



JBMS NEWSLETTER

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JOHN BRADBURNE AND THE STATE OF ZIMBABWE

We continue to be in close contact with those struggling in Zimbabwe. Obviously, the raging inflation and the scarcity of supplies, notably staple foods and diesel is having an effect on Mutemwa. But the Deacon Kawisi

and his team at Mutemwa aided by the Zimbabwean Leprosy Association and the JBMS (Zimbabwe) are doing sterling work to ease the plight of the patients.

All readers will be aware of the on-going problems, and therefore

we do not intend to comment any further. Instead, we begin with the address from Cardinal Napier, the Archbishop of Durban, given at the recent South African Bishop's Conference.

Address from Cardinal Wilfrid Napier OFM, Archbishop of Durban, at the recent South African Bishop's Conference

When God decides to grant his people a favour, wherever they may be in the world, no one can stop or block the movement of His Spirit. The Spirit blows where He wills and works through agents of His choice. Both the Bible and the lives of the Saints give us colourful illustrations of people who tried to resist but could not. Even the great prophets learned the hard way that they could not resist God's call.

There are examples of learned and socially privileged people who came to be regarded as eccentric because they withdrew to the margins of society in search of an unknown treasure. Some went as far as to sell everything in order to acquire what their heart desired. A recent example is Mother Theresa of Calcutta. She was drawn not by lure of gold but was led by the Spirit to find God in the poor and marginalized.

John Randal Bradburne belongs to this class of special people for whom God had a special place in his plan for Southern Africa. Attracted by the values of the Kingdom he rose like a star to be used by God to remind our society of the need for transformation of the human heart.

By all accounts John Bradburne developed hunger and thirst for God that impelled him to seek the source of his life in contemplating God. As a star draws its light from

its internal source of energy, so did God become for him the source of all that he was. In turn he has become a Star for Zimbabwe, for Africa and indeed for the whole world.

It is ironic that someone who was a soldier at the outbreak of the Second World War should have ended up in Rhodesia hailed as man of God on the eve of that country's political conflict and civil war. Because of his "careless" way of life he came to be known as the "Vagabond of God". Led by the Spirit he dedicated himself to serving the poor, giving them hope and sharing his life with them.

Today the Church in Zimbabwe, Southern Africa and Africa is in dire need of spiritual heroes. For many, especially the youth, the life and ministry of John Bradburne makes him a most suitable role model. His love and caring for lepers gave concrete expression to the love that he experienced in contemplation, in solitude and in silence. The fervent desire to love God found its counterpart in his keen desire to live with and serve the marginalized community of Mutemwa.

This made him a prophet of hope for the afflicted and the marginalized. But it also makes him a prophet of peace and reconciliation to the people of

Zimbabwe today. His death at the hands of the suspicious guerrillas could be the source of spiritual renewal for a nation that is at present so terribly divided and polarised.

His love of nature and creation is a good basis for building a respect for the environment, for the proper use of the natural resources of the earth. People of all religious traditions, both Christian and African can be inspired to seek a new love and respect for the creation that God has entrusted to His people. Please God the thousands of pilgrims, who visit the Shrine at Mutemwa to ask for John Bradburne's intercession, will come to absorb something of his Franciscan Spirituality.

For these reasons it is our fervent prayer that the desire of the John Bradburne Memorial Society to see their hero's cause for canonisation grow and prosper, will be blessed with success. We often use the expression a "saint out of his time", but I am sure that as far as we in Southern Africa are concerned John Randal Bradburne is the saint for our time. May God grant increase to the number of people who see in John Randal Bradburne a ray of hope for the people of Africa who so often can see only the "valleys of depression" before them.

An article by Fr Claudio Rossi, SJ about his visit to Palma in Campania in Italy with Don Francesco Picciocchi to retrace his memories of John Bradburne, who stayed with him in 1952-53

We are indebted to Mr. Silvestro Peloso from Brentwood, who was living in Palma in Campania in Italy as a young man in 1952, and having recently heard about John Bradburne via the Secular Franciscans contacted the John Bradburne Memorial Society to say that he remembered meeting John all those years ago. He was able to track down Fr Picciocchi in Italy and from then it was possible to make this meeting with Fr Claudio Rossi SJ who was in Rome, and then to journey to Palma together. Fr Rossi knew John when he was out in Zimbabwe, and he has been a tremendous promoter of his Cause.

At about 10.30 on the 28th March 2003, I arrived at Baiano, about fifty minutes by train from Naples. Most of the journey is through an untidy, run-down outer Naples. The only attractive things were the many fruit trees in blossom, and the ripe lemon trees everywhere. I met Don Francesco Picciocchi, who is the 'Father Francis' John stayed with in Palma Campania, living in a little room off the organ loft in the Parish Church in 1952-53. He is an absolute delight, most youthful for his 81 years. He and his Comboni nun sister Suor Rosaria were exquisite hosts to me.

Don Francesco was born on 11th March 1922. The third of eight children, of Nicola and Caterina Picciocchi, ordained on 14th July 1946 at Pompei. He was Parish Priest of Palma from December 1947 - December 31st 1966. He then pursued a teaching vocation, teaching in schools in Nola, Baiano, Naples and Rome where he became headmaster. He evidently acquired a little fortune, which he has now all put into 'La Fondazione Gesu & Maria', which is a foundation to help young people find jobs, or complete their studies. He lives above the offices he built. He has a little chapel, St Giacomo, where he celebrates daily Mass. An intellectual, with a degree in Abelard's philosophy. He feels passionately about justice in the Church and Society, and has often suffered for standing up to the corruptions of Church and State in Southern Italy. Brilliant, yet humble, a good, faithful priest, a loving pastor. Everywhere we went his former parishioners were

delighted to see him. His sister, Suor Rosaria, worked in the Sudan, Uganda, and Aden. Now in Rome, she often stays with him. Don Francesco greets everyone with the words, 'Sia laudato Gesu!' (Jesus be praised,) to which one replies 'Sempre Sia laudato!' (always be He praised!). He is against all pomp and titles in the Church, a beautiful, 'holy rebel'!

In September 1952, when John arrived from Louvain in Belgium, the police in Baiano let him stay in a prison cell. There was a couple, Raffaele and Santa Tulino. They had eight children. When Signora Tulino heard this, she said, 'a pilgrim from the Holy Land. He is Christ among us, all the more that he comes from the Holy Land'. And she had John come to stay with them. One of their eight children, Antonio, was handicapped, and loved music. John especially spent time with him, and as promised, when he returned to England, he sent him his/a recorder. Until her dying day, Signora Tulino always remembered John. This information was given by Agnese, a daughter and Canossian nun in Rome. Her sister, Suor Guiseppina, whom I met in the family home, is the foundress of the Good Samaritan nuns in Asmar-Eritrea, a congregation founded to help the poorest, abandoned children, Aids children, homeless mothers and their children. She is in Italy with a sick child, and I was fortunate to meet her. A strong, serene, lovely person. The local Curate (whom I also met) now Monsignor Elia Ferrone, after sometime suggested that his friend, Don Francesco, a cousin of the Tulinos, take John to stay with him at his parish of Mater Dei in Palma! And that is how John lived there until 1953. Mater Dei is in the centre of the town. Neo-classical, built in the 1900's. The present parish priest, since 1970, an able musician, Don Pierono Manfredi, was also very cordial.

Don Francesco said that John's personality was very attractive. His goodness, his living a life of great simplicity and poverty. He had very few clothes, and did not want more. But he was always very neat and clean. He slept in a little room off the choir loft, and would slip into the choir loft to play the organ. John prayed a lot, with deep devotion. Don Francesco allowed

him a lot of freedom, and he loved walking, especially going up the mountain, where he made his vow of celibacy. But this priest was aware of that eccentric side of John. There were two tiffs. One had to do with John not always being well. Aftermath of War, nerves, or maybe malaria. Don Francesco suggested that he should ask for a Pension from the British Government, and this upset John, who thought it would be stealing. John also wrote poems in a book he had decorated with the colours of the Union Jack. There was a misunderstanding, and John thought Don Francesco had spoken badly about the British. So, sadly, they parted under this cloud. One has to accept the imperfect human side of us all - John included. Yet after all these years, Don Francesco still wanted, and tried to find him.

Although until a few months ago, Don Francesco knew nothing of what had happened to John, he had kept alive a vivid memory of him. In fact in 1996, while on holiday in Cornwall, he had gone to Ottery St Mary in Devon, where John's mother had lived, to (unsuccessfully) try and find news of John. The story he remembers very clearly is of John making his vow of perpetual celibacy. John told him that he often was disturbed by a girl whose house was opposite his room. She loved singing! One day, outside the church, he pointed her out, saying 'that in England 'dark-eyed beauties' were especially admired'. Was John in love? What struggles of the heart were going on in him?

After some time, John told the youngsters of the parish Youth Club, that he was 'engaged', and then soon after, that he had 'married'. They were all excited and wanted to meet the lady! So sometime in May 1953, John, Don Francesco, and the youth went for a picnic, above Palma, where there rises a high mountain, with the village of Castello, and about a kilometre beyond and above there was the chapel of Santa Maria a Miano, with a painting of Our Lady. (I was touched that Jesus holds His Sacred Heart - see picture, because it reminded me of John's famous poem, which ends, 'for you are homeless save God keeps *your* heart'. I thought it could also

represent Jesus holding our heart....)



Centre: Don Giuseppe Esposito -
PP of Castello

Right: Don Francesco Picciocchi
With the painting of Our Lady, before
which John made his vow of chastity

All we know is that soon after John started telling the youth in the parish that he was engaged, this was an all important moment in John's life. All that was human, good and natural in this young man had, by the power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit been sublimated, lifted to a God-invited supernatural level through Our Lady's intercession, 'The Mother of Fair Love'. The Queen of his heart.

After 50 years, Don Francesco, a very unsentimental man, remembers it as a day filled with joy. He remembers these details so well. So John showed them the 'mystical spouse of his heart!.... Our Lady, as we know from his writings, poems etc. On their return, Don Francesco remembers they sang these songs, which we can say have beautiful, double meanings.... "There is a path in the woodlands, whose name I know, do you also want to know it...?" "There is a path in the heart, where love is born, do you want to know it...? And in the other song they sang, "Let us go and collect, the wheat, the wheat, the wheat, let us go and collect, love, love, love,... (the Eucharist?)."

The present painting of Our Lady was painted in about 1920, when the original was burnt. The chapel was abandoned many years

ago, and is now sadly roofless and derelict. The painting is now venerated in the Church of St John the Baptist, Castello. When we went to Castello on Friday afternoon, Don Francesco said he could never find the parish priest, and the church would be locked. But at 4.30, there was the parish priest, Don Giuseppe Esposito, ending the rosary before Mass. He most willingly unhooked the painting, dusted it down, and took it outside for me to photograph. On Saturday morning we went and visited the derelict chapel. Don Francesco was again moved. Somehow in 50 years he had never been back, and he treasured those memories so vividly, of the joy-filled day.



The derelict chapel of
S. Maria A Miano

Universally, those that remembered John, remembered him as someone very special. A man of God, of prayer. A man of absolute goodness, kindness. A man of lived simplicity. All kept repeating these things. Biagio Prisco, who became the Sacristan (born in 1931). He remembers John often helping the street sweepers sweep the streets of Palma. He remembers John climbing the Church Cupola, and precariously sitting there and praying, while the town folk looked up in 'horror'. It seemed so dangerous. John would spend hours up there in prayer. Biagio's brother, Salvatore, remembers John getting upset when the Prisco boys used to ill treat certain lizards. "Don't kill them." The future Franciscan! He remembers him as "buonissimo" very, very good. Always smiling, calm.

A number of the parish youth did very well and became lawyers, well advanced in the police etc. One of them Dr Antonio Simonetti (born 1938). For him John was "Cordialissimo" most cordial. Humble. Once John rang the bell at Mass, because young Antonio, then 14 years old had forgotten. Afterwards Don Francesco told John he had rung them incorrectly, and Dr Simonetti recalls John's humility, that he came and apologised to *him!* John used to also serve at Mass, ring the steeple bell, sweep the church. Once from England his mother sent tea. The people of Palma had never drunk tea. So after Sunday Mass, John made tea for everyone!

There was the old habit of spitting, even in church. This used to upset John, and he used to chide people not to do this in 'God's House'. Anna Maria Fernandez remembers that John used to take her baby brother, Gaetano on his shoulders, up to the Cupola. Again from below it looked so dangerous, and folk used to look up in horror. She recalls John as 'buono and bello', good and handsome! He ate little. "I must do penance", he said.

Don Francesco remembers three other things. During the 1953 elections John helped put up posters for the Christian Democrats, against the Communist threat. He threw himself into this. John also used to compliment him on his preaching and he remembers that besides tea, he received other parcels from his family.

I think the story of John's vow of perpetual chastity is very important. With his undoubted courtesy and charm, John was also a fair, handsome young Englishman. He could have made many conquests. In our permissive age here is a wonderful lesson and example for us. A young man who cooperates with God's presence in his life, to live a life of celibacy. No easy thing, especially for one who remains in the world, without structures and community to support him.

I left Baiano on Sunday morning and concelebrated at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Rosary at Pompei. Very much the centre of this Holy Year of the Rosary.

Our Lady, Queen of Peace, pray for us! Our Lady, of the Rosary, pray for us! pray for us! pray for us!

TESTIMONIES

I wanted to thank you for the newsletter you faithfully keep sending me.

The other thing I might say is the strength I find in John Bradburne to live a chaste life (which I believe I am called to do). In this idiosyncratic call, which is difficult to talk about inside a community commitment, let alone outside one, I find John a supportive presence. Don't ask me to explain it, I just know it is true! I just hope that I can attain a fraction of John's love for the world and its people.

I also have tried to spread the news of John Bradburne to several others recently, one of whom is a 'leading' Franciscan in Rome who had never heard of John before. He was very interested indeed.

To all who support the JBMS, I wish every blessing of the Lord.

W. F.

We were desperate to find a care home for my sister Noreen and thought that we had succeeded, but on the 18th December last year, we discovered to our horror, that what we had sorted out was no longer a possibility. I phoned all the contacts I had made in my search and although I received a sympathetic hearing, nobody could offer a solution to my problem. We were unable to get any support or suggestion until after half an hour of intense prayer. A call was made to a lady in a position of authority in a neighbouring county. This particular lady had chatted with me a few days before when she had been told of my dilemma. She happened to be in her office, although it was her day off, and she took the call from my husband as I had to go to work. From there she had the matter sorted out within hours. I had reached the point of absolute despair, this was Friday 25th December. The relief we felt was indescribable and we still continue to offer prayers of thanks as she is now being well cared for, after having had her basic need ignored and other needs neglected over the past two years.

My sister Noreen used to drive out to Mutemwa on a regular basis, giving lifts and promoting John's Cause. I have her original copy of John's memoir 'Strange Vagabond of God'. The pamphlets I have are being handed out on a regular basis, and some of our old contacts are sharing and remembering their times at Mutemwa, and their memories of John.

Veronica Madgen, Herefordshire

My brother who was spreading the news of this remarkable man, gave me the Novena prayers to John Bradburne.

I have always had a very strong belief in my faith and the power of prayer, and since receiving the Novena to John I have had numerous prayers answered, some minor favours, but just recently our youngest grandson contracted Meningitis and was rushed to hospital. Immediately our family started our prayers to John Bradburne, and with the grace of God he pulled through, and has made a full recovery.

I will do my utmost to spread the news of John Bradburne and pray that he be recognised for all the good that is coming through him from God. Please be assured of our continued prayers.

Mr. and Mrs. Ian Duffy, Glasgow

It was my pleasure to visit Buckfast Abbey in February '01, and whilst praying for my brother who was terminally ill, I picked up the leaflet about John Bradburne. Six weeks later my brother passed away on March 27th, forty years to the day when our mother died.

At the end of my holiday, I slipped the leaflet into a drawer where it lay forgotten until I came across it this Spring. Because I suppose my brain was focussed on my brother, it was as if I was reading it for the first time. I was amazed about what happened at John Bradburne's funeral. His life has inspired me to pray to him, as he is from our time and understands what we go through. Since I have prayed to him on an almost daily practice I have felt more healthy. This came about immediately as in the first instance I asked him to stop what I thought was a profuse nose bleed whilst taking a bath. I said "You must be the person to ask as God used your blood to draw attention". IMMEDIATELY the bleeding stopped. Since then when I have felt unwell I ask John Bradburne to intercede and ask Jesus to help me, especially as I too have had a special love for God's Mother since I was a small child. Things such as my arthritic ankles and knees have definitely improved. The nose thing was from a sore spot which had been there for a long time. It is still there but has never bled again!

Mrs. P. I. B. Smith, Berks.

Once again I wish to praise and thank John Bradburne for his instant help. My daughter Margaret, a teacher, gradually got hoarser for one week before the Bishop's arrival to Confirm up to 30 pupils. Two days before, her voice

had completely gone, and we stormed Heaven with prayers to John that her voice would be restored to conduct the ceremony and choir. She not only got back her voice, but the joyful confidence she needed because of the problems in the sale of their business.

The business has now been sold through the power of John's intercession, and a new four bedroom house in Cork has been bought. He is a saint, and we thank God for the power of prayer.

E. D. from Cork

John is doing great work. Our daughter Julie had a tumour on the brain. She saw seven professors who were reluctant to operate. One decided to do so. He told her that before the operation she should take her husband and two children away for a week, somewhere quiet, which she did!!! He also told her that due to the position of the tumour there was every possibility that she may lose the sight in one eye, and also her speech may be impaired and/or arm and leg. I prayed the Novena prayer to John Bradburne, until I heard that she was completely cured.

Peter Ward, South Africa

I have been very remiss in writing to you. It is now several months since John Bradburne answered a novena by helping my daughter and my nephew to find a flat to rent in London, a very nice flat in Fulham at a most reasonable price. My daughter rang to say that they had found the perfect flat the day before. It was only about half an hour after her call that I remembered it was the ninth day of my novena to John. Also, earlier in the morning, I had been shopping and had bought a copy of the 'Catholic Life' because it contained an article on Bradburne.

He also helped me last year when my husband had to have tests for possible cancer, which thankfully proved negative. When I asked John for a sign, that he would send a bee to show he was listening to our prayers, a bumble bee flew into the window pane almost immediately. And a bit later, when I asked for a second bee just in case the first had been a coincidence, one flew into the room through an open window.

On our holiday in Barbados in February this year, we were amazed to see a novena card to John pinned onto the notice board in the Anglican Cathedral in Bridgetown.

Caroline Straghan, Dorset

A HEAD FOR HEIGHTS



John Bradburne's father Rev. T. W. Bradburne was Rector of St Agnes Church, Cawston, in Norfolk from 1933-46. Mary, John's elder sister writes this piece from those days.

It is true most children enjoy climbing - and that is no exception - but I recall in our family John and I were inveterate climbers - though I have no head for heights. At Cawston, in the front garden, was an enormous copper beech, from the top of which you could see miles beyond the village - and we spent many hours up there. At Greshams - in his House garden Farfield - John had at his disposal

an enormous oak which he called The Monarch - difficult to climb, and I never saw him do it - but he spent much time up there too.

Much scarier than this was the time when John walked across the top of the rood screen in the church at Cawston, which was very high, and a sheer drop onto stone paving. There was a way down from the side pillar, but the top width was narrow and it was a long way across. I only witnessed this once, and my heart was in my mouth - Our mother was doing the flowers below. I can only imagine how she felt.



The 15th Century Rood Screen

To climb the fells as we often did, was therefore a doddle - and though tiring, presented few problems - unless you got lost - as we sometimes did.

It has been recalled that when as a Gurkha Captain in India, John could often be found up a tree playing his recorder, or whatever, to the amazement of his platoon below. Words failed them - English madness! It was through Malayan jungle John escaped to Sumatra in the Burma war - but he never related that experience. Fr Dove writes a little about the time in 'Strange Vagabond'.

I am glad John spent much or most of his war in a tree-populated environment - rather than in the desert. Trees are friendly - and protective. Open desert and you are the target - totally exposed.

Back to earlier days, John was so miserable at Seascale, his preparatory school, my father sent him to a Major Sargent on the Sussex coast, to be tutored with a few other boys for his next school. Here he was quite happy - and made friends. Among the boys was Robin Oats, a young relative of the explorer, the two became friends.

Once into his teens John matured easily and without trouble. He was not far from home, and could cycle back at weekends.

Then the war broke out, and John was called to service.

John Bradburne, wanderer, hermit, monk and hero by Fr Stephen de Kerdrel

Recently after Mass, one morning, Brother Damon and myself found ourselves discussing the nascent brotherhood of St. Mary, which we appear to have been called to found, and wondered whether it was all a pipe dream. The conversation however did not finish there but took on a life of its own. The next port of call on this conversational tour was the particularly perplexing relationship between the sexes, made more and more unpleasant by the competitive and imitative behaviour of Western men and women. The conclusions that we reached ran on the following lines.

I Men and Women

Men by their nature are always searching and striving for some goal, and so much of their lives are dominated by some quest or other. From a mythical standpoint this would be the Christian quest for the Grail; for the pagans, Jason seeking the Golden Fleece. It is a quest that involves a group dedicated to the task. It is the realization of a dream. Dreams, however, have a habit of disappearing. Women, because their great vocation is motherhood, cannot afford to dream too much, babes at the breast will not be fed

by dreams. Men are always scanning the horizons for yet another adventure. Motherhood involves something more akin to creation, where God lovingly looks down on his creation. This is not to say that woman's vocation is to be tied to the kitchen sink defiantly taking on an army of politically correct feminists. It is to do with seeing things as they really are, and that is wisdom. In a nutshell, Man seeks his Grail, and Woman contemplates the whole picture, and that is wisdom. Both need the other. The great Edith Stein, known to the Church as St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, would say

that Woman's genius is an intense ability to love wholeheartedly. Men have often had harems, but women have not. Perhaps that is why women so often love their children with a greater intensity than their husbands for the very obvious reason of the extraordinary bond between mother and child. So it is rather odd that some of the greatest bonds between human beings are between two men, best exemplified by Jonathan and David; this it must be added forcefully has nothing to do with homosexual love which is a grave sin. Women do not usually have such intense friendships with each other. Women often share their experiences with one another about children, men do not. Women will often love their husbands with a totality which is beyond their spouses; their love is often inclusive.

II

The Modern Hero

Suddenly Brother Damon and I found ourselves discussing contemporary heroes. Today the hero is exemplified by celebrity, and the one that dominates not only the British media, but beyond this realm, is the ever present David Beckham. Whatever Beckham's undoubted talents may be on the football pitch, he does not encapsulate in his life the epic qualities of a hero. He has not crossed deserts, climbed mountains, forded rivers in full spate, fought off hostile enemies against great odds, and then achieved his goal. David Beckham is an ordinary man with an extraordinary talent. If that makes him a hero, then the remarkably gifted tenor, Luciano Pavarotti is a hero. But there is a fundamental difference between the two. Beckham is young, good looking, and very rich. Pavarotti is middle aged, no longer good looking, and very rich. But he is not a footballer, and would not be considered, in the vulgar parlance, sexy. Men want to be like Beckham because he is a footballer, rich and sexy. Western Society is about comfort and ease; it is not about the Cross and asceticism. True heroism, whether it be exemplified in the Biblical heroes, such as Gideon, David, and Judas Macchabeus, or in pagan heroes such as Beowulf, Jason or Aeneas, confront overwhelming odds and win. Beckham only confronts a ball on a football pitch and makes a vast

amount of money in the process. Heroes for Western Man today do not even have the rebellious charm of Marlon Brando in "The Wild Ones", James Dean in "Rebel Without A Cause", or Peter Fonda in "Easy Rider". There is not even the glamour of a counter culture, there is simply the colourlessness of consumerism. Narcissism has replaced a quest for the heroic, and today's idolaters like the Queen in "Snow White" endlessly gaze into the mirror and repeat continuously "Mirror, mirror on the wall tell me who is the fairest of them all". Oddly, the malicious Queen and the devotees of football stars, and film stars make strange bedfellows; but do they? The link between such unlikely groups is vanity. There is no vision, and Western men are ceasing to be heroes. The differentiation between the sexes has foundered on the rocks of comfort, consumerism and sensuality. It is an extraordinary state of affairs that we have reached. The Cult of shopping, sex, sun and sleaze heightened by drugs, and copious amounts of alcohol have made depravity what it is, intensely dull, boring and hellish.

III

The Christian Hero

As we reflected on the disappearance of the classic hero we then began to traverse the terrain of the Christian hero and were surprised to find how many of the great saints came from military backgrounds or, because of the chaos in the church, were very much spiritual warriors. St. Martin of Tours was a soldier, St. Francis of Assisi, a rather unsuccessful one, aspiring to knighthood, and Ignatius of Loyola was a very good soldier. Camillus de Lellis was a successful mercenary, and St. Louis of France had to be a soldier because he was a King. We should also remember St. George, who, whatever else might be legendary about him, was indeed a soldier.

Then you have the saints who go out on the spiritual quest to do battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil. The earliest of these spiritual warriors, after the era of martyrdom, would be Antony of the Desert, then Athanasius who, in fighting Arianism, had to flee into exile. Four times he was exiled for his defence of the Faith, and he triumphed against hopeless odds. As most of the bishops of the Church veered off into heresy,

Athanasius stood firm. Then you have Augustine, very possibly the greatest of the Church Fathers (Sadly our Orthodox brethren do not appreciate his greatness which is a real problem with ecumenism) who had to fight against Pelagianism and against the schismatic Christians, the Donatists. Gregory The Great had to defend the Church as the Western Empire collapsed all around him. Then we have Columba, of royal blood, who learns humility in self imposed exile, the reasons for which are obscure. He and so many Celtic saints endure the martyrdom of exile in the cause of preaching the Gospel. Then closer to our times we have Charles de Foucauld, a converted French Officer who goes into the desert, and half a century later John Bradburne, a former soldier, begins his pilgrimage and quest.

IV

John, a Christian Hero and Ideal for Today

If Athanasius is known by the title "Athanasius contra Mundum", then perhaps John is "John against Western Decadence and Indifferentism". There is nothing decadent about John. He was heroic and principled when he was fighting with "The Chindits". He valiantly pursued his strange vocation wandering for Christ until he found his desert in which to grow in holiness. He subjugated the flesh through fasting and prayer during the hedonistic and sensual sixties and seventies. He served lepers in a way that was truly humble and loving. His almost knightly devotion to Our Lady (in that he is a true son of St. Francis) informed his relationship with women. Also just when devotion to Our Lady was being denigrated by so many religious and clergy, John was championing Her cause. His love of Latin and plainchant could not have been more unfashionable during the turbulent period of the pontificates of Blessed John XXIII, and Paul VI. Pope Paul stood on the deck of the Ark of The Church and must have wondered whether most of it was going to break up on the reefs of neo-modernism. The great protagonists of the Council good, bad and indifferent will, in the future, no doubt be of interest only to scholars of Church History, or seminarians, but John and his like will grow in stature, because they turned their backs on the World,

and heroically make their journey to Heaven. John is the utter antithesis of the Consumerist society. There was nothing easy in his quest. He had to confront his own quite narcissistic nature, and the need for attention. Using prayer, fasting, service of the lepers, and the solitary life, he confronted all the squalor of our present Western Society. John is an anachronism, but his love for the past only confirms him as one of the great champions of Christendom, which has all but disappeared. When many in the Church were being seduced by a world view which was bland, humanistic, bureaucratic, and all about feeling good, John

heroically stuck to the time honoured traditions of orthodox Christian behaviour, which are simple. The spiritual life is combat, and it is a battle royal to the finish. It requires that we correspond with grace, and it means that we have to do our best, while avoiding Pelagianism on the one hand (we can get to Heaven on our own efforts) and Quietism on the other (we sit back and do nothing, thinking God will do it all for us), and that we be people above all of prayer and charity, and from this our good works will spring. It requires that we live our lives with the prayer that John was introduced to by that fine Jesuit

spiritual director Michael Ivens, namely the Russian Orthodox Jesus Prayer. "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner" John's heroism and greatness sprang from living that prayer to the depths, and finally to the giving of his life for his Lord and King.

Conclusion

At the end of this conversation which lasted about an hour, Brother Damon asked "How did we begin this conversation?" I replied "with the question as to whether we were on the right track with the life that we are trying to live." No doubt John would approve.

FUNDRAISING AT THE SACRED HEART CHURCH IN HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXON



Pictured above are the Church Choirs in Chorus, raising the roof at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Henley to the tune of £700. The concert in aid of Mutemwa Leprosy Settlement, brought choirs from different denominations together.

Fr Dove who was John Bradburne's close friend since the war years, and author of the book 'Strange Vagabond of God'. His mother is well remembered, living next door to the church at Henley.

Over £5,000. has been raised in the past months for the work at the Settlement.

God willing we hope very much that for the twenty fifth anniversary of John Bradburne's death, Fr Dove will mark this event with a visit to England, and in particular to the Henley Parish to say a special thank you for their tremendous support over the years.

**JOHN BRADBURNE DAY AT LADYEWELL
SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 7TH**

MASS 12 NOON

PACKED LUNCH

**2.30 p.m. Talk by Peter Goradema and his wife
(from Zimbabwe)**

Rosary, Benediction

Blessing with the Relic of John Bradburne

For further enquiries telephone 01772 700181

OUR GRATEFUL THANKS

Once again, we would like to thank all those who have supported the JBMS with testimonies, letters, donations and prayer.

It is always a joy to hear from you, and it gives us a great incentive to widen our horizons.

We are particularly indebted to those who offer to distribute our prayer leaflets and newsletters. This is our best way of bringing others to know about John Bradburne.

So please if you feel that you could take some of these, we are delighted to send these to you. Contact Celia on 01568 760632

NEW TRUSTEE FOR THE JBMS

We are very pleased to welcome Anne Lander as a new Trustee for the JBMS.

Anne will be able to contribute a great deal to the Society, with her extensive knowledge of Zimbabwe. As a good friend of Mutemwa and John Bradburne, she has an insight that she can share with us, to ensure that the work of the Society continues to flourish and grow.

ITEMS AVAILABLE FROM THE JOHN BRADBURNE MEMORIAL SOCIETY

1. John Bradburne's Mutemwa. In poems and pictures edited by David and Hilary Crystal. £6.00.
2. Strange Vagabond of God. Memoir of John Bradburne by Fr John Dove SJ. £14.
3. Songs of the Vagabond. Book of poems by John Bradburne selected by Professor David Crystal. £7.00.
4. John Bradburne of Mutemwa, 1921-1979. Booklet £1.50. Orders for ten or more copies at £1 each.
5. Audio cassette of John Bradburne reading his poems. Recorded by him at Mutemwa. £6.00.
6. Audio cassette of Westminster Cathedral Hall talks with Fr John Dove and Professor David Crystal, with testimonies. £6.00.
7. Video - 'On Eagle's Wings'. The life and death of John Bradburne. £12.00.
8. T.V. Documentary video about John Bradburne - "Issues of Faith" (Presented by Fr Claudio Rossi) £9.00.
9. Video 'Do Not Let the Dream Die' £10.00 (includes testimonies about John Bradburne).
10. Print of the painting of John's life by Fr Claudio Rossi SJ, £2.50.
11. Cards (no message) from the painting by Fr Claudio Rossi SJ. 10 for £3.50.
12. John Bradburne prayer leaflets available on request at £2.50.

All prices include postage and packing.

Newsletters available on request.

For orders outside the UK please add £5.00 for p&p.

Please do not send foreign cash or postal orders. These cannot be cleared through our banking system - sorry.

Credit cards cannot be accepted - apologies.

Gift Aid and Covenant Forms available on request.

ORDER FORM

To: John Bradburne Memorial Society
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