

29th June 2020

Kneeling

**"O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
With gold of obedience and incense of lowness,
Kneel and adore him: the Lord is his name."**

John Samuel, Bewley Monsell, O Worship the Lord

Gracie Allen was one of the most spiritual people I've ever known. When I became minister in my second parish in the mid-1980s, Gracie was already elderly, but, in her later years, she carried with her a dignity and an attitude of holiness which, while never ostentatious, was obvious for all to see.

She was one of the first people I visited. She welcomed me warmly to her home and invited me into her "back room" where we sat and talked for some time in front of a roaring fire. We shared issues of faith, family-life, background, Church, and much more. When our conversation came to a natural conclusion and I suggested I should be going, she suddenly reached over and grabbed me by the hand. "Will you pray with me?" she said. So, I began to pray, but as I did, Gracie slipped off the chair and ended up on the floor. Still holding my hand tightly, she dragged me on to the floor with her. I was panicking! Was she having a stroke, a heart-attack? Was it too warm? Was this a fainting turn? But after a moment's confusion I realised what was happening. She was *kneeling* in prayer, and, if she was doing so, she expected her minister to do likewise.

Every time I visited her over the next ten years – and that was often – we knelt in front of the fire and prayed. Over and over again Gracie created for us a moment of prayerful holiness. Though I never asked her, I suspect she knelt *every time* she prayed at home, such was her devotion to her God: "Kneel and adore him: the Lord is his name."

In our Church tradition we don't kneel much in prayer. But maybe we should, especially if kneeling creates for us the atmosphere of prayerful obedience, "the beauty of holiness", Gracie Allen always offered to me.

A prayer for today

As we come in humble devotion, you welcome us into your presence. May we, therefore, approach you surrounded by the "incense of lowness", seeking in "the beauty of holiness" the blessing of our God. Amen

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

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