

CHRISTIANS AGAINST ALL ANIMAL ABUSE

www.animalpadre.org

Telephone: 01352-712368

email: animalpadre@aol.com

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Vain Culture, Perverse Police, But A Free Press!

Early this year I was interviewed by Gloria Hunniford who made it clear that, for herself, using animals so as to further research on human cancers was justifiable; and, she went on to give full support for a marathon held for such a purpose. She conveyed in the programme the impression that animal activists were all of a violent type to be equated with that of a grave dug up by an extremist faction. Yes, her view expressed was akin to those who give credence to 'respectable' scientific bases such as Porton Down, support for the 'hoorah for henry!' mentality of blood sports enthusiasts, and undoubtedly awe and obeisance to that profound elite who - with culture and decorum - torture animals in Oxford. As for any who might question the latter - or suggest a liaison with the police! - such 'arrogance' may savour of 'forgetting one's station in academia'. Well, this did not affect a response from the prestigious Oxford Mail! On the 31st of May its most bold headlines on the front-page read: as follows:

DAMNING: CASE AGAINST LABORATORY PROTESTERS COLLAPSES AS THE COURT HEARS 'UNPROFESSIONAL' TAPE RECORDINGS MADE BY THE POLICE!

Yes, thank God! A lady Judge cleared the animal activists who had been militantly – yet legally – protesting against Vivisection at the University; and she slated the police for their Draconian methods, which had included them referring to the animal activists as no less than 'shit' and 'cunts'. Such vile four letter words had been picked up on tape recordings and used as undeniable evidence. Indeed, that such language should have been used was admitted by the deputy chief constable as 'very regrettable and most unprofessional'.. Yes, I would add: and more so when more women protestors were the target than men, and when the eldest activist was a lady in her seventies! When – O when? – will the public realise that the vast majority of animal activists are educated, refined and extremely caring folk? Sadly, however, one or two uncouth yobs affiliate themselves to our noble cause and it is to the antics of these that both the media as well as our opposition give, far too often, the publicity and prominence.

It is an honour and a privilege to know several Quakers who are active in the animal cause, and once again non more so than octogenarian Joan Court. Yes, a cultured Cambridge graduate who last week had a slop bucket literally emptied over her head while protesting against Pate fio de gras outside a Cambridge restaurant serving the same. Yet she intends returning to the same spot to make yet further silent vigils outside of it. She was once a personal supporter of Ghandi himself, and certainly hasn't lost that militance. Below, we have a photo from the Oxford Mail, and what they had to say about her vigil and fast on the 27th of April:

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FASTING FOR FELIX An 88 year old woman is fasting for two days within a cage in Oxford's Cornmarket street to campaign against animal testing. Joan Court is only drinking water until tomorrow on her fast for Felix protest in front of St Michael's Church. Her protest, which started yesterday, is to mark a 'World Week For Animals' Incarcerated In Laboratories. Miss Joan Court said: "I am trying to raise awareness among the people of Oxford at what is happening. It is ethically and morally wrong. You should never harm any sentient being." The fast is named after Felix, a macaque monkey to be used by one of the colleges for research into Parkinson's disease.

Christendom's Warped Standards Of Morality

I can assure you that the rank and file of animal activists are – as I've stated many times on TV – the very salt of this earth. They include members of all strata's of society who are united as brothers and sisters of one noble cause: that of animal protection and care. Indeed, the more vulnerable a form of life is then the more deserving it is of our human protection. And this is fully compatible with Christianity's supreme analogy: 'the good shepherd prepared to lay down his life for wayward sheep'. What a pity that clergy from the Pope down didn't realise this! If Benedict had spent as much time preaching such a theme as he has that of denouncing birth control in poverty stricken lands such as Brazil, it would have put him in a far better light. Yet he is surely no more off beam than two local Baptists of the 'born again' variety who were generously prepared to buy a whole host of battery chickens to make a supper for a visiting choir. 'Animals are put on this earth for us to eat', they rationalized 'and as they have no soul then it surely matters little as to how they are intensively bred or reared!'

Yes, and both such popes and born agains feel they are more spiritually advanced than all else. Well, how deluded can these folk become? I sense that Jesus of Nazareth wouldn't last long in their midst today. No more than possibly two and a half years, as He did amongst the scribes and the Pharisees who brought about His crucifixion: 'Father forgive them because they know not what they do!' he said of the Roman soldiers But both the Pope and so many of the 'born again' know what they are doing. Hence they may well be – as were their first century counterparts - without excuse. Meanwhile, the rank and file of a more middle of the way clerical type simply 'go through the motions' as did priests of the past. And they're no less averse in hounding the prophets than were their forbears *'Don't rock the boat; don't be a conscience rouser; just be nice. Always avoid controversy' and – in return – you'll be liked by all'*. Ah yes! Such is the way they reason. But I ask: what did the Master say? (See Luke 6:26)

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We Came Across Playful Bullocks Viewing Us Above A Gate

While on my way to Denbigh from Holywell, I happened to spot three bullocks peering over a fence and happy to make our acquaintance. Doreen was in the driving seat and we crossed over the road to the spare land near the gate in to the field. Indeed, as our car came to a standstill it appeared that these three young and inquisitive animals were most anxious to converse with us; yes, and even though there was quite a drizzle of rain in the air! Well, Doreen had done much driving, life had been very hectic indeed, and soon she was slumped in the driving seat quite shut off from the world outside. Yet these young bullocks of assorted colour kept looking at me through the windscreen down which the rain had made a few channels.

Well, I thought – though troubled with my leg – I'm going to get out of my passenger seat to waddle over towards these lovable creatures who actually appeared not unlike young children when they're happy to be in each others company. Well, momentarily, on them spying my stick, they began to back away, but thankfully they stopped when I ceased approaching them further. 'How could I tell them that I meant no harm but rather wished them all the luck in the world?' I asked myself. Then, I decided to do what I sense God had called me to do as a padre for the animal kingdom. So, silly though non-believers might consider me to be - or very much lacking in what an animal liberationist might want to accomplish practically - I closed my eyes and in silence pronounced the Aaronic blessing over these bovine creatures. Yes, and doing so very much with their probable future destiny in mind. Here are the words of that blessing:

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you and grant you His peace, both now and always, Amen (Numbers 6:24)

Well, when I opened my eyes, more had made their way from under the trees nearby to view me; and so I did the same thing, offering the same prayer over several more. And, believe it or not, when I opened my eyes, behold I found that more still had come out to look at me, several with their heads peering through the gate and others over it. Indeed, the procedure was repeated until the gate and fencing on either side were seen with such likable and sensitive creatures peering towards me with such a questionable stare in their eyes as to wonder what this life is all about. However, one thing seemed to impress them very much - and I don't think it was just reading into the situation what I was imagining! - It was when I prayed that we might meet again in that New Jerusalem of William Blake's. Yes, that greater Paradise of the Apocalypse; where the only ones excluded would be those who prolonged their own earthly existences here, through preying on weaker and more vulnerable life than their own.

Then, as I hobbled – indeed, almost stumbled back – to the car with the assistance of a stick, I turned once more to view those childlike creatures who had appeared not only aware of my temporary affliction but keen to see me without pushing another of their kind out of the way in the process. Yes, without a Mum or a Dad to teach them right or wrong, and void of any teacher to educate them - or, indeed, Parson to preach to them the virtues of kindness and mutual respect - I felt these creatures knew that I represented God. And I somehow knew that they would not be quite the same again because of our encounter. What is more, my heart filled up within and I realised that in the process of blessing them God's Holy Spirit was now, more than ever, blessing and flooding my soul. I tell you: as I left that ethereal scene, through the slight drizzle and mist of an otherwise glorious day, and with gorgeous trees overhead, I felt I was not saying Goodbye to my bovine brothers and sisters but rather Orevwa!

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Dear Reader, I don't believe for one moment that the art of blessing is to be confined to clergy channels – even though thrice ordained oneself! I believe it to be the responsibility of every Christian to go around silently blessing others. And for those of us in this great cause of animal care, we are able to do this when unable to do, because of circumstances, little else. And believe me, such acts of grace are truly practical - to say the least. Then why not start from today? On one or two occasions I've parked our car on a bridge spanning a main motorway in to Wales; and as each vehicle has rushed beneath I've simply said words to this effect: *'Whoever you are my friends, God bless and encircle you with His love'*. Well, whether He did or didn't, the blessings that began to flow back in to myself proved one thing at least.. It's this: *what you give out you get back sevenfold*. Again, it's just what The Master promised

However, efficacious as it is, we as animal activists will never confine the impartation of our blessings to a fallen humanity; for unlike the masses, our hearts as well as our arms go out to encompass and embrace the whole of creation. Yes, just as our Blessed Lord's did when even nailed to Golgotha's cross. He, our good shepherd, has the whole world in His hands, and the mind that was in Him needs also to be in us. So Dear Fellow Activist, this work of blessing is something YOU can do, and as you do it then you are sending out spiritual ripples, frequencies and transmissions that will prove more efficacious than we may dare to imagine.

What Everyone Should Know About The Animal Liberation Movement

Through the generosity of a Madame Benney living in Provence, I have received a graciously signed copy of Keith Mann's monumental publication of 644 pages entitled: FROM DUSK 'TIL DAWN. It is full of illustrations and – though I've so far simply scanned through it – one thing is made extremely clear: The ALF is totally against damaging the life of any species – and that includes the most predatory of all! And such an ethical stand is highlighted in an excerpt from a highly respected publication which read

:It is a strange sort of terrorist campaign, to say the very least, which has waged for over 20 years without killing anyone! (The Observer: July 1992)

Property may well be damaged in an effort of animal rights activists seeking to free defenceless animals from torture, but they do not attack the perpetrators themselves. At least – during my fifty year involvement with them! – I have never known an authentic animal activist, or indeed a liberationist, to be one who would seek to harm life of any kind. Reverence for all life is their motto, but this is not to be confused with reverence for property.

I view the animal activist bodies, as I have come to know them, as akin to the actions, life styles and aims of other philanthropic movements. I think of the past works of William Wilberforce – a founder member of what later evolved in to the RSPCA. And in more recent times, the life work of a Mahatma Gandhi or, indeed, a Martin Luther King. The fact is that such people were basically driven by an urge to protect forms of life that had been horribly abused and yet couldn't speak up for themselves.

Yes, such movements may well have resorted to damaging property, but the motive behind it was surely an altruistic one: no less than the liberation of innocent life that had undergone horrendous abuse! Indeed, the appalling tragedy was that the law of their day was heavily slanted in putting property of far more value than life, and this was reflected in the harsh sentences that were, and still are, meted out. Indeed, has not this perversion and distortion of moral priorities been one that has marred our past British history and penal system? One could be pilloried and flogged for stealing a loaf of bread; and when the so-called crime was at the cost to property owned by the governing classes penalties were more unjust than ever.

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Up to his deathbed, my Dad did not appreciate my leanings as a young man towards Christianity. And who could blame him when the local churches proclamation of it was so unlike Jesus Christ's! The Vicar of the village would never start the Sunday service until the local squire had arrived; and when he did, others touched their hat or doffed their cap. The red carpet would frequently be rolled out to the main door, except for when he chose entrance into a side chapel where the pews were upholstered and its small fireplace lit when appropriate. This 'lord of the manor' was far from being an unkind fellow. He certainly had his many good points, as did his wife. She visited the poor of the parish on a purely voluntary and unpaid mission. 'She was not poor!' Indeed, the squire was also the local magistrate who dispensed the law; and even the local bobby would doff his helmet in the squire's presence.

Well, the above refers to well over a century ago, and we are now in the age of a so-called Socialist government, till recently under Tony Blair's leadership and reflective of an embryonic Third Reich. Those who live in earshot of HLS and similar hell-holes are akin to those who lived in Dachau, near the concentration camp. They worshipped at the picturesque church, learned to avoid the evils of profanity, four letter words and self-abuse. Yes, while in ear and nose shot of the sounds and smells of the incinerators! Well, I tell you, we in Britain today are far guiltier. Those past Germans dared not to speak out for fear of the consequences. We in a democracy CAN speak out without recrimination, yet – quite unforgivably - we remain mute!

Well, as I see it, such a 'profession' of the faith of Christ is nothing but contemptuous of all that Jesus stood for. Our Saviour was one whose greatest act of militance was to enter the temple of Jerusalem – the focal point of all worship – and there to liberate animals and birds about to be ritually slaughtered. Yes, and in the process of liberating the latter and driving out the former with a whip, He appears to have knocked over some tables with force. Enough to send their 'filthy lucre' well and truly spinning. If this was not deliberate damage to property as well as sacrilege and profanity, then what was? But Our Blessed Lord justified such an act, to Himself, because life for Him was more sacred and of value to Him than a centre of worship and the furnishings it contained. He spoke of His Father in Heaven requiring mercy rather than (ritual) sacrifice, hence it was an act of 'righteous indignation'. And I truly feel that many raids perpetrated in the past, by liberationists such as Keith Mann, have similarly been fuelled by a spirit of righteous indignation rather than any spirit of wanton vandalism.. However, a law that puts property before life will not concede to such a view, and can become contemptible

My review of Keith Mann's blockbuster (672 pages & 140 photos) will appear in the next newsletter. Sufficient to say that copies are available at £14.99, plus £2 postage, from Keith Mann, BM2636. London WCIN 3XX

Yet Another View Of Doddy!

A few days ago I switched on TV and was delighted to find that Parkinson was interviewing our king of comedy, dear Ken Dodd. What a tonic this man is – as I mentioned in last quarter's News Letter! Indeed, this time he spoke of how he loves to put good seed in to folk's minds and to see how the good seed grows and spreads. At least, this was the gist of what I comprehended in a busy room. But then he went on to give some really funny jokes as well as possibly less humorous ones just to go away and make one think. One might call it indirect suggestion: planting a thought indirectly so that the mind might later work upon the same. Yes – I may be wrong – but in my mind reminiscent of the parables given by Jesus where some would later go away remembering no more than a delightful story on the surface while 'those who have ears to hear' would discern a deeper message, be it at a conscious or subconscious level. And bearing this in mind, our great presenter of mirth narrated in his own unique way what I remember as approximating the following story:

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One camel said to another: why do we have two big humps on our backs? To which the more knowledgeable one replied: to carry on the water we need for treading miles over the desert. The other one asked: why do we have such massive eyelashes? In order to flick away the sand that blows our way. Why do we have such massive and cumbersome pads on our feet? Asked the most curious one. In order to protect our feet from the cutting sands of the desert. Replied the other. The following question remained unanswered and was the climax of the interview: 'then why are we here in London zoo?'

Yes, the story was followed by much laughter, but to those who have minds to go deeper, it reflects that they've been taken out of the environment God created them for so that man might use them as creatures to be gazed upon in – for them – a most foreign and uncomfortable environment. And – as one who once qualified in psychotherapy – I find that such implanting of suggestion can have tremendous effect for good. Indeed, it must do as it was the very method constantly used by our Blessed Lord during His brief sojourn with us as Jesus of Nazareth. And one thing needs to be doubly emphasised: we must never think that our form of contributing to animal protection, care and action is right and that others are wrong. Heaven knows! We've seen what blinkered and dogmatic views have done to Christianity. Indeed, we see what its doing to the Muslim world today.

Let us oppose dogmatism and the arrogance it brings, all the way! As said before repeatedly: we are in the greatest of battles and in fighting the good fight we are contributing through many regiments whose methods can vary enormously. Then let us not take our eyes off the one enemy by taking slights at fellow comrades in different regiments to our own. I can assure you that I am not immune from the latter. But focusing on those who have belittled me as an extremist within Christendom, or not extreme enough outside of it, can only do one thing: embitter me within and, in so doing, release most harmful toxins within my body. As it is, crippled with arthritis at times, I ask My Lord: whom do I still bear a grudge against from the past? Lord, bring that one up to the surface of my mind that I might surround that one with forgiveness. I tell you in all humility that if we do not put the practice of forgiving those who have wronged us, and of going further: blessing those that have spitefully used us, then we have no right to call ourselves the children of our Father in Heaven. It's not easy! Forgiveness that costs nothing is meaningless. True forgiveness takes real guts, and I confess that I'm still working on it at 77.

Judge not, for judgment is mine saith The Lord:



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This photo is one of protesting legitimately outside a firm dealing with the live export of animals. It's easy to be judgmental towards those responsible, and to lower ones self into uncouth behaviour and foul language. But, as it was on this past occasion, Judi and I prayed and led others in singing a couple of hymns relating to our human responsibility to care and protect weaker life than our own. Yes, and God abundantly blest that effort, as He has done, very many more. It's so easy to spew out venom towards those who abuse weak and more vulnerable life than their own. So much appears so unjust and, totally unfair in this life; and if it were the only one then such would undoubtedly be the case. But such cannot be the case. Our own imperfect and tainted sense of fair play reminds us that death is no more than a breaking out from the womb, a casting off of one's chrysalis, ir a hatching out from a dark and exceedingly cramped shell. Indeed, such experiences are sometimes quite painful, but what follows is dependent upon what one has sown here and now. There is a Heaven to gain as well as a Hell to shun, and what form these take we are not clearly told about except that the bliss of one and the agony of the other is very real indeed – yet all most just deserts to reap what one has sown!

And – to make out that a just God would never allow any form of life to suffer in agony – is to evade reality all around us. Is not, indeed, the existence of so much animal life a constant hell? And I not only think of the most innocent cows horribly exploited by us, but I think of those vile, subhuman forms of reptiles, insects and beetles who loath and prey on each other almost every hour of their existence. I truly cannot help but ask myself: what kind of life did they live to deserves their present existence in Hell itself? Yet this does not give me to, even, ignore their plight if I can make their existence a little bit better. Their present judgment may well be from God, but I must show them the Christian gospel in action by deeds speaking louder than words. In brief: the sadistic animal abusers – and to a lesser extent those who in varying degrees support them – are to have their future destinies decided by a God of supreme justice; but I must also reflect His supreme love as well. The ultimate objective of which is to ultimately reconcile all forms of life for acceptance in to a far greater paradise than was ever lost. (see e.g Collosians 1:20)

A Saintly Lay Preacher & His Cat

Near where I live a delightful retired schoolmaster lives with a cat as his closest companion. He is a fellow who – along with myself – believes that God's love embraces far more than a decadent humanity. Noel, for that is his name, was utterly devastated when his last cat died and I had the honour to conduct a little service for it within his garden.

Well, his new cat is the treasure of his life and something happened recently which has confirmed for my friend that his cat has a sixth sense. It so happened that Noel was keen to venture out one night and his feline companion literally blocked his passage as Noel's car made its way down the drive. Indeed, this had never ever happened before so the engagement that night – entailing driving on the busy motorway – was cancelled.

But then, the next morning, hardly had the car got far along the local roadway than did a loud scraping occur. The breakdown club was called out and my friend was assured that the car, should it had gone the planned journey the night previous, could have resulted in an appalling accident – and, no doubt, serious fatality. Yes, indeed, Noel will – I sense – agree with the sentiments of many of us – that God does provide guardian angels for us and that they are frequently in the form of living pets rather than cherubs with wings!

Saying Farewell At A Pet Crematorium

Some feel that once their pet has died that its body is of no more value than the discarded chrysalis of a caterpillar or the vacated shell of a chick. Indeed, what inner heartache they endure is frequently to be softened by, quite altruistically, procuring another abandoned pet from a sanctuary. Nevertheless, others find a substitute for a deceased pet as lacking in consolation as the offer of a newly adopted babe might be as a substitute for the one just lost.

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We all differ in our bereavement processes and what may be helpful for one may not be the best way for another. Indeed, I lost a child of a few hours due to medical negligence and was strongly advised not to erect a head stone in Andrew's memory. Both the clergyman and the minister of those 1950s strongly advised against it. I had just been given a place at theological college, away from home. "While you are away at college your wife will be crying her heart out at the graveside" they said. Seek to keep her mind from having such a spot, they said. But later I discovered that such advice was not in our circumstance the best. Years later my ex-wife begged to view where Andrew had been laid to rest. The gravedigger took us to a spot locked by a trap door. "Under here" he said in blunt West Yorkshire; amongst the still born in the pauper's grave!" "Well, I want his remains removed", I said. "You'll need an act of Parliament" was his reply "and, what is more, such 'hardly lived' do not receive a name on their boxes!" The memory of that has haunted me down the years. What a way in which to start a four-year stint at Nottingham that train for the strict Nonconformist ministry! It was a reflection of the Puritan heritage! Students for today's church don't know they're born!



Nevertheless, through it all I would learn never ever to dissuade a family's need to have a grieving spot should such be their wish. Many, of course, prefer to bury their pets in a garden, and others in an animal's crematorium or pet cemetery. It's all a matter of personal preference here. Indeed, the photo here is one of a delightful lady of Czechoslovakia. Along with her lovely daughter, they had candles lit for each year of their pet's life. The pet was called 'Cheerio', but - speaking for myself - I sense a better name would have been 'Orevwa', as I sense such lovely folk, along with their pet, will meet up again!, never again to part.

Swallowing One's Own Words; Or A Taste Of Ones Own Medicine!

Hip replacement operations are very common these days and, thankfully, they are generally very successful. Well, such a major operation was experienced by myself when I was a patient in Abergele Hospital this July. It has also been said with some justification that hospital staff are themselves, frequently, the most anxious of patients; and as one whose past ministry has very largely been spent around hospital wards, I was no exception.

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Indeed, over many years, I had accumulated quite a few positive phrases which I used to dish out first in St. Luke's General and Psychiatric Hospital in Huddersfield and then, much later as a Senior Chaplain for the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney. Indeed, I would pray and remind patients that good can come out of evil, that sunshine can come out of suffering, and – the most frequent saying of all! – God does not will it, but temporally allows it that we end up on our backs so as to be able to look up to Him! Yes, upset for a time to be set up for eternity!

Well, the night before my operation I realized that I must swallow my own words which were never offered glibly though they might have appeared that way. So – it was no use sweating and turning! The evening was a most pleasant one and I have always felt the closeness of God while walking along hospital wards and corridors late on at night. Words of S. Baring-Gould's hymn came to my mind: "Comfort every sufferer lying late in pain" yes, and another verse as well; "Jesus give the weary calm and sweet repose, with Thy tenderest blessing may their eyelids close". Indeed, as yet other verses of hymns flooded into my soul from past memory it began to appear as if there was a tremendous sense of illumination all over. Yes, and not least when I walked near the woods outside.

Indeed, to those of you familiar with such an ethereal setting as Abergele Hospital you will appreciate the calmness I felt on that late summer evening where wildlife is so close, and in the words of the same hymn, "Birds and beasts and flowers soon will be asleep". But then for some reason I couldn't understand, a section of scripture kept coming back to me. The words were those attributed to David before the temple in Jerusalem was built: "I have loved O Lord the beauty of Thy House and the Place where Thy glory dwelleth".

Well, I thought, the outside of the hospital chapel nearby, might do well with a few buckets of paint, and the interior is hardly – with all the best will in the world - a place of beauty, so I made my way back in the late peacefulness of the night and prepared myself for the surgeon's knife, as well as the anaesthetist's epidural, to occur first thing the next day.

Indeed, on being wheeled down to the theatre I suddenly found myself overcome with deep emotion. The assurance from so many who had previously assured me of their prayers was somehow reflected through the members of staff whom I passed on my way down. Indeed, the wards and corridors appeared spiritually aglow and recollections of words on an illuminous gift box of the war years flooded my soul: "Put me in the light all day and I will shine for you all night". Yes, if you put Jesus in full light as your Lord in the day, when darkness comes He'll never forget you! 'He' is true to His word.

And then, the final recollection of consciousness followed; on being manoeuvred into the theatre itself I was aware of genuine folk who were true and humble people of heart. "Do you mind sitting up forward so that our friend the anaesthetist can put the needle into your back?" asked a gentle lady. Well, I must admit I didn't fancy the idea, and said quite humorously, that as a past Chaplain I've been telling people that the Almighty allows us to get low that we might look up to Him, that now its happening to me I sense I'm quite a coward at heart! It was then the words from this sweet lady, were to the effect that the blessings I had given out to others were now flooding back this hour to bless me! Then an icy cold spray was felt on my back - enough to make one jump out of the trolley! - and then she smiled and said in utter sincerity "God Bless You". 'He did', and I entered the Land of Nod.

Indeed to 'come round' with such a dedicated staff caring for one's every need – and nothing too crudely basic being any trouble for them! – brought me to realise that the quotation of scripture which had kept coming to me on the previous night was not referring to some hospital chapel adjacent but rather to the very staff themselves. Yes, inflated hierarchic structures of past chaplaincy memory from the 1970's and 80's - which I'd known only too well - were clearly absent in Abergele. There were no inflated egoists of western tradition instilling fear into patients, as well as giving staff nightmares through self assuming the role of God! On the contrary, from the most gracious of senior consultants to the humblest of orderlies I sensed a mutual respect: a loving spirit that was confirmed in my mind by an awareness of the numinous which, as a Christian, I chose to call the radiance and blessing of God the Holy Spirit.

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Members of other Faiths have, of course, every right to chose a different terminology. I only know that wise men once came from the East in quest of spiritual illumination concerning the Christ child: and I believe they are still as curious today, and amongst their gifts to the western world are those of compassion, courtesy and humility which our western medical heritage has so frequently abysmally lacked to its shame. As the world shrinks, I love the words of a hymn by the spiritually perceptive yet physically blind George Mathieson: "Gather us in thou love that gatherest all; gather our rival Faiths within thy fold" Indeed, I chose it at my first ordination into the Christian Ministry in 1964, loving its universalism. Nevertheless, I couldn't help but appreciate it when in the late evening hour two fellow patients opposite me in Ward 8 began to sing "One day at a time sweet Jesus, is all I'm asking of You". Yes, and then four or five hymns followed, some in the euphoria and language of "God's own country".

Abergele Hospital is, undoubtedly, proud of its Welsh heritage; and to awaken in the early morning with the greeting of 'Bore da' and offers of 'Paned o de' was, I sense, the final cherry on the cake. Like many more who cross over its illuminated bridge and enter it's ethereal setting I will never forget this haven, and all who have been making it what it has become today. Of such a spot I can truly say: 'I have loved O Lord the habitation of Thy House and the place where Thy Glory Dwelleth'. (Psalm 26 v8).

P.S: I wish to thank all those many well-wishers who either contacted Doreen to enquire about me, or who sent me a 'get well' card while I was in hospital. You changed what could have been a most arduous experience in to a blessed one; and I am forever grateful.