-marks and my hand into his side.”

A week later, Jesus appeared to the disciples—Thomas among them. Jesus said to Thomas, “Take your finger and examine my hands. Put your hand into my side. Do not persist in your unbelief, but believe!”

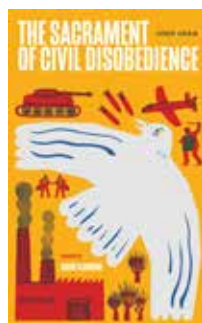
“My Lord and My God,” Thomas declared as he fell in worship before Christ.

Thomas’ response to the risen Jesus became the proclamation of the early church, the community of believers and resisters. But the words ‘My Lord and My God’ were not just pious words uttered to Jesus in a prayer; they were political words of revolution. This creed, as a statement of belief, was an act of nonviolent civil disobedience.

A law had been passed declaring that the emperor was to be addressed from then on as ‘My Lord and My God’. Addressing Jesus with this title was not only an act of faith and an expression of love for Jesus: it was a highly illegal act. It broke

the law. As far as the empire was concerned, it was an act of political blasphemy, because the emperor was god. The followers of Jesus who used this title, as John’s Gospel hints, had taken up the way of nonviolent civil disobedience. They were no longer servants of the emperor; they had finally become followers of Jesus.

Today, we too are called to be a people who address Jesus—not the culture, the system, Wall Street or the state—as our Lord and our God. We are called to be people of the resurrection. As followers of Jesus, we take up where he left off: with the illegal work of nonviolent civil disobedience. ●



You can pre-order *The Sacrament of Civil Disobedience* from our publishing imprint, Lab/ora Press or from all major online bookstores from mid-November.

www.labora.press



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● **People from all walks of life - many from church backgrounds - feel moved to act in 'nonviolent civil disobedience' for the first time in their lives. We asked a number of protestors what caused them to 'cross the line' for the first time: to break the law, and risk arrest, for the sake of a higher form of justice.**



HILARY BOND

Schools worker and pioneer priest for the Parish of Wareham

I HAD SIGNED up as non-arrestable, but despite committing simply to cook for other people for a few days, I had devoured every word about what you might need to know if you did get arrested.

I was going to the October 2019 rebellion in London as part of Extinction Rebellion and Christian Climate Action. I was a relatively new member of both, and had only joined up after years of writing to my MP, hassling big businesses and those with the power to make a difference, and trying to live my own life in a way that impacted the world as little as possible.

I had reached the point of feeling like everyone was patting me on the head, telling me to run away and play and that they would sort it out; and then seeing absolutely nothing change. My frustration had turned to desperation and I did not know what to do next.

So it was that I found myself sitting in the middle

of the road at the end of Lambeth Bridge with a police officer about the age of my son squatting in front of me. As he asked me why I was doing this I realised that I could no longer walk away; that as a follower of Jesus - who spoke truth to power and was ultimately executed because of it - I had to do everything that I could in order to be part of bringing fullness of life to all of creation, now and for the generations to come.

Josh reluctantly arrested me, and the ensuing 24 hours were a life changing experience full of the presence of God and some amazing people. The whole story is much longer - but maybe that is for another day. I have now been arrested four times; it was not something I ever expected to find myself doing, but I firmly believe that it is part of my Christian calling at the moment at least: and I pray that it will make a difference.





SUE PARFITT
Retired vicar and family therapist from Bristol



2

ASH WEDNESDAY, 1984. The Theological College Principal had organised for a woman to address us ordinands at the morning service, in deference to the five of us women struggling to get a hearing in an excluding Church; so it seemed churlish of me to say I couldn't be there, as I was going to join the Dominican monks of Blackfriars and break into the Upper Heyford military base instead!

This offer of inclusion to us Anglicans, in the planned Catholic action, confirmed my sense that this was the right time for me to "cross the line" into civil disobedience and oppose the siting of American cruise missiles in the UK.

Early morning. Pieces of carpet flung over the barbed wire that topped the high perimeter fence. We clambered over, helping the Dominicans with their long white robes. Speed was of the essence. Chained together, we spread out along the runway, a menacing plane in the background. Cross erect, ashes prepared, we began the penitential service, seeking forgiveness for our own complicity in the Western world's preparations for nuclear war.

→

"Chained together, we spread out along the runway,

a menacing plane in the background."

(cont.)

The military police arrived, but I felt no anxiety. We were immersed in the liturgy and were allowed to finish. Then hauled into vans, still chained, and taken to an empty room to await the charges - breach of the peace. We were fasting, but I gratefully accepted some raisins from my Anglican mate to sooth my churning stomach. Released, but charged to go to court soon.

We took our toothbrushes with us to court I recall, expecting prison. But no - warm handshakes from a sympathetic clerk of the court and smiles from the judge!

A group of Christians obeying God's call to challenge the culture of death and speak of God's promise of life hit the newspaper headlines, and that first foray into "crossing the line" confirmed my sense that this kind of radical action did indeed have a place in opposing death and bringing in God's Kingdom of justice and peace.



3

CHRIS COLE
Founder and director of Drone Wars UK

I first became involved in civil disobedience in the 1980s at the annual Ash Wednesday 'Repent and Resistance' liturgy organised by Catholic Peace Action, Pax Christi and others outside the Ministry of Defence in London.

Through work with CAFOD, I had met people who were struggling with what it meant to be a Christian in the situation of gross poverty and injustice. I became more and more aware of the connection between our comparatively lavish lifestyle in the West, and the poverty and injustice in the South. I became aware just how many lives were being destroyed to defend that lifestyle and to keep 'our' economic system going, to keep 'our' oil flowing.

Taking part in that first act of civil disobedience was a symbolic, but concrete 'no' to the deadly ways of the world, and a prayerful 'yes' to God's way of peace and justice.







*"My heart was convicted that God was calling me to act on behalf of those I
now describe as being among 'the crucified of today'."*



4

MARTIN NEWELL
Passionist Priest and environmental activist



IN THE 1990s, British Aerospace was among those arming Indonesian forces occupying East Timor, who killed over 200,000 people. In 1996, four women, the ‘Seeds of Hope Ploughshares’ group, disarmed a BAe Hawk Jet due to be exported from the UK to Indonesia. In court, the jury found they were justified in their actions, and therefore ‘not guilty’ of £1.7m damage to the plane.

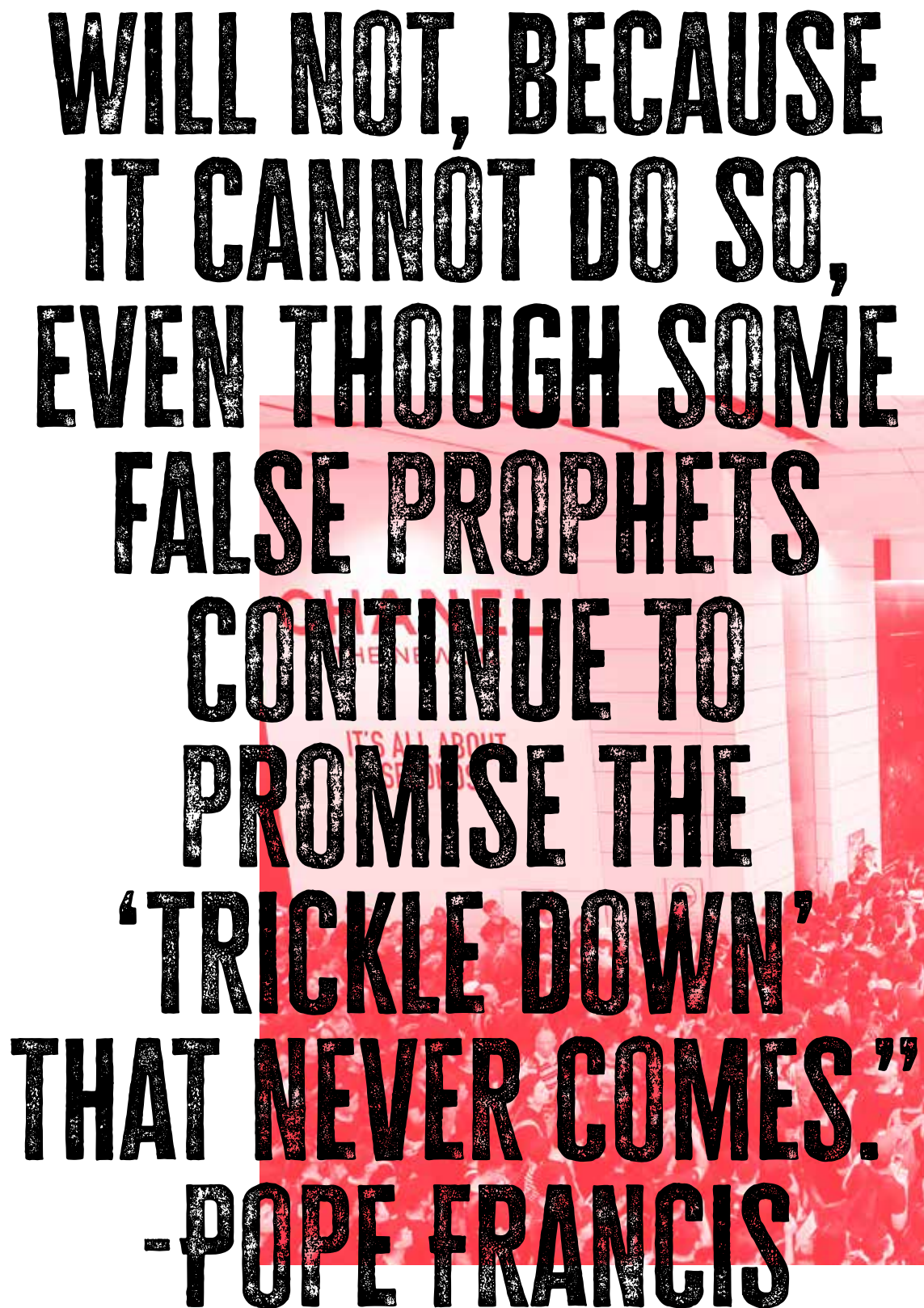
I had already been inspired by the Ploughshares movement, which is based on incarnating the words of the prophets Isaiah and Micah, “they shall hammer their swords into ploughshares, and make war no more”. This movement is deeply connected to the Catholic Worker (CW) movement. After the trial, and inspired by the action and the outcome, a Liverpool CW community started.

It was through reading CW newspapers, articles and books, as well as of course the Gospels, that I had become convinced that Jesus was a pacifist, and so I should be too. Through that reading, and through meeting people involved in similar nonviolent direct action (NVDA) through Pax Christi, I also had become convinced that NVDA and civil disobedience were a legitimate, and at times necessary, part of Christian discipleship.

These convictions remained theoretical until I visited the Liverpool CW in 1997. I was invited to take part in an act of ‘trespass’, prayer, witness and protest at the same BAe Wharton base where the four women had acted the year before. My heart was convicted that God was calling me to act on behalf of those I would now describe as being among ‘the crucified of today’, so I responded. ●



**“WE CANNOT EXPECT
THE ECONOMIC
MODEL THAT
UNDERLIES UNFAIR
AND UNSUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
TO SOLVE OUR
PROBLEMS. IT HAS
NOT AND**

The background is a red-tinted photograph of a crowded event. In the foreground, there is a large crowd of people. In the background, there are posters and a banner. One poster on the right shows a figure and the text 'HUANES PER...'. A banner in the center has the text 'IT'S ALL ABOUT...'.

**WILL NOT, BECAUSE
IT CANNOT DO SO,
EVEN THOUGH SOME
FALSE PROPHETS
CONTINUE TO
PROMISE THE
'TRICKLE DOWN'
THAT NEVER COMES."
-POPE FRANCIS**

St Clare,

CLAIRE HENDERSON DAVIS speaks about her latest dance theatre production *All Creation Waits*, & a living practice of incarnation and liturgy.

Incarnation & the Material World



52

Dancer, theologian and Gestalt therapist are words often used to introduce Claire Henderson Davis, depending on the 'hat' she's wearing. But as we talk on a Friday morning in early September, I realise this is just the tip of the iceberg.

WORDS: JEMMA MELLOR



WHILE STUDYING THEOLOGY at The University of Edinburgh, Claire began training in dance and choreography, in tandem with her PhD. From 2015-2018, Claire

held the fascinating position of Contemporary Performance Artist & Theologian in Residence at Chester Cathedral, supported in part by the Passionists.

She is also the author of *After the Church: Divine Encounter in a Sexual Age*, an autobiographical re-imagining of the Christian tradition in contemporary language. More recently, she has been working as a police chaplain, and is just completing her accreditation as a Gestalt Therapist. On top of all this, she is an environmental activist and passionate advocate for reconciling the church and the embodied self.

We spoke at length about *All Creation Waits*, a dance theatre production which Claire directed and performed in in 2019*, and which toured the UK last autumn as a film. *All Creation Waits* is a contemporary imagining of St Francis and St Clare, coming to terms with the need to leave their existing lives in addressing our environmental emergency.

Q Claire, can you tell us about the project and about the motivations behind such a work?

A The Third Order Anglican Franciscans were looking to somehow engage the charism of St. Francis with the contemporary world, and they asked me whether I would consider making a piece around this idea. Initially I wasn't interested; I thought *there's too much scope for sentimentality here*, but I said I would think about it. Around this same time I was finishing my residency at Chester Cathedral, and I went and lived for a year in this little village called Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant in north Wales, in a housing cooperative.

Steve Jones, from Sector 39, who founded the cooperative, is an expert in permaculture. So, this is the environment I found myself in; I was full of permaculture ideas, spending a lot of time taking

*In collaboration with Ian Bush, Fraser Patterson, Malcolm Guide and Gary Lloyd.

long walks in the hills, and thinking about Francis in that context. So it started to come to mind how I might approach such a project, and how to do it in connection with climate change.

It started with the idea of Francis and Clare, and their relationship; not as a retelling of the historical story, but as a symbolic re-imagining. Francis has withdrawn from the world, and Clare comes to join him. Clare, in the piece, comes in on her high heels, very unbalanced, tottering around, and there's an exhaustion in her.

I felt like Clare was the symbol of the earth, a symbol of nature—what we're doing to nature, that

connection between the feminine and the earth. That felt very symbolic of what's going on in our culture, with the erasure of the feminine voice or the body, particularly in Christianity.

So Francis, having withdrawn from the world, is interrupted when Clare arrives, which is that thing that happens to us, isn't it? What do we do when we are interrupted? And so they have to share the space, they have to make a relationship with each other. Francis really has to face his own violence towards the earth, which leads them towards a place of finding connection, and then of going out to create change.

Q The relationship portrayed between St Clare and St Francis, in this re imagined contemporary setting, develops slowly throughout the performance. Through letters, shared radio listening and mutual readings of *Laudato Si* the two characters are changed in these everyday moments of reflection and interaction together.

As a choreographer and dancer what was it like to work on a piece which embraces slowness and the contemplation of the everyday?

A The text came first, and I knew I was going to ask Malcolm Guite to write the text. But before he wrote the script, we went on quite a wild trip together. Fraser and I drove Malcolm from Manchester out to the Aberdaron, where the opening film was made, and we showed him all the places that we wanted to use. I had gone to Aberdaron by myself in 2011, and I knew that's where we were going to set this, because the story is about Francis restoring the church outside the city.

Once Malcolm had written the text, we went down to London to work with a voice coach on how to speak the text. Composer Gary Lloyd then recorded the text with us, and used it to create a soundscape with text, music and sounds of nature. With that recording of the text, we went into the studio to work on the physical. Because of the text, the movement had to be quite contemplative. It had to be in a relationship with the words. I think that's why there's a kind of slowness in it, in order to create space. There has to be space for the words to be heard.

There's almost like an element of movement poetry in it, it's not 'dancey' dance. It's physical theatre that's creating the relationship with the text.



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Q The videoed work has recently been on tour across the UK, an adaptation which had to be made to the original live tour due to the Covid 19 pandemic. What was it like having to adapt the work under the circumstances and what has engagement been like from audiences?

A I mean, it was kind of the piece that broke me! It was such a disaster in the sense that, first we had the trauma of Fraser leaving the piece, which is its own story, and so we were re-rehearsing it quite at the last minute with Bysh. We then premiered in Salford Cathedral, and then, you know, the pandemic and everything was cancelled.

So, what do we do with this? What do we do with the funding? Finally we decided to make the film, and I really feel glad about that.

Then I had this idea of launching it for Cop 26. In theory, it was a good idea, but in a sense it suffered from the competition of Cop 26 rather than being supported by it—and then in the lead up to it, I got pneumonia, and I couldn't go on the tour. So in some ways, it was a total disaster, but it got a good audience in Chester, and I've had some lovely

correspondence from people who've really been moved by it.

The redeeming factor is the film was made. In some ways, it feels like it may not have got its final outing yet.





Q In a recent open letter to Pope Francis you draw parallels between the harm inflicted on our common home, of this earth, and the relationship of the church to women and the feminine.

Can you tell us more about your personal heart and priestly calling to actively work towards repair and reconciliation in both of these areas?

A Right at the heart of Christianity is the idea of incarnation, of the word becoming flesh. Jesus is the word who becomes flesh. But I think, incarnation is also a description of a process at the heart of human life, that connects the body and the mind.

For example, any creative idea begins as something in the imagination, and then we have to engage with the material world in order to bring that about. As we engage with the material world, further ideas come that shape our sense of the word. But we're in a culture where there's a profound distortion within that relationship, between word and flesh, that has come out of the church.

Let's say, in an archetypal sense, the word is masculine and the flesh is feminine. What we have is a culture in the church where the word has dominated the flesh. The word imposes itself; the material world is being used and abused—rather than the material world having its own integrity, its own limits that need to be respected, its own shape. For example, in a fertile relationship between word and flesh, there's an open-endedness about the word. As the word engages with the flesh, then the word learns new things, as the flesh takes form. The word changes, and there's a reciprocal relationship.

Christianity, in that sense, has a lot to answer for. In its rejection of the flesh as something that must be controlled, overcome, and repressed, it has not learned the process of incarnation. So what we have left is just the word. The word which is simply barren, because it has no skilled relationship to the material world.

What you have, then, is a culture in which people are looking for that connection in other ways: through yoga, through other kinds of practices that are drawn from other traditions, because there's a lack of skill in this area within the Christian tradition.

**“Incarnation is a
description of a
process at the heart
of human life, that
connects the body
and the mind.”**

“Kneeling, for example, shapes the body into a form of humility.”

So what kind of body is the Christian tradition currently shaping?”

What I'm trying to do is to develop a living practice of incarnation in my work, that develops skills in relation to the material world, to the body, to feeling. All of my work has been about developing those skills, through psychotherapy, through dance, through breathing, meditation and yoga.

There's a need to heal that relationship, and that's what I'm doing in relation to Christianity. I'm not willing to abandon the Christian tradition, because our culture is deeply formed in this tradition; there's a need to heal that relationship.

Q Liturgical practices, repetition and shared public acts seem to be themes that are important within your wider body of work. Focusing on humanity's current relationship with the environment and the divine feminine, what new shared public acts to do think the church needs to embrace at this time?

A My interest has always been in liturgy. I did my PhD looking at liturgy, using research in anthropology on ritual. This approach to ritual asks not 'what does it mean?', but 'what kind of body does it form?' Kneeling, for example: kneeling shapes the body into a form of humility. So the question I was asking was 'what kind of body is the Christian tradition currently shaping?'

I was looking particularly at this book called, *In Breaking of Bread: The Eucharist and Ritual* by P. J. Fitzpatrick. He was writing about what happened in the Second Vatican Council: you had a democratisation of the liturgy, where it became participatory, but no parallel change happened in the power structure of the church.

So he argued that the liturgy, in this expression, became a form of propaganda, because it wasn't a true expression of the corporate life of the church.

It was giving a show of democracy, but there was no real democracy within the church and that was why it failed, because those who wanted the tradition to remain the same, rejected the democratisation; and those who wanted to change saw there was the democratisation of the liturgy, but not of the church. No-one was satisfied, and I think that that remains, in a way, a central problem in the church.

Liturgy, then, is no longer seen as something that the church is really offering to the public; it's become like a private language for Christians who go to church. The church has started to use a kind of discursive, rational language to talk with others, outside of the church, so they talk about social justice and things like that, but in that, they've lost an embodied language. I'm interested in how we create a public, embodied language for the church.

Q Lastly, what's next for you?

A I am exploring ministry in the Anglican Church. I'm still working in psychotherapy, and want to keep connected to that. In terms of my creative work, I want to explore djembe drumming; I'm not sure why, but I feel this is my way into whatever happens next on that liturgical level. ●

To watch *All Creation Waits* or for more information about Claire's practice please visit: www.clairehendersondavis.com

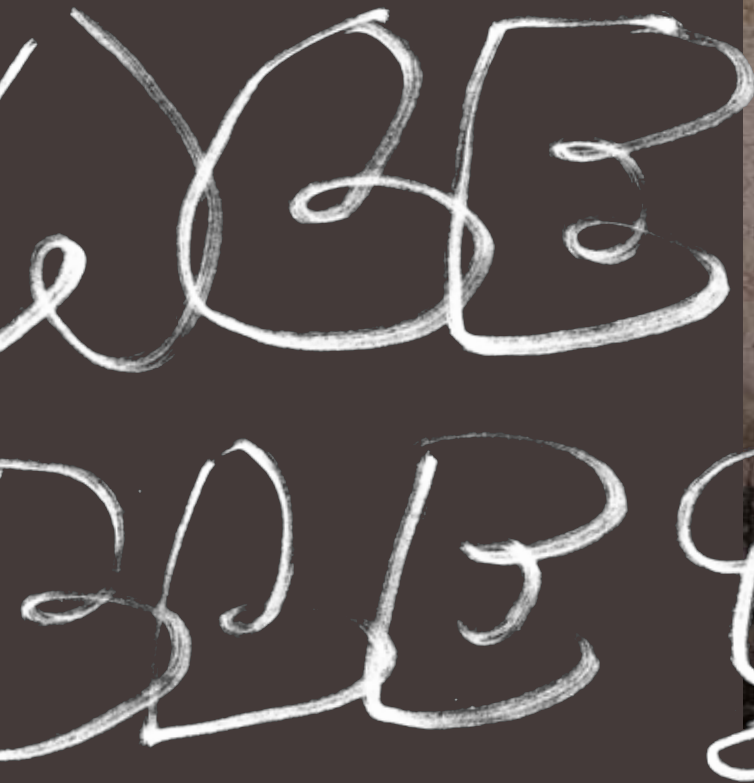
After the Church: Divine Encounter in a Sexual Age can be purchased from all good bookshops.

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Words by
Aisling Griffin



SOMETIMES GET ASKED by students if I believe peace is possible. The last time I was asked this, I had to stop and reflect for a moment. I think it's easy to glibly say yes, as a kind of wishful thinking, but to genuinely answer yes, I had to momentarily re-find that spark that gives me hope, whilst acknowledging the challenges that we face.

As the Schools and Youth Education Worker for Pax Christi, I get to work with many young people, teachers and chaplains to explore peace and peacebuilding. Their insights and responses can be profound, sometimes challenging, but ultimately are hopeful. Although each young person is



↑ War-torn parts of Daraa, Syria (Levi Meir Clancy)

← Peace organisations building relationships in Damascus (Hozien Azour)

↓ Residents of Idlib celebrate the restoration of their ancient clock tower (YouTube/Idlib Media Center)



different, I think it's fair to say most young people are aware of what is happening in our societies and our world. In workshops it's clear that they are aware of the injustices, conflict and violence in their lives and communities, and yet my impression is that social justice and fairness are important to them. Young people show they care for others, sharing their concerns but also their joys, and want to respond.

↓ Syrian NGOs are rebuilding destroyed parts of cities such as Daraa. (Mahmoud Sulaiman)



I remember myself trying to discover how I could respond to the world that I could see around me. Through experiences with Taizé, overseas volunteering, chance friendships and through contact with organisations such as the Columbans, I found my way to meeting a range of people committed to working for social justice. Their energy and witness inspired me to get involved - and eventually to work with Pax Christi!

I'm lucky today to be able to work with numerous organisations and individuals who first inspired me, but also to meet others who are doing this work. Working together and supporting each other is an important way to build hope and find encouragement. Young people are finding their voice in the many social justice movements or organisations that are youth led and youth focussed. Climate justice is just one issue where we can see the creative and passionate responses of young people, both as individuals and as groups.

I'm indebted to chaplains, teachers and educators who invite me in to work with their young people. Their commitment to widening the experiences, opportunities and skills of the young people they work with is invaluable, as is the support that they give to my work and promoting social justice.

So, where does this leave us? Let's remember to look for and celebrate those signs of hope. Let's continue, both young and not-so-young, to build networks and communities where we can find them. Pax Christi is always eager to welcome new members and the Passionist project, FaithJustice, is one example of a growing network of young Christians interested in social justice, where they can learn, explore and respond.

Much of the hope I get comes from the people that I am privileged to work with, especially the many young people and educators who want to make the world a better place. Across the country, and indeed across the world, we can find young people committed to working for peace and social justice. ●

Community of the Passion's John Thornhill is an unapologetic appreciator of church buildings, often travelling around the UK to visit them. Here, he contemplates their lasting power.

Words & Images by
John Thornhill

Additional Photography by
**Roger Marks, J.Hannan-Briggs,
Herry Lawford, Chris Moore**



IN MY POSTGRADUATE Diploma in Parish Church Studies, we looked at the story of Christianity in Britain from “bricks-and mortar” up - that is, what the 40,000 churches in Britain tells us about the ebb and flow of Christian faith. For the record, that’s just over a thousand more churches than pubs. For many people in an increasingly multicultural and secular society, the church in the landscape remains one of the last testaments-in-stone to the faith of generations: anchoring faith in memory and long learned Christian practice.

For others, they are built-burdens which block the Holy from the World. Giles Fraser controversially once wrote “Indeed, I suspect that if every single (church) were blown up tomorrow, England would be a much more Christian country in 10 years’ time. Theologically, they are little more than rain shelters.” →

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MORTAL

I'm not with Giles Fraser on that. Faith is expressed in words and action, but it is also a deposit which we leave behind in art and culture. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI was a great advocate of the idea of beauty as a path to God. He once said "when we enter a Romanesque church: we are spontaneously invited to recollection and prayer. We feel as if the faith of generations were enclosed in these splendid buildings."

But churches not only invite an expression of faith, for many they can be uninterrupted spaces where we can encounter the struggle between doubt and faith which so perplexed the Welsh poet R.S.Thomas:

**"Often I try
To analyse the quality
Of its silences. Is this where God hides
From my searching? I have stopped to listen,
After the few people have gone,
To the air recomposing itself
For vigil..."**

My passion for churches lies not solely in their irreplaceable beauty and irreplicable uniqueness, but also in their continued relevance as artefacts of faith and spaces in which we still seek and express faith. ●



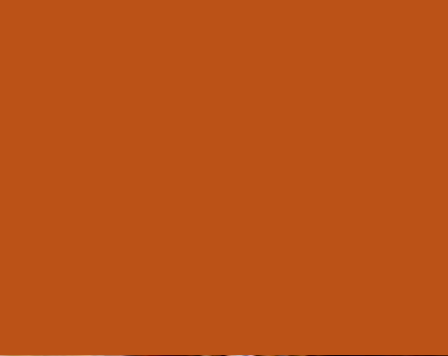
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Holy Trinity Church,
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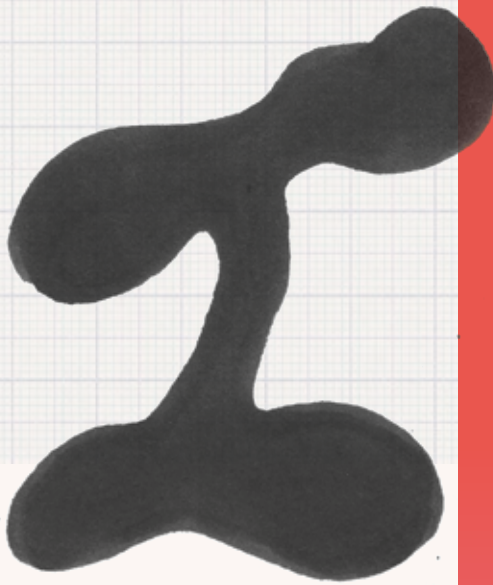


St Laurence,
Ludlow



Words by
Teresa Wilson

THE POWER OF DREAMING



MAGINATION IS THE door to all new ideas and creations. I am an artist and I know this very well. But a quote by Pope Francis, printed in my parish church newsletter earlier this year, made me reflect further and consider what it means to imagine and dream BIG.

“We will never discover the special personal calling that God has in mind for us if we remain enclosed in ourselves, in our usual way of doing things, in the apathy of those who fritter away their lives in their own little world. We would lose the chance to dream big and to play our part in the unique and original story that God wants to write with us.”

The words of Pope Francis seemed a little harsh to me. It led me to ask myself – am I frittering my life away making artwork that only a few people will see? Am I stuck in my own little world?

Every endeavor begins with a dream, followed by action. So, I began to wonder... what does a very big dream/ action look like?



Image by Caron Brown

1

CAVE OF THE HANDS, ARGENTINA

The Cave of the Hands, Argentina is an example of a dream that took 7,000 years to be completed. It was made by blowing powdered pigment through a blowpipe to create stenciled handprints on the rock walls; created by many hundreds of people, probably women and children from 7,300 BC to 700 AD.

The hands seem to reach out of the rock towards us from the past as if to say... *“We greet you, spirit beings of the future... we are all one”.*



2 LITTLE AMAL

Little Amal is an example of a big work of art that travelled on a very long journey. The Little Amal project was an undertaking in support of refugees. A 3.5 metre high giant puppet representing a Syrian refugee child; this living artwork walked 8,000 km across Europe in 2021. Wherever it went it received massive attention and emotional reactions.



3 MY BED, TRACY EMIN

My Bed by Tracy Emin is a work of huge melancholic power. The story that Emin recalls is that she had been wallowing in a depressive state in her bed for several days when, on the way to the bathroom, she looked back and saw her bed transformed. The colours and sculptural forms of the bed, in her vision, became abstract, and she saw the whole suddenly as an instant and complete work of art.

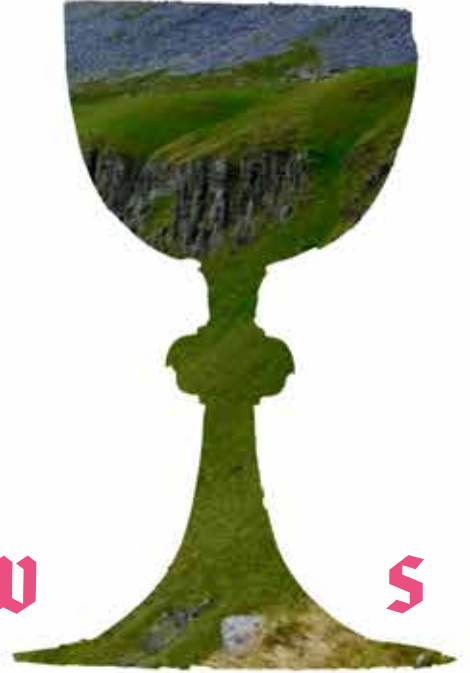
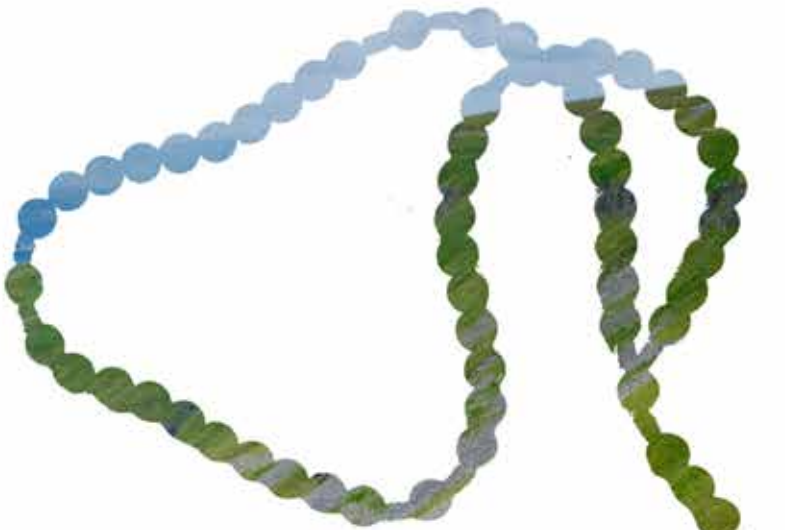
Art is shamanic and transmutational. It changes both the energy of the artist and of the viewer of the art. For this reason it is, and always has been, a spiritual practice.

The moment of inspiration which urges us to imagine, dream and create in the world is a gift from the Holy Spirit. I believe what Pope Francis was saying to me, and to us all, is to dream, create and act — and to do it with style! ●



F O U R

passionist priests take vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and to keep alive the memory of the passion.



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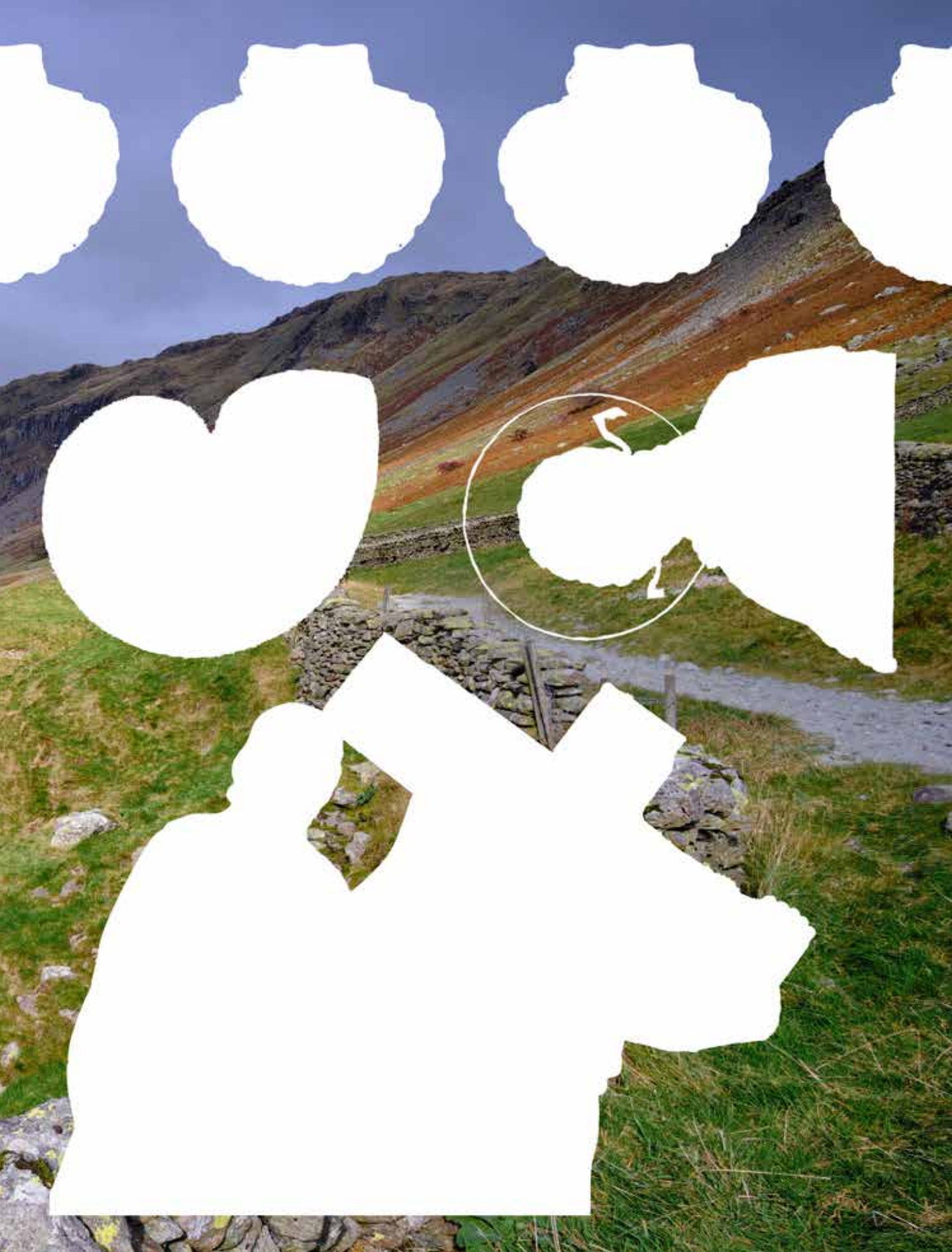
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Four Passionists explain what the vows mean to them today. >



PHOTOGRAPHY: IAN CYLKOWSKI
ILLUSTRATIONS: LIAM ROTHERAM



O B E D I E N C E

WHEN I ENTERED religious life, I always associated obedience with lots of negative connotations, e.g. always being submissive, always being good and dutiful, unquestionably doing what has been asked by someone in authority, leading to loss of all individuality.

I learnt that the Latin word for obedience, 'ob-audir,' means 'to listen intently'. I am called to listen to the word of God and listen to my Community and my Superiors. I am called to listen to the signs of our times and respond with a new sense of mission.

I have experience of this obedient listening – some time

ago I was amazed to hear that where I live, which is a very affluent town in Yorkshire, there was a food bank to help some people who were struggling financially.

I was really moved by this and prayed about it. I felt a call to try and help in whatever way I could. I then asked my Community if I could volunteer at the food bank whilst not forgetting my primary work in the retreat house. The Community agreed and I am now on the rota of volunteers to help in the food bank.

Now I have realised that obedience is not about being submissive or a threat to my individuality, it is striving to be



attentive to the ways in which God's presence is revealed in the world around us. For me obedience means fidelity to God which frees me from the tendency to put my own will before the God whom I love with all my heart.

SUSAN IRWIN is a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Cross & Passion and part of the team at The Briery Retreat Centre, Ilkley

C H A S T I T Y

THIS MAY BE a surprise, but it's the *easiest* of the vows, I would say – either because of a *purpose*, which captivates me completely ("the Kingdom of God is justice and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit"), or because of a *relationship* which is so deep, that I am totally imbued in it.

No, it is both: not as an achievement, but as the most precious gift. Living chastity is responding to God's presence every day, all the time,

wholeheartedly, but not like an obligation or even a choice; more like a life-fulfilling peaceful surrender. It enables me to give everything in ministry and in the liturgy: being there for you. And, because I am not 'available', I feel absolutely free to have true friendships that are not threatening in any way.

But, I should add, all this would not make sense if I neither lived in community, nor believed in eternal life.



MARK ROBIN CP is Provincial of Holy Hope Province of Passionists, the Netherlands.

P O V E R T Y

FROM HIS COLLECTIONS of spiritual stories, Fr. Anthony De Mello SJ shares a story of a wise woman who was travelling in the mountains and found a precious stone in a stream. The next day she met another traveller who was hungry, and the wise woman opened her bag to share her food. The hungry traveller saw the precious stone and asked the woman to give it to him. She did so without hesitation. The traveller left, rejoicing in his good fortune. But later he began to think; *what is the one gift she possesses which enabled her to give away the stone so freely and with a smile on her face?* Yes, she must possess something that is deeper and more precious than a gem!

The vow of poverty first and foremost is about possessing the one gift of Jesus' presence, the 'buried treasure which neither moth nor woodworms destroy and thieves cannot break in and steal'. The vow of poverty also calls us to detach ourselves from superfluous life by ordering our desires daily towards a simplicity of heart.

In Luke's gospel, Jesus tells Martha that there is only one thing necessary and Mary has chosen it. Our Passionist constitutions therefore calls us to focus on Jesus 'the one gift necessary', "who showed us love by becoming poor for our sakes". We carry this 'Crucified Love' in our prayers, community



life and ministry as of absolute importance relying solely on the grace of God. This very act of surrender 'to live simply so others may simply live' brings us blessings of a hundredfold—as promised by the one who calls us.

TOMY KANJARATHUNGAL is a Passionist priest from the Indian Province who is currently a member of the Passionist International Community at Highgate





THE MEMORY OF THE PASSION

DURING HIS VISIT to Rome, St Paul of the Cross was turned away from the Quirinal Palace after his desire to see the Congregation approved by the Pope. He turned his steps towards the Basilica of St Mary Major where he prayed and asked for guidance before the famed icon of the “Salus Populi Romani”.

It was here that Our Holy Father and Founder made a fourth vow to keep alive the Memory of the Passion of Jesus—“The Memoria Passionis”—as we do the same, today.

As Passionists, we keep alive the memory of the sufferings of Jesus in many ways; including by the witness of our distinctive habit. We are dressed in black because we are in mourning for the death of Jesus.

I believe this vow is of real importance today, when so many people have lost their sense of love and belonging. People are searching for love, and also desire to feel loved; the Passion, and the Cross—an infinite work of love—is where we need to look to see just how much we are loved by Christ.

We can keep alive the memory of the Passion in so many other ways in our time: by being with and accompanying suffering people who have lost hope (just like our Mother of Sorrows, who accompanied her son to Calvary and stayed with him to the end). We pray with them, support them with our presence, and bring them to an encounter with Jesus Crucified through our preaching and ministry.

Keeping alive the memory of the Passion is to give witness to the infinite love of Christ for us by which he laid down his life for us upon the Cross. ●

CIAN HENNESSY is a Passionist novice who is part of the community at Tobar Mhuire Retreat Centre, Northern Ireland.



THE LAST WORD

with

PASCHAL SOMERS

THE ZULU WORD ‘Ubuntu’ (not so much a word as an African philosophy) teaches that ‘I am because of you, and you are because of me and together we are’. It is well illustrated with the following simple but factual story:

A professor from the USA was touring South Africa when he came to a rural village where he found some children at play. He told the children that he wanted to teach them a new game. When he had gathered them together, he placed the children on one side and put a whole lot of fruit on a table on the other side.

Having organised the children into a queue, he said, ‘Right, I’m going to count you down from five to zero and when I get to zero, I want you all to run and whoever gets to the fruit first can have it all’. What the children did next shocked the visitor. They joined hands, walked towards the fruit, and shared it out amongst themselves.

The professor asked a little girl why they had done this, and she said that it was because of ‘Ubuntu’—before adding, ‘How can I be happy when the others are sad’?

There is an important life lesson here for all of us: ‘Ubuntu’ teaches us that we are inextricably connected, and that what happens to one person has its effects on others. Our humanity can only be defined through our interaction with each other. How many of us have known the crucifixion of isolation during times of Covid? We are made for one another, so that something happening in Ukraine, for example, will impact what is happening everywhere else.

If we just ignore such happenings and the opportunity to interact with people, this is how we end up having conflicts, wars and

disease. ‘Ubuntu’ teaches us we are designed to connect and not to be isolationists. In our solidarity, we come to see that together we can make the world a better place in which to live. Although competition will benefit one or perhaps the few, cooperation will benefit us all. St Paul captures well what ‘Ubuntu’ is essentially about when he writes to the Romans, ‘We do not live for ourselves only. If we live, it is for the Lord that we live, and if we die, it is for the Lord that we die. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord’ (14:7-8) and, ‘Ubuntu’ would add, ‘we belong to each other’.





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st paul of the cross

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