

## OBITER

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS ON TELEVISION. On Good Friday the Stations of the Cross were mimed, in the presence of B.B.C. Television cameras and a large congregation, at St Dominic's Priory, Haverstock Hill. For Catholics who are interested, as they should be, in the effective use of television, this was an important and moving occasion. A small screen became the medium through which a familiar ceremony acquired an entirely new emphasis and significance. In Holy Week a good many of us think vaguely and sentimentally about the events which led our Lord from the Fortress Antonia to the Sepulchre. We have been so long preserved from the brutalities which revolution, civil war and invasion have visited on less fortunate countries that we may find it difficult to imagine the savage cruelty of the Crucifixion. But without this effort of imagination we cannot understand the nature or the price of the Redemption. This mime succeeded, not by shock tactics, but by a superbly controlled formal presentation of violence, terror, tragedy and heroism, in bringing home the facts which Good Friday commemorates.

As an act of corporate worship it was unforgettable. The cameras were ignored: everyone who took part, and this notably includes the congregation, was concentrated upon the scenes which were presented and the short statements with which they were introduced by the Prior, Father Illtud Evans. Some viewers may have felt that the emotional contrast between the Stations and the music which accompanied them and the rather matter-of-fact tone which Father Illtud adopted was too sharp. On reflection they may realize that any other tone would have been almost unbearable: it was, after all, as matters of fact that these scenes were enacted: we were invited to recognize the truth which is both unique and permanent.

Those who took part in the mime did a splendid service for their parish, their congregation and their wider audience. David Gill, who produced them, imposed upon them a discipline which resulted in movements that were precise, significant and, above all, sincere. The young man who took the part of our Lord stood out among the players for the conviction and sad strength of his acting. The music, admirably chosen and performed, added much more than a background; and the B.B.C. television producer, John Vernon, handled his cameras in a manner which was altogether worthy of a memorable occasion.

DAVID LLOYD JAMES