

To: Father David Nicholson, OSB, monk of Mount Angel Abbey, Oregon

Prinknash Abbey, Cranham, Gloucester GL4 8EX

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Dear Father David,

The Book, 'By Flowing Waters,' arrived here a couple of days ago, and ever since, I have spent every available hour going through this masterpiece, for that is what it is. Where on earth did Dr Ford find time to do all this work?

There is so much of it, that I found it difficult to put it down. I have sung through lots of the pieces to get the feel of Plainsong wedded to the English text. At first I found this difficult, but after repeating a piece four or five times I found that I was getting the hang of it. Obviously you have to find your own rhythms for each piece, as there are no bar lines. This may be a good thing.

I've been asking myself as to how I would get a group of our fellows to sing this music. I would first of all have to learn the pieces myself, to find the best interpretation of music and text. The given music and text certainly give you enough of the bare bones to make an acceptable piece of liturgy.

The Book itself is marvellously laid out and produced. And like the New English Hymnal, it will sell even before it is opened.

I would like to have your own views on the book, and especially I would like to know how you teach the music to your choir.

One of the great problems of the English Language is the many mixed and weak syllables sung in jublations, which are not found in Latin. The two syllables of 'butter' being a case in point. But one must also say that in some of the large operatic works, and in the music of the Anglican liturgy, not to mention Oratorios with English texts, composers and singers have their own way of getting over this. It comes back to what I said before, that before teaching the pieces to the choir, you have to learn the music and decide upon an interpretation.

I'm going to let the Panel of Monastic Musicians see the book, and it will be good to discuss it with them. A few of us can meet in the early autumn, and I look forward to knowing their views.

It was very good of you to send me this splendid piece of work, and it will be interesting too to see how the Chicago Volume compares with it when it comes out.

Again, thank you very much for being so kind in letting me see the Book. And many congratulations on the work.

Fraternally Yours,

Fr. Charles [Watson, OSB]