

'childlike' quality in him. It's not quite the right word and yet it captures something very deep and very essential that has a great deal to do with those qualities of welcome and wonder. And it's that image of a childlike wisdom with which I want to leave you in words from Thomas Merton's great meditation on holy wisdom:

'Sophia, the feminine child, is playing in the world, obvious and unseen, playing at all times before the Creator. Her delights are to be with the children of men. She is their sister. The core of life that exists in all things is tenderness, mercy, virginity, the Light, the Life considered as passive, as received, as given, as taken, as inexhaustibly renewed by the Gift of God. Sophia is Gift, is Spirit, *Donum Dei*. She is God given and God Himself as Gift. God as all, and God reduced to Nothing:

inexhaustible nothingness. *Exinanivit semetipsum*. Humility as the source of unfailing light... She is in all things like the air receiving the sunlight. In her they prosper. In her they glorify God. In her they rejoice to reflect Him. In her they are united with Him. She is the union between them. She is the Love that unites them. She is life as communion, life as thanksgiving, life as praise, life as festival, life as glory. Because she receives perfectly there is in her no stain.' (*Hagia Sophia*, 1962)

Wonderful in the sight of the angels!

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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## Donald Allchin – A Tribute

### Kallistos Ware

Many of you here present I'm sure have memories of Donald that extend back over many years. My own memories begin in the year 1947 when at the age of thirteen I arrived as a King's Scholar at Westminster School. And was assigned to the Election Room of which Donald, four years older than myself, was in charge as monitor. In the hierarchy of a boarding school, four years makes a considerable difference; but

Donald was never a remote figure of whom I was afraid. At that distant time I found him a very encouraging—indeed a luminous—presence and such he always remained for me through the sixty-three years of our friendship.

I recall when I was writing my first book I frequently came to a halt, baffled and discouraged. I used to walk down to Pusey House where Donald was librarian and if I was lucky I found him at

home. (That was not always the case, for throughout his life, Donald was usually not in the place where he was expected to be!) Half an hour's talk was enough to break my writer's block. He would not usually offer specific advice; but his personal warmth, his enthusiasm, his sense of wonder, were enough to restore my confidence and give me hope. I went home knowing what I wanted to say and how I was going to say it.

Invariably throughout the decades of our friendship my life was enhanced by our meetings. One of Donald's books, on the Blessed Virgin Mary, bears the title, *The Joy of All Creation*. Some people felt he spoke too often about joy, but for me his words rang true. The joy of the holy

virgin at the Annunciation; the joy of the Resurrection. It was I think the joy and wonder that he found in the Orthodox Church that made him a lifelong friend of Orthodoxy. And it was the same joy and wonder that attracted him to a poet such as Thomas Traherne. One of the titles given by Orthodox to icons of the Blessed Virgin Mary is 'The Mother of God of Unexpected Joy'. That is what Donald brought into my life not once but many times—unexpected wonder and unexpected joy. May the kingdom of heaven be his!

**Kallistos of Diokleia** is Metropolitan of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Great Britain.



Donald with Thomas Merton and Colonel Hawke in Hawke's Diner in Bardstown on the day of Martin Luther King's assassination, 4 April, 1968.