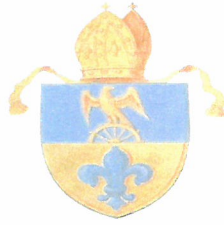
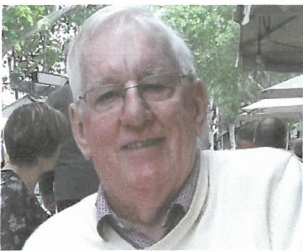


The Diocese of Swansea and Brecon



No. 94

Christmas 2021



From the Editor: Chancellor Brian H. Jones

My Dear Friends,

The Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves from the opera Nabucco, known as the Hymn of Freedom, reflects on the situation of the Hebrews in captivity under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar. They are separated from their families, their city has been destroyed their places of worship have gone. Their Chorus:

***'Greet the banks of the Jordan
The towers of Zion
Oh my country so beautiful and lost
Oh so dear and yet unhappy'***

Yet listening to those words draws attention to the contemporary situation, the plight of refugees across the world as they yearn for their homeland. Asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Syria, Sudan, Iraq, Iran, Libya and various other places across the world, those who put their lives at risk everyday as they attempt to cross the Channel to find safety, over a thousand on one day at the time of writing.

I imagine that their chorus would echo that of the Hebrew Slaves

***Oh my country so dear and lost.'
Oh so dear and yet unhappy***

The icon draws our attention to the birth of the

The birth of the Christ - Child. The scene in the icon is one of peaceful celebration as the Holy Family celebrate the new arrival. The visitors Angels - Shepherds and Kings/Magi are the first to welcome him. Then the anxiety sets in for the parents as Herod begins the slaughter of all boys under the age of two, because this child could threaten his kingdom. So within weeks the Holy Family become refugees in Egypt - seeking asylum till the death of Herod means that they can go home. Like the Hebrew Slaves and twenty first century refugees their cry too would have been:

***' Oh my country dear and lost.'
Oh so dear and yet unhappy***

Yet it is in this Child that the hope of the world is to be found. There is no human experience that this child did not experience. Through his Death, Resurrection and Ascension He established a kingdom which has a place for all who seek hope, security, new life, all those opportunities that are denied refugees and asylum seekers. The responsibilities are with governments, which cannot be set aside, people cannot be denied regardless of who they are and where they are - I commend them all to your prayers.

With best wishes for a Happy Christmas

Brian



FAMILY NEWS

We send our congratulations and best wishes to:

- Edward and Catherine Lewis who retired on the Feast of Christ the King and will make their new home in Wolverhampton.

Ivor Thomas Rees



Our congratulations to Ivor Thomas Rees who recently celebrated his ninetieth birthday and also celebrated 70 years of ministry and 60 of ordained ministry. During that time he has served in a wide variety of chapels, not only in his native Rhondda but also in Clapham. Over the period he has written extensively including his volume *The Clapham Dissenters* the history of one of the oldest Nonconformist churches in England and Wales, and of Nonconformism over the centuries. It tells of the relationship of one of the church's ministers with the prime minister of the day, William Gladstone and of the influence of the church in this part of London.

To mark the occasion of his birthday and his final retirement he preached at a service at the Uniting Church in Sketty in which he traced the pattern of his ministry taking as his text from the prophets Amos and Isaiah ‘*go forth and tell my people.*’ The service is available on YouTube under his name Ivor Thomas Rees. He and his wife have not been too well recently and as we send him our congratulations we also send him our prayers for a speedy return to full health. *Ed*

We send our good wishes and prayers to those who have not been well. Please do let us know of any illness so that we can include people in our prayers privately, and in the intercessions in the churches in which we worship

In Memoriam Hilda Price.

Hilda's great claim to fame was that she was born on the same day as the Queen. She was born and educated in Carmarthen, her mother having been Mayor of the town. After training as a teacher she met and married Ken Price who was the curate in St. Peter's Carmarthen, and that began a long and happy married life. Hilda was

hugely supportive of Ken's ministry in Aberdare, Pennard and latterly Morriston. until they retired to their home in Neath.

Apart from her contribution to the work of the Mothers' Union her other great interest was Inner Wheel and she served for some time as President of the Gower and Llŵchwr Branch. We send our sympathy and prayers to her family and commend her to the care and mercy of Almighty God. *Ed.*

In Memoriam John Workman, Priest

John died recently at the age of 95 after a long life most of it spent in Swansea. In his early years he was an accomplished gymnast which accounted for his fitness. At the outbreak of war in 1939 John was eligible for conscription, and as there was no choice he was directed to be a Bevin Boy and to work in the mines. For the duration of the war he worked underground in the Abercrave Colliery.

His working life was spent in the retail trade as manager of the upmarket shoe shop Penhales in St. Helen's Road. After their marriage he and Isa made their spiritual home in St. James Church in the Uplands where I first met them when appointed to a curacy in St. Mary's with particular responsibility for St. James. I prepared their children Janet and Michael for Confirmation and all the family were choristers there.

When he retired John offered himself for Ordination with the support of Isa and the family and the then parish clergy. He trained in Hawarden and served his title in the Cathedral with Dean Huw Jones. Huw and his wife Gwyneth gave huge support to both John and Isa as they began their ministry, which spoke volumes of the importance of training incumbents.

John developed a pastoral ministry not only to the Cathedral congregation but also an outstanding ministry in the Brecon Hospital. From there they moved to Cwmbwrla, when John was appointed the incumbent there and he continued and developed his pastoral skills for his new congregation. His particular interest was the church's ministry to the sick, having gone through a particular difficult period before his ordination.

In the first part of their retirement John and Isa lived in Belgrave Court right opposite St. James so their link with the worship there was taken up again. Then they moved to their final home in the parish of Newton where like most of the retireds he was available for opportunities to continue his ministry.

After Isa's death he continued to live in their home.. John had a most amazing long life, ranging from the depths of the mine to the joys of cathedral worship, accompanied on his journey by Isa. We commend John to the care and mercy of God and send our condolences and prayers to Michael and Janet and their families. *Ed*

Bishop John Lomas



The announcement of the appointment as Bishop of Swansea and Brecon was made this morning by the Church in Wales Senior Bishop, Bishop Andy Bangor, and the Bench of Bishops after the Electoral College had failed in September to elect a bishop. The Archdeacon of Wrexham, John Lomas, an aircraft engineer, who served in the Royal Navy during the Falklands War, has been chosen as our new bishop.

He eventually left the career to train for ministry in St. Michael's College Llandaff and was ordained Deacon in 1994.

His first curacy was at Rhyl where he served for five years from 1994 to 1999. He then returned to the Royal Navy as a Chaplain to the 3rd Destroyer Squadron serving on HMS's Edinburgh, Glasgow and Liverpool. During this time he served in Sierra Leone and returned to the Falkland Islands.

He returned to Wales as Vicar of Holywell in 2001, where he spent the next 10 years and oversaw the building of the new St Peter's Church. He was made a Canon Cursal of St Asaph Cathedral in 2008 and served as Area Dean of Holywell from 2008 to 2011.

He was appointed Transition Missioner for Corwen from 2011 to 2013, followed by a year as Transition Missioner for Bangor Monachorum. He became Archdeacon of St Asaph in 2014 and, following a diocesan reorganisation, was appointed Archdeacon of Wrexham in 2018.

As Archdeacon of Wrexham he was part of the team leading the diocese's successful £1.9m bid for a major evangelism project in the heart of Wrexham – now Hope Street Christian Community. Prior to that John was the diocesan Transition Minister, helping parishes with no current Vicar to think about the future in innovative ways. As Vicar of Holywell for a decade he oversaw the building of a new church, St Peter's, as a resource for the whole community.

The appointment will be confirmed on November 22 at a meeting of the Sacred Synod of Church in Wales Bishops at St Giles' Church, Wrexham. Archdeacon John's consecration as Bishop will take place at Bangor Cathedral at a date yet to be fixed

The Senior Bishop, Andy John, said Archdeacon John had a passion for evangelism. He said, "John will be an excellent addition to the Bench of Bishops and I am delighted he has accepted this role. He has a passion for evangelism and for supporting clergy in pastoral ministry."

Archdeacon John said he was looking forward to leading the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon as it began its new chapter. He said, "I feel very privileged to have been appointed as Bishop of Swansea and Brecon and am looking forward getting to know the diocese. My motivation has always been to work with people and clergy to release them and resource them to build church in the community and to be the very best interpretation of the Good News of Jesus in whatever situation we find ourselves, whether we are in a large urban setting or a small deeply rural setting. Helping people on the road to living their best life in Christ is a huge privilege."

We look forward to welcoming him and his wife to the Diocese some time in the New Year. *(I am grateful for permission to use detail from the Diocesan website Ed.)*

THE NEW ARCHBISHOP



The Electoral College meeting in Holy Trinity Church, Llandrindod Wells on the Feast of St. Nicholas elected Bishop Andy, Bishop of Bangor as the 14th Archbishop of Wales, Bishop Andy has been Bishop of Bangor for thirteen years and brings to his new post huge experience, his next official role as Archbishop will be the consecration of our new bishop, which will be held in Bangor Cathedral, now the Metropolitan Cathedral. comes at a time of change and challenge for the Church and as we welcome him we commend him to the prayers of the whole Church. **ED,**

MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS

I wonder how many readers listen to Beverley's World of Music on BBC Radio Wales on Sunday evenings at 10pm? I have only recently discovered the programme which mainly draws from the rich heritage of popular music from the 1930s, 40s and 50s. Listening to the songs of our youth certainly opens up many channels of memory.

The same can be true of our spiritual life. What would be our Desert Island Discs of significant moments in our spiritual pilgrimage? Such a list would be intensely personal. Looking at the list of significant memories, we may be surprised at God's persistence in attempting to reveal His love and concern for us, despite our tendency to get side tracked by material concerns. My own list would include the first time I attended a formal liturgical service and was drawn in by the atmosphere, a memorable series of confirmation classes, a Quiet Day at Aberystwyth and later the experience of communal worship at theological college. From the years of pastoral ministry certain retreats stand out, when the privilege was granted of seeing life as a whole and the path forward shone brightly. Then there were the wonderful moments when the presence of God seemed very real, as we had the privilege of seeing someone's life transformed by grace.

The joy of memory is to rediscover all the precious moments and to realise afresh that God is working through our prayer and witness. The following poem links our prayer with Christ's

His prayer was just like our prayer,
For Him, no lightning flashes reading God's mind
But in the quiet of dawn piecing together the hints in
Scripture

And the yawning gap between theory and reality,
Drawn deeper into a kindlier view of the God that
Israel revered.

Exalting love and in the end placing Love upon the
throne

His Mother and the rabbi gave directions
He was the one that walked the distance and achieved
the goal.

Perfectly human, for Him there were few absolute
certainties

Only the breath of God, warm as an oven
Beating within His breast

Only the daring of God to imagine the Unimaginable
as boundaries melted away

Into a vision that endured-

The vision of a world in harmony with itself

Because in harmony with God

A renewed humanity would take the lead

Renewed through Sacrifice

His prayer was just like our prayer

And His fearful foreboding all too real.
As He returned to the Carpenters shop.
For the prayer must turn into action,
And the Sacrifice awaited.
Thus, He prayed.

George Bennett

ASSISTED DYING - A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEBATE

One of the most difficult experiences most of us can ever have, is sitting beside someone who is terminally ill and in great pain. Our hearts naturally break to see those we love in such agony and we feel so helpless faced with their suffering. Everything in us screams that this is wrong and wants that pain to be eased. The recent debate in the House of Lords on assisted dying allowed many to tell their harrowing stories of such pain and distress. We clearly must do all we can to alleviate such suffering – that is a gospel imperative. Yet I am not convinced by the arguments of those who wish to see assisted dying made legal in our country. Drawing on the comments of the bishops who spoke in the House of Lords debate, I am sharing three substantial arguments against legalising assisted dying.

Firstly, much concern was expressed that the proposed bill placed very many vulnerable people in more vulnerable positions. Archbishop Justin said:

“The common good demands that our choices, rights and freedoms must be balanced with those of others, especially those who may not be so easily heard. Sadly, I believe this Bill to be unsafe. As a curate and parish priest I spent time with the dying, the sick and the bereaved. I still do. All of us have personal experience. I have as well. We know that the sad truth is that not all people are perfect, not all families are happy, not everyone is kind and compassionate. No amount of safeguards can perfect the human heart, no amount of regulation can make a relative kinder or a doctor infallible. No amount of reassurance can make a vulnerable or disabled person feel equally safe, equally valued, if the law is changed in this way... And it does not serve dignity if in granting the wishes of one closest to me I devalue the status and safety of others.”

Bishop Paul Butler developed this theme in his speech.

“It is natural to want to ease hardships and burdens for our loved ones especially in a time of pain but also in a time of rising care costs and stretched health services. But human beings do not always act in the best way. We are flawed creatures.

"There is a very real danger that individuals feel they have become a burden, and thus think that the dutiful option to their families is to end their life. In Oregon and Canada where assisted dying has been legalised, fear of being a burden to their families actually frequently accompanies the requests.

"The scope for abuse and pressure from this for people to end their lives is significant. It is not a giant leap but a small step. The practice of weighing the value of lives against emotional and financial cost simply is dehumanising.

If the value of people's lives is called into question, it is likely that those who have been historically undervalued and overlooked will be again.

"Those with disabilities, mental health issues and other minorities are already vulnerable, and the difference of experience between those groups and others has again been evident during the pandemic. This bill acts on the principle that people should have the ability to act upon their will to end their lives.

"But what we have seen over the pandemic are instances, as reported by the Care Quality Commission, of Do Not Attempt CPR decisions that have been made either without, or against the will of the vulnerable.

"We must not overlook the cultural implications of passing a bill that leads anyone to measure the worth of someone else's life. Who are we to put a value on human life, or determine that in some instances, the person is not worth the cost? Let us not abandon the imperative principal that is innate to us, of valuing every human life and protecting and caring for the vulnerable.

Bishop Martin Warner also stressed the vulnerability of many people, drawing on his own pastoral experience with sex workers in the back streets of Plymouth, the largely black and Asian communities in Leicester and in the bedsits and overcrowded flats of Hastings, home to people with severe mental health issues and/or drug dependency.

Secondly, many suggested that the better way was to improve the provision of palliative care. Bishop James Newcombe argued:

"One is the need to put our time, effort, and resources into improving palliative care, rather than promoting suicide for those who are terminally ill.

We are all doubtless aware of the great strides forward that have been taken in recent years; but as many on both sides of this argument have reminded us, improvements have not been universal, a good death is not always available and more investment and research is required if we are to maintain our position as a world-leader in this area.

Despite what we have heard about Oregon, existing evidence elsewhere seems to suggest that where assisted dying or euthanasia is legalised, there tends to be a corresponding decline in palliative care.

Thirdly, there was also concern about the change this would have in the doctor patient relationship. Bishop James Newcombe cited a recent letter from a group of doctors training to be palliative care consultants:

"They speak of the danger of 'a seismic shift in the way in which patients are cared for' and suggest that allowing Assisted Dying 'would fundamentally alter the dynamic in the patient-doctor relationship and destroy the trust that is so essential to our work'. That view has been confirmed by several GPs with whom I have spoken recently. As one put it, 'a change in legislation would affect the very essence of trust in the doctor-patient relationship'

All the bishops acknowledged the desire to alleviate pain and suffering and the humane intentions of those supporting the bill but thought that assisted dying was not the right way ahead. "The aim of a compassionate society should be assisted living rather than an acceptance of assisted suicide." Their view was that the proposed bill would "lead to unintended consequences which we should not let pass."

Norman Boakes (Southampton)

Climate Change Fatigue: What Now?



For two weeks at the beginning of November Glasgow was the 'centre of the world's attention for the meeting

of COP26 - the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It may have been the 'centre of the world's attention' but by November 13th many of us were suffering from overkill, however concerned we are about the whole issue, and disappointed about the amount of talking that was going on with no conclusions. Both the Queen and the Prince of Wales were amongst those expressing frustration, as well as Greta Thunberg and the more vocal eco- protesters.

I am sure there is no need for me to repeat the clear scientific evidence for global warming. Suffice it to say that in 2015 it was predicted that this century's global warming would rise to 3.5 degrees Centigrade if nothing was done, and the Paris Agreement of 2015 was to try to keep this down to 1.5. The Prime Minister of Barbados warned at the beginning of the conference that 2 degrees would be a death sentence for many low lying island countries on the front line of climate change, but the predicted warming after COP 26 is still 2.4 if promises are kept.

The New Scientist magazine quotes Corinne Le Quere of the University of East Anglia as saying that the packet of pledges made at Glasgow keeps the 1.5 C goal alive but only just. She says every word has been ramped up to a level above what it was before, so that the target is still alive, but 'hanging by a thread.' The overall assessment of the New Scientist is that 'despite last minute changes, the agreement made at COP 26 still amounts to an important ratcheting up of climate ambition.' Ultimately, UN climate summits alone can only do so much. Greta Thunberg was disappointed by the outcome and tweeted: 'Instead of looking for hope, start creating it.'

In The Friend, the Independent Quaker weekly journal, the climate activist Tim Gee says 'Over twenty years or so as a climate activist I've found faith a more potent source of sustenance than hope', although the Bishop of Norwich, Graham Usher, criticized the Government for its lack of engagement with faith groups at the COP26 climate summit, and said that it was a great shame the British Government didn't put more emphasis on the role of faith communities. After the conference, the Archbishop of Canterbury said 'God calls us not to be afraid - not because climate change isn't a cause for fear, but because we are invited beyond that fear into action.' Tim Gee has a very interesting comment to make in that respect, which I would like to quote at length:

'Rich and powerful people have profited much from our present, harmful, systems. If we believe they will help us transition to more just social order, that is an illusion it would be helpful to put to one side. My faith in the future is encouraged much more by the people

Bill Fillery

ST. JUDE'S TABERNACLE



In the Autumn Newsletter Brian rightly drew our attention to the fear that many of the ornaments removed from our redundant churches may be lost. He mentioned St Jude's Church where he, his brother Tudor and Geoffrey Thomas were nurtured in the Faith.

The good news is that the Tabernacle which was installed there by Dudley White, the last incumbent, has a new home at All Saints' Oystermouth where it was re-dedicated by Bishop Rowan Williams at the Patronal Festival on 1st November.

The Tabernacle (which houses the Blessed Sacrament) was for many years neglected in storage but has now been painstakingly refurbished and restored to its former glory by Canon Robert Jones. Placed in the centre of the Altar which was carved many years ago by the Revd John Davies, Vicar of Llanmadoc, it fits perfectly into the architecture of the Chapel.

In the Parish Magazine the vicar, Canon Keith Evans, writes: "*The Tabernacle will be a focus of prayer and devotion in our historic Lady Chapel. As Anglican Christians we believe that we know the 'Real Presence' of our Lord in the sacrament of his body and blood. Now that the tabernacle will have a place of prominence it will help us in our Eucharistic devotion and celebrate how Christ is always with us.*"

Many of the ornaments in our churches have been gifted by relatives and friends as memorials to their loved ones. Consequently it is incumbent on us to make sure that they are preserved and handed on to future generations perhaps, (as has been the case with the St Jude's Tabernacle) in other churches where they will continue to be valued and treasured.

Arthur Howells

BRECON CATHEDRAL FONT



How often have we walked down the aisle at the end of the service and passed the font without a second thought. All too often an officiating cleric is standing in front of it to wish us well as we depart. In Chancellor David Walker's time he came down the aisle in procession and as he got close to the Bishop standing in front of the font, he saw a glint in his eye and David wonder what he might want. It seemed that the Bishop wanted David to go to Caereithin effectively as incumbent which David did. What I wonder would David have seen if he had the chance to look behind the Bishop? Actually, David had probably looked at the font as he was responsible on behalf of the Chapter for liaising with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales in its "Architectural Study (of) The Cathedral Church of St John the Evangelist Brecon".

The font appears to be the oldest part of the cathedral dating from the mid C12 and has grotesque carvings belonging to the Hereford School of Romanesque Carving. It has Gothic pointed arcading around the lower part of the stem. These pointed arcades actual intersect so that two together produce a rounded arch. These were signature carvings of the school, a school which was probably no more than a loose grouping of craftsman engaged in carving in churches largely in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. As it presents itself to us now, it has a large chalice shaped bowl with on the rim a partially decipherable Latin Inscription – probably due to the semi-literate masons with regard to his knowledge of Latin. The inscription comes from the Gospel of St Mark 1, 9-11 which recalls the Baptism of Christ.

The grotesque carvings may look more Celtic than Norman and feature three 'Green Men with' engravings of 'The Tree of Life', 'A Scorpion', 'an Eagle', and 'a fish' – a set of descriptions the

'Buildings of Wales Book' describes as the "four surviving medallions are fantastic birds, beasts and foliage". The work featured in the carvings has brothers in the carvings in Stottesden in Shropshire which "The Buildings of England Book" describes as the most sumptuous font in Shropshire. In Herefordshire the churches at Kilpeck and Shobdon magnificently show the quality of this school of carving.

Of related interest is a chart on the pillar of the north arcade nearest the main door which show the range of mason's marks which have been found on the stones in the cathedral. Of particular interest to this article is the fact than many of the marks have also been found in Hereford Cathedral.

Paul Baker

Acts 16:9: "Come over into Macedonia and help us"?

It was Halloween, sometime in the early 1970s. I was a novice in the Society of St Francis, in their East London house, nearing the completion of my noviciate. The early 70s in Anglicanism was a time of emphasis on "urban ministry", and SSF following the trend, had set up a year for novices in the East End for us to see what deprivation meant in daily lives. I'd done my year, and after being a volunteer with the local social services, felt my response was best as an architect to help with the housing backlog.

I'd started that September working with the local council, and was taking some time getting used to the differences between office life and the community house. I'd get back of an evening for Evensong, and was quite feeling the strain of the new routine. This Halloween, the others were going over to Toynbee Hall, a charitable foundation in Mile End, for a party with some of the workers there. Partying was not on my menu that evening, so I stayed in and held the fort.

Shortly after the others had gone, the phone rang. I answered it: "The Society of St Francis" "Good evening: This is the Archbishop of Central Africa. Is Br. Thomas there?" (My name in community was Thomas.) My first reaction was to say "Come off it, alright, I'll drag myself over to Toynbee after all". But then I thought, "No, I'll play along with my brother novice and see how deep a pit he could dig for himself". "This is Br Thomas".

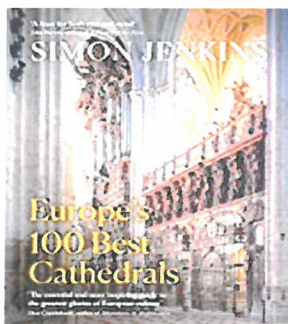
I'm NN., Archbishop of Central Africa. My wife and I are here in London on furlough. I was wondering if there was a chance you could come to Malawi to take charge of our diocesan building programme." I was now thankful that I hadn't called the bluff! Was this my "Come over into Macedonia and help us" moment? I said that I had no idea, as it all depended on my superiors in the Society, but the idea sounded interesting.

The upshot was that I went over to see the Archbishop in Kensington that evening to find out more of what was involved. This would entail living on the shores of Lake Malawi, and I remember being fascinated to learn that they built their timber frame constructions on concrete pillars, to take them off the ground, discouraging snakes and insects, and that they had to mix DDT in the concrete to prevent termites getting up into the wood! I also told the Archbishop he would have to ask SSF officially.

The result was that I didn't go. From the point of view of my vocation, my novice master pointed out that if I went as a Franciscan on my own it would be the end of my vocation, and SSF did not feel able to found a new branch house there then. As I had more or less only just put my hand to the Franciscan plough, I felt I didn't want to give it up, and if I had decided to go to Malawi on my own, I think I would have been less attractive to the province, as they would have had to pay me a salary! I also think my superiors were a little piqued that the Archbishop had, in approaching me first, tried to get in through the back door!

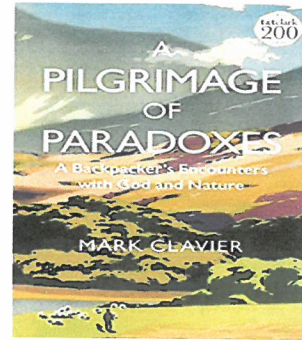
But what IF.....? **David Jenkins**

FOR THE BOOKSHELF



Then writings of Simon Jenkins may be familiar to many of us. The former Editor of The Times and The Evening Standard, an historian who has enthralled us with his historical writings e.g. *Britain's 100 Best Railway Stations*, *England's 1000 Best Churches*, *English Cathedrals* and now *Europe's 100 Best Cathedrals*'

Recently published Jenkins travelled across the Continent and outlines what, in his view, are the greatest of them all. There are detailed descriptions of Cologne, Paris, Moscow, Barcelona and St. Davids just to mention a few. Each account is a tribute to the religious, cultural, political and architectural history of the Continent over a long period of time. Described by Dan Cruickshank in his review as *'The most inspiring guide to the greatest glories of European culture'*. A truly amazing publication, there is till time to get it on your list to Santa.!!! **Ed.**



Pilgrimage of Paradoxes is due for publication on December 30th. In it Mark Clavier examines a series of paradoxes that lie at the heart of Christian faith: eternity and time, silence and words, and wonder and the commonplace. In an intellectual reflection on an overnight trek on Cadair Idris in Wales and other wilderness walks, he explores the oft-hidden connections between faith, society, and nature. Each reflection ranges widely through history, folklore, poetry, philosophy, and theology to consider what these paradoxes can teach us about God, ourselves, and our world. By weaving together nature-writing, memoir, social commentary, and theological reflection *A Pilgrimage of Paradoxes* uses a memorable mountain journey in the ancient landscape of Wales to draw readers into reflecting about what it means to belong.

Our Contributors Once again I am grateful to our contributors for a variety of offerings for this issue of *The Newsletter*. **Ed.**

The Retired Clergy Newsletter

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