

# Philip Carpenter RIP

5TH JUNE 1992

Martha says to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died.' (Jn.II:21) Lazarus' death breaks up a home, a family. The family of Mary and Martha and Lazarus was one of the places in which Jesus rested and refreshed himself, and it is a home that is broken by death and by the apparent absence of Jesus: 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died.'

Many of Philip's friends will experience his death in much the same way. Whenever one came to see Philip, one was made to feel immediately at home; one was made welcome, as he put a large gin and tonic into one's hand and one relaxed into a deep, comfortable chair. And he communicated a sense of the Church as a large open home, in which anyone could find acceptance, peace. A place where, as St.Paul said in the second reading no one would be despised.

Perhaps the roots of this vision of Christianity lay in his own sense of family. He was devoted to his family, to his brother, Gilbert, a priest of the Church of England, to his sister-in-law, to his nephews and nieces. His house was filled with family furniture and pictures of ancestors. And he shared this open hearth with all sorts of waifs and strays who came his way.

This was why he was such a good University chaplain for eleven years. He claimed that this saved him from being narrow and dogmatic; it opened his mind. But that was because he opened himself to anyone who turned up, and especially to foreign students, when he was based at the Overseas Students' Chaplaincy from 1966 to 1973, before he came here. And this parish was just the right place for Philip's ministry, with its transient, international, multilingual congregation, as a glance at the collection plate will confirm. He offered a sense of this Church as somewhere anyone could belong. It is not surprising that one of his favourite places was The Passage Centre, for the homeless.

He offered this hospitality to the Dominicans too, with whom he was associated for so long. It was in our London Parish that Philip first decided to become a Catholic; his first appointment after ordination as a Catholic priest was near our sisters at Bushey. He always made us, brothers and sisters, at home, and even housed the printing of *New Blackfriars* in the basement of the Church. He will be enormously missed by so many Dominican friends, and especially, Sister Jackie with whom he worked so closely for years. And so it is good and fitting that he should be buried with our sisters at Bushey today.

He greatly valued his years working as a priest in the Church of England. They were part of the rich inheritance he brought to Catholicism and for which we should give thanks today. I am told that it was during a procession of the Blessed Sacrament that he decided to become a Catholic. It was his devotion to the Eucharist that brought him home to us. And surely it is in the Eucharist which we are now celebrating with Philip and for Philip, that we find the sacrament of that home for which we all search, which no suffering or death or sin or failure can break up and where we will never again find ourselves saying like Martha, 'If you had been here, Lord, my brother would not have died.' In this sacrament Jesus embraced everything that any human being could ever do to break up the home, and redeemed it. This was the meal which made Peter welcome, who would deny Christ, and Judas who would betray him. It was when Jesus embraced his own death, the ultimate shadow over every family. This is the sacrament of the home where Mary and Martha and Lazarus and Philip and all of us can find peace and healing and forgiveness and eternal life.

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## The Problem of Evil

Brian Davies OP

We are often told that there is something called 'the problem of evil'. What is this supposed to be? And how should we respond to it?

It is usually understood as a problem for *classical theism* (sometimes just called *theism*), supporters of which are commonly called *theists*. According to classical theism, God is all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-good. In the world around us, however, we discover a great deal of pain and suffering. We also find a great deal of moral evil—morally culpable actions (or refusals to act) which diminish both those who are morally bad and those around them. The problem of evil is commonly seen as the problem of how the existence of God can be reconciled with the pain, suffering, and moral evil which we know to be facts of life. And it has often been said that they cannot be. Thus it has been urged that the problem of evil constitutes grounds for disbelief in God.