



*Nothing Dearer than Christ*

Oblate letter of the Pluscarden Benedictines, Elgin, Moray, Scotland. IV30 8UA.

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DMB series No 56 Christmas 2022



**Monastic Voices: Poetry - St Elizabeth of The Trinity,** Carmelite(1880-1906)

**There Is One Who Knows All Mysteries**

There is this One who knows all mysteries  
And who embraced them from Eternity:  
And this same One. ..the Father's Word He is .  
Splendour, that Word, of His Divinity.  
See that One come, with Love's excess,  
With Charity so urgent! Say:  
'Son of the Father's tenderness -  
God gives us Him on this great day .'  
O Word! may - lifelong now -  
I listen to You! so  
Possessed by You, that how  
To love be all I know.  
'Amo Christum.'

In me, a house that God is living at,  
This Jesus Christ, Divine Adorer there,  
Takes me to souls, as to the Father: that  
Being the double movement of His prayer .  
Co-Saviour with my Master, here!  
Whose call to me still drives me on;  
I For this I ought to disappear -  
I lost in Him, with Him as one...  
One, Word of Life, with You  
For always! and, above,  
Your virgin host anew

All shining forth with love.  
'Amo Christum.'

His sanctuary, I! He rests in me -  
There is the peace one looks for and attains:  
In silence, and in deepest mystery,  
He's captured me: forever I'm in chains.  
Ah, to Your ev'ry word to cling,  
Calm in the faith I'm anchored to;  
Adoring You, through everything  
As one who only lives by You!  
Beneath Your 'splendent Light,  
O Word, by night and day  
May I be now -outright -  
To Your great love, a prey.  
'Amo Christum.'

Mother of God, tell me your mystery;  
Of how your earthly life was spent: the way -  
Right from the time of 'Fiat' -how you'd be  
Buried in adoration, Mary! Say  
How - in a peace, a silence - you  
(What mystery! ) could enter in  
To Deeps that none but you could do -  
Bearing the gift of God within.  
Secure in God's embrace  
Keep me, I ask. In me  
His imprint may He place -  
For wholly Love is he.

'Amo Christum' December 1903 Dijon

**FROM THE OBLATEMASTER'S DESK—Almost!!**

--- At Christmas:->>Her first Christmas in Carmel, Elisabeth wrote to Father Angles in 1901:

« *This feast speaks so much to my soul; it seems that Jesus invites it to die to everything, to be reborn to a new life, a life of love* ». Elisabeth who is profoundly nourished by the liturgy, instantly grasps the depth of the mystery: God comes to us to give us His Life.

In 1903, she wrote a poem as she did every year, to celebrate this beautiful feast. In it, she meditates for the most part on the coming of the Word among us, taking our human condition upon Himself, and dwelling within us.

In each stanza, Elisabeth contemplates a particular aspect of the mystery and then deduces the attitude we should have in response so as to give God love in return for Love. Elisabeth uses the words "Amo Christum" or "I love Christ" as a refrain in the poem. These words are from the hymn of the same name which every newly professed bride of Christ sings at her solemn profession, and which Elisabeth had engraved on the crucifix which she received on her profession day, January 11, 1903.

St. John stated in his Gospel: *"The word became flesh"*; Elisabeth uses his words as the title and beginning of her poem. In response, Elisabeth makes herself welcoming and attentive, wanting to learn everything from Him. With the very meaning of her name, *"House of God"*, Elisabeth is led to **take the prayer of Christ as her own**: Christ who came to earth as our Savior, bringing us the Mercy of the Father while offering up Himself as perfect sacrifice. Elisabeth thirsts to share everything with her Master. Her apostolic ardour presses her to ask the Lord to be united with Him in accomplishing His mission.

At the end of the poem, Elisabeth looks towards the Virgin Mary whom she chosen some time ago as her model. For Elisabeth, every mystery of faith should cause us to withdraw within ourselves in recollection: welcoming it so as to be drawn into its depths, and allowing ourselves to be transformed by it. Later, she would ask in prayer, speaking of Christ: *"May I be another humanity for Him in which He can renew His whole mystery"*. Let us enter with Elisabeth, into this joy of allowing God to accomplish within the deepest part of ourselves, the admirable exchange of taking our humanity, thereby giving us a share in His Divinity. << Dijon Carmel 2022

### **BOOKS AND MEDIA:**

Simply a general commendation of poetry in regard to the last and most fundamental things. Prose is in many respects the poor relation of poetry. Poetry is, perhaps counter intuitively, more precise and all-embracing than science and theology. St. Teresa(of Avila) in chapter 16 of her Life tells explicitly how the mystic sometimes feels the impulse to express in poetry a deep spiritual experience, even though talent as a poet may be lacking: "Oh, help me God! What is the soul like when it is in this state! It would want to be all tongues so as to praise the Lord. It speaks folly in a thousand holy ways, ever trying to find means of pleasing the one who thus possesses it. I know a person who though not a poet suddenly composed some deeply felt verses well expressing her pain." The power of poetry is proved by the fact that it can be in some degree appreciated in an unknown foreign language, like its sublimer form of song. An eminent Oblate recently gave St John Henry Newman's poem the "Dream of Gerontius" their highest commendation and Edward Elgar's choral setting of it. Perhaps these well illustrate the precision of poetry and song in stating the mystery and entering more deeply into it. The mystery here in question--Entering into eternity!

**UK OBLATE WEBSITE-- [HTTPS://WWW.BENEDICTINE-OBLES.NET](https://www.benedictine-oblates.net) DETILS OF NEXT CONGRESS TO BE POSTED IN JANUARY 2023 ( FOR AUTUMN 2023)**

**Pluscarden Benedictines** Br. Cyprian Bampton: For inclusion on the mailing list write Br. Cyprian Bampton OSB at the Abbey address -- similarly subscriptions and changes of address to him.

Pluscarden Live Streaming --go to our website and you will find a drop-down list leading you to livestreaming-- click onto that and choose past or present items or click on this link :- <http://pluscardenabbey.org/live> Br. Michael is in charge of the live streaming. All queries to him.

NEXT YEAR 2023

OBLATE RETREATS 2023

RESIDENTIAL BOOKINGS:- FR. GILES BY LETTER (S.A.E. ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA!)

OR EMAIL [guestmaster.pluscarden@gmail.com](mailto:guestmaster.pluscarden@gmail.com) for bookings or officially [guestmaster@pluscardenabbey.org](mailto:guestmaster@pluscardenabbey.org)

or a form through the website [www.pluscardenabbey.org](http://www.pluscardenabbey.org)

The Pluscarden website is the primary source for day to day information: Please keep an eye on it--especially if you have a "booking"----and for livestreaming.

- **2023 Lent Friday 24th February to Monday 27th February Fr. Abbot.**
- **2023 Summer Friday 11th to Monday 14th AUGUST Bishop Richard Moth**

WORLD CONGRESS -- "It has been decided that the "5th World Congress of Benedictine Oblates" will be held at the Badia Primaziale Sant'Anselmo, in Rome, from 9 to 16 September 2023." Abbot Primate Gregory Polan O.S.B. --- Registration will be from January 1st 2023. Further details to follow.

**PRAYER INTENTIONS** The Repose of the soul Emeritus Archbishop Mario Conti, of Elizabeth Muir wife of Oblate David Muir. For Abbot Anselm's intentions, Bishop Hugh's & Bishop Richard Moth's intentions. --Vocations here at Pluscarden and to St Mary's and St. Scholastica's, Petersham U.S.A and Kristo Buase Priory. Health for Fr. Benedict, Dawn Cole in her 90's and Br. Thomas her only carer. Health of Oblates: *Peter Aitken Co-ordinator of St Mungo's chapter, Glasgow for decades until the lockdowns, aged*

95 and fell on his way to Sunday Mass; now in Ward 51 Queen Elizabeth University Hospital Glasgow 1345 Govan Road, Glasgow G51 4TF if you get a chance to mail or visit. George Brand's wife Yvonne and George himself, Justyna Tymecka and Marvia McCulloch, Alice McLeod covid, Joe Bagley, Robert Cantafio and his mother Margarita, Ursula Humphrey, Jane Coll's granddaughter Natasha Gunn. Fr. Francis Wilson, Janet Boyd Moss, Connie Reid, Mary Frances McGregor. Please pray for the health of Fr. Matthew, Br. Cyprian, Br. Finbar, Rev. Christopher Mayo, Rev. Angus Macleod, & for Netta Ewing. For Siobhan Gilmour's husband, for Mrs. Allie Brien, Margaret Johnston's mother, for Gitte Mackay, Leonora Duson, and her daughter, Joe Barrett senior, Maureen Woodhead & her Sister Doreen, Bob Barr, Brian Milne, Fiona Sellar, Nick MacCrae. Martin MacCrae, Jacqui Heath-Anderson and daughter Sally, Poppy Sinclair, Ian, Fred's Twin, Pam Woodhead( nursing home),Alison donald( nursing home) Carolyn, Marshall & Malcolm Boardman, and also for Eileen Kerr, Elizabeth MacKay, Alistair Macdonald, Elizabeth Mackay **and for ALL the housebound and the sick.**

**Our three sponsored seminarians** are all doing well. One Taking a year "out". Charles has finished his Philosophy degree with an Upper Second, and is now embarking on a year's post-graduate course in education. He is with the Servite Order and the teaching qualification will be useful for him when he is ordained, God willing. One will be ordained Deacon next year God willing. They are extremely grateful for the financial support we give them and pray for us. Please pray for them and for Sr Catherine OSB, who does so much to keep everything running smoothly & our new coordinator of the seminarian programme-- Penelope Coate's contact details: [penelopecoate@yahoo.com](mailto:penelopecoate@yahoo.com). 0794 9399592.

#### OBLATE CHAPTERS

PLEASE MAKE USE OF THE CONTACT DETAILS BELOW TO FIND OUT HOW THINGS STAND OR--Contact me--details at the head of every letter- I can forward, or:-

**St Mungo's Chapter, Glasgow:** See the prayer-list.

**St. Monica's Chapter for far North** -- Thurso. Contact Jane Coll. "Scaraben", Westside, Dunnet, Thurso, Caithness, KY14 8YD. Phone 01847 851467 & Orkney and Shetland by zoom .

**St. Peter's Chapter, Aberdeen:** 7.00-8.00 pm Mondays as below, Cathedral Presbytery, Huntly Street, Aberdeen contact Chairman Mr. Robert Ian Johnston, 31, Tay Road, Mastrick, ABERDEEN AB16 5LA or secretary Mr. George Brand [geobra@msn.com](mailto:geobra@msn.com):-Schedule: Mondays: next:- 19th December. 7.00-8.00--prayer & discussion & centred around Compline from the Abbey---contact chairman & secretary.

**St Andrew's Chapter, Moray.** I will send out an invitation email to you in good time. Live-streamed Oblates at None have taken a break but past ones are available on:  
<http://pluscardenabbey.org/live> Warm regards and prayers

Eileen Fitzpatrick Oblate OSB Co-ordinator St Andrew's Chapter

**Benedictine Prayer Circle-** Oblates may like to join John McKinlay's Benedictine Prayer Circle, see Links on the UKOT website---John McKinlay [jgjm07@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jgjm07@yahoo.co.uk)

*We entrust our Abbey and our Oblates and our( God's! ) struggling world to the prayerful intercession of Our Holy Father St Benedict!*



*et Verbum caro factum  
est et habitavit in nobis  
et vidimus gloriam eius*

*gloriam quasi unigeniti a Patre  
plenum gratiae et veritatis*

*Prayers for Peace and Blessings at Christmas*

*Fr. Martin PAX*