

# All Saints Parish Paper

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## THE VICAR WRITES:

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Dear friends,

As I write this in late August, emails, messages and letters are still coming in from visitors and parishioners, as well as friends of our parish in many continents, speaking of how impressed and moved they were by our celebrations of Our Lady's Assumption. I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who was involved in any way in the liturgies of the day, and especially in the procession.

The morning of 15<sup>th</sup> August saw the re-introduction of the High Mass after an absence prompted by COVID of nearly 18 months. It was particularly good to see in use for the first time a beautiful set of white High Mass vestments which have recently been entrusted to the sacristy of All Saints'. They came from Ascot Priory and have been given to us on permanent loan.

The sisters of the Society of the Most Holy Trinity were a community of nuns who lived for many years at Ascot, but dwindled in number and eventually became extinct with the death of their last sister some years ago.

The trustees of the convent are now finding new uses for their buildings in accordance with the charitable purposes of the trust set up to look after the nuns' remaining assets. They are keen that certain objects belonging to the sisters but which can no longer be used in the convent should find new, appropriate homes where they will be cared for and valued. These vestments have very kindly been given into



our custodianship for the time being.

They are a set of white English gothic vestments, and are of extraordinary beauty and craftsmanship. The quality of the embroidery is outstanding, and the whole set is in very good condition indeed. I am very pleased All Saints has been chosen as the custodian of these remarkable vestments which form such an important part of Anglo-Catholic patrimony and history. I ask you to say a prayer every time we see them in our sanctuary for all who served God as the sisters of the Society of the Most Holy Trinity.

All Saints' church was packed with not a single seat to spare in the evening of 15<sup>th</sup> August. There were at least 40 visiting clergy

sitting in choir, and we were particularly fortunate and grateful to have a contingent of Chelsea Pensioners present with us. They formed a guard of honour for us, around the image of Our Lady, in the procession. What a splendid sight their red uniforms were in the procession. We want to assure them of our continued prayer for all who live at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, and thank them for their participation in our celebration.

Friends of our parish came from far and wide to participate. There was even a full coach load of people who came from Portsmouth for a day out in London after their parish Mass. They all had high tea at the Savoy Hotel and then came on to us later in the evening for evensong, procession and benediction. I can imagine no more exciting a Sunday afternoon!

The procession itself was a splendid act of witness to our faith in Jesus Christ and our love of his mother Mary. With over 300 people, we made a big impact on Oxford Street. Dozens of people stopped to look, take photos, or ask questions. A good number of people in the street joined us in our procession and came back to All Saints' with us for benediction. Our joyful band of instruments made a splendid sound accompanying our hymns, and our choir kept us all in time and in tune. The praises of God rang out and echoed around those streets of the West End where there is usually only the din of traffic.

Our procession was so well advertised that we even attracted a mariological protestor who stood at the gates of All Saints' with signs asserting the error of our ways. It felt as though we were all back by the pump in Walsingham on National Pilgrimage Day, and added an exciting frisson to the evening! I am grateful to our stewards for ensuring there was no disturbance.

When we had returned to church for benediction, we were privileged enough to be able to use a magnificent monstrance kindly lent to us by the churchwardens of my old parish, St Benet's, Kentish Town. It is an enormous nineteenth century Belgian neo-gothic construction that is well over three feet tall. It looked resplendent on our beautiful altar as a worthy and fitting throne for our Lord's sacramental presence, and even those crowded into the very back row told me they could see the moment of benediction because of its size.

I hope we received from God on Sunday a renewed vision of what All Saints' can be at its best: a place of welcome and hospitality for Anglo-Catholics in the Diocese of London and in the wider Church of England more generally; a place where the Gospel is proclaimed confidently and thoughtfully; a place people can look to as a locus of support, encouragement, and inspiration as they live out their Christian discipleship; a place people see interacting with the world and joyfully taking the Gospel of Jesus Christ beyond its church walls.

I firmly believe that when we make ourselves open and welcoming to God's Spirit, the Spirit himself makes us open and welcoming to others. Let us take the spirit of joy and confidence that we experienced on Sunday and allow it to influence our thinking in other areas of our parish life as we plan for the future and emerge from COVID.

God clearly wills for us to grow in faith, number and love of him. Let us open our hearts to that divine will and desire, and allow God to work through us so that his name may be glorified.

***Fr Peter***

*(Photographs from the evening of  
15th August are on pages 10 and 11)*

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## ONLINE ZOOM THEOLOGY

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A few weeks ago, we announced a significant addition to the theological teaching and formation on offer at All Saints' in the form of a series of online theology teaching sessions to begin in September. The idea of the programme is that there will be an online theological teaching session by Zoom once every two months on a Tuesday evening at 7.00 pm. Details of our plans over the coming months are listed below, and I encourage you to put the dates in your diary and tune in if you can.

The first of these theological sessions is only a few weeks away now, on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September. To prepare for the seminar, you are encouraged to watch the two films that will be discussed, *Supernova*, and *The Father*. Both of these films can now be rented on Amazon and watched at home now they are no longer on release at cinemas.

In order to access the session on 14<sup>th</sup> September, the Zoom meeting ID is 884 0442 9227. Alternatively, simply go to: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88404429227>.

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021 — 7.00 – 8.00 pm**

**Forgetting and Remembering: does memory make us human?**



Participants will be asked to watch two recently released films, *The Father* and *Supernova*, in preparation for this session. Both films, which will form the focus of our discussion, explore questions to do with dementia and human relationships. How does the Christian tradition respond to the idea of dementia? How does memory define who we are? How can we contribute to debate on this topic in a way that values human life?

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021 — 7.00 – 8.00 pm**

**Ravenna by Judith Herrin**

This theology session will be led by Fr Peter Anthony and will discuss Judith Herrin's recently published history of Ravenna. It will follow on from the study day we will be holding on the history of Ravenna which will have taken place on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> October, at which Judith will be speaking. This online session will offer an opportunity for people to discuss Prof Herrin's book in greater detail and depth, and to mull over what we learned from the study day.

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022 — 7.00 – 8.00 pm**

**‘Damned by our Knowledge’: English religious anxiety in Graham Greene**

‘The trouble is, he thought, we know the answers — we Catholics are damned by our knowledge.’ (*The Heart of the Matter*) A presentation by Fr Michael Bowie on the work of Graham Greene, drawing particularly on material from the novels, *The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of the Matter* and *The End of the Affair*.

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022 — 7.00 – 8.00 pm**

***Looking East in Winter* by Rowan Williams**

This session will discuss our Holy Week preacher, Rowan Williams’ new work on Russian and Eastern theology. Described as, ‘an original and illuminating vision of a Christian world still none too familiar to Western believers and even to students of theology,’ we will explore how ‘the deep-rooted themes of Eastern Christian thought can prompt new perspectives on our contemporary crises of imagination and hope.’

**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022, — 7.00 – 8.00 pm**

***Cathedral* by Ben Hopkins**

This theology session will explore novels about the building of cathedrals. We will focus on Ben Hopkins’ new historical novel, *Cathedral*. We will compare this with other similar works such as Golding’s *The Spire*, Huysmans’ *La Cathédrale*, and Ken Follet’s *The Pillars of the Earth*. What is it about great buildings that seem to speak beyond themselves about the divine and the power of human creativity? How do churches operate as sacraments of God’s presence and why do they feel so necessary for the offering of Christian worship?

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**A HOMILY PREACHED for the FEAST of the ASSUMPTION,  
SUNDAY 15<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2021, by FR PETER ANTHONY**

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‘I’ll tell you why Mary can’t save you — because she’s not God.’

Those are words I heard the other day as I was making my way across Oxford Circus. A slightly unhinged street evangelist was shouting through a megaphone into the crowd. He was very concerned with the dangers of what he described as Mariolatry.

One of the most intriguing characteristics of living in the West End I have discovered is listening to the protestors, street preachers, and vaccine cranks who regularly congregate at Oxford Circus to shout at people through their megaphones. The preaching is almost without exception an

extraordinary parade of error, superstition, delusion and conspiracy theory that in my experience at least bears little resemblance to the Christian religion.

But the fellow I was listening to the other day was in full flood making a series of assertions about Our Lady’s rôle in the history of salvation.

“She can’t save you because she wasn’t crucified for you. She can’t save you because she didn’t rise from the dead for you. She was just human like you and me.”

What I suspect that preacher didn’t realise is this. He had unwittingly explained with remarkable concision the theological

mystery which does in fact lie at the heart of today's feast. For I hope none of us here believes Mary can save us. She is indeed not God. That's the point. She was saved by her son as a sign to us of what we too can hope for.

The Assumption celebrates the fact that our ultimate hope is the life of heaven. Mary's vocation was so special and so unique that her son would not allow her to taste death. At the end of her earthly life she was taken body and soul to heaven to be reunited with him there, where she continues to pray for us.

But for as unique and special as her vocation was, she was no less human than you or me, and was still saved by her son's death and resurrection. She experiences his resurrection life before we do as a foretaste and exemplar of what we hope for.

But as I listened to the street preacher get more and more worked up the other day, another thought came into my mind. What good does all this shouting do? Has it ever convinced a single person that God loves them? In fact does it put off more people than it convinces?

And that led to another thought: if we go on a procession around Oxford Circus this evening, what distinguishes us from him? Are we not in danger of becoming just another religious spectacle that simply annoys people and puts them off the idea of organised religion? What can we do to ensure that our witness tonight is more effective at showing people the love of God?

I think one of the key issues is this. The street preachers of Oxford Circus see their goal as convincing people of an idea. It's about aggressively changing someone's mind through argument, which frankly

rarely works.

But our procession tonight I hope is not about persuading people of an idea, or arguing with anyone, but rather showing what being a Christian is like. For as we make our way through the streets of the West End, we will be worshipping.

We will be showing what it looks like to so believe and trust in God, that it is our hearts' greatest desire to praise him. And as our procession of worship goes along, Christ will be at the heart of it, in an image cradled on Mary's knee. Our procession tonight will be, if you like, a visual metaphor for the whole of the Christian life. For the Christian vocation is a journey through life with others, in Christ's company to God our Father.

And if we are joyful, and happy and full of Christ's love as we process through our city, others will want to be like that too. They will want to explore themselves what it is that gives us that joy and confidence. And they will know that there exists here at All Saints' a community that will help them do that and deepen their relationship with God.

My prayer is that through our celebration of the Assumption tonight, we reveal to the world what being a Christian is like rather than shouting at them through a megaphone about what it is not. And one of the most important things being a Christian is about is making our way through life to God in the company of all those fellow Christians who have also found their hope in Christ. And the first amongst those fellow Christians is Our Lady — the one chosen by God to be mother of his son, and our mother too, and who today is assumed in glory into heaven as a foretaste of what we can hope for too.

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## SAINT OF THE MONTH (September 23rd)

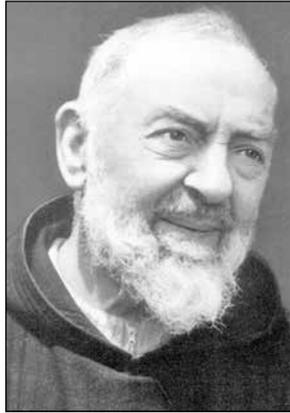
### ST PIO OF PIETRELCINA

#### PILGRIMAGE AND PADRE PIO

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In 2018, led by Fr Gerald Beauchamp, some of us undertook a breathless pilgrimage to Adriatic Italy, where we encountered many saints. Starting in Bari, where St Nicholas is buried (and where there is a Russian Orthodox chapel in the *Duomo*), we travelled on to San Giovanni Rotondo to meet St Pio, better known as Padre Pio; then to Loreto with its holy house, a devotion clearly related to our own Walsingham shrine; thence to Ravenna, with its ancient mosaics and early saints, to which we hope to make a pilgrimage next year with Fr Peter; finally to Assisi to visit Francis and Clare. These were the headline saints but there were so many more: in Italy there's a saint around every corner, and sometimes, it seems, behind glass under every other altar, wearing very interesting clothes.

There are many spiritual benefits to pilgrimage, but above all there's the mixing of the human and the divine. Saints help us with that. We weren't quite Chaucerian pilgrims in our behaviour (well, I can only speak only for myself) but travelling together in a group means that the human elements, the comforts and discomforts of eating, drinking, sleeping and not-sleeping, walking, getting lost, shopping, sightseeing, the mechanics of luggage, and travel itself, all these get gloriously mashed together with the spiritual experiences, of which there were plenty. I would highlight Loreto



which, in my ignorance, I expected to be tacky, but which turns out to be very beautiful, well-supplied with history and art and obviously also a place of deep devotion. Both Fr Gerald and I observed how easy it was to pray there. That's about the human/divine intersection: Mary's humanity, and the extraordinary sentence carved over the altar in the Loreto holy house which baldly declares '*Here the*

*Word of God was made flesh*'. Even the most sceptical of us understood that the documented history of the walls which make up three sides of this ancient building is verifiable: if we believe in the incarnation, this is one of those 'thin places' of encounter. We were encountering humanity in the company of sanctity and divinity: our own and each other's humanity, and the deep meaning of St John's proclamation that 'the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory.'

But before we got to Loreto our first stop after Bari was San Giovanni Rotondo, where Padre Pio's magnificent shrine, designed by Renzo Piano in a massive, almost hubristic, echo of the upper and lower churches in Assisi, is to be found: this is the most visited sanctuary in Italy.

My first encounter with Padre Pio was via Graham Greene. Greene had a great devotion to him and more than once recorded a visit to his Mass which is

documented in the recent biography by my friend Richard Greene (now known to us all as ‘Richard Greene, no relation’):

*Just as he had been inspired by the popular piety of Mexicans, here too was a holiness on the borders of magic. When Graham Greene and Catherine Walston [then Greene’s mistress] had arrived in Apulia, Pio invited them to speak with him, but Greene refused, fearing that a conversation with a saint might force him to change his life.*

*Early the next morning they attended Pio’s Mass. Standing about six feet away, Greene watched him pulling down his sleeves to hide the black wounds of his stigmata. Having been warned that Pio’s Masses went on for some time, Greene became so absorbed that afterwards he was surprised to find that it had taken not the half-hour he supposed but a full two hours. For the rest of his life, through years when he struggled to remain a Catholic, Greene carried two pictures of Padre Pio in his wallet, and as he put it to John Cornwell, this encounter in 1949 ‘introduced a doubt into my disbelief’. This is an important phrase, echoing one he used of the Earl of Rochester so many years before [Rochester he says, saw ‘the cracks in the universe of Hobbes, the disturbing doubts in his disbelief’]. Greene regarded most atheists, including his friend the logical positivist A. J. Ayer, as far too assured of themselves. Had he lived a little longer Greene would almost certainly have regarded the scientism of Richard Dawkins and the new atheists as just another brittle orthodoxy.*

Richard Greene, *Russian Roulette: the life and Times of Graham Greene*, 2020, (p.210)

Soon after this visit Greene wrote in a

letter to Kenneth Woodward (who was writing a book about the process of saint-making):

*In Rome I was told by a Monsignor of the Vatican that Padre Pio was ‘a pious old fraud’, a view which I did not share. I also said I had said the wrong thing when I met Pius [XII — the other saint he’d met] ... when I told the Pope that the two Masses which had most impressed me in my life were his own double Mass on the anniversary of his becoming a priest at Saint Peter’s and the Mass Padre Pio had said in his village. My interview with the Pope became rather a stiff one.*

Richard Greene, *Graham Greene: A Life in Letters* 2007, (p.415)

Richard Greene believes that GG read too much into this encounter with Pope Pius as he was in fact not opposed to Padre Pio, as related below. The Pope seems to have been more concerned about Greene himself: having read GG’s *The End of the Affair* later wrote to Cardinal Heenan, saying ‘I think this man is in trouble. If he ever comes to you, you must help him’.

As we know, the Church subsequently determined that Padre Pio was not a ‘pious fraud’ but truly a saint. So, who was he? Briefly, he was born Francesco Forgione in 1887 to a very pious peasant family in the small village of Pietrelcina in southern Italy; he joined the (Franciscan) Capuchin friars at the age of 16 and was given the name Pio in honour of an earlier Pope. He became a priest seven years later and spent fifty years at the monastery of San Giovanni Rotondo, where he was much sought after as a spiritual advisor, confessor, and intercessor. Many miracles were popularly ascribed to him during his lifetime and he famously received the *stigmata*, or wounds of Christ, a phenomenon first known in

the life of S Francis of Assisi, understood by Francis to be a manifestation of the experience of S Paul: *From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus* (Galatians 6: 1). His stigmata were the best-known miraculous phenomenon among many claimed by followers of Padre Pio, which included prophecy, bilocation, and many healings. He died in 1968, a few days after the fiftieth anniversary of his receiving the stigmata, and over 100,000 people attended his funeral.

Devoted to exploring a religious vocation from early childhood and frequently suffering from an astonishing array of illnesses, he was also observed to have mystical experiences from an early age. The Church was, perhaps understandably, suspicious of this uneducated peasant friar who was judged by various medically-qualified priest visitors to be of low intelligence, with little understanding of theology. It didn't help that Pio had, perhaps understandably, a suspicious and defensive attitude towards those who came to evaluate him. The Vatican initially imposed severe sanctions on Pio in the 1920s to reduce publicity about him: it forbade him from saying Mass in public, blessing people, answering letters, showing his stigmata publicly, and communicating with Padre Benedetto, his spiritual director (whom some saw as a Svengali-figure, manipulating the peasant friar). The Church authorities then decided that Pio must be relocated to another convent in northern Italy out of harm's way, but the local people threatened to riot, and the Vatican eventually left him where he was; a subsequent plan for removal was also abandoned. Nevertheless, from 1921 to 1922 he was prevented from publicly performing his priestly duties, including hearing confessions and saying

Mass. From 1924 to 1931, the Holy See made statements denying that the events in Pio's life were due to any divine cause. But in 1933, the tide began to turn. Pope Pius XI reversed the ban on Padre Pio's public celebration of Mass, arguing, 'I have not been badly disposed toward Padre Pio, but I have been badly informed'. In 1934, the friar was again allowed to hear confessions. He was also given permission to preach despite never having taken the exam for the preaching license. Pope Pius XII, who assumed the papacy in 1939, contrary to Greene's suspicions, actively encouraged devotees to visit Padre Pio. Finally, in the mid-1960s Pope Paul VI dismissed all accusations against Padre Pio. He was beatified in 1999 and canonized in 2002 by John Paul II.

Pio was devoted to the rosary, writing that 'the person who meditates and turns his mind to God, who is the mirror of his soul, seeks to know his faults, tries to correct them, moderates his impulses, and puts his conscience in order'. He compared weekly confession to dusting a room weekly and recommended the performance of meditation and self-examination twice daily: once in the morning, as preparation to face the day, and once again in the evening, as retrospection. His advice on the practical application of theology was often summed up in his now famous maxim, 'Pray, Hope and Don't Worry'. A very different Saint from San Alberto Hurtado about whom I wrote last month, he had this serenity in common; compare Hurtado's motto *Contento, Señor, Contento*: ('contented, Lord': happy in your will for me), expressing the joy with which Hurtado always lived and which we must all learn if we are to commend the Gospel.

Padre Pio directed Christians to recognize

God in all things and to desire above all things to do the will of God. Many who had heard of him, like Grahame Greene, travelled to San Giovanni Rotondo to meet him and confess to him, ask for help, or have their curiosity satisfied. Pio's mother died at the village around the convent in 1928. Later, in 1938, Pio had his elderly father Grazio live with him. His brother Michele also moved in. Pio's father lived in a little house outside the convent, until his death in 1946.

There are obvious similarities here with other popular saints such as S John Vianney, in whom a combination of illness, minimal education and rigorous self-discipline issued, surely by God's grace alone, in a pastoral ministry which bore and continues to bear good fruit beyond anything they had to offer themselves. There are also similarities to the experiences of many great mystics quite different from Pio and others too, like S Rose of Lima, whom we commemorated on 23 August. You'll be sensing that this Anglican priest feels just a little discomfort at the borderline-magical elements of S Pio's story, which are more than a little redolent of the pilgrimage scene in Fellini's *Nights of Cabiria* and the

apparition to the children in his *La Dolce Vita*, but at that point I pause and recall the personal experience of Graham Greene, whose religious instincts and intelligence I admire, and suspend my lily-livered Anglican reserve.

Our group's visit to the magnificent shrine church revealed a well-organised (and marketed) pilgrimage centre at which we received a warm welcome (though the clergy deputed to meet us were certainly less enthusiastic about Anglican pilgrims than we found them to be in Loreto or Assisi, where we are doubtless more likely to be found). It is undoubtedly moving to make one's way through the lower church where Pio's body can be seen and where thousands pray daily. The supernatural and populist element of Pio's story contrasts markedly with last month's arguably more practically and pastorally focused Jesuit saint, Alberto Hurtado (though there is also a large and well-equipped hospital administered by the shrine at San Giovanni), but Padre Pio's appeal, especially in Italy, is so far-reaching that, by his fruits, he must be taken seriously as a compelling example of modern sanctity.

*Fr Michael Bowie*



*St Pio in his tomb in the lower church at San Giovanni Rotondo*

**PHOTOGRAPHS from the EVENSONG, PROCESSION and BENECTION for the FEAST of the ASSUMPTION of MARY on SUNDAY 15<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2021**





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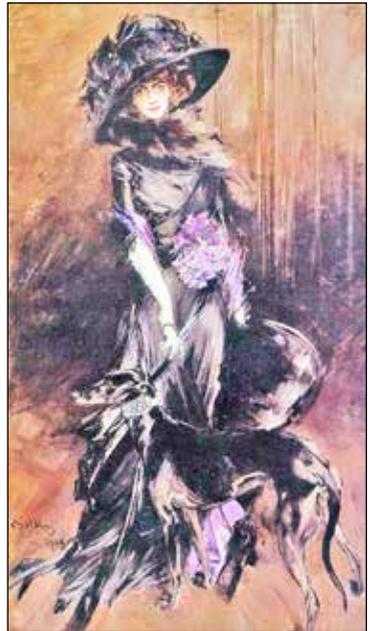
## FROM RICHES TO RAGS (BUT WHAT RAGS!): *Luisa Casati, a secular(-ish) pilgrimage*

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In June I made an unusual pilgrimage — to Beaufort Gardens, near Harrods, and to the Brompton Cemetery.

I'd just read two books, *The Unfinished Palazzo: Life Love and Art in Venice*, by Judith Mackrell and *Infinite Variety: The Life and Legend of the Marchesa Casati* by Scot D. Ryerson and Michael Orlando Yaccarino.

Luisa Casati lived for the last year or so of her life in Beaufort Gardens and was buried in the Brompton Cemetery after a sparsely attended Requiem at the Brompton Oratory. Born one of the richest heiresses in the world she had squandered her entire fortune and run up substantial debts creating extravagant parties, houses and clothes, one of the houses being the extraordinary *Palazzo Venier* in Venice, which was subsequently owned by Doris, Lady Castleross (who with her husband Valentine, were the originals of Amanda and Eliot in Noel Coward's *Private Lives*) and then by Peggy Guggenheim, the eccentric art-collector and patron (the *palazzo* is now the Peggy Guggenheim Museum).



*Portrait of Luisa Casati*  
by Boldini, 1908

Judith Mackrell was drawn to write about this house, now a world-famous gallery, by the three extraordinary women who inhabited it and by the narrative of how they gained agency in a period when women

were less easily able to exercise it than now: a combination of money, to which all three sat lightly, and a determination to be themselves, not adjuncts to men. A very modern story, you might think, and not

much to do with the Kingdom which we preach, but it led me also to think about a fifth century Empress Saint, of whom more below. My day-off walk in West London was a sort of pilgrimage, rising to a challenge from a fellow regular at *Le Beaujolais*: my friend James is a Cecil Court-based seller of First Editions who had once spent a fruitless afternoon in the Brompton Cemetery looking for the Marchesa Casati's grave and he wanted me to try and find her.

All three women lived what we might think of as rackets, self-centred and irresponsible lives; all three certainly exhibited behaviours which we would characterize as extreme. Casati especially interested me because, having lost all her money and spent the last twenty years of her life in poverty (renting rooms in London out of which she often had to move suddenly to avoid creditors and landlords), she remained cheerful, uncomplaining and unabashedly herself. She now dressed in a ragged parody of the extraordinary outfits for which she had been world-famous when young and found her way back to the Catholic faith of her family: she was often seen at Mass at the Jesuit church in Farm Street and in the Brompton Oratory, a short walk from her last address in Beaufort Gardens.

Luisa was, as in everything else, unconventional in her Catholicism, combining it with seances and other occult interests which were not uncommon in her generation and milieu and had always fascinated her, not least through her connection with the man who was probably the true love of her life, Gabriele D'Annunzio, one of the great writers and professional 'characters' of modern Italy, a fervent nationalist who inspired Italian

Fascism (though he thought Mussolini a vulgar clown). She was not an exactly *admirable* character, but her waywardness and indifference to money combined with her determination to be a living work of art, pre-dating Gilbert and George (and in my view outshining them by many megawatts) compels attention (which, of course, she loved). She is said to have been the third most-painted woman in history (the BVM being the most frequent subject of female portraiture): many of the portraits do not survive because she was as likely to give them to a taxi-driver in return for a journey as to keep them. This supreme indifference to money (and any sense of needing to pay for anything in her life) is on one level sociopathic: she had little regard for or understanding of those who had never had the opportunities she squandered. But there is still something magnificent in her refusal to be personally diminished by the rags to which her riches turned. Her wit and her generosity with the little she had, remained legendary. No longer able to create extravagant clothes, pageants and parties, she made dozens of extraordinary and witty collages some of which were photographed and include an especially sharp depiction of Henry VIII.

I am reminded while writing about Luisa of another (literally) iconic woman from many centuries ago, the Empress Theodora who is strikingly depicted in a mosaic in San Vitale, Ravenna (which she never visited) with her husband the Emperor Justinian. Our guide in Ravenna during our Italian parish pilgrimage in 2018 (featured elsewhere in this month's *Parish Paper*) remarked that Theodora should be the subject of a film (as, I'd say, should Luisa — I have in fact recently pitched this idea to an actor friend who is very interested

in pursuing it). Luisa Casati had herself photographed and painted as Theodora (among many other historical and fictional characters).

Venerated as saint in the churches of the East, Theodora rose to the throne and sainthood from the humblest and dodgiest of backgrounds (the circus, the stage and, probably, prostitution). Theodora has inspired two wonderful biographical novels by Stella Duffy, which I warmly recommend. You may feel the need to read them in brown paper covers as the first is entitled *Theodora: Actress, Empress, Whore* (the second is more modestly entitled *The Purple Shroud*, referring to her taking on the imperial purple). I read the first on a journey to Australia including a two-night stop in Abu Dhabi, which it struck me is probably not unlike what Constantinople might have felt like when she knew it as a recently constructed city. I'll be re-reading both volumes before our parish trip to Ravenna next year.

But I digress: back to Luisa. My walk began in the Brompton Oratory, where I attended the noon Mass and prayed for the repose of her soul. Then I made a quick detour to see the façade of Luisa's last dwelling in Beaufort Gardens, followed by a careful perambulation of Brompton Cemetery. This is, of course, worth a walk at any time, being one of the great burial grounds of London where you'll happen upon the famous twentieth century tenor Richard Tauber and the suffragette leader Emeline Pankhurst without even straying from the main path.

Finding Luisa was a little more difficult but, bearing in mind my friend James's fruitless afternoon, I came armed with a couple of photos, by means of which I could reconstruct the location of the grave:

the backs of houses along the eastern wall, and some distinctive monuments against that wall, together with a sense of which trees seemed to be nearby, led me to her after about twenty minutes' search. The monument is much smaller than it looks in photographs (who knows who paid for it!). I approached it from the path along the wall but immediately saw that many pilgrims had been there before me: there was a little footpath worn into the grass from the main walkway nearer the centre of the cemetery. Votive offerings, including photos of Luisa and a champagne bottle, were scattered around its base. On it, beneath a sculpted urn draped with floral garlands is her name (misspelt as *Louisa*) and an epitaph from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*: 'Age cannot wither her nor custom stale her infinite variety,' an inspired point of comparison (hence the title of her biography).

You may find the books fascinating, as I did, or possibly scandalous, which all three lives were, in their way. If you hate camp you won't approve, especially of Luisa (unsurprisingly, the foreword to the original edition of her biography was written by Quentin Crisp). But the magnificent largeness of vision and sheer adventurousness of all three women (to whom I would want to add Theodora) is, for me, a wonderful challenge to meanness and mediocrity and a reminder that a lived life is more than a book-keeping exercise. The best antidote to meanness and mediocrity is the Gospel; we really need to convince more people of that. Our own version of Christian worship has that extravagant generosity of vision at its core; so should our faith.

**Fr Michael Bowie**

*Fr Michael's Photographs are on page 14*

## Luisa Casati Pilgrimage Photographs

1. *The Empress Theodora depicted in mosaic in San Vitale, Ravenna*
2. *Luisa Casati as Empress Theodora*



*Below Luisa Casati's Grave  
in Brompton Cemetery*



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# MARATHON AND MIND

*by Amy Blythe*

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I'm running the London Marathon on Sunday October 3<sup>rd</sup> for **Mind** the mental health charity who provide a wealth of resources and support to those suffering from mental health problems. Now more than ever charities like **Mind** play a vital role in day-to-day life as we adapt to the new challenges of the world living with coronavirus.

One in four of us experience mental health problems and I am one of those one in four. **Mind** were there when I was too embarrassed and scared to talk to anyone else and were a starting point of me realising what certain patterns of my own behaviour, thoughts and feelings were and that it was OK and very necessary to ask for help. I've realised now that the more I speak about my mental health, the more I accept myself.

My anxiety reached an all-time high last year during the pandemic as a result of isolation from friends and family and watching a career I'd spent my whole life working towards disappear virtually over-night. I spent a lot of time on Mind's website, reading the information pages, trying to come to terms with what was happening to the world and to my own mind. I was worried about opening up about what I was experiencing and reading the information and other people's stories made a massive difference to me.

It was terrifying to open up about my mental health for the first time, but the support I've had from people since has been amazing. There isn't a fairy tale



ending to living with a mental health problem, but I am better at managing my problems now, and I want to raise as much awareness and as much money as I can for people who might think recovery is impossible. Whenever I struggle out on a hard training run I have to remind myself, 'This might be painful now, but it's nothing like as painful as a panic attack that lasts for hours, and it's nothing like as painful as a lot of the problems people are going through that the money I'm raising could help with'.

Emerging out of lockdown presents new challenges every day as we adapt to life with coronavirus and every step I run as part of this journey will hopefully help support anyone else struggling with life in the 'new normal'.

If you're struggling and feel like you need help please visit **Mind.org.uk** where online support is readily available to make sure no one faces a mental health problem alone.

Due to the pandemic this is my third attempt at training for the event as it has been postponed three times! Since

beginning training in January 2020 I have run over 2,000 miles so any donation big or small is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions about the charity or my marathon journey please come and say hello in the courtyard after Mass!

*Amy Blythe sings Alto in the All Saints Choir.*

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## DEPARTURES AND ARRIVALS

*By Stephen Farr, Director of Music*

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Keen observers of events in the choir stalls will have noticed a number of changes of personnel in recent weeks, as we begin what we all hope is a linear and interrupted return to our normal levels of staffing. Since early 2020, there have been three departures from the ranks of regular singers, two of these during my hitherto rather unexpectedly eventful tenure as Director of Music. I hasten to add that it's very much a case of *post hoc sed non propter hoc* — at least, I don't think it's anything I said — but it seems an appropriate juncture to welcome new arrivals and offer a word of appreciation and thanks to recent leavers. These aren't easy times for recruitment — many singers in London have decided to leave the profession because of major professional disruption and life changes — and I think we have done extraordinarily well to make a set of appointments which would have been a source of great satisfaction even in more straightforward times.

Moving down from high voices to low: Tess Pearson joins us as a new soprano (replacing Emily Owen, who was already in a new post on my appointment to Margaret Street in January 2020). I had the great pleasure of working with Tess during my

time at St Paul's, Knightsbridge, where she was a regular visitor as a deputy, and I was delighted when she accepted the post here after a number of years of being a first-rate deputy. Tess began her singing career as one of the first girl choristers at Ely Cathedral, moving on to read Music at Nottingham University. She comes to ASMS with a wealth of professional experience, both sacred and secular, to her credit — she performs regularly with a range of leading vocal ensembles — and during the last few months developed an online fundraising project for *Help Musicians UK*, involving more than 40 professional singers performing songs from Disney musicals. Fr Peter, you can relax. There are no plans for a Mass setting based on themes from 'Frozen'.



In the alto section, we welcome Anna Semple, who has also been a much

appreciated visitor as deputy in recent years. Anna read Music at Trinity Hall, Cambridge (where she sang as a choral



scholar under Andy Arthur, a former Assistant Director of Music at All Saints); she is in the final stages of completing a Master's in Composition at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and I hope to persuade her to contribute to the ASMS music list from time to time. Anna combines her work as a singer with a varied portfolio of musical activities, and has been commissioned by the choirs of St John's and Clare Colleges in Cambridge and the ROH, among others.

Anna steps into a big pair of shoes; her predecessor was Dan Collins, who has moved on to become Director of Music at St Mark's, Hamilton Terrace, where he presides



over a flourishing choir which is already moving on to greater things under his direction. I've known Dan since he was 8, when he auditioned (successfully) for a choristership at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, and quickly

acquired (for reasons no one quite understood) the nickname 'Spam'. Dan was a star chorister — apparently free of nerves and seemingly incapable of singing a wrong note. After a period as a Choral Scholar in the choir of Magdalen Oxford, where he read Music, Dan has pursued a hugely successful career as a consort and solo singer, now branching out into work as a conductor. He's also a very talented organist — his Duruffé Toccata is quite something. It's a sadness to me that we never had the opportunity to work together regularly at All Saints, but we look forward to his continued — even if occasional — visits as a deputy.

Last, lowest, but very much not least, we say farewell to Richard Smith, who has been part of the life of All Saints for a long time. Richard is that rare creature, a real low bass, and his presence has



been especially felt on those days when Rachmaninov is on the menu. At the start of the pandemic, he relocated with family to Somerset; as (fingers crossed) the worst

of Covid shows signs of receding, it's become clear that life changes and family commitments make it impossible for him to continue as a regular member of the choir — Somerset is quite a commute, even for the Henschel Tantum Ergo. The search for his successor — he's not really quite replaceable — is on, and there will be news on that before long.

I know you will want to join me in thanking Dan, Emily and Richard for all they've contributed to the life of All Saints over many years; and in offering a warm welcome to Tess and Anna as they settle into their places in the stalls. We look forward with cautious optimism to the day when they will join all their colleagues in a fully-restored choral body.

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## MUSIC LIST SEPTEMBER 2021

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### ✠ SUNDAY 5 SEPTEMBER — 14<sup>th</sup> AFTER TRINITY

#### HIGH MASS at 11am

<i>Setting:</i>	Missa Dum Complerentur — Victoria
<i>Preacher:</i>	The Vicar, Fr Peter Anthony
<i>Offertory Motet:</i>	O sacrum convivium — Tallis
<i>Communion Hymn:</i>	323 Father of mercy, God of consolation
<i>Final Hymn:</i>	490 Judge eternal, throned in splendour
<i>Voluntary:</i>	Kyrie, Gott Heiliger Geist BWV 671 — Bach

#### EVENSONG & BENEDICTION at 6pm

<i>Office Hymn:</i>	150 O blest Creator of the light
<i>Canticles:</i>	Gray in F minor
<i>Anthem:</i>	Never weather-beaten sail — Parry
<i>O Salutaris:</i>	Paul Brough
<i>Tantum ergo:</i>	Paul Brough
<i>Voluntary:</i>	Fuga, from Organ Sonata in D minor Op 65 No 6 — Mendelssohn

### ✠ SUNDAY 12 SEPTEMBER — 15<sup>th</sup> AFTER TRINITY

#### HIGH MASS at 11am

<i>Setting:</i>	Mass for four voices — Byrd
<i>Preacher:</i>	Fr Michael Bowie
<i>Offertory Motet:</i>	Expectans Expectavi — Wood
<i>Communion Hymn:</i>	294 Just as I am, without one plea
<i>Final Hymn:</i>	362 Glorious things of thee are spoken
<i>Voluntary:</i>	Allegro from Sonata in F Wq 80 — C.P.E. Bach

#### EVENSONG & BENEDICTION at 6pm

<i>Office Hymn:</i>	150 O blest Creator of the light
<i>Canticles:</i>	Truro Service — Gabriel Jackson

*Anthem:* O nata lux — Tallis  
*O Salutaris:* Lassus  
*Tantum ergo:* Andriessen  
*Voluntary:* Nun ruhen alle Wälder — Oortmerssen

✠ **SUNDAY 19 SEPTEMBER — 16<sup>th</sup> AFTER TRINITY**

**SUNG MASS at 11am**

*Setting:* Missa Sanctæ Margaretæ — Gabriel Jackson  
*Preacher:* Fr Julian Browning  
*Offertory Motet:* Verleih uns Frieden — Mendelssohn  
*Communion Hymn:* 385 Jesu, the very thought of thee  
*Final Hymn:* 368 Guide me, O thou great redeemer  
*Voluntary:* Allegro Vivace from Sonata No 1 in F major — Mendelssohn

**EVENSONG & BENEDICTION at 6pm**

*Office Hymn:* 150 O blest Creator of the light  
*Canticles:* D. Purcell in E minor  
*Anthem:* Sing joyfully — Byrd  
*O Salutaris:* Bach  
*Tantum ergo:* Bach  
*Voluntary:* Voluntary in A minor (from Melothesia) — Locke

✠ **SUNDAY 26 SEPTEMBER — 17<sup>th</sup> AFTER TRINITY**

**SUNG MASS at 11am**

*Setting:* Missa Brevis in B flat K275 — Mozart  
*Preacher:* Fr Peter Anthony  
*Offertory Motet:* Jesu, grant me this — Bairstow  
*Communion Hymn:* 269 The heavenly Word proceeding forth  
*Final Hymn:* 312 Where the appointed sacrifice  
*Voluntary:* Wir glauben all an einen Gott BWV 680 — Bach

**EVENSONG & BENEDICTION at 6pm**

*Office Hymn:* 150 O blest Creator of the light  
*Canticles:* St John's Service — Howells  
*Anthem:* Unser lieben Frauen Traum — Reger  
*O Salutaris:* Harry Brama (set 2)  
*Tantum ergo:* Harry Brama (set 2)  
*Voluntary:* Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit BWV 669 — Bach

*For a full Music List, including readings and psalms, go to [asms.uk/music](http://asms.uk/music).  
All Masses are live streamed on [asms.uk/youtube](http://asms.uk/youtube).*

## CALENDAR and INTENTIONS for SEPTEMBER 2021

1	S Giles	Medical researchers
2	<i>Feria</i>	Vocations
3	S Gregory the Great	Pope Francis
4	S Cuthbert	Diocese of Durham
5	✠ <b>TRINITY 14</b>	Parish and People
6	<i>Feria</i>	Christians working in the NHS
7	<i>Feria</i>	Our bishops
8	<b>NATIVITY of the BVM</b>	Thanksgiving for Our Lady
9	<i>Feria</i>	Penitents and Confessors
10	<i>Feria</i>	Persecuted Christians
11	<i>of BVM (Walsingham Devotion)</i>	Devotion to Our Lady
12	✠ <b>TRINITY 15</b>	Parish and People
13	S John Chrysostom	Preachers
14	<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 (Monthly Requiem)</i>	Faithful departed
19	✠ <b>TRINITY 16</b>	Parish and People
20	S Andrew Kim Taegon and martyrs of Korea and the Pacific	Korean Christians
21	<b>S MATTHEW</b>	Evangelists
22	<i>Feria</i>	Missionaries
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	✠ <b>TRINITY 17</b>	Parish and People
27	S Vincent de Paul	The homeless
28	<i>Feria</i>	Christian Unity
29	<b>S MICHAEL and ALL ANGELS</b>	Thanksgiving for the angels
30	S Jerome	Translators of Scripture

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

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