

## ‘THIS TOO SHALL PASS’

### *Not the parish pew sheet*

*A miscellany of matter serious and not so serious*

Issue number 25: Trinity XIV

*Truth and keeping promises have been in the news recently, which put me in mind of this fragment, translated by Helen Waddell, from the Benedictbeuren MS (which also contains the texts used by Carl Orff in Carmina Burana):*

O truth of Christ,  
O most dear rarity,  
O most rare Charity,  
Where dwellst thou now?

...

Then Love replied,  
‘Man, wherefore didst thou doubt?  
Not where thou wast wont to find  
My dwelling in the southern wind;  
Not in court and not in cloister,  
Not in casque nor yet in cowl,  
Not in battle nor in bull,<sup>1</sup>  
But on the road from Jericho  
I come with a wounded man.’

*Thomas Troeger, in Music as Prayer, delivers a salutary warning:*

How easily we are tempted to think that our present generation is superior to the generations that have preceded us. We learn about cruel practices of the past and judge them as barbaric while congratulating ourselves on being more civilized. We read about the ignorance of the past and dismiss it as folly while priding ourselves on how knowledgeable we are . . . It all adds up to what I call the hubris of the present moment, an arrogance that fails to see that we share with past generations the same mixture of cruelty and kindness, wisdom and foolishness, beauty and terror. Future generations will find distortions and absurdities in our values, practices, and inventions that never occurred to us.

*Some more signs, rather less unfortunate than last week’s:*

Last chance to fill up. The next two stations are mirages     *At the edge of an African desert*  
With fronds like these, who needs anemones?     *Above ferns in a London florist’s shop*  
We repair all husbands’ do-it-yourself jobs     *In a painter’s and decorator’s shop*  
Visitors will be prosecuted if they throw peanuts at their ancestors     *In a monkey-house*  
If absence makes the heart grow fonder an awful lot of people must love the church     *On a church notice-board*

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<sup>1</sup> That is, the official document known as a papal bull.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer, quoted by Esther de Waal in Seeking God, reminds us of an important feature of meditation:*

It is not necessary that we should discover new ideas in our meditation. It is sufficient if the word as we read and understand it penetrates and dwells within us. As Mary pondered in her heart the tidings that were told by the shepherds, as what we have casually heard follows us for a long time, sticks in our mind, occupies, disturbs or delights us, without our ability to do anything about it, so in meditation God's word seeks to enter in and remain with us. It strives to stir us to work and to operate in us so that we shall not get away from it the whole day long. Then it will do its work within us without our being aware of it.

*A few more memorable names that have come my way:*

Oliphant Chuckerbutty and Darius Battiwalla (*organists*)

Adolphus Hailstork (*composer*)

Captain Linnaeus Tripe (*nineteenth-century photographer*)

*Dr Eric Mascall points out, in this extract from Theology and the Future, how important it is to remember the importance of the created world as something more than dead matter:*

If the total truth about the natural world is simply that it is not God, it is emptied of all positive value and meaning. The naïve belief that everything is divine, which is ascribed, perhaps overconfidently, to primitive man, may be only a distortion of the very important truth that creatures embody and manifest, in their finite way, an analogical participation in the wonder and glory of God their Creator, who incessantly pours goodness into them . . . If all that one can say as a theologian about the created world is comprised in the negative statement that the world is not divine, one will, I fear, be as unsuccessful in commending the Christian religion to the artist or the poet as to the scientist.

*And finally:* What do you get if you cross a cow and a kangaroo?

*I don't know what it's called, but you'll need to milk it on a pogo stick . . .*

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## **Readings**

*For this Sunday (Trinity XIV) Genesis 50: 15–21; Romans 14: 1–12; Matthew 18: 21–35*

*Psalm 103: 1–13*

*For next Sunday (Trinity XV) Jonah 3: 10–4: 11; Philippians 1: 21–30; Matthew 20: 1–16*

*Psalm 145: 1–8*

Almighty and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope and charity: and that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command; through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end.

*Collect for the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity*