

first four lines: *“To spend uncounted years of pain, Again, again, and yet again, In working out in heart and brain, The problem of our being here...”*
In a long epic poem Clough wryly commented: *“And almost everyone when age, Disease, or sorrows strike him, Inclines to think there is a God, Or something very like Him.”*

Hopkins was a High Anglican at Oxford but also had an ascetic nature. Kenny describes his conversion to Catholicism as a much swifter, less anguished, process than Clough’s gradual abandonment of Anglicanism for the agnosticism of his later years. After Oxford, Hopkins became a master at Newman’s Oratory School and there found his vocation to the priesthood, entering the Jesuit novitiate the following year. From then on he appears not to have had any doubts about his Catholicism. He died in Dublin in 1889, aged 45. In perhaps his best-known poem, *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, Hopkins confronts coming to terms with tragedy, in this case the death by drowning of five nuns. The poem ends with Hopkins accepting the will of God. Much of Hopkins’ work faces up to similar struggles in life, with his true faith shining through. A brief extract of from one of his last poems is: *“Enough! The Resurrection, A heart’s clarion! Away grief’s grasping, joyless days, dejection. Across my foundering deck shone, A beacon, an eternal flame...”* -**Stephen S**

Entrance antiphon: The Lord said: I think thoughts of peace and not of affliction. You will call upon me, and I will answer you, and I will lead back your captives from every place.

First Reading: Daniel 12: 1-13

Psalm 15: Response: Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.

Second Reading: Hebrews 10: 11-14, 18

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Stay awake and stand ready, because you do not know the hour when the Son of Man is coming. Alleluia!

Gospel: Mark 13: 24-32

Memorial Acclamation: Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

Communion Antiphon: To be near God is my happiness, to place my hope in God the Lord.



Thirty third Sunday in Ordinary Time Cycle B, 2023 Weekly

Reflection: New Challenges to Faith in 19th Century (3): God and Two Poets “God and Two Poets” is a book by Sir Anthony Kenny. In it he compares the lives and

written works of two Victorian poets for whom religion was their central preoccupation in an age where science and philosophy provoked atheism and agnosticism in some, and a robust and vehement affirmation of the faith in others. The poets were Arthur Hugh Clough and Gerard Manley Hopkins. This very brief resumé aims to illustrate their lives of faith and doubt. Both poets read classics and philosophy at Balliol College, Oxford, though Clough (born in 1819) was 25 years older. Clough was fascinated by the sermons of Newman, while the latter was still an Anglican clergyman. Later, Newman led Hopkins into converting to Catholicism. Each poet was, as an undergraduate, regarded as the most intelligent Balliol student of his day. Each was subsequently regarded as a failure. Clough dropped out of academia as an Oxford tutor because of the agnosticism which plagued his life from about the age of 30. Hopkins was considered by his Anglican friends as having thrown away his talents by becoming a Jesuit. Kenny says that both men were indifferent to reputation. Both left much of their best poetry unpublished, whilst having a firm confidence in their own poetic talent.

Clough’s diaries as a young man demonstrate a strong Anglican faith. He spent long hours in private devotion and spiritual meditation. He had a keen evangelical sense of his own sinfulness. When he became a tutor at Oriel College in 1842, he began to have serious doubt, influenced greatly by new biblical criticism. By the end of the decade, he was agnostic. He continued his academic career in London and the USA and married in 1853. He died, aged 42, in 1861. Agnosticism appears to have tormented him. Throughout his adult life, as reflected in his poetry, he struggled with his lack of faith and constantly appears to have re-examined it, though sometimes denouncing faith in strong terms. Kenny refers to a brief verse in one of Clough’s notebooks which he says, *“could well stand as his own epitaph”*. These are the