



Magazine

August

2019

The Julian Meetings

- *Foster the teaching and practice of contemplative prayer in the Christian tradition*
- *Encourage people to practise contemplative prayer in their daily lives, and explore ways of doing this which are appropriate for them*
- *Support the individual ecumenical Julian Meetings — groups whose members meet regularly to practise Christian contemplative prayer together*



The Julian Meetings Magazine August 2019

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Each year the Taizé Community in France produce their 'Proposals' and in 2019 'Hospitality' is their focus. This article is the text of the Second Proposal.

Be Attentive to Christ's Presence in Our Lives

God offers us hospitality, but it is by our free response that it becomes a true communion with him.

Jesus shows us that God is love, offering us friendship. Humbly, Christ stands at our door and knocks. Like a poor man, he hopes for and awaits our hospitality in return. If someone opens the door for him, he will enter.

By a simple prayer, we give him access to our hearts. Then, even when we hardly sense his presence, Christ comes to dwell within us.

- * Praying in a church, even for just a moment; setting time aside, in the evening or the morning, with no other purpose than to entrust our day to God - these are things that build us up inwardly over time. Recalling the presence of Christ also frees us from our fears - the fear of others, the fear of not being good enough, worry in the face of an uncertain future.
- * When we do not have much time, we can speak to Christ about ourselves and others - those nearby and those far away - in just a few words, as in a whisper. We can tell him what is in us and what we do not always understand. A few words from the Bible can also remain with us throughout the day.

The Risen Christ said: "I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with them, and they with me." (Revelation 3:20)

What helps me to hear Christ?

What does it mean for me to 'open the door' to him?

© Taize. Full details are on the Taize website: www.taize.fr

The Silence of a Rose

I held the stillness
as though it were a rose.
with care, with reticence,
with beauty.
Silence welled deep within its petals
far beyond the sweetest music
and I myself was held
as though a raindrop
on the tip of a leaf,
as though a child on the lap of one
who is the music, and the rose,
and the silence.
But most of all,
who is the silence.



Lynne Chitty



*We sit in silence round a flame -
As a moth comes once again.
We trawl the depths
for inner peace
As once was sought the golden fleece.
You join our mirth, share our pain,
The focus of our soul's refrain.*

Helen Turney
Sambourne & Studley JM)

Looking through different eyes



When I look at a patch of dandelions, I see a bunch of weeds that are going to take over the garden.

My children see flowers for mummy and blowing white fluff they can wish on.

When I look at an old drunk and he smiles at me, I see a smelly, dirty person who might want money and I look away.

My children see someone smiling at them and they smile back.

When I hear music I love, I know I can't carry a tune and don't have much rhythm so I sit self-consciously and listen.

My children feel the beat and move to it. They sing out the words. If they don't know them, they make up their own.

When I feel wind on my face, I brace myself against it. I feel it messing up my hair and pulling me back when I walk.

My children close their eyes, spread their arms and fly with it, until they fall to the ground laughing.

When I pray, I say thee, thou and please grant me this, give me that.

My children say, "Hi God! Thanks for my toys and my friends. Please keep the bad dreams away tonight. Sorry, I don't want to go to Heaven yet. I would miss my Mummy and Daddy."

When I see a muddy puddle, I step around it. I see muddy shoes and dirty carpets.

My children play in it. They see dams to build, rivers to cross and worms to play with.

I wonder if we are given children to teach or to learn from?

No wonder God loves the little children!

Enjoy the little things in life, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.

In the stilled silence
mind heart and soul
wait upon God
reach out to God
not thinking
not asking
not doing
just waiting
stilled upon
God

© Malling Abbey

Do not be afraid of your doubts ... Do not think they cast doubt on God, or the sky, or earth, or man, or knowledge. They are only telling you that your baby clothes have grown tight, that the view of the world which you held yesterday is beginning to squeeze you, that the image you had formed of God and the world has become too small for the experience of God and the world which has developed in you. Rejoice, and build a view of the world which is wider, deeper, wiser and more spiritual.

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

In My End Is My Beginning

T.S.Eliot begins his poem 'Burnt Norton' with the line, 'In my beginning is my end.' while in the last stanza he has the line 'In my end is my beginning'. I have meditated on these lines a great deal since I returned to live in Malvern, 60 years after my first arrival as, what today, might be called an alongside with the Community of the Holy Name. I then continued to fulfil what I believed to be my life's vocation there.

It all seemed so straightforward then and little did I realise what turnings and dislocations the journey would take, and how much I needed to grow before I could begin to respond fully to what God asked of me.

I continue to be so grateful for the formation and training I received in CHN, which gave me the foundations on which God could build and lead me on. The journey towards what I believed was a call to a simply contemplative expression of service led through years of theological study. Then, least expected of all, to marriage to someone who was to deepen my life in God even more. John was a Hebraist and specialist in the psalms. Before taking up his post in the university he was greatly affected by living in Jerusalem for several years. A deeply prayerful man, he taught me a huge amount and widened my understanding of what it meant to be human and what it could mean to live a life of prayer. Before his death we spoke of how I might continue with this.

A few years after John's death I was introduced to SCL, the network of the 'Single Consecrated Life'. This provides a route and support for those who wish to take a vow of celibacy within the Anglican Church, and consecrate their lives to God, some through active ministries, some in more contemplative lives, some even as solitaries. This was open to those who were single, virgins, widows or divorced, ordained or lay. After a time of discernment with the



Diocesan Bishop a temporary vow is taken in a service of consecration by the Bishop. This is followed by life consecration at a later date. This is then registered with the Advisory Council.

It has been in following this route that I have been enabled now to live as a consecrated widow and solitary here in Malvern. Sisters Theresa Margaret and Verena were a particular help along the way. It was Verena who introduced me to Sister Rosemary, my present spiritual accompanier. She is a member of the Community of the Sisters of the Love of God, where over the years I have found inspiration and counsel. To all of these I owe a huge debt.

As I look back along the way I have been led and find myself here, in what seems a place of intersection and inter connection, I am extremely grateful and pray that I may have grace to be faithful. Truly in my beginning my end was in embryo, and now, in what must be the last stage of the journey, my beginnings are so much interwoven within my end.

Margaret

Margaret's journey of faith could be read as another example of an unexpected pilgrimage. 'I then continued to fulfil what I believed to be my life's vocation' was followed by something quite different!



In many people's lives this happens. To their surprise and, often, initial dismay God calls them onwards from what had seemed a settled place to a quite unexpected future. In our last magazine Sr. Pamela described just such a calling to be a pilgrim. God is full of surprises!

A Contemplative Healing Practice



At this time there is so much in the world which is crying out for healing, at all levels: global, national, community and individual. Healing was at the centre of Christ's ministry.

I believe that all of us can follow His example by offering healing prayers, and by taking what practical steps we can to help healing come about.

I find taking some time out to contemplate Christ the Healer is a wonderfully 'centring' way to start each morning. The aim is to continue the healing focus while engaged in all the tasks throughout the rest of the day. (I find this monumentally difficult, but I believe it is very important to try.)

I would like to share a simple way of offering healing. It need take only 15 or 20 minutes, but it can of course be extended for longer. Please feel free to adapt this practice to whatever suits you.

Sit quietly, contemplating the breath. Be aware of the breath coming and going. Focus upon breathing more slowly and deeply, but with no force or effort. Allow all mental distractions to come and go without engaging with them.

Reflect upon the unity of Creation; that every element – including ourselves - is interconnected.

Contemplate the light and/or energy of healing, and that it is entering and flowing out of the lungs and heart. I find it particularly helpful at this point to contemplate the presence of Christ the Healer, and also Archangel Raphael, the Angel of Healing.

Become aware of what wants to be healed within the self

(whether this be physical, emotional, and/or spiritual).
Imagine on the in-breath that the self is being bathed in
the light of healing, and on the out-breath that the
entire self is whole, and is glowing with healing. (Do
this for at least five full in- and out-breaths.)

Bring your attention to what wants to be healed within the
community, and repeat five full breaths so that the
entire community is whole, and radiant with healing.

Focus upon what wants to be healed within the nation,
repeat five full breaths so that the entire nation is
whole, and vibrant with healing.

Finally become aware of what wants to be healed within
the world, repeat five full breaths so that the entire
world is fully healed and whole.

Gradually bring back the breath to normal, and come 'to',
while perhaps pledging to continue the focus – at least
in the background - for the rest of the day.

'By His wounds we are healed' – Isaiah 53:5

Steve Gardiner

Prayer

Written by an unknown prisoner in Ravensbruck
O Lord, remember not only the men and women of
good will, but also those of ill will.
But do not remember all the suffering they have
inflicted on us; remember the fruits we have bought,
thanks to this suffering – our comradeship, our
loyalty, our humility, our courage, our generosity, the
greatness of heart that has grown out of all of this.
When they come to judgement let all the fruits we
have borne be their forgiveness.

*Our paths may cross
in lonely desert spaces,
or crowded city places,
on mountain steep,
or urban street,
but our paths will cross,
and you will offer
to lighten our load,
walk our road,
ease the pain,
take the strain.
Our paths shall cross,
when you will call,
and shall we turn,
can we learn
to hear your voice,
make the choice?*

From: <http://www.faithandworship.com/prayers>

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Choosing God's Path

I have been at a few meetings over the years, when a major decision has to be made, but the path God would have us take is not clear. There have been valid arguments for all the options we could take, with some positions passionately held.

The most powerful meetings have been those where, once everyone has had chance to speak, we have sat together in silence for 5-10 minutes. This has allowed the Holy Spirit time, and space, to be with each person present. It has allowed heated arguments to cool, and heads to clear.

The decisions we have then made have very often been unanimous and, in due course, blessed by God.

Sometimes, dear Lord
My mind feels like a bee
 Buzzing round
 From place to place
Sipping the nectar of various thoughts
 Moving constantly
 Restlessly seeking
How can I stop this constant fluttering?
 I need a strong scent
Something to attract me
 I need to focus on You
For You are calling me
Like beautiful blossom
 Your colour
 Your vibrancy
 And Your very Life
 Is what I most need
Help me Lord to be drawn to You
 To seek Your nourishment
 For You are Food for me
 As nectar is to the bee
Help me Lord to settle my mind
And alight upon the flower of Your Love
 To stay there until I am filled
Feeding on Your Fragrant Beauty.



*This day and every day
Amen*

Elizabeth Mills



Book Reviews Editor

Sadly, ill health has meant our Reviews Editor has had to give up her role.

Is this a job you might consider doing?

Role description

To collate a selection of book / CD etc. reviews for each issue of the JM Magazine

Details of the task

1. Liaise with publishers for review copies of suitable books
2. Welcome suggestions of possible books for review from any other source.
3. Keep a list of potential reviewers with a variety of backgrounds. Match reviewers to an appropriate book.
4. Welcome suggestions for new reviewers,
5. Welcome unsolicited reviews, and accept them as appropriate
6. Send books for review to reviewers, and receive their reviews in due course.
7. Check the review for full publishing details, and for content and length. Edit the review, if necessary.
8. E-mail reviews to the Magazine Editor for inclusion in the magazine. They may be further edited if this proves necessary.
9. Receive a 'Read' PDF from the Magazine Editor for forwarding to those publishing houses whose books have been reviewed.

If you might be interested, please contact Deidre Morris, the Magazine Editor (details on page 27) for a chat and / or a more detailed job description.

One Quaker's Experience of Silence

John Edward Southall (1855-1928) was a lifelong Quaker. This extract adapted from his publication 'The Power of Stillness' describes his experience of silence as the vital element in his approach to religion and life.

This is one way to know God. 'Be still and know that I am God.' 'God is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.'

A score of years ago a friend placed in my hand a little book which became one of the turning points in my life. It was called 'True Peace'.

It was a medieval message and it had but one thought, and it was this - that God was waiting in the depths of my being to talk to me if only I would get still enough to hear his voice.

I thought this would be a very easy matter, and so I began to get still. But I had no sooner commenced than a perfect pandemonium of voices reached my ears, a thousand clamouring notes from without and within, until I could hear nothing but their noise and din. Some of them were my own voice, some of them were my prayers. Others were suggestions of the tempter, and the voices of the world's turmoil. Never before did there seem so many things to be done, to be said, to be thought: and in every direction I was pushed and pulled, and greeted with noisy acclamations of unspeakable unrest.

It seemed necessary for me to listen to some of them, but God said, 'Be still, and know that I am God.' Then came conflicts of thoughts for the morrow, and it's duties and cares; but God said, 'Be still'. And as I listened, and slowly learned to obey, and shut my ears to every sound, I found after a while that when other voices ceased, or I ceased to hear them, there was a still, small voice in the depths of my being that began to speak with an inexpressible tenderness, power and comfort.

As I listened, it became to me the voice of prayer, and the voice of wisdom, and the voice of duty. I did not need to think so hard, or pray so hard, or trust so hard, but that 'still, small voice' of the Holy Spirit in my heart was God's prayer in my secret soul. It was God's answer to all my questions, was God's life and strength for soul and body, and became the substance of all knowledge, and all prayer and all blessing: for it was the living God himself as my life and my all.

This is our spirit's deepest need. It is thus that we learn to know God; it is thus that we receive spiritual refreshment and nutriment. It is thus that we receive the Living Bread; it is thus that our very bodies are healed, and our spirit drinks in the life of our risen Lord, and we go forth to life's conflicts and duties like the flower that has drunk in, through the shades of night, the cool and crystal drops of dew. But, as the dew never falls on a stormy night, so the dew of his grace never comes to the restless soul.

We cannot go through this life strong and fresh on constant express trains; but we must have quiet hours, secret places of the Most High, times of waiting upon the lord when we renew our strength, and learn to mount up on wings as eagles, and then come back to run and not be weary, and to walk and not faint.

This extract, used with permission, is the text of a leaflet on Silence produced by Quaker Life Outreach, Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ Website: www.quaker.org.uk

I have always loved the desert. One sits down on a desert sand dune, sees nothing, hears nothing. Yet through the silence something throbs, and gleams.
Antoine de Saint-Exupery

This is an edited version of the sermon given by the Rev'd Rodney Bomford to a gathering of members of Julian Meetings at an Anglican Eucharist in 2008

There are many ways to contemplate. The one I try to practise sounds very simple. I try to be entirely still, and empty my mind of any distinct thought, while remaining entirely awake and attentive. A practical person might suggest this is a waste of time. What are you doing? Nothing. What are you thinking of? Nothing. So what is the point and purpose of it?

This is the big question, whatever method of contemplation you adopt. What is the point of it? One answer may be that it brings a sense of peace. For many of us it often does, but I don't think that should be the point of doing it. In principle we contemplate because God invites us to, although our motives are seldom unmixed, nor entirely clear even to ourselves. The principle is important. Contemplation is a response to a calling from God: a calling to know God better. We do it, not to reach a state of peace, not to satisfy our curiosity about God, but because God calls us to it. He calls us to the ministry of contemplation.

Christians have many callings, many ministries, and no one receives them all. Only God knows fully what they are for: we can only guess. So if we ask 'Why does God call some to contemplation?' we should not expect a full answer. It might be to do with experiencing his presence, because many believe this happens when contemplating. It could be just as important to experience his absence, which is also what many find happens when contemplating. This may be one insight that those who contemplate can offer us: when God seems to be most absent then he is perhaps most present.

Whether we experience presence or absence is not really important, for our feelings are unreliable guides. The truth that God is always with us is one clear insight that contemplation offers to the church - and to the world. God is greater than all our feelings and imaginings. His being is a mystery beyond

I wait

and I listen

I hold out this chalice empty



for your filling

I wait

I listen

words or thought. Another insight is to know that, while we can never experience God as he really is, yet the longing to do so is perhaps the greatest gift that he can give. Our prayer is not to gain some kind of gift for ourselves - not to have strange experiences or reach strange states of consciousness - but simply to respond to God's call to reflect back to him his everlasting love for his creation.

Pamela Fawcett

It is with sadness that we report the death of the Rev. Canon Pamela Fawcett on 1st March, aged 90 years. Pamela was associated with the Julian Meetings from its earliest days. Her most valuable contribution was from 1982 when she became editor of the magazine. In those days it was just several A4 sheets of paper stapled together.

Pamela's great gift was to commission well known and less well known writers on prayer and spirituality to provide articles on silence, prayer and a contemplative relationship with God. She also included inspiring poetry on prayer. During her many years as editor of the Magazine, Pamela was also an active member of the Advisory Group.

In 1994 JM decided to celebrate their 21st anniversary by publishing an anthology of articles and poems from the JM Magazine under the title "Circles of Silence". Pamela played an important role in helping the editor, Robert Llewelyn, to trace the authors of selected articles to obtain permission and clear copyright. The book was a great success, was reprinted and is now out of print, but often available second hand..

Pamela was one of the first women to be ordained in Norwich Cathedral in 1994 (together with Hilary Wakeman). They were the first women in the Diocese to be made Honorary Canons.

We give thanks for Pamela's life, her ministry and her dedication to the Julian Meetings.

*Everything that's created comes out of silence.
Thoughts emerge from the nothingness of
silence. Words come out of the void.
Your very essence emerged from emptiness.
All creativity requires some stillness.*

Wayne Dyer



The image of an apple tree was recently offered as a way to visualise the diocese in which I live.

Is this also an image we might use for the Julian Meetings?

There is a strong trunk - our three-fold God whose love supports the whole of who we are and what we do and it branches out to all creation

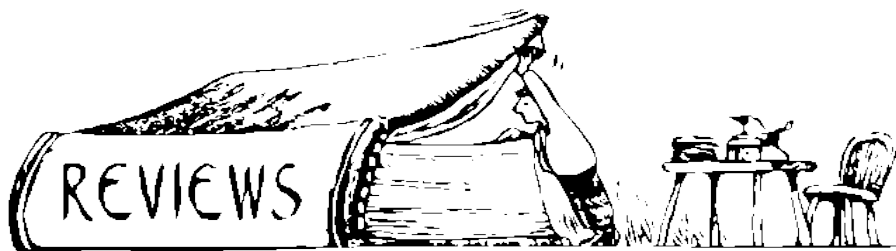
The tree is rooted in the soil of faith, and fed from there by

the sap of the Spirit. But it is also fed by the leaves that photosynthesise energy from the sun. So the tree cannot exist without the leaves – over time it will die – but the leaves can only live on the tree. They depend on each other.

‘The Julian Meetings’ is rooted in the soil of faith, but exists as an organisation, as a network, only because of all the twigs (the individual Julian Meetings) and the many leaves, which are the individual members whether they belong to a Meeting or not. If there are no Meetings or members - no twigs or leaves - then there is no JM, no tree, in the longer term.

The trunk and branches support and feed the twigs and leaves, but it is the latter that blossom and bear fruit. The handful of people who provide the JM admin are like the trunk and main branches: they connect the individual Meetings, and provide support (e.g. the website), and food (magazine, newsletter, publications). But most of God’s work is done in each person and each Meeting. Without them JM, like the tree, is just a dying skeleton.

Deidre Morris



RHYTHMS OF GRACE: Finding intimacy with God in a busy life.

Tony Horsfall

BRF 2012 £9.99

ISBN 978-1-84101-842-3

Fifteen years ago a book by John Main started me on the path of contemplative prayer and an exciting new journey in faith. I had already encountered Brother Lawrence and read *The Cloud of Unknowing*. Later I read Henri Nouwen, Thomas Merton, Margaret Silf and many more, who deepened my appreciation of the riches we have in our Christian tradition.

This is a fascinating book by an author new to me, whose experience echoes my own. I returned to living faith through the ministry of a charismatic church, so I appreciate the early chapters which highlight the strengths of the Evangelical and Charismatic strands Christianity in the UK. He alludes to the need for a growing maturity of faith, where we serve out of a place of rest in God.

Tony outlines a journey that many will recognise and clarifies six great practices for setting out on, maintaining and deepening our relationship with God. He introduces us to spiritual explorers down the centuries, from the 4th century desert fathers and mothers, to those of the present day. He gives the scriptural grounding of their exploration in the practice and experience of Jesus and the early church. The joy too is that, in the final pages, Tony sets out how the reader or small groups of interested people, might explore together those inner disciplines which lead us into new life; a gift indeed.

Sue Cutts

WHERE PRAYER FLOURISHES

Thomas Merton, foreword Sarah Coakley

Canterbury Press, 2018 £6.53

ISBN 9781786220615

Merton's last book, before his death in 1968 aged 53, it was originally entitled *The Climate of Monastic Prayer: a guide to Christian prayer and meditation for his fellow Cistercian monks of Gethsemane, in Kentucky*. It has become a valuable tool for Christians wishing to deepen and enrich their prayer life. Not an 'easy' read, it assumes some Christian maturity, but to those who persevere it brings rich dividends.

Merton questioned his role in the Cistercian community, but the strength and depth of his faith and his gifts for the written word, were clear. His Abbot, unusually, allowed him to build a writer's retreat in the adjacent woods. This gave him solitude, silence and tranquillity to study, interpret scripture and write over 70 books, many of them highly acclaimed.

Based on Merton's own practice of prayer and meditation, this book conveys the power of his spiritual experiences in meditation, which he describes as the 'prayer of the heart'. His practical, reverential, approach makes this a valuable aid to personal prayer and meditation. Merton makes clear the need to open one's heart as the doorway for God to fully enter one's life. Contemplative prayer is not emptying the mind of distractions (as much Eastern practice advocates) but filling the heart with unbounded love for God. On the way, he warns, are many pitfalls: false dawns, deceptions, diversions. He describes many of these in detail and how to avoid them.

Introducing the history of Christian contemplation, Merton explains how the different modes of prayer evolved through the practices of such spiritual luminaries as Saints Augustine, Basil, Benedict, Bernard (of Clairvaux) Columba, and Gregory (of Nyssa). These modes: *oratio*, *lectio* or *contemplatio*, offer different paths towards the same goal - a spiritual union with God. Merton exhorts the reader to follow these paths, in a way that is practical and available to us all.

A CRY IS HEARD my path to peace

Jean Vanier with Francois-Xavier Maigre

Darton Longman & Todd 2018 £9.99

ISBN 978-0-232-53391-0

Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche in 1964, died earlier this year aged 89 (90). He retired from direct responsibilities and the council at the age of 75. In his usual, humble way he writes 'I needed...to make room for others.' Despite his years he 'can recapture the uncontrollable laughter, the freedom to be a little silly and times of silence experienced together in prayer.'

This moving book is both a memoir of years spent with the intellectually disabled, and also a rallying cry to set ourselves free – free of dreams of power, free of a desire to win, free of our rivalries, enabling us to be free to love the marginalised and oppressed. The L'Arche communities taught Vanier 'the path of joyful wisdom.' He tells of three realities: communion, friendship and fellowship, which are at the core of L'Arche. Many of the young people who go to serve for a year lack confidence, have experienced failure, or have lacked love and support in their families: he tells how they are gradually transformed as they discover that they are loved by those they came to serve.

He tells of residents in L'Arche communities worldwide: of those who cannot speak and smile a lot; of those who have a few words and crave affection; of Andre, nicknamed Doudoul, who, when asked by a cardiologist what he saw in his heart, replied 'Jesus'. Asked what Jesus was doing - 'He's resting.' Jean Vanier led retreats to people of many faiths, witnessing that people with an intellectual disability are a privileged path to God. Often there were moving, challenging encounters: - a retreat in Moscow when Orthodox, Catholics, Pentecostals, Baptists and others noted how they were united in prison but on becoming free became they divided again.

This book, a call to action towards unity and peace, is profoundly inspiring, encouraging and filled with hope.

Jennifer Tann

ONE UNFOLDING STORY: Biblical reflections through the Christian Year

Michael Perham, ed. Paula Gooder, Joanna Moriarty

Canterbury Press ,2018 £14.99

ISBN 978 1 78622 049 3

This selection of sermons by the late Michael Perham, former Bishop of Gloucester, reflect his faith in the God of love he lived and preached. Following the Christian year from Advent to the return of Christ the King, our faith is deepened as we encounter the riches of God in each season.

Sermons are to be spoken aloud, so his arguments are easy to follow – and full of surprises - on topics that are wide ranging, challenging and informative. They often raise questions to which he has no answer: he suggests we learn to live with the questions.

Bishop Michael has a passion to share God's unfolding story: to encourage us to open our eyes and ears to the signs of God's kingdom here and now. A Christmas sermon asks us understand that God came, not to the Church but to the world he loves so much. We encounter him in the market-place and wherever people live their daily, messy lives, as well as in our sacred spaces. He emphasises that, 'God reveals his glory not in creation ... not in miracles ... not in wise and holy teachers ... but in Jesus.'

Bishop Michael's concerns are inclusivity, liturgy, Eucharist, the scriptures and above all prayer - the key to renewal of worship: 'it is ... not new words, modern music, fancy movements or rich symbolism that make worship a deep encounter with God, but a spirit of prayer permeating the liturgy from beginning to end.' He encourages us to persevere to find the new path to explore, a new truth for which to search.

This is not a book to sit down and read straight through, but one to spend time with through the year and it contains a goldmine of quotations to lead a Julian meeting into silence.

Ann Morris

GAME CHANGERS: Encountering God and Changing the World

Gavin and Ann Calver

Monarch Books 2018 £8.99

ISBN 978-0-85721-926-8

This book's aim is to place the decline of church membership (in the Western world) in the context of the Bible Story, and to make mission both possible and exciting. The Calvers see the need for change in a culture where Christianity is marginalised and where there is an intellectual bias towards atheism. Their engaging manual helps to banish hopelessness at the size of the task, and encourages us to have the confidence, each in our own small way, to change the world. 'We are not called to be bland magnolia wallpaper on the bare walls of the world, but to stand out as vibrant, colourful and distinct.'

The story of Moses weaves through the book's five sections that lead us through the process. Like Moses turning aside to consider the burning bush, we must make time and space to *encounter* God, and be transformed by that holy moment. We must banish the doubt and despair that can form a hedge to obscure our view of eternity. If God can use Moses, insecure, uncertain and unprepared when he started his ministry, he can use anybody. In fact God seems to choose us especially for our weaknesses, so that we are dependent upon him.

Section two encourages us to accept the challenge to **enlist**: 'or do we throw water on the flames of the burning bush?' God will help us to grow: David fought a lion and a bear before tackling Goliath. It is not organisations that have success, with sterile strategic plans: it is the people behind any achievement, change or revolution who make the difference. Ed Miliband, in 2015, said: 'change happens: people don't give up, they don't take no for an answer, they keep demanding change.'

The last three sections help us with mission, encouraging us to enlist co-workers, then equip and empower them. At the end of each chapter we are asked to pause and consider: *Yes! But?* The questions are often challenging but they suggest

ways for individual and group reflection to discern what this might mean for us today.

A book full of hope and encouragement, in a fresh, thrilling style. The challenge to disciples (us) is, as always, to embed Jesus' values into our culture. His first disciples didn't do too badly once he had ascended!

Ann Morris

OPEN TO GOD: OPEN TO THE WORLD

Pope Francis with Antonio Spadaro

Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2018 £10.99

ISBN 978-1-4729-5901-0

This book offers a glimpse into the mind of a quite different Pope, Francis, who reveals his hopes and aspirations boldly, honestly and directly via a series of interviews. Under the Holy Spirit, prayer is his only preparation for these questions: an opportunity he sees as one of great pastoral value.

Pope Francis is not afraid to speak of where he feels the church has failed, or to discuss the church's illnesses. That of clericalism, which he sees as stunting spiritual growth and distancing the church itself from poverty. He quotes St Ignatius: 'poverty nurtures, mothers, generates spiritual life, a life of holiness, apostolic life, and it is a wall, it defends.'

He condemns proselytism: 'enthusiasm must shift towards common prayer and works of mercy, working together to help the sick, the poor, the imprisoned.' He expresses refreshingly clear, progressive and pragmatic views on ecumenism. He exposes flaws in past ways of teaching in theology and in philosophy. Francis balances his criticisms by direction from the Scriptures: the theology of Jesus began with reality and rose up to the Father. He firmly stresses our need to study, be dedicated, alert and seize hold of reality – all in prayer.

In his interviews, he meets head-on the problems of our modern world, including those emanating from the Church. He holds strong views on terrorism as the world sees it and

exposes a form of deeply violent and difficult terrorism at the disposal of us all – that perpetrated by the tongue.

In these dialogues with people of all backgrounds he speaks again and again of the need to support academic study with real life; to meet people where they are in the midst of their troubles, at the periphery and from afar, through prayer and personal community discernment. The importance of God's Grace, discernment and mercy flow throughout his interviews.

Gerry Carter

THE SECRET TESTAMENT OF JULIAN

Simon Parke

White Crow Books, £11.99

ISBN 978-1-78677-067-7

Another book on Julian, which claims to be *by* Julian – a diary she jotted down between writing the Revelations of Divine Love. In this untold story, her parish priest is dragged from the church and burnt in the Lollards Pit; the Bishop orders the wall of her cell to be broken down in a search for books; an angry mob throw a burning log through her cell window. And much more...

Does this rubbish matter? Sadly, it does. People believe what they read in books: fiction and fact are so plausibly entwined here that anyone meeting Julian for the first time in this book could take it for gospel. A book in the Dan Brown 'school', to be avoided.

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