

Issue 3:  
April 2022



The Virgin of Kyiv

A candle in...

THE

# WINDOW

*News and Views from the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames*

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Easter 2021: Picture courtesy of David Bevington

## Holy Week 2022

This beautiful picture – an idyllic scene – makes us glad to be living here and now. But let us also pray ‘keep us mindful of the needs of others’.

### Gethsemane

There he is  
Man of great sadness  
Come to this quiet garden to weep  
The stress unimaginable  
The pain intolerable  
The weight of the world pinned to his shoulders

There he goes  
Man of great obedience  
Quits this garden, wakes his friends from sleep  
The appearance of peace  
The demeanour of calm  
The weight of the world on his cross to bear

*Jennifer Brown*

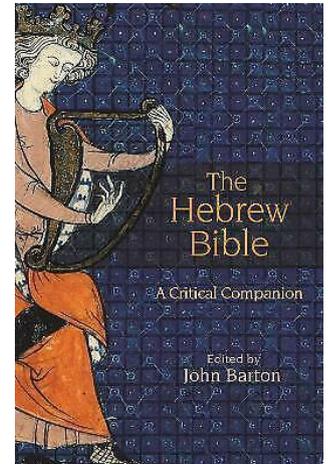
## The Hebrew Bible: A Critical Companion

Princeton University Press, paperback 2021

Edited by John Barton

All Christians officially recognize the Old Testament as part of the Bible, but few of them read it. Often it is seen as cruel, bloodthirsty, and harsh—by contrast with the kind and benign New Testament. This contrast sometimes then turns into an opposition between Christianity and Judaism, and produces anti-semitism, with Judaism being seen as promoting the ‘cruel God of the Old Testament’.

Biblical scholars spend a lot of time trying to correct these misunderstandings, which is what they are, but seldom with much success. The only way to see how much in the Old Testament is religiously positive is to read it, but trying to get people to do that is a losing battle, because they ‘know’ in advance how unpleasant, and indeed boring, it is. And it’s equally difficult to get across the fact that Judaism is not identical with the Old Testament anyway, just as Christianity is not identical with the New, but that both faiths have further developed ideas that were only beginning to form within the Bible. You can’t read off either faith from the Bible, and conversely neither Jews nor Christians automatically know what’s in it just because they are believers. There are surprises in store for any reader of the Bible, whatever their faith.



In the academic world there are many people studying the Old Testament, often known now as the Hebrew Bible, in great detail, and finding it fascinating. Not perfect, but fascinating. There is a British and Irish ‘Society for Old Testament Study’ with about 500 members, including me, mostly academics, students, clergy, and interested lay people, beavering away at trying to understand the Old Testament from many angles: not only theological but also historical, literary, linguistic, anthropological, and sociological. A few years ago I was asked by Princeton University Press to edit a large volume with chapters on modern study of all these aspects of the Old Testament and more, and it appeared in 2017 as *The Hebrew Bible: A Critical Companion*. I recruited a lot of colleagues, mostly from the UK, the USA, Germany, and Israel, many of them younger academics at the cutting edge of biblical studies.

Last year the book appeared in paperback, and I was invited to talk about it at the Oxford Literary Festival recently. About forty people came, including some from Abingdon. Many had done some study of the Bible, but some knew it only from hearing passages read in church. I tried, as I usually do when I’m asked to speak about the Old Testament, not so much to ‘convert’ the audience to it as a religious text, but simply to convince them that it’s interesting.

One aspect of this is to describe what’s actually in it, because there’s a popular picture of it as made up of not much more than some gory stories, genealogies (the ‘begats’), and a few laws, all harsh and unreasonable. So I tried to show how much more there is, and how varied the contents are. Some of the many stories connect with history known from other ancient sources; many of the laws are humane and just (and far less bloodthirsty than English law in, say, the Middle Ages); the Psalms—which many *do* appreciate—reflect on the human relationship with God; and in the so-called ‘wisdom books’ such as Proverbs there is mature thinking about the meaning and purpose of life. Even if it isn’t all true and perfect, it is at least worth taking seriously—just as much as Greek philosophy or English literature. And modern translations mean that it’s all much more accessible than it used to be.

The contributors to my volume are variously Christian, Jewish, agnostic, and even atheist, united only by their belief that the books of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible are worth spending time with. They are the Scriptures that were known to Jesus, St Paul, and all the early disciples, and therefore are not just an optional extra for Christians today. But I tried also to show that they are an important body of literature for everyone, whatever their beliefs. You can’t read with understanding any books written before the late twentieth century if you don’t know your way around the Bible, because writers in the past took it for

granted that their readers would pick up references to biblical texts. Even today, the film *The Power of the Dog* uses a quotation from Psalm 22 as its title.

Understanding the Hebrew Bible does need an effort, since it comes, after all, from up to three millennia ago, and from a culture that isn't ours. Books such as the one I was presenting at the Festival are designed to introduce readers, of whatever persuasion, to these texts from the ancient world, which serious thinkers regard as still worth investigating.

I don't know what anyone took away from my talk, but I hope a few people will have been encouraged to open the Old Testament and at least dip in.

*John Barton*  
Senior Research Fellow at Campion Hall, Oxford  
Honorary assistant priest in the parish of Abingdon-on-Thames

## Book Review: *Being Christian*: Rowan Williams, London: SPCK, 2014

*Gwen Bevington*

Bishop Rowan published this little book almost a decade ago; four chapters (20 pages each), based on talks from a Holy Week series in Canterbury Cathedral. The chapters are: Baptism; Bible; Eucharist; Prayer – “simple and recognizable things that make you realise you are part of a Christian community.”

After reading Canon Keith Ward's outstandingly helpful article in the March Candle, I found myself remembering +Rowan's book, and especially his chapter on the Bible, which I think can act as a footnote to Keith's overview. (The chapter on the Eucharist is also, I think, outstanding.)

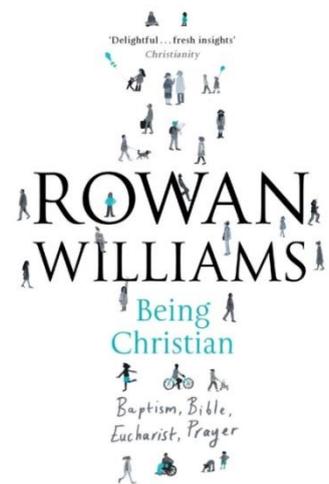
Bishop Rowan emphasizes that Christians have always *heard* the scriptures: listening to the Bible being read is a way of trying to listen to God. Hearing it read in church is the *primary* form of receiving it (not that those privileged with literacy shouldn't also study it in private).

Two of Bishop Rowan's points particularly strike me.

First, he points out that when Jesus tells a parable, we have to figure out where it's going, who we are in it. As we read the story, for example, of the son whose father was prodigal of love, we have to look at ourselves and decide if we are the wayward returner or the censorious older brother. Are we even called to be the generous ever-forgiving father? If we'd been one of the hired hands, what would we have seen going on? And here's the thing: we can take this approach to other parts of the Bible. When we read of Joshua's invasion of Canaan, do we identify with the invader or the invaded? If we'd been a bystander at the time, what would we have felt? Whom does God want us to emulate? As Keith says, the over-riding hermeneutical rule is the rule of love, expressed in the person of Jesus.

The second point focuses on an example of two Bible writers taking very different positions.

We start in 2 Kings chapters 10 and 11: Jehu, who has been anointed by the prophet Elisha and has murdered Jezebel (the wicked queen), goes on to massacre the whole household of King Ahab – his 70



sons, his staff and his friends, in their territory of Jezreel. Jehu is a mass-murderer; but the writer, the “Deuteronomic historian”, sees these events as a triumph. “The Lord said to Jehu, “...you have done well in carrying out what I consider right...” (2 Kings 10.30) Yet within a short time, the prophet Hosea is declaring God’s word: “I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel.” Two writers hear God speaking, but hear different things. For Hosea, the Jezreel massacre is a cause of shame (perhaps parallel for us, to, say, Paul’s attitude to slavery?) and a good example of the Bible’s internal self-critiquing. We, the hearers, are implicitly asked where we put ourselves in such matters. (Similarly, whole books stand opposed to other whole books – Jonah and Ruth, I would submit, subverting the nationalism of Ezra and Nehemiah. The Bible is not a monologue but an intense conversation, into which Christians are called to be drawn.)

Canon Keith’s great gift is that of clarity, spelling out how and why many have reached conclusions much the same as his own. Bishop Rowan has a reputation for being...slightly less clear. But his chapter in this small book clarifies to me why I am passionate about our rich, dense, multi-layered holy scriptures; and also why I want to pay them no less respect than I might pay, say, Shakespeare. I want to get the nuances and the subtleties. I want to read them carefully, respectfully, with understanding.

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## Christian Moral Decision-Making: Not as Simple as it Seems

*The Revd Dr Charles Miller*

Our resident Regius Professor Emeritus (aka Canon Keith Ward) has written about ‘a Christian approach to moral decision-making’ which, I know, some (maybe many) readers have found helpful. There are indeed some helpful insights. Chief among them is the asserted primacy of Jesus’ so-called ‘love commandment’, not really new to Jesus since he was inspired by two positive commandments in the Hebrew Torah, what we call the ‘summary of the law’ in which love of God and love of neighbour form a double bedrock (Deuteronomy 6.5 and Leviticus 19.18). St Paul reiterated that bedrock, as Prof Ward notes, in Galatians 5.14, though for the sake of his line of thinking there Paul highlights loving one’s neighbour as oneself. Canon Ward rightly identifies Jesus’ importance in showing ‘the unlimited love of God, and the need to care for the well-being and fulfilment of all, even our enemies’. Who could argue with that?

In fact, though, neither ‘love’ nor ‘well-being’ nor ‘fulfilment’ are simple ideas; neither are they straightforward experiences for a person who is developing and growing both naturally and supernaturally. Learning to love is a meandering business (as the bulk of literature and films testify); it has left and still leaves many ‘walking wounded’ in its wake.

I spent Lent 2021 trying to understand better what I called ‘the ways of love’ (emphasis on the plural *ways*). I was motivated to do that (to the impatience of a number of sermon listeners, I know) since how we understand those ways of love in human experience and in the Biblical witness both descriptively and prescriptively<sup>1</sup> impacts head-on with the whole project of being human, and how ‘love’ can function as, for instance, a moral compass.

We would expect the witness of Jesus’ character, teaching and example to help us understand the ways of love, and Christians have always supposed that they do.

As I consider his witness, I realize some important things. First, Jesus was no theorist in any strict sense. His expression of the ‘unlimited love of God’ took the concrete form of a life lived, an embodied love more than a theorized love. But we need to see, too, that he was rigorously trained-up in it to – morally

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<sup>1</sup> ‘descriptively’ – what we actually do; ‘prescriptively’ – what we ought to do.

and spiritually trained. Further, his life lived as Love incarnate was in fact a life formed by the rich web of religious duties and moral obligations which were his inheritance as a faithful, serious-minded Jew. They shaped him as a child (so far as we know) and he studied and we can suppose he internalized them in his serious study of the Hebrew scriptures throughout his 'hidden years' before his baptism and public ministry -- all of that formation so that 'the innate propensity of love' might fully unfold in accord with the Maker's purposes.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus, like many of his so-called competitors, was creative with the tradition which formed him, and Christians think that his particular creative 'take' on that tradition was and is decisively important. I would say that his 'take' was organic *not* revolutionary. He re-positioned and re-prioritized cultic and moral laws often highlighting according to what he took their core meanings to be (sometimes using hyperbole to do so, a common middle-eastern rhetorical habit). But, I would argue, he did not fundamentally turn-over the tables. Moral dutifulness, as I see it, was re-worked in the service of love but not over-thrown by love.

In any case, love, be it natural or supernaturalized, is no simple idea, principle or experience. Jesus' own example, his parabolic, illustrative teachings and his witness to what 'the Kingdom' requires of people highlight how our love/loves are *the problem before they are the solution*; highlight how human loves readily skew the moral compass before they set us toward a True North. I think of Evelyn Underhill's description of 'the three great disorders of our power of love', namely, *loving wrong things, loving too much and loving too little*.<sup>3</sup> It seems to me that there, almost in a nut-shell, we have the motivation for the challenging counter-message of Jesus' teaching and example in both his life and in his death and resurrection: *that we might love the right things in the right way and to the right degree*. And if that is so, then the power of the 'love commandment' is a moral building-block more in aspiration but less in fact. By all means hold it up as the goal but realize this: *the 'love command' is where we end – up not where we begin*. Beneath a morally effective love of God and love of neighbour, as indeed of any genuine 'unlimited and universal love', lies a battery of habits, virtues, gifts and graces which slowly but (we pray) surely heal those three 'great disorders' of the powers and ways of our loving.

Christians' moral decision-making happens, of course, in real-time and concerns real situations and real people. Such decision-making cannot wait until all the disorders of our loves are identified and healed. But that serves to put a weighty qualification on the primacy of love as the single, over-riding basis for our actual moral decisions. Instead, I suggest, we need to focus on the things that constitute the healing stream by which our loves become more like the Absolute Love, the Divine Charity, which we call God. We need, in other words, to make moral decisions taking as full an account as we can of spiritual-moral resources the Church feeds us with, sacramental grace and the Scriptures mediating God's presence with us, habits of prayer and streams of character-forming guidance like the Decalogue, the witness of Wisdom and virtues like prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice, and characteristics of bearing and behaviour which for St Paul gave actual content to the form of human loving; that is, loving in a way that is patient, kind, not envious or proud, nor boastful, arrogant or proud; not self-assertive or rude; rejoicing in truthfulness; bearing, believing, hoping and enduring all things (1 Corinthians 13.4-7).

Those give our moral teeth real bite, our 'love' real meaning. Moral characters formed on those terms will then more likely embody healed and *ordered loves*. They will then be able to catch at least a glimpse of what human well-being and fulfilment -- the 'human-being fully alive' (St Irenaeus) -- look and feel like.

Yes, ultimately the 'love commandment' *is* our goal and guide. But to get there 'clearly we must work hard' (St Theresa).

<sup>2</sup> See *What Is Man? A Journey Through Biblical Anthropology* (2019; trans. 2021), p. 212.

<sup>3</sup> From her *Mount of Purification*.

## Judas



It was not meant to end  
like this, in suffering,  
death and defeat.  
You had the power to  
save yourself, but,  
like a stream ebbing away  
to lose itself in  
a thirsty desert, you  
let it go.

Where now your prophecies  
of kingdom and glory?,  
All vanished like dew  
in morning sun.

Heady days, those early days,  
full of promise of a new  
beginning and hope for  
a brighter future.

You walked into peoples' lives  
with love and compassion,  
your teaching offered them  
the gift of eternal life, - now,  
you healed broken bodies  
and restored troubled minds,  
you even had the power to  
raise the dead.

Why did it have to end?

I didn't betray you  
for money, or not mostly.  
You spoke of suffering and dying but  
I never believed you would  
go through with it. I was trying  
to force you to act, to claim  
your kingdom, but you meant  
a different kind of kingdom,  
didn't you?

By the time I understood,  
it was too late.

I still thought you would find  
a way to save yourself.

Why didn't you?

You can't save anyone,  
still less the whole world,  
by dying, can you...  
can you?.

If you can, then  
for pity's sake,  
save  
me.

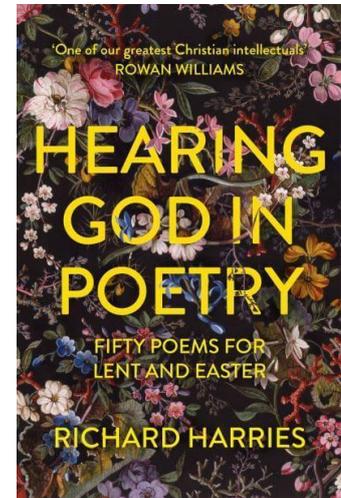
*Susan Gee*

## Hearing God in Poetry

Fifty Poems for Lent and Easter by Richard Harries

Review by Roderick Smith

Our Diocesan Bishop for 19 years (1987-2006), Richard Harries, has continued his ministry in many ways during his retirement. His most publicly visible role has been in writing books for a general audience on the relationship of writers and visual artists and their creations to faith. He has followed his book *Seeing God in Art*, published two years ago, with *Hearing God in Poetry* for this year's Lent and Easter. The 50 poems he has selected for our reflection are grouped according to eight general themes which are not too tightly linked to Lent and Easter – so don't be afraid to work your way through the book, or just dip into it, in any season.



Richard Harries, after giving us each poem in full, starts his reflections with a paragraph or two sketching a biography of the poet. Before going any further I'll follow Bishop Richard's example and say a little about *his* life and work. He started his adult life serving as an officer in the military but after three years he left the Regular Army to study theology, first as an undergraduate at Cambridge and then as an ordinand at Cuddesdon. After some parish ministry he returned to academia, firstly in a teaching role and later also as Dean of King's College, London. I first encountered him in 1986 when he had been invited to speak in a series on contemporary ethical issues organised by the Rector of the parish in which I then worshipped. Richard spoke on the topic of the book he had recently published on the ethics of war and nuclear deterrence (*Christianity & War in a Nuclear Age* (Mowbray, 1986)). I remember the clarity and honesty of his arguments even when presenting views with which he disagreed. I was delighted when shortly afterwards it was announced that he was to be consecrated bishop for our diocese.

Bishop Richard continued his contribution to public debates on ethical issues both during his time as diocesan bishop and afterwards. He has served as a member of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority and in recognition of this work he was made an honorary fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences. He must be unique in combining this honour with that of being a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature! Never afraid of controversy, at the start of his episcopacy he challenged the Church Commissioners on the inadequacy of their ethical considerations when choosing and managing investments. He was also instrumental in getting the House of Bishops' 2017 report on human sexuality (which recommended no change) rejected by General Synod. On his retirement as Lord Bishop of Oxford, Richard was made a member of the House of Lords in his own right – an honour usually only awarded to retiring Archbishops.

So, who better to compile an anthology of poems and draw our attention to what they might be saying about the human and material worlds and their relationships in the light of God? There have recently been several collections of poems compiled by clergy who add devotional commentaries. For example *Frequencies of God – Walking through Advent with R.S. Thomas* by Carys Walsh, and *My Sour-Sweet Days – George Herbert and the Journey Of the Soul* by Mark Oakley. These obviously focus on a particular poet. In contrast, Richard Harries imposed on himself a strict discipline of only including one poem per poet, so we have a huge variety in the 50 poets chosen to help us hear God in poetry. The African American Toni Morrison, the Australian Les Murray, the Israeli Yehuda Amichai and many others were unknown to me before beginning *Hearing God in Poetry*.

In his introduction Richard Harries states that “Although a devotional book, this is not a book of devotional poetry.” In justification he quotes Austin Farrer:

Faith perishes if it is walled in or confined. If it is anywhere, it must be everywhere, like God himself: if God is in your life, he is in all things, for he is God. You must be able to spread the area of your recognition of him and the basis of your conviction about him, as widely as your thought

will range.

Richard Harries says that in his commentaries on the poems he has “not often sought to draw out moral or theological lessons, as I believe that the point about poems is that they speak for themselves”. Nor does he provide technical textual analysis of the poems – what he does say is accessible and to-the-point. Some of the poems do have an obvious devotional message, for example the poem by Elizabeth Jennings (who lived with mental health issues) starts:

I count the moments of my mercies up.

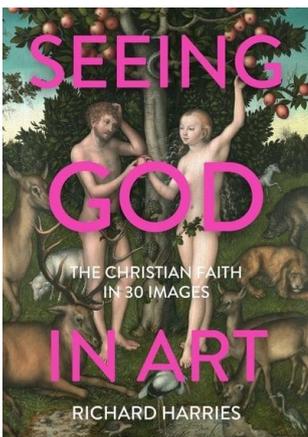
I make a list of love and find it full.

I do all this before I fall asleep.

Which poem from the book would I choose as my favourite? My immediate reaction would be to say T.S. Eliot’s Little Gidding from his Four Quartets (the last poem in the book). But, for me, the opening section of Burnt Norton in the Four Quartets (not in *Hearing God*) just pips this at the post so I’ll forgo choosing Eliot here. Instead I’ll go for John Donne’s Batter my Heart. Donne seeks to have a true and constant relationship with God but finds reason an inadequate helpmate for this purpose. Using many quite violent words and images he even pleads that God “divorce” him so that he can be “ravished” anew by God.

## Seeing God in Art:

The Christian Faith in 30 images. Richard Harries

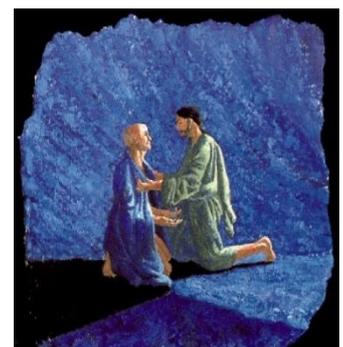


A group, led by Charles Miller, has been studying this book since September in a group called, historically, ‘Desiring Life’. If you are interested, it meets fortnightly in the Parish Centre Lounge on a Tuesday afternoon. Here are a few reflections:

This book by Richard Harries connects with my first experience as an ‘intentional’ Christian during my teenage years living in Manhattan. Thanks to my artistic mother I had always been visually inclined and spent much of free time as a youngster drawing, painting and modelling. In Manhattan one priest in particular connected to my high-school shared with me his passion for the visual arts and architecture. Saturday trips to the great museums, The Cloisters, and innumerable churches where all the styles of the European tradition were re-presented, with live commentary to put it all into theological perspective – it was an extraordinary immersion into one of Christianity’s many ‘languages’ of belief. *Charles Miller*

One of the happiest things about Desiring Life is the informality. There can be up to 15 of us, but more usually there are just five or six. Everyone who wants to gets a chance to talk, and if you feel you have nothing to say, that’s OK too. Our Rector Charles leads the discussion, and it is a joy to see him so relaxed, obviously enjoying discussing our current book by his friend and our former bishop, Richard Harries, “Seeing God in Art” – a subject very close to Charles’s heart. I am constantly astonished and delighted at the new insights that crop up in the conversation about great paintings, mosaics and icons. *Tony Richmond*

This painting by Oxfordshire artist Roger Wagner is the last in a series he painted of Job. This one is titled ‘And the Lord lifted up Job’s Face’. The problem of suffering has no easy answers. God is pictured here in the form of Jesus. Bishop Richard comments that ‘for believers, it is this experience of the humble servant God, kneeling at our level, that enables them to live with the contradiction between the love of God known in Christ and the harshness of much human experience, and to work to reconcile the two by doing what they can to alleviate the suffering of others.’ Despite the difficulties, Richard Harries affirms that ‘at the heart of the universe is a wise and loving power’. *Rob Rutherford*



<https://www.rogerwagner.co.uk/work/item/120/out-of-the-whirlwind-1995>



Hildegard Nicholas, The Prodigal

This mosaic arrested me as soon as I saw it - the warm, rich colours of the Father, the swirling emotion, the enfolding arms, the portrayal of apology (repentance) and forgiveness, of love, of joy; the blue of the universe behind, the hint of stars.

In Bishop Richard's words: 'Jesus' inclusion of those he met is simply an acting out in human terms of the eternal attitude of God towards all his children.'

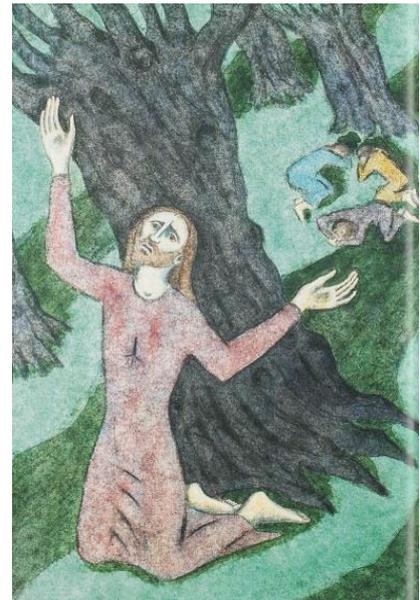
The Bishop then suggests our prayer might be: Jesus, as you include me in your embrace, help me to include others. *Elizabeth Simpson*

This is not a well-known, often-viewed painting, since it is part of Bishop Richard's own collection. Helen Meyer was born in 1929 and as well as painting she worked in clay and, especially, wood. When +Richard was vicar of All Saints' Fulham in the 1970s, she created a set of Stations of the Cross for the church.

This Meyer work is called a painting, although the reproduction makes the surface look almost chalky-crayony. (The Desiring Life group posited pastels.)

In it, Jesus is in the foreground, kneeling, looking up and holding his hands to heaven in prayer. Behind him is a large gnarled olive-tree, and with a downhill perspective we see at the bottom of the slope the three disciples curled up asleep, at the foot of one of several other olive-trees.

The trees cast dark-green shadows, rather menacing, across the paler green grass, presumably lighted by the moon. +Richard in his comment compares the tree-roots to claws. The hands have shadow on them, presaging the nails that will pierce them; a crease in the centre of Jesus' robe suggests the spear through the heart.



Helen Meyer, Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane

It's remarkable how in quite a simply-drawn face, the artist has captured the sense of burden and dread - also the contrast between the disciples (who are shutting down, evading the sharp reality) and the focused, concentrating, utterly given Jesus.

Jesus is a white man, but his eyes are brown and there's something about his features that suggests an ethnicity not necessarily Caucasian.

This is an image that one can gaze on for a long time. Bishop Richard pinpoints that this is the moment where the tension between Jesus's will to live and his sense of vocation reaches its climax. God's will is not another external will competing with our wills, but the source of our whole life. The heart of the Christian life is seeking God's will - something that is actually the core of ourselves.

In a book like this, the writer could use an image as a peg on which to hang some theology. In this case, the theology is all there in the image and the comment wholly respects it. *Gwen Bevington*

## Gemma Simmonds, 2010, Glimpses of the Divine: The Art and Inspiration of Sieger Köder

Veronica Margetts writes: As Christians, people of God, we have, by His Grace, a deep love for His Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. I have chosen to share this extract now, in the Easter edition of 'Candle', at a time in the Church's year when we gather together around our Lord in the wilderness of Lent, the first Passover Breaking of Bread and around his Cross – the obedient source of our salvation; - finally celebrating at the empty tomb – symbol of His victory over death, done, not in blaze of trumpets but in the secret dead of night and the quiet of a garden. May we all find increasing solace as, fed by His Broken Body, we hide more and more in the depths of His Wounds, now Glorified, and add, as we pray with the Apostles: "Lord, increase our Faith," – and hear His whispered reply: "Blessed are they who have not seen yet have believed." All in His gifting.

### HOUR OF DARKNESS – WHY?

Out of the depths comes a quiet voice,  
stronger than earthquake, wind or fire; stronger than torment of  
human grief:-

"You are My Beloved Child.

I am God-with-you;

Find your strength in My love –

Stay awake and watch!"

### DENIAL

If only He would give a sign, If only He would prove stronger,  
If only he would:

cast Himself off the Temple

make bread from the stones

feed the hungry

solve our problems....

In the distance a cockerel crows. The look is Love not accusation:

"Do you love me more than these?"



The Washing of Feet: Sieger Köder

### THE BREAKING OF BREAD

Jesus comes with an invitation

To meet a God stronger than our own images, beyond the limits of our interpretation and understanding. It is in Word and Sacrament that this our God is revealed; understanding dawns, hearts burn with hope, eyes open to possibility as bread is broken.

### FAITHFUL WOMEN - RESURRECTION

Countless mothers throughout the world mourn and protest about the death of their children through the violence of war, greed and hatred. Now in the dark before the dawn, faith finds an answer to questions, and hope, a reason for living. What waits in the darkness is not dead memory but hope made flesh, love brought to life, joy made visible. Morning has broken.

### ASCENSION

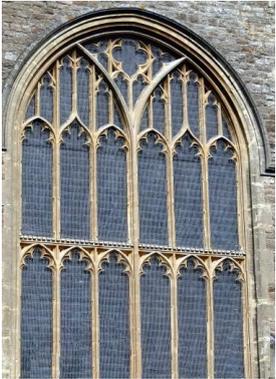
Hands stretched out in blessing –

"Receive the Holy Spirit."

"Lord, if you want to, You can heal me."

"Of course, be healed – in the Name of the Christ, in the Name of the Church, in the Name of God."

Grace poured out, Love given freely, power to become a child of God, prophet, priest and King. Human hands recall the hands of a carpenter, hardened by human toil, softened by kindness, stretched out between Heaven and Earth, wounded for our sins. Make our hands Your hands – for the healing of the world. Amen

<b>Where's this ... font?</b>			
<b>A</b>		<b>B</b>	
<b>C</b>		<b>D</b>	
<b>Where's this ... West Window?</b>			
<b>A</b>		<b>B</b>	
<b>C</b>		<b>D</b>	

## Love Is

Love is

Taking your wife a cup of tea in bed in the morning.  
(My husband has done this all our married life.)

Love is

Watching your grandchildren play football when it is cold, wet and windy and you are frozen.  
(A lot of us do this.)

Love is

Giving your children unconditional love and being proud of who they are.  
(My parents did that for my sisters and me.)

Love is

Putting up with my bossiness and supporting me always.  
(My sisters do that because they understand me.)

Love is

Bringing me a birthday cake and singing Happy Birthday in the middle of the road.  
(My son and his family did that for me during the first lockdown.)

Love is

Being there for me, listening to me and helping me to solve my problems.  
(God does that for me.)

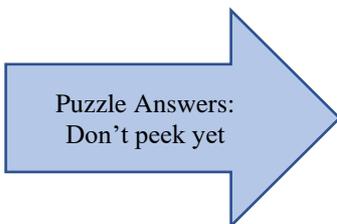
Love is

Sacrificing his life so that I can have eternal life.  
(Jesus did that for me.)

Love is

The message of Easter.

Eileen Duckett



Window	Trinity (West window)	St Nicolas? (West window)	St Michael's (West window)	St Helen's (West window)
Font	St Michael's	St Nicolas?	Trinity	St Helen's
	A	B	C	D

## Services for Holy Week and Easter

### 10<sup>th</sup> April Palm Sunday

**St Helen's**

8 am Holy Communion  
10.30 am Palm Liturgy, Procession  
and Sung Eucharist

**St Nicolas'**

11.15 am Holy Communion

**St Michael's**

9.30 am Palm Liturgy and Sung  
Mass

### 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> April Mon & Tues

**St Helen's**

8 pm Compline with Address

**St Michael's**

7 pm Said Mass and Address

### 13<sup>th</sup> April Wednesday

**St Helen's**

10.30 am Holy Communion  
8 pm Compline with Address

**St Michael's**

7 pm Said Mass and Address

### 14<sup>th</sup> April Maundy Thursday

**St Helen's**

8 pm Liturgy of the Lord's  
Supper and Vigil

**St Nicolas'**

7.30 pm Holy Communion

**St Michael's**

12.30 pm Said Mass  
8 pm Liturgy of the Lord's  
Supper, Vigil and Compline

### 15<sup>th</sup> April Good Friday

**St Helen's**

2.00 pm Liturgy of the Passion

**St Nicolas'**

10 am Liturgy for Good Friday

**St Michael's**  
10am Children's Service  
for  
**GOOD FRIDAY**



A simple interactive act of worship for families. Listen to the Easter story and then enjoy a range of craft activities as we share refreshments together after the service.

**St Michael's**

10 am Children's Service  
2 pm Liturgy of the Passion

### 16<sup>th</sup> April Holy Saturday

**St Helen's**

9.10 am Morning Prayer  
8 pm Lighting of the New Fire,  
Vigil, Renewal of  
Baptismal Vows

**St Michael's**

8 pm Lighting of Easter Fire and  
Paschal Candle, Vigil of  
Readings, First Mass of  
Easter

### 17<sup>th</sup> April Easter Day

**St Helen's**

8 am Holy Communion  
10.30 am Festal Eucharist of the  
Resurrection

**St Nicolas'**

11.15 am Holy Communion

**St Michael's**

9.30 am Sung Mass

## April and early May Events

### The Mercenary River with Nick Higham

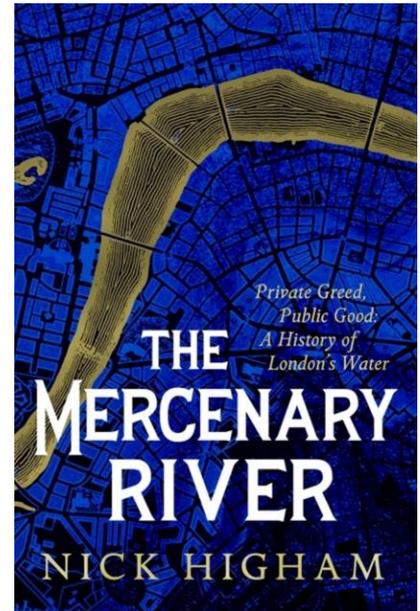
20th April, 7pm,

St Nicolas Church, Market Place, Abingdon, OX14 3JD

Nick Higham hails from London and is a journalist who has spent 30 years at the BBC: fifteen as their arts and media correspondent and also hosting 'Meet the Author' on the BBC News Channel. His interest in London's water began with the New River, which originally ran to New River Head on the borders of Islington and Clerkenwell, within sight of the building housing the London Metropolitan Archives where much of his book was researched.

**Premium tickets** are £24 each and include a glass of wine or soft drink, together with a copy of The Mercenary River (RRP £22).

Doors open at 6.30pm for a 7pm start.



### St Helen's West Porch

During Holy Week St Helen's will create an Easter Garden in their West Porch and will be handing out seasonal bags to their visitors.



Chelsea gold medallist  
and NAFAS judge

*Anna Stevens*

will be creating themed flower  
arrangements in celebration of the  
Queen's Platinum Jubilee

THE QUEEN'S  
PLATINUM JUBILEE 2022

MICHAEL & ALL  
ANGELS CHURCH

**FLORAL  
EXTRAVAGANZA**

**Saturday 14th May  
2.00pm**

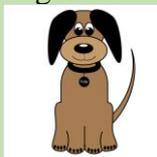
St Michael and  
All Angels' Church,  
Park Road, Abingdon

**Tickets £10**  
Available from the  
Bookstore  
Bury Street, Abingdon  
Tel 01235 5390

Sponsored by  
**Simpsons**  
Lettings & Property Management

Proceeds towards Church Fund

And for walkers and their dogs, **St Michael's** will be running a **dog walkers café** outside the North Door on Park Road every Sunday between 11am and 12.00 from 24<sup>th</sup> April through the summer months. Coffee and refreshments will be on sale for humans, water and home-made dog biscuits for our canine friends.



# The Parish Website

By the time you read this, I very much hope that the new parish website will be up and running. You can find it at:

[abingdonparish.org.uk](http://abingdonparish.org.uk)

(The St. Michael's and St. Nicolas' webpages will run in parallel with the parish site for a short period.)

We hope you like it and will find it a useful asset. Our aim from the start was to create a site which was straightforward, informative and user friendly for those outside our churches. We worked on the premise that most users will not be members of our congregations but will be seeking information for example about weddings, or the buildings, or when we are open or even possibly be interested in joining our worship! We also very much wanted to make it a parish site, somewhere you could find out about all three churches but also one which allowed each church to express its own characteristics.

A website is never 'finished'; it is always a work in progress. One area we wish to develop further is the inclusion of photos of us - not our buildings but the people in them and what we do. If you have or are able to take photos of events at any of the churches, please forward them to myself or to Steve Thomas (email details below).

The site will include a google calendar for each church and you will be able to download services and other recordings so please use it as a very useful source of information.

Lastly, a very big thank you is due to Eluned and Nick Hallas at St. Nicolas and to Louise Heffernan (and those who helped at an earlier stage) at St. Michael's and to Steve Thomas at St. Helen's who has put the whole thing together.

Margaret Horton ([margaret\\_r\\_horton@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:margaret_r_horton@yahoo.co.uk))

Steve Thomas ([stephen.l.thomas@btinternet.com](mailto:stephen.l.thomas@btinternet.com))

[Parish Home](#) [About Us](#) [Events](#) [Activities](#) [Baptisms](#) [Weddings](#) [Funerals](#) [Communications](#) [Hire of Buildings](#)



THE PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES



[St Michael's](#)



[St Helen's](#)



[St Nicolas'](#)

## Welcome to the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames

**We are a group of three Church of England churches who work together as a Team Ministry, serving the centre and south of Abingdon.**

*We aim to worship God, to grow in faith  
and to share Jesus Christ with others.*

## Useful Weblinks:

Services: for the latest news see the new Parish Website:

[abingdonparish.org.uk](http://abingdonparish.org.uk)

Page for Church of England links: services, daily readings etc

<https://www.churchofengland.org/>

**FOOD BANK.** The Abingdon Foodbank is still very busy and anxious to keep up the support. **Northcourt Road (Christ Church) is open to receive donations on Tuesday and Friday mornings between 9.30 am and 1.00 pm.** Their main long-term needs are:

Long life milk (not soya), sugar, fruit squash, tinned meat and vegetables. They also give out a lot of washing up liquid and toilet rolls. You can also make donations by sending a cheque made out to *North Abingdon PCC Christ Church*, clearly marked '*for Food Bank*'. You can also donate via the Foodbank website <https://abingdon.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/> or the Parish office have details if you want to donate via online banking.

And finally, from Social Media with thanks to whoever originally posted it!:



Even more finally.. Two 'Keep the dates':

Celebration Service for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee: June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7pm in St Helen's Church

Eucharist to celebrate 50 years of Charles Masheder's Ministry: Saturday July 2<sup>nd</sup> at 3pm in St Helen's Church

**Thanks** to all contributors and to you, the readers.

The next issue will be published on May 15th: ideas and contributions to [Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk](mailto:Candle@abingdonparish.org.uk)

We would also welcome responses to any articles published here or in previous issues.