

**Ini Kopuria**  
**died 6 June 1945**  
**Founder of the Melanesian**  
**Brothers**



In 1924-1925, Ini Kopuria developed what became the Ira Retasasiu (meaning 'company of brothers'), commonly called the Melanesian Brotherhood or Tasiu.

Born in the early 1900s near Maravovo, Guadalcanal, he was sent to school first at St. Michael's Pamua on Makira in 1913, and later to Norfolk Island. He joined the Native Armed Constabulary, rose to the rank of Sergeant, and was stationed on Guadalcanal. In 1924, following an intense religious experience, he decided to form a brotherhood to take Christianity to the non-Christian villages on Guadalcanal. He was influenced by his knowledge of English orders of monks with the three-fold vow (obedience, poverty and chastity), the short-lived St. Aidan's Brotherhood (1916-1920) which Rev. Charles Fox formed to spread Christianity to inland villages on Makira while Ini was at school there, and the Melanesian Mission itself, which was supportive of indigenous religious orders. Bishop Steward encouraged this indigenous

vehicle for spreading Christianity.

Ira Retasasiu was founded on 28 October 1925, in consultation with Bishop Steward, once Ini Kopuria's teacher at Maravovo. Ini took a life vow and gave his land at Tabalia to the Brotherhood, which became their headquarters. He and the first seven brothers began missionary work in the Solomon Islands, which was later extended to other areas of the diocese. The Brotherhood declined in the 1940s and 1950s, by which time most people had accepted Christianity, but there was a revival in the late 1950s when the Brotherhood's focus was altered to Christian revival and, in 1957, their work spread further into Papua New Guinea. Ini also began the Order of Companions of the Brothers, formed from men and women who promised to help the Brothers through prayer and funding, ensuring that the Tasiu had a true indigenous base.

Ini Kopuria remained Head Brother until 1940, when he left, absolved from his lifelong vow, and married. He spent the rest of his days as a village deacon in Guadalcanal, until he died in 1945.

*The Diocese of Chester has links with the Anglican Church of Melanesia*

# **St Cross Newsletter**

**May 2025**

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*The Vicar writes.....*

Last month when I wrote I said that my prayer was that St Cross would see a good number of visitors over Easter, and that our services would run smoothly and safely, with the joy of Jesus Risen being felt in good measure by all who came.

It was a joy to see so many people on Easter Day especially with many of our regular congregation away visiting family. The Monday of Holy Week saw so many people coming together from various churches in our Deanery to worship in the Parish Hall using a Taizé style of worship. It's not everyone's cup of tea but there's no doubt that this style of worship which is quite simple and gives plenty of time for quiet prayer does enable some people to encounter the living God in a very personal way. And especially those less used to formal liturgical worship.

By contrast, the Maundy Thursday service saw a very low attendance this year and looking ahead I think we need to reconsider what we do here. I've also decided that Ascension

Day which falls on a Thursday, should be celebrated using a Taizé Service in the evening rather than the Sung Eucharist (historically, numbers for this tend to be small, too). The Eucharist will be celebrated for the Ascension at our normal Wednesday service on the 28<sup>th</sup> May.

The annual meeting took place the week after Easter and that was very well attended. It was a good meeting which finished with mixed feelings because one of our Readers, Mary, had decided the time had come for her to retire from licensed ministry due to her health. It was a joy to reflect, particularly on her time with us over the last nine years and to celebrate the many ways in which she has contributed to the life of this church and helped many of us in our own faith journeys. But when you add on her service in her previous Diocese (Chelmsford) making a total of twenty-one as a licensed Reader, it is a tremendous achievement and reflection of her commitment and dedication to Christ's work in his Church.



Mary fully deserves a well-earned rest now with Owen who has been an immense support to her throughout her ministry.

It was a fitting tribute I believe to receive the news from Wilmslow Wells for Africa the same weekend that the projects

mentioned in last month's newsletter have already been accomplished and I thank Mary for putting us in contact with this charity which helps to provide clean water for people living in very poor conditions.

May we continue in May to enjoy the season of Eastertide.

Yours, in Christ

*Paul*

### Occasional Offices in April



**Funeral**  
**April 1      Josephine Dodd**

### Diary for May

#### **Mondays**

**2-4pm      Monday Together in the Parish Room**

Fellowship, refreshments and activities supporting the work of the church.

#### **Tuesday 13 May**

**7.30pm      Lectio Divina (on Teams)**

#### **Thursday 15 May**

**2pm      Mothers' Union**

#### **Thursday 29 May**

**Ascension Day**

**7.30pm      Taizé Service**