



My Christian Journey: In Places Lived

Marianne Dorman

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Over the years, people have commented, "Why don't you write about your life?" To write a chronological autobiography never appealed to me. Thus, I abandoned the idea until about five years ago when having morning tea with my Byzantium scholar-friend in Sydney. We were discussing some aspect of Classical Roman history when the subject of genius loci (spirit of the place) entered our conversation. On the bus back to my flat in Lane Cove, this idea kept niggling at me. Perhaps, I could write about the places (loci) in which I have lived and the effect of these on my Christian journey, firstly as a child, then as a student, wife, mother, educator, writer, and an admirer of all that is beautiful, as expressed in most music, worship in the Eastern and some Western traditions, literature, painting, people, and the natural world. The result is this book, beginning in a small country town, Cowra, some three hundred kilometres south-west of Sydney, Australia, then to a smaller island, Great Britain, where I lived mainly in Oxford and ending on yet a smaller island in Puget Sound, Whidbey, close to the Canadian border. As well as being influenced by various places, so by people. These include Fr. John Hope of Christ Church St. Laurence, Sydney as a teenager and the Lady Margaret Professor in Oxford, Dr. Rowan Williams when I first arrived in this University City. Perhaps the person who influenced me mostly was not one I actually met in person but came to know through my research. He is the divine Lancelot Andrewes who has been part of my life for more years than I can remember and whose sermons and devotions are embedded in my being. In later years, I have been grateful to the renowned biblical scholar, Fr. Raymond Brown who gave me a fresh and scholarly understanding of the New Testament. Last but not least, has been the Franciscan, Fr. Richard Rohr who has taught me the necessity of non-dualistic consciousness for spiritual growth. As much as places and people have helped to shape me, none has more than the Potter and Pantocrator who has moulded and reshaped this lump of clay constantly in my Christian journey.

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