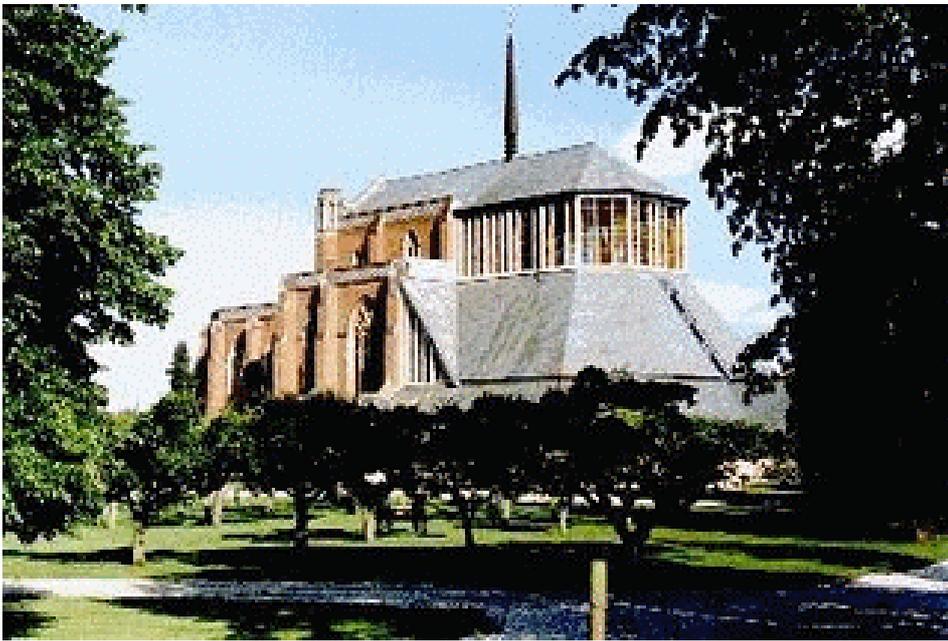




LONDON CHAPTER OF DOUAI OBLATES

OCCASIONAL PAPERS II

BLACKFRIARS  PUBLICATIONS



Douai Abbey, Woolhampton

CONTENTS

Introduction	5
The Desert Fathers, <i>David Rees</i>	6
The Concept of Time in the Rule of Benedict, <i>Klara Brunnhuber</i>	10
The Trinity – Can I be a Catholic and a Buddhist? <i>Thomas Brunnhuber</i>	15
The Wisdom of Stability, <i>Nigel Spencer</i>	20
The Psalms in Context, <i>Simon Bryden-Brook</i>	25



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INTRODUCTION

This collection of papers by members of the London Chapter of Douai Oblates is the second in our series. The first collection appeared in July 2010 and contained articles on spirituality, silence, purity of heart, humility, obedience and traditional Benedictine Vespers.

This collection covers different areas, and although none of the members of the London Chapter has any great claims to scholarship, we hope that our reading and discussions have resulted in some ideas that other oblates, as well as some 'outsiders' - a wider readership - might find stimulating. In so many ways, we are all beginners.

Our London group is beginning to grow so that we hope that our next publication, the third in this series, will feature some new writers.

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THE DESERT FATHERS

David Rees

Firstly we cannot jump straight into exploring something about the Desert Fathers without touching on some of the earlier influences on the early Christian mystics. The chief among these heavily affected by Greek thinking and wisdom has to be Origen. He was born in Alexandria in 183 AD. He succeeded Clement his teacher as Catechist for the Christian community, and according to Bernard McGinn in his *Presence of God: A History of Christian Mysticism*, he maintained that probably Origen was the greatest interpreter of Scripture Christianity at the time had ever seen. His place in the mystical tradition is central, maintaining that the mystical consciousness need not be misty or schismatic. A great disciplined and active mind can co-exist with deepest prayer. Reason and Faith are sisters as Martha and Mary. And we have recently heard similar words from Pope Benedict on his UK visit, referring to Religion and Reason living side by side. In our own time Laurence Freeman OSB, Director of the World Community for Christian Meditation, in his paper on the roots of Christian Mysticism, says: "in itself mysticism is direct consciousness of what is immediately present and yet forever effable . . . images and thoughts are objects that can be labelled and controlled whereas God, as St Irenaeus said, is a reality we can never know as an object but know only through participation in his own self-knowledge." Laurence Freeman goes on to quote Karl Rahner as saying that the Christian of the future will be mystical or there won't be any Christianity!

I must emphasise that my resources on the Desert Fathers have been drawn very much from contemporary commentaries and on those who within the Church have a firm commitment to silent prayer/prayer of the heart/pure prayer. To begin with I would like to quote from a piece written by Fr Geoffrey Webb, a retired priest whom I have known for many, many years. He says it is difficult to get a clear idea of what Christian worship was like in the era before Constantine. Bishops till then had been free to improvise a form of words around set themes which would be considered appropriate for the great drama of the Eucharist. Once the Church became official and established, embellishments and ritual, influenced by daily observances of imperial and royal households, were incorporated along with structured leadership.

But worshippers at the Eucharist might also have been aware of an alternative source gradually emerging during the 3rd century, namely monasticism. This development was seeking a more purist approach, but of course seeming to be more exclusive and demanding, yet remaining in communion with what had already become the established form of church - that is before Constantine's conversion. This impulse was first apparent in the Eastern borderlands of the Roman Empire - in Egypt and Syria. Egypt was particularly suited to the Christian withdrawal from the world because of its distinctive geographic conditions - the

desert – easy to walk out into the desert away from civilization. It was right here towards the end of the 3rd century that the monastic movement first tied itself into the developed church of the bishops, and left a continuous history in conventional Christian sources through the lives of two powerful personalities who would be presented as founder figures: Anthony and Pachomius, representing respectively two different forms of monastic life: that of the hermit and that of the community.

Yet St Athanasius' biography of St Anthony makes it clear that St Anthony was not the first Christian hermit. He tells us that in his boyhood in the 250s Anthony had



been fascinated by a number of individual Christians in nearby villages who had adopted a solitary life or practised an ascetic discipline . . . Anthony attracted great numbers to join him in the desert. The first monasteries were the result of groups withdrawing from the world and founding specialised new villages along the fertile river area. Pachomius, an ex-soldier, devised a set of simple rules

as a format for hermits to preserve their solitude while becoming members of a common group. This followed an heroic austerity becoming the pursuit, actually described by St Athanasius as a “noble contest”.

Then an enlightened man turned up to add some common sense – Evagrius of Pontus active in the second half of the 4th century, a respected preacher in Constantinople. He joined forces with St Macarius in the Nitrian desert in Egypt remaining there for the rest of his life, influencing everyone with his teaching on prayer. He maintained that prayer must be brief and pure which of course much later St Benedict incorporated into his Rule. Evagrius preached that prayer must be like the experiences of Christ's Transfiguration on Mount Tabor beheld by his chosen companions. The Saviour appears to the contemplative in an essentially brief encounter. It cannot be extended but the experience will continue to inspire you in a quiet way even when occupied in daily tasks such as basket-making in the case of these hermits which they sold weekly in the markets to procure food. For Evagrius, contemplation and theology were the same. In prayer and silence one becomes able to see into the essence of the created world, which subsequently introduces one to the essence of the Creator – an experience of light and bliss that transcends thought. Evagrius deeply influenced those who eventually wrote up the story of the Desert Fathers – Palladius, John Cassian, Maximus the Confessor. Palladius pointed out that all were very much pioneers in those days full of

passionate zeal in their hermitages and communities benefiting from the wisdom and guidance of directors to get them through their difficult times. One can see that much later in the Church and especially in the Eastern Church with the wise counsel of the *staretz* in the Russian Orthodox Church across the breadth of Holy Mother Russia. And of course the Rule of St Benedict uses much of these early influences in the 6th century when he points out that the solitary life is bound to be arduous at first but in the course of time will lead to unutterable delight.

I would now like to draw from other sources on the Desert Fathers: *Running Streams – Aspects of Christian Mysticism* by Stefan Reynolds and Laurence Freeman OSB. The early Church Fathers were always clear that the proper end of prayer was divinisation. St Basil said “The human being is a creature who has received the vocation from God” – something on his recent papal visit to the UK the Pope emphasized to young people both at St Mary’s College and elsewhere. In the 4th century Gregory of Nyssa said: “Our spiritual dimension is beyond our ability to explain . . . by this mystery within us we bear the imprint of the indivisible godhead.” It is interesting to note that the early Christian monks understood the distractions of the human mind as the real meaning of original sin because it is the incapacity to pay attention to God in the present moment. The Desert Fathers recommended the practice of mindfulness as a way of making the heart pure. In this age of doubting any such expression as original sin I find this explanation rational, timely and comprehensible in order to bring us into the NOW and to persevere in that itself. And this is what Christianity shares most with other Faiths. How completely ecumenical and transcending. We see all around people, especially the young, seeking for they know not what yet in truth for paths into their spiritual dimension which of course they would deny.

And finally I would like to quote from Rowan Williams’ *Silence and Honey Cakes* (Chapter 3 final paragraph):

The life that the desert monks and nuns speak of is a life in which there is space, but they are committed to finding the space the divine opportunity within very limited territory. The desert may look big in photographs, but the desert as experienced is also the size of your own heart and mind and imagination. These are not infinite spaces: indeed they may be very restricted ones. And the commitment to stay within the “space” of these particular people’s company, these daily disciplines, this unchanging environment, material and mental, is costly. It takes time, once again, to discover that the apparently generous horizon of a world in which my surface desires have free play is in fact a tighter prison than the constrained space chosen by the desert ascetics.

When you have learned more or less successfully to “flee” some of the illusory landscapes in which life appears easier, you still have to learn how to inhabit the landscape of truth as more than an occasional visitor. To conclude from Fr

Geoffrey Webb's "thoughts" on the Desert Father I shall quote from his reference to Diarmaid McCulloch's *History of Christianity* which was serialized so effectively on television last year. In one episode he claims that mystical themes have a habit of emerging through the ages in unpredictable circumstances as a counterpoint to various structures of Christian belief. On Mount Athos in the 14th century Gregory Palamas championed the practice of what was called Hesychasm - Greek for silence. Linked with the idea of stillness was the mystical idea of LIGHT as the vehicle for knowing God or as the metaphor for the knowledge of God. This emphasis on silence and light is strangely reminiscent of the Quakerism that emerged in England in the 17th century. There are practical ways to structure still/silent prayer appropriate physical posture and correct breathing are important. One characteristic practice is to repeat a single devotional phrase, the most common being the prayer of the Publican "God be merciful to me a sinner" - the Jesus Prayer as it came to be called in the Eastern Church. Such set techniques are a reminder of the systematic Eastern approaches to prayer from Buddhism to the Sufis of Islam who could well have drawn on Indian spirituality. And Fr Webb goes on to "sum up by recalling the truly amazing achievement of Fr John Main who brought with him to his Benedictine novitiate a habit of meditation already acquired in Malaya. He has made it possible for so many people across the world to find "light" in the stillness." So back to what the Desert Fathers were committed to seeking.

This paper was read to the London Chapter of Douai Oblates on 12 October 2010.

RESOURCES

Stefan Reynolds and Laurence Freeman OSB, *Running Streams: Aspects of Christian Mysticism*

Laurence Freeman OSB, *The Roots of Christian Mysticism* (Introduction)

Rowan Williams, *Silence and Honey Cakes*

FURTHER RECOMMENDED READING

Geoffrey Webb, *Few Thoughts on the Desert Fathers*

Olivier Clement, *The Roots of Christian Mysticism*

Wallis Budge, *Palladius* (English translation)

THE CONCEPT OF TIME

The concept of time in the Rule of Benedict

Klara Brunnhuber

Time – like space – is in Esther de Waal’s words one of the “primordial dimensions of reality” as we know it.¹ It is inseparably built into our very being, our biological nature. All physiological processes need time. Without it no growth, development, change, or movement would be imaginable. Time is one of the very prerequisites of life itself.

In her book *All Men are Mortal*, Simone de Beauvoir introduces us to Raymond Fosca, a 13th century prince who has been cursed with immortality.² Although his love for the beautiful and ambitious actress Regina once again manages to penetrate his solitude and ennui, de Beauvoir wants us to understand that it is time and ultimately the prospect of death that gives meaning to our existence, depth to our experience of joy and sorrow, and value to fundamental concepts such as action and freedom.

In Ancient Greece, not one but two words – and divine beings – existed to express two fundamentally different aspects of time. The first of these was the Titan Cronus, the merciless father of time, who devoured his own children in fear of a male successor. Only one of them, Zeus survived through his mother’s feint, and as grown man forced his father to spit out his siblings who would then govern the fate of man from Mount Olympus. At a deeper level, this legend reveals a lot about one of the main aspects of chronological time as many experience it today. Time devours its children, fears its successor, the Future. She is characterised and driven by fear. As Anselm Grün, a German Benedictine prior explains, it is the same fear that is palpable in our dread of losing time and our efforts to gain control of our lives by dividing time and making it measurable in exact units.³ At the same time, he continues, this attitude devalues the here and now, makes it equal with any other time unit that has gone before or is to come. It creates pressure and fear, without any opportunity for real growth, for creation of something new and lasting. Everything races on, without ever reaching a centre or goal.

1 Esther de Waal, ‘Creation’, Gervase Holdaway [ed], *The Oblate Life* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008) p 205.

2 Simone de Beauvoir, *All men are mortal* (ET London: Virago Press 1995, French edn Gallimard 1946).

3 Anselm Grün, *Im Zeitmaß der Mönche – Vom Umgang mit einem wertvollen Gut* (Freiburg: Herder Spectrum, 2003).

In contrast, Grün explains, Kairos stood for the right, the supreme moment - of undetermined length and experienced as unique by the individual.⁴ The God, Kairos was depicted as having wings, either on his feet or his shoulders, standing on tip toes, standing on a wheel, or balancing scales on a razor blade. The rear of his head was bald, indicating that the fleeting moment once passed was impossible to grab and hold back. It had to be met and attacked from the front. We all know this special moment, when time seems to slow down or stand still, often accompanied by extreme emotion, be it horror, joy or surprise. All our senses are sharpened, we are fully alert, fully alive and the memory of this long moment remains with us for ever. I distinctly recall the horrendous moment, when queuing at road works in the Swiss mountains, I watched a huge concrete wall topple over, covering under it several construction workers. The sight of the falling wall, falling in slow motion for what seemed an eternity, observed in the certain knowledge of the terrible consequences that were to follow, has stayed with me ever since.

The Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, tells many stories of the right, the opportune, the supreme moment. These are always decisive instances in which God offers his saving grace. Often his offer is rejected by man who doesn't realise its immeasurable value. The first words spoken by Jesus in Mark's Gospel are: 'The time (*kairos*) is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand' (Mark 1,15). Many



mystics have thought about the fullness of time. Once again, Anselm Grün, himself devoted to the practice of the Jesus Prayer, quotes Master Eckhart when he writes that through God becoming man in Christ and entering human time, time itself has been transformed, has gained a new quality.⁵ No longer a scarce resource to be exploited, efficiently filled and utilised, time becomes the medium through

which man can attain union with God. In the here and now, time is fulfilled, filled with God, and time and eternity become one. As time has been transformed through the birth of Christ, death has just as fundamentally changed through his death and resurrection. Through Him, we not only have the opportunity for uniting our hearts with God's heart in this world but also the prospect of full union with him in eternity after death.

Benedict has devoted numerous passages of his *Rule* to laying down an intricate framework for structuring the day, the week, the year. Most importantly, he establishes a gentle rhythm rather than a stern schedule, adjusting the length of prayer to the shorter nights in summer (RB 10,2), allowing for exceptions and

4 Grün, op. cit.

5 Grün, op. cit.

flexibility at times of travel (RB 50,4), hospitality (RB 53,10) or illness (RB 36,1), and advising for the second Psalm at Vigils to be said deliberately and slowly, to prevent latecomers from having to take the last place and do public penance (RB 43,4).

Monks before him had been living structured lives but Benedict's achievement is to have created a timetable that acknowledges and mirrors the human biorhythm. He allows for times of work, study, prayer, silence, leisure and rest; without any evidence from psychosocial research he seems to have been aware of the value of regular and consistent activity, and the enhancing quality of varied tasks and invigorating breaks. When lived in this way, time becomes fruitful and creative. The soothing and fertile schedule of monastic life is one of the reasons why even a short stay at a monastery can bring about inner change, become the catalyst for important decisions, help to find personal focus or a new aim in life.

For Benedict, time is closely related to balance and moderation. The Latin word 'temperare', from which the English word *temperate*, has at its root the Latin term for time '*tempus*'. In laying down rules for the right structure and use of time, Benedict aims for a framework that supports this attitude of the right measure of all things.

Benedict's time management is in perfect harmony with the rest of his teaching. He invites his monks to treat time as another precious good, similar to the tools of the monastery. His handling of time both enables and supports the three Benedictine vows of stability (through regular, consistent following of the Hours), obedience (prompt response to the call of the bell) and *conversatio morum* (pondering on the best use of personal time and for the abbot on how best to regulate the sequence of the day in order to prevent murmuring, at the same time challenging the strong and supporting the weak).

Benedict dedicates several chapters to structuring his monks' day, the order of Psalms to be read during the week, and specific regulations for the different seasons and times of celebration over the course of the year. Thus every hour, every day, every season gains its own flavour and colour. Anselm Grün describes this beautifully in his little book on time. He reminds us that for the early Christians each prayer time was linked to a different mystery of the life of Christ:

- Vigil: The night hour when we are awaiting Christ's coming. In the silence of the night, we stay awake and ponder God's teachings and deeds.
- Lauds: Morning praise and with it the praise of God and of Christ's resurrection.
- The third hour (9am): The highpoint of the morning, reminding us of the hour when the Holy Spirit was poured out over the Apostles.

- Midday: Despite the sun being at its zenith, this hour is dark, the time when Pilate spoke his death sentence. *Acedia*, the Midday demon as the Fathers called it, is ready to strike when we are at our weakest, brought low through exertion and heat. This short prayer time is an invitation to take a brief respite in God, and find renewed strength for living in the here and now.

- The ninth hour (3pm): The hour when Jesus died on the cross. For us Christians, his death is a symbol of hope, a gaze towards His resurrection. It is a prayer for a good end for our struggles, for God's blessing on all our struggles today and at the end of all days.

- Vespers: As darkness descends, the Church remembers Jesus descending into the darkness of death and ascending in his resurrection into eternal light. We praise God, the light and centre of our lives.

- Compline: With the day's work complete, we ask for God's protection during the night. The theme of temptations and nightmares takes us into the realms of our innermost fear, shame and sinfulness. We need God's sheltering hand, his healing radiance to bring light into the darkest voids of our soul.

Even if as oblates we may not be able to follow the Hours fully and consistently, I have found that regular prayer times – in my case mainly Lauds and Compline – help to anchor my day, give it depth and meaning, new focus and vigour. Having struggled with the chronological aspect of time all my life, I try not to perceive it as following the sequential tyranny of the clock but as a conscious effort to opening myself, becoming alert for the 'right moment' through listening, praising, inviting God into my life. Similarly, the feasts of Saints and the



celebrations of the Church Year may be opportunities to experience time in its circular, recurring quality.

Why should his monks obey his suggestions for what can be interpreted as a rather stern and rigid time structure? What is the ultimate aim behind this struggle against the temptations of sloth on the one hand and against the danger of over zealous and self-destructively ascetic use of time on the other?

As with many other aspects of his *Rule*, Benedict uses the Prologue to explain his vision and reasoning behind the regulations that are to follow. In a quick analysis of the text of the Prologue, I have counted over 20 mentions of time in a variety of themes that together create a framework and provide the theoretical underpinning for his rules on time. Several of these themes come in contrasting pairs:

- Always - never: Benedict implores his monks to aim for perfection, advising what to do and which actions to avoid at all times (Prologue 4, 6-7, 9, 22, 50). As we find out to our relief, this attitude does not prevent him from being acutely aware of (and cater for) our weak nature.
- Now - at the end of time: Benedict quotes Romans 13:4 in saying: 'It is high time for us to arise from sleep.' (Prologue 8) The aspect of *kairos* is immensely important to him. Every moment is an opportunity to listen to God's voice, to repent, to turn around, to start running towards God who is already in our hearts. At the same time, he points towards our ultimate goal: our union with God in death. (Prologue 10, 18, 44, 50)

Benedict's final main theme is the use of our time here on earth, seen as a 'truce', an opportunity to prepare ourselves for eternal life, for progress in faith. Benedict urges us to use our time well, to run while we 'have the light of life.' (Prologue 13, 36, 42, 49)

Linking back to our last meeting on the Trinity⁶, Benedict's teaching on time is another example of his non-dual thinking. With him it is not one or the other but always both: structured AND flexible, pointing to the here and now as well as to eternity, aiming for perfection yet fully aware of our fallibility. In full recognition of this healing, saving quality of our time on earth, he invites us into his non-dual thinking and through his Rule, offers us the necessary tools that we need as eternal beginners on this path.

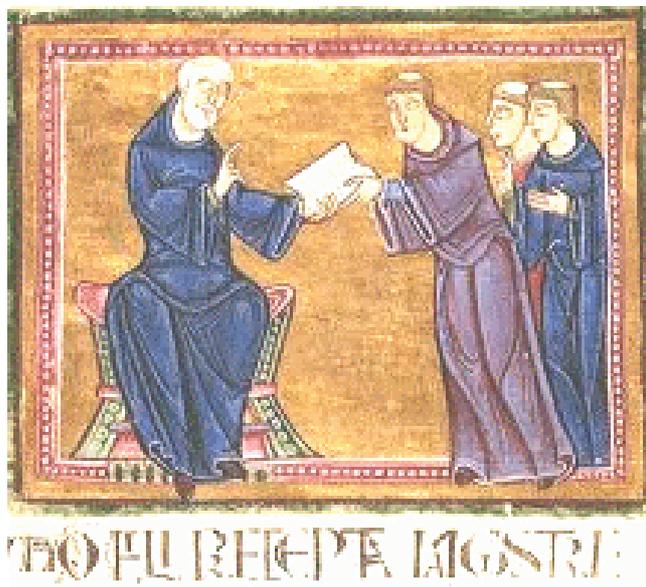
This paper was read to the London Chapter of Douai Oblates on 15 June 2010.

6 See pages 11-15 in this collection.

THE TRINITY – CAN I BE A CATHOLIC AND A BUDDHIST?

Thomas Brunnhuber

My presentation is a reflection on the Rule Chapter 9 verse 2, “*To this should be added the third psalm and the Gloria.*”



In this chapter St Benedict regulates the number of psalms and the various responses to be used in the divine office. I will be focusing only on one aspect, to be precise, on one phrase. Of course, what is meant is the *Gloria Patri*.

I have also got a subtitle: “Can I be a Catholic **and** a Buddhist?” The subtitle will make more sense towards the end of the paper.

My reflections are divided into 3 parts followed by a conclusion:

1. A brief summary from the literary commentaries
2. Trinity and non-duality
3. Trinitarian examples of the *Rule*

As none of these thoughts are my own, it remains for me to say that I have shamelessly quoted long passages from various sources.

* * *

By prescribing how often and when the ‘Glory be’ should be said, St Benedict puts it at the centre of the *Opus Dei*, and thus the *Gloria Patri* constitutes the centre of

monastic life. This is not a pious exercise but has profound implications for the consciousness of the monastic as we shall see.

As with silence, St Benedict does not reflect much on it or develop a theology of silence; he legislates for it. He does not talk much about it; he simply does it.

In my own little survey at Douai, I discovered that the 'Glory be' is said 30 to 35 times a day. There is probably no other phrase or prayer as often used as this one. As a consequence the 'Glory be' has been elevated without much notice or justification to a repetitive prayer or *mantra*. And reverence is demonstrated by bowing or standing up.

According to Holzherr, a Benedictine abbot and commentator of the *Rule*, it was rather uncommon before Benedict to use the 'Glory be' so often. Holzherr argues that Benedict exhibits a particular Trinitarian piety and reveals his anti-Arian attitude⁷.

We can safely say that for Benedict Jesus Christ was fully human and fully divine and he wanted his monks to acknowledge this 30 times a day.

Benedict was not interested in reflecting any further on the Trinity but he wanted to ensure that we develop a Trinitarian image of God; not so much through reflection but rather through practice. I will try to argue that fundamentally it is not about a Trinitarian view of the Godhead but of reality.

In this paragraph, in contrast to Benedict's attitude, I would like to reflect on some aspects of the Holy Trinity which until recently was largely irrelevant for me. Three books and one talk in a short space of time made me more receptive to the reality of the Holy Trinity.

In his lecture "From Duality to Trinity", Laurence Freeman⁸ opened a new chapter in my approach of the Holy Trinity.

A few weeks later I read in Timothy Radcliffe's book *Why go to Church?* that "We need to get rid of the image of the celestial Daddy." In fact we need to rid ourselves of *any* image of God. St Augustine was quoted, that if you count you get it wrong. The Holy Trinity is not about counting from 1 to 3.

The most profound reflections about the Holy Trinity and the Trinitarian reality of life I found in Raimon Panikkar's book *The Experience of God*.⁹ According to Panikkar there are 3 principal approaches to God:

- a) *the dualist vision, in which God is the absolutely Other. There is an infinite distance between Creator and creature*

7 George Holzherr, *Guide to Christian Living, with Commentary*. (Translated by Monks of Glenstal Abbey, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1982,)

8 Given at Westminster Cathedral.

9 Raimon Pannikar, *The Experience of God: Icons of the Mystery* (Augsburg Fortress, 2006)

- b) *the monist vision, every thing is God and we experience God insofar as we all experience things*
- c) *the non-dualist vision (advaita) in which divinity is neither individually separate from the rest of reality nor totally identical with it.*

God is neither the Same (monism) nor the Other (dualism). God is one pole of reality. This pole is nothing in itself. It exists only in its polarity, in its relationship. God is relationship, intimate internal relationship with all.

Pannikar continues that the Christian event constitutes a challenge to both monism and dualism. The principal dogmas of Christianity are non-dualist¹⁰ I will often use the words Trinitarian and non-dualist interchangeably.

Although the One is certainly not a numerical value, it surely implies the negation of all multiplicity; it is the expression of unity. To say that God is not One means that the rationalizing human mind cannot reduce reality *ad unum*.

If, in the monotheistic perspective, there is one absolutely omniscient Being who embraces and understands all of reality, that is not the case for the Trinity. Nevertheless, there are not three gods: this is non-dualism. God is not one, but neither is God two nor any multiplicity. It is only through the constant negation of duality, by refusal to close the process, in the conscious renunciation of trying to understand everything, in the *neti neti* of apophatic mysticism, that we can approach the Trinitarian mystery.¹¹

God, the Human, and the World are not one, nor two, nor three. They are not three things, neither are they one. Reality is Trinitarian, not dualist, neither one nor two. Only by denying duality (*advaita*), without reducing everything to unity, are we able consciously to approach it.¹²

But the Trinitarian scandal that, according to the theology of the first centuries, cost Jesus his life ended in time by becoming blurred...The Trinity did not fit in with the Christian empire. Theocracy is more in accord with monotheism. The monotheism of orthodox Judaism emerged again in the way Christianity was lived. The God of the Hebrew Bible was identified with the Christian God. For many, Jesus became simply the God of the Christians.¹³

Sharing the life of the Trinity, we are slowly healed of rivalry and fear. And so the dogma of the Trinity does not fuel intolerance and claims of Christian superiority.¹⁴

10 Pannikar, op cit.

11 Idem p 65

12 Idem p 66

13 Idem p 67.

14 Timothy Radcliffe, *Why go to Church? The drama of the Eucharist* (NY, Continuum, 2008) p. 88.

So when we say that God is one and three, we are not so much making numerical statements as struggling to glimpse the mystery of the love that is the Trinity's being: it points to a reciprocity, utterly mutual without introversion and turned out beyond itself.¹⁵

Trinitarian views in the RB

The Rule at its core and in its outlook has a non-dualist vision. Three small examples should demonstrate this point:

1. The example of the ladder of humility clearly exists only with the two sides, body and soul. It clearly avoids **an either or**, or a supremacy of the one over the other. A balanced life needs both aspects (RB 7)
2. Benedict wants us to cherish and regard the tools we are using for the daily work like the vessels of the altar. It has been said that Benedict tries to overcome the divide of the *secular* and the *sacred*.
3. That guests should be received as Christ implies the strongest non-dualist attitude. The guest or stranger, the poor or the sick are not vicariously representing Christ but *are* Christ despite of or because of being a guest, a stranger, poor or sick. This is clear Gospel teaching of the Trinitarian view of life.

Conclusion

The RB leads us to acknowledge the Holy Trinity and thus the full humanity and full divinity of Jesus Christ. This recognition is so radical as it tries to overcome a dual view of reality. As Christ is not either human or divine, so are we. Thirty times a day we are asked to bow to the holy Trinity and acknowledge that reality is not dual but non-dual or Trinitarian.

This single phrase in the Rule wants to open us up to the understanding that religion is not merely here for us to become good but to become God.¹⁶ God became man, for man to become God.

Since the 16th century, the thinking mind has divided reality into two entities: *res extensa* and *res cogitans*. Dualism has become the most obvious perspective of reality. As a consequence one either became a Protestant or remained a Catholic etc. I would like to add my son's question, which I think encapsulates a new way of thinking: "Can I be a Catholic and a Buddhist?" This is a non-dual or Trinitarian question.

Let me close with a short litany on the word AND

15 Loc cit pp 85, 88

16 Michael Casey, *Fully Human Fully Diving: an interactive Christology* (Liguori, 2004)

The shining word AND

AND teaches us to say yes.

AND allows us to be both and.

AND keeps us from either or.

AND teaches us to be patient and long suffering.

AND is willing to wait for insight and integration.

AND keeps us from dualistic thinking.

AND does not divide the field of the moment.

AND helps us to live in the always imperfect now.

AND keeps us inclusive and compassionate toward everything.

AND demands that our contemplation become action.

AND heals our racism, sexism, heterosexism and classism.

AND keeps us from false choice of liberal or conservative.

AND allows us to critique both sides of things.

AND allows us to enjoy both sides of things.

AND is far beyond any one nation or political party.

AND helps us face and accept our own dark side.

AND allows us to ask for forgiveness and to apologise.

AND is the mystery of paradox in all things.

AND is the way of mercy.

AND makes daily practical love possible.

AND does not trust love if it is not also justice.

AND does not trust justice if it is not also love.

AND is far beyond my religion versus your religion.

AND allows us to be both distinct and yet united.

AND is the very Mystery of Trinity.¹⁷

This paper was read to the London Chapter of Douai Oblates on 12 April 2010.

¹⁷ Richard Rohr, *The Naked Now: Learning to See as the Mystics See* (Crossroad, 2009)

THE WISDOM OF STABILITY

Rooting Faith in a Mobile Culture.

Nigel Spencer

What I want to share with you all this evening is a collection of thoughts, quotes, and some reflections on the wisdom of stability. I was inspired by Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove's book *The Wisdom of Stability*.¹⁸ The sense in which Benedict uses the word *stabilitas* is wider than merely physical place. Cicero used the word *stabilitas* to express, at different times, firmness, steadfastness or durability. In verb form, *stabilio* means to establish or make stable. *Stabilis* can also mean unwavering and the *stabilitor* is the person who makes form or establishes something. *Stabilitas*, therefore, has as much to do with a mode of being than with the stability of place.

The concept of stability in the life of the oblate does pose one or two challenges, since the oblate does not live within the community and will certainly not remain within the walls of the monastery. Yet Benedictine stability is important in the life of the Oblate in a number of ways.

In the foreword to Wilson-Hartgrove's book *The Wisdom of Stability*, Kathleen Norris starts by acknowledging in our modern culture that we learn early on to keep our options open, always ready for the new, improved model, the latest 'best thing'. She goes on to suggest that we consider stability tedious at best, and at its worst it is seen to restrict freedom and limit our potential; and we can often worry that if we remain in one place while the world changes around us, we risk stagnating and becoming irrelevant. In this post-modern era of exponential change how can we take stability seriously, let alone consider it a virtue?

In a culture devoted to the pursuit of success and fame, what makes stability so unappealing may be that it acts as 'the great leveller in a society of widening gaps, calling each of us, whatever our social status, to acknowledge the extent to which we're equally bound by powers beyond our control.' What we most need Wilson-Hartgrove suggests, is something that only stability can provide, 'a way of life founded on solid ground, freeing us from the illusion that we can live without limits.'

The wonderful insight of Wilson Hartgrove's, that stability is not something we accomplish but is always a gift, is encouraging to me. 'The heart's true home,' he writes, 'is a life rooted in the love of God, but the Christian tradition insists that this love is always God's mercy directed at us *before* it is our response of trusting love. God offers us stability in the only thing that cannot fail - God's faithfulness

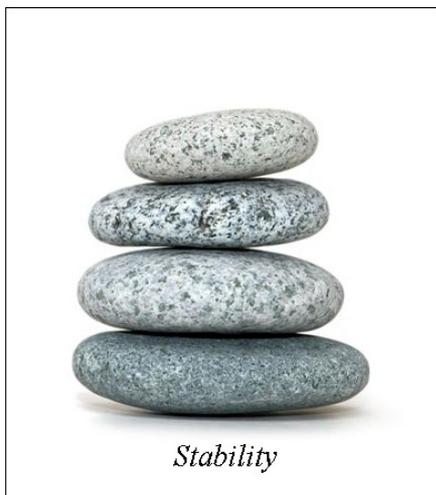
¹⁸ Wilson-Hartgrove, Jonathan, *The Wisdom of Stability – rooting faith in a mobile culture*. (Massachusetts: Paraclete Press, 2010)

itself'. Sometimes the conviction that it is God who has brought two people - or a community - together is all we need to keep us in the struggle to nurture and maintain relationships of trust, respect, and love. Committing to such stability is never easy, but it is always worth a try.

When we opt for stability there are bound to be internal struggles, mostly with demons of anger, pride, and boredom. To commit to stability means accepting other people as they are. How dreary to consider that God has given us this family, this spouse, these colleagues on the job, this church congregation. We are meant for more important things, and our talents will be better appreciated by a Surely more sophisticated crowd. Wilson-Hartgrove reminds us of the main reason Christianity will always remain unpalatable to those who are seeking an easy, ethereal spirituality. 'Life with the God we know in Jesus Christ', he writes, 'is lived in community with other people.' Of course conflict will come. Our job is to face them openly and honestly, and above all, to seek reconciliation. Stability is an essential in this process.

'Seek' is perhaps a dangerous word to use when discussing stability says Kathleen Norris, because in some ways stability is the antithesis of the relentless seeking that is so prominent a part of modern religious life. One of the radical premises of Wilson-Hartgrove's book is that there comes a time to set seeking aside. But as the romance of our initial religious experience fades, and the reality of life with other human beings in a church congregation seems too much to bear, we are tempted to move on. Wilson-Hartgrove asks us to stop a moment and ask if we might abandon our seeking, settle down, and allow God to find us where we are.

There is no stability without a way of life; no rhythm of life together without the commitment to stay.



Though the monastic vocation is peculiar to certain individuals and communities, the whole point of the churches setting people apart as monks is to reveal something of the good news Jesus offers all people. 'Come unto me,' Jesus beckons, calling all of us who are weary from wandering and heavy-laden by the burden of trying and trying again to make a home for ourselves. 'Come unto me and find rest for your souls; for my yoke is easy and my burden light.'

When Jesus invites us into the rest of his easy joke, he is not saying that we can take it easy while he does all the work. Rest is not a couch

where we kick back in front of the TV, glad to be home for the holidays. Rather, it is the place where we learn the rhythms of the work we were made for from the

One who made us. Rest is coming home to the way of life that fits, learning to inhabit the story of God's people and practice the craft of life with God wherever we are. If stability challenges us to stay put in a mobile world, its wisdom also promises a way of life that is sustainable, giving rest to weary souls.

This very practical pursuit of a life with God revealed to our desert forebears their utter dependence on the grace of God and other people. 'One thing that comes out very clearly from any reading of the great desert monastic writers', says Anglican Archbishop Rowan Williams, 'is the impossibility of thinking about contemplation or meditation or 'spiritual life' in abstraction from the actual business of living in the body of Christ, living in concrete community. The life of intimacy with God in contemplation is both the fruit and the course of a renewed style of living together.' Again we cannot rest in God without learning a new way of life with our neighbours. The craft of life with God is learned in the workshop of stability in community.

Finding Our Rhythm

Visitors to monasteries often admire the wisdom of the community's common schedule. Often influenced by the need for spiritual retreat that brought them to the monastery in the first place, visitors confess that they are frustrated by the difficulty of making space in their own lives for prayer and spiritual reading. So many demands and distractions seem to crowd out the prayer life that we know to be important. The monastic schedule inspires outsiders, helping them to see that it is possible for a community to find its rhythm in a life with God.

The divine office for Benedictines is the *Opus Dei* – the 'work of God' – that is all of creation's true work. The trees of the field clap their hands, deep calls out to deep, and even stones are poised to cry out in praise to the Creator. Likewise, the communion of saints around God's throne sings, 'Holy, holy, holy,' worshipping the Lamb who is worthy to receive all honour and glory. When Benedictines sing the Psalter and pray the prayers of the church on a fixed schedule, it is their privilege to devote their whole lives to the work for which every creature was made. The rhythm of their life together serves as an invitation to those of us outside the monastery: come and see how life with God reorders our relationship with time.

Could the stability of the monastery's rhythm be a gift to those of us who live outside its walls? For St Augustine, in the fifth century, the most fundamental distinction human beings need to understand is the difference between the Creator and creation. The condition of time is one way to understand this distinction. 'Things which happen under the condition of time are in the future, not yet in being, or in the present, already existing, or in the past, no longer in being,' Augustine wrote in his classic *City of God*. 'But God comprehends all these in a stable and eternal present,' Augustine noted, convinced that our fundamental stability depends on God who is not like us and is, able to save us.

Such an understanding of God reveals that our desire to get out of the limits of time is, at root, a desire to become like God by our own efforts. This is what the Christian tradition calls sin. Sin consistently leads humans to self-destructive behaviour, frustrating us not only because we don't get what we want but also because the things we want seem so noble and good. Who, after all should we strive to be like, if not God? So long as we're doing good things, wouldn't it be better if we could do two or three or four of them at once?

What we often find hard to admit is that we are limited creatures. Subject to the confines of time and space, we cannot be anywhere, any time. As a matter of fact, we can only be in this place, now. Monastics who have accepted this as an ultimate reality and promised themselves stability for life offer us a model for what it might look like to find our rhythm in a life of faith. Benedictines have long practised an ordered rhythm of gathering for prayer, scattering to take care of the day's tasks, and returning again to the call of the monastery bell. In this rhythm of daily life, time is transformed from an enemy into a friend.

Over time, we can see how the gift of a rhythm of life with God transforms a community and the world around it. The community of Sant'Egidio in Rome was started by high school students in 1968. Inspired by student protests, a handful of middle-class Roman youths got together and started talking about how to love their neighbours as themselves. They committed to pray together several times a week in the church of Sant'Egidio. Forty years later, communities around the world continue to chant psalms and sing hymns each evening, rooting their members in a reality much older and deeper than their own desire to be friends. Wherever we find these rhythms, they are our link to the eternal dance of the seraphim around the throne of God. In them we learn the cadence of life that lasts forever.

From ancient Israel to the Egyptian desert to medieval Europe to the contemporary agrarian movement, the images of stability are strikingly constant, despite unique insights from each era and experience. Over and over again for those who have practised it, stability is a tree rooted in the earth, a monk seated in his cell with feet planted on the ground, a house built on a firm foundation, a ship anchored in the storm-tossed sea. In a tradition dominated by male writers, stability is consistently imaged as the constancy of a living father.



But with every tradition, there is a striking exception that stands out like the dot of yin in a sea of yang. The insight is no less true for being the minority report. Indeed, its power and beauty are amplified by the contrast with something,

equally true, though perhaps over-represented. In the great tradition of stability's wisdom, it takes a mother - Amma Syncletica - to see what is not denied but rather overlooked in all the dominant images: 'if a bird abandons the eggs she has been sitting on, she prevents them from hatching, and in the same way monks or nuns will grow cold and their faith will perish if they go around from one place to another.' The goal of all our stability is new life that can only come through the nurture of love in community.

Like Amma Syncletica's mother bird, Mary, the Mother of God, demonstrates a fragile stability, trusting God's interruption and making her nest in a borrowed manger. She does not have the power to create the stable environment any mother would want for her child. But she receives the gifts she is given, settles down along the way, and does the hard work of delivering the life of the world. Any of us who have been incorporated into the body of Christ have Mary to thank for her faithfulness. In her, we find hope that we can receive the stability we need to root ourselves in a mobile culture and become a community for the life of the world.

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THE PSALMS IN CONTEXT

Simon Bryden-Brook

For us as oblates of St Benedict, the context of the psalms is the Liturgy of the Hours and we experience them when we attend the offices in the monastery or when we use the prayer of the Church in our own devotions. But the liturgical context of the psalms is dictated by their theological context. Jesus lived and died a Jew; Christianity is nothing without its Jewish heritage and our acknowledgement of the centrality of Judaism for Christianity is essential if we are fully to understand the context of the psalms in Christian worship.

How can Christians use the Jewish Psalter when it was written without any knowledge of Christianity and must surely in some way have been superseded? A Catholic friend of mine, well versed in Hebrew studies, expressed his reservations at reciting the 'Glory be to the Father . . .' after each psalm. It seems almost offensive to a great religion, that of Jesus himself. But the point is surely that as Christians we know that God is Trinitarian and cannot pretend that we do not. When the psalms invoke God, we know that this God is not only the Source of All Being, but also Word made Flesh and Holy Spirit. We cannot block out our knowledge of the Incarnation and pretend we have become Jews when reciting the psalms. When we use them as Christians, then the psalms are revealed in their fullest richness.



I see therefore four great lessons for us from the psalms:

- 1. The Incarnation is central.*
- 2. God's presence and love is ubiquitous and unconditional.*
- 3. God earnestly desires the practice of God's Rule of justice and peace.*
- 4. We as the Body of the Risen Christ are called to share in this priestly work.*

Does Christianity replace Judaism?

Any practising Christian is aware that the Jewish prayer book, the Psalter, lies at the centre of Christian public prayer. Morning and evening prayer in the episcopal churches, Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox, consist almost wholly of the Jewish psalms. It is sad that most Roman Catholics hear little

of the Psalter beyond the responsorial psalm proclaimed at the Sunday Eucharist, but those who visit religious communities find that the recitation of the psalms lies at the heart of the public prayer of the Church, the liturgy of the hours.

For some this is a shock. They find the language and content of the psalms of the Hebrew or Jewish Scriptures incongruous compared to the language of traditional Roman Catholic popular piety. 'Mourning and weeping in this vale of tears' or 'Shine, Jesus, shine!' is language more familiar to them than 'rescue me from sinking in the mud' (Ps 68 [69]:15) or 'precious oil running down Aaron's beard' (Ps 132 [133]:2).

Some Christians are puzzled by the use of the term 'the Hebrew scriptures'. What is wrong with calling them the 'Old Testament'? The key to the puzzle is our relationship as Christians with Judaism. Is it true to say that Christianity has superseded Judaism so that the 'New Testament' replaces the Old and takes away its significance? Must the religion of the Jews be seen as old hat and discarded in favour of our superior new version? Not so.

In a world where we have become more aware of the importance of acknowledging the riches of religious traditions other than our own, we are more careful than we have been over the centuries not to offend by thoughtless language the susceptibilities of the Jews.

But more than this, any sensitive reader of the New Testament (we may prefer to call them 'the Christian scriptures') is aware that the Jewish scriptures are there frequently referred to and indeed explained and elaborated. 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them,' says Jesus (Mt 5:17) and St Paul confirms that the old covenant (or 'testament') has *not* been superseded (Rom 3:31).

In what sense then is the Jewish dispensation (or 'covenant' or 'testament') fulfilled and not superseded or abolished? It is the way we understand this that is the key to why we are keen not to appear to belittle the Jewish scriptures by calling them 'old' and why we continue to use and be fed by the Jewish prayer book, the Psalter, both in our private devotions¹⁹ and in the public prayer of the Church. Indeed, Christians pray the psalms *with* Jesus the Jew.

¹⁹ Ps 115 [116] before Holy Communion, Ps 137 [138] after Holy Communion, and Ps 129 [130] for the dead, for example.

We cannot deny that Jesus is the Christ

We believe in the Incarnation, so psalms like 109 [110] and psalm 2 mean more to us than to the Jews. Scholars like Professor Geza Vermes²⁰ are unable to take this step of Christian faith despite shedding, by their scholarly work, much light on Jesus and his teachings. However much insight such scholars are able to bring to the *words* of Jesus, and there is no doubt that we are immensely enriched to be reminded of the Jewishness of Jesus and his religion, they are unable to see him as the Word of God. Indeed they suggest that it is highly debatable that Jesus himself shared this belief. And yet Christians so believe.

À propos Benedict XVI's first encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, Professor Janet Soskice has written:

The novelty of Christian teaching on love is not in 'what Jesus taught' but 'who Jesus was' – for if God is love, then Jesus is, in Christian belief, this love incarnate. Jesus is both the homeland which we desire and, and our way to that homeland. His sacrifice on the cross is, the Pope tells us, 'love in its most radical form' and by receiving the sacraments we, whose love on its own is too weak, are fed by the divine Love, and 'enter into the very dynamic of self-giving'. By this we are united not only with God but with one another; we become, as week after week Christians pray at the Eucharist, 'one body'.²¹

Professor Soskice might have added that in praying the Prayer of the Church we also 'enter into the very dynamic of self-giving'.²² Indeed, we enter into the very homeland of Jesus and his disciples, into the land and the faith which God gave to their forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and into the history of God's chosen people. The prayer of the Church is the prayer of Jesus and by making it our own we enter fully into Jesus' prayer, which is of course nothing but a total self-dedication to the will of God.

The unity of Jewish and Christian prayer

I have written elsewhere about the centrality in the psalms of the sense of God's presence, of God's unswerving commitment to each of us in a covenant relationship, and of the centrality in the psalms of God's call to

20 And we should have to say some members of the Jesus Seminar, it would appear.

21 *The Tablet* (4 Feb 2006, 4f)

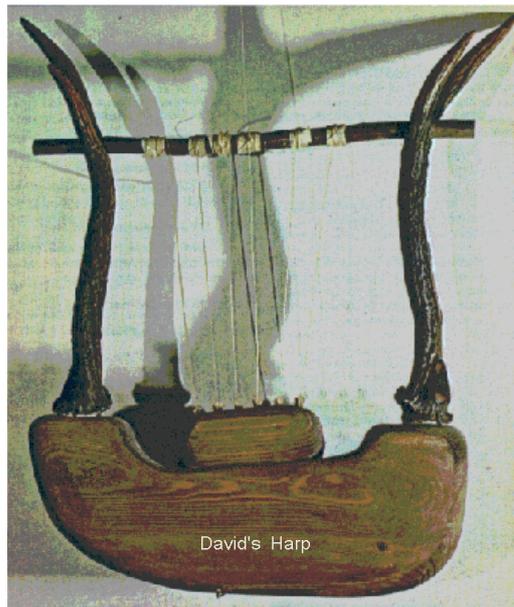
22 Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas Est* (2005), 13

bring about God's Rule – the Kingdom.²³ As Christians we cannot use the psalms without seeing Jesus as central too.

Luke tells us the story of how, on the road to Emmaus after the resurrection, the risen Christ 'beginning with Moses and all the prophets, explained what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself.' (Lk 24:27) In Luke's later story of the risen Jesus appearing to his followers in the locked room, we hear how Jesus said, 'Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.' (Lk 24:44) This is the traditional triple reference to the Hebrew Scriptures and shows that no Christian can live without them: law²⁴, prophets and psalms.

Psalms in Christian context

We may at times of course be puzzled by some of the details we find in some of the psalms, such as the references to 'Sihon, king of the Amorites, Og the king of Bashan', etc. (Ps 134 [135]:11 and 135 [136]:19 & 20) or scandalised by the desire to 'dash the children of Babylon on the rock' (Ps 136 [137]:9). The important thing for us is that these psalms were the prayers of Jesus the Jew, Jesus the rabbi from Galilee, the prayers of Jesus, a human being like us. Scholars like Professor Vermes²⁵, Albert Nolan²⁶, and Leonard Swidler²⁷ have shown how enriching it is to our Christian faith to understand the Jewishness of Jesus and to enter deeply into the thought-patterns of the tradition by which he was nourished. Even so, as Christians, we often find new meaning, never intended by the author:



My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Ps 21 [22]:1)

23 Gervase Holdaway OSB ed, *the Oblate Life* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008), 97-104

24 As found in the Torah, the five books of Moses.

25 Geza Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* (London, SCM Press, 1993) for example

26 Albert Nolan OP, *Jesus before Christianity*, (London, DLT, 1997, rev 1992)

27 Leonard Swidler, *Yeshua – a Model for Moderns*, (Kansas, Sheed and Ward, 1988)

Even if Jesus did not in fact utter these words on the cross (Mt 27:47), they seem ready-made for him and for Christians they must always refer to him. So too other psalms cannot be read by the Christian without recalling our Lord's suffering:

*Have mercy on me, O Lord,
for I am in distress.
Tears have wasted my eyes,
my throat and my heart. . .*

*In the face of all my foes
I am a reproach,
an object of scorn to my neighbours
and of fear to my friends. (Ps 30 [31]:10, 12)*

But as Christians we gain even more from using the psalms in the Liturgy of the Hours. The Christians of the Apostolic Age focussed on the contemporary, active, Risen Christ present in the Church through his Spirit rather than what he had said and done during his earthly life.²⁸ The apostles remembered Jesus and had no need of a written history; only as the memories faded was a record necessary. For St Paul, liturgy is Christian life and the liturgy can be seen as 'the on-going *Sitz im Leben*²⁹ of Christ's saving pattern in every age, and what we do in the liturgy is exactly what the New Testament itself did with Jesus: it applied him and what he was and is to the present'.³⁰ The eschaton³¹ is not a time or a thing; it is a person, the new Adam, Jesus Christ. And the new creation is a life lived in him – or rather, his life in us.³²

The Christian faith has only one object, the mystery of Christ dead and risen. But this unique mystery subsists under different modes: it is prefigured in the Old Testament; it is accomplished historically in the earthly life of Christ; it is contained in mystery in the sacraments; it is lived mystically in souls; it is accomplished socially in the Church; it is consummated eschatologically in the heavenly kingdom.³³

28 Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Divine Office and its Meaning for Today* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1986) p 228

29 i.e. context

30 Taft, *op. cit.*, p 336

31 Our goal, the end of time, the final consummation, the triumph of God.

32 Taft, *op. cit.*, p 345

33 Jean Daniélou, "Le symbolisme des rites baptismaux," *Dieu vivant* I (1945) 17, translation by Taft (*op cit* p 371)

St Paul insists on our personal participation in the Redemption so that the liturgy becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy:

Our common worship is a living metaphor of this same saving reality, not only representing and re-presenting it to us constantly in symbol to evoke our response in faith and deed, but actively effecting it in us through the work of the Holy Spirit, in order to build up the Body of Christ into a new temple and priesthood in which offerer and offered are one.³⁴

The fathers of the Second Vatican Council expressed this in the following way:

Christ Jesus, high priest of the new and eternal covenant, taking human nature, introduced into this earthly exile that hymn which is sung throughout all ages in the halls of heaven. He joins the entire community of humankind to himself, associating it with his own singing of this canticle of divine praise. For he continues his priestly work through the agency of his Church, which is ceaselessly engaged in praising the Lord and interceding for the salvation of the whole world . . . the divine office . . . is truly the voice of the bride addressing her bridegroom; it is the very prayer which Christ himself, together with his Body, addresses to the Father.³⁵

Conclusion

*Let the people praise you O God;
let all the peoples praise you. (Ps 66 [67])³⁶*

All this we find in the psalms as they have come down to us through the Jewish people. As Christians we add nothing and delete nothing, for we have no need to do so.³⁷ We are content to make our way slowly and meditatively through psalm after psalm, praying them in the same way as the Jews do and as Jesus did, but with our Christian faith. As a token of this we add a Christian doxology to each psalm. In traditional wording this is 'Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit'. Some Christians of today are happier with a reformulation such as, 'Glory to God,

34 Taft, *op cit*, p 344

35 *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 83-84 in W M Abbot, *The Documents of Vatican II* (London, Geoffrey Chapman, 1966) p 163

36 For centuries, this psalm was said every day at Lauds. RB 12 and 13.

37 *The General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours* (found in Vol I of the *Divine Office*) at 131 expresses reservations. J D Crichton commented on 'sub-Christian' passages in the psalms and concluded, "The only solution to the problem that I can see is that the church should recognise frankly that there are still psalms and parts of psalms in the office that the Christian cannot use or can only use by means of a complicated exegesis." *Christian Celebration: The Prayer of the Church*, (London, Geoffrey Chapman, 1976) p 84.

Source of all being, eternal Word and Holy Spirit'. But even these doxologies are using words taken from the Jewish scriptures, understood of course by us as Trinitarian.

There is no formal explicit proclamation of the Gospel in the liturgy of the hours except on special occasions, beyond a few words at the readings, and these are not only brief but merely hints and reminders. The psalms require no contradiction or trumping by Christians. In our tradition morning and evening prayer end with the gospel canticles, *Benedictus* or *Magnificat* and these fit seamlessly with the psalms. Then we recite the *Pater Noster*, the very prayer which Jesus taught us. With him we are praying to the Father, seeking to unite our wills to God's and to proclaim the reign of God.

'The *Opus Dei* . . . is a work of God in us before it is a work we do in response to his call.'³⁸ 'The almighty has done great things for me – holy is his name!' sings the Mother of God in the *Magnificat* (Luke 1:49) and these words 'sum up the whole dynamic of liturgical anamnesis and thankful praise,'³⁹ that is the Liturgy of the Hours, the core of which is the psalms.

[*This is an elaboration of Chapter 11 in Gervase Holdaway OSB ed, Oblate Life, (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008), pp 96-106 and was originally prepared as the first of four within a module entitled 'The Psalms in Christian Life and Prayer' as part of a submission for the degree of Doctor of Ministry at the Global Ministries University, USA, in July 2008.*]

This paper was read to the London Chapter of Douai Oblates on 3 August 2010.

38 I. Hausherr, "Opus Dei," *Monastic Studies* II (1975) 195ff, quoted in Taft *op cit* p 365

39 Taft *op cit* p 365

