

## Editor's Note

*“ . . . in every generation, she [wisdom] passes into holy souls, and makes of them friends of God, and prophets.”<sup>1</sup>*

Donald Allchin (1930–2010) was an ordained priest in the Church of England, an historian, and theologian. After a four-year curacy in a parish in Kensington from 1956 to 1960, Donald became Librarian at Pusey House, Oxford. During the 1960s he developed a substantive interest in Eastern Orthodox Churches and became friends with the Orthodox theologians Vladimir Lossky and Dumitru Staniloae and the Russian historian Nicolas Zernov. Donald was an active member of the Society of St. Alban and St. Sergius promoting Anglican-Orthodox dialogue and later became the editor of its journal *Sobornost* until 1977. From 1968 to 1973 he was warden to the Sisters of the Love of God, an Anglican contemplative order in Fairacres, near Oxford. During this period he became a friend of Thomas Merton, visiting Gethsemane Abbey in Kentucky and conducting a lively correspondence. From 1973 to 1987 Donald was residentiary canon at Canterbury Cathedral where he developed an interest in the Welsh spiritual tradition. Donald returned to Oxford in 1987 to become director of the St. Theosevia Center with a focus on learning and dialogue between Eastern and Western Christian spirituality. In 1994 he moved to Bangor, North Wales and immersed himself in the poetry, saints, and holy places of the Welsh spiritual tradition. He remained there as professor in theology and Welsh until 2010 when he returned to Oxford and died later that year.

1. Wisdom of Solomon 7:27.

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Donald Allchin was also a friend of God. He found God's presence and boundless grandeur everywhere and in every person he encountered. Without trying, Donald could be fully present in places, conversations, and relationships and at the same time make connections with other diverse yet complementary topics and persons. His endless curiosity and delight in life gave birth to an eclectic range of interests and academic investigations. Donald's gift of friendship was contagious. He could draw people from a variety of backgrounds and interests into a collegial network of collaboration and mutual support. All of this flowed from Donald's prayerful experience of God. The life of the Trinity was the template for Donald's awareness and celebration of the unity of all creation and human life. At the same time he knew that the resurrection of Christ brings both the opportunity for transformed human life and the responsibility to mend and transform broken human lives and institutions.

The chapters, poems, and memoirs in this book represent what Donald's friendship and mentoring have brought forth in the lives of the contributors. The book is an example of his ability to bring people together, even after his death, and it testifies to Donald's influence and contributions to the life of the world. Here you will meet poets, historians, bishops, archbishops, monks, priests and lay persons, scholars, professors, and writers. You will taste the rich ecumenical dialogue between Donald's Anglican heritage, the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Roman Catholic Church, and churches of the Reformed Traditions, including Donald's friendships and correspondence with Thomas Merton and the Romanian Orthodox theologian Dumitru Stăniloae. Readers will gain insights into Donald's interpretation of the Anglican Tradition and his emphasis on the value of monastic solitude and community for the lives of modern Christians. And last, but certainly not least, you will enter Donald's journey into the lives, poetry, saints, and holy places of the Welsh spiritual tradition. And this is only a taste of his legacy. In Donald's words, "*For the things which belong to the story of Jesus are not yet completed.*"<sup>2</sup>

2. Allchin, *Participation in God*, 1.