

CHURCH TIMES

Friday,
June 9th,
2017

If VUCA (Comment, 2 June) is or isn't your thing, perhaps CHJM could be. The website can be found at <http://cchjm.org>.

Who cares

I WENT, years ago, to the launch for Michael De-la-Noy's biography of Mervyn Stockwood, and saw several of those who played a leading part in the 1960s' South Bank ferment. I think it may have been then that I last met the Revd Tony Crowe, another old Southwark hand.

As a curate in New Eltham in 1963, he interviewed the Revd Nicolas Stacey in St Mary's, Woolwich, for his parish newspaper, and was handed two boxes of press cuttings to read; and they were in touch in retirement.

Now he picks up on Andrew Brown's comment (Press, 26 May) that it was "proper" for the Stacey obituaries to say nothing about the priest's theology, and quotes the last words of Stacey's book *Who Cares*.

These refer to his eucharistic theology, which puts his well-known emphasis on the secular world into another light: "I believe Christ's Spirit is with us when those who would try to follow Him break bread together in the manner of the Last Supper. I take my stand that our life here on earth is but the beginning of something so much better which God has prepared for us and passes our understanding.

"And finally, I take my stand that the gates of Hell will not prevail against His Body here on earth — which is the Church."

Not an unsuitable thought, dare I say it, after a Whit Sunday when the closure of Southwark Cathedral left everyone's attention focused on the flesh-and-blood sacrifice of those who were trying to save life and limb outside it. Whether some or none were communicants, it was a time, in the words of the Corpus Christi sequence, to "Look not on the outward sign."

Register this

THE advertiser who in April placed a Classified notice in this paper, "VICAR Vehicle registration for sale. . .", tells us that it produced an interesting response from someone who had acquired the registration "V11CAR".

"The Reverend Prebendary had parked one day in the Exmoor town of Dulverton. On returning to his car, he saw a small gathering. By chance, parked next to him was a car with the registration V11CAR. The good folk of Dulverton were, it seems, amused."

what the distinction is. The Rule is simple: spend time each day in the presence of the Heart of Jesus; express compassion practically; reflect on your practice of compassion; and recognise the value of the "sacrament of confession".

Anyone can join without adopting this Rule by becoming an Associate. The association has the approval and support of the Bishop of Southwark, the Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Fr John-Francis says.

While reading his letter, I was instantly reminded of Fr Andrew SDC, one of the pioneers of the Franciscan spirit in Anglicanism (and, readers may recall, spiritual director to Lilian Baylis, the pioneer manager of the Old Vic).

Lo and behold, when I visit the website, there Fr Andrew is, with words that I remember first reading in *The Mirfield Mission Hymn Book*. There, too, is Fr Arthur Shearly Cripps, of whom I know less, but who was described as the "St Francis of the African Countryside", and whose shrine is located in Maronda Mashanu, Zimbabwe.

As a general rule, Anglicans are more at home with verbal devotion to the Sacred Heart, which appears unobtrusively in their hymns, than with the more surgical forms of iconography; and the words "divine compassion" sum-up the underlying truth without the danger of raising Protestant hackles.

In Fr Andrew's steps

WITH a novena sponsored by two Church of England archbishops just behind us, it may seem that all things are possible.

Fr John-Francis SMMS — who has, for a priest, the appropriate surname of Friendship — writes to draw attention to a new online association that sounds just the thing for people who want to move forward in their spiritual lives but don't want more meetings to attend.

"In this month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and at a time when fear, bigotry, and hate are ever present in the world, a new online Spiritual Association of the Compassionate Hearts of Jesus and Mary (CHJM) has been created to assist members in developing the virtue of compassion," he writes.

The aim is "to develop a compassionate heart for the sake of the world", while its "purpose" is to nurture compassion. I'm not sure