

## The Queen of Fair Women

By Edmund Matyjaszek

Tender to the touch  
A womb so warm,  
Beginning to bulge beneath the dress;  
A slight wobble in the walk, a breath  
Deeply taken, the lungs' lunge;  
While below the heart  
A sharp pain of joy and pride.

She walks through the crowded streets of her  
husband,  
Stops for the mild gossip of the morning,  
Carrying fresh fish, or hens' eggs,  
Goose feathers for a softer bed;  
Almost careless in grace, so abundant  
With the living presence of her Lord.

Though years will take tears to tell,  
Shattering sorrow, bitter grief, bitter beyond words,  
Nothing can take away that morning  
When she stepped out lightly, laden with love.

## The Vigil of the Assumption

By Edmund Matyjaszek

I've moved among your visions since my birth,  
Not knowing, not conscious, hardly comprehending;  
My father's garden, white trellis with its rose;  
At school the sombre picture of a serpent crushed;  
Your statue in the church, cut flowers at the base;  
Beads told over by bowed women on their knees.  
Yet I never noticed what was there -  
Like a painting a guest would stare at  
While you nod, surprised to see it on the wall.  
But that's not false. To grow up in your presence  
Natural, accepted, accustomed to, at home



Leads to ease and in familiarity  
Grows an affection strong in roots  
That now flowers. Simply, I'm amazed.  
I had not thought such blessing possible;  
Showered with sweetness that strikes to the core,  
Made one this night with the moon and stars.  
Tomorrow is your feast and I prepare  
By recollecting my powers of mind  
To still them, to be quiet, to be at peace,  
Ready to participate and offer praise  
In your honour. Taken up, you reign  
As queen, as crowned, immaculate and bride  
Whom we revere; but may you still remain  
To sway by ordinary unseen presence  
In those things surrounding us,  
The beads of childhood, the garden rose in bloom.



## The Visitation

By Edmund Matyjaszek

The hill country of Judaea is dry  
And at this season drier  
Than sand with no sea.  
Parched,  
The desert possesses  
The arid soil as wind  
Whips up grains that sting the eye and score  
The cheek with lacerations.  
Skin shrinks from its contact like a child  
from harsh words.

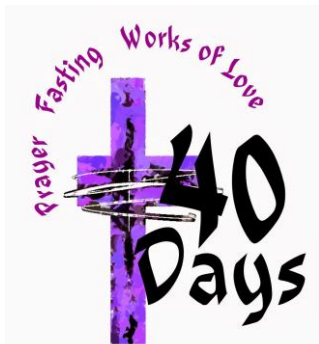


Hurrying, she comes heavily along the goat path  
To greet her cousin. Suddenly,  
A kick of life; the baptist struggles  
To erupt on Jordan's banks as Elizabeth  
Staggers into words and hails with praise.

## Lenten Poem

Written by Elizabeth Foley

Lent is a season in which we prepare  
For Easter by fasting, penance and prayer.  
Fasting we discipline body and soul  
Curbing our greed by strict self control.  
Regulating our drink, food and pleasure.  
Putting God first before self and leisure.  
Penance we humble ourselves and express,  
Sorrow for sins that we have confessed.  
Forgiveness is sought when we have done wrong.  
With a clear conscience we we'll become strong.  
Our Lady's words, they are for you  
*"Do whatever He tells you to"*  
Listen to what God has to say  
In the gospel every day.  
Prepare in prayer, take time and read.  
The Word of God is all you need.  
Just use Lent like a threshing floor.  
Beat out the sins that you deplore.  
A spiritual Spring cleaning start.  
Clean out the worries from your heart.  
Take time, a good Confession make.  
A resolution you must take.  
Not to commit those sins again  
Or sanctifying grace will wane.



## Eternity

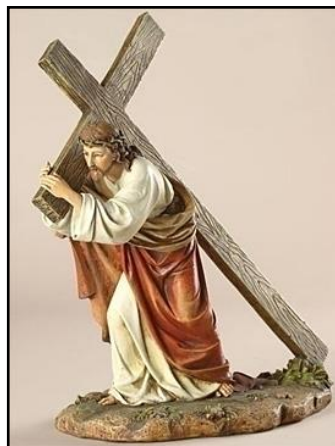
Written by Beth Foley

This present moment don't you see,  
Right here and now's ETERNITY  
suspended on a thread of time,  
My will is free, the choice is mine.  
At any time the thread could break.  
The way I've spent my time will shape,  
My life for all ETERNITY  
In bless or endless misery

## ***The Way of the Cross***

By Elizabeth Foley (12th June 1990)

Having set Barabbas free  
A sinner now at liberty  
Christ for sinners was to die  
By Jews condemned to crucify  
Ridiculed, scourged barbarically  
A crown of thorns in mockery  
A purple cloak, a reed as mace,  
The soldiers spat and struck His face  
A rude wood cross He had to bear  
Upon His last rough journey here  
As man, completely drained, He fell.  
As God, love inexplicable  
He gave His life that we might be  
With Him throughout eternity.  
For this end He created men,  
Rejected, now yet pleads again.  
Christ His mother on the way  
Horrendous shock, with her to stay.  
Obedience to the Father's will  
Both physically and spiritual.  
Excruciatingly to die,  
Crucified and hung up high,  
Hands, feet and side gnashed open wide.  
For us Christ lived, for us Christ died.



## **Candlemas**

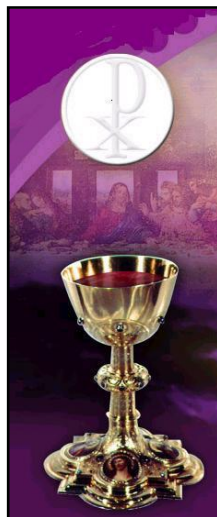
by Elizabeth Foley

Candlemas is one of three  
Feasts; ending the Christmas liturgy.  
The Presentation of the Babe; Purification of the Maid.  
His Mother pure, obeyed the law,  
Simeon his Messiah saw.  
Candles are blessed, lit and processed,  
“Christ Our Lord” by all confessed.

## Holy Communion

by Elizabeth Foley

I need to concentrate so well  
For at the Consecration bell  
If I could see with angel's eyes  
Heaven touches earth, but hidden lies  
From us who round the altar kneel,  
Where forms of bread and wine conceal  
THE SON OF GOD; Whose waiting there,  
Prepared with each Himself to share,  
At Communion in each breast  
Jesus Christ is each soul's guest.  
What preparation did I make?  
Or do I let the time slip by  
Complacent of my company?  
My Guardian Angel help me be  
Alert at all times God's with me.  
Please join me angel as I raise  
Songs in my heart of love and praise



## Walsingham Restored

written by Peter Clarke. 2007

Along the Norfolk lanes the pilgrims trod  
To visit the Shrine of the Mother of God,  
The rich, the poor, the sick and the lame  
To England's Nazareth on foot they came  
Flowers for Mary the children bring  
They came to Walsingham to pray and sing.  
Kings and princes, the great and the lowly  
To Mary's shrine, hallowed and holy.  
Across this pleasant land so green  
They came to pray to the Virgin Queen.  
Hymns were sung, prayers and petition  
To ask for Mary's intercession.  
Then Cromwell's men to Norfolk came  
The wreckers to their eternal shame  
And on that fateful August day



Mary's image was taken away.  
No more celebrations of her feast.  
The statue gone, the pilgrims ceased.  
The holy Priory razed to the ground.  
Mary's image was no longer found.  
Yet with the Slipper Chapel Charlotte bought  
The return of the pilgrims she clearly sought  
For return they did and in a while  
Again they walked the holy mile  
For now the Church of the Annunciation  
And in the Chapel of Reconciliation  
Both individuals and those in procession  
Find in Our Lady their consolation.  
With Mary's shrine now fully restored  
With her we grow in the love of Our Lord  
And proudly proclaiming our faith, hope and love  
We worship Him in heaven above.

## **The Graves at Carisbrooke Priory**

Written by Edmund Matyjaszek

*"The neat row of simple graves....the nuns' life of prayer"*

Lay them down; let them rest.  
Neither heat nor the autumn rain  
Shall disturb where they are placed.  
Nor shall seasons come again

With growing, with hope,  
expectancy, loss -  
The curving arc of human care.  
Lay them down; let them rest.  
Their time is over. Kind and rare

Is a life lived in anonymous love,  
The self-effacing, daily work  
Of looking out for others' worth,  
The lonely, the shy, the unseen hurt

Of bruised souls. Now in rows



Neat, aligned, with hardly a name  
To separate each from each they lie.  
In life companionate; in death, the same.

Over their graves the pine trees sway.  
Around the crosses that mark them hops  
A robin stained red on his scarlet chest.  
The sun now shines; glints through the raindrops.