



# All Saints Parish Paper

7, MARGARET STREET, LONDON W1W 8JG  
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## FR MICHAEL WRITES:

This month's Parish Paper focuses on our recently celebrated Festival, which we were fortunate to complete just before the return to lockdown, allowing people to be physically present at the Liturgies as well as to join us online. There are sermons from all our Festival preachers and some photos. I have also included Fr McGeary's wonderful sermon from our parish Requiem for Fr Gerald Reddington.

In addition to the Festival content this month, part 2 of my series on Anglicanism and its essential Catholicity focuses on Scripture (the first 'pillar' of the Lambeth Quadrilateral). There is also a note from Janet Drake about the Marylebone Project, which we support through outward giving.

By the time you read this we hope the church will be opening again for the second week of Advent as we prepare to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord. As one *Tablet* commentator has written, one small benefit of the second lockdown is that, for once, the commercial pre-Christmas assault won't start before Advent!



*The Elevation at Mass on All Saints Day*

This year there will be no Christmas Midnight Mass at All Saints: the usual difficulty of getting to church (and of getting home again) is magnified this year, so we have decided to offer a Vigil Sung Mass of Christmas and Blessing of the Crib at **6pm on the 24th** and Sung Mass of the Day as usual at **11am on the 25th**.

Daily Mass will continue to be streamed at noon on all other days, for which I continue to be extremely grateful to Huw Pryce, Paul Weston and others who help them. If you are watching you will have noticed the augmented visual content; as lockdown has bitten again it is gratifying to report an increase in participation, especially in the choral liturgies which we are now able to offer with new microphones

(our first purchase from the donations we have received towards ensuring that live-streaming can be a permanent feature of our offering of worship).

A word about *giving*: this year has, unsurprisingly, presented financial challenges to the parish. The lack of congregations and visitors in the church building as well as the loss of a few regular givers has contributed to a shortfall in our budgeted income. We have been reticent about asking people for money at a time when many are under pressure, but we will need to revisit our regular giving programme if we are to set things right next year. Those of you who read the weekly parish email know that the *Parish Giving Scheme* is the most effective way of offering regular financial support to the parish. I'll repeat the information here, in the hope that some of you will feel able to sign up: it allows contributions to be

anonymous and deals with GiftAid, which saves our office a lot of time.

It is no longer possible to register for the scheme online.

There are now two options, for each of which you need the **parish code: 230623075**.

You can join the scheme either by telephoning 0333 002 1271 and quoting the code or by requesting a form from the Parish Office.

The following link will take you to a page which explains how the scheme works:

**[www.paritygiving.org.uk/donors/how-it-works](http://www.paritygiving.org.uk/donors/how-it-works)**

I hope you are well and look forward to seeing you at All Saints before too long. Meanwhile have a blessed Advent and a happy and holy Christmas.

*Fr Michael*

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## SERMON for SUNG MASS on ALL SAINTS DAY 2020

*Recorded by Fr Martin Browne OSB*

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Greetings in the name of the Lord, from Glenstal Abbey in County Limerick, Ireland. I join you from our abbey church. I was delighted, several months ago, to accept Fr Michael's invitation to preach for you today. We both presumed back then that life would be a bit more normal by now and that I would be able to travel to London for the festival. Our abbey school, of which I'm Headmaster, is on half-term at the moment and I was looking forward to having a few days away. Sadly, travel is still impossible, but even though



*Fr Martin Browne OSB*

I can't come to you, I am very happy indeed that you can, as it were, come to me and visit our church here in Glenstal, virtually, for the next few minutes, thus allowing me to keep my promise to be the preacher for this All Saints Festival Eucharist. I don't think it's too fanciful to suggest that joining the congregation who are physically present in Margaret Street in this

way, along with the many others who are worshipping online, is itself an eloquent expression of the reality of the Communion of Saints for our time. Let us give thanks

that though physically separated we can be united in worship, in communion with each other and with the saints in glory. This sermon is pre-recorded, but once our 10.00 am Community Mass here is over, I will be racing back to my room, clicking on the link and joining you and praying with you for the service. It will be an odd kind of out-of-body experience to watch a live service at which I myself am the preacher!

This isn't the correct part of the liturgy for acts of penitence, but I have something of a confession to make. I love this feast dearly. It is hopeful and joyful. The readings are beautiful. The hymns and antiphons of the Office as celebrated in my monastery are among my favourite texts and melodies of the year. But for all that, I struggle to hold the various themes of the feast in tension. I find them difficult to harmonise.

There's the glory of the Church Triumphant, worshipping the Lamb. In a church like All Saints, where the Anglican emphasis on worship 'in the beauty of holiness' is especially treasured, as it is in many Benedictine monasteries, including my own, I'm sure this is an important theme. But even when our hearts and voices are in the clouds, our feet must remain on the earth... Surrounded oftentimes not by beauty or sanctity, but the opposite. And speaking of clouds, there's also the idea of the 'cloud of witnesses' — the Christian forebears whom the Church recognises and honours as saints: those whose images adorn our churches, whom we honour and whose intercession and solidarity we crave. But like many in our society these days, I find that I'm not that keen on heroes very much anymore. The darker sides of people once thought to be leaders and luminaries

have been uncovered with such frequency and such regularity in recent years that it's hard to look up to anyone these days. And then there are the anonymous saints — the folk who aren't depicted in icons or statues, whose lives may or may not have been outwardly remarkable, but who were faithful and have entered upon their eternal reward.

How do we hold all these themes in tension? How do we rejoice with the saints in heaven, without floating off into the clouds ourselves? How do we honour the Church in heaven, without becoming triumphalist and self-satisfied? How do we celebrate our religious ancestors and their teaching and example, without ignoring their flaws and the elements of our heritage that have been — and sometimes still are — sinfully toxic? And how do our godly neighbours and heroic grannies fit into this panoply of spiritual superstars?

As I was putting the finishing touches to this sermon, news came in of the horrific terror attack in the basilica of Notre Dame in Nice on Thursday, where three worshippers were murdered, one of them by beheading. Today's First Reading immediately became more real. *'They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple.'* These were ordinary people. They weren't preachers or activists, clerics, theologians or founders. In all probability, they had no idea of the danger that lay ahead of them when they left their homes to visit the church on Thursday morning. They didn't face the kind of great internal existential struggle before consciously choosing to lay down their lives for Christ

that one sometimes reads about in lives of the saints. They simply went to church. And there, this atrocity was perpetrated on them.

Despite the fact that they were basically in the wrong place at the wrong time and the consequently random nature of their slaughter, the Church has traditionally recognised people who die in this way as martyrs. Because they were killed '*in odium fidei*' — out of hatred of the faith — they are judged to be 'martyrs' — witnesses to Jesus Christ. As you may know, my Church has a hugely complex system for recognising and canonising new saints, requiring much historical and theological examination and medical attestation of miracles and so on. This process of 'saint-making' takes a long time. In the case of martyrs, however, it is simpler. The very fact of their martyrdom, their witness to Christ, even if, as was the case in Nice, it was involuntary, is itself understood as evidence of sanctity.

And here is a truth that might just help reconcile and integrate those different streams and themes of this feast of All Saints. Holiness... sanctity... beatitude... or however we wish to describe it, *demands* something of us. It *costs* us. It's not a coincidence that for a long time, nearly all the people whom the Church recognised formally as saints were in fact martyrs. They paid the ultimate price. In time, other kinds of luminous Christian witness were recognised by the Church too. But whether a saint dies violently at a young age in a time of persecution, or peacefully at home in bed after a long life, holiness is *always* demanding and costly. It calls for self-emptying, for self-giving, and for self-offering. How could it not? For holy

Christian lives reflect the given, broken and shared life of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus. In the words of Malcolm Guite, the saints are '*the gathered glories of his wounded love*'. Holiness is demanding, but it doesn't often demand the kind of horror visited upon those martyrs in Nice last week. It is usually much more ordinary. It simply demands that we recognise who we are before God, and in entirely undramatic ways open ourselves to his love and do our best to live by the light of his Gospel.

Holy Christian lives reflect the values and characteristics of the Beatitudes. We will never succumb to undue churchy triumphalism or vainglory if we take the Beatitudes seriously. We will never fall into the trap of disconnecting sanctity from the reality of messy human reality if we read the Beatitudes carefully. We will never struggle to utter the names of our godly relatives and friends in the same breath as those of the apostles and greatest teachers of the faith if we consider their lives in the light of the Beatitudes.

One of the benefits of streamed worship is that one can go back afterwards and look again. I dare to recommend that everyone listening now, whether in church or online, would be well advised, later today or in the days to come, to click on the link for the recording of this Mass. Tempting as the Mozart *Kyrie* and *Gloria* may be, scroll or scrub past them until you get to the Gospel and listen to the Beatitudes again. When the Gospel is finished, press 'pause' — and don't even think of re-playing the sermon!

What then?

I have only one suggestion.

Play it again...

*Fr Martin*

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## SERMON for EVENSONG and BENEDICTION on ALL SAINTS DAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2020

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‘Father, how do I get to be holy and strong?’ God sends his messengers in many strange guises. In my case, tucked away in the backstreets of the East End, one of them is Eddie. Eddie’s a computer genius, highly intelligent and wildly keen on being a good Christian. He’s had more than his fair share of knocks in his life, and he lives in a rather squalid flat on the estate behind my vicarage.



*Fr Peter McGeary, Vicar of  
St Mary's, Cable Street*

Eddie thinks and thinks, and then comes to me armed with questions. There can't be many parishes where the priest has to give his view on whether the early Church owed more to the Greek philosophers than the Platonists over coffee after Mass on Sunday — it certainly beats arguments about the flower rota!

‘How do I get to be holy and strong?’ Good question. I suppose it's a question that comes up on All Saints Day in the minds of many. Our liturgy today bids us consider the numberless, nameless body of Christian men and women who have gone before us, to give thanks for their faith and their witness, and to pray that we might follow in their footsteps and so one day be counted among their number.

Very good. But what does that mean? What made *them* holy and strong? And what am *I* supposed to do? On one level of course, that is a ridiculous question:

*we can't do anything, all is by the grace of God, grace with which we co-operate as best we can in the enterprise we call 'discipleship'. But even so, the voice of Eddie still rings in my ears. What makes me think somebody is a saint? What do I think makes them holy?*

I always find it difficult to preach on saints in the abstract: I have to be thinking about particular people for it to make any sense to me. So here goes:

In the past few months, five priests whom I knew and respected very much have died on me. We remembered one of them here only yesterday. Although I did not see any of them that often, I miss them all very much. They were all very different personalities, but each served God faithfully and wonderfully. What was it that made me think they were ‘holy’?

I've been pondering what, if anything, they had in common. And I think I have found four things, four words, each beginning with the letter H (I think you are meant to do this sort of thing these days: ‘the 4 Hs of holiness’, perhaps?).

**1: Heart spoke to heart.** They said their prayers. They didn't make a big thing about it, they just got on with it. The boring unflashy stuff (Daily Office, Mass, that sort of thing) without which anything of spiritual substance is

unthinkable. Their spiritual lives had shape and they had discipline.

And side by side with this was a real intellectual curiosity — and not just about what some people think of as ‘theology’. They knew that we live in a facile age, where any sense of nuance or complexity is regarded with suspicion, where stupidity is proclaimed as a virtue. So heart needed brain, and vice versa, each feeding and being fed by the other.

**2: Hospitality.** They were generous and welcoming. You never got the impression that you were booked in for a fifty minute session with them. They were each hugely busy men, but when you rang the doorbell or ‘phoned them up, they gave the impression that they were just putting the kettle on (or, in one case, about to mix an especially lethal mixture of gin and sherry) and they had all the time you needed.

And of course at the heart of that hospitality was the ritual, formalised exchange of gift and duty that we call the sacraments.

**3: Humour.** In contrast to the rather dour, humourless Church that we seem to inhabit at the moment, they each had a deep and healthy sense of the absurd, an instinctive ability to puncture the false pride, cant and foolishness that characterises so much Church discourse at the moment. They knew that we are reborn into the Kingdom of Heaven not with repentance only, but with laughter also.

**4: Hinterland.** By this I mean that they had something going on in their lives that was not ecclesiastical. In days

of old I suppose that this would have been something like beekeeping or trainspotting if you were a clergyman, but nowadays there are other things. Having a hinterland kept them from being too churchy, too boring. It reminded them as well that God gets around: he is not restricted to the visible, institutional manifestation of his Body. Thank heaven!

So there we are. Five priests. And four things they had in common. They lived lives of joy and thankfulness, happy in their own skins, knowing that through adversity, God had not deserted them; fiercely aware of their foibles and weaknesses; but knowing too that God had called them to his service *because* of those foibles and weaknesses, not despite them. They stood and stand as examples for all of us to follow.

So how do I get to be holy and strong? Well, Eddie (and anybody else who is listening): you don’t. You pray and live and laugh and repent, and so bit by bit are drawn closer to the Mercy and the Grace, the

*Ground of being, and granite of it;*  
*past all*

*Grasp God, throned behind*  
*Death, with a sovereignty that heeds*  
*but hides, bodes but abides;*  
(G.M. Hopkins:  
The Wreck of the Deutschland, 32)

*In loving memory of:*

Freddie Jackson  
Geoffrey Kirk  
David Paton  
Gerald Reddington  
Bill Scott  
*Priests*

*Fr Peter McGeary*

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## SERMON for the REQUIEM on ALL SOULS DAY 2020

### by FR JOHN PRITCHARD

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**Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.'**

When I was a curate in Berkhamsted and learning from Fr Michael the importance of black vestments, I recall I would regularly visit a lady in the community and one day while seeing her in hospital she said to me, "**Fr John, what will it be like? Death? What is going to happen to me?**"

On my journey to her that day, I had turned on the radio in my car (and believing there are no accidents in signs and symbols), in hindsight it was helpful that playing on the radio was that number originally from the Bible and now from Lloyd-Webber's and Tim Rice's musical *'Joseph'*.

*Close every door to me! keep those I love from me! Children of Israel are never alone.*

With this melody and sentiment of these words ringing in my mind and heart, I said to Muriel, there are many things I don't know about death, but whatever happens I can promise that you will not be alone, whatever happens you will not be abandoned or lost to God! For the Bible tells me so.

Throughout the covenantal history of



*Fr John Pritchard*

salvation, everything in our scriptural tradition reminds us that God will not give up on us, everything we know about God revealed in Jesus, is that he will not let you be lost or abandoned. For the comfort we proclaim this side of the grave will be realised in the life to come as our words pass away, and we come to see more clearly what we now proclaim only in part.

You see, though these days of All Saints and All Souls remind us that no Christian is solitary; what they also remind us is that there is a power in God which we might not yet have fully grasped or believed.

Yes, we continue to pray for the souls of the faithful departed, as they make their way to God perhaps. But we lament maybe not our loss, but possibly that we do not fully appreciate just how committed and devoted to creation God is and will always be.

This isn't just rosy eternal optimism, but a true and tangible covenant that God reveals in Jesus Christ as Saviour, so that you Children of All Saints, Margaret Street, you the Children of the internet looking in, are not in this world or in the world to come going to be lost to God. You are not and will never be cut off from the God who made you, who sustains you and welcomes you into his nearer presence even if you've

done such a terrible thing as serve on the PCC!

This is why as clergy, and as baptised Christians, yes of course we mourn the loss of our friends and those who have encouraged us in the faith, we might even pray for them thinking we can influence them as much in death as we might in life, but we see death through a completely different lens.

Momentarily painful, but life resolved in a moment, hurt and failure by this world's standards wiped away and the loneliness of this life resolved as we understand true union, true communion in a more fully revealed life with God.

Our union with the saints, with the faithful departed and with God should for us surpass the need for clarity through death, and not only be realised in it! but celebrated in this moment with thanksgiving around memories and souls caught up in the presence of Christ.

For St John in his Gospel reminds us that the hour will come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and live!

But sisters and brothers, have you not also heard the voice of the Son of God? and doesn't that voice command us to live in



*The catafalque at the All Souls Day Requiem*

God more fully? Have you not heard his voice in our Scriptures speak to you? Have you not heard him in the sacrament of your Baptism welcome you as equal brothers and sisters in the Kingdom of God? Do you not hear him in the Sacrament of the Altar lead you forward in his way and not your

own? Or is hearing the voice of love just too painful and the journey of transformation in Christ scary and unbearable.

The Dead have their consolation, as Dumbledore reminds us, “do not pity the dead, Harry, pity the living. And above all those who live without love.”

In the death of my father a couple of months ago, sad as that occasion was, there were so many moments where the love of God was revealed and his presence known. In the death of a dear friend of ours a couple of months before that, with eyes to see, the love of God was revealed. This is the constant outworking of God, to be revealed in love, and that moment with Muriel who died a couple of days later. Muriel you will never be alone, you will never be abandoned — that too was the revelation of God's truest nature to be covenantal and to let those who fear most being lost, be told you are not lost at all.

Bishop Jack, former Diocesan of



Sheffield, used to say: on Holy Saturday Jesus goes to the most lost parts of Hell to restore to God all of creation.

Our Good News is that we worship a determined and covenantal God, who when we come into his presence the only awkwardness will be, that we never fully grasped the breadth, depth and nature of his true love or compassion, or at least never fully responded to it.

Our commemoration of the Faithful Departed allows us for a moment to remember and pray for a more intimate group of people in our lives, it allows us to remember with thanksgiving before God those whom we have known more directly: those who gave us life, or who nurtured us in faith and journeyed with us on the Way.

But we are reminded that there is nothing to be done beyond what Christ has done. There is nothing to be accomplished other than that which Christ has already

accomplished.

And though we wait for the final consummation of God's new creation in Christ; those who are Christ's, whether or not they have passed through death, we join in prayer and through Sacrament looking for God's kingdom to be revealed finally and in all its fullness.

Do not fear God or what is to come, for when we come before the unutterable goodness and holiness of God, we will know his grace, mercy and love and may those who have gone before us, bear testimony to us that God is love and in Love God is revealed and within the powers of the love of God you and I have been created. Trust in God, trust in the promises of God revealed in scripture and Sacrament, and Live.

May the Souls of the faithful departed Rest in peace: **And rise in Glory.**

*Fr John*

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## **GERALD REDDINGTON, PRIEST, 8/8/34 – 17/6/20** **REQUIEM MASS, 31 OCTOBER 2020**

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It was a while before I met Gerald Reddington. I arrived here as the Curate in the spring of 1990, and he had just left to take up the post of Vicar of St Barnabas, Ealing. We bumped into each other eventually of course, but my initial contact was not with him, but rather with those who had been influenced by him, in particular a very diverse group of fascinating people, who were profoundly indebted to his pastoral ministry.

What made this man such a special priest, I wondered. I never got to know him that well, and all I can do here is hazard



*Fr Gerald Reddington*

one or two guesses. I wonder if they ring any bells with you, you who come here today to do the only thing you can do for Gerald now, here in the church to which he was so committed for so long, and that is to thank God for his life and to commend him to his love and mercy.

Firstly I think that he wasn't afraid of human beings. That sounds silly, doesn't it, but the Church is full of priests who don't like human beings, who can't cope with the baffling, often annoying diversity that constitutes the human race, especially those who come to church!

Gerald wasn't afraid of people. He accepted people no matter who they were, and tried to understand them as they were — or rather as who they thought they were — and in so doing he transformed and enriched them. This costly ministry of listening and attention that he exercised in so many different contexts touched countless lives for good.

And secondly, I think Gerald wasn't afraid of himself. It would be intrusive and impertinent for me to dwell on this,

but we all know that he had more than his fair share of tragedy and affliction to deal with in his life. I do not know by what wondrous means he accepted all that life threw at him, but he did not deny, evade or suppress it. Somehow it all became grist to his pastoral mill, a way of beginning to understand the afflictions of others.

And he accepted his own foibles, weaknesses, sins and stupidities as well. Fully and totally. He was not a great priest despite his weaknesses, he was a great priest *because* of them.

We live in a world and — God help us — a Church, poisoned by the need for clarity, certainty and seriousness. We inhabit the language of the boardroom, not the Gospels. May this stockbroker-turned-priest whom we mourn today be a reminder of the central, joyous truth that the story at the centre of our faith, the story of Jesus Christ — a narrative of suffering, death and resurrection — is not a narrative of success, but one of transfigured failure.

For that, for Gerald, unending thanks.

*Fr Peter McGeary*

## **ANNUAL MEETING OF PARISHIONERS AND ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING**

### ***From the Churchwardens:***

The meetings were held in Church immediately after Mass on SUNDAY 18<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2020.

Christopher Self and John Forde were elected as Churchwardens for the year 2020 – 2021.

Cedric Stephens, Frances O'Neil and Janet Drake were elected as Lay Members of the Deanery Synod for period 2020 – 2023.

Geoffrey Woodcock, John McWhinney, Judith Mather and Keith Postance were elected to the Parochial Church Council for a three-year term 2020 – 2023.

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## *What is the Church of England? How is it Catholic? 2*

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### Scripture

#### **The Lambeth Quadrilateral — Resolution 12, Lambeth III 1888**

Having explained last month where the Lambeth Quadrilateral came from and why it matters I need to repeat the content of its four articles:

- (a) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as ‘containing all things necessary to salvation’, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.
- (b) The Apostles’ Creed, as the Baptismal symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.
- (c) The two sacraments ordained by Christ himself — Baptism and the Supper of the Lord — ministered with unailing use of Christ’s words of institution, and of the elements ordained by him.
- (d) The historic episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of his Church.

I now want to consider article a), Scripture.

### Scripture

#### **What is the Bible?**

It may seem obvious and straightforward to say, as the first pillar of the Lambeth Quadrilateral states, that the Bible is a sufficient rule of faith. But what is the Bible? The word ‘Bible’ is shorthand for the unwieldy collection of books which comprise Christian Scripture (importantly not always and everywhere the *same*

collection of books).

#### **Scripture and the Canon of the New Testament**

I begin with a statement about the Bible, one which I often repeat. This is a simple matter of history and logic, which has a theologically important implication: ‘the Church comes before the Bible’. It was the Church, about **350** years after the death of Jesus, which determined what went into the Bible, what constitutes Scripture for Christians (this is what we call the **Canon** of Scripture — the Greek word Canon meaning a ‘rule’, or standard, or set of parameters). So, while deep knowledge and understanding of Scripture is vital for us, Christianity, and therefore the Church, does not *come out of* the Bible: it may come out of events and revelation which can be found reported there, but it is in fact the Bible that *comes out of* Christianity, or more precisely out of the Christian Church. Otherwise, there would not be any authoritatively identifiable Christians until about 350 years after Jesus’ death, lacking an authoritatively defined Bible (the first reference to a Canon of 27 New Testament books is found in St Athanasius’ Easter letter of 367).

So to say that the Bible is a sufficient rule of faith for the Church has a circularity about it which needs acknowledgement. Moreover, to call this collection of writings a ‘rule of faith’ or even to say that it contains ‘all things necessary to salvation’ is helpful at one level and unhelpful at another. ‘Smite the Amalekites’ and ‘love your enemy’ are both biblical commands; which is the rule? We need a guide, a way

of reading which will make sense of this unwieldy but precious volume.

### **Liturgical Theology and the origins of 'Scripture'**

This is where liturgical theology bears upon both Scripture and faith; what we do in worship, how we order it and which texts we use are the key. These things are constitutive of Christianity itself.

Worship also most clearly expresses our doctrinal positions as Christians: as an ancient Latin tag puts it, *lex orandi, lex credendi* ('the rule of prayer is the rule of faith'). And the Bible, in its composition and formation into a canon of Scripture, is intimately bound up with a liturgical setting, whether theoretical or real.

Unlike several Churches of the Reformation, the Church of England retained the traditional lectionary diet, expanding the provision for the daily office but retaining the thematic emphases for seasons and Sundays even as she was causing the whole text to be read 'in course' (i.e. in its entirety from start to finish) on weekdays.

More importantly still (almost uniquely among the reformed Churches), she insisted that the readings did not require a sermon on all occasions. The bare reading of Scripture remained a proclamation in itself, as it had always been. By this our Church showed that she continued instinctively to regard Scripture as a *part of worship* (the place from which it had, in fact, arisen) rather than a didactic tool. Scripture continued to be mediated through, and as part of, the liturgy.

Richard Hooker (1554 – 1600), the most authoritative Anglican voice

between the first Prayer Books and the Lambeth Conferences, wrote about this in his *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*.

Somewhat they are displeased in that we follow not the method of reading which in their judgment is most commendable, the method used in some foreign Churches, where Scriptures are read *before* the time of divine service, and without either choice or stint appointed by any determinate order. Nevertheless, till such time as they shall vouchsafe to us some just and sufficient reason to the contrary, we must by their patience, if not allowance, retain the ancient received custom which we now observe. For with us the reading of Scripture in the Church is a part of our Church liturgy, a special portion of the service which we do to God, and not an exercise to spend the time, when one doth wait for another's coming, till the assembly of them that shall afterwards worship him shall be complete.

Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, 5.19.5

Here's some modern commentary on that from John Barton and John Halliburton:

Of course it was never in doubt for Hooker that the Bible is addressed from God to man; but he was open to the possibility that, in its liturgical function, it can become a word spoken by man in the presence of God: a word by which the worshipping community sustains and transmits its faith as it confesses its identity with the people of God in the Scriptures. This is indeed 'edifying' in the sense that it builds up the Christian community and helps to form the character of those who participate in it; but it is far more than merely *didactic*.

By continually ‘reciting’ the story which the Scriptures tell, the Church at worship actually engages in dialogue with God — ...much dialogue even in human relationships takes the form of the recitation of significant narrative. People get to know each other by telling each other the story of their lives...The accidents of the Elizabethan settlement throw up an approach to the Bible which sees it contextualized in liturgy, functioning as a focus for the Church’s corporate belief not just by being an external norm of faith but by being itself a form of prayer, a text by which the worshipping community praises God.

John Barton & John Halliburton, ‘Story & Liturgy’ in *Believing in the Church*, p 99.

The liturgical tradition clearly privileges certain parts of Scripture over others (and in a quite different way from the privileging of proof texts in modern arguments). To take an uncontroversial example, the Psalms are and have been used as liturgical texts from the time of their composition and they are far more prominent in the liturgical diet of Scripture, especially if we include the daily office, than any other book. Here most clearly we see Scripture used as worship, not teaching.

### **The privileging of the Gospels in the Liturgical tradition**

More controversially to some, in all mainstream liturgical traditions the Gospels are uniquely privileged in a different and significant way. The classical ‘shape’ of the Eucharistic Liturgy, whether Eastern or Western (including most western protestantism), reaches the first of its two climactic points with

the proclamation of the Gospel reading (the second climax being the Eucharistic Prayer/Communion). The Gospel reading is traditionally proclaimed by a deacon or priest, it is the obvious high-point of the Scripture readings (up to four in a Sunday Eucharist, if we count the Psalm). Its proclamation is often attended by special ceremonial, such as (at least) the procession of a separate Gospel Book to the chancel step or centre of the nave. This part of the Eucharist is a clear acted parable of the special character of this reading. And there is a continuous tradition of Eucharistic lectionaries with the Gospel reading in the primary position, usually controlling the choice of other readings.

### **Whose book is the Bible?**

Once we understand that the Church is logically prior to the Scriptures, even as it submits to the authority of God articulated in them, we are in a position to understand that they only have full meaning *within* the Church and that, in a sense, *only* the Church can read or teach them with authority. Jesus himself, after all, did not write or dictate any Scriptures. But it is Jesus, whom we believe to be the Christ, whom Christians seek distinctively to follow. We may approach him through the Scriptures, but he is found there at one remove, mediated through human language, in an account guaranteed for us by the Church.

Clearly this makes the identification or definition of the Church, in the first four centuries and now, an urgent task for Christians and this is exactly the interrogation of the Church which Anglican reformers and their immediate heirs undertook. It also opens, perhaps uncomfortably, questions about the

location of a coherent final authority for Christians.

The Lambeth Quadrilateral makes it clear that Scripture alone cannot define us — it may provide a sufficient rule of faith and tell us the things necessary for salvation, but the Bible is the Church's book. So even when we are seeking a definition of the Christian Church through engaging with it, it will not be sufficient to search the Scriptures without guidance from the Church which formed it.

### **The Gospels: a guide to Scripture**

In any case the Scriptures are not univocal: they speak with many voices from many times; they are a messy human incarnation, the Word of God mediated in human words. So if we call them the rule of faith or regard them as authoritative, and then find conflicting messages between or even within individual books and writers, how do we know where the authoritative words are? In a war of texts (a frequent event in our history) which text trumps the others? I would argue that both the Church in its treatment of Scripture and Scripture itself in its ecclesiastical origins lead us to see the Gospels as our guide to the rest of the Bible.

Formally, the Gospels are *Bioi*, a genre which recorded the lives of significant people, the ancient-world predecessor of what we call biography. So the person of Jesus is the subject. As the Prologue to John (1: 1 – 18) proclaims, Jesus is the incarnate Word of God. Here John gives us the key to the whole collection of books. We can understand the Bible to be the mediation of the Word of God in human words (a 'literary incarnation'). The Gospels are the core texts of the Christian Bible (because their subject is

the person, Jesus the Christ).

This puts an account of Jesus, the incarnate Word, at the centre of any reading. It acts as a reminder that Jesus himself is always more important than anything written about Jesus.

The most systematic modern attempt at defining Anglican doctrine, the Archbishops' doctrine commission report of 1938, *Doctrine in the Church of England*, noted the primacy of the Gospels and the importance of a holistic reading:

Within the body of Scripture as a whole a special authority has always been attached to the recorded teaching of our Lord as contained in the Gospels.

The Christian Church rests on the belief that in Jesus Christ there is given to mankind the supreme revelation of God. This revelation is given through all that He was and did, and thus includes but is not limited to His teaching.

It follows... that the method of direct approach to isolated texts in our Lord's teaching... is liable to error. pp 32 ff

I would argue that we need to construct a *thematic* method of interpreting the Bible, based upon the person, life, teaching and works of Christ. In developing and applying such a method of interpretation the primary subject is the person and teaching of Jesus, with the incarnation, cross and resurrection at the centre. The whole event of the incarnation, rather than just recorded words, is the point of reference. Any question needs to be answered with this in view. Clearly this is more difficult than reading words off a page as if they were unmediated truths; it requires a subtler and deeper familiarity

with the whole portrayal of Jesus and indeed the whole Bible. But, carefully applied, the benefits are considerable in helping to liberate Scripture from human constraints (including both inerrancy and relativism).

It follows from this that any use of the non-Gospel New Testament (or the Old Testament) as a starting point skews the biblical witness away from the Word of God (the Christ) and towards *human words*, such as the specific and community-focused theological and polemical concerns of Paul and others. We should always beware readings of Scripture which put other texts above the Gospels: any arguments that rely solely on *non-Gospel* texts (especially if they are few and/or isolated texts) are to be doubted.

A yet more significant example of this skewing can be found in the doctrine of Penal Substitutionary Atonement, held by many Evangelicals, including some Anglicans, to be a core Christian belief. According to Penal Substitutionary Atonement (articulated as the core of the 11-point basis of faith of the UK Evangelical Alliance, 2005), every human being is ‘corrupted by sin’ which ‘incurs divine wrath and judgement’, resulting in ‘eternal condemnation’. Salvation is won from this wrathful and condemning God by what is, in effect, a human sacrifice — that of God’s own Son who has taken human form for the purpose. This is ‘the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross, dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, so reconciling us with God’.

This theory depends on a hopelessly strained reading of a handful of scattered

New Testament verses. Its real origin is psychological: the reformers’ image of God as a wrathful and condemning king. Luther recognised that we could not earn forgiveness from such a king by good works or by any other means of our own, but assumed that forgiveness still had to be won. The death of Jesus on the cross, resembling an Old Testament sacrifice, provided the mechanism, the answer to the question. But a more holistic reading of the New Testament shows that this question is imposed on the Cross from outside. The life and work of Jesus is, taken as a whole, a bold announcement that God is compassionate and forgiving rather than wrathful and condemning. Luther and St Paul were right to assert that we can’t earn forgiveness by our own efforts. But the good news, the Gospel, is not that Jesus *earned* it for us, but that it is a free and entirely unwarranted gift of grace from a compassionate God. Penal Substitutionary Atonement (and some parallel Catholic imagery of sin and damnation) is probably one reason why Christianity suffers radical decline in the developed world. We don’t fear our rulers; the wrathful and condemning king doesn’t get us into Church. He does, however, stand gloweringly behind the fundamentalist obsession with sex, power and money.

So the **Gospels** are the key both to Scripture and Christian faith. The Creeds, which do not include unbiblical doctrines like penal substitutionary atonement, help us to proclaim the Gospel personally and communally and to be confident that we don’t need such extra doctrines, any more than we *need* papal infallibility. I will address the Creeds in next month’s issue.

## News from the Marylebone Project

We recently were able to make contact with the Marylebone Project and arrange for the material donations collected before lockdown to be delivered. They welcomed both the donations and our contact. They were pleased to report that although they have had to scale down some of their activities their main provisions have continued. To date they have had no cases of Covid and have managed to keep their staff in employment. They are currently converting their day centre into a homeless shelter which will be an important resource as winter approaches and Covid restrictions continue.

*Janet Drake*

## MUSIC LIST DECEMBER 2020

*Evensong and Benediction will go ahead if government regulations permit congregations in person. Current regulations, which do not permit an in-person congregation, are due to be revised before Advent 2. Consult asms.uk for the latest arrangements.*

### ❖ SUNDAY 6 DECEMBER ADVENT 2

#### SUNG MASS AT 11am

*Setting:* Mass for four voices — Byrd

*Preacher:* Fr Michael Bowie

*Motet:* Rorate Cæli — Handl

*Communion Hymn:* 501 Drop down, ye heavens, from above

*Voluntary:* Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme BWV 645 — Bach

#### EVENSONG AND BENEDICTION at 3pm

*Canticles:* Short service — Ayleward

*Anthem:* O Sapientia — Ramsey

*Voluntary:* Nun komm, den Heiden Heiland BWV 659 — Bach

### ❖ SUNDAY 13 DECEMBER ADVENT 3 (Gaudete)

#### SUNG MASS AT 11 am

*Setting:* Missa Brevis in G K140 — Mozart

*Preacher:* Fr Michael Bowie

*Motet:* Rejoice in the Lord always — anon, attrib Redford

*Communion Hymn:* 501 Drop down, ye heavens, from above

*Voluntary:* Præludium in G BWV 568 — Bach

#### EVENSONG AND BENEDICTION at 3pm

*Canticles:* Sumsion in A

*Anthem:* O thou the central orb — Wood

*O Salutaris:* Elgar

*Tantum ergo:* Vierne

*Voluntary:* Prelude in G (Op 37) — Mendelssohn

### ❖ SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER ADVENT 4

#### SUNG MASS AT 11 am

*Setting:* Missa Brevis — Palestrina

*Preacher:* Fr Michael Bowie

*Motet:* Dixit Maria — Handl

*Communion Hymn:* 501 Drop down, ye heavens, from above

*Voluntary:* Præludium in G minor — Tunder



**EVENSONG AND BENEDICTION at  
3pm**

*Canticles:* Short service — Gibbons

*Anthem:* Ave Maria — Phillips

*Voluntary:* Fuga sopra il Magnificat  
BWV 733 — Bach

**THURSDAY 24 DECEMBER  
CHRISTMAS EVE**

**SUNG MASS at 6pm**

*Setting:* Jugendmesse — Haydn

*Preacher:* Fr Julian Browning

*Motet:* O magnum mysterium  
— Victoria

*Communion Hymn:* 35 Silent night

*Final hymn:* 30 O come, all ye faithful

*Voluntary:* In Dulci Jubilo BWV 729  
— Bach

**FRIDAY 25 DECEMBER**

**CHRISTMAS DAY**

**SUNG MASS at 11am**

*Setting:* Missa Brevis in D K194  
— Mozart

*Preacher:* Fr Michael Bowie

*Motet:* The blessed son of God

*Communion Hymn:* 32 O little town of  
Bethlehem

*Final hymn:* 26 Hark! The herald angels  
sing

*Voluntary:* Final from Symphonie no 6  
— Widor

**✠ SUNDAY 27 DECEMBER  
S JOHN**

**SUNG MASS AT 11 am**

*Setting:* Missa O magnum mysterium  
— Victoria

*Preacher:* Fr Michael Bowie

*Motet:* Gaudet in caelis — Victoria

*Communion Hymn:* 202 Word supreme  
before creation

*Voluntary:* Christum wir sollen loben  
schon BWV 611— J.S. Bach

*For a full music list, including readings and psalms, visit [asms.uk/music](http://asms.uk/music).*

*All services are streamed on [YouTube.com/AllSaintsMargaretStreet](https://www.youtube.com/AllSaintsMargaretStreet).*

*A reduced choir will be singing in church for all these services.*

## – 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

## 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 Email**

This gives weekly news of events, people to pray for, and a short letter from the Assistant Priest. You can subscribe for free at [asms.uk/email](http://asms.uk/email) — all subscription enquiries to the office: [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)

## **Parish Officials**

### **Churchwardens:**

John Forde 020 7592 9855

Chris Self 020 7723 2938

### **Hon PCC Secretary:**

John McWhinney [asms.pccsecretary@outlook.com](mailto:asms.pccsecretary@outlook.com).

### **Hon Treasurer:**

Patrick Hartley 020 7607 0060

### **Director of Music:**

Stephen Farr c/o 020 7636 1788

### **Assistant Director of Music:**

Jeremiah Stephenson c/o 020 7636 1788

### **Electoral Roll Officer:**

Catherine Burling c/o 020 7636 1788

## CALENDAR and INTENTIONS for DECEMBER

1	<i>Feria</i>	Openness to God
2	<i>Feria</i>	Food banks
3	S Francis Xavier	Christians in India
4	S John of Damascus	Christians in Syria
5	<i>of BVM</i>	Marian shrines
<b>6 ✕</b>	<b>ADVENT 2</b>	Parish and People
7	S Ambrose	Unity
<b>8</b>	<b>IMMACULATE CONCEPTION BVM</b>	Society of Mary
9	<i>Feria</i>	Devotion to the Sacred Heart
10	Our Lady of Loreto	Loreto Shrine and pilgrims
11	<i>Feria</i>	Homeless and hungry
12	Our Lady of Guadalupe ( <i>Walsingham Devotion</i> )	Walsingham Cell
<b>13 ✕</b>	<b>ADVENT 3</b>	Parish and People
14	S John of the Cross	Contemplative Religious
15	<i>Feria</i>	Our Bishops
16	<i>Feria</i>	Our clergy
17	<i>Feria (O Sapientia)</i>	Ordinands
18	<i>Feria (O Adonai)</i>	Our Servers
19	<i>Feria (O Radix) (Monthly Requiem)</i>	The Faithful Departed
<b>20 ✕</b>	<b>ADVENT 4 (O Clavis)</b>	Parish and People
21	<i>Feria (O Oriens)</i>	Our Choir and musicians
22	<i>Feria (O Rex)</i>	Our IT team
23	<i>Feria (O Emmanuel)</i>	Local shop workers
24	<i>Feria (Christmas Eve)</i>	Expectant mothers
<b>25 ✕</b>	<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b>	Evangelism
<b>26</b>	<b>S Stephen, First Martyr</b>	Persecuted Christians
<b>27 ✕</b>	<b>S John, Apostle and Evangelist (CHRISTMAS 1)</b>	Parish and People
<b>28</b>	<b>Holy Innocents, Martyrs</b>	Abused children
<b>29</b>	<b>S Thomas Becket</b>	Archbishop Welby
30	<i>In the Octave of Christmas</i>	Women's ministry
31	S Silvester	Pope Francis

