

## **Transcript of extracts from the Taizé service on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2020 at 6pm from Leek Wootton**

### ***Reflection on the life of Brother Roger by Revd. Jim Perryman***

The son of a fairly austere Swiss Protestant pastor, and his French Protestant wife, Roger Schutz founded a community built on gentle love, which transcended denominational and national boundaries and sought reconciliation, based upon our oneness in Christ. He came to Taizé in 1940, and gave refuge to Jews and Christians escaping from occupied France, until he too had to flee. But he returned after the liberation and offered service and spiritual support to German prisoners of war.

He started a community for a small group of brothers, which grew into a community welcoming thousands of young people from around the globe to join them each week to work, worship, fellowship and overcome boundaries together. He was recognised as a prophet by the Pope, but remained a brother among brothers.

He followed the way of the Prince of Peace and, like his Lord, met a violent death. Pierced, not by nails, but by the knife of a young woman who was mentally ill. At his funeral, his successor brother Alois prayed for forgiveness: "With Christ on the Cross, we say to you, Father, forgive her. She does not know what she did."

15 years on, the community continues. And through the lockdown has embraced technology such that its meetings online drew over 2000 people each evening from around the world.

### ***Talk by Revd. Jim Perryman from a meditation by Brother Emile<sup>1</sup>***

"What is best in our life grows out of a simple trust in God." To remember Brother Roger 15 years after he was killed at Evening Prayer in Taizé, Brother Emile wrote the following meditation.

In a time of trial, we can sometimes latch onto a verse from a psalm or from the Gospel as to a life preserver. And perhaps the more the words we are using are simple and direct, the more helpful they are. One person may say: "The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear?" Another will remember the words Jesus spoke during the storm on the lake: "It is I. - Do not be afraid." Each one of us perhaps can think of a text that provided support in a time of need or distress.

Over the past few months, a phrase from Brother Roger has often been with me: "What is best in our life grows out of a simple trust in God." It's no secret that Brother Roger was gifted with a matchless ability to avoid sentences containing the words: "You must". He knew that the "you musts" we use too easily can be toxic. So let's not transform this into "You must trust!" Rather, in this time of hardship for so many, let's try to understand that he is drawing our attention to a gift, pointing to a path that is open and on which we can walk, a way of being that enhances what is possible.

"What is best in our life grows out of a simple trust in God." It's one of the most demanding and at the same time the most liberating phrases of Brother Roger. We can wonder: how is it possible to express one's faith with such striking simplicity? No doubt his words have come from the experience of an entire lifetime, a life that did not contain only success. Brother Roger was not averse to speaking about some of the failures he had experienced. Yes, life can at times cast you down, and discouragement can take over. But Brother Roger knew as well that we can get up again.

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1 Full text of the meditation at [https://www.taize.fr/en\\_article28061.html](https://www.taize.fr/en_article28061.html)

For Brother Roger, trust was so much part and parcel of the Kingdom of God that toward the end of his life he modified a quote inspired by the gospel of Mark that is part of the *Rule of Taizé*. The passage is read as an “exhortation” when a new brother is about to take make a life commitment: “Whether you wake or sleep, night and day, the seed springs up and grows, you know not how.” ... What he was suggesting is rich in meaning and can be helpful. This is the modified text: “Whether you wake or sleep, night and day, the desire for trust in God and in your brothers grows and widens, you know not how.” Without it being explicit, we are led to understand that for Brother Roger the Kingdom is not so much a place where we go after our death or a promise that will be fulfilled at the end of time (though it is of course both of those things as well), but the Kingdom is present when God reigns, when it is no longer fear or mistrust that govern life, but trust, or, if you will, the life of the Holy Spirit in us. ... The Taizé song, “The Kingdom of God”, ... takes up a verse from Romans: “The Kingdom of God is justice and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (14: 18) and adds to it words taken from Brother Roger: “Open in us the gates of your kingdom.”

By our trust, not perfect, idealized and inaccessible trust, but the humble trust of which we are capable, that is offered and that is only begging to grow in us, the Kingdom of God comes near.

***Prayer by Revd. Jim Perryman and Keith Grierson, chairman of Kenilworth Churches Together***

We're going to turn to prayer. Let us pray:

God of compassion, we give you thanks for Brother Roger's life. In a world often torn apart by division and distrust, through his life and those of his brothers he created a place of unity and reconciliation. We give you thanks for his witness to the risen Christ, and for his faithfulness right up until death.

You have blessed us, risen Jesus, we want to root our lives in your trust to such an extent that the wellspring of joy never runs dry.

Happy those who abandon themselves to you, O God, with a trusting heart. You hold us in joy, simplicity and mercy.

Please join with me in the Lord's Prayer, and use whatever version you're comfortable with.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.  
Amen.

***Psalm 37:3-7 [NIVUK]***

<sup>3</sup> Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

<sup>4</sup> Take delight in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart.

<sup>5</sup> Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:

<sup>6</sup> he will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun.

<sup>7</sup> Be still before the LORD, and wait patiently for him.

***Psalm 33: 20-22 [NIVUK]***

<sup>20</sup> We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield.

<sup>21</sup> In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.

<sup>22</sup> May your unfailing love be with us, LORD, even as we put our hope in you.

[Transcribed by Hamish Blair with help from <https://otter.ai>]

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