

# LITTLE S. MARY'S, CAMBRIDGE

*September 2020: No. 542*

## NEWSLETTER



*This newsletter contains: Meet the Designers; I is for Incense; More about Incense; “The Towers of Trebizond”; Ade Bethune, Catholic Worker Artist; Zoom-Tide Bible Study; Garden News plus the usual Vicar’s letter, daily intentions for prayer and more ...*

# From the Vicar

Beheading of S. John Baptist, 2020

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

I remember that when I went from being an undergraduate to a graduate student I was told that I was moving to a research *marathon* not a weekly essay *sprint*! It took me a long time to realise this and adapt accordingly. Coronavirus is much the same, isn't it? I confess that when this all began back in March I fondly imagined that by September we'd be back to normal. More to the point, in March and April I was full of zeal for making sure we kept Holy Week as best as we could and asking various people to call round those on their own or who were elderly. As we enter the seventh month of Covid-19 my initial heroism and activism has fallen away and motivation is now needed simply to keep going. I can't believe I'm alone in finding this period almost more trying than those initial months, even though now there are small numbers of people in hospital and the daily death count declines. I try to be encouraged by these figures.

I am encouraged too by your various contributions to the weekly news-sheet and these monthly newsletters – what an interesting, active, generous and thoughtful congregation LSM has! I'm encouraged as well by the progress in our redecoration works. The scaffolding will start coming down early this month and we should be finished by the beginning of October. I hope that with the energy of a new academic year and the government plan for mass testing this will be a time of renewal.

I'm hesitant to make too many plans, however, given how quickly the situation seems to change. At the moment, come October we will have a capacity of 50 at each Mass and I hope to have some organ and choral music too. Congregational singing is not presently allowed but recent research indicates that singing is no more dangerous than speaking for spreading the virus – so there may be change coming. I'm conscious that the requirement to wear a mask in church is a real burden and doesn't look like changing any time soon, but perhaps we will get used to it? I would also hope, given that one can go to bars and restaurants and get on a plane, that we might have reintroduced refreshments after Mass in some form in October. I'm sure like me you miss the chance for fellowship after Mass, as well as the usual privileges during Mass. All I can say at the moment is watch this space. October will certainly involve a reduction in the number of Masses on

a Sunday and the return of public Offices and Masses during the week at the usual times.

I've been deeply thankful that at the time of writing this letter we have not lost any of our congregation to Coronavirus. That said I am very sad nonetheless to report the deaths from other causes of two people with a long connection with LSM. Fr Anthony Wibberley died on 15th August (fittingly, the Assumption) after long illness but peacefully and with Jo, his wife, by his side. Andrew Wardill died on 9th August, also peacefully and quickly (his step-daughter spoke to him only the day before). Andrew will not be known to many of you because he had retired several years ago to the south coast. Prior to this, however, he was Head Server at LSM for a long time. I remember him from my student days here. Both Fr Anthony and Andrew were loyal servants of the church and deeply committed Christians. We commend them to the Lord whom they served and keep their families in our prayers. Both funerals will be small private affairs but we hope to have memorial Masses for them both here when Coronavirus restrictions have ended.

'Other people have had it a lot worse' I hear people say. indeed they have – I often think of the single parent in a flat in London trying to home-school two children during lockdown and both pray for those in that situation and give thanks it isn't myself. Yet everyone has had 'it' badly because it has been a time of national trauma from which no-one has escaped psychologically, regardless of their economic or medical circumstances. When Jesus tells us not to be afraid 47 times in the four Gospels He does it because there's a lot to be afraid of. We must, therefore, be gentle on ourselves and ask for the gift of patience; above all we must seek to take to heart S. Paul's command to the Galatians: 'Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ' (Galatians 6.2).

With continued prayers and all love, I am yours ever  
in Christ,

Fr Robert



## Meet the Designers: Lida Kindersley by *Jeremy Musson*

Members of the LSM congregation will be very aware of the outstanding artistic quality of the newly-inscribed Stations of the Cross unveiled in 2019 in memory of the late Fr John

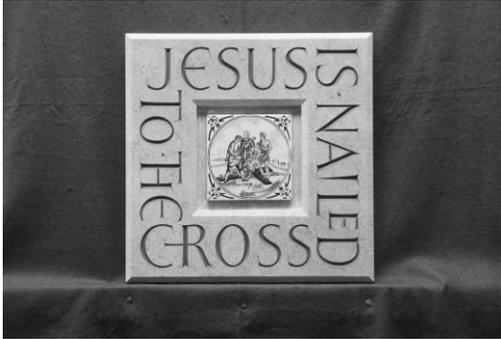
Hughes. Fr John had a long association with LSM, was Dean of Chapel and Chaplain at Jesus College, Cambridge and died tragically young in a car crash in 2014. The simple stone - elegant frames which surround the original ceramic tiles depicting the Stations of the Cross - are inscribed with the carved letters providing the narrative descriptions of the moments in the story of Christ's suffering and Crucifixion, offering a focus for prayer and meditation. So well-judged are these works, dedicated only in 2019 by the Bishop of Ely, they feel almost as if they have always been here.

These panels were carved by Lida Lopes Cardozo Kindersley MBE, the charismatic letter cutter and typeface designer, author and publisher who runs the world-famous Cardozo Kindersley Workshop in Cambridge. Lida was selected as the letter cutter to do this work on the recommendation of several members of the congregation, including theologian Professor Catherine Pickstock, and because of the close association of the Cardozo Kindersley Workshop with Eric Gill. "Lida fitted so well with Fr



John's spirit and approach - anti-utilitarian, a commitment to beauty for its own sake, hand carved – personal" says Fr Robert. Fr John's research also included the work of Eric Gill, discussed in his first book *The End of Work: Theological Critiques of Capitalism*, (2006) and so 'it was a natural thing to go to the workshop whose founder was trained by and so closely connected to Gill'.

Lida says, “We began with the architecture as a given: we need our work to be in tune with the fine proportions of the church. The existing tiles were quite small, so that was another given. We felt some colour was important, and the stone we chose should be light not dark, and not a marble. So, we selected a Hopton Wood stone, which was especially popular with sculptors in the 1920s and 1930s. It took us some time to think through the lettering and the framing, but we found a shape and showed it to Fr Robert, Catherine Pickstock and others at LSM who



encouraged us, to carry on, saying ‘everyone loves it, go ahead!’”

This encouragement was critical, says Lida, “It was so important, and allowed the design to become freer and freer, more lively.” What emerged was a style for the lettering, which caught the drama of each of the Stations of the Cross, where almost pictorial form

emerges within the letters. For example, when Jesus is nailed to the Cross, the letter I takes the form of the nail. The red colour is very traditional brick red, used a lot by Eric Gill, and enhances the chisel marks, each of which Lida argues illustrates “hand, brain and eye co-ordination”; each mark represents “the blow of conviction”



Lida’s story is a remarkable one: one of the foremost letter cutters currently working in the United Kingdom, Lida was born in 1954 in Leiden in the Netherlands, and studied at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague in 1976,



where she had studied type design and lettering, with Gerrit Noordzij. She then came, later the same year, to assist leading letter-cutter and sculptor, David Kindersley, in Cambridge. Lida began as apprentice, then they married, and David recognised her ‘as a genuine creative equal’ in what had been a very male-dominated world, and they worked in close collaboration on

letter-cutting and on books.

David Kindersley (1915-1995) had studied art at the *Académie Julian* in Paris and then, inspired by the writings of Gill, had joined him as an apprentice and then as a trusted assistant, before setting up his own workshop in 1936 (but continued to work for Gill on commission and was responsible for winding up Gill's workshop after his death). Gill's earliest inscription was done in 1903, so at Kindersley's death in 1995, it was possible to say that the two men had straddled the whole story of 20th-century British crafts, resurrecting the neglected craft of letter cutting and, what is especially important to the Cardozo Kindersley workshop still today, redefining the idea of the workshop as a 'way of life'.

Lida and David began their collaborations in 1976 and these works include the magnificent memorial to the abbots of St. Albans, carved on Welsh slate, which is laid on the ground in front of the altar in the Abbey, as well as the handcut and handwritten inscriptions for the Ruskin Gallery in Sheffield, and the lettering of the vast British Library Gates. They also carved Stations of the Cross for the London Oratory School, very different from those at LSM.

David founded a Cambridge workshop in Barton in 1945, which in 1967 moved to Chesterton Towers, and in 1977 moved to the former Victorian school building on Victoria Road where it became the Cardozo Kindersley Workshop, run by Lida since David's death in 1995. Today it retains a worldwide reputation and Lida is also a formidable champion of true dedication to living skills and the importance of craft skills in the age of technology. She has trained over 40 apprentices.

Lida's work in slate, stone and other media includes carved memorials, plaques, inscriptions and sundials, and can be seen in many notable institutions, cathedrals, churches and churchyards around the UK and beyond. She designed the memorial medal for the opening night of the Millennium Dome; carved the memorial stone to Dame Peggy Ashcroft in Westminster Abbey (unveiled in 2005) and the memorial to Stephen

Hawking at Gonville & Caius in Cambridge in 2018 (with the legend 'Remember



to look up at the stars and not down at your feet'.) Lida is supported in her work by her second husband, Graham Beck, and has been joined in the workshop by two of her three sons with David Kindersley, Hallam (left) and Vincent, and Vincent's wife Roxanne, while Paul is a creative artist in London.

Lida says, “A stone well cut for a clear purpose, done with love and dedication, is a time-consuming thing to make. A stone is commissioned because someone feels strongly that they want to commemorate something, or someone, special. To commemorate is to hold as worthy of remembrance; to celebrate; to give it weight and joy, gravitas or importance; to perpetuate. A cut stone is a material thing representing something immaterial – both it and the letters are symbols. Stone is one of the world’s natural resources. This precious natural resource and its history must be respected, and in cutting one wishes to add to it something that aims to enhance the world. Cutting letters in stone fuses the timeless natural beauty and permanence of the material with a living message and meaning”.

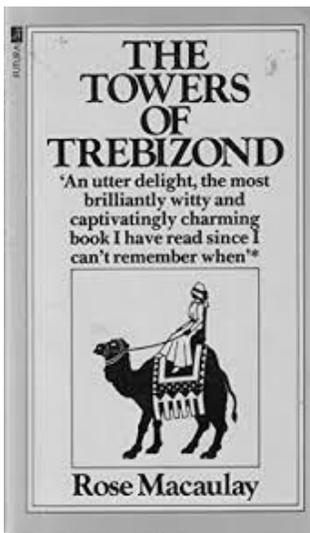
The author and former museum director Julian Spalding memorably wrote of Lida’s work, “Cutting in stone is for her a way of making light - and by implication life – last: making the intangible permanent. The secret lies in the spacing. Cutting penetrates the hardness of the surface, creating a luminous incision which transforms the solid block into a rock pool stained and marbled by eons of making.” Mr Spalding captures beautifully the aesthetic charge of the LSM Stations of the Cross, the floating words made permanent; the drama and poetry of the moment.

[www.kindersleyworkshop.co.uk](http://www.kindersleyworkshop.co.uk)

[www.julianspalding.net/JS/Lida\\_Cardozo\\_Kindersley.html](http://www.julianspalding.net/JS/Lida_Cardozo_Kindersley.html)

## The Towers of Trebizond

*A review by Edmund Racher*



“Take my camel, dear” said my Aunt Dot, as she climbed down from this animal on her return from High Mass.’ Those are the first lines of Rose Macaulay’s last novel, *The Towers of Trebizond* (1956). Much of the flavour of the book can be found in those first few words with the juxtaposition of the familial, the exotic and Anglican faith.

So: *The Towers of Trebizond* is written from the point of view of a woman called Laurie, a member of a well-off High Church family, who all appear to be keen anglers. She joins her aforementioned Aunt Dot and the forthright priest Fr Hugh Chantry-Pigg

on a journey to Turkey, to assess the possible success of an Anglican mission there. Their explorations take them to Trebizond – a city on the northern Turkish coasts now known as Trabzon. I could offer context for the titular city, but the novel will supply that in abundance! If your knowledge of the geography and history of the Near East is slim, exploring the references Laurie makes will remedy this swiftly.

Laurie joins her aunt out of a sense of familial obligation, and with an eye to the possibilities of illustrating a travel book of their experiences.

Her faith is constrained, but she follows on all the same, even as Fr Chantry-Pigg holds an open-air Mass on a coastal steamer and walks in a rather short Corpus Christi procession. However, despite the blitheness of Laurie's account and the charms offered by the ruins of Trebizond or regional Turkish cuisine, there is a largely unspoken background of sorrow - not just by the looming presence of the neighbouring Soviet Union or the irregular pace of modernisation in Turkey, but by Laurie's own faith and personal relations.

Laurie's faith is informed by her family history and is clearly of a literate and informed nature but is sufficiently personal and spiritual to make her more than a 'cultural Anglican'. Her attachment to God is hampered by an ongoing adulterous affair as well as by an awareness of the weight of history - of schism, belief and atrocity. Confronting this forms an under-layer to her mishaps in Turkey and the Levant, and her eventual return to Britain.

Macaulay's tone is generally light, often with an emphasis on the joys of travel or on broad characters, which have been noted as Dickensian. Despite Laurie's flights of fancy, however, there is a constant line of the tragic which cannot be ignored. Even as Laurie appreciates the ruins of Trebizond, she knows quite well how things become ruins in the first place.

This mingling of vision and reality is at the heart of *The Towers of Trebizond*. Despite the efforts of the characters, the demands of both affect them. However, this is not quite a novel about failure, or a novel to inspire despair. There is an eye of the storm in which to find peace, though one does not always find it.

*The LSM Reading Group will be discussing this book, via Zoom, on Wednesday 30th September at 8pm. Look out for the link, and join in!*

# An A-Z of Interesting Things I is for Incense

Incense, made from aromatic resins from trees and plants, is burned to give off scented smoke. In church it is burned in a censer or thurible, on top of lit charcoal, thereby generating the clouds of smoke.

The smoke of burning incense is seen as symbolic of the prayers of the faithful rising to heaven.

## A Discursive Exploration of Incense

by *Edmund Racher*

The presence of a thurifer and wafting clouds of incense during Mass may have an alien effect on the newcomer to Little St Mary's. It is so particular an ornament; even in a world of scent diffusers and scented candles, it may seem quite unconnected to other elements of worship. The elusive nature of smell as a sense, contributes to this – it is neither as obvious as the colour of a vestment nor as diffusive as an anthem.



However, incense does give a firm impression of its presence. Grey-white smoke plumes from the bulb of the thurible; cloud-like. Both smoke and clouds have an established history as signs of the Lord. The fiery cloudy pillar of Exodus (see Exodus 40:38) is one such

example; the whirlwind God appears to Job in another (Job 38:1). If a more visual example of all this is called for, I can only direct the reader to the motion picture *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. In between visions of an imperilled Harrison Ford, a sense of Biblical foreboding is conveyed by storm clouds, rushing winds, vortices and smoke-like vapours.

The smoke that goes up from the altar of the Temple according to the animal sacrifices outlined in Exodus 29 may also be worthy of

consideration. Far more pressing, though, is the altar for incense that is described in Exodus 30. That said, incense is mentioned as used in pagan worship (2 Kings 23:5); another improper usage of incense is seen in Leviticus 10:1.

Of course, the smoke that rises from the thurible may be said only to show the currents of air that move throughout the Church – the motions of God’s Creation that persist invisibly and unseen to many; the concept of the Music of the Spheres may be of use. Smoke likewise appears on Mount Sinai when Moses ascends it (Exodus 19:18). The prayers of the faithful may reveal these patterns even as they interact with them. Likewise, the motion of the thurible produces air currents that the smoke then reveals.

Fiery serpents assailed the Israelites in the desert (Numbers 21:6) and the trails of smoke from the thurible may look somewhat snakelike. If, taking the command to be ‘wise as serpents and harmless as doves’ (Matthew 10:16) can be applied, we may think of the fumes of incense as having the sweetness of poetry and the value of wisdom. Curiously, I have always envisaged the Flames of that descended at Pentecost (Acts 2:3) - a very definite flame of knowledge - as being smokeless. Yet sweet for all that.

The rattle of the thurible’s chain maybe likely, I confess, to raise the image of Jacob Marley in the mind of the onlooker. However, aside from the purely spectral, we may conjure a different set of elements with the chain. The imprisonment of St Peter (and numerous other saints and martyrs) has the image of the chains falling away (Acts 12:6-7) hence the name of the Church in the Tower of London: St Peter ad Vincula (the name has been used elsewhere).

All these may offer a wider perspective on the way that incense interacts with the wider workings of worship and scripture.



## **Calendar and Intentions**

**for**

**September 2020**

*The list of Thanksgivings and Intercessions offers a focus for our daily prayer, both at the Offices and Mass, and in our personal times of prayer.*

*The Vicar would be glad of suggestions or additions to the list of daily intentions.*

# Calendar for September

TUE 1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>S. Giles, hermit</i>
WED 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Martyrs of Papua New Guinea
THU 3 <sup>rd</sup>	S. Gregory the Great, bishop & doctor
FRI 4 <sup>th</sup>	<i>S. Birinus, bishop &amp; missionary</i>
SAT 5 <sup>th</sup>	
<b>SUN 6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY after TRINITY</b>
MON 7 <sup>th</sup>	of Requiem
<b>TUE 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary</b>
WED 9 <sup>th</sup>	Charles Lowder, priest
THU 10 <sup>th</sup>	
FRI 11 <sup>th</sup>	
SAT 12 <sup>th</sup>	
<b>SUN 13<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY after TRINITY</b>
<b>MON 14<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Holy Cross Day</b>
<b>TUE 15<sup>th</sup></b>	S. Cyprian, martyr
WED 16 <sup>th</sup>	S. Ninian, bishop
THU 17 <sup>th</sup>	S. Hildegard of Bingen, abbess
FRI 18 <sup>th</sup>	
SAT 19 <sup>th</sup>	<i>S. Theodore of Tarsus, archbishop</i>
<b>SUN 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>15<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY after TRINITY</b>
<b>MON 21<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>S. Matthew, apostle &amp; evangelist</b>
TUE 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Ember Day
WED 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Ember Day
THU 24 <sup>th</sup>	Our Lady of Walsingham
FRI 25 <sup>th</sup>	Lancelot Andrewes, bishop, Ember Day
SAT 26 <sup>th</sup>	of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Ember Day
<b>SUN 27<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY after TRINITY</b>
MON 28 <sup>th</sup>	
<b>TUE 29<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>S. Michael &amp; All Angels</b>
WED 30 <sup>th</sup>	<i>S. Jerome, doctor</i>

# Daily Intentions & Anniversaries of death

World Leprosy Mission	1 <sup>st</sup>
Papua New Guinea Church Partnership Musicians	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Those researching a Covid 19 vaccine	<i>Ernest Cherry, Queenie Windeatt</i> 3 <sup>rd</sup>
Schools – teachers, pupils & parents	<i>Richard Poole</i> 4 <sup>th</sup>
	<i>David Mossop</i> 5 <sup>th</sup>

<b>Our Parish &amp; People</b>	6 <sup>th</sup>
Faithful departed	<i>Ian Ledsham, Kimji Popat</i> 7 <sup>th</sup>
Midwives & the Rosie Maternity Unity	8 <sup>th</sup>
The sick	<i>Helen Kinnier Wilson, Ivan Buchanan</i> 9 <sup>th</sup>
Friends of LSM	10 <sup>th</sup>
Hamlin Fistula	<i>Christine Stevenson, Joyce Bird, Joan White</i> 11 <sup>th</sup>
Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament	12 <sup>th</sup>

<b>Our Parish &amp; People</b>	13 <sup>th</sup>
Trust in the Cross	<i>Lilian Fletcher, Doris White, Patrick Theobald</i> 14 <sup>th</sup>
Those persecuted for the Faith	15 <sup>th</sup>
S. Cyprian's Sharpeville, South Africa	16 <sup>th</sup>
Protection of the natural world	<i>Leslie Norman, Edith Butcher</i> 17 <sup>th</sup>
Calcutta Cathedral Relief Service	18 <sup>th</sup>
Bishops	<i>Rose Linsey-Bird, Hannah Dennett, Geoffrey Smith, pr.</i> 19 <sup>th</sup>

<b>Our Parish &amp; People</b>	<i>Lily Wythe</i> 20 <sup>th</sup>
Missionaries and Evangelists	21 <sup>st</sup>
Friends of Fulbourn Hospital	22 <sup>nd</sup>
Westcott House, Ridley Hall, & ERMC.	<i>Michael Rowett</i> 23 <sup>rd</sup>
Walsingham	
	<i>Ena Matheson, Nellie Harnwell, Ian Thompson, pr., Stephen Sykes, bp.</i> 24 <sup>th</sup>
Those preparing for Ordination	<i>Joan Wardill</i> 25 <sup>th</sup>
Society of Mary	<i>Richard Bainbridge, Ian Paton</i> 26 <sup>th</sup>

<b>Our Parish &amp; People</b>	27 <sup>th</sup>
Cambridge Aid	28 <sup>th</sup>
Trust in the strength of good over evil	<i>Derek Gibbons</i> 29 <sup>th</sup>
Biblical scholars	30 <sup>th</sup>

# **Zoom-tide Bible study**

*by Ben O'Neill*

Between 5th May and 21st July we met for no fewer than eleven sessions on Zoom, covering a broad range of Scripture: from the 'still small voice' that Elijah found on Mount Horeb to the valley of dry bones brought to life in the Book of Ezekiel, to episodes in the Gospels, including the woman healed by merely touching the hem of Jesus' garment, Jesus' promise to the apostles that He is with them even until the end of the age, and His Resurrection appearances. The aim was to find, read, and meditate on passages that might provide some comfort, hope, and peace in the midst of the anxiety, isolation, and loneliness that has been a defining feature of our lives over the past few months.

I had led a weekly Bible study, as well as an evening discussion group during the course of my pastoral assistantship year (2018-19) at Christ Church Vienna, in the Diocese in Europe, and was very grateful to have the opportunity and Fr Robert's blessing to be able to lead this group. We were joined at various points by members of the Vienna congregation; the reminder that the universal Church spans borders of time and space, and that, even when we are unable to worship together, we are part of the universal household of faith, was a useful one. I am also grateful to Charles Cowper, Ordinand at Ridley Hall, Cambridge and on attachment at S. Clement's Church, Cambridge, for guest leading one of the sessions. A particular highlight was the final session, Tuesday 21st July. I invited participants each to present a series of reflections on a passage of their own choosing. Seeing participants over the course of a series such as this one, becoming more confident and willing to speak in an often-personal way is, in my experience, a real blessing, and I am grateful to all participants for their contributions, some of whom have attached their own reflections and comments to this article. Reading back over their thoughts has helped me to relive many of the discussions and the fellowship that we enjoyed in these most challenging of times. We all agreed that the eleven weeks have gone by very quickly, but it is my hope that a similar group may be established in the Autumn, whether electronically or in person.

It is now time for me to part ways with LSM, having finished my studies at Peterhouse. I have been appointed to the position of Assistant Chaplain and (Graduate) Teacher of German at Stamford School in South Lincolnshire – a short train ride away, so I am sure I won't lose touch entirely.

*“I thoroughly enjoyed the weekly Bible study sessions, especially hearing about other people's religious experiences and their interpretations of passages. We all learned from each other's input. At the end of the final session, Ben led us in a beautiful and moving ad-lib prayer. I can't remember it verbatim now but part of it reminded me of a poem I was inspired to write five years ago. If you would like to read the full poem, it is on the 16th News Sheet. One of the verses in particular stood out to me 'Help us walk the path your Son Jesus trod. Light the way in darkness and take our prayers to God'. It is all too easy to go spiritually and mentally off piste in these unsettling times but with prayers it is possible to come through the other side of almost anything. So let us (with the help of Mary and Jesus) walk our paths in faith, hope, and love until we are reunited in Heaven.” - Chessie Nour*

*“We have just completed a set of eleven Bible studies under the more-than-capable leadership of Ben O'Neill. For the first ten weeks, Ben sought to raise our spirits by the selection and evaluation of stirring selections from the Bible that all gave us good reason to be thankful. On the eleventh and final session, we all brought along our favourite Bible passages to read and discuss. Overall, it was a very successful series, much appreciated by all the participants! Thanks again Ben, for all your efforts and we hope to see you at LSM soon!” - Ray & Janice Adams*

### **Some personal reflections on the LSM Zoom Bible studies**

*by Alison Stacey*

The LSM Zoom Bible studies offered an unprecedented opportunity for a diverse range of people from a wide range of ages, backgrounds and nationalities to meet online and share their own experiences and insights into the Bible. Week by week, I had the privilege of receiving new insights into sometimes very familiar passages.

Here are some of the reflections which struck me most deeply over the course of the studies from May to July. Included below are comments made by various participants of the Bible studies. I don't always remember who offered which particular insight, but even where I do remember, I am leaving all contributions anonymous.

In **1 Kings 19** we encounter Elijah in a desperate state, but God reassures him and gives him a clear mission. God spoke to Elijah in the silence of the mountain. Because of the Covid-19 restrictions, many of us were given a season of silence. Could we (did we?) use this silence to hear God speaking to us more clearly?

**2 Kings 5** presents the story of the healing of Naaman. When I was very young, I had a *Ladybird* book entitled 'Naaman and the little maid', so as I reread this story I could picture the different episodes through the vivid illustrations in my book. Having the book meant too that I was very familiar with this particular incident in 2 Kings. Some participants noted the parallel with last week's passage: there, Elijah encountered God as a small voice; here Naaman receives simple instructions regarding being healed. Naaman received free healing, free mercy and free grace, reminding us beautifully of what we as Christians receive in Jesus. I was delighted that **Psalm 23** was included in our series of studies as it was an especially resonant Psalm for me in the early weeks of the Covid-19 lockdown. I even wrote it out on a small piece of paper which I kept in my purse. I took it out to look at (and to try to memorise) every time I was standing in the queue for Tesco. It was fascinating to hear the idea that the *table* mentioned in this Psalm could represent the Eucharistic table. Some participants noted the parallel with 1 Kings 19: just as the Angel gave Elijah food for his (physical) journey, so God gives *us* food (he prepares a table for us) for our *life* journey.

Some people were troubled by the apparent *conditionality* of God's love in **John 14: 15-30**. Yet it was suggested that a better way to look at this may be to recognise that God's love is unconditional *but* something to which we *must* respond. If we love (and are loved by) God, we *will* want to 'share the love'. Quite a large part of the discussion on this passage was taken up with our relationship with/to the Holy Spirit, and the difficulties we sometimes have in relating to this person of the Trinity. It was helpful hearing different group members' perspectives. One suggested thinking of the Spirit as the *energy* of God e.g. a flame, breath or wind. All of these could be 'in' or could come 'into' you.

The group leader suggested that it would have been remiss to omit **Matthew 28** and the account of the Resurrection in this series of Bible studies, given that the

passages were chosen for their various messages of hope and comfort. The Resurrection is *the* biggest sign of hope and life in the whole of scripture. Some group members found particular comfort for the current times: it was an ordinary Sunday morning like any other; then Jesus rises... the normal, and then the *new* normal.

In our discussions of **Hebrews 2** we had a lively debate on the subject of whether Jesus really was *totally* without sin. The incident of Jesus throwing people out of the temple and whipping them was raised. Was that a sinful act? Some participants were very clear that this *wasn't* sinning e.g. being angry about injustice (as Jesus arguably was here) is the very *opposite* of sinning. A definition of sin given by the Jesuit Gerald

Hughes was shared: 'Not letting God be God'. In clearing the temple, Jesus was not acting for His own glory but for His Father's. Those buying and selling in the temple were not letting God be God. Jesus was restoring things to how they should be.

We enjoyed the very optimistic message of **Ezekiel 37: 1-14**. God can revitalise *anyone*, no matter how dead things seem. An interesting point is that God *could* have raised the dry bones *by Himself*, but instead He chose to 'collaborate' with the prophet. This is the way God works throughout scripture; He gives us an opportunity to share in His work. There is no finer example of this truth than in the Blessed Virgin Mary. A further useful point to note is that the 'healing' of the dry bones took place in stages: worth taking to heart when our prayers are not immediately answered. One participant felt a resonance with the lockdown times and observed that being 'dried out' can be redemptive. Someone suggested that it was OK to feel like a dried-up stick: *they* are used to kindle fire! Our discussions of **Psalms 30** yielded some deeply personal testimonials, particularly concerning experiences of profound joy or the power of silence. These were uplifting to hear and I will treasure them. It was interesting to discuss the idea of bargaining with God! Some participants said they did, other said they didn't.

It was very helpful to think through the implications of the anonymous woman's situation in **Luke 8: 40-48**. I'm not sure that I had truly empathised with her before: she was separated from God and the community; she could not participate in any way in 'divine life', and she *touches a rabbi*. A woman touching a rabbi was not acceptable; worse, an *unclean* woman touching a rabbi meant that the rabbi was defiled and the woman could have been stoned. How terrified she must have been when

Jesus singled her out. But then Jesus reassures her ... in spades!

Obviously He wasn't any ordinary rabbi. He could not be made unclean; He is so holy that all the woman needed to do was touch His garment (not even His body) to be healed completely and instantly. We ended that Bible study session with a spirited discussion of the nature of healing miracles today. Do they still happen? Some definitely thought so. The blending of genres was noted as one reason why **Revelation** (here we studied **Revelation 1: 1-11**) can seem obscure. God's unchanging nature was a key theme from our discussions. Almost everything else in life, even our understanding of the laws of physics, changes; but not God. Some found the idea of God as the Alpha and Omega very powerful. We don't know what the end will be, but we can certainly trust God. For our final session, we were all given the opportunity to bring along a passage which particularly resonated with us. It was a joy both to share with others some verses that are dear to me (**Proverbs 3: 5-6**) *and* to hear the passages which others had chosen, and their reasons for doing so. The session was varied as some shared deeply personal experiences whilst others offered a more theological reflection. Passages chosen by the other participants were: **I Kings 19:12, Matthew 3:13-17, Matthew 6:8, Luke 4:1-13, John 3:16, John 19:26, John 20:19-29, I Corinthians 13 and I Corinthians 15: 14-20.**

The final session epitomised the joy and privilege of these Bible studies. As we met together week by week we learned more about each others' faith journeys and were privileged to share in some participants' profound experiences of God. It seems to me that doing Bible studies online results in greater openness from those present, more diversity amongst those who join in and the opportunity to participate for people who would not take part in a conventional Bible study. Praise God for His mercy in granting this very special opportunity to share in discussion of His Word.

# Ade Bethune: Catholic Worker Artist

by *Emma Bourne*

Ade (pronounced Ah-day, a nickname for Adelaide) Bethune, was born in Brussels in 1914, six months before the outbreak of the First World War. The youngest of four children in a well-to-do Catholic family (a fifth child, André, was born after the war), her young life was not without its share of drama and suffering. Her father was serving in the army at the time of her birth, and with the onset of war, he remained, as she later described it, mostly just ‘a picture on the wall’ during her early years. Her grandfather, the Viscount Terlinden, stepped into the void, and encouraged Ade’s early interest in drawing. In 1917, her elder sister, Thérèse, died of meningitis, and Ade wrote later that one of her earliest memories was of praying with her family round the little girl’s coffin. It may seem odd to us now that a child so young be exposed to death in this way, but even now, Ade was not growing up as a bystander, but as fully exposed both to the hardships of life, and to personal responsibility to put them right. Her mother and eight-year-old brother were both involved in resistance work against the German occupation, producing and circulating an underground newspaper. Her mother was even arrested and spent a month in prison in 1918. All this before Ade was four, when the war finally ended and her father, whom she had barely seen, returned home.



By comparison, the rest of Ade’s childhood was far less eventful than its first four years, but those early years shaped the rest of it deeply. No doubt it was this emphasis on ‘personalism’ in her young life, so integral to the theology of the Catholic Worker movement, that equipped her to hear and respond so readily to God’s distinctive call on her own life. Always a devout child, she looked forward to making her first Confession and Communion with pious anticipation, but it was not until she was 12 years old that she was, as she later put it, ‘converted.’ Typically perhaps for such an artistic child, it happened during a play, about Saint Francis:

*‘I was absolutely astounded by discovering Saint Francis and what his life meant, but also by seeing the spirit of his poverty so well expressed...My life was changed. I was converted. I threw away a lot of my old treasures and decided to follow poverty myself as a disciple of Saint Francis. I took religion seriously;*

*that's the only way I can describe it. Put important things first; let less important ones go overboard.'*

Two years later, in 1928, the Bethune family emigrated to New York. It was here that Ade's faith, art and her sense of social justice combined into what could be called a vocation, and what would lead to her becoming known as a 'Catholic Worker artist.' As with all genuine vocations, however, Ade's was several years in the blossoming. She continued her studies in art in New York, as well as reading Scripture, studying church architecture, and educating herself more deeply in her faith. She admitted later that, up until her young adulthood, the only bits of Scripture she'd read were the snippets in the Missal. She bought her first full Bible for \$3 at the age of 18: 'I started reading that and loved it.'

A year later, in 1933, Ade first came across the Catholic Worker movement at a party with some art school friends. It was the hospitality that particularly attracted her: perhaps her mind went back to watching that play about Saint Francis all those years before in Belgium, or perhaps to the memory of her mother's resistance work. After reading some copies of the Catholic Worker newspaper, and finding their artwork rather 'shabby', she drafted out several illustrations and sent them to the editor, a certain Dorothy Day. Without waiting for a reply to her submissions, she then packed up two bags of clothes and made her way over to the Catholic Worker house to donate them. So enthusiastically does she seem to have cleared out her wardrobe, that she recorded later how Dorothy mistook her for a young homeless woman requiring shelter at the house:



*'A tall woman, with a face as though it had been carved by an axe, told me very kindly, 'I'm so sorry, we don't have any more room.'* I was so shy that I stuttered, *'I'm the girl who made the pictures for you; and I brought these clothes for you.'*

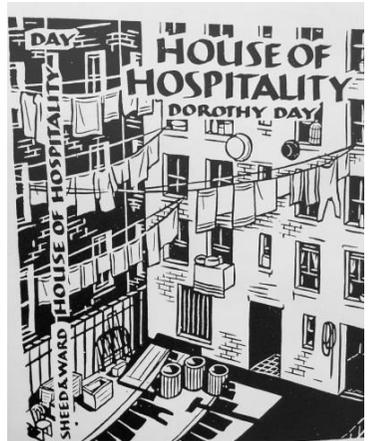
*'Oh,' she said, 'You are? Fine.'* She took the two shopping bags and sat me on a pile of newspapers. Then she took out a missal and said, *'All right, we're going to need your St Joseph for March, but we'll need a picture for April. St Catherine of*

*Siena's feast comes in April....Don Bosco's feast also comes in April; I'd like to have a picture of him too.'* I think it was at this moment that Ade's apostleship properly began. It lasted the rest of her long life, until

her death in 2002. From this first conversation sitting on a pile of newspapers, she became a passionate and dedicated craftswoman of the Church. As well as her work for the Catholic Worker, which remained prolific and constant, she designed stained glass, statues and murals for church buildings; she took on young women from humble backgrounds as apprentices to learn her crafts; she gave away far more than she earned, having to support herself when times got desperate by giving French lessons and cutting lingerie patterns; and she was no stranger to the everyday labour of the Catholic Worker movement either, overcoming her shyness to sell newspapers on the street with Dorothy, and cook food for the people seeking shelter in the Catholic Worker house. In all this, she is a great reminder that preaching the gospel does not have to be done in eloquent words and long phrases. Some people are called to preach in this way, certainly, and it is a good thing they are! But others, indeed all of us in one way or another, are called to preach in a way more like that of Ade: in simple images, clear pictures – whether those be artistic images, or the images created by deeds, behaviour, acts of kindness and charity:

*‘Everyone, every layperson acting with the spirit of forgiveness, does work of mercy. It is not a specially labelled vocation, but a truly ‘lay vocation’...visiting the widow and the orphan in their tribulations, and keeping oneself unspotted from worldly values and judgements.’*

Ade Bethune deserves to be better known. Up until now, only one full biography has been written of her, the oddly-titled but excellent ‘Proud Donkey of Schaarbeck’ by Judith Stoughton, sadly out of print but available second hand, and from which the quotations in this article are taken. Dorothy Day, by contrast, has a wealth of literature written about her, helped of course by the fact that she was a writer, not an artist, by trade. This is not in any way to denigrate Dorothy Day’s work, but rather to recognise that Dorothy and Ade together, in their Christian friendship, are a wonderful lesson, not only in the fruits that can bloom from collaborative works of mercy, but also in how we Christians can, and indeed **must**, encourage and foster the vocations in each other, not cling to them selfishly, so that the works of mercy taught by our Faith, may be performed consistently, tirelessly, and for the greater glory of God whom Ade frequently reminds us is the ‘Artist of all things.’



# **Ride & Stride for Churches**

*Saturday 12th September 2020*

This yearly event has rolled about again. The Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust invites participants to cycle or walk to as many churches as they can on the day, having obtained sponsorship. The money raised is split between the church of your choice and the Trust, for the care and repair of our local churches. Let it not be said - just because the Trust keeps our older churches up - that they are not at the forefront of innovation. This year, there are differences:

- No need to get your sponsorship form signed by individual sponsors
- (you still need to get Gift Aid details);
- No registration form to sign at churches;
- Unlikely to be any refreshments served at churches and toilets may also be closed (left to local church current restrictions);
- Churches that are normally open might be closed and churches might not have volunteer welcomers.

Instead, Ride and Stride invites participants to

- Go paperless and to take photographs of their visits;
- Stay local and explore close to home;
- Visit virtually! – get on your exercise bike and explore churches
- via national websites, e.g. <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/> or <https://www.explorechurches.org/>

There are many ways to help. All forms and the necessary information can be obtained online from the Trust website

<https://camhct.uk/rideandstride>

# Garden News

These three were blooming in the garden last Wednesday when a few of us met to have (our own) coffee and look at the garden. The green bins were refilled with previously-cut rubbish but it was far too hot for anything else. The garden will now be open and it is hoped that on Wednesdays anyone who is interested in the garden, and meeting friends, will come and join the workers around 11am. We can drink coffee (as was our custom after the 10.30am Mass), which can still be watched online before you come.

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