



THE VALYERMO
Chronicle

SAINT ANDREW'S ABBEY
NUMBER 258 ✨ FALL 2018

LETTER *from the* ABBOT

Dear Friends,

THIS PAST SEPTEMBER FR. Angelus and I were privileged to attend our General Chapter at Subiaco, just outside of Rome. Our journey to Rome started with a two hour delay at Los Angeles International Airport. We were to find out later that this was ‘just the beginning’ of a very long journey.

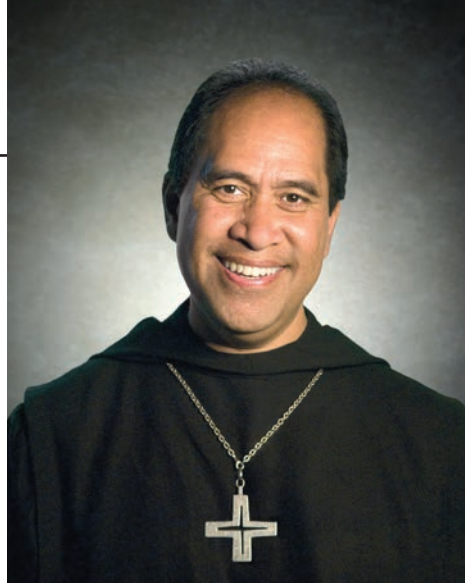
Because we were delayed two hours in Los Angeles, we missed our connecting flight in Chicago, which was to take us directly to Rome. So they re-booked us on another flight, which included another connecting flight in Europe. Our re-booked flight was cancelled, after having sat on the runway for 2 hours.

There were a few more re-bookings, delayed flights, sitting on the runway, and missed connecting flights, before we actually arrived in Rome, almost two days later — without our luggage.

So we joined 20–30 other people standing in the lost-and-found line in Fiumicino airport to see about our lost luggage. We waited in the line for over two hours. The clerk behind the counter, after asking us questions and punching several keys on his computer, said that our luggage, was (still) in Chicago. He instructed us to return to the airport the next day at 9:00 in the morning, at which time our bags would arrive on another inbound flight. We did as instructed, but our suitcases didn’t arrive. We were told again that our bags were still in Chicago.

This had never happened to me before. So all the while I kept asking myself, as many of us do in these kinds of situations, “What is God showing us or trying to teach us.”

Fr. Angelus suggested that we ask



ourselves, “What are all the good things that have happened to us because of this?” Of course, I looked at him in disbelief and wondered “what kind of person is this” who looks for the good in these uncomfortable confusing and frustrating situations?

Nevertheless, we started naming all the good things that happened. To my astonishment, there were several. But there was one event that stuck out in my mind in a special way. Through our numerous times of going back and forth to the airport and walking up and down through the terminal, we saw a sign that said *capilla*, which is “chapel.”

So I said, “Let’s go check it out.” At first I thought it was going to be a generic prayer room like they have in another European airport I’ve been to. But no. This chapel had the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle; it had an altar, pews, a crucifix, statues, etc. In fact, when we walked in, Mass had just ended.

Obviously, Fr. Angelus and I stayed for a while in the chapel to pray (for our luggage!). As I was praying, I “heard” the Lord say to me, “Yes, your luggage is important, but I am most important. So don’t lose your focus. I am the reason you are here. I am the reason you are a monk. I am the reason you are the

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abbot. I am the reason you are attending a meeting in Italy. I have brought you here to this chapel to remind you. Don’t forget the reason you are here, and don’t worry about your luggage.”

It was a profound prayer experience for me, in the middle of the busy Fiumicino airport in Rome. I thought did God bring me all the way out to Rome to tell me that? Apparently.

After that deep prayer experience in the *capilla*, I thought *now* we will find our luggage since I now realize the “lessons” in all of this. But we didn’t, and there were (and are) other lessons still for me to learn and to be reminded about.

I was reminded of three truths of the spiritual life: (1) even when everything goes wrong, God remains (with us) in the midst teaching and reminding us; (2) there are always other blessings God gives in the midst of trying times, if we but have the presence of mind to reflect; and (3) just because God blesses me with a wonderful deep prayer encounter with Him, it doesn’t mean that God will answer my prayers the way I want, perhaps because He wants to bless me more and in other ways.

We never did receive our luggage during our entire twelve day stay in Subiaco. Our suitcases arrived at Los Angeles International Airport two weeks after we returned to the monastery.

I still reflect on this entire experience, and I am still discovering blessings I received because of it. Thankfully, God never tires of blessing us; and we are able to see these blessings if we but have the presence of mind to stop and prayerfully reflect.

Abbot Damien ✱

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Saint Caecelia and the Angel

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THE MAJORITY OF CATE-chized Catholics appreciate the positive role that the Liturgical Arts play in forming sanctified Christians. Making believers more Christ-like—through visual, verbal and tangible means—is the goal of Liturgy, Lectionary and life. Broadly speaking, what we say, hear, see and do is what we will become. As such, true worship is one of the primary means by which holiness of life is envisioned, enlivened and empowered. Worship is an artistic work of grace.

And art itself, even apart from strict liturgy, has the potential of a saving and sanctifying impact. Dostoyevsky famously wrote “beauty will save the world.” This said, how many people sitting in pews actively engage with the work of worship? How many are truly intentional about participating in being formed by

ART & HOLINESS

DR. DONALD P. RICHMOND, OBLOS B

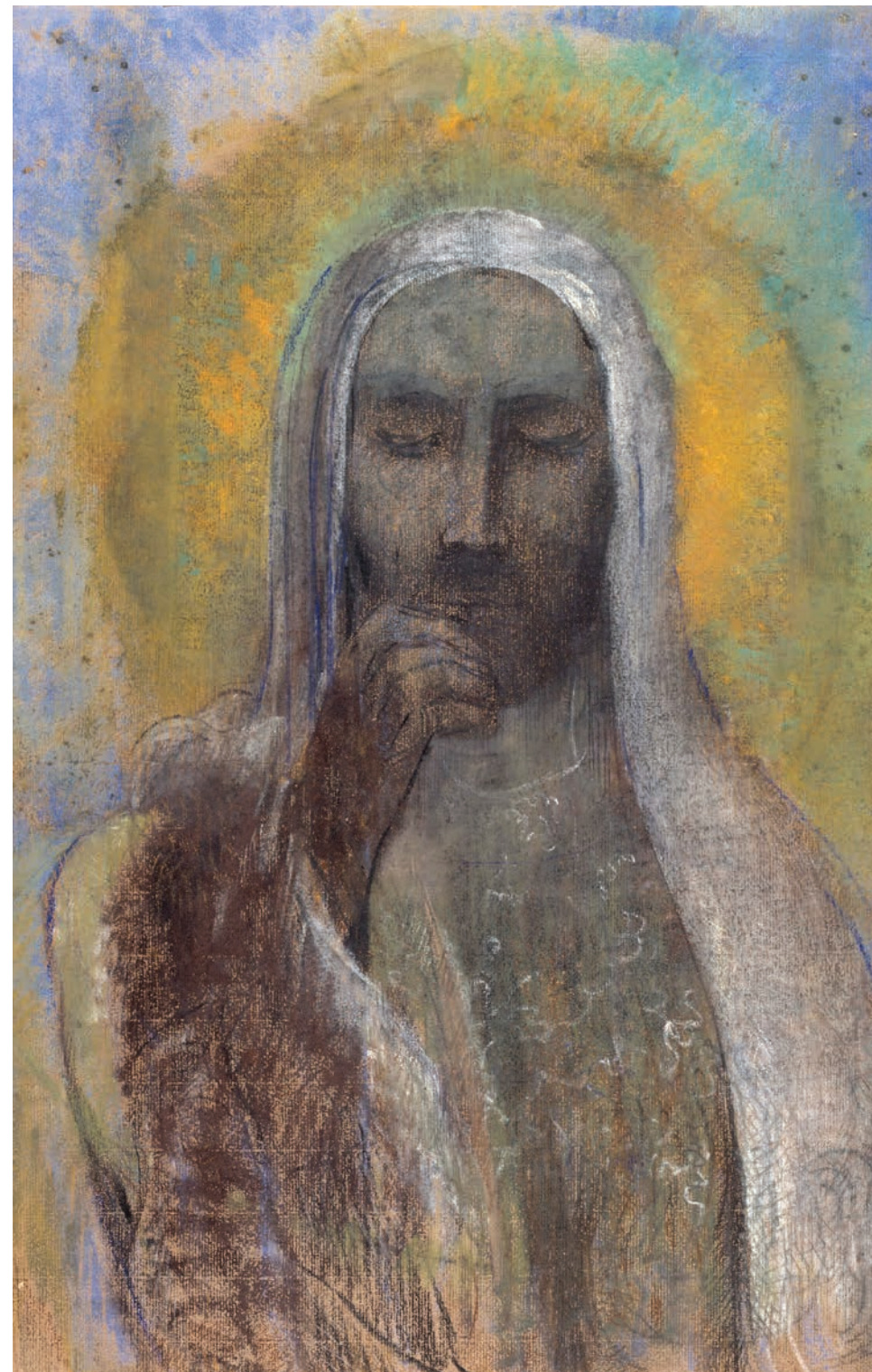
the words and actions of worship that transform and transfigure our lives as individuals, families and communities? The following thoughts suggest, briefly and broadly, practices by which we become artists whose role is to create Christian realities, the Kingdom of God, in, with, among and through us.

According to the biblical narrative, powerfully communicated in the story of the two men traveling on the road to Emmaus (St. Luke 24: 13–35), worship is expressed through two primary means: Word and Sacrament. Both, with all their varied expressions, have dynamic verbal, visual and tangible components attached to them. Both and together, as corporate action, contain and communicate the means of holiness. Silence, speech and action, as essential elements of Word and Sacrament, all contribute to the shared processes of worship, art and holiness.

The discipline of silence, as the seed and soil of speech, is essential to liturgy, art and personal formation. During the Liturgy of the Word we encounter and embody silence, speech and song. Each piece, as part of the whole, cultivates and creates an environment by which hearing and heeding can occur. If we are going to grow in grace, in Christian maturity, we need to intentionally engage in what is happening. Enter and engage with the silence. Do not have conversations. Do not speak. The Sanctuary is, initially, the place of silence. This silence is the blank page, so to speak, upon which we will continue to create the art-as-life in which we wish to live. True art is nurtured in silence, in waiting. Sit in it. Sanctify it. Let silence sanctify us. Let silence create and re-create us as creators, who themselves are created in God’s image.

It is such silence that space is created in which creative activity can genuinely occur.

Moving into the realm of words, of speech, we must remember that God created the worlds with words. Jesus is The Word, and God continues to uphold all things “by the words of His power.” As such, words are written into the fabric of creation, cultures, creatures *and creativity*. Consequently, our use of words, as part of the essential fabric of our lives, can make or break us. Positive words create positive outcomes and destructive words create destructive outcomes. Entering into the words of worship, owning them by engaging the heart of our voices, allows us to engage in God’s ongoing creative activities in recreating and restructuring the world. Mythologically speaking, words are often magical. To speak certain words in certain ways can create new realities.



ODILON REDON, "CHRIST IN SILENCE," CA 1897.

Although we want to avoid all magical tendencies, we need recognize *how* the words of established liturgy do, in God's economy, create and sustain new realities. The Blessing does offer a blessing. The Admonition to "lift up our hearts" does lift up our hearts. Speaking and hearing the Word read and preached, especially when effectively and efficiently preached, does re-member us as living members of an historic past. Reciting the Creed does affirm the living realities, the beliefs, within which we establish our behaviors. When we pass the peace, peace is truly passed. True ritual — like the process of devout Icon writing — does conform to, and create, the reality. What this actually means, from an artistic perspective, is that the words we use are the "paints" we apply in order to develop the visual "picture" we want to create. Within the iconographic tradition, the devoted artist uses a sanctifying process in order to produce a sanctified image through which the Divine shines. This, then, illuminates and sanctifies the devout viewer who, in turn, becomes the image she has viewed and venerated. Of course, and not to be overlooked, all sacred images, regardless of the image depicted, reference Christ. In short, when we fully engage with holy words, we create potentialities for holy living.

Risking misunderstanding, and maybe misapplication, this process of image-making is Eucharistic. It is the Word becoming flesh. It is silence and speech moving into the realm of the tangible. Within the context of liturgical practice, the words we say with devout intentionality becomes flesh. Although this may be most perfectly actualized and realized through the words and actions of the priest, our participating in this sacred event actually helps us arrive at the "source and summit" of seeing Jesus. While Word makes our hearts "burn," Sacrament makes us "see." This makes for great art and

great artists. Whether a visual or verbal artist, the passion and the practice must be joined in order to conceive and create. Both are essential. The burning is the passion, the "heart" of who we are. The seeing is the vision for what we want to do. Together, when joined, they create the "picture" or "reality." Together is when Jesus is most perfectly revealed. As such, all true art, like all right worship, is an elevation, revelation and celebration of Christ.

This, as might be expected, has everything to do with both art and holiness. Great art is created when the artist's passion and seeing are joined to create the piece she wants to create. As an illustrator I have an interesting illustration of this. Some years ago I wanted to draw a picture of Jacob wrestling with the angel. The idea was burning within me. And so, without sufficiently living in the silence and sitting before the text, I just began to draw. Repeatedly I failed to produce the piece I wanted to create. So, after multiple failures, I just "sat" with the idea. I practiced, so to speak, "Lectio" of the heart. One day, after waiting and reflecting, I closed my eyes and, as I closed my eyes, the picture drew itself in my mind. After opening my eyes I grabbed my sketch-pad and drew exactly what I saw in my imagination. The picture was perfect. It was exactly as I wanted it to be. My passion, with the practice of patience and adequate textual reflection, resulted in "seeing" what I needed to see and competently putting my hand to the task of drawing it to a successful conclusion. All worked toward a common end. Other artists, far more graced and gifted than I could ever be, have identified similar experiences when the work creates itself.

Worship, art and holiness are, at their best, organic processes. They share similar practices and progressions. They embrace being

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ODILON REDON, "MYSTICAL CONVERSATION," NO DATE

EVER NOTICED HOW SO much of Holy Scripture takes place at the center of the home, welcomed around a dinner table with food, wine and family? More than a few of Jesus' parables were told leisurely during important "sit-down dinners" where much more than "food" was served! These lessons are mentioned in all four gospels! Meals, banquets and sumptuous feasts are featured

of the Word becoming flesh and His coming Kingdom. Jesus used these sacred, intimate and precious moments, occasions of common hospitality, to teach us about humility, forgiveness, singularity of heart, reverence, human weakness, sinful appetites and Holy Communion with Him forever.

Jesus did most of his ministry either sitting or reclining around a dinner table

even if they might have been uncomfortable circumstances in Pharisees' houses or like the time Jesus invited himself over to Zacchaeus' house. There was even a quick meal that followed the Resurrection near Emmaus. These were special moments, times of fellowship that were deliberate, well-thought out, sometimes even planned down to the last detail. What transpires during these mealtimes are the delight-

in many of these graced meals of genuine fellowship, Jesus was being what Israel was always supposed to have been, the center and cause of joy and justice for the whole world!

This relational richness of Jesus' ministry contrasts with the isolation of western cultures today. It's easy to see how isolated and private the lives of Americans have become. Family zones are demarcated by huge posts

HAVE YOU SAT DOWN TO EAT *with a* SINNER LATELY?



BY FR. ISAAC KALINA, OSB

so prominently in this sacred literature that artists and scholars have commented "that Jesus ate his way through the gospels." In fact, and in irony, they basically killed Jesus because of the way he ate and drank: with sinners, without washing, and, on a sabbath day. And, it was while sitting down to eat a meal with others, as well, that Jesus Christ the Lord revealed the depths of the Father's love, the mystery

or sitting or reclining in a boat while catching dinner! The Last Supper and the Feeding of the 5,000 both made quite an impact on all four evangelists since these are recorded in all four of their Gospels. Jesus' meal with Levi the tax collector and his friends is found in all three of the Synoptic Gospels. We can come up with so many passages describing different meals! They are highlighted by Luke,

ful fruit of prayer and *lectio divina*. In the Old Testament, Israel's calendar was punctuated by festivities at the sanctuary of the Temple, which always included eating and drinking at home! The Feasts of weeks and tabernacles were joyful times of thanksgiving for the harvest period. And the tone of these moments is always celebration! Jesus' feasting and celebrating then, were not new inventions. But,

and fences. And within the home, family members are zoned into private bedrooms or public spaces, all provided with a flat-screen television, internet connection, and cell telephone. This is not the life our parents and grandparents had! People's values change with their lifestyles.

The result of our individualism and this kind of isolation in western culture is pervading loneliness and depression. Many

people feel that they lack connection and meaningful relationships. We find ourselves regularly surprised when yet another friend expresses a desire for a richer relationship. Many of our friends are capable and socially skilled but isolated by a more automatic and impersonal way of life. Jesus' method of "fellowshipping", exchanging inner thoughts during a blessed meal witnesses loudly to our culture today. His way shows us the shape of life and the texture of flourishing. They display the beauty, feasting and joy of the new creation that was promised by Jesus Christ and sealed by His Resurrection. There must be something about sitting down and sharing in a meal that reveals the kingdom of God to us, even if only in terms we don't quite grasp yet. Considering Jesus' choice to create such fellowship during a simple meal, it is no surprise that the second coming of Christ is also conceived as a meal, as the "wedding supper of the lamb" as we are told in the Book of Revelation.

While sitting down to eat seems to stand out for Jesus and the four gospel writers, don't you think they wanted us to learn something from these meals? We can all learn to bring Christ's joy to our neighborhoods and His mercy into our workplaces. First Century Jews did their utmost to stay clear of wicked sinners, tax collectors, prostitutes, idolaters, criminals because they obviously had no place in a theocentric world. Is it not interesting that these people were Jesus' company of choice? We learn from them that our tables should be places of radical welcome and hospitality, especially for those who feel lonely, or on the outside, and unloved. This is the shape of the Kingdom of God! The messianic banquet was one of the predominant images for Jewish reflection among rabbis in the decades leading up to Jesus. And, the

Eucharist becomes for us a foretaste of that heavenly banquet which we long for with all our hearts. Today, our holidays are filled with celebrations and luncheons, office parties or whatever for nearly three months straight, if you count Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve. We seldom make the connections between those special meal-times, the Eucharist and the Messianic Banquet, but we should! The meals we share together as families and friends are icons of what we share when receiving Christ's Precious Body and Blood. They're not just for ourselves alone to enjoy. We don't go out to parties or have dinner over at someone's home just for the food!

For our joy to be complete, our invitation must be shared with all of humanity, our tables must be extended to include all who hunger and thirst. Because that Kingdom is one where everyone is invited, not just the righteous; no one will be left out, where the last and the least shall be made the greatest. ✠



BY ALAN VINCELETTE



MOST EVERYONE KNOWS ABOUT THE intimate connection between Latin hymns and Catholicism. Less well-known is the close connection of jazz music with Catholicism.

When the French established colonies in the United States in the late seventeenth century, they brought with them their Catholic tradition of marking the period just before the Lenten fast with balls, “carnival” parades, fairs, and other festivities, all leading up to the ultimate feast of Mardi Gras. In fact, both the word “carnival,” (*vale carni* or “farewell to meat” in Latin) and the phrase “*mardi gras*” (“Fat Tuesday” in French) bear etymological vestiges of this origination. Hence throughout the 1700s and 1800s Mardi Gras celebrations rang out in French-founded towns in Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, and Louisiana.

And ring out they did. Accompanying all of these festive events was music played by various brass bands and orchestras. This was especially so in New Orleans, Louisiana, where there was an abundance of balls, parades, and additionally, funeral processions to the cemeteries, throughout the year. As various historians have pointed out, while other U.S. cities banned dancing or alcohol on Sundays or altogether, New Orleans, on account of its Catholic heritage, countenanced a fair amount of drinking, dancing, drumming, processioning, celebratory revelry, and good cheer. Indeed, when some Protestant ministers proposed in 1831 that New Orleans limit the number of balls, the editor of the local Francophone newspaper *L'Abeille* pointedly specified that it is not the case that “dance is a Satanic invention... [or] that the Creator gave us the instinct of pleasure only so that we might procure the glory of resisting it.” Similar sentiments would be expressed by the Catholic jazz trumpeter Milton Batiste, who in response to criticism of jazz funeral processions by Protestants and some Catholics, noted that the Bible says “Let the trumpets blow, let the angels sing.... Make a joyful noise unto the Lord.”

Two other traditions were crucial in the formation of New Orleans jazz: the African-American music tradition, and the rough and seedy bars and brothels of the so-called Storyville red-light district of town. Often all three of these influences were combined, as many jazz pioneers were blacks or creoles of color who were baptized Catholic but then honed or plied their trade in the Storyville houses of ill-repute. Such was the case, for example, with Louis Armstrong, who was forced to invent scat vocalization after his music fell off the stand one evening, yet whose skill on the trumpet was such that it was said he could blow the angel Gabriel out of the clouds. The aforementioned Milton Batiste, Sidney Bechet, (who once threatened to shoot a man who claimed he was playing out of tune), Papa Celestin, Louis Cottrell, Harold Dejan, (leader of the Olympia Brass Band featured in the 1973 James Bond movie, *Live and Let Die*, Pete Fountain, Bunk Johnson, Jeanette Kimball, George Lewis, Jelly Roll Morton, Kid Ory, and Alphonse Picou were all jazz musicians born out of that New Orleans mix.

As jazz developed it moved out of New Orleans and made its way to Chicago, New York, and Kansas City. As it emigrated it brought with it the French Catholic culture that occasioned it, the African-American rhythms that drove it, and unfortunately the vices of Storyville that all-too often undid it. As Artie Shaw put it “Jazz was born in a whiskey barrel, grew up on marijuana, and is about to expire on heroin.” For example, Charlie Parker, baptized Catholic, developed an addiction to alcohol and drugs so intense that he pawned his or his bandmates’ saxophones for drug-money on occasion, and came to lose both his faith and his ability to play, with his drummer hurling a cymbal at



him one evening in frustration. His song “Relaxin’ at Camarillo” is based on his imprisonment and treatment for alcohol and drug addiction at the Camarillo State Mental Hospital. Yet if vice could emigrate, so too could Catholicism immigrate, making inroads into the hearts of several notable jazz artists born outside the Big Easy and the Catholic fold, including Billy Holiday, who unfortunately could never fully escape her troubled past, Mary Lou Williams, and Dave Brubeck.

In the city of Los Angeles, six West Coast Jazz artists with close ties to Catholicism, each spent time fostering the jazz scene: New Orleans expatriates Jelly Roll Morton, buried at Calvary Cemetery in Los Angeles, Kid Ory, buried at Holy Cross Cemetery in Culver City in a jazz funeral reminiscent of his hometown, and Louis Prima; as well as

Woody Herman, whose funeral service was held at St. Victor’s Parish in West Hollywood, Pete Fountain, who was kicked off the Lawrence Welk show for jazzing up the carol “Silver Bells” against the wishes of the show’s namesake, and Gerry Mulligan.

Finally, a singular phenomenon was that of the “jazz priest” of the 50s and 60s. Fr. Norman O’Connor hosted radio and television broadcasts about jazz and served as Master of Ceremonies at the Newport Jazz Festival, John Sanders played trombone with the Duke Ellington Band before deciding to become a priest, and Fr. Peter O’Brien became the mentor and manager of Mary Lou Williams. This tradition continues today with Stan Fortuna, John Moulder, and others.

So in addition to listing to the hymns *Pange Lingua Gloriosi* and *Veni Creator Spiritus*, why not play a little jazz music to set the mood for the spiritual contemplation or celebratory feasting. Allow Dave Brubeck’s “Forty Days,” Duke Ellington’s “Solitude,” or Mary Lou Williams’ “Temptation” to guide your prayerful reflection. Or let Dave Brubeck’s “Take Five,” Pete Fountain’s “Mumbo Gumbo,” Woody Herman’s “Woodchopper’s Ball,” or Louis Prima’s “Sing, Sing, Sing,” accompany your religious feast. You might even consider attending a live jazz show at the Baked Potato, Blue Whale, Catalina Club, Lighthouse Cafe, Tap Room, or Vibrato Jazz Grill in Los Angeles, or a local club in your own “neck of the woods,” or should we say “mouth of the delta,” in honor of New Orleans, the city of Jazz’s origination, and the Catholic roots of jazz. ✠

Alan Vincelette is professor of philosophy at St. John’s Seminary, recipient of a professional certificate in drums from Berklee, and drummer for the coverband, Grest.



Sacred Music

A UNIQUE HEALING

FR. ANGELUS ECHEVERRY, OSB

JOHN MELHUSH STRUDWICK, "SAINT CECILIA," 1897

"FATHER, YOUR MUSIC IS HEALING." Someone said this to me recently about my compositions. While reflecting on this comment, I felt thankful she shared this experience and I was inspired to write a few words on the subject of music and healing, because music has been a constant, healing balm for me throughout my entire life. I can imagine many of you have shared this experience. I have experienced the healing power of music as it has healed me as well, in varying ways at various times. Times such as the compositional process, in active or passive listening of music, in its performance, whether in a concert setting or at liturgy. Some may recognize and agree that music written with no preconceived meaning can still make us feel good. For listeners, who are also believers, this exploration concerns the healing aspect unique to sacred music.

If you research the healing power of music, you will find scientific articles supporting music's ability to heal, both physically and emotionally. You will also find, to a lesser degree, articles on Music Therapy (*a career I had looked into prior to entering monastic life*), a discipline which specializes in this type of therapeutic healing. However, the majority of sources on this topic are found in esoteric-type articles about "consciousness heightening" and "deepening levels of awareness of self" through music. Finally, you will stumble upon plenty of "New-Age" sources, which seem to almost divinize the music itself, turning it into something quasi-spiritual, giving it a magical power. Not much will be found, however, about *sacred* music's healing power. Even less frequently will one find the Catholic perspective in writings, leaving it unfamiliar and hard to imagine it could ever have a healing effect.

Music is a blessing, as it is a reflection of the harmonic spectrum that exists in nature.

We know this through the study of *Acoustics* (the science of sound). For example, we can detect the melodic and rhythmic patterns produced by bird song, we feel the rumbling of distant thunder, and experience it through the phenomena of the echo effect or in the "howling" of winds. Similarly, if the soothing white noise of ocean surf can be experienced, the same applies to anything capable of producing a sound. In nature, one can always find or feel vibration. It is ordered, proportionate, and *sensed* by us. We humans are physiologically affected by both random sound as well as organized sound (i.e. music). Regardless of the form, it *does something* to us. Generally, the effects of music are a positive and beneficial experience, though there also exist forms of music detrimental to our spiritual health, in that these forms might lead us away from God in its message, its mood-altering ability, or for simply having been heard.

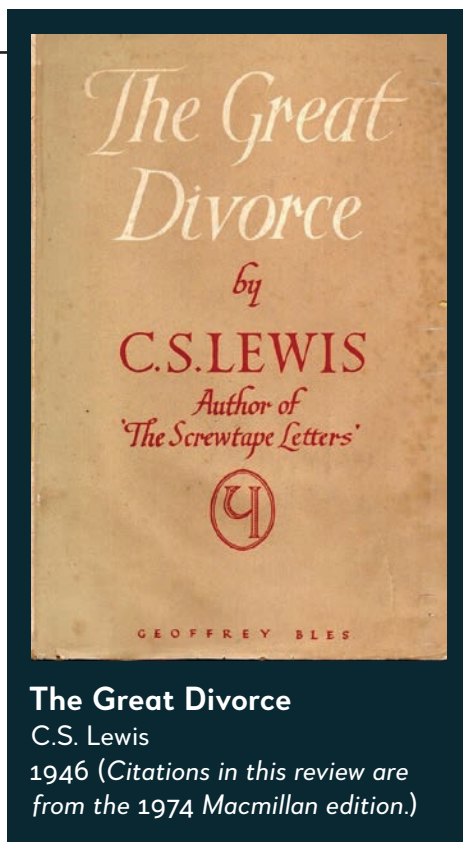
By way of example, when I suffered from anxiety, listening to Renaissance choral music produced a palpable change within me, leaving a sense of stability and hopefulness, as if the music were caressing my frightened heart. Whether people are traversing a personal or a universal crisis, sacred music can bring healing and comfort to us in our need. And just as Jesus brought comfort and healing to those who sought him, if allowed, sacred music, too, may heal. If we embrace sacred music as an extension of God's ability to heal, this gift may be brought into our lives readily at any time, any place. Just as this tangible hopefulness has the ability to awaken a dormant, cherished dream where we find ourselves re-stabilized and resolved, sacred music, if experienced as divinely delivered, may also heal, allowing us to be drawn closer to God. It is for these reasons, that sacred music is a gift for which we may give thanks and say, "Father, Your music is healing." ❄

BOOK REVIEW

FR. PHILIP EDWARDS, OSB

A YOUNG GRADUATE STUDENT, WHO was about to return to South America, recently visited the Abbey and requested that I, as a Benedictine monk, would write his friend, who was manifesting an interest in the black arts, an admonitory letter of spiritual caution. The graduate was to have come back the next Sunday or so before leaving. I did try to write something, but he never came. The revisiting, however, of the Benedictine Medal's exorcistic words and the experiences cited in Gregory's *Dialogues* from which they spring, reinforced in my own thinking what is perhaps a lax universalistic positivism, which is squarely quashed by C.S. Lewis in the person of the "fat ghost who... seemed to be wearing gaiters" in the fifth chapter of the book that the editor has suggested for this review. (Full disclosure: he suggested the author, I the book: "Hey, Flip, time for the next review. What about C.S. Lewis?" says he. "How about *The Great Divorce*?" says I).

I suspect that most of you who read this *Chronicle* are more familiar with Lewis and Tolkien and their Inklings friends than I am; I have read, often many times, quite a few of Lewis's books, but have not done the thorough research expected for a proper book review. Certainly, any Christian of my generation knows *Screwtape* (my father read his letters to the whole family when the book first came out) and the Ransom "Trilogy," and those of the next generation will know the *Chronicles of Narnia*. (I did try to get my mother to read *Till we have Faces*, but she did not take to it.) The apologetic writings, well-summed up in *Mere Christianity*, and the personal biographies, such as *Surprised by Joy* and *A Grief Observed*, are certainly worth revisiting, but as a sample of Lewisiana, *The Great Divorce*, a relatively short



The Great Divorce
C.S. Lewis
1946 (Citations in this review are from the 1974 Macmillan edition.)

and sweet fantasy of a bus tour from Hell to Heaven, "fills the bill." (An interesting coda would be the short piece, written near the end of Lewis's life, *Screwtape Proposes a Toast*: "...All said and done, my friends, it will be an ill day for us if what most humans mean by 'religion' ever vanishes from the Earth.... The fine flower of unholiness can grow only in the close neighborhood of the Holy. Nowhere do we tempt so successfully as on the very steps of the altar" [pp. 26–7]).

Yes, Virginia, there is a real Tempter and there are real everlasting fires—though they are the fires of an ovenly Love, assaying, purifying, crackling into light and life those whose iron doors are open to its licking flame, but endlessly tormenting those who adamantly slam them shut upon themselves (cf Matt 25). Lewis, that black-Irish boy

from Belfast, sees them smoldering in the grey, ashy grates of the lace-curtained parlors of the dismal working- and middle-class row-houses of the coal-grimed cities of the United Kingdom. He models the book's dank, drizzly-grey netherworld on this wan reality, and peoples it with shadowy ghosts whose sheer thin transparency (practically nothingness) is revealed when they get off the bus in Paradise. It's rather like Dante's Inferno, where the flames are topside and the

depths sullenly frozen, but here the topside is across the gap, the purgatorial plains of Paradise, "[not] Deep Heaven" (as Macdonald will explain in Chapter IX), [but] ye can call it the Valley of the Shadow of Life" (p. 63).

Paradise with its sparkling and thunderous waters and fruit-laden greenery and lions and unicorns and repentant sinners. There is warmth and light, brought to a head in the last half of Chapter XI in the person of a healing angel,



POUL SIMON CHRISTIANSEN, "DANTE AND BEATRICE IN PARADISE," 1895

“more or less human in shape but larger than a man, and so bright that I could hardly look at him. His presence smote on my eyes and on my body too (for there was heat coming from him as well as light) like the morning sun at the beginning of a tyrannous summer day” (p. 99).

Fire itself breaks in at the moment of submission and healing:

“The Ghost gave a scream of agony such as I have never heard on Earth. The Burning One closed his crimson grip on the reptile; twisted it, while it bit and writhed, and then flung it, broken backed, on the turf” (p. 103).

The Ghost in this scene is the only one from the bus who makes the definite breakthrough into Solidity.

When I first read this book as a repressed Puritan youth, it was this part which I (mis-) remembered most in a way that blindered my view of Lewis, causing me to miss the glorious chivalric gallantry of a Galahad charging up the mountain, and stick instead with the first partial image of a sturdy human shoulder and the hairy tail and rounded buttocks of an equally sturdy plow-horse (Piers Plowman?), the Yeoman hero of both middle and working class—and Protestant Reformers! Lollardy and *Pilgrim's Progress*? (Well, of course, would not a charger for a well-armed knight itself have some sort of protective trappings and need to be of sturdier fame than a sleek racer?)

Somehow too I missed the overshadowing significance of the Solid Teacher “with a strong Scotch accent” (p. 60), whom we first met in Chapter IX and whose modified Universalism seems not to have condemned him to the same fate as the prelatial-gaitered Ghost we met in Chapter V. Someone commenting about Lewis and his Inkling comrades once

mentioned having difficulties with plodding through George Macdonald for reasons related to his “Victorian” lack of style and ponderous/outdated ideologies—whatever! In this book, whose very title insists on a true and lasting separation between Heaven and Hell, Macdonald is presented

as an enthroned and shining god, whose ageless spirit weighed upon mine like a burden of solid gold: and yet, at the very same moment, here was an old weather-beaten man, one who might have been a shepherd—such a man as tourists think simple because he is honest and neighbors think “deep” for the same reason. His eyes had the far-seeing look of one who has lived long in open, solitary places, and somehow I divined the network of wrinkles which must have surrounded them before re-birth had washed him in immortality (pp. 60–61).

From this moment until book’s end in Chapter XIV, the old Scotsman Teacher will be guiding and explaining....

The good man’s past begins to change so that his forgiven sins and remembered sorrows take on the quality of Heaven: the bad man’s past already conforms to his badness and is filled with dreariness. And that is why, at the end of all things, when the sun rises here and the twilight turns to blackness down there, the Blessed will say, “We have never lived anywhere except in Heaven,” and the Lost, “We were always in Hell.” And both will speak truly (p. 64).

Hell is a state of mind—ye never said a truer word. And every state of mind, left to itself, every shutting up of the creature within the dungeon of its own mind—is, in the end, Hell. But Heaven is reality itself. All that is fully real is Heavenly. For all that can be shaken will be shaken and only the unshakeable remains (p. 65).



There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, “Thy will be done,” and those to whom God says, in the end, “Thy will be done.” All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. “Those who seek will find. To those who knock it is opened” (p. 69).

In the penultimate chapter, Macdonald deals with being called a Universalist talking “as if all men would be saved.”

Ye can know nothing of the end of all things, or nothing expressible in those terms...all answers deceive. If ye put the question from within Time and are asking about possibilities, the answer is certain. The choice of ways is before you. Neither

is closed. Any man may choose eternal death. Those who choose it will have it. But if ye are trying to leap on into eternity, if you are trying to see the final state of all things as it *will* be (for so ye must speak) when there are no more possibilities left but only the Real, then ye ask what cannot be answered to mortal ears. Time is of the very lens through which ye see—small and clear, as men see through the wrong end of a telescope—something that would otherwise be too big for ye to see at all. That thing is Freedom: the gift whereby ye most resemble your Maker and are yourselves parts of eternal reality. But ye can see it only through the lens of time, in a little clear picture, through the inverted telescope. It is a picture of moments following one another and yourself in each

ART AND HOLINESS

from page 6

moment making some choice might have been otherwise. Neither the temporal succession nor the phantom of what ye might have chosen and didn't is itself Freedom. They are a lens. The picture is a symbol: but it's truer than any philosophic theorem (or, perhaps than any mystic's vision) that claims to go behind it. For every attempt to see the shape of eternity except through the lens of Time destroys your knowledge of Freedom. Witness the doctrine of Predestination which shows (truly enough) that eternal reality is not waiting for a future in which to be real; but at the price of removing Freedom which is the deeper truth of the two. And wouldn't Universalism do the same? Ye *cannot* know eternal reality by a definition. Time itself, and all the acts and events that fill Time, are the definition, and it must be lived (pp. 128–9).

Chapter XIV concludes with a bang and a whimper:

Vertigo and terror seized me and, clutching at my Teacher, I said, "Is *that* the Truth".... "Ye saw the choices a bit more clearly than ye could see them on earth: the lens was clearer. But it was still seen through the lens. Do not ask of a vision in a dream more than a vision in a dream can give.... Ye are only dreaming. And if ye come to tell of what ye have seen, make it very plain that it was but a dream. See ye make it very plain. Give no poor fool the pretext to think ye are claiming knowledge of what no mortal knows. I'll have no Swedenborgs and no Vale Owens among my children."

"God forbid, Sir," said I, trying to look very wise. "He *has* forbidden it. That's what I'm telling ye."

I awoke in a cold room, hunched on the floor beside a black and empty grate, the clock striking three, and the siren howling overhead."(pp. 130–132) ❌

with, and participating in, the silences, forms of speech and practical actions until the time that the image of Christ can be "drawn out" most perfectly into the canvas of the world. Worship, art and Christian maturity are all nurtured in silent waiting, communication, imagination, and a set of ordered actions that incrementally perfect our chosen artistic discipline. We do not happen upon an artistic masterpiece any more than we happen upon living a sanctified life. Our crooked-lines-made-straight are predicated upon received grace and achieved growth. What applies to worship applies to art. May God help us to craft our lives and our varied artistic vocations into liturgical celebrations! ❌

DR. DONALD P. RICHMOND, a widely published author and monastic illustrator, is a professed Oblate for St. Andrew's Abbey.



Judgment

When the long road reaches its end
and the way becomes the gate,
and the companion becomes the host,
and the friend becomes the judge,
she, the soul, whatever she believed till then,
whatever name she muttered when she prayed,
will stand and look deep into the eyes of Love.

Either her heart will melt
or her spine will stiffen.
If she is strong in hatred,
she will turn and flee
down the dark corridors of loss,
followed by the sad gaze
of the One who gave the world for her.

If her heart melts,
his eyes will search and probe
the depths of her being.
Then he will open his arms
and hold her close,
whether for moments or for ages of ages,
as long as it takes for her to weep away,
in his arms,
all sadness and regret.
Then he will wipe the last tears from her cheek,
lift her chin with his finger
and look again deep into her
eyes, and she into his.
And feasting on the vision
of each other's joy,
they will remember all good and forget all grief,
and the bride and her Beloved...
will...know.

BEN HARRISON, May 2014

Published in *Spirituality*, Jan/Feb 2015.

CARPACCIO, "MEETING OF ST. JOACHIM AND ST. ANNA,
WITH ST. LOUIS IX AND ST. LIVRADE" (DETAIL).





UPCOMING PREACHED RETREATS

DECEMBER 2018

- 1 Taller Adviento En Espanol
- 21-23 An Adult Christ at Christmas
- 24-26 Christmas at Valyermo
- 31-1/2 New Year, New Beginnings

JANUARY 2019

- 11-13 Contemporary Cinema & Spirituality:
Winter Session
- 14-18 Four Spanish Mystics:
Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Avila,
John of the Cross, & Maria de Agreda
- 16 Take Charge of Your Life
- 18-21 Mid-Winter Dance Workshop:
The Sacred Dance Into Divine Love
- 26 Beginning Again

FEBRUARY 2019

- 9 Experiencing God's Love
- 20 Take Charge of Your Life

MARCH 2019

- 5-8 Lenten Silent Retreat
- 20 Take Charge of Your Life
- 25-29 Priests' Retreat:
Walking the Way of the Heart
Through the Gospel of John...
- 31 Taller Cuaresmal en Español

APRIL 2019

- 1-3 Extraordinary Time:
Spiritual Reflections from a Season
with Cancer, Death, & Transition
- 10 Take Charge of Your Life
- 15-17 Holy Week Silent Retreat

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SAINTANDREWSABBEY.COM (Click the Guest House link)

For reservations, call the retreat office: (661) 944-2178

NOTE: Many have enquired about the music being written and performed by FR. ANGELUS. You are invited to share in his website of original music at: angelusechevery.com

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