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### Two of Tarrawarra's seniors graduated from the "school of the Lord's service", summa cum laude, at the end of 2018.

Fr Carthage O'Dea died in our infirmary on 22 November. Br John Pocock responded to God's call to "come!" in the Maroondah Hospital, Ringwood just over a fortnight later, on 8 December. Following their Requiems on the 3rd and 15th December, the community, family and friends accompanied them on foot the short distance through the gum trees to our cemetery where they claimed the twenty-first and twenty-second spots to await the resurrection. ■



# HOMILY FOR THE FUNERAL MASS FOR FR CARTHAGE O'DEA OCSO

By Dom Steele Hartmann OCSO



**“You are those who have stood by me in my trials.” (Luke 22:28)**

These words were spoken to Fr Carthage by Dom Camillus Claffey, the abbot of our Mother House in Roscrea at the time of our foundation. In a note from Dom Laurence Walsh of Roscrea, on the occasion of Fr Carthage's passing, he told of Dom Kevin Daly's recollection of Camillus' trip to Australia to set up our foundation, which sheds some light on what these 'trials' were and how Carthage was able to support him in them. "It was the early days of long overseas flights, and apparently somewhere over the Pacific, the plane ran into heavy turbulence." Camillus thought they were going down, as he hurriedly asked Carthage if he knew a quick form of absolution. "The abbot risked his life for the community!" Camillus told the assembled brethren on his return to Roscrea, without any mention of Carthage.

Fr Carthage was born in Dublin to Denis and Susan O'Dea in 1927. He was baptised 'Patrick Brendan' shortly thereafter. His siblings were Denis, Maire, George and Kevin. Carthage, Denis (who went on to become Fr Joseph of Nunraw Abbey, Scotland) and Dom Laurence Walsh were in the same class at Cistercian College, Roscrea. On completion of his Matriculation examination, Carthage entered Roscrea with (later Dom) Colmcille O'Toole in August 1945. Denis/Joseph

and Laurence entered the following year, with Denis for Nunraw which had no novitiate of its own at that time. Carthage made Solemn Profession in 1950, and was ordained priest in 1952. In 1954, as secretary to the abbot, he accompanied Dom Camillus to Australia to set up the foundation here at Tarrawarra. I recall Carthage saying to me that he didn't know he was to stay on, when Camillus returned home. In 1958, together with the other founders, Carthage made his stability here. In 1962 Carthage went to Rome to study Canon Law at the Gregorian University and Moral Theology at the Alphonsianum. In 1987 he went up to Sydney to participate in a renewal programme. In his time with us, Carthage served as Bursar and Sub-prior. He also taught Canon Law and Moral Theology to those in formation, including myself.

In the last part of today's Gospel, Jesus addresses the Twelve directly using the words Camillus quoted to Carthage: "You have stood by me in my trials." (Luke 22:28) "Have stood" is really a description of the apostles' discipleship, containing as it does a sense of endurance and solidarity with him: they stood with him, in all his trials, since the time he called them.



True discipleship, then, is not so much participation in Christ's glory in his kingdom, the fighting over which prompted this teaching of Jesus in today's Gospel (Luke 22:24. cf.: Mark 10: 35-45), as a commitment to endure with him in his trials come what may, to 'deny oneself, take up

the cross daily and follow him,' so to speak. (Luke 9:23; John 12:26) Such commitment requires a strong and robust faith. For, as the parable of The Sower points out, weak, shallow faith, like seed sown on rock, receives the Gospel message gladly but forsakes it in times of trial. (Luke 8:13) It is this strong sense of loyalty that Camillus acknowledged in Carthage, a value which he himself treasured and was delighted to have recognised. Carthage was not only loyal to his abbot, the one whom we monks believe 'holds the place of Christ' in our midst (RB 2:2), but he was faithful to his call from Jesus these many long years (RB Prologue 14-16); he was a loyal follower of Christ. Jesus goes on to say to these stalwart disciples of his that he will 'confer a kingdom on them.' (Luke 22:29)

The word, 'confer' here, is really the word for 'covenant:' "I covenant a kingdom on you, as my Father covenanted a kingdom on me, and you will sit on thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel," says Jesus. (Luke 22:29) 'To judge' in those times meant not so much the dispensing of justice, as 'to rule.' What Jesus is promising by way of covenant, by way of agreement, is a share in his mission, to do what he is doing in and for the kingdom — it is not so much about sharing the glory with him, as actually working with him, doing what needs to be done, to shepherd his people towards their heavenly homeland, and in this sense, to actively 'rule' with him.

Being a covenant, discipleship, that standing with him and working with him in all the trials of his mission, then, is the way to enter this agreement with Christ. We are all called to do this; we are all called to enter this covenant — the ultimate goal of which, is, then, not so much the saving of sinners, as the transformation of them into fellow servants of the kingdom, so as to be Christ's peers in his mission and reign, with none greater, none lesser. (Romans 8:29; Luke 22:26) For doing this, for encouraging others to also become followers of and fellow workers with Jesus, the disciple will come to share with Christ in his eternal reward.

As St Benedict would put it: "Never swerving from his instructions, then, but faithfully observing his teaching in the monastery until death, we shall through patience share in the sufferings of Christ that we may deserve also a share in his kingdom." (RB Prologue 50) This is monasticism's aim: to form workmen in the school of the Lord's service,



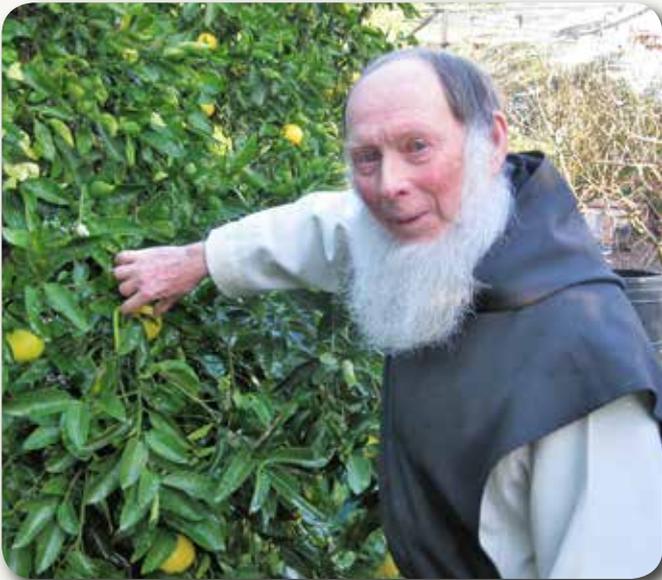
so as to be workers with him in his mission. (RB Prologue 14; 4:78; 7:70) Carthage did this: he answered the call and entered the school, learned how to be a workman, and then went on to form others in the Lord's service, enduring all the trials that this involved. Because the Lord is faithful to his covenant, we can be sure that Carthage is now there celebrating with the Lord in his new recliner chair (C.f., e.g.: Matthew 9:10; Mark 2:15; 14:3, 18; 16:14), eating and drinking with him in the eschatological Winners' Circle, so to speak, just as he has promised. (Revelation 3:20-21)

May he Rest In Peace. ■

# HOMILY FOR THE FUNERAL MASS FOR BR JOHN POCOCK OCSO

By Dom Steele Hartmann OCSO

**Abruptly Jesus broke into prayer: "Thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. You've hidden these things from the learned and the clever, but revealed them clearly to mere children. Yes, Father, that's the way you like to work." (Matthew 11:25-26) .**



Last Saturday, when Br John died, was a very full day. It was the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and so our Mass was later that morning. At Morning Prayer Br Simon made his first profession as a monk. It was also the day of the beatification of the Atlas martyrs, those monks of ours in Algeria who were killed for doing no more than we ourselves do here. To mark the occasion we watched the film, *Of Gods and Men*. It was half way through this that I was informed of John's death. In watching this film again I was struck by the pathos of life with all its symbolic acts, especially a life lived in a place so remote. In a post-modern world that increasingly cares little for the things of religion and meaningful acts, looking on these lives that were given, it seems to ask: For what? It reminded me of the question from the Rule of St Benedict that I had put to Br Simon earlier in the morning: 'Friend, what have you come here for?' (RB 60:3)

In going through some papers of Dom Kevin O'Farrell, our first abbot, Br Luke came across a

short reflection on the death of our brothers of Atlas. Fr Kevin wrote: "Even after these few hours since the news broke, we see the whole Church, while busy with so many things, pause in silent wonder at so great a love. ... It has pleased God for his own purposes to draw the eyes and hearts of the world to these seven whose vocation as monks, and called to be a Christian presence in the Islamic world, had purified their love and made them transparent witnesses to Christ in his boundless gift of himself. ... For ourselves as Cistercians, while much reflection is obviously needed, yet some precious truths already begin to emerge. ... We see the world stand in wonder and [awe] at this story of what is perhaps the most fragile and one of the smallest abbeys of our Order. ... There is evident a precious pruning away of what may seem important, but is obviously very secondary: our lives — and on the other hand, a highlighting of what is of real importance." In Br John's life, too, as he descended into dementia, we can see something of this precious pruning going on, and yet before his mental deterioration became more complete, there was always a gentle cheerfulness about John that suggested that he understood what was of real importance.

Another person, who together with some others, was also prompted to watch *Of Gods and Men* on the occasion of the beatification of the Atlas martyrs, said of it as it came to an end, "We looked at the footprints in the snow. We look at the men as they were being taken away. At the end of the film, there was a deafening silence in the sitting room that says a word has been understood, a message has been grasped, prophetic words illuminated by the testament left behind by Christian de Chergé."

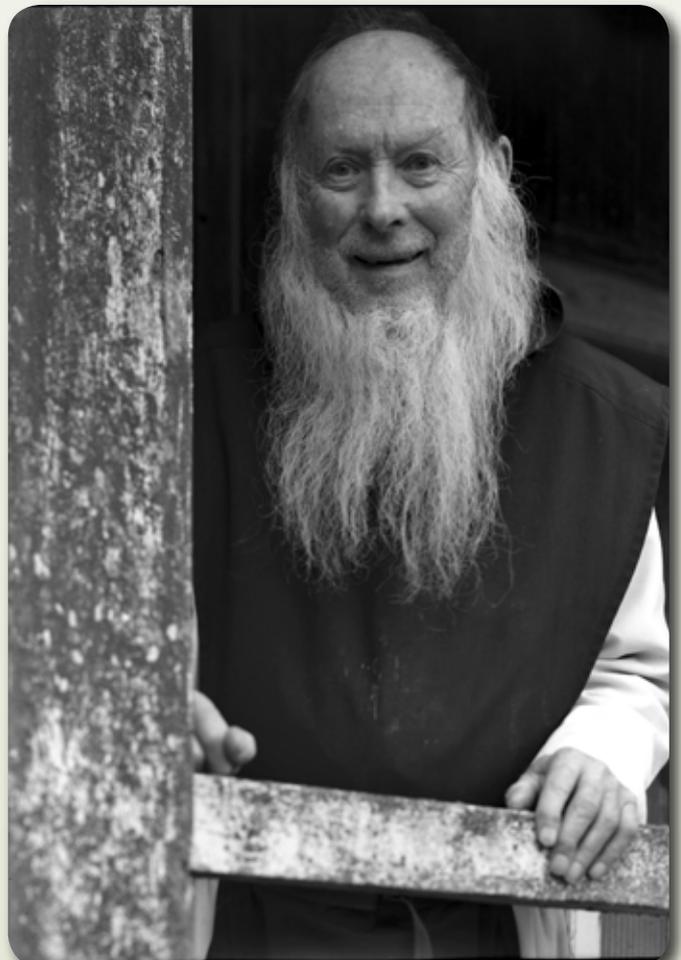
St Paul's words to the Corinthians came to my mind: "The language of the cross is folly to those not on the way to salvation, but those of us who are on the way see it as God's power to save. ... It was God's wisdom that human wisdom should not know God, because it pleased God to save those who believe through faith the foolishness of the message we preach. So, while Jews demand signs

and Greeks seek wisdom, we preach a crucified Christ: to Jews a stumbling block they cannot get over, to Gentiles madness, but to those who are called, whether Jew or Greek, a Christ who is the power and wisdom of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18-24) The fellow who made these comments went on to recall some other words of Dom Christian: "[As baptised persons] there is a presence of God among men that we need to assume," and then he noted: "These blessed men assumed it to the extent of giving their lives.

This presence, which the martyrs of Algeria used to celebrate in the humility of their daily lives, is expressed by praise, by sharing and by the lives they gave." This reminded me of our Lord's words in today's Gospel: "Thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. You've hidden these things from the learned and the clever, but revealed them clearly to mere children. Yes, Father, that's the way you like to work." (Matthew 11:25-26) Br John was one of these little ones who understood this, and his simple, humble life gave praise to God our Father as the Lord of all; John knew what he came here for! We can be sure that our martyrs of Atlas will welcome our Br John as one of their number.

Br John was born in Bendigo on the 17th February 1932, to Robert and Ellen Pocock. He was baptised Edward Patrick a month later. He was one of nine, his youngest and only surviving brother, Gerry, is with us today. On leaving school, John was apprenticed as a radio technician in what is now Telstra. He entered Tarrawarra on 29 March 1959 and was given the name John. He made his solemn profession on 7 May 1964. John did most of his studies here in the monastery. In 1989 he went on a Sabbatical in the Holy Land, studying Scripture at St George's in Jerusalem. In the monastery he worked for many years in our dairy and, when we still did small square hay bales, he was in charge of building our haystack each summer. He combined composting with a wormery and orchard. Nothing wasted! In later years he became our Guest Master. His warm smile was a welcome greeting to all who came.

His simple presence will be greatly missed. ■



## BR SIMON



Br Simon Wang brought joy to the community when he made his First Profession of vows during the celebration of Lauds on 8 December, the Solemnity of Mary's Immaculate Conception.

Simon came to us from Malaysia, the son of Wang Ah Ree (Anthony) and Tham Ah Keng (Lucia). He entered the community on 3 May 2016, and received the novice's habit on 8 December the same year.

Simon's tertiary education was in the area of computer studies. He graduated from Kolej Damansara Utama, Malaysia in 1999, and was employed as a web developer prior to joining us. His talents and training have been of great service here in the renewal of our liturgical books and in the Eucharistic Breads Department. His gentle, thoughtful manner has been much appreciated in our infirmary, especially during the challenging times of 2018. We pray for your ongoing growth and happiness here at Tarrawarra, Simon. ■

## VISITORS FROM JAPAN



Dom Aloysius Yokouchi, abbot of our community of Phare, Hokkaido, Japan, accompanied by Br Thomas Makoto, spent 18-23 October with us.

Dom Steele had conducted the Regular Visitation of their community, 5-21 June. A number of our community have been at Phare over the decades. At least for those who haven't, our visitors gave a power-point presentation on their monastery. When we saw them out raking snow off their trees to save them from damage, our vocations to Tarrawarra were confirmed! For our part, we took them to the Wild Life Sanctuary to meet kangaroos in the rain! On a brighter note, we did share the dawn chorus of the local birds, with brilliant solos from the kookaburras. ■

## BISHOP DAVID WALKER



Emeritus Bishop David Walker was the 2018 Tarrawarra Annual Retreat master. The retreat was held somewhat later than usual, 25-30 November.

David is the only one to have given two retreats here. When he was with us in 1979 he was heading up "The Centre", a spirituality institute in Sydney. He was appointed Bishop of Broken Bay in 1996. His final conference to the community this time was on twelve characteristics of fraternal charity, an absolutely central issue. The accompanying handout is a valuable resource for spending a month of soul-searching on each of the characteristics. His reflections at Mass on the Eucharist were also from the heart and to the heart. Thank you, David. ■

## ATLAS MARTYRS

**Cardinal Angelo Becciu, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, beatified nineteen men and women in Oran, Algeria, on Saturday 8 December.**

Seven of these were the monks from our Cistercian community of Our Lady of Atlas, Tibhirine, martyred in 1996: Christian de Chergé, Luke Dochier, Paul Favre, Michel Fleury, Christophe Lebreton, Bruno Lemarchand, and Célestine Ringiard.

During the celebration, Cardinal Becciu read a message from Pope Francis which included the following: "Through the Beatification of our 19 brothers and sisters, the Church wished to bear witness to her desire to continue working for dialogue, harmony and friendship. We believe that this unprecedented event in your country may trace in the Algerian sky a great sign of fraternity addressed to the whole world".



We share with our readers Fr Christian's Testament, opened, on Pentecost Sunday, 26 May 1996, after his death. It is surely one of the twentieth century's greatest documents of Christian faith and love. ■

# FORMATORS' MEETING

The triennial meeting of those responsible for the training of the next generation of Cistercian monks and nuns in the communities of the region of Asia and the western Pacific (known as Oriens), was held at the monastery of Guimaras, the Philippines, 23-29 September 2018.

Fathers Joseph Chua and Samuel Chua represented Tarrawarra and returned with a power-point presentation of the gathering – as we have come to expect of two of our tech-savvy younger brethren.

Twenty-four participants (11 monks and 13 nuns), two translators (Chinese and Japanese), and the speaker jetted into Iloilo, crossed the small stretch of water by catamaran to Guimaras, then completed the journey to the monastery by jeepney. In addition to Australia, they arrived from South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Macau, and Indonesia. The Indians failed to procure visas in time, and New Zealand was not represented.

The speaker was Dom Guillaume Jedrejczak, former Abbot of Mont-des-Cats, France, and current chaplain of the convent at Valserena, Italy. Dom Guillaume developed his expositions around the theme of *conversatio morum* (for those unfamiliar with latin and monastic jargon, the elements of the monastic way of life) and desire for happiness.

He drew examples from the Church Fathers, especially the fourth century monastic great, John Cassian, one of St Benedict's primary inspirations. Group discussions followed each lecture.

Not everything was deadly serious. That would be seriously un-monastic! The community church is open to catch every possible breeze. An amusing liturgical extra was provided one morning when a dog pursued a chook across the sanctuary during the readings at Mass.

The group's Day Out with some of the Guimaras community was on a private beach resort, an hour from the monastery, called "Playa de Paraiso" (which might translate as Surfers' Paradise but should not be allowed to conjure up images of Queensland's south coast, but rather something on a simpler and more human scale). Guimaras was voted a great host. ■



## BR PETER

Our Br Peter Browne, together with two of his mates, Fr David Batey and Vince Filia, in late August and early September, undertook a short temporal, but long geographical, nostalgic pilgrimage, to the scenes of their youthful days with the Capuchin Order in the United States fifty years ago.

They had entered the Capuchin Friars, Assumption Seminary, Plumpton, Sydney in July 1966. After completing their novitiate and taking Temporary Vows in 1968, they were sent for further studies at the seminary of St Mary's, Crown Point, Indiana. Peter was there until May 1971. They all reconsidered their futures and eventually returned to Australia to a variety of avocations. After a working life with the P.M.G. (later Telecom, then Telstra) Peter entered Tarrawarra in May 2001, and made his definitive engagement as an Oblate in September 2007. All three retain their love for the Capuchins.

The Pilgrim Three left Sydney on 27 August, stopped over briefly in Honolulu, walked the beach at Waikiki, flew on to Dallas-Fort Worth, "getting into Chicago and Crown Point Indiana 50 years to the day and minute. We shook hands, thanking God for taking care of us all those years". They visited the Seminary, now a Baptist College, caught up with former Capuchin confreres and friends, particularly the Shepards who had been so good to them, spent time in prayer at Blessed Solanus' tomb in Detroit, and in another small former Capuchin church at St John near magnificent Stations of the Cross which they walked. ■



# TESTAMENT OF FR CHRISTIAN DE CHERGÉ

## When we face an A-Dieu....



If it should happen one day – and it could be today – that I become a victim of the terrorism which now seems ready to engulf all the foreigners living in Algeria, I would like my community, my Church and my family to remember that my life was GIVEN to God and to this country. I ask them to accept the fact that the One Master of all life was not a stranger to this brutal departure. I would ask them to pray for me: for how could I be found worthy of such an offering? I ask them to associate this death with so many equally violent ones which are forgotten through indifference or anonymity.

My life has no more value than any other. Nor any less value. In any case, it has not the innocence of childhood. I have lived long enough to know that I am an accomplice in all the evil which seems, alas, to prevail in the world, even in the evil which might blindly strike me down. I would like, when the time comes, to have a moment of spiritual clarity which would allow me to beg forgiveness of God and of my fellow human beings, and at the same time to forgive with all my heart the one who will strike me down. I could not desire such a death. It seems to me important to state this. I do not see, in fact, how I could rejoice if the people I love were indiscriminately accused of my murder. It would be too high a price to pay for what will perhaps

be called the “grace of martyrdom” to owe this to an Algerian, whoever he may be, especially if he says he is acting in fidelity to what he believes to be Islam. I am aware of the scorn which can be heaped on the Algerians indiscriminately. I am also aware of the caricatures of Islam which a certain Islamism fosters. It is too easy to soothe one’s conscience by identifying this religious way with the fundamentalist ideology of its extremists.

For me, Algeria and Islam are not that, but rather a body and a soul. I have proclaimed this often enough, I think, in the light of what I have received from it. I so often find there that true strand of the Gospel which I learnt at my mother’s knee, my very first Church, precisely in Algeria, and already inspired with respect for Muslim believers. Obviously, my death will appear to confirm those who hastily judged me naïve or idealistic: “Let him tell us now what he thinks of it!”

But these persons should know that finally my most avid curiosity will be set free. This is what I shall be able to do, please God: immerse my gaze in that of the Father to contemplate with him His children of Islam just as he sees them, all shining with the glory of Christ, the fruit of his Passion, filled with the gift of the Spirit whose secret joy will always be able to establish communion and restore the likeness, playing with the differences. For this life lost, totally mine and totally theirs, I thank God, who seems to have willed it entirely for the sake of that JOY in everything and in spite of everything. In this THANK YOU, which is said for everything in my life from now on, I certainly include you, my friends of yesterday and today, and you, my friends of this place, along with my mother and father, my sisters and brothers and their families.

You are the hundredfold granted as promised! And also you, my last-minute friend, who will not have known what you were doing: Yes, I want to THANK YOU and this “A-DIEU” to be for you, too, because in God’s face I see yours. May we meet again as happy thieves in Paradise, if it please God, the Father of us both. AMEN! IN H’ALLAH! ■

Algiers, December 1, 1993.

Tibhirine, January 1, 1994.