

**A FORUM ON CATHOLIC ANGLICANISM:
“WHAT MAKES CATHOLIC ANGLICANISM DISTINCTIVE?”**

St. James, King Street, Sydney
Saturday, 17 November, 2001

“The Oxford Movement and how it changed the Church”

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Introduction

No story in the whole history of the English Church, since St Augustine landed in AD 597, is so splendid as the story of the Oxford Movement.¹

So begins S. L. Ollard’s *A Short History of the Oxford Movement*, first published in 1915 and still in print. He goes on:

[The story of the Oxford Movement] has every sort of interest. It is exciting, romantic, chivalrous, like the story of a crusade. It has its humour as well as its tragedy. And the actors in it were among the most spiritual men who have ever lived in England. They were men of genius besides: poets like Keble, Newman, Isaac Williams, and Faber; men of letters like Newman and Dean Church; preachers whose sermons are read today, divines and theologians whose fame will last as long as Christianity endures. So that a more interesting subject hardly exists in the whole of Church history.²

My brief for this talk is to show how the Oxford Movement changed the Anglican Church, so although I must touch on it, it is not my intention to give a history of the Oxford Movement. Like Dr Ollard, I will be using the term ‘Oxford Movement’ to describe not just the rather academic concerns of the Tractarians, but the entire Catholic Revival in the Anglican Communion in the nineteenth century and following.

And, like Ollard, I speak as a totally convinced and utterly biased product of that Revival. Ever since I discovered the Catholic Tradition in the Anglican Church (at the age of seventeen) I have found the Catholic Faith to be an authentic, beautiful and Christ-centred way of life, faithful to the Scriptures, spiritually vital, intellectually satisfying, compassionate, challenging, idealistic, humane.

¹ S. L. Ollard, *A Short History of the Oxford Movement*, Oxford 1915, reprinted & revised Mowbrays, Oxford, 1983, p 19.

² Ibid.

In examining how the Oxford Movement changed the Church, I want to show how the Oxford Movement was in essence a movement of Christian renewal—theological, liturgical, pastoral, and spiritual—and it was missionary in nature. It was not in conformity with the then current social, political or even religious culture of its day, but ran counter to prevailing culture and was opposed by it. It demanded of its adherents conviction and courage.

And I want to show that the Oxford Movement has exerted an influence on and brought about change for good not only for those who would claim to be its direct successors, but on the Anglican Church as a whole, and on the wider Church.

In this paper I want particularly to touch on five ways in which the Oxford Movement changed the Anglican Church:

1. It renewed in the Anglican Church a sense of its identity as not only the heirs of the protestant reformation. It gained renewed understanding that it had retained the essentials of Catholic order, sacraments and doctrine.
2. It brought about a renewal in liturgy, worship and sacramental theology in the Anglican Church. The Oxford Movement taught the Anglican Church as a whole to be more Eucharistic in worship.
3. There was a renewal of and interest in spirituality and personal holiness, a renewed self-sacrificing ideal of priesthood and pastoral ministry, and in many lay organisations, a fostering of devotion, service and missionary outreach.
4. There was a revival of the Religious Life of monks and nuns, friars and sisters (along with lay societies, associations and oblates), which brought new ways of being Christian, new and prominent roles in the life of the Church particularly for women, new ways of serving the poor and needy, and new ways of reaching the 'unchurched' and preaching the Gospel.
5. Finally, I want to show that at the heart of the Catholic Revival in the Anglican Church is the conviction that religion is fun! — that God is good, and that he loves us. Of course that is not unique to Anglo-Catholics, but it is a recognisable characteristic that needs to be fostered. If the world is to be reached with the Gospel it desperately needs Christians who can laugh at themselves. This is a sign of our confidence in ourselves and in God, and a reminder that it is always his mission we are involved in, not our own.

At the conclusion I hope to show that the Catholic Tradition is now integral to authentic Anglicanism and needful for its vitality, and that there continues to be a need in the Church for these insights and emphases.

Catholic Identity

Perhaps it is too obvious that the first and fundamental insight of the Oxford Movement is a recapturing of a vision and identity of Anglicanism as Catholic. Catholic not just in a broad and general way, but as holding the faith of the universal Church, not that of a sect: the catholic scriptures, creeds and doctrines as defined by the Councils of the early undivided Church, the Catholic ministry and order of bishops, priests and deacons, the sacraments of the Catholic Church, and being in continuity and conformity with the early Church Fathers and the Catholic faith from the earliest times down through the middle ages to the present day.

Of course this insight and emphasis was not new. And that was the point. The Oxford Movement was not trying to introduce something new to Anglicanism, it was reminding the Church of something it was starting to forget. Their success in this can be measured by the fact that by the middle of the twentieth century the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher (who leaned more toward Evangelicals than to Catholics) would state that the Anglican Church has no doctrine of its own, it holds only the doctrine of the Catholic Church.

So the Oxford Movement reminded the Church of its continuity, and that this tradition of classical Catholic doctrine and sacramental worship had never been fully lost in the Church of England, surviving throughout the reforms of Henry VIII, Edward VI and the Elizabethan Settlement, inspiring the Caroline Divines and the Non-Jurors. The High Church tradition ('High Church' because they had a 'high' doctrine of the Church and its worship, order and sacraments) of the Church of England was the immediate predecessor of the Tractarians.

The authority for the theological basis for the Oxford Movement would therefore be historical, biblical and patristic, not the protestant reformers. As Bishop Frank Weston said at the 1920 Lambeth Conference, "Why am I obliged to take my view of the Church's teaching from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when the Church is 1,920 years old?"³

How has this emphasis changed the Church? It renewed in the Anglican Church a sense of its identity as not only the heirs of the protestant reformation but at an even more basic level the pre-reformation Catholic Church of England going back through the earliest centuries, and a renewed appreciation for the theological and spiritual riches of its Christian past.

It gave renewed understanding to the notion that it had retained the essentials

³ Quoted in Geoffrey Rowell, *The Vision Glorious: Themes and Personalities of the Catholic Revival in Anglicanism*, Oxford, 1993, p. 184.

of Catholic order, sacraments and doctrine and eventually provided the scholarly resources to mount an apologetic to defend this understanding.

(This would contribute greatly in the twentieth century to the Ecumenical Movement. Tractarian scholarship would be the inspiration for the Lambeth Quadrilateral which forms the basis for the fundamental declarations of our own Australian Church constitution as well as for such declarations as the Lima Document on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry of the World Council of Churches.).

As a Church which understood itself as part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, the Anglican Church opened itself to the spiritual riches of—and dialogue with—contemporary Roman Catholicism as well as Orthodox Christianity.

There is a little hymn for children by the great hymn writer and translator John Mason Neale:

I am a little Catholic
And Christian is my name,
And I believe in Holy Church
In every age the same.

And I believe the English Church
To be a part of her,
The Holy Church throughout the world
That cannot fail or err.⁴

Of course the Catholic Church is a living thing, and must “constantly change in order to remain the same thing,” as Newman would put it. Having a sense of historical continuity does not mean adherence to some idealised point in the past. The Catholic Church is ‘incarnated’ in every generation, and must live its life and carry out its purpose in every age.

It worries me, therefore, that some examples of contemporary Anglo-Catholicism seem stuck in a time warp!

Renewal in Worship and Theology

Tractarian theology soon began to manifest itself in ceremonial changes. Anglo-Catholics became increasingly plainspoken and insistent about the symbolic linkage between their beliefs and liturgical ceremonial. In a sermon of 1867, the Reverend John Edwards argued that “the restored Ritual of our own days is the natural and inevitable expression of that deep revival of faith and devotion

⁴ Quoted in John Shelton Reed, *Glorious Battle: The Cultural Politics of Victorian Anglo-Catholicism*, London, 1996, pp. 67.

which began in the University of Oxford about forty years ago." He observed that when the rising clergy had gone out from university, "they strove to teach what they themselves had learnt. . . . At length it was seen that the Church's Ritual is the best exponent of her doctrine." Archdeacon Denison wrote that he found, "after many years experience, that Catholic Truth, however carefully taught in the Church, in the School, and from house to house, but not accompanied with its true and appropriate ceremonial, had failed to reach the hearts and influence the lives of my people." He had, he said, "made good the defect," and "the remedy has been largely blessed."⁵

Note that the motives of the 'Ritualists' were not primarily aesthetic, but intended to embody Catholic Truth, and their desire was to bring people to the faith of the Church. The "Catholic Truth" being asserted by symbolic ritual and increasingly forceful words was still that of the Tractarians. Like their predecessors, the new generation of Anglo-Catholics emphasised baptismal regeneration, the apostolic succession, the sacrament of penance, and—increasingly—the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and that sacrament's sacrificial character.⁶

The growing confidence and conspicuousness of Anglo-Catholicism led, as we know, to opposition. Dom Anselm Hughes of Nashdom Abbey wrote in his history of the Catholic Movement *The Rivers of the Flood*:

After a decade or so, a violent opposition to the Tractarian movement got going, and it was reinforced by some of the more shabby dregs of the Low Church and so-called 'Evangelical' parties. Small riots and brawling took place in some churches, the best known of these being those which were organised at St George's-in-the-East, near London Docks, where the offences were no more grievous than the surplice being retained in the pulpit instead of being changed for a black Geneva gown, and a surpliced choir singing the Office in a mild attempt to copy cathedral usages. . . .

These disturbances were organised by certain pressure groups, which formed themselves into protestant societies, some of them reputed to be wealthy. The most offensive of these was the 'Church Association'—using the word 'offensive' in its literal sense as of a party which is not content with mere counter-action but launches a direct offensive. They directed their activities not so much against the Tractarians or their more immediate followers the 'sub-Tractarians', men who were as a rule too solid in their scholarship and position to be easy marks, but rather against the rank and file of the working clergy, the men who had dared to translate their principles into practice, and had brought back the Sacraments and the glory of worship to the English people, so long starved on the meagre diets of puritanism, foreign protestantism, methodism and latitudinarianism.⁷

If ritual were merely a question of taste and good order, compromise might have been possible. But the most fervent advocates of advanced ceremonial were having none of it. "Ritual and ceremonial . . . are the signs of realities or they are nothing," said a former curate of St Barnabas, Pimlico, in an 1865 lecture. "They

⁵ Ibid., p. 63.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Dom Anselm Hughes, *The Rivers of the Flood*, London, 1961, p. 21.

are no mere accident to religion. They belong to the very substance of religion. They are not the mere adjuncts and decorations of religion. They are the natural and spontaneous exhibition of religion.”⁸

Many opponents of the Oxford Movement agreed. The ultra-protestant journal *The Rock* made a similar point, observing that

birettas, wafers, mixed chalice, elevation, prostration, eastward position &c., &c., . . . do really involve the whole question for which the battle of the Reformation was fought. Is the Great KING objectively present on our “altars”—under whatever form—or is He not? If He *is* so present at the bidding of a “priest” then it behooves us to go softly and bow down in lowly adoration before His footstool. No service can be too solemn, no accessories too costly or magnificent for so august an occasion. Bring forth the royal vessels, and make the tabernacle of His feet glorious. Let clouds of incense ascend before His throne. Let us come into His courts with thanksgiving. Let the singers go before and the minstrels follow after. Let His priests be decked in the most sumptuous apparel, and let all things testify to our sense of the KING’s condescension in visiting His people and our desire to give Him the honour due unto His name. Such we know is the Roman (or sacerdotal) theory, perfectly consistent and coherent throughout, *if only it were true.*⁹

(A ritualist pamphlet reprinted this observation with statements on the Real Presence by sixteenth and seventeenth-century Anglicans, including Ridley and Latimer.)¹⁰

Ceremonial as an expression of Catholic theology continued to increase. John Reed in a recent book, *Glorious Battle*, writes:

By the end of the [nineteenth] century there were many varieties of Anglican worship to choose from. (Some believed this was an improvement, but many disagreed.) An ecclesiastical Rip Van Winkle roused from a seventy year sleep in the 1890s would have noticed few changes in the Church of England more startling at first glance than those in the conduct of public worship. . .

Suppose that our sleeper awoke to find himself in London, at Oxford Circus, on a Sunday morning. Within a few blocks he would find a bewildering array of services. . . If he walked north along Regent Street, for instance, he would immediately enter the parish of All Souls, Langham Place. . . If he turned south from Oxford Circus, though, he would enter the parish of St John the Baptist . . . on Great Marlborough Street. . . If he walked a little farther down Regent Street the next parish [was] St Thomas. . .

Here, in a stroll of less than half a mile down Regent Street, on any Sunday in the 1890s, our observer could witness a range of Anglican worship that he would probably refuse to believe possible. At All Souls, an austere Evangelical service not very different from what he would have seen in most English parish churches sixty years before. At St John the Baptist, a lavishly decorated choral service reminiscent, perhaps, of cathedral services early in the century, but increasingly representative of “normal”, middle-of-the-road parochial worship. At St Thomas, Regent Street, a High Mass almost indistinguishable save in language from that of any well-to-do Roman Catholic church of the period. The same contrasts could be seen in many other neighbourhoods of London, in most large cities of the nation and in many smaller ones.

⁸ Reed, *Glorious Battle*, op. cit., p. 70.

⁹ Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁰ Ibid.

What happened while our observer slept? The answer is that a movement called “Anglo-Catholicism” had sprung up and, despite reversals, had flourished. St Thomas was among the churches in the vanguard of that movement; they showed how far it had come since its beginnings. The worship at St John the Baptist looked like Anglo-Catholic worship of an earlier day, but it was not an Anglo-Catholic church. It illustrated, rather, how much the great central body of Anglican practice had been influenced by the movement. Even All Souls, Langham Place, had been influenced by Anglo-Catholicism, although in a reactive way. Its weekday services and weekly communion had been Anglo-Catholic innovations, but Evangelicals alarmed at their rivals’ success had adopted those practices in self-defence.

In short, the Anglo-Catholics had not only won their right to toleration within the Church of England, they had by their example and success influenced the practice and attitudes of all parts of the Church.¹¹

So how did the Oxford Movement change the Church in its worship and Liturgy? It brought about a renewal in liturgy and worship in the Anglican Church, with a renewal of the importance of the sacraments, a renewed beauty and sense of God’s mystery in worship and our devotion to him. There was renewal in church music, architecture, art.

There would in time be liturgical reform and prayer book revision, with great study and scholarship having been undertaken so that more was understood about early Church and Catholic practice than before. In time the Oxford Movement also taught the Anglican Church as a whole (including Evangelicals) to be more Eucharistic in worship.

Love of Souls

The Catholic Revival began in the University of Oxford.¹² The Tractarian fathers were clerical dons, concerned with theological issues in an academic as well as pastoral and devotional way. They were learned men and part of their achievement was to draw on the inheritance of patristic theology and devotion which had for many years been neglected in Anglicanism.

Of course they were also pastors—to their pupils, and to the many who subsequently came to them for advice. But the setting for their own immediate pastoral work was the university, or, in the case of John Keble, the country parish. College parishes and old pupils in orders gave them contact outside the university environment, and the vision of church, ministry, and sacraments which they had imparted through sermons, tracts, and the work of spiritual direction took root amongst the clergy in very different situations.

The Church of England was ill adapted in its organisation and government to respond to the increasingly rapid changes in nineteenth-century society,

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 4–7.

¹² See Rowell, *The Vision Glorious*, pp. 116ff.

especially in the expanding urban areas, particularly the urban poor. The story of the slum priests of the Catholic revival is in part a story of pioneering work in response to these difficulties. If the Oxford Movement may be said to have changed the pattern of Anglican worship it was in these urban parishes that the changes both began and were pressed to extremes. Decorous restraint and academic discourse were equally out of place in the slums. Mystery and movement, colour and ceremonial were more powerful. The sacramental sign could speak more strongly than the written word.

But if these were the characteristics of worship influenced by the Oxford Movement, that worship impressed through the devotion and holiness of life and pastoral concern of the priests who led that worship. Geoffrey Rowell, in his book on the themes and personalities of the Oxford Movement, *The Vision Glorious*, writes:

The legend of the Anglo-Catholic slum priest is not without foundation, as a consideration of some of the leading figures of the revival will make clear. Time and again in their battles with bishops and ecclesiastical lawyers and 'no-popery' agitators they maintained that the richness of Eucharistic worship was not only the legitimate heritage of the Church of England, but that which embodied as nothing else could the sense of the reality of Divine grace in a way which could be grasped by the poor and unlettered.¹³

In the 1860s Robert Gregory, later Dean of St Paul's, described the appalling state of the poor in England, and how children were growing up amid squalor and vice, completely ignorant of religion. He believed that where there had been religious influence of any kind it had tended to give the impression that the hearing of sermons was the purpose of church-going, and that religion was essentially a private matter. Sacramental worship had been neglected in England, and so religious practice had never taken root amongst the mass of the population in the same way that it had done in Catholic countries.¹⁴

The slum priests were determined that sacramental worship should be the centre of the Church's ministry in the areas of urban deprivation. The foundation of churches such as St Saviour's, Leeds, St Alban's, Holborn, and St Peter's, London Docks, and the work of priests like Alexander Heriot Mackonochie, Charles Lowder, George Rundle Prynne, and Robert Dolling provide outstanding examples of such heroic attempts.¹⁵

The Society of the Holy Cross, founded by Charles Lowder and others in 1855, drew its inspiration not from pre-reformation medieval Catholicism but the work of St Vincent de Paul in seventeenth-century France and from contemporary Catholicism. It provided a significant link between priests who shared Catholic convictions. The list of priests associated with the Society is impressive, including

¹³ Ibid., p. 117.

¹⁴ R. Gregory, *Sermons on the Poorer Classes of London preached before the University of Oxford, 1869*, p. 123, cited in Rowell, *The Vision Glorious*, p. 119.

¹⁵ Rowell, *The Vision Glorious*, p. 119.

Pusey, Liddon, R. M. Benson (the founder of the Cowley Fathers), A. H. Stanton (curate at St Alban's), Prynne, Le Geyt, C. C. Grafton (later Bishop of Fond du Lac), George Body (a notable missionary), Bodington, Linklater, R. W. Enraght and J. Bell Cox (both imprisoned during ritualist prosecutions), R. J. Wilson (later Warden of Keble College, Oxford), W. J. E. Bennett, Archdeacon Denison, and Arthur Tooth, as well as a number of other prominent parish priests.¹⁶

In the foundation of the Society of the Holy Cross, Lowder attempted to give substance to St Vincent's ideals in an English context. The objects of the Society were 'to defend and strengthen the spiritual life of the clergy, to defend the faith of the Church, and to carry on and aid Mission work both at home and abroad'. It would be recorded at the early meetings of the Society:

. . . In the presence of such utter destitution, it was simply childish to act as if the Church were recognised as the mother of the people. She must assume a missionary character, and by religious association and a new adaptation of Catholic practice to the altered circumstances of the nineteenth-century and the peculiar wants of the English character, endeavour, with fresh life and energy, to stem the prevailing tide of sin and indifference.¹⁷

Compton MacKenzie in his novel *The Altar Steps*, gives us a portrait of an Anglo-Catholic slum priest:

The Missioner was a tall hatchet-faced hollow-eyed ascetic, harsh and bigoted in the company of his equals whether clerical or lay, but with his flock tender and comprehending and patient. The only indulgence he accorded to his senses was in the forms and ceremonies of his ritual, the vestments and furniture of his church. His vicar was able to give him a free hand in the obscure squalor of Lima Street; the ecclesiastical battles he himself had to fight with bishops who were pained or with retired military men who were disgusted by his own conduct of the services at St Simon's were not waged within the hearing of Lima Street. There, year in, year out for six years, James Lidderdale denied himself nothing in religion, in life everything. He used to preach in the parish church during penitential seasons, and with such effect upon the pockets of his congregation that the Lima Street Mission was rich for a long while afterward. Yet few of the worshippers in the parish church visited the object of their charity, and those that did venture seldom came twice. Lidderdale did not consider that it was part of the Lima Street religion to be polite to well-dressed explorers of the slum; in fact he rather encouraged Lima Street to suppose the contrary.

"I don't like these dressed-up women in my church," he used to tell his vicar. "They distract my people's attention from the altar."

"Oh, I quite see your point," Thurston would agree.

"And I don't like these churchy young fools who come simpering down in top-hats, with rosaries hanging out of their pockets. Lima Street doesn't like them either. Lima Street is provoked to obscene comment, and that just before Mass. It's no good, Vicar. My people are savages, and I like them to remain savages so long as they go to their duties, which Almighty God be thanked they do."¹⁸

In short, the Oxford Movement led to a renewal of and interest in spirituality

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid. pp.120-121.

¹⁸ Compton MacKenzie, *The Altar Steps*, London, 1912, pp. 16-17.

and personal holiness. This manifested itself most obviously in a renewed ideal of self-sacrificing priesthood, missionary zeal and pastoral ministry. But it also manifested itself in the growth of lay organisations fostering devotion and missionary outreach. There was a renewal in bringing the Gospel to and serving the poor.

When we look at the Anglo-Catholic movement in Australia we find the same ideal, the same heroism, the same love in the name of Christ. The names that will come to mind: in Melbourne, Fr Tucker of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, the Mission to Streets and Lanes in Fitzroy of the Sisters of the Community of the Holy Name, Fr Maynard and Christian Socialism, Fr Cheong the Chinese priest whose holiness and love of Christ overcame racial prejudice; even here in Sydney Fr John Hope with his soap box preaching in the Haymarket and mission services followed by Benediction, the Sisters of the Church; there are the Bush Brothers, the New Guinea Martyrs, the Melanesian Brothers. Bishops such as Patterson the Melanesian martyr, Selwyn in New Zealand and the Pacific, Weston of Zanzibar, Philip Strong.

You and I have known holy men and women, ordained and lay, whose faith lived out in the Catholic tradition of the Anglican Church has been a sign and vehicle of God's grace and love, and has drawn us to Christ and made us want to be like them, and try to love as they did.

I have perhaps laboured this aspect of personal holiness and missionary and pastoral zeal. I have concentrated on priests because they are the ones who have inspired me in my own priestly vocation. I believe that this love of Jesus in the Sacraments, and love of Jesus in the poor and needy, is the heart and soul of authentic Anglo-Catholicism. I think it is the authenticating and legitimising sign of fidelity to Christ and the Gospel in our own day too.

I finish this discussion with one final account of the London slum priests, this time of Fr Lowder:

St. Peter's had just been consecrated when the cholera came. Of all plagues this is the most awful, far worse than bubonic plague or the Black Death. In Asiatic cholera, fiends appear to have seized the victim, and to be tearing him in pieces.

In this visitation the Anglo-Catholics won their spurs. Dr Pusey came down to help, laymen, among them Lord Halifax, came to work with Lowder and his priests. Morning after morning they met for Communion in the newly-consecrated St Peter's, and separated for the appalling labours of the day, each recognising that the day might be his last. . .

As [Lowder] was seen carrying some cholera-stricken child in his arms to the hospital, the people began to call him "Father." Thus was the title "Father" won for the secular clergy of the Anglo-Catholic movement: it is a title which they will only retain as long as they are true to this ideal. . .

To the inspiring and controlling spirit of a *true* Anglo-Catholic movement, the first essential is a thirst for souls.¹⁹

The Religious Life

I have not time to say very much about the great revival of the religious life in the Anglican Communion which came about as the result of the Oxford Movement. Its early impetus was once again the needs of the Church's mission, with sisterhoods founded to care for the poor and destitute, women who frequently fought bitter resistance from their families to answer Christ's call to service.

It was sisters from the early Anglican orders who answered Florence Nightingale's call for nurses in the Crimea.

The role of Anglican religious orders in mission, both in England and around the world, has been immense. The training of clergy (the Cowley Fathers, Mirfield Fathers, Society of the Sacred Mission, etc) has been significant. Contemplative orders such as the Benedictines have fostered holiness and scholarship, and through visitors and the networks of associates and oblates aided the spiritual lives of countless people.

Of course at the present time in the developed world the religious life seems to be declining. It remains, however, a counter-cultural sign in our materialist and secular societies of discipleship and service.

I might add that in the religious life there is also a seed of hope for the Church's future. While vocations in traditional formal religious orders are indeed declining, the devoted, ordered life of religious community is finding creative and innovative expression in the Church. From L'Arche and Focolari communities, to domestic and family communities reminiscent of Little Gidding, the idea of Christian community and the religious life is finding new manifestations.

The squalor of the slums in Victorian England was an ironically appropriate setting for elaborate and colourful liturgy. Today, many people are wanting a more informal, personal and intimate experience of God in prayer, sacrament and word, as well as an experience of close-knit loving community. It may be that in a more domestic setting inspired by the religious life a new form of discipleship that is nevertheless truly Catholic and fed by Christian tradition is emerging.

Enjoyment of God

¹⁹ From *Saints and Leaders* by the Rev'd H. F. B. Mackay. These accounts of Anglo-Catholic heroes were delivered as addresses at All Saints', Margaret Street, sometime before their publication in 1928 by the Society of SS Peter and Paul.

The history of the Oxford Movement teaches us that Christ's mission is best carried forward by people who do not take themselves too seriously. It was not only their holiness but often their sense of fun and humour that attracted people to the great personalities of the Catholic Revival.

This is a whole subject in itself. Why have I included it as a way in which the Oxford Movement has changed the Church? Well, Catholics like to have fun when they get together. They like to have fun when they worship. They like to make fun of the Church. This has led some to consider Anglo-Catholics frivolous. That is a mistake. The holy things of God, the scriptures, the sacraments, the faith: these things are not made fun of. It is ourselves we laugh at. Thank the good God we can!

For a treat I'm going to read you a poem by Fr Forrest.

The Martyr

Good Father Q believed himself a martyr for the right
The bishops he'd resisted were too numerous to cite,
Full many persecutions he had suffered at their hand,
A record, quite undoubtedly the highest in the land.

Secure within the fortress of his freehold he would cry,
'All hideous erastians I finally defy;
My protestant diocesans may fulminate or ban,
The only Bishop I approve is in the Vatican.'

By adamant intransigence, withstanding every blow,
As bishop after bishop did his best to bring him low,
He gained the reputation of a veritable rock,
With fortitude impregnable repelling every shock.

For years and years uncountable he'd confidently boast,
'I've fought a pretty battle with the Calvinistic host;
Resisting many bishops in a devastating war,
And even looking forward to defying many more.'

One day a new diocesan invited Father Q
To come and tell him candidly the things he wished to do.
So, with grimly set expression and a tightly clenching fist,
He cited in defiance every item on his list,
Depicting, like an artist in the gaudiest of paints,
The tabernacles, monstrances, and relics of the saints;
And arrogantly emphasized the things he valued most,
The Rosary, our Lady and processions of the Host.

The bishop listened carefully, and told him on the spot,
'If you believe all this is good, O.K., then have the lot!
And now our happy conference must very quickly end,
For I have other clergymen to interview, my friend.'

‘Good bye,’ his Lordship added, ‘and I hope we shortly meet.’
But Father Q sat motionless and rigid in his seat;
For, paralysed and overwrought by what had just been said,
The thought of approbation by a bishop struck him dead.²⁰

Conclusion

I hope you found Fr Forrest’s poem charming and amusing. But we can see it also as a kind of grim parable. The Catholic Tradition is now integral to authentic Anglicanism, and I believe authentic Anglo-Catholicism is needful for its vitality. But we cannot be content to be merely tolerated. Neither freedom nor unity are more important than Truth. Indifference, not direct opposition, is the enemy in post-modern society, and we will die out and deservedly so unless we can relate our devotion to Christ, the Scriptures, and the Sacraments and a love of souls to others in ways that will connect with people and help satisfy what we recognise, but they do not, as starvation for God.

In his book *Catholic Evangelism* the German scholar, Dieter Voll, suggested that what we see in the ritualist priests of the nineteenth century is the convergence of Catholic and Evangelical traditions, and that nowhere is this more evident than in the mission work.²¹ Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals were both concerned with a vital rather than a formal religion, and the need for a greater preaching of conversion in contexts where there was next to no folk-religion or conventional religious practice to give support.

In one of his last sermons, Fr Stanton spoke of the cleansing blood of Christ, personal faith in a Saviour, and of the Mass as expressing both of these:

Never be ashamed of the Blood of Christ. I know it is not the popular religion of the day. They will call it mediaevalism, but you know as well as possible that the whole Bible from cover to cover is incriminated, reddened, with the Blood of Christ. Never you be ashamed of the Blood of Christ. You are Blood-bought Christians. . . . The uniform you wear is scarlet. . . .

And the second thing is this: Let us remember that our religion is the religion of a personal Saviour. It is not a system of ethics, it is not a scheme of philosophy, it is not a conclusion of science, but it is a personal love to a personal living Saviour—that is our religion! Why, you can hear the voice of Christ off the altar to-day at Mass, ‘Do this in remembrance of Me’. ‘You’ and ‘Me.’²²

It was the combination of incarnational and sacramental theology and social concern which was the keynote of Bishop Frank Weston’s address to the Anglo-Catholic Congress in 1923 in words which have become justly quoted. He

²⁰ S. J. Forrest, *Orders in Orbit*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 30–31.

²¹ Cited in Rowell, *The Vision Glorious*, op. cit., p. 137.

²² *Ibid.* p. 138.

believed that the sacramental focus gave a reality to Christ's presence and power that nothing else could. "The one thing England [and Australia!] needs to learn is that Christ is in and amid matter, God in flesh, God in sacrament." And so he concluded:

But I say to you, and I say it with all the earnestness that I have, if you are prepared to fight for the right of adoring Jesus in His Blessed Sacrament, then, when you come out from before your tabernacles, you must walk with Christ, mystically present in you through the streets of this country, and find the same Christ in the peoples of your cities and villages. You cannot claim to worship Jesus in the tabernacle, if you do not pity Jesus in the slum.²³

For me the legacy of the Oxford Movement is a living faith in the incarnate Lord expressed in sacramental worship and self-sacrificing love for others. This is the meaning of the Gospel and the Catholic Faith. May it find forms and expressions that will enable it to continue to bring God's love to people in our own day.

²³ Ibid. p. 186.

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