

Miss Davies-Cooke produced a small book of meditations in 1957, entitled 'Thoughts Now and Then'. It can be found in the British Library and in the Carmelite community library at Aylesford.

Here is an example.

GREETINGS

In former days, the usual greeting was 'All hail', or 'Hail', preceding the words of salutation or welcome.

The Angel Gabriel, appearing to our Lady, prefaced the communication he brought to her from almighty God by saying: 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women' (Luke 1 28). Another important salutation was that of St Elizabeth, who, when Our Lady visited her, cried with a loud voice and said: 'Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?' (Luke 1 42-43).

Our Lord's own prayer, the 'Our Father', and the 'Hail Mary', are chief among the prayers of the Church, and what a wonderful thought it is that we are permitted to use the self-same words.

The 'Our Father', comprising Praise, Hope, Resignation, Supplication and Repentance. The 'Hail Mary', repeating with the angel the salutation of the approval of God Almighty; and with St Elizabeth, the humble fervour of complete abnegation towards her own cousin. 'Whence is this that the mother of my Lords should come to me?' (Luke 1 43). She might have considered it only right and proper that the young girl should climb the long hill to greet and congratulate her.

How strange and inconsistent it is that many otherwise believing Christians should deny to God's Mother the recognition of the high destiny God has allotted her. Most decent human beings deeply resent any ignoring or want of courtesy towards their own in others. Logically, the First Lady, not only of one's own country but of the whole world, would be the one all should bow before, as the mother of Jesus, the king of glory.

She, above all, is in a position to draw us nearer to him, and to answer the prayer of the Church, which ends the Hail Mary: 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death.'

Amongst the peoples of the world the greetings vary, and change, between each other, in the course of time. Years ago, Germans would say: 'Grúss Gott', but later, unfortunately, this changed to 'Heil Hitler'. In England, we use 'Good Morning' as in France, 'Bonjour', but it is more usual for us to say: 'How do you do?', not really meaning to enquire after each other's health. An irascible old gentleman once retorted: 'How do I do? How should I do?'

But it is our words of parting, which are most significant. 'Goodbye' we say, and are often

answered by 'Oh, don't say that!' But what better wish could be expressed than 'God be with you', which is the true meaning?

The French say 'Adieu', which we ourselves sometimes use, and which has the same meaning. The Spaniards, too, saying 'Adios', and the Italians 'Addio'.

All unwittingly, English-speaking people daily use the prayer: 'God be with you'.

Goodbye.