



# JBMS NEWSLETTER

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## A PILGRIMAGE TO SKIRWITH! by the Bishop of Lancaster, Rt. Reverend Patrick O'Donoghue

Have you ever had the distinct feeling of following on the heels of another person? In a strange way that is my relationship with John Bradburne. During my seminary studies in the early sixties at Allen Hall, then in Ware, near Hertford, I have vivid memories of hearing fellow students talk about a 'recluse'. This man was the caretaker of the Cardinal's country house nearby in Hare Street, Buntingford. It had been the home of Robert Hugh Benson a convert to Catholicism, and an eminent writer who bequeathed the property to the Archbishops of Westminster. It was only a few miles from the seminary and occasionally we visited its chapel on our walks through that beautiful countryside.

Some years later, and now a priest, I had a posting to Westminster Cathedral. John's ghost and presence preceded me. People talked about the 'eccentric' who, a few short years before, was doorkeeper and part-time sacristan. The story, on its rounds at the time, was that he lived in a room no bigger than a broom cupboard. I never did locate the place but the story seems to have had some foundation.

On coming to Lancaster in 2001 John's presence was yet again to haunt me. Six miles out of Penrith, an important parish in my diocese, is the village of Skirwith where John was born.

There was to be no escape from this man! But in truth there was a further reason for my attachment to him. Over the years I've had a growing desire to serve the poor, and John, in some strange way, seems to have been playing the part of guardian angel - Ware, Westminster and now Penrith.

What a surprise then when Celia Brigstocke invited me to be the Celebrant at the twenty-fifth Anniversary Mass in Westminster Cathedral and some time later asked that I pen some notes for the Christmas Journal. This needed research and I resolved to visit Skirwith, John's birthplace, where he spent those early formative years. I wanted to breathe the air of this holy place and capture something of the spirit of the young John Bradburne. I was not to be disappointed.

Leaving Lancaster on an autumnal October morning I skirted Morecambe Bay and headed north towards Kendal. I noticed how the green ferns, so prominent in the summer time, had now taken on a deep rust colour and were already melting into soil. Every bend of the road unveiled a new and exhilarating vista. Approaching Shap there was a sudden change in the weather. It turned cold and wet though the hundreds of sheep on the slopes seemed unperturbed. On Journeys such as this I long for the literary gifts to describe the beauty of the countryside even when it is rough, barren and

fearsome. It fires the imagination - not just aesthetically but also ascetically.

Dropping down into Penrith, I found the Alston road and soon came to the village of Langwathby where a signpost invited me to turn right for Skirwith. Diligently I followed my instructions to watch out for a telephone box and turn sharp left. Almost immediately the church and vicarage were up ahead and my pilgrimage was nearing a climax. Alan Kitchen, the Church Warden, knew of my visit and soon he was on hand to welcome me.

Before entering the church we sat for a while on the wall opposite, watching the floodwaters of Skirwith Beck, now swollen, fast-flowing and angry after a deluge of rain in previous days. How John, as a little boy, must have enjoyed this scene for it stimulates the imagination! There was much to see and admire in the nineteenth century stone building, so akin to hundreds of other places of worship throughout the country. Its fine proportions, sturdy columns and carpentry work caught my eye but most of all it was the quiet it generated, so conducive to prayer. I loved the stained-glass and particularly the scenes from the early life of Christ - the Annunciation, the birth of our Saviour, His meeting with the Magi, presentation in the Temple and among the lawyers when He was twelve years old.



*Baptismal Font*

There, too, was the baptismal font in which John was baptized and where all Christians receive their mission - in later life he would reflect deeply on the significance of this great Sacrament. I saw the plaque commemorating the 16 years that his father was Rector of the parish: "T. W. Bradburne 1913-29". There was a beautiful crucifix hanging above the altar and a Lady Chapel carved out of the main aisle (Rector Bradburne was an Anglo-Catholic and perhaps these stemmed from his time).



The Warden guided me to the sacristy and here was yet another surprise. Taking the Baptism Register from the safe he pointed to the entry that I had come to see: "John Randal Bradburne, parents: Thomas William and Erica May". John

DATE	NAME	FATHER	MOTHER	MINISTER	WITNESSES
1913	John	Thomas	Erica	Rev. T. W. Bradburne	...
1914	Erica	Thomas	Erica	Rev. T. W. Bradburne	...
1915	John	Thomas	Erica	Rev. T. W. Bradburne	...
1916	Erica	Thomas	Erica	Rev. T. W. Bradburne	...
1917	John	Thomas	Erica	Rev. T. W. Bradburne	...
1918	Erica	Thomas	Erica	Rev. T. W. Bradburne	...
1919	John	Thomas	Erica	Rev. T. W. Bradburne	...
1920	Erica	Thomas	Erica	Rev. T. W. Bradburne	...
1921	John	Thomas	Erica	Rev. T. W. Bradburne	...

*Baptism Register*

was baptized there on the 31 July 1921. Gazing at the entry, I wondered if it was recording the birth of someone who might one day be officially recognised as a Saint of the Church! The impact of this silenced me for a few moments.

Outside again we circled the church and viewed, across the field, the large and elegant sandstone vicarage - John's home for eight years. Near the church gate was a mature horse-chestnut from which, no doubt, he would have collected conkers. Here, too, was the meadow and lawn where he and his brother and sisters played. He would have admired those majestic trees that shelter the house from south westerly gales.

Dragging myself away from Skirwith and the village church, my pilgrimage to John's birthplace was over but another just dawning. In spirit at least I was being invited to accompany

him through the highways and byways of an extraordinary life. His was a soul, restless in the service of the Lord and in search of his true vocation. With indomitable courage he traversed continents, criss-crossed deserts, jungles and places of great deprivation, went up many cul-de-sacs, until at last finding Mutemwa and his beloved lepers. The characteristics of a saint are all too clear - conversion, persevering faith, love of silence, anonymity and prayer, and, of course, the crucible of suffering. He was to bring hope and solace to many, especially the poor. His giving of himself in the service of the Lord was truly heroic and an inspiration to all of us.

John's life and death were conformed to Christ. Today, All Saints Day, I envisage him among the throng of Angels and Saints, joined to Christ, praising the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit.



*Skirwith Vicarage  
John Bradburne's  
birthplace*

# 25th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

September 2004 commemorated the 25th Anniversary of the death of John Bradburne. We feature two pieces - one from Pauline Hutchings on the events at Mutemwa. The second piece is written by John Reid, the founder, along with Celia Brigstocke of JBMS, about the event at Westminster Cathedral.

The 25th anniversary of John's year to Heaven was always going to be very special, but who could have guessed how wonderful and inspiring an occasion it would be.

The mood was set at a lunchtime Mass at the Harare Cathedral - Fr Guri, a Redemptorist priest, was the main celebrant, assisted by Frs John Dove, David Harold Barry and Peter Meiring - all SJ's. The Cathedral was almost full which was most gratifying for a Thursday midday Mass. Our readings were simply the readings of the day, yet they happened to be particularly pertinent for the occasion. Luke 5: 1-11 in which the fishing nets of the disciples almost break with the weight of their miraculous catch and Our Lord tells them that they will henceforth be netting people for the Kingdom. And 1 Corinthians 3: 18-23 'The wisdom of this world is absurdity with God'. This reading put us in mind of the essential paradox of John's own life of poverty so generously poured out for God in the service of his beloved lepers, a life seen by society as eccentric, trivial, unimportant and even useless.

The celebrations at Mutemwa started on Saturday 4th September in mid-afternoon with Confessions as usual. Imagine our surprise and delight, when we arrived, to find a newly constructed Sanctuary complete with altar and red carpet! All this was organized and donated by a member of the JBMS Zim, Miss Barbara Muyengwa in 'thanksgiving to her Lord.' Barbara is an invaluable member of the Society, bubbling over with a zest for life and for celebrating her joy at Mass! All the equipment used for the Mass was sourced by JBMS Zim this year, including the altar cloth and beautiful wooden ciboria.

Once again we must congratulate the JBMS Zim, chaired by Cyprian Chipwere, for their hard work and excellent organization of a major event under the usual difficult circumstances. They had hired 4 tents from Rooney's that were used for seating pilgrims, serving the food and for sales of Tee shirts, and other religious material. I understand that Rooney's very kindly offered the hire of their



equipment at a special rate, thanks to the good offices of Mrs. Ann Lander, for which the Society is very grateful.'

The crowds that poured into Mutemwa were awesome - they came in greater numbers than ever before. Busses, trucks, taxis and cars jammed every inch of the access road and parking area. There seemed to be people everywhere one looked. Visitors arrived from Tanzania, Zambia and South Africa, and from every corner of Zimbabwe. In the evening, during the Testimonies Service when Cyprian read the names of parishes represented, we thought the list would never end!

Fr Liam and ten Franciscan Brothers conducted the Holy Hour and we were pleased to welcome Fr Sean Lilianfeld and a large group of pilgrims from his parish in Soweto, South Africa.

In honour of the very special occasion, the JBMS Zim decided not to sell food this year, but to celebrate with the people by feeding them free of charge. Dedicated Society members were to be found shrouded in the smoke of cooking fires, stirring enormous cauldrons of appetizing stews and sadza. Mrs. Mercy Bell joked that she had specifically married a non-Shona man so as to avoid the rigors of African cooking - 'and just see what I am doing tonight for John!' she laughed. Members of the Society also cooked for the leprosy patients during the two days they were at Mutemwa, and instead of finding themselves short of food as they had anticipated,

they were surprised to have food left over! It seemed to be a bit of a loaves and fishes story.

The Vice Rector of Chishawasha Regional Seminary, Fr Munyangani, who kept the crowd interested and amused for well over an hour with his homily, conducted the 10pm Mass. He appealed to pilgrims to be aware of the many blessings they receive and to thank God as well as all the petitioning they do. People are less worthy than chickens, he told them. At least after each sip of water chickens take, they look up to heaven to give thanks!

Cyprian and his JBMS Zim team had miraculously, according to a technically minded observer, managed to take electricity right to the top of Chigona hill by means of a single small gauge cable! This provided much needed light for the all night vigil. It was magically impressive to see the mountain alight and one could not help wondering what John's reaction would have been at the thought of his life inspiring such wonders, multitudes of people bearing twinkling candle flames all over Chigona. Chigona, lonely scene of John's prayer life, wild frightening scene of his banishment from Mutemwa Village when Alistair Guthrie climbed half way up with John to pitch a tent for his exile, and his leper friends cleared a path for him later that same dark night.

Fr Regis Chikuni spoke on the role of Mary in the Church and the world. Appropriately, it was an important theme at the celebrations bringing to mind John's injunction:

...the more the faith grows dim  
more highly prized  
Must be the Ark of God's  
Incarnate Word.

Fr Guramombe's theme was 'I am the truth and the life' and Fr Mukumba exhorted pilgrims to give generously, not only materially, but also of their love, time and prayers-from-the-heart for the leprosy patients. An all night prayer vigil is a rigorous and admirable devotion that the pilgrims performed with all their legendary enthusiasm, energy and joy.

After dawn prayers on the mountain they flowed down in incredible numbers to wash and freshen up for the 8am Mass conducted by Fr Fidelis Mukunori SJ - who knew John and was able to talk about his memories of John's saintly life from his personal experience.

Although always a subject of hot debate, trying to guess how many people were at the Mutemwa ceremonies is pure conjecture, and perhaps one should be satisfied with the knowledge that the number who go to celebrate John's

extraordinary life, to pray and to renew their faith, seems always to be on the increase. John's life is indeed a netting of people for the Kingdom of God. We hope that soon his sanctity will be officially recognized for the benefit of so many, both in Zimbabwe and beyond, who are inspired by his example.

by Pauline Hutchings

## 25th Anniversary Celebration at Westminster Cathedral

Westminster Cathedral, a major centre of English Catholic life, where John Bradburne had passed many happy hours working as sacristan in the late 1950's was an ideal place to celebrate John's life. Preparations for the planned Mass and Talks began months in advance. Despite this the closest suitable date available was September 18th, two weeks after the day he died. Special arrangements were made to bring Fr. Dove SJ, John's great companion, over from Zimbabwe, with Fr. David Harold-Barry SJ, another great friend, accompanying him on the long journey.

Beautiful displays of specially selected Zimbabwean flowers adorned the Cathedral sanctuary. A side chapel was kindly made available for a photographic display of John's life. Remaining up for a week, it generated much interest. Mass started at 2 pm with Rt. Rev. Patrick O'Donoghue, Bishop of Lancaster as Principal Celebrant and eight other concelebrants including Fr. Piers Grant Ferris and Br. Alexander Tingay, both OSB; Frs. Paschal Slevin and Sean Gildea, OFM; Frs. John Dove and David Harold-Barry SJ; and Fr. Terry Tastard. John's great love of liturgy, music, singing and Our Lady were reflected in the Mass, Cantor, classical latin plain chant, Jesu Joy of man's desire, Pachelbel, Prayer of St. Francis and closing Ave Maria. Readings were: Isaiah bringing 'Good News to the Poor', St. Paul on the Gift of

Love, and St. John's opening verses: '... the Word was God'.

John's guide and lifelong companion, Fr. Dove, gave an inspiring sermon tracing the 37 years of their life together from first meeting as fellow Gurkhas in India after John's near miraculous escape from Burma and Malaya until his death in Zimbabwe in 1979. A little conversation with Our Lady in the Malay jungle changed John's life for ever. He became a seeker and then a pilgrim. Taken by Eastern Sadhu's, he went on to roam Europe and the Holy Land in search of his vocation. After unsuccessful attempts to join three orders he followed his mentor, Fr. Dove, to Africa and 7 years later found his final home, a sad leprosy settlement. Here, as an outcast and member of the third Order of St. Francis, he devoted the last ten years of his life to loving and caring for some 50 other outcasts. His loves were: the rosary, Jesus prayer, Scripture, Poetry, Singing and Solitude. And finally he gave the ultimate sacrifice, his life, for those he loved - an inspiration for us all.

Over 600 people attended the Mass, giving generously to JBMS' Mutemwa cause. At the end of Mass Bishop O'Donoghue shared with the congregation his admiration and interest in John (see details elsewhere in this issue). About half the congregation then went on to the Cathedral Hall for further talks about John followed by tea, among them many

members of John's family including his sister, Mary Campbell.

JBMS chairman, Tim Brigstocke, bade all a warm welcome and then introduced the first speaker. Fr. Sean Gildea, a fellow Franciscan and great friend of John's from Zimbabwe, saw John as a man of great joy, freedom, laughter and love. To celebrate his life Fr. Sean, swaying to and fro, invited all to join him in singing the great Laudate song in Shona. A vibrant response of dancing, clapping and singing ensued to everyone's merriment. Fr. Sean pointed out what a huge contribution John had made to the Church in Zimbabwe. By bringing people together and transforming Mutemwa, without design, he became a great peacemaker. In the Zimbabwe of the 60's he stood leadership on its head by his witness to Christian leadership as service. And now by his life he has created one of the leading centres of Pilgrimage in Africa.

Next Fr. Sean spoke of John's holiness as a Franciscan - a man of:

- **extraordinary faith**, deep prayer, reliance on the Father and great devotion to the Eucharist

- **great love**, serving, bathing, playing and singing to the lepers - "so ordinary yet at the same time so extraordinary"

- **hope** - "the hand that makes a shelter for the night when the house is in ruins" - so needed in Zimbabwe today

- **courage and endurance**, suffering deeply, but transforming suffering through acceptance.

Finally, Fr. Sean shared what John meant to him: his humanity. "To be a witness does not consist in engaging in propaganda, nor even in stirring people up, but in **being a living mystery**". In many ways John's life: "... makes no sense if God does not exist", drawing people to the Gospel attracted and puzzled by a joy in life, a question mark and invitation. John sought to be a buffoon for Christ, but his laughter hid the suffering he felt when saying: "I only herd hens - not even sheep. I am nobody!" John chose his path in total freedom. Thrown out of Mutemwa he roasted in a hot tin hut, freely and joyfully giving away his life, a gift to God, the lepers and all of us.

The second speaker, renowned English Literature professor David Crystal, named John the most prolific English poet ever. His current corpus of 6000 poems would stretch 10 feet on a library shelf, and more could well be undiscovered. "I love this inability to stop" writes John, and the deluge would fill every spare corner of paper in his manuscript. Page after page with never a

crossing out, averaging around one line a minute was testimony to his prolific ability. Emotionally intense, highly original and complex, John's work was full of puns, rhymes and little messages. A fun example was a sonnet on Time, written at 4 am, where the first letter of each line spelt out "Time I went to bed"! John repeatedly claims to be just a mouthpiece, scribe and buffoon for Mary or God. Professor Crystal agrees: "he is inspired. No one could do that alone". John is also a prophet as in: "... and Greensleeves which I piped for Ronnie Knox alone ... later in Westminster Cathedral shall be heard not on recorder then ...". He once wrote: "... my age is fifty three, my lines are many, and almost all of them not read by any." Not any more says Professor Crystal who expects to make John's edited works available on the internet within two years.

Final speaker, Fr. David Harold-Barry SJ, witnessed the miracle of the drops of blood beneath John's coffin at his funeral. For him this was just a sign or overflow of a life of giving and suffering that had gone on for years. In some senses, knowing John, it was not even extraordinary that something like that should happen. Fr. David shared a simple

story about John told by a complete agnostic visiting Mutemwa and talking one night with John and several others in his small candlelit room. At one point the visitor noticed John had dozed off, but strangely he also noticed that simultaneously the candles went dim and the conversation lost its warmth. It beautifully illustrated John's harmony with the world and how he lifted people's spirits, a quality of closeness to God.

After the talks five people shared testimony of their physical or spiritual meetings with John, in Zimbabwe, UK and Ireland. They spoke of the great privilege, his inspiring dedication, love, warmth, peace and commitment to the poor. In conclusion, the chairman warmly thanked the Bishop, celebrants, speakers, secretary, trustees and many other helpers for their participation and contribution, and all those attending, for their support. He invited all to tea and refreshments and wished them a safe journey home.

A video recording of the sermon and talks is available from the JBMS Secretary.

by John Reid, a Trustee and Treasurer of the JBMS.

## NEW ITEMS FOR SALE

Two new items are available for sale through the JBMS. Firstly a new book of insights by John Bradburne, called a Book of Days. This has been selected by Professor David Crystal in preparation for this year's 25th Anniversary.

We would like to thank David and his wife, Hilary, for the immense amount of support that they continually give to John's Cause in the UK, in bringing his poetry to light. Without such help we would not be where we are today.

The second item is a video recording of the 25th Anniversary celebration on September 18th at Westminster Cathedral and in the Hall. The first section includes the homily given by Fr. John Dove SJ at the Memorial Mass. The second element in the video are the talks in Cathedral Hall introduced by the Chairman of JBMS Trustees, Tim Brigstocke, and given by Fr. Sean Gildea OFM, Professor David Crystal and Fr. David Harold-Barry SJ. This concludes with testimonials from members of the audience.

Both these items are included on the updated items list.

# BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS

## David Crystal

*Summary of a talk given after the Anniversary Mass in Westminster Cathedral, 18 September 2004.*

John Bradburne started to write poetry twice. The first time was as a schoolboy - as he tells us in 'Excelsior', written in 1971:

First time I ever wrote a verse  
Was on a ruined wall  
At Baconsthorpe, I might do worse  
Than quite it, - after all  
This other stuff that has ensued  
On eight and thirty years reviewed.

I quote aright, I cite the note  
Made long ago to play the goat:  
Alas, alack, I am undone,  
I want to eat a currant-bun;  
But God is good, He told me so,  
The trees are swaying to and fro.

Would it be wise  
To analyse  
That silly-sounding thing?  
I'd like to spell  
Emmanuel  
As Currant-bun: our King  
In twofold eucharistic kind  
Of grape and grain there reigns  
resigned,  
If you will have it so;  
Trees swaying to and fro  
Could be the Springing from the  
Cross  
Of Hagios Athan-atos;  
A toss and two He took, and then,  
Spread-eagled, soared and sent  
accord to men.

That ruined wall belonged to what  
Was once a Priory, a plot.

In fact it wasn't a priory.  
Baconsthorpe is a manor fort. My  
wife and I went there recently to  
see if there was any sign of the  
scribbled poem. Not a chance.  
Weathering has long since  
removed pencilled phrases from its  
walls.

He really got down to writing, it  
seems, when he was 27. Another  
poem, 'A Ballad of a Lifetime',  
written in September 1974, tells us  
so:

By my twenty-seventh year, had  
stirred  
In my fancy scarce a single rhyme;  
Then I came to Rome and,  
homing, spurred...  
Galaxies of brightness at a time!  
Now there is a ladder that I climb, -  
Up I go... I slowly come to ground

Admitting that I do not live (no  
dime!)  
By selling what I caught without a  
sound.

But of course, once he started,  
he couldn't stop. And eventually,  
more poems emerged from his pen  
than from any other poet in the  
English language.

He literally couldn't stop. In  
'L'Ensuite', written in 1974, he tells  
us how he keeps wanting to add  
just a bit more to a poem.

I love this inability to end  
Ever without just adding one more  
verse,  
It seems to me a sempiternal trend  
For blending with The One is none  
the worse  
Even for endless aeons unbegun,  
To wit: God - Holy Spirit, Father,  
Son.

In fact, the thing that made him  
end a poem was usually arriving at  
the end of a page, or having to  
change the paper in his typewriter.  
And every bit of the paper is used  
up. Often he writes a couple of  
sonnets on a foolscap sheet and  
finds he has just an inch of space  
at the bottom. So he fills it with a 2-  
or 3-line poem!

He wrote in an extraordinary  
fluent way. The manuscript texts  
show page after page with no  
corrections or changes of mind at  
all. And he writes fast. We know  
this because sometimes he not  
only dates the poem but tells us  
the time of day he finished it. For  
instance, on 10 August he finished  
'To Paddy Bidwell' at 3.55 a.m.  
The next poem on the page,  
'Mattins', also ends with the time:  
04.45 on the same night. There are  
36 lines in the second poem - and  
they were written within 50 mins. A  
line a minute, more or less.

This might not seem too  
difficult, until you realise just how  
complex the writing is. I'm not  
thinking here of the originality of  
the thought, or its theological  
content, which is impressive  
enough, but of his literary facility.  
He is a stickler for metre and  
versification, taking great pains to  
work out a symmetrical structure  
for a poem. His rhyme schemes  
are intricate; his word play even  
more so. And there is something

else, which I discovered only last  
year. Read this poem, 'Sonnet on  
Timu' (Timu was one of the  
Mute-mwa lepers), written in  
September 1969:

Timu's no Timon, Athens were to  
him  
Inseparable word from hens at  
hand,  
Many a time I greet him daily, Tim  
Ever is bright, dimness to him is  
banned;  
Intent on converse and on getting  
round  
Wondrously well on only hands  
and knees,  
Enters he here and there, all's fairy  
ground  
Native to happy Tim who's born to  
please;  
The produce of his poultry he will  
beg  
That I may purchase any time I  
pass  
Only providing that it is an egg  
But not a chicken cheeping "Fresh  
is graas  
Even as I am flesh!": three pence a  
time  
Duly I pay and Timu's lay's  
sublime.

Did you notice anything? Read  
it again, this time looking at the  
initial letters of each line. It is a  
perfect acrostic. Once I noticed  
this, I found acrostics all over the  
place.

So, think about it: write a poem  
like that, with an acrostic, making  
sure that each line has the right  
metre and that the sonnet rhyme-  
scheme is followed (abab cdcd efef  
gg). Don't forget to add alliteration  
in most lines, and a sprinkling of  
puns. The whole thing has to make  
good sense, of course. Oh, and do  
it a line a minute, with no  
corrections.

Something very special was  
going on here.

The irony is that John  
Bradburne never thought his work  
would be read. He reflects  
gloomily, on 16 August 1974, in 'To  
the Lodestar':

When Shakespeare died, at only  
fifty-two,  
Behold, he'd told the thoughts of all  
mankind!  
There is no shade of mood in me  
or you

Which, in Will's way, may not  
expression find;  
But, since himself that Bard has  
done this thing  
In such a princely manner for the  
throne,  
Shall I endeavour to go echoing?  
Or shall I tintinabulate his song?

Say nay, it were a nightmare  
travesty  
To try to gild the lily of his art  
Which is as if the Holy Ghost made  
free  
Both on our mortal and immortal  
part:

My age is fifty-three, my lines are  
many  
And almost all of them not ready by  
any!

Not any more, John. Not any  
more.

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## TESTIMONIES

For the last five years John Bradburne is a spiritual friend of mine. I spent a number of years in religious life and became homeless in my search for a new direction. It was during that time I found John's prayer card. I prayed to him every night while I availed of hostel accommodation. I went on to work with the elderly for one year and became homeless again. It was then John Bradburne's prayer card turned up for the second time in the back of a Cathedral. It was a consolation to hear those words again

"God's love within you is your  
native land  
So search none other never  
more depart  
For you are homeless  
Save God keeps your heart".

I realized at that moment I'd found my true home in God, consequently I have settled in my home town of origin. I'm getting involved in our Cathedral and in the lay ministry of the Church. I've turned my life back to God realizing I should have never departed from it in the first place.

### **L. C. - Republic of Ireland**

Recently I was assaulted on the streets and when x-rayed in the casualty, it was discovered that I had more wrong with me than the punches. The surgeon, a Sikh, has told me since that I have a "friend above", because they would not have discovered the "extras" if I had not been beaten up!

The surgeon is very pleased with my recovery and it can only be put down to "divine intervention." I have talked

about John to many people and asked for his help in all my necessities. So I should make this known to others as my part in the bargain for my recovery! I knew John in Mutemwa and used to say Mass there at least once a month until he died and was at his funeral and his burial.

Enclosed is my order for various items listed so that in my small way I can further the Cause of John Bradburne.

### **Rev John F. Gough**

For many years we prayed (with family and friends) that we would be blessed with the gift of a child. After lengthy and unsuccessful medical treatments this seemed extremely unlikely if not impossible.

However last summer we received the wonderful news that we were going to have our much longed for baby.

After a difficult pregnancy and dangerous birth, our beautiful son, Michal Gerard was born on 22nd April.

Although probably not a medical miracle, it seems so to us.

We used the various Novena Prayers to John Bradburne and wished to share our wonderful news.

### **Susanne and Stephen Murray**

I suffer from severe M.E., my hands are particularly weak and painful, also shoulders and arms.

I pray regularly to John Bradburne and he always eases the pain, even holding the prayer leaflet brings comfort.

### **Pamela Logan**

I feel that I have been influenced by John Bradburne's life story as written by Fr John Dove. In 2002 I travelled from Wisconsin to Dublin, trying to discern a vocation. A friend in Ireland helped me arrange to take a retreat at Loyola Hall, near Liverpool. During the eight day period of prayer, and spiritual guidance with Fr Gerald O'Mahoney, I found a copy of 'Strange Vagabond of God' in the Retreat Centre library. I began reading and in three days had finished the book. I was very moved by John Bradburne's search for his own place in God's plan. I made the decision to somehow find a way to become a priest. At that time I was 58 years old. About a month later, I went to Fatima in Portugal. During an eight day visit filled with prayer to Mary and many rosaries, I decided to write to the Diocese in Wisconsin, and I hoped that when I returned to this state that perhaps one of the bishops would consider accepting me as a seminarian. I continued to pray to Mary, and with a lot of trust and hope in my heart, I returned home. Almost immediately, I was contacted. As I write this message, I have been studying at the Sacred Heart School of Theology for two years and am now at the start of my third. I pray to be ordained in 2006 and become a priest for the Diocese of Superior, Northern Wisconsin. I feel that reading about John Bradburne, at the time when I needed help deciding about my own life, gave me the determination to proceed. I continue to pray the rosary faithfully, and I sincerely hope that John's example will help others as it helped me.

### **Pat Hardy, Wisconsin, USA**

# UPDATE MUTEMWA

We are updated regularly about developments at Mutemwa via Margaret Chigwanda, our main contact in Zimbabwe, and Chair of the Managing Committee (ZLA) for the Settlement. It was wonderful to meet Margaret again on her visit to London at the 25th Anniversary celebration held at Westminster Cathedral.

A recent report illustrates how things are going there.

Total number of patients is now 58. Twenty five of those are leprosy patients and thirty three are disabled or destitute.

Two deaths occurred at Mutemwa in August and September. These were Rambai Chuma and Jairos Samson.

A blood pressure machine was donated by Mutoko Hospital so that patients can be checked regularly.

Orthopedic technicians have visited Mutemwa recently and fitted more handmade leather shoes for the patients.

Sixty new mattresses have been bought to replace the old ones, £2000 was donated by JBMS UK for this.

Final touches to the Nurse's House have been made and electrical wiring finished.

Tree cutting work has been undertaken to remove some dangerous trees overhanging houses on the premises.

The fields surrounding Mutemwa have been ploughed and await seeds and fertilizer before the rains come.

Several donations of clothes and foodstuffs were received from many Catholic Parishes and Methodist Churches in Zimbabwe on the JBMS anniversary day.

**The Franciscans.** A representative from the Franciscans has informed us that they have applied to their Head Office in Ireland for approval to set up a base and stay at Mutemwa. Three Franciscan brothers stayed for the month of September at Mutemwa. For the month of October, five brothers will be staying at Mutemwa, and currently two sisters from the Precious Blood are also staying for a month.

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## GRATEFUL THANKS

Deep gratitude to all of you who have given their wonderful support to the JBMS with donations, prayers and friendship over the past few months, without which we could not survive.

Special thanks go to Michael and Tom and others for their great efforts in spreading the word about John Bradburne in and around New York. Further information on their work will be given in the next edition when their website will be completed.

Thanks go also to all of you who were able to attend the 25th Anniversary Mass at Westminster Cathedral, and for making it such a success. In particular, thanks go to the Right Reverend Patrick O'Donoghue, Bishop of Lancaster, for his tremendous encouragement and support for John Bradburne and the work of the Society, and for being the chief celebrant at the Mass.

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.
- NEW** 13. Video of the 25th Anniversary homily and talks in September 04 at Westminster Cathedral. £9.00
- NEW** 14. John Bradburne's 'Book of Days' - a selection of Bradburne's insights for each day of the year, by David Crystal. £8.00

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