

# All Saints Parish Paper

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## THE ASSISTANT PRIEST WRITES:

In September we keep another feast of Our Lady, a later addition to the Calendar than the Assumption, but no less significant: Mary's Nativity, celebrated on 8 September.

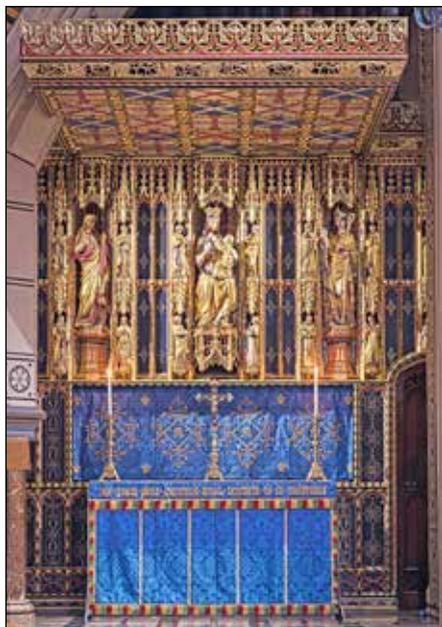
Mary always points away from herself and towards her Son. Her significance is rightly tied to her son's immeasurably greater significance and we sense that, like John the Baptist, she would happily declare, 'He must increase and I must decrease'. So we honour Mary, the Mother of God, with an eye on her horizon. We look beyond her to her Son, to the Light of the World.

But this is only part of the story. Saint Augustine of Hippo, who died in the year 430, wrote:

The Church observes the birth of John [the Baptist] as a holy day; and *none of the other great ones of old* is solemnly commemorated in this way. We celebrate John's birth, as we celebrate Christ's.

*(Sermon 293: 1 – 3)*

Augustine is reminding his listeners that it was the customary practice for a saint to be remembered, not on the date on which he or she began his life in this world, but on the date on which the saint began life in heaven. Therefore, the saint's real birthday, the true *dies natalis*, is the day of their death. Augustine, in telling us that celebrating John the Baptist's 'birthday' is unusual, confirms for us that the Nativity of Mary was not being celebrated in the West in his time. This



*The Lady Altar*

*Photograph: Andrew Prior*

feast originated in Jerusalem, during the 400s; it was celebrated in Constantinople by the year 500 and then, finally, in Rome by the seventh century.

Beginning to celebrate the Nativity of Mary was a turning point in Christian understanding. The Church's decision to add this third 'nativity' to its calendar, in addition to those of Our Lord and John the Baptist, followed the increase in veneration of the Blessed Virgin in the years following

the Council of Ephesus in 431. That council met a year after Augustine died. It affirmed that Mary was *Theotokos*, the Bearer, or Mother, of God. The celebration of her birthday (nine logical months after the feast of Immaculate Conception), signals what happened at the Council of Ephesus: the Church's recognition of Mary's central rôle in the events of our salvation. So, while this feast points forward, it also insists that Mary had value in herself, not just as a necessary link in a theological daisy-chain. Mary was a person who was born as John was and Jesus was, but also as you and I were.

The birth of Mary, like the birth of John the Baptist, is a sign that God is doing something new, but not just that. The incarnation demonstrates our relationship with God as flesh and blood human beings. Here we celebrate that humanity of Mary which God embraced and elevated in order that we all should be exalted to an intimate relationship with him, by that grace with which Mary was filled. Grace, the newly revealed characteristic of God in the New Testament scriptures, was acknowledged by the angel in this unique human life. Mary demonstrates that it is also a human quality, gifted by God, in which we can share.

The law indeed was given through Moses; **grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**

Mary was born as we are born and she did great things *with* God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

Remember Mary's song, the Magnificat, words we are more accustomed to hear at Evensong or daily evening prayer:

'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.

Here the young woman Mary, having accepted Gabriel's news and responded with a 'yes' to God's proposal that she will bear his Son, recognizes in her experience the pattern of how God deals with any of us.

He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.

The feast of Mary's birth recalls that she, full of grace, is also one of us, which means that we can emulate her, be filled with God's grace ourselves. We do this by pointing to Jesus, but also in our daily routine, in all our relationships and encounters. We can be as she was, full of grace, in recognising the true value of those we know and encounter, not as powerful or significant people by some worldly measure, but as children of God and therefore dear to us as well.

That principle that God works with and through those who make no claim for themselves, including the empty-handed and downhearted, informs the whole of Mary's song. Mary sees God's dealings with her as the manner of his activity throughout history: this is what God is like, *gracious*. Just as God has exalted her, an ordinary person, so God is graciously, generously, *for* all of us, especially when we feel most downhearted, rejected or misunderstood.

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As we approach the first Sunday in September it is good to be able to add a family celebration from our community to Sung Mass that day. Judith Mather, who is probably the only adult member of All Saints ever to have attended the church from within a month of her birth, is well

known to us all and now a valued member of our PCC: she and her husband Joe will celebrate their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary during Sung Mass on September 6<sup>th</sup>. As with so many other events this year the celebration has had to be scaled down a little but, as you will read in a piece from Judith below, her innate exuberance has prevailed over all pandemic limitations.

On the last Sunday of August we said farewell to our Organ Scholar of the last two years, Jordan Wong, whose skill and flexibility have been invaluable during a period of change in our music staff and the more recent difficulties associated with the lockdown. He played for Mass on his last Sunday and we will miss his contribution to our liturgical music as we wish him the very best for his future career in law and church music. He has written a little about his time with us below.

Fr Pip Bevan who moved to Fitzrovia, partly to be within reach of All Saints, has also written for this edition, partly as a result of *Paparazzo* Martin Woolley having captured an image of him arriving for weekday Mass on his new chariot. A picture may be worth a great many words, but I thought this one would be a little cryptic without some explanation from the subject!

It has been encouraging to see people making their way back to Mass in church but it will be many months before everything will be back to normal: it is pleasing, however, to report that some choral singing will soon be possible. We are continuing to investigate the means by which we can continue to offer live streaming in this constantly changing landscape. Many thanks to those who have already contributed financially to this project; some of the messages accompanying contributions have been very moving, not least one received last month

from a lady in North Wales who had last set foot in All Saints 75 years ago but has been sustained by our Masses throughout this period, during which no church has been open where she lives.

I hope you are keeping well and also finding ways return to actual worship, if not with us in your local parishes.

With prayers and best wishes,

*Fr Michael*

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## ALL SAINTS MEMORIES

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I first came to All Saints, Margaret Street in July 1973 having been born on June 20<sup>th</sup> 1973. I was two weeks old! To be honest I don't remember a lot about that occasion but my parents, Pat and Tony Hawkins, told me that, until I was baptized, I couldn't pass the font, and I didn't do so until after my baptism about six months later. I was baptized in the font at the back of church by my uncle, Fr Frank Hawkins. I mention this because, during Fr Michael Marshall's incumbency, baptisms usually took place at the front of the church on what I called a railway sleeper with a bowl on top.

I have sat with my family in various seats /places around the church. When I was a small child, I always sat in the front row with my mum and my gran so I could watch my dad serving as MC and Sub Deacon and so I could see him read the Epistle. I was very proud of my dad and, when he wore the best white vestments, I was fascinated by the dolphin on the back.

A member of the congregation once said to my mum that they thought we were a one-parent family as Dad was always in the sanctuary serving or looking after the strong room and the candles. Dad also used to help Joe Kirkham run the All

Saints Club. This is where my love for 'hula hoops' crisps and cheese cubes began as I used to sit on the not-so-hotplate in the window!!! This used to keep me quiet while the grown-ups talked about grown-up stuff. This was an amazing part of my childhood as I met so many different people, Lords, ladies, artists, actors, Archbishops, Bishops, lawyers, QCs, MPs and wonderful ordinary people.



*Judith Mather*

I used to come to All Saints every Saturday with my Dad as Mum worked very hard as a hairdresser and Saturday was her busiest day. We called it 'daddy daycare'. I helped my dad prepare the sanctuary for Sunday, including changing the candles and altar frontals.

My favourite job was hoovering the carpet in the sanctuary. I think I might have been the first woman in the sanctuary! But what people don't know is I was the biggest stickler for straight candles. My Dad and I spent quite a while with 1 and 2p coins making sure the candles were perfectly upright. Even to this day I'll have a word with John Forde if they are not correct! (Sorry, John, for criticizing.) Another favourite memory of this time is that Dad looked after the strong room and we treated all those treasures with love and care and as you would expect from any custodians at All Saints especially the unbleached candles and the jewelled funeral pall.

I was confirmed by the Rt Revd Ambrose Weekes in the eighties (who also gave a pontifical blessing at our wedding). My dad first met Bishop Ambrose in the 1960s and they became great friends.

Joe and I were married on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1995. My adopted godfather David

Paton performed the marriage and Bishop Ambrose gave his pontifical blessing. Our wedding was 'grand' and I'm proud of that!

Few of our friends are religious and it gave me great pleasure to tell them that Bishop Ambrose was not the Pope as they thought.

The entire service was 'grand': the liturgy, the music, the serving. If you ever have the opportunity to arrange a service at All Saints, then make it 'grand'.

The choir was amazing, Nick Luff was organist and I was so proud of our church that day as it showed off the best All Saints can be!! I can't believe how many non-churchgoers were impressed and moved and come to carol services now.

My dad walked me down the aisle to 'I Was Glad' by Parry. That was really unnatural for him as he would have liked to have been in a cassock and cotta. The Mass setting was Gounod's 'Messe Solonnelle', which I would love to hear in full at All Saints soon. The hymns we chose were, 'Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones', 'Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken' (my school hymn), and 'Love Divine All Loves Excelling'. We left the church to Widor's Toccata.

We had our photographs taken in the courtyard and had our wedding breakfast in what was then the Berners Hotel around the corner from All Saints.

All Saints is the most remarkable special place and I can honestly say it will be my love from my cradle to my grave. RIP Revd Ambrose Weekes, Fr David Paton and Nick Luff: wonderful people.

*Judith Mather*

## *Jordan writes:*

It is somewhat difficult to believe that it has already been two years since I moved to London, almost to the day. I can still remember having to lift all those boxes and suitcases down the creaky college staircase in Cambridge, into the van heading for the city. There is that strangely contradictory feeling that I have just started at All Saints not long ago, yet also that I have been here for a long time.

Even after two years, I am still taken by the beauty of the place, the traditions, the liturgy, and I feel privileged to have served and added to its livelihood with music, for which this church has never stopped being a great muse. Perhaps a rather dramatic two years during my time as organ scholar, or so I have been told, and coming back to play in August has certainly felt even more surreal, though no less enjoyable. The services have often been my highlights of the week, especially compared to law school, dare I say...

I have enjoyed great camaraderie with the choir, and it is certainly one of the things



I will miss the most. Many thanks especially to Jeremiah, for being my first guide to All Saints, fellow enthusiast for indulgent music, and a great friend. Many pleasant connections were also made in the courtyard, which I will equally treasure.

At the moment, I have no plan musically: it will be interesting to see what comes along when churches are back in full swing, whenever that might be. It will be strange no longer having a regular commitment devoted to church music (as it already has been since March!). Sadly, it may be time to hang up the organ shoes, perhaps temporarily, or indefinitely — who knows; or perhaps a return to the piano, my ‘mother’ instrument. At the very least, I will be looking for an organ in London for regular practice, or perhaps even a church or churches for which I can continue to play, if such is possible alongside a solicitor’s career in London.

I shall be eager to return to visit All Saints in its full glory, hopefully soon.

*Jordan Wong*  
*John Birch Organ Scholar 2018-20*

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## *From the Churchwardens*

### **Appointment of Fourteenth Incumbent — Process and Progress**

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In the January Parish Paper Fr Adam Atkinson gave an outline timescale for the process in ‘Discussion and Decision on Sacramental Ministry and the Appointment of a New Incumbent’. Sixty five people took part in conversations with Fr Adam during January and February. The timescale was then severely disrupted by the Pandemic,

with the PCC meeting scheduled for late March and the Meeting of Parishioners and APCM scheduled for late April being postponed for the foreseeable future.

Fr Adam prepared his report on the conversations for the Bishops of London and Fulham in April. This was then circulated to members of the PCC to inform a review of

the Resolution under the House of Bishops Declaration, passed in November 2016.

In accordance with the direction of the Diocesan Bishop, the Benefice was formally declared Vacant by the Registrar on 22 June 2020. As Fr Moses had ceased to be incumbent on 3 November 2019 the applicable legislation\* required the PCC to complete and submit the Statement describing the Conditions, Needs and Traditions of the Parish (the Parish Profile) and to appoint the two Parish Representatives within just 28 days, by Monday 20 July. In anticipation, some background work had been done on the objective parts of the Statement and in mid June the members of the PCC were asked to complete a questionnaire on the Parish Vision and Person Specification, based on the Diocesan proforma. Various views were expressed. These were collated together and a balanced distillation was produced and incorporated into a draft Profile which, with some amendments, was approved by a correspondence vote by the PCC following a 'Zoomed' meeting on Monday 13 July. Archdeacon Adam Atkinson made a presentation on the findings of his conversations and a majority of the PCC voted to affirm the Resolution passed in November 2016; consequently the Bishop of London, who remains both the Ordinary and the Patron of the Living, has asked Jonathan, Bishop of Fulham, to exercise Episcopal oversight of the parish according to the provisions of the London Plan. At the same meeting, and after a vote, Kate Hodgetts and John Forde were appointed as the Parish Representatives.

The Bishops of London and Fulham arranged a meeting with the members of the PCC which was held by 'Zoom' on 21 July. In accordance with their request, some adjustment to the order of the Profile text was

made with a new opening sentence written, and then agreed with the Bishop. The Profile has now been completed and we are grateful to Mike Glasspell of Oink Creative Limited, a friend of Judith Mather, for generously making this into an attractively presented document complete with photographs. This will be posted on the Parish website once the advertisements appear in the church press.

Video versions of the Pastoral Letter from the two Bishops and a summary of Archdeacon Adam's consultation have been made available:

<https://youtu.be/wkjI2qbuwL4>

<https://youtu.be/qv9kXNrrhBI>

The text of the Bishops' letter is on the parish website.

The formal involvement of the PCC in the appointment process has now concluded. It should be noted that, although the rôle of the Parish Representatives is limited in law to exercising a right of veto to any candidate presented by the Patron, in practice, in this Diocese, they are usually involved in drawing up the final shortlist and are present at the actual interviews. The Bishop's office is arranging for the vacancy to be advertised in September. Shortlisting will take place in October and interviews will be held in early November. It is hoped that the announcement of an appointment will be made before the end of the year, once the various formalities are completed. We look forward to the Collation and Induction of the next Vicar of All Saints which is now expected to take place during Eastertide next year.

Please pray for all those involved in the appointment process.

*\* Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986; 1 March 2019 Version.*

## Annual Reports for 2019

In recent years there has been a consolidated pack of information for the Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting, held in Lent or Eastertide, which has included the various reports and minutes of the meetings held in the previous year. The Meetings which were expected to be held at the end of April have been postponed to a future date due to the pandemic. This is in accordance with directions from the

Diocese which are similar throughout the Provinces of Canterbury and York.

The lockdown delayed the compilation of some of the usual reports, but all have now been completed except for the report on the electoral roll which is directly related to the date of the annual meetings. The consolidated document containing the various reports is on the Parish website. If you would like to have a paper copy please contact one of the churchwardens.

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## LITURGICAL LIFE IN THE CHURCH 6

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This is the sixth of a series of articles to refresh our memory about how we live as Christian people nurtured in a Catholic discipline and tradition of worship.

This month the series concludes with articles about the six sacraments additional to the Mass, sacramentals, and the Daily Office.

### Baptism

The Gospel is about our relationship with God, a free gift ('grace', the distinctive characteristic of New Testament revelation). Relationships are always personal, particular and local, not theoretical. Jesus taught that the primary family membership is our status as a child of God and brother or sister to him and other Christians. The sacrament of baptism integrates us into this new family: it is the 'new birth' (or 'birth from above') of which he speaks in his conversation with Nicodemus in John 3. Because we believe that sacraments are effectual signs, making real what they signify, this new birth is unrepeatable and does not depend on the faith of the recipient. For this reason, as the church grew, not only adult catechumens (those instructed in the faith in preparation for initiation at Easter)

but also the infant children of believers were brought to be baptized. The anointing with chrism which takes place in Confirmation came, customarily, to be separated from baptism and given by a Bishop at a later stage. Baptism confers full membership in the church, the family of Christ.

### Confirmation

Confirmation is originally an element of the sacrament of Baptism. It came to be separated from baptism and usually (though not always) conferred by a Bishop as the practice of infant baptism became the norm. In Eastern Orthodox churches this 'chrismation' (anointing with chrism oil) has never been separated from baptism and is completed by the priest who baptizes. It confers the gift of the Holy Spirit, of which the oil is the sacramental sign (understood to be the 'seal of the Spirit' mentioned in, e.g., 2 Corinthians 1 and Ephesians 1).

In the reformed Church of England confirmation was administered simply by the laying on of hands with prayer; more recently Anglican revisers have recovered the use of oil, used in this sacrament from before the canon of Scripture was agreed (e.g., in Hippolytus' Apostolic Tradition,

c. 215). Chrism oil, which is also used to anoint the hands of priests at ordination (and in the English Coronation Rite), is consecrated each Holy Week by a Bishop at a special Chrism Mass at which priests renew their ordination vows as they prepare for Easter.

## **Confession**

Confession, or Reconciliation (as this sacrament is now commonly called), is a gift conferred on the Church by our Lord's post-resurrection commission to the disciples in John 20:

Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

(Compare also the gift of 'binding and loosing' to Peter, representing the whole Church, at Matthew 16, further clarified in Matthew 18.)

This sacrament is falling into disuse even in the Roman Catholic Church, where it remains mandatory but where the form of it is now becoming controversial. The practice of 'private' or individual confession is one of several forms it has taken over the Christian centuries, and rites of General or 'group' Confession and Absolution, familiar to Anglicans from our liturgical patrimony, are likely to become more common.

Confession was accounted by Luther a 'Sacrament of the Gospel', but the English reformers relegated it to those ceremonies 'commonly called Sacraments' (Article 25) on the basis that the Lord did not ordain a visible sign or ceremony attaching to it. Nevertheless, a form of confession and absolution is found in the Book of Common

Prayer in the rite for the Visitation of the Sick, indicating that it continued to be normatively used. It is also commended in the BCP in the first Exhortation, which was required to be read to give notice of any celebration of the Eucharist.

The sins confessed are held in absolute confidence between priest and penitent.

Careful self-examination and the articulation of personal failure, with the assurance of forgiveness, is a joyful spiritual discipline which can only add depth to a personal rule of life and bring us closer to God.

## **Matrimony**

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony has some unique features.

First, the two lay people are the technical celebrants of the sacrament: the priest acts as a witness who blesses the marriage.

Because it originates in extra-Biblical social constructs, because monogamy is not the only form of marriage in the Bible, and because marriage has a legal and social function outside of Christian life and practice, the Church has sought to base its sacramental status on New Testament warrants, which are twofold. One is the so-called prohibition of divorce by the Lord (Matthew 19): this is in fact a declaration of divorce as a sin in the context of the Gospel, which is a proclamation of forgiveness. The other warrant is Paul's theological image of the Church as the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5), tied to 'headship'. Neither of these is unproblematic.

It may be better to accept the sacramentality of Marriage as a gift of God in creation and to rejoice in the blessing conferred by the sacramental rite. Undertaken freely by Christians and blessed by the Church it is an

‘effectual sign’ of the ‘inward and spiritual grace’ of a commitment to faithfulness in relationship.

## **Anointing**

The sacrament of anointing with holy oil, formerly known as Extreme Unction, takes its immediate warrant from James 5:

Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.

There is a clear scriptural basis for this sacrament, including its association with ‘elders’ or presbyters: priests, according to Catholic order.

Over time this sacrament had come to be restricted to those in extremis (hence ‘extreme unction’) and given with their deathbed confession. Nevertheless, like most of the sacraments, it could be and was repeated, and, during the renewal of liturgical life and the growth of healing ministry in the twentieth century, it was restored to frequent use across a range of Christian traditions. The terminology in James of ‘saving and raising up’ is clearly about more than physical healing, and associates the sacrament with the gift of resurrection life.

## **Ordination**

Ordination, the setting aside of members of the community as Bishops, priests, and deacons for the sacramental ordering of the whole Body of Christ, is a fundamental characteristic of the Church.

The laying on of hands would, according to longstanding Jewish custom, commission a person to be sent out with full and assured

authority to act in place of the sender. This echoes other cultural traditions and was gathered into Christian polity within the first two centuries of the Church’s life.

The sacramental nature of Orders matters because they situate us firmly within the fullness of the Apostolic faith as an essentially Eucharistic community (which significantly predates the biblical Canon). The Church ‘is like’ this. Our polity has always included some who do not acknowledge it; sometimes they have even been among our Bishops. But holy orders are at the heart of God’s gift of the Church to the world. The very giftedness of orders and sacraments means that they hold their value even when misunderstood or misused.

Like Baptism, Ordination confers a permanent ‘character’ on a person, which guarantees the efficacy of the sacraments they celebrate, permanently changes who they are, and cannot be removed, even if the order is no longer exercised.

## **Sacramentals**

Sacramentals are sacred signs given to aid us in the life of faith. They increase our devotion and help us to draw closer to God; sacramentals are so called because they are ‘like sacraments’ but do not in themselves effect what they signify.

They have developed in response to the needs, culture and special history of particular regions or times. They always include a prayer, often accompanied by a specific sign, such as the laying on of hands, the sign of the cross, or the sprinkling of holy water (which recalls Baptism).

They do not always require the participation of a priest: blessings such as grace at meals may be celebrated by any Christian. Objects of devotion, like rosaries,

icons, statues and medals, may be blessed by a priest and then used and shared by any Christian.

The best known sacramentals, apart from blessings, are the Rosary and Stations of the Cross. Sacramentals also include pilgrimages, processions, commissioning to various ministries, the dedication of a church and altar, holy oils, vestments, relics, and the Christmas Crib.

### **The Daily Office**

The Daily Office derives from the two early forms of Christian liturgical community: monasteries (which celebrated seven or eight such services a day) and cathedrals (which had two services: morning and evening prayer). At the English reformation a form of morning and evening prayer was provided, merging the two traditions into a simpler daily pattern, with the intention that the laity as well as the clergy would

participate. This developed into our daily said services, required of the clergy as a duty, or officium, but available to all.

This distinctive pattern of Anglican worship developed its own liturgical music for Morning Prayer (Matins) and Evening Prayer (Evensong). Choral Matins is now less commonly celebrated, except in some Cathedrals, but Evensong remains the evening worship of parishes which have retained a choral tradition and is also an important part of cathedral and collegiate worship in many places. It has a large repertoire of musical settings, also drawing from Roman Catholic sources, is often augmented by an anthem and a sermon on Sundays, and may be followed by Benediction. The late evening service of Compline, the last office of the monastic day, has been widely revived in Anglicanism in both public and private devotion.

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## **THOUGHTS ON DAILY LIFE DURING THE LOCKDOWN IN FITZROVIA**

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*How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? Psalm 137: 4*

Christmas came with great joy, new life, new birth, a hopeful time. New Year and Epiphany, the Manifestation of Christ to the world, the Baptism of Christ, and then around March 21<sup>st</sup> just after Mothering Sunday, the Coronavirus lockdown arrived and our world changed almost overnight. London and the Parish of All Saints in Fitzrovia became strangely silent, with empty streets, and almost no traffic or aircraft. The cafés, pubs and restaurants, so much part of our local life, were shuttered. From the open door to our balcony on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor there was silence except for the sirens of ambulances. People were in their houses and flats, beginning to work from home where they could. London was eerily

silent, apart from chemists and supermarkets to which people ventured out sparingly. Of course, I belong to the elderly class at 79 years of age, and so could not even get out at all in the first weeks of lockdown. Thank God for Sainsbury's, who, when I had set up our account had noted my age, and offered regular delivery slots throughout the time we were locked down.

I found the lockdown period almost a "foreign land", everything was very out of kilter. Of course the daily round of Offices and Mass streamed from All Saints at Noon were an anchor in the storm. Especial thanks to Fr Michael and the team who kept this vital Sacramental Presence of our Lord broadcast daily like the Manna in the Old Testament. Our act of daily Spiritual Communion was life-giving. Going out

each day to the coffee shops of our parish, usually on my way to Mass or returning home, Giovanni and Susan at Conchiglia, Alex in Hanson Street, Kaffiene, Gitane, and Giovanni at H.T. Harrison in Great Titchfield Street, had been a large part of my life. I have always in my work as a Priest found that “holy loitering” around the parish has always presented opportunities for people to encounter the Gospel. I have never been one for the well cut suit, the stock and linen collar, I have always worked in my cassock, which I learned from my days at Chichester Theological College, and in 1965 as a Curate at St Mary’s, Walton, in Liverpool. Not in any sense of clericalism, but so that people can see a radical Christian presence present to them in the street. Often today the Church is invisible to the majority of people. You are seen as a Priest who is near to them, and available to them. Often people stop you and ask for prayers, perhaps a blessing, or to tell you of things going on in their lives, or that they just need a “listening ear” to unburden their hearts. “Morning Father” or “Mornin’ Farve” is a greeting of friends in the streets of our Fitzrovia Parish. This all stopped in the lockdown, and we entered a strange land. How can we sing the Lord’s song in an alien land?

We learned new skills, Zoom came into our lives, and the Word of The Lord, and His Sacrament came to us in a new way. The Sodality of Mary Mother of Priests, a life-giving community for priests to which I belong, ran seminars, closely followed by our own Diocese and St Mellitus College. It was strange being a Zoom presence at a Board of Trustees for The Museum of Homelessness, but the work continued.

The lockdown brought time and space to think. Richard continued to go into work, and so for a large part of the day I was alone.

For me this brought back times as a young man when I had tried my vocation for seven years at Mount St Bernard Abbey. Fr Bede, our Novice Master, was always quoting the Fathers and saying: *abide in your cell and your cell will teach you everything*. I began again exploring the difference between loneliness and solitude. In the lockdown I was never lonely, but began to explore again what being solitary was. Fr Henri Nouwen puts it so well:

*In solitude we discover that our life is not a possession to be defended, but a gift to be shared. It’s there we recognise that the healing words we speak are not just our own, but are given to us; that the love we can express is part of a greater love; and the new life we bring forth is not a property to cling to, but a gift to be received.*

Also I was reminded again in this strange time of my great grandfather: he was a quiet, poetical Welshman, a Rector’s Warden for thirty years in the same small village church. The family farm bred and trained pit ponies for the mines in South Wales. He met my great grandmother at the Autumn horse fair, and loved her all his life. In his late 80s he spent the winters by the kitchen fire looking intently into the flames, he spent his summers sitting quietly under the boughs of a favourite apple tree in the orchard, his pince-nez glasses almost magically perched on the end of his nose, and the big old family Bible in Welsh on his knee. As a small boy I can remember going up to him and asking him what he did all day, just sitting there under the apple tree reading and staring. *Pippin*, he said, *I am making my soul!* And all these years later his words still resonate in my own life and soul. Great grandfather was preparing himself to die, to go to God. When he did die, he was laid out in the farm parlour, in an open coffin, visited by many

friends and neighbours. After the Requiem Mass and funeral, he was planted like a seed in the ground, his life was celebrated at the farm with a great ham tea, crusty bread, golden butter, with Welsh Cakes, homemade wine, and much gossip! At seventy nine, and in my solitude I thought of my soul; it was a chance to look back over my life and count the cost of the years. Time to repent of times when I did not love as much as I ought to have done, and thank God for His wonderful goodness to me over the years. My life-long asthma and my arthritis have begun to get the better of me, and I am helped in



*Fr Pip in his chariot  
(photo: Martin Woolley)*

travelling distances by my new chariot, which means that I can now attend daily Mass. I am surprised by how physically tired I get, especially in the afternoon. A far cry from my years on Long Island in the Bahamas as a young priest, when I said Mass each day in a different church, and sang four Masses every Sunday, and thought nothing of it, but that is perhaps a story for another time!

*Even when I am old and grey, do not forsake me, my God, 'til I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come. Psalm 71: 18.*

***Fr Philip Bevan***

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## **SERMON for the FEAST of THE ASSUMPTION 2020** **by ✠ Jonathan Baker**

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‘The Feast of Our Lady in Harvest,’ or just, ‘Easter in Summer’ — those are two of the titles given to this day and this feast by our Christian brothers and sisters in parts of southern and eastern Europe. Easter in Summer — and how fitting it is that the epistle for this principal feast of Mary the Mother of the Lord is part of St Paul’s great hymn to the resurrection from his First Letter to the Corinthians. The Assumption of Our Blessed Lady is, of course, the fruit of her Son’s resurrection. As we celebrate Mary’s assumption and proclaim her to be, body and soul, in the glory of heaven, so we affirm our faith in the resurrection of the dead. We are able to say more than we believe in the resurrection, more than

we hope in the resurrection: we are able to say, look, here is a human person taken up into glory, here is what it looks like to say of someone who is a creature as we are, fashioned from the dust: Death, where is your victory? And we are able to say, as we celebrate Mary’s assumption, very specifically, that we believe in, and can see, the resurrection of the *body*. Not for we Christians the speculations of the philosophers about the survival of the soul, not for us the conviction of pagans ancient or modern that our future consists in absorption into the stars or the rivers or the trees, not for us the gloom of the scientific materialists for whom there is nothing beyond the grave but the abyss of non-

existence: no, we proclaim that we shall know God in our bodies — transfigured, yes, glorified, yes, but demonstrably and recognisably ourselves, our perishable nature clothed in imperishability.

To possess a body, even a risen body, a glorified body, requires there to be a space in which that body can dwell: and so as we celebrate the promise of the resurrection life in the Assumption of Mary, we

celebrate the reality of heaven, the place where we shall be at home with God. One of the beautiful symmetries of this feast day is that of the homecoming of the one who gave God a home. Many of you here and many watching online I am sure will be pilgrims to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, England's Nazareth, and you will know that at the heart of Walsingham is the Holy House. One of my fellow Guardians of the Holy House writes that, at Walsingham, we rejoice to say that 'here God has a house and God has a mother'.<sup>1</sup> God has a house. One of the threads running through the Old Testament is that of their quest to make a dwelling place fitting for God Most High — in the tabernacle, the tent, carried by the people of Israel through the wilderness on their journey to the promised land; then in the Temple in Jerusalem. The beauty of the tabernacle, its colours and fabrics; the fittings and lamps and the other holy things which adorned the Temple precincts

and courtyards — all these find their echo in the sanctuaries of our churches, carried over into, and continued in, the worship of God in this the dispensation of the New Covenant. You will know of course that at

the very centre of the Holy of Holies, the most sacred place of worship, in the second and smaller temple built by the people of Israel on their return to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon was — nothing: for



*Bishop Jonathan, preaching for the Assumption*

the Ark of the Covenant, where the very presence of God was known to dwell, was lost when the former temple was destroyed and the people taken into captivity. And in today's first reading from the Apocalypse, St John the Divine sees the vision of heaven, the sanctuary, the holy place, laid open, and the ark of the covenant there. And then the great sign — a woman, whose son is born to rule over all nations. Now the woman clothed with the sun, standing on the moon, can rightly be understood as the symbol of the people of Israel, or of the Church: but surely too she is Mary, the new Ark, the one in whom the creator of all things was pleased to dwell. The Holy of Holies, the House of God and the gate of Heaven, is no longer the innermost recess of a temple built by human hands in brick and in stone; it is no longer an empty space;

1 The Revd Dr Jeremy Sheehy, 'Sacred Space and the Incarnation' in *Sacred Space*, Continuum, 2007 p20

it is a woman, it is Mary, the Lord's mother, whose most inward parts contain 'heaven and earth in little space.'<sup>2</sup>

As we pause and wonder at these truths of our faith, as we gaze in our mind's eye upon the image of the woman clothed with the sun, so we must hold all of this together with our Gospel reading, with the young girl from Nazareth, the 'lassie from the sticks,' in the words of one modern biblical scholar,<sup>3</sup> 'waxen little more than a child,' in Mother Julian's memorable phrase, singing 'Magnificat,' singing the praises of God; and we must remember that these are not two Marys, but one and the same. It is a mistake of some protestant attitudes to Mary of Nazareth to see in her no more than a convenient vessel for God's purposes, a necessary bit of the kit, as it were, needed to bring about the incarnation, but afterwards disposable, of no further interest, the job done. It is, or has been, perhaps, a mistake of some strands in catholic devotion so to emphasise devotion to the glorious Queen of Heaven and thereby minimize the life and witness of the earthly Mary. But here in St Luke's great hymn is the spirit-filled Mother of the Lord singing of God's mercy and God's majesty, here is the Mother of the Lord singing of God's protecting hand on the poor of the Lord; the materially poor, yes of course, but also the poor in spirit, all who know their need of God. Here is the Mary who seems to exemplify the very qualities of the Beatitudes which her Son would teach to be the very hallmarks of blessing. Mary of course is closer to God than we could possibly imagine as the one who bears His Son: but this is not a passive closeness, Mary is not merely the recipient of divine grace as a jar might be filled up with water: no, the water overflows, it is living water, it is active discipleship. Mary

is the one who ponders the things of God in her heart, modelling for us the life of prayer and contemplation; Mary is the one who hurries to tell her cousin Elizabeth of all that the Lord has done in her life, modelling for us evangelisation and witness; Mary is the one who says to the steward at the feast, and pointing to her Son, 'Do whatever he tells you,' modelling for us obedience and discipleship; Mary is the one who most perfectly fulfils her son's words, 'blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it'. From the Cross Jesus gives the beloved disciple, the representative of all disciples, into Mary's hands: and so it is that the Mother of the Church is present at the birth of the Church, as she prays with the apostles and awaits the descent, once more and afresh, of the Holy Spirit who came upon her at the annunciation.

The orthodox theologian Sergius Bulgakov writes passionately of Mary's lifelong vocation to be the Mother of Jesus, the Mother of God: God requires of her<sup>4</sup> constant, testing, trusting and faithful growth in that vocation, growth in holiness: in this she is a disciple with us, and the model of discipleship for us. She is the pattern of the Christian life, the pattern of life in Christ.

And so we return to today's feast. If Mary is the pattern of the Christian life, where can she be, but alive, body and soul, in that place where the Christian life finds its destiny and

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2 Mediaeval carol, c 1420

3 See John Fenton *'The Blessed Virgin Mary'* in *More About Mark* SPCK 2001 p 95

4 See *The Burning Bush: On the Orthodox veneration of the Mother of God* trans Thomas Allan Smith, Grand rapids/Cambridge 2009 See esp ch 4 *'The Glorification of the Mother of God'*.

its fulfilment, its ‘perfect consummation and bliss?’<sup>5</sup> Where can she be but in the heavenly places, a sign, a beacon, for us of God’s purposes for our own lives? Yet one thing more we must say. No more in heaven than on earth is Mary’s a passive or a merely functional rôle. There, she intercedes for all the children of her Son; she is the ‘noonday torch of charity,’ the ‘living spring of hope’.<sup>6</sup> She is Mother of Mercy; she is our gracious advocate; she casts the protecting veil of her maternal care and compassion over all things living, over all creation. She prays the prayers of a mother who witnessed the suffering and death of her own Son for the teenager killed the other day even in the precincts of

this parish.

Blessed are you Mary, pattern of the resurrection life. Blessed are you Mary, who bore the creator in your womb. Blessed are you Mary, pattern of discipleship and model of the Christian life. Blessed are you Mary, assumed body and soul into heaven, who intercedes for us with your Son. And blessed above all others is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Amen.

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5 BCP Burial Office

6 These two are titles accorded to the Blessed Virgin Mary in Dante’s *Paradiso*, Canto XXXIII, 10, 12 (Everyman edn 1995, tr. Allen Mandelbaum)

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## ALL SAINTS, MARGARET STREET Part 4

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### **Kenneth Needham Ross (1951 – 1969)**

In 1951 Bishop William Wand appointed Kenneth Needham Ross as eighth vicar. After a curacy in the Southwell diocese he spent nine years on the staff at Salisbury Theological College and then ten years as Vicar of St John the Baptist, Old Malden in Surrey. Unlike his immediate predecessor he had not worked through a stream of distinctively Anglo-Catholic Churches. While at All Saints, he produced a number of short pamphlets and booklets on the Catholic traditions and practices of the parish. In 1953 *High Mass explained* did exactly that on what was then a modified Prayer Book rite clothed in the full Western ceremonial of the time. He also produced a series of pamphlets for a wider readership on the various sub-Christian cults which were and remain prevalent. His books included *Why I am not a Roman Catholic*, published in 1957 — in the pre-conciliar years. In 1969 at the end of his vicariate

he wrote: “All Saints’, while always remaining avowedly and proudly Anglican has found great strength in the past in a judicious and discriminating willingness to learn from the Roman Catholic Church. I hope and believe that it will continue to do so in the future.” Although Ross questioned elements of Roman dogma, he actually brought distinctly Western practices into All Saints. In his first year Devotions before the Blessed Sacrament advanced into Benediction — something which Mackay had expressly desired thirty years before. In his first Holy Week in 1952 the High Mass of the Easter Vigil was moved from the morning of Holy Saturday until late that night, following the experimental use allowed by Pius XII in 1951, which had been taken up by a number of Anglo-Catholic churches. In 1959 the Blessing of the Chrism and the other oils was quietly added to the High Mass of Maundy Thursday, which was then still celebrated

in the early morning. From 1960 the High Mass of the Last Supper was celebrated in the evening after a separate High Mass of the Chrism earlier in the morning. This was celebrated by the Bishop of London or one of the suffragan bishops at All Saints until 1979, after which more emphasis was placed on the corporate renewal of ordination vows and the service moved to St Paul's from 1980.

From the time of Upton Richards there were various Guilds and Confraternities in the parish; some were branches of Anglo-Catholic Societies and some unique to All Saints. The Confraternity of All Saints was established by Upton Richards in 1865 with the object of uniting young women between the ages of 18 and 30 working in London in a fellowship of prayer and good works. This flourished for many years but was adversely affected by the Second World War and was dissolved in 1952. This opened the way for two new ventures: The Guild of the Sacred Heart open to all and the Fellowship of St Margaret for younger women.

The Guild of the Sacred Heart was established to encourage private prayer. Kenneth Ross commented, "All Saints' has long been famous for the beauty and reverence of its liturgical worship, and there must be thousands to whom corporate worship has meant something entirely different after a visit to All Saints'. I pray that this may never cease to be true. But I become uneasy when I find, as I sometimes do, that people do not always balance participation in this most moving formal worship with a more spontaneous and unliturgical devotion in their private prayers. Whereas our High Mass convincingly challenges folk whose

only idea of worship is of the prayer-meeting variety, I do not find that we are sufficiently alive to the opposite challenge to our liturgical worship. There ought to be more evidence of that warmth of personal devotion which does not depend at all on forms and ceremonies, but which springs straight from the heart. It may be and will be shapeless and sprawling and inarticulate and unpredictable, but that is all right, for it is not liturgical worship but unliturgical devotion. It would be a grievous error if we tried to make our liturgical services spontaneous and extempore; but I cannot but think it a mistake too when people make their private prayers too liturgical." Over ten years later in June 1964 Kenneth Ross wrote that the Guild which had gone on its way steadily, though with a diminishing membership, was an association of people who prayed for All Saints and support it, making their Communion regularly and their confession at least annually. Members specifically undertook to spend half an hour a week in prayer for the conversion of sinners, preferably in church. This was for some usefully undertaken during the silent Holy Hour concluding with Benediction on Thursday evening every week which was however open to all.

The Fellowship of St Margaret for young women attending All Saints met one evening each week 'for purposes of devotion, culture and recreation'. Kenneth Ross added: "That sounds horridly stilted, but you can see the idea!" Three years on in 1955 the Fellowship of St Margaret reported on the previous year's activities, which concluded on the feast of St Margaret of Antioch, their chosen patron saint. Fr [later Metropolitan] Anthony Bloom gave a talk about the Orthodox liturgy and the Church in Russia. There were talks on the

Diocese of Nassau, with which All Saints' had been connected since Roscow Shedden went as bishop, and on the St Pancras Housing Association, founded by Fr Basil Jellicoe, who had lived at 84 Margaret Street, regularly assisting at All Saints.

In anticipation of the centenary of the Parish in 1959 a restoration was undertaken in late 1958 under the direction of the architect Laurence King. The work included an interior decorative scheme which completely overpainted significant parts of Butterfield's original decoration, a new lighting installation, the repositioning of the 1924 statue of Our Lady and the Divine Infant on a corbel bracket with a spirelet above and three new somewhat baroque confessionals. These replaced the perfunctory "Confessional Screens" erected in 1911 early in Mackay's time. King's proposal for a new setting of the Calvary Crucifix beneath the west window of the baptistery was never implemented. The Crucifix was taken down, together with its altar and black hangings, at the time of the internal restoration. It was subsequently given on loan to the Chapel in Wandsworth Prison, where it remains. The final part of King's interior scheme was a timber screen across the south chancel aisle, erected in late 1962. Most of King's other work was subsequently reversed between 1994 and 2014. The remaining parts are the gilding of the previously plain foliated alabaster frieze high above the choir stalls below the clerestory windows, the corbel bracket supporting the statue of our Lady, a small square table in the nave, and two of the three confessionals. The timber screen was replaced in 2007 by the present iron gates in memory of Helen Clayton, the first woman to serve as a churchwarden of All Saints.

Leading up to a Parish Mission in

Eastertide 1959 to be conducted by Fr Jonathan Graham CR, Kenneth Ross wrote: 'Early in this century All Saints' was described by a well-known and sympathetic observer as an "extinct volcano". Whether that was just or not, it certainly started erupting again under Mackay's inspired leadership. The parish work might diminish and almost reach vanishing point, but the mission of All Saints Church to London as a whole increased. The temptation to merely cater for a little pious coterie of musically- or ritualistically-minded persons is one which has always been eschewed here.'

1959 was the centenary of the consecration of the church. In the June Parish Paper in an article entitled "A hundred years of blessings" Kenneth Ross wrote: "Right from its consecration in 1859 Mass has been said daily in All Saints', and the whole lay-out of the church proclaims that it is the Mass that matters. I believe myself that more people will have been converted through attending High Mass here than by hearing the splendid evangelical sermons of past vicars and curates of this place. The high solemnity with which the worship is conducted, coupled with the determination of those participating to make their lives something to join to the Sacrifice of Christ, this brings us right to the heart of the Christian message. What is it that unites high and low together, but the conviction that the Sacrifice of Christ's death is central? The whole purpose of Eucharistic worship is "that we may ever dwell in him and he in us" — and who is *he* but the Lamb of God freely offered for the sins of the world? The Mass is the proclamation of Christ's death, and here we have a part in his dying and rising again. So far as we are concerned, Calvary might just as well not have witnessed the

crucifixion and Margaret Street not have seen a hundred years of Masses, if we are not finding Calvary here and if we are not feeding on Christ throughout the day by faith with thanksgiving.”

The Octave of liturgical celebrations for the Centenary included an exterior procession of the Blessed Sacrament around the parish. The canopy was carried by four Doctors of Divinity, including Eric Mascall. *(Although a monstrance was borrowed for this procession, it was not until 1982 that a monstrance was introduced for Benediction. At the same time the references to the Immaculate Conception and Glorious Assumption were included in the Divine Praises.)*

In 1960 the All Saints Men’s Forum was established for men under 40. Early meetings were addressed by a number of well known guest speakers including Bishop Mervyn Stockwood, Dean Eric Abbot, Fr Trevor Huddleston, C.R. and Peter Boydell, Chancellor of the Dioceses of Oxford, Worcester and Truro. In January 1962 the Men’s Forum and the Fellowship of St Margaret held a joint Christmas party; the Parish Paper reported “It was the first venture of this kind and proved to be a great success, so much so that members of both organisations are determined to repeat it on suitable occasions in the future.” Later in 1962 both were dissolved and “The 84 Club” was formed as a new mixed club for everybody in All Saints under the age of 40. The Club produced *Saints in Fetters*, a dramatically illustrated history of the church, its priests and furnishing. An expanded and improved version was performed on two evenings in October 1963 as an extension of the Dedication Festival. The Club met on Wednesday

evenings for a programme varying between light entertainment and serious discussion. There were a number of distinguished speakers. In 1967 Archbishop T.D. Roberts S.J, who was based at Farm Street, gave an address on the subject of “Vatican II and Authority”. Amongst other activities the Club arranged the coffee mornings which had been started after Sunday High Mass in the Parish Rooms at 84 Margaret Street. In November 1968 the Club arranged the festival party for the congregation; people were encouraged to get their tickets early as there would be guests from St Charles Borromeo, Hinde Street Methodist and St James’ Spanish Place!

There were series of lectures on Monday evenings. A sample from November 1968: Anthony Cæsar spoke on the “Future of Psalm-singing” and Metropolitan Anthony Bloom on “Why use the psalms at all?” The Pope’s representative in England, Archbishop I.E. Cardinale, the Apostolic Delegate, then spoke on “Renewal, Reform and Reunion”.

Kenneth Ross was vicar when both the church and the world were in a time of rapid transition. Liturgical change in the Church of England followed the very significant changes in the Roman Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council. The new Church of England rites (Series 1 and 2) were introduced at All Saints alongside modifications to the ceremonial associated with the Council, but the Eastward position was maintained.

Within the parish some of the most challenging problems were around the resident Choir School for eighteen boys. In the early 1960s an ambitious scheme had been proposed to demolish Nos 6, 7 and 8 Margaret Street and to build a

small commercial office block, a larger Choir School for both resident and non-resident boys with a small suite of rooms for the vicar. In late 1967 it became clear to Fr Ross and the Churchwardens that the School was unsustainable as an educational establishment and would therefore be closed at Easter 1968. What can now be seen to be the inevitable and correct decision created much hostility both inside and outside the Parish.

Fr Ross was much sought after as a confessor. His book *Hearing Confessions* was published in 1974, after his death. Many still remember his undemonstrative, carefully prepared and engaging sermons. He had been a regular contributor and theological adviser to the *Church Times*.

In 1969 Fr Ross moved to Wells as Canon Chancellor. He died in 1970 at the age of 61. Over fifty years later those who were in the parish in Kenneth Ross's time fondly remember a shy but kind and intelligent man.

**The last fifty years and the last five vicars (one Michael, three Davids and another Alan)**

Following Fr Ross there have been five vicars spanning a period of half a century. Four are still living: Michael Marshall, David Hope, David Hutt and Alan Moses. The tenth vicar, David Sparrow, served five years from 1976 until 1981, when he sadly died in office after a long illness at the age of just 45.

*John Forde*

**NEW WEBSITE, NEW ADDRESSES**

The church has a new website, and a new address where it lives. But don't worry, if you put the old address into your computer, it will re-direct you to the right place automatically. The new address is:

**asms.uk**

We hope you'll find that rather easier to remember, and pass on to friends. You can put 'www' on the front, or not — either way it will get you there.

This means the parish emails are changing too. But again, the old addresses will continue to work indefinitely. The new addresses are:

**assistantpriest@asms.uk**

**office@asms.uk**

Do drop us an email at the office if you encounter any problems — if, say, you used to rely on part of the old site, but can't find the equivalent page on the new one.

We considered adopting the address "asms.org" but the anagram persuaded us otherwise.

**James Sherwood**

Parish Office

office@asms.uk

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## SERMON for TRINITY 9

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Last week I ended with some fake news, promising The Calming of the Storm. Today's Gospel was not the one generally entitled The Calming of the Storm, but we did hear *a* calming of *a* storm, the second of the sea-miracles, a more personal story involving the group of disciples in general and Peter in particular. I had mentally replaced one piece of the Gospel jigsaw with one of a similar shape. That is very much how the Gospels work: human story-telling taking events and *placing* them to illustrate the truth they demonstrate. Stories, like humankind, are made in the image of God.

As I said last week, at the heart of the Gospels we hear about Jesus' teaching ministry, though always with an eye to his Passion and Resurrection. This core is made up of parables, and miracles which are parables, plus a couple of sermons which are expanded into formal discourses by John, interwoven with the parables and miracles.

We are now in the midst of three Sundays focusing on these Miracles, or as John more accurately describes them, Signs, which are enacted parables. Their point is what is *signified*. Last week we heard the feeding of the five thousand, which is followed by the feeding of the four thousand, events which point us to God's gathering-in and feeding both Jews and gentiles with the bread of his word, enacted for us daily at the altar in the Mass.

Today we've heard the strange story of Jesus sending his friends out in a boat in a storm while himself withdrawing for quiet prayer: this withdrawal precedes a significant re-entry. The disciples are frightened both by the storm and, as we've just heard, by him walking towards them across the sea. He responds, 'do not be afraid, it is I', 'do not be afraid' being the single most frequent *divine* command in scripture. Then impulsive

Peter tries to meet him on the waves, sets out, begins to sink and is rescued.

As with last week's miracle or sign scriptural context abounds: briefly, the waters of chaos being calmed by the Spirit at creation; our rescue, in the person of Noah, from the great Flood; the deep history of Israel's God as one who rides upon the storm and can make his way on the waters; and Passover, the parting of the Red Sea. The theme is found in creation narrative, repeated in psalms and canticles, enacted in the Exodus. The people of God, tossed about on the storms of life, are rescued by the one who redeems us, saves us; we are recalled to faith, to trust the promise that though we fail and sink, we are pulled back to safety by our loving God. The underlying scripture proclaims that only God can master this terrifying element, telling us who Jesus is. Today's Gospel is a disclosure of the same type as the Transfiguration. Peter's experience is ours, a reassurance that Christ is always at hand for each of us as well as for the Church as a whole. As suggested last week, there is more detail in Fr Jeffrey John's book *The Meaning in the Miracles*.

Last week in setting the scene for the miracles, I mentioned the Jewish teaching method, *Haggadah*, 'narrative' in which scriptural texts are used to interpret what is reported, weaving together threads of prophecy-fulfilment, symbolism, typology, allegory and numerology. The reported event reapplies the truths, hopes, patterns and meanings of the scriptural past to the present, and the key to unlocking the meaning is found in the Old Testament stories underlying the telling.

This way of communicating narrative is innately human. Knowing it from fiction or the telling of myths helps us to understand what the scriptural writers are doing: this

is human communication, with the truth-stakes raised.

Compare, at the most basic level, films of books and remakes of films. In a more nuanced way some directors reuse or recreate scenes and images from other films; some call this intertextuality; that just means one text using another text to tell a story. Fr Richard Leonard SJ writes that this is characteristic of animated films like *Shrek*, which set me thinking about how many sophisticated references and re-tellings were present in the animated cartoons of my youth, from Bugs Bunny to Duckula. That led me in turn to my favourite director, Federico Fellini. Fellini, whose working life began as a cartoonist, constructed his films from a series of characters which he drew; there was no fixed script (that's a parable of creation). As he found his voice, his films became interlocking scenes worked up from these images, weaving together elements from his remembered past. All are beautiful, funny and human. Having just watched again his most personal film, *Amarcord*, (Riminese dialect for 'I remember'), I was struck by a comment by one of his producers, Renzo Rossellini: 'all Fellini's films are *frescoes*'. For an Italian, growing up with that sort of art all around him, this does not mean just frescoes in the technical sense. He means visual narratives in fragmentary episodes, carefully arranged to help us interpret them. An orthodox iconostasis, mediæval wall paintings and, nearer to hand, the images all around us on these walls and in our stained-glass windows, all do this, they tell us the Gospel.

Rossellini compares the famous frescoes of the Sistine Chapel, where Michelangelo, asked by Pope Julius to paint a geometrically ornamented ceiling with the twelve apostles around the decoration, instead painted Old Testament scenes, organizing the composition so that the narrative begins at the altar with the story of *The Creation of*

*the Heavens and Earth*, followed by *The Creation of Adam and Eve* and the *Expulsion from the Garden of Eden*. And, note for today, *Noah and the Great Flood*. The figures around these frescoes are accompanied by prophets and sibyls who foretold the coming of Christ. In the four corners of the room are scenes depicting the Salvation of Israel.

As with religious art, not every Fellini film is as effective in communication as every other, but within the completeness of his work each film is an episode with individual scenes. Fellini himself said:

*All my films turn upon this idea... a world without love, characters full of selfishness, people exploiting one other, and in the midst of it all, there is always... a little creature who wants to give love and who lives for love.*

That is a profoundly Catholic sensibility, almost echoing S Therese of Lisieux.

Many of Fellini's films have inspired films, or scenes in films, by other directors, acknowledging the power and truth of his stories, their human resonance. The incarnation enfleshes religious story telling as the most *human* story telling. The Gospel is the story of how God, to show his love for us, achieves human resonance, makes his Word heard in our words. Those frescoes, and what you see depicted all around you in this building, are Gospels. The miracles or signs are scenes which communicate truth if we don't get stuck on the surface of them.

We don't need to be fearful that this somehow undermines the truth of the Gospel. This resonance with our lives makes it our story: we are pulled from the waves when we fall or fail. That is why the gospels are the Gospel, capital G, the primary Christian scripture. They are narratives, not propositions, statements or laws. Jesus didn't die for a proposition. He entered into our life, including our death, so that we could become fully human, alive in the image of God.

*Fr Michael*

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## MUSIC LIST SEPTEMBER 2020

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### ✘ SUNDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup> AFTER TRINITY

#### MASS AT NOON

*Motet:* I was glad — Parry

*Communion Hymn:* 309 (i) Victim divine  
thy grace we claim

*Voluntary:* Toccata from Symphonie 5  
in F minor Op 42 — Widor

### ✘ SUNDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup> AFTER TRINITY

#### MASS AT NOON

*Motet:* O how amiable — Weelkes

*Communion Hymn:* 312 (T425) Where the  
appointed sacrifice

*Voluntary:* A voluntary for my  
Ladye Neville — Byrd

### ✘ SUNDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup> AFTER TRINITY

#### MASS AT NOON

*Motet:* Ertödt uns durch dein güte  
BWV 22 — Bach

*Communion Hymn:* 308 (T279) Thee we  
adore, O hidden Saviour, thee

*Voluntary:* Fugue on a theme of Corelli  
BWV 579 — Bach

### ✘ SUNDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup> AFTER TRINITY

#### MASS AT NOON

*Motet:* A new commandment — Tallis

*Communion Hymn:* 275 Blessed Jesu,  
Mary's son

*Voluntary:* Præludium in G — Buxtehude

*All services are streamed on YouTube.*

*Motets and hymns are pre-recorded from the choir's homes,  
and produced specially for each service.*

### KEEPING IN TOUCH

As well as the monthly **Parish Paper**, you can keep in touch with life at All Saints through:

**The All Saints Website:** [asms.uk](http://asms.uk)

#### **The Weekly Parish Email**

This gives weekly news of events, people to pray for, and a short letter from the Assistant Priest. You can subscribe by sending the Parish Office an email titled News and Events/Weekly Newsletter to: [office@asms.uk](mailto:office@asms.uk)

#### **Assistant Priest:**

The Revd Dr Michael Bowie 07581 180963

Email: [Assistantpriest@asms.uk](mailto:Assistantpriest@asms.uk)

#### **Honorary Assistant Priest:**

The Revd Julian Browning 020 7286 6034

#### **Parish Office:**

020 7636 1788

Email: [office@asms.uk](mailto:office@asms.uk)

## – ALL SAINTS MARGARET STREET –

(Registered Charity Number: 1132895)

### **Parish Legacy Policy**

At All Saints Church, we welcome all gifts in Wills, however large or small, and we promise to use your gift to make a difference in our parish.  
Our PCC legacy policy is to encourage people to leave bequests specifically to one of our two related charities:

#### **All Saints Choir & Music Trust** (Charity Number: 802994)

which supports the choral tradition at All Saints. The capital of the Choir & Music Trust cannot be spent, only the income.

or

#### **All Saints Foundation** (Charity Number: 273390)

which assists the PCC in the care of our Grade 1 listed heritage buildings.  
The capital of the All Saints Foundation can be spent.

### **Non Designated Bequests**

When bequests which have not been designated for any specific purpose are received, the PCC's policy is to direct these to one or other of the two All Saints Trusts, or to some specific piece of restoration work or capital expenditure.

***You can be confident that your gift will have a long—lasting effect rather than being used to pay day—to—day expenses.***

### **Remembering Donors**

The names of donors will be entered in our Chantry Book and they will be remembered in prayer each year on the anniversary of their death.

### **Contacting Us about Bequests**

If you would like to discuss making a bequest to All Saints, please contact:  
The Vicar/Honorary Treasurer/The All Saints Choir and Music Trust Administrator/  
The All Saints Foundation Administrator

c/o The Vicarage, 7 Margaret Street, London W1W 8JG.

The Parish Office can put you in touch with these individuals by email.

Please email in confidence: [office@asms.uk](mailto:office@asms.uk)

or telephone 020 7636 1788.

### **Mission Projects**

All Saints year—round fundraising efforts support:

**The Church Army** hostels and programmes empowering homeless women into independent living in Marylebone (**The Marylebone Project**)

**The USPG—led UMOJA, HIV Project in Zimbabwe,**

enabling people living with HIV and Aids to live positive lives, and

**The Soup Kitchen** (American International Church, Tottenham Court Road) feeding up to 80 vulnerable people daily

## CALENDAR and INTENTIONS for SEPTEMBER

1	S Giles	Medical researchers
2	<i>Feria</i>	Preachers
3	S Gregory the Great	Pope Francis
4	S Cuthbert	Diocese of Durham
5	S Teresa of Calcutta	Christians in India
<b>6</b>	<b>✠ TRINITY 13</b>	<b>Parish and People</b>
7	<i>Feria</i>	Christian healing ministries
<b>8</b>	<b>NATIVITY of the BVM</b>	Thanksgiving for Our Lady
9	<i>Feria</i>	Anglican Religious Communities
10	<i>Feria</i>	Christian Unity
11	<i>Feria</i>	Persecuted Christians
12	Holy Name of Mary	Devotion to our Lady
<b>13</b>	<b>✠ TRINITY 14</b>	<b>Parish and People</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>HOLY CROSS DAY</b>	Christians in Jerusalem
15	Our Lady at the Cross	Parents and carers
16	Ss Cornelius and Cyprian	Theologians and teachers
17	S Hildegard of Bingen	Church musicians
18	<i>Feria</i>	Persecuted Christians
19	Monthly Requiem	Faithful departed
<b>20</b>	<b>✠ TRINITY 15</b>	<b>Parish and People</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>S MATTHEW</b>	Evangelists
22	<i>Feria</i>	Practical discipleship
23	S Pius of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio)	Spiritual directors
24	Our Lady of Walsingham	Shrines of OLW
25	S Sergei of Radonezh	Russian Christians
26	<i>of BVM</i>	Our Deanery and Area Dean
<b>27</b>	<b>✠ TRINITY 16</b>	<b>Parish and People</b>
28	<i>Feria</i>	School chaplains
<b>29</b>	<b>S MICHAEL &amp; ALL ANGELS</b>	Thanksgiving for the angels
30	S Jerome	Translators of Scripture

