

All Saints Parish Paper

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THE ASSISTANT PRIEST WRITES:

Happy *unusual* Easter!

Our present circumstances are presenting all of us with new challenges and opportunities, neither of which we've wished for: even two months ago I couldn't have contemplated that I'd be celebrating not only daily Mass but also the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord almost alone in the room where we usually vest, yet watched by an online congregation far larger than usually gathers in church, many of whom are making a more than usual effort to keep in touch with one another and with me. I hope you have found similar pluses as well as minuses in all this strangeness. Meanwhile we carry on with our 'new normal' programme, hingeing on daily Mass at Noon.

It has been a huge help to me, as well as being, I hope, of benefit to you, to be able to continue in the daily offering of the Holy Sacrifice for you all, as well as in the regular rhythm of the Daily Office which I continue to pray in church on your behalf. We stripped and then re-clothed the High Altar during the Triduum and you can



The Paschal Candle

Photograph: Allie Reddington

see a photo of it restored to Easter glory on this page. On the Sunday after all this is over I hope we shall celebrate with a Festal High Mass and Procession and a Solemn Evensong, Te Deum & Benediction using all the music that was set for Easter Day. Meanwhile, thank you to the singers in our choir for providing weekly Offertory Motets for our live-streamed Mass.

Like everything else in the world at the moment this is an *unusual* issue of the Parish Paper in that there have been no visiting preachers whose sermons I can share and other activities that are usually reported have also been significantly curtailed. However I am grateful to Fr Peter Oesterby-Joergensen of Galtrup in Jutland, Denmark, for sharing his Easter sermon and some photos with us. Fr Peter is a Danish Lutheran Pastor whose priestly ministry is very much in our liturgical and theological tradition who visits us regularly with his wife Anna; they have become personal friends to me as well as friends of the parish and I hope to visit them later this year: I will let Fr Peter introduce himself further, see page 10.

May is Mary's month, and so (following up on last month's article on the Hail Mary) I have included an edited (i.e. considerably shortened!) version of a talk I gave on the Immaculate Conception here a few years ago when I was still Rector of Berkhamsted; Marian devotion could do with a boost at Margaret Street. Perhaps you might consider returning to your rosary now that you have more time for prayer!

There is a further instalment of the series on Liturgical Life in the Church — concluding the paragraphs on High Mass and adding some about the Altar and Reservation. There will be two further instalments in this series, focusing on the other six sacraments and some devotional practices of our tradition.

In addition to a new Director of Music, Stephen Farr, we look forward to welcoming a new Organ Scholar, William Forrest, after the summer, as we say an especially grateful farewell to Jordan Wong after his two years with us; thanks also

to his predecessor Laurence Long, who returned to us to help for a few months. We wish them both well and look forward to seeing them when they visit in future. William has written a little about himself and Stephen has also written, among other things, about the unusual (there's that word again) appointment process under current constraints in his message to us. (*See page 6 for both items.*)

No doubt when we re-emerge and meet again we shall find it as strange to be together in one church building as it has been to be excluded from that liturgical fellowship: still, we all look forward to the moment with urgent enthusiasm! Meanwhile, thank you for many kind Easter wishes and comments on what we've been able to offer (and I repeat my particular thanks, offered elsewhere, to Huw Pryce and Paul Weston, and to the on-site team, Allie and Marcus Reddington and Ian Lyon, whose enthusiastic and generous efforts have made it possible; also to Martin Woolley for answering Mass).

Have a very happy *unusual* Eastertide and keep well.

Fr Michael

**BLESSED BE HER HOLY
AND IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION**

Our Lady: doctrine and devotion

When I used to come here occasionally from Berkhamsted for Evensong and Benediction, it struck me that those of you who are fortunate enough regularly to worship at Benediction in the traditional form are probably almost the last people in Anglophone Christendom, certainly among the last Anglicans, who regularly

say the words ‘Immaculate Conception’. The Divine Praises, which I know by heart from my own Anglo-Catholic upbringing, are now pretty hard to come by, even in places like the shrine at Walsingham where Benediction happens frequently.

Even as a teenager piously repeating those words, it did occur to me to wonder why we were addressing them to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Did he not know this about his mother? But, in those happy and uncomplicated *English Missal* days, one simply accepted that this was part of the richness of Catholic devotion which must be recovered in our church.

There is, however, a coda to this reminiscence. When I left that Sydney parish as a 26-year-old layman in 1985 one of the half dozen or so weekday High Masses every year was celebrated on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 8 December. The *English Missal* told us that it was a Double of the First Class and therefore it should be so celebrated. It wasn’t the best-attended of our weekday High Masses, but perhaps a hundred people turned out on a bright and hot summer evening in Sydney, no doubt before doing some early Christmas shopping. By the time I returned to that parish as Rector, eleven years later, it seemed that hardly anyone even remembered the Solemnity; High Mass was certainly no longer celebrated for it. I later learned that it had fallen foul of some parish politics. This feast was now said to be old-fashioned, ultra-montane and irrelevant to the renewed liturgy. Anyway, the 15th of August was now in our new Australian prayer book calendar and should be promoted as the primary Marian feast.

One can understand that argument to a point. It has been an important part of

Anglo-Catholicism’s responsibility in leavening the Anglican lump (and how lumpen a lump it can be!) that we had to grow out of aping Roman doctrine and liturgy and into owning the Anglican consensus which is represented by first, our renewed synodical polity (hollow laughter), and, more importantly, our renewed liturgical resources. No doubt the Divine Praises have fallen foul of this consensual instinct. My evidence for thinking that is the bowdlerized version of them that you’ll find in *Celebrating Common Prayer*, where the petitions about Mary have collapsed into one inelegant and mealy-mouthed phrase, ‘Blessed be God in the Virgin Mary, mother of our Lord and God’ (and the final petition, ‘Blessed be God in his angels and in His saints’ has become, ‘Blessed be the Holy and Undivided Trinity’). So far, so C of E.

I would suggest that, as in many of these allegedly conciliatory and consensual Anglican moves, something of the real catholic tradition of Anglicanism is lost by abandoning or ignoring this feast, and doctrine.

The Immaculate Conception *can* seem inextricably bound up with 19th century ultramontaniam: the proclamation of the dogma, Vatican I, and the definition of Papal Infallibility all seem to sit uncomfortably close together on the exclusive Vatican end of the ecclesial sofa; the doctrine may also seem rather closely tied to the apparitions at Lourdes (where our Lady said, ungrammatically, to Bernadette, ‘I am the Immaculate Conception’), with all the iconography and devotional material which follows from that. But if we dig deeper we shall find that this doctrine belongs to the whole Church, not just in the panting heart of Rome. It is much older than

our divisions; it was accepted by all the leaders of the Reformation except Calvin. It was never wholly abandoned even by the BCP and Archbishop Cranmer took a very long time to disown it (by which time he was well outside the subsequent Anglican settlements of Elizabeth I & 1662). In summary it was never completely expunged from Anglican awareness and remains to this day in the Calendar of the BCP 1662; in earlier editions it even retained some propers.

The worship of the Church and its doctrine are never divorced; indeed the true primary theology, it is sometimes argued, is liturgical theology (*Lex orandi, lex credendi* as the tag goes). And Marian doctrines are often especially illustrative of this truth in their origins and development. If we look at the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and its origins in Christian devotion we shall soon see that it does not belong to any single Christian tradition, but lies at the heart of that robust orthodoxy of the undivided Church to which classical Anglicanism has always looked for authority. It is true that the detailed arguments about the doctrine belong to the late middle ages and the Western Church, and it is also true that the modern formulation of it is part of Pius IX's somewhat claustrophobic pontificate. But if we park those details, which are in fact secondary and peripheral, and look at where the doctrine comes from, I would argue that we find something squarely within our own tradition, and indeed indispensable to it.

The story of Mary's conception is told first in the so-called *Gospel of James*. This, as a second-century source, is not so far removed from much of the New Testament and contemporaneous with the earliest

Fathers, like S Ignatius of Antioch and S Polycarp. That is extremely significant: like those early post New Testament writings this apocryphal Gospel is part of a tradition which was as important in the early Church as the texts we now call the New Testament (the New Testament not having been given a fixed and final form as scripture by the Church until much later, in the 4th century). The *Gospel of James* describes Mary's parents, Anne and Joachim, as righteous Jews who were distressed by their childlessness. Anne cried out in prayer to God, vowing that any child she bore would be consecrated to the Lord's service. The Lord heard her appeal and while Joachim was tending his flocks in the fields an angel appeared to him to announce that his wife would conceive a child. At the same time an angel appeared to Anne in her house with the same message (incidentally, we should note, *this* is the house, *Mary's* home, on which the Holy House of Walsingham is modelled in Richeldis' dream).

On hearing the news, Anne and Joachim both left their work, each running to find the other. They met at the Temple gate [in other versions of the story it is identified as the Golden Gate (*Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* 3: 88)] and embraced one another there. The couple then returned home and, nine months later, Anne gave birth to Mary. This story was the focus of the earliest liturgical feast in honour of Mary's conception and scenes from it became standard features of the devotional art of Middle Ages and Renaissance.

It seems to have been celebrated first in the Eastern Church, at the end of the seventh century. It turns up in Ireland in the eighth century and in England in the 11th, when we have the first record of a

celebration on 8 December, that is nine months before the feast of her birth, 8 September. After the Norman conquest the feast of Mary's conception was suppressed by the new ecclesiastical regime. It was in protest against this suppression that the first thorough account of the doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception was expounded. So, ironically, English Christianity is the seed ground of the doctrine as the Western Church now understands it. And it grew from story and image, via devotional and liturgical observance, into doctrine.

Anglican Theologian John Macquarrie, in his book *Mary for all Christians*, argued for what he called 'the governing intention' of the dogmatic formulation:

...when we are considering the theological question, we are concerned not with the biology of conception, or with the several quite different ways in which conception has been understood, in ancient, mediæval and modern times. The doctrine of Immaculate Conception is not focused on the biological event and is not tied to any particular theory of conception — indeed it was the recognition of this point that led to the overcoming of some of the original difficulties with the doctrine.

...I suggest that we should understand conception as 'the absolute origination of a person'. This is not a biological but a philosophical definition, and it speaks not of the fusion of cells or anything of that sort, but of the mystery of the coming into being of a human person.

Original sin, understood with S Anselm as a lack of *original righteousness* (rather than an inherited taint bound up with sex), leads us to a more affirmative view of humanity under God. The Immaculate

Conception then teaches not about preservation from an inherited stain, as Pius IX formulated it, but rather that Mary was preserved in her right-relatedness with God. This is justification as taught by Paul, in whose teaching the right relationship with God, 'righteousness' or 'justification', is always a gift or *grace*. Mary is seen to go before us in this, just as, in her Assumption, we see our resurrection prefigured. Macquarrie suggests that another way to express this would be to say that Mary 'was always a recipient of grace' — 'full of grace' as the angelic salutation puts it. The negative categories of some dogmatic and juridically-focused theology are thus replaced with Gospel values of grace and generosity.

In this way the Immaculate Conception in fact affirms the inherited value and goodness of our creaturely life. That seems counter-intuitive, especially when one is familiar with the 19th-century effusions of it, which seem to divorce Mary from her Son (or even her parents!) and set her apart from us. In Western theology dogmatic formulations do have a tendency to the death-dealing letter rather than the life-giving Spirit. They tend to move us away from grace and leave us mired in law. But the doctrine in its older and less technical form arose from devotional and liturgical practice, not theological argument; it arose from a desire of faithful Christians to honour the Mother of God.

The Immaculate Conception is all about how, through Mary, we are not only related to Christ in his incarnation but are also ourselves capable of becoming the human persons God wants us to be: Mary's rôle in the incarnation, and her sinless nature, are gifts of the same grace that operates in us, if we will allow it.

***From Stephen Farr,
our new Director of Music:***

It won't surprise anyone reading if I say that I hadn't anticipated quite such an unconventional start to my tenure at All Saints. My first service in post should have been Low Sunday, but even though it's not possible to begin the liturgical round as I had hoped, there's been plenty of activity behind the scenes. Music lists to November are completed, my admirable colleagues in the department are working hard to provide some musical element to the cyber-life of the church, and applications for vacancies in the soprano and organ scholar departments have been received for future attention.

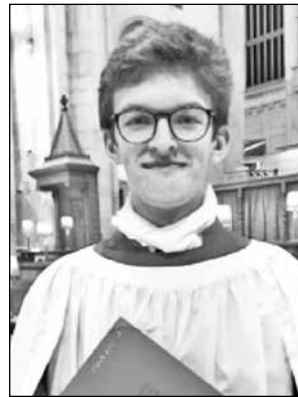
With regard to the latter appointment, I'm delighted to announce that William Forrest — currently (furloughed) Organ Scholar of St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, — will be joining us in September, or as soon thereafter as social distancing allows. William is a graduate of Cardiff University, and engaged with great good humour and adaptability to an inevitably unique process of online audition and telephone interview. I greatly look forward to his joining the team and to working with him in the coming year.

To return to the subject of admirable colleagues — this is the moment for me to offer my heartfelt thanks to Jordan Wong and Jeremiah Stephenson, who as you know have done quite outstanding work in keeping the music at All Saints at its accustomed level in the last months of interregnum. It's a great sadness that I won't have a longer period to work with Jordan, who leaves us at the end of August, but I know of his superb playing by repute. Jeremiah has been an indispensable source

of wisdom, sound advice and essential local information (once or twice over good lunches). It's made the process of transition as easy as it could possibly be, and I count myself extremely fortunate to have him as my colleague — I know it's going to be a very happy and inspiring partnership.

***From William Forrest,
Organ Scholar***

I'm delighted to have been appointed as Organ Scholar at All Saints from September 2020. I'm currently the Organ Scholar at St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, and before that I spent three years at Cardiff University, including a year as the Junior Organ Scholar



at St Martin in Roath, a church in a similar high Anglican tradition in central Cardiff. I originally hail from a small town just outside Portsmouth, and spent 10

years singing at Portsmouth Cathedral as a chorister, Head Chorister, and then as a bass, and where I started playing the organ.

I'm very excited to be moving to London come September and to becoming part of the excellent musical and liturgical heritage of All Saints. Having auditioned electronically due to the Coronavirus situation, I'm looking forward to meeting, learning from and working alongside Stephen, Fr Michael and all at All Saints when doing so becomes feasible.

SERMON FOR EASTER MORNING

When talking to children in school at this time of year I sometimes used to ask them: which is more important, Christmas or Easter? They usually said Christmas, which isn't surprising if you compare the secular celebrations. If I insisted that Easter is more important at least one child always replied, 'but you couldn't have Easter without Christmas'. Having foolishly asked the question in the first place, I then have to find an effective way to explain that without Easter, the miracle of Christmas would not get us to heaven. If you have successfully negotiated that conversation you probably have a Lambeth degree in theology.

Of course it isn't a competition. And Christmas has a broad and instant appeal, in part because it seems easy to understand. The core *story*, at least, is easy: the birth of a child to poor parents, a child who grows up to be someone special. That much we can all get. It is the stuff of biography, history and popular fiction. The detail of it, the Word made Flesh bit, is far from easy. But we all quickly understand that it describes God becoming one of us, getting inside our skin, in solidarity with us. And if we believe that we are not far from the kingdom of heaven.

Easter clearly wouldn't mean what it does without that happening first. Easter would be just another *Life of Brian*, a tragic mistaken death of a kind that still happens far too often; the sort of death that was especially common under the Roman Empire. This would then be the story of a great spiritual teacher in a remote imperial province who got mixed up in a toxic clash of secular and religious politics and was executed as an act of political expediency.

But if we have processed the inner meaning of Christmas, the Incarnation, God so close to us that we can't see the join, then the Crucifixion takes on a new and specific horror. People were so busy with religion, politics, and the politics of religion that they failed to recognize God. Which, of course, also still happens. But in this case they also tortured and killed him.

The sequel, which we celebrate this morning, is not as easy even to *tell* as the Christmas story. You realize that as soon as you read the Gospel accounts. But you can't untangle the significance of one from the other. It is all one glorious and elegant narrative in which God gets *completely* involved — insanely and generously involved — with his human creation. It appears to go horribly wrong, a classic tragedy. But then God breaks open the champagne and shares the party with everyone. There is a grave seriousness, but also a lively divine *joyfulness* about the outcome. We do not just drink champagne (though we must do that today if we have any); we also break Easter eggs. We know that breaking them in order to enjoy them is a parable of Christ's breaking out of the tomb, leaving death behind.

If you ask 'could Easter happen without Christmas', or 'does Christmas have meaning without Easter', you quickly see that they are inseparably bound up with each other. But if you ask a different question: which is the crucial piece of the jigsaw for Christian faith? what is it that makes a difference to each one of us? — there is no contest. St Paul gives the unequivocal answer in this morning's second reading:

If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be

pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. (1 Corinthians 15: 19 – 20)

Christmas shows God getting involved with us, showing us how much he loves us by drawing near to us, accessing human life in vulnerability. The Cross shows him taking that vulnerability seriously, courageously refusing to dodge his solidarity with us. But Easter, which *we* can't adequately describe, shows him flipping that over and offering each one of us access to *glory*, to the life of God, the life which is eternal, full, and rich, and free from fear.

Each of us has a shell: of sin and sadness, of failure, disappointment and defeat. It usually gets thicker and thicker as we grow older. If we aren't careful it can become an impenetrable carapace, to God and to other people. The Good News of Easter is that

Christ once and for all, for all of *us*, broke out of that shell, and became the living first fruits of the harvest of all our lives.

Among the carvings in the ninth-century abbey of Vezelay in Burgundy you can see a carved stone relief graphically depicting the death by hanging of Judas Iscariot. Beside it is a carving of the risen Christ tenderly carrying the corpse of Judas to paradise. You don't need a theology degree to get that point.

Examining ourselves in the looking-glass of Easter, we can begin to see how sin and sadness, failure, disappointment and defeat do *not* have the last word in our lives, even in these strange times. We are loved; we have a future. We need to share that news with those who haven't woken up to it yet. Chocolate and Champagne, or even Prosecco, always help.

Fr Michael

***From Fr Michael's friends Lindsay and John Knight
in Mount Gibraltar, NSW, Australia:***

Midday in Margaret Street W1 is 9pm in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales, Australia, where autumn colours are everywhere and the evenings already feel like winter. Just a perfect time to recline on a comfy sofa in front of a gently blazing fire with a glass of red wine, an aged cheddar and a few crackers. And to join our UK friends in celebrating a warm, comforting *in camera* Easter Mass at All Saints.

We had begun our quarantined Easter Day with hot cross buns delivered by a kind friend and chocolate eggs from the children next door, followed closely by a High Mass live streamed from our own parish church, Christ Church St

Laurence in George Street, Sydney. Here in Australia churches are still open but operate without a congregation physically present. A wide variety of services are streamed on YouTube, suiting all flavours of churchmanship, from our own soft spot for the metaphoric power and beauty of Anglo-Catholicism through to the happy-clappy Hillsong jamborees preferred by our Prime Minister.

And they have been so popular! The three CCSL services of the Easter Triduum have been viewed 5,600 times at the time of writing, and the numbers still go up each day. In the beginning Father Daniel Dries fires up a huge Paschal candle from swirling flames in mystical darkness.

With appropriate social distancing, three choral scholars and an invisible baritone (choirmaster Sam Allchurch) power through Haydn's *Missa Brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo*. For the postlude Hamish Wagstaff lets it rip with that trusty show stopper Mulet's *Carillon Sortie*. Still available on YouTube if it sounds like your cup of tea.

So the All Saints Mass beautifully bookended our Easter Day, begun and ended with ancient liturgy and superb musicianship. Watching Father Michael and Ian Lyon recite and sing such familiar words in such an unfamiliar setting brought back strongly sweet memories of our recent visit to London.

May 2019 — such a short time ago, but how different the world was then! After a sybaritic weekend at the Charlotte Street Hotel we met Fr Michael in the hotel lobby and he helped carry our bags around the corner to 6 Margaret Street, where we spent five happy days in his welcoming garret, gradually acclimatising to the ever present rhythm of bells and Masses, joining a couple of splendid Sunday High Masses and Evensongs. The trip was mainly about business, of course, but we managed a visit to the Kubrick exhibition at the new Design Museum and a feverish revival of *Noises Off* at the Lyric Hammersmith. Not to mention the occasional Ottolenghi breakfast at *Rovi* in Wells St.

And a poetry launch. For the past 10 years we have run a small (but, yes, perfectly formed) Sydney-based poetry imprint: Pitt Street Poetry. While most of the poets we publish are Australian, we have a scattered few based in Europe: Benedict Andrews in Iceland, Jacob

Ziguras in Poland and London's own Tim Cumming: journalist, film maker, watercolorist and poet. So late one afternoon we repaired to an upper room in a very old house in Great Ormond Street for the launch of Tim's third PSP collection *Knuckle* amidst much consumption of poetry, wine, cheese and all the rest of it. If you're interested they're available at the London Review Bookshop or for mail order at pittstreetpoetry.com.

To return to the present: PSP's modest contribution to the contra-pandemic of on line arts events is a video poetry festival called LEGERE, which is broadcast each Thursday and Friday on social media. As it happens, Tim Cumming is reading this weekend: a passage from Homer's *Odyssey* and his own 'Sehnsucht'. You can find LEGERE — where else — on YouTube. And Facebook. And Twitter. And Instagram.

The poetry ties go back a way. Linsay's mother Clare and Fr Michael's father Rod were close friends in Sydney and productive collaborators in a much loved series of recorded poems and songs for children. The two Michaels — one a priest and the other a stage designer (Linsay's brother Michael Scott-Mitchell) have been mates since childhood. Not dissimilar callings. How pleasing to extend and affirm the friendship between our families during our visit to ASMS.

In Australia we are blessedly fortunate that the coronavirus pandemic is rapidly coming under control, albeit through a severe and disruptive national lockdown. We face several more weeks (or even months) in splendid solitude in our cottage on the side of Mount Gibraltar before we can contemplate returning to the hustle

and bustle of our city lives in Haymarket, Sydney. And to our beloved CCSL, just down the road.

Meanwhile, we send the warmest of greetings and prayers to all our friends

and colleagues in London, and around the UK. We are backing you all in this most recent battle of Britain, and look forward to visiting Margaret Street again in happier times, which are surely just around the corner?

Fr Peter Oesterby-Joergensen, whose Easter Sermon is printed on page 15, writes from Denmark:

Both Anna and I were born in 1958, we met at the University of Aarhus and married in 1981. We have five children, five sons — and daughters-in-law, ten grandchildren. I was ordained a priest in 1987 and in 1988 appointed parish priest for three rural parishes (in 2011 a fourth was added) on the island of Mors in the Limfjord, northern Jutland, about 1,550 parishioners.

During my studies of Theology, I got in touch with the small “high church” / catholic movement in the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church. This made me interested in the theology and the history of the Anglo-Catholic movement, and soon I learned the name of All Saints, Margaret Street, but only about 35 years later did Anna and I visit the church for the first time, in the autumn of 2014. Immediately we felt at home and soon we decided to return to the All Saints Festival in 2016. (Afterwards I sent a letter to Fr Alan who had it printed in the Parish Paper January 2017.)

We visited the church again in 2018 and 2019. We like the beautiful church and its liturgical life very much, and we are very grateful for the kindness so many of the All Saints people have shown us.

Fr Peter’s photographs



Anna in contact with Fr Michael (on an iPad)



Left: Fr Peter in Galtrup Church, Easter 2019



Right: Galtrup Church (c1200)

Below: Galtrup Parochial House (1867)



LITURGICAL LIFE IN THE CHURCH 4

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

This month continues with Part 4 of the Mass, from the Invitation to Communion to the final Dismissal and Marian devotions, followed by some paragraphs about the altar and its ornaments, the reservation of sacrament and Benediction.

High Mass IV:

The Invitation to Communion

The invitation to communion has taken many forms in the centuries of Christian worship. The most commonly used text picks up the words of the *Agnus Dei* and identifies the gifts of bread and wine with John the Baptist's words, 'Behold the Lamb of God' (John 1: 29), a reference to the sacrificial passover Lamb of the Exodus story. With these words we recognise the real presence of Christ under the forms of bread and wine. We answer with more scripture, words uttered by the centurion who asked Jesus to heal his slave (Matthew 8: 8): 'Lord I am not worthy that you should come under my roof but speak the word only and I shall be healed'.

The Communion

Our communion or fellowship with God in receiving the Body and Blood of Christ under the forms of bread and wine is the completion of the sacrifice which we are offering and sharing. The communion sacrifices of Israel were in three parts: offertory, which we enact symbolically with the bringing of the bread and wine to the altar (and also, to some extent, with our

offering of money); mediation by the priest (our Eucharistic Prayer); and the action of communion, in which we fully participate in the life of Christ made available to us in the sacrament for spiritual nourishment and upbuilding. For the communion, compare Exodus 24: 11, of the Israelites in the holy mountain in God's presence: 'they beheld God, and they ate and drank'.

We also use the word 'communion' to signify our shared faith; for that reason we restrict receiving communion to those who are baptised and, usually, confirmed members of the Church. Anglican tradition has always taught the importance of receiving both consecrated elements (the bread and wine, the Body and the Blood, are the fullness of the gift and what it signifies, the death and resurrection of the Lord), but also teaches the doctrine of concomitance, by which the whole Christ is understood to be present in each element.

The Postcommunion, Blessing & Dismissal

The fourth and final section of the Mass expresses our thanksgiving for receiving communion and sends us out to live the Christian life.

The original core of the postcommunion rite was an antiphon and final collect. Anglicans sometimes have *two* collects at this point, one sung or said by the priest, 'proper' to that day in the liturgical calendar, and another, usually unvarying and said by all. This second prayer ('Father, we thank you for feeding us ...') is a modern version of the Prayer of Thanksgiving for Holy Communion in the *BCP*.

Originally the Mass finished quite quickly after Communion. After a song

or antiphon, the assembly would have been sent out after just a collect and the dismissal, the receiving of communion having been considered the ultimate blessing and no other being required. Like the offertory and the fraction, the dismissal serves a practical purpose but it also speaks to us of our shared baptismal ministry in the world: as one of the newer formularies expresses it, ‘Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life’.

As the liturgy developed, a final blessing was added in various forms; Cranmer provided our familiar Anglican formula: ‘the peace of God which passes all understanding...’ Many other seasonal blessings have been added in the reforms of the last century.

The *Angelus* & *Regina Cæli*

It is customary to add a greeting to Our Lady at the end of High Mass. For most of the year this is the *Angelus*, a simple form of prayer recalling the origin of our salvation, the incarnation or becoming human of God in Jesus Christ, which is the core of the Gospel. It was originally composed to be learned by heart and recited by the faithful three times daily when the clergy were saying the Divine Office. It takes its name from the opening words of the devotion in Latin: *Angelus domini nuntiavit Mariæ*, ‘the angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary’. In the verses and responses we hear the story of Mary’s visit from the angel, her willing response, and the message of Christmas: ‘the word was made flesh and dwelt among us’. We respond with the ‘Hail Mary’, echoing the angel’s greeting to Mary and asking her prayers as we seek to live the Christian life. The devotion concludes, appropriately, with the collect for the Annunciation, the feast on which we celebrate this encounter.

In Eastertide the text changes to the *Regina Cæli*, a Marian antiphon originally associated with Compline at this season, as we rejoice with Mary in the resurrection of her son: ‘Joy to thee, O Queen of heaven’; the final collect also relates to the season.

The Altar

The altar is the most ancient symbol of Christ in a church building, traditionally consecrated by a Bishop with five crosses incised in it to represent the five wounds of Christ. It is treated with special reverence as the place where the offering of the Eucharist is made, and acknowledged reverently whether or not the Blessed Sacrament is reserved there. It is honoured with incense and also by being kissed by the priest, like the book of the Gospels. It should always be a fixed and focal point in a Christian church and is often made of stone (or with a stone inset) reflecting its function as a place of sacrifice (since ancient altars were of stone). It is usually located at the liturgical ‘east’ end of the building, but in modern churches may occupy a central position to emphasise the gathering of God’s people around it for Mass, which is a sacred meal as well as a sacrifice. In many early Christian churches it was at the *west* end of the building, the celebrant standing behind it to face east, the direction of the rising sun and therefore the resurrection. This is the origin of so-called ‘facing the people’ celebration. Our churches rarely have altars located at their liturgical West and Eastward-facing celebration is now experiencing a slow but steady revival in liturgically-minded churches like ours. It is not only more in accord with ancient tradition, but also emphasises that the priest and people make the offering *together*. The altar is often vested in the colour of the feast or season.

Candles & Lamps

Lamps and candles have always been used in Christian worship, especially in evening prayer, but also at Mass. Like many liturgical customs, candles and lamps have a practical origin. But Christian liturgy and popular devotion has continued to use the living flame of candles and lamps to symbolise Christ the living Light of the World, and as a sign of prayer. Votive or 'prayer' candles are lit by many Christians as wordless prayers (an offering of money is also made for the support of the church or for the poor and needy).

The source of all Christian lamps and candles is the great Easter or Paschal Candle, kindled from a light blessed on Easter Eve and used in the blessing of the Font.

Candles burn at the altar in various numbers according to the season and celebration. The traditional number was seven, but one was removed when the Bishop was not the celebrant: as this became normative, six candles were usually lit for Solemn Mass or Evensong, with a seventh added if the Bishop were celebrating.

A white lamp traditionally indicates that the sacrament is reserved; coloured lamps also burn in sanctuaries (red) and at shrines (red, or blue for our Lady).

The Altar Cross & Processional Cross

The cross is our 'standard'. Placed on the altar it proclaims our first allegiance to 'Christ and him crucified' (1 Corinthians 2: 2). Carried before a procession it announces that we are acting in the name of the crucified Lord, as his brothers and sisters. We are signed with the cross in baptism, and make the sign of the cross

on ourselves. The cross appears in many shapes and designs. On the altar and in procession it should always display a figure of the crucified Jesus (though this may depict him as a triumphant and risen king, as did the earliest representations): emptied of the crucified Christ, the cross is emptied of meaning as well. A sign of humiliation and shameful death, we proclaim it, and give it a place of honour in our worship, as pointing to the Gospel-priorities, opposed to the values of the world, of which we are never ashamed (Romans 1: 16), 'Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God' (1 Corinthians 1: 24). Crosses are traditionally veiled in the last two weeks of Lent, (sometimes called Passiontide) before the proclamation of the unveiled cross on Good Friday.

The Reserved Sacrament & Tabernacle

The consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist were from early times reverently kept or 'reserved' from the Sunday assembly, to be taken to the sick or received at home. In periods of Christian history when communion was less frequently received, the real presence of Christ in the sacrament became a focus of devotion and so the place of reservation became more important (and worship focused on the sacrament arose, in Benediction).

The place of reservation must be safely locked, but accessible, so it gradually took the form of a small safe in the sanctuary wall (an 'aumbry', in England), or more prominently located at or above the altar.

The name 'tabernacle' means a tent, such as that in which the Ark of the Lord's presence dwelt in the travels of the ancient Israelites, and tabernacles are often domed and veiled, suggesting a royal tent.

As home of the sacramental presence of Christ in a church building, the tabernacle is another focal point, not always located at the High Altar, but always marked by a white (or sometimes red) lamp which burns when the sacrament is there.

At All Saints our tabernacle is an unusual one: apparently floating above the High Altar, it is enclosed in a silver copy of a Sacrament House such as the one you may see in Southwark Cathedral. The tabernacle itself is adorned precisely as a royal tent, and has to be raised and lowered mechanically.

Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament
The Blessed Sacrament offers us the nourishing and real presence of the Lord with us. It is given to us for our use, for our communion with God. Because of this it is the focus of God's blessing. We 'reserve' or keep it in the tabernacle for the

communion of the sick and housebound and also as a focal point for devotion in the church building, a reassurance of God's loving presence, 'tabernacling' or dwelling with his people (John 1: 14: 'and the Word became flesh and dwelt — literally 'tabernacled' — among us').

As the Church grew to a fuller understanding of this gift, a new reverence for the sacrament led to less frequent communion and to adoration of the sacrament itself. Thus the devotional service of Benediction, in which the priest conveys God's blessing to us with the sacrament, developed as a reassuring pledge of our communion in Christ. Now that we again receive communion frequently, it remains a beautiful opportunity for contemplation and intercession at the end of Sunday worship, and an unsurpassable final blessing in the liturgies of the day.

FR PETER'S SERMON FOR EASTER DAY 2020

Readings:

*Psalm 118: 19 – 29,*¹ *Matthew 28: 1 – 8*

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

And here in the church of Galtrup we are accustomed to repeat it in Russian — as well as the priest can do it: Христос воскрес!²

Perhaps a sermon today should consist only of these words in Danish and Russian: Christ is risen!

Then you might also avoid comments like the one that fell when a married couple had once gone to church. The priest preached for a long time, so long that more people began to leave, including

the husband of this married couple. He waited outside the church door. A dozen minutes later his wife showed up. The man asked: Well, is he finished at last? Ah, she replied, he has been finished for a long time; but he doesn't know it himself...

I have been looking forward to this day. Even under the conditions we live in now — or maybe just because of them.

1 In the Danish Church there is no official tradition for singing or praying the Psalms, but for some Sundays we have readings from the Psalms.

2 Because of our Russian son-in-law and because of a parishioner born in Russia.

The very different day. As we read in Psalm 118:

This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.

O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Or in the words of today's special prayer:

On this day, through his Only Begotten Son, God has conquered death and unlocked for us the path to eternity.

Therefore, we shall sing that 'here is news from the gates of death', and then add: 'O Blessed Easter morning / with gold in its mouth!'³

Now it's been a month since Denmark was 'shut down' — as it is called. A strange month. Undoubtedly, different people have experienced this month differently: many have been permitted (or have had to) undertake their work as usual; many others have not.

And we have had to meet with as few people as possible — and remember to keep a distance. Or even better: stay at home.

Sometimes, it has discouraged us. It still can. How long is this going to last? What will it cost, financially and in other ways?

And for ordinary citizens, it does not make the situation better that both politicians and experts obviously disagree with one another about what is right to do.

But once in a while my wife and I go for a walk, towards Tøving or Bjergby, to Øster Jølby — or here in the church yard or at home in the garden. Then this

thought hit me, now that it is spring:

It is as if all free nature is completely unaware of all that about the corona virus — or does not care about it. The sun shines. Some days have offered a nice sunrise. For several days, we have had very nice weather. Spring is in the air. The birds are singing. Everything is green. The first flowers spring out, white and blue, but especially yellow. Out here in the church yard, the daffodils are spreading on the graves. We have a few of them at home in the garden, too.

All that has been preaching to me. About Easter. About resurrection. About life. About new life finding its ways despite of all the misery concerning us so much right now. It made me think: There is hope. God gives us signs of hope — in the midst of all seeming so hopeless. As the prophet Jeremiah says: God knows the plans he has for us, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give a future — and a hope.

The clearest sign of hope God gave to the world as He raised His Son from the dead. Therefore, the angel's message to the women at the tomb began with the words: Fear not!

Fear not! Jesus had said in advance about himself: I am the resurrection and the life! Now it turns out to be true, for He has risen from the dead, lives, and dies no more. Fear not! Life has triumphed, for He has triumphed. Death did not get the last word, and death shall never get the last word.

Thus, in His great mercy, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

3 *Norwegian-Danish hymn*

God has born us again to a living hope. There is hope. Hope when there is nothing more here or now; but also hope here and now. Fear not!

Two verses in the Book of Psalms say about God that He led me out into a 'place of liberty'⁴. And that's why a third verse says: I walk at liberty⁵. That's where we are — as Christians. In the place of liberty. With living hope. Under the mighty word: Fear not!

Some of what might be said in a sermon today we leave to the hymns to say. And rather than molesting our Lord Jesus Christ and His resurrection with too many words, it is far better to look at the resurrection — and at the Lord — with a wondering gaze, and then sing of His victory, and worship Him, the resurrected and living and victorious one who comes to us.

Moreover, let's release the joy today. For most people, it does not matter if today

we do not mention what we've all talked about so much these last few weeks.

Turn on the gramophone or CD player or digital aids and enjoy some happy and festive music, everyone can just follow his own taste. Have a good breakfast or dinner — or both. Enjoy a glass of snaps. Open up a bottle of wine. If you can't come together with family and friends, use the 'phone or Messenger or Skype. It's better than nothing. If you have the time, you may go for a walk and notice all the small signs of resurrection and life.

This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Happy Easter!

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

4 *Psalm 18: 20 (or 18: 19), Psalm 118: 5*
5 *Psalm 119: 45.*

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 www.allsaintsmargaretstreet.org.uk

The Weekly Parish Email

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

Assistant Priest: The Revd Dr Michael Bowie 07581 180963
Email: assistantpriest @allsaintsmargaretstreet.org.uk

Honorary Assistant Priest: The Revd Julian Browning 020 7286 6034

Parish Office: 020 7636 1788
Email: office@allsaintsmargaretstreet.org.uk

ALL SAINTS, MARGARET STREET

LENT APPEAL

**At the beginning of Lent, we appealed
for three important causes:**

THE BISHOP OF LONDON'S LENT APPEAL:

Climate change emergencies in Angola and Mozambique

TWO PARISH MISSION PROJECTS:

THE SOUP KITCHEN

at the American Church Tottenham Court Road
Providing food and other help, including mental
health support, to homeless men & women.

HELEN BAMBER FOUNDATION

A UK charity based locally, helping asylum seekers,
refugees and others who have survived extreme violence.

Since we launched this appeal the **Soup Kitchen, who have remained open throughout the emergency**, have appealed to all their supporters to increase their giving if they possibly can. This essential service is providing food to more people than ever — up to 150 meals a day.

The American Church's congregation have been asked to bring forward and increase pledges they have made to help to meet the crisis. We hope that All Saints' congregation will also rise to the challenge and give as generously as they are able.

The Mission Committee

– **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@allsaintsmargaretstreet.org.uk
or telephone 020 7636 1788.

Mission Projects

All Saints year—round fundraising efforts support:

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

The USPG—led UMOJA, HIV Project in Zimbabwe,
enabling people living with HIV and Aids to live positive lives, and

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

CALENDAR and INTENTIONS for MAY 2020

| | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Ss Philip & James | Apostolic witness |
| 2 | S Athanasius | Theologians |
| 3 | ✘ 4th SUNDAY OF EASTER | Parish and People |
| 4 | <i>Feria</i> | Generous evangelism |
| 5 | <i>Feria</i> | Increase of faith |
| 6 | <i>Feria</i> | Repentance |
| 7 | <i>Feria</i> | Openness to the Gospel |
| 8 | <i>Feria</i> | Trust in God |
| 9 | <i>of BVM (Walsingham Devotion)</i> | Shrine of OLW |
| 10 | ✘ 5th SUNDAY OF EASTER | Parish and People |
| 11 | <i>Feria</i> | Relationship with Christ |
| 12 | Ss Nereus & Achilleus | Pope Francis |
| 13 | Our Lady of Fatima | Fatima Pilgrims |
| 14 | S Matthias | Missionaries |
| 15 | <i>Feria</i> | Renewal |
| 16 | <i>Monthly Requiem</i> | Faithful Departed |
| 17 | ✘ 6th SUNDAY OF EASTER | Parish and People |
| 18 | <i>Feria</i> | Persecuted Christians |
| 19 | S Dunstan | Archbishop of Canterbury |
| 20 | S Bernadine of Sienna | Third Order SSF |
| 21 | THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD | Hope |
| 22 | S Rita of Cascia | The lost and desperate |
| 23 | <i>of BVM</i> | Society of Mary |
| 24 | ✘ 7th SUNDAY OF EASTER | Parish and People |
| 25 | S Bede | Diocese of Durham |
| 26 | S Philip Neri | Oratorians |
| 27 | S Augustine of Canterbury | Province of Canterbury |
| 28 | <i>Feria</i> | Unity |
| 29 | <i>Feria</i> | Parish Priests |
| 30 | <i>of BVM</i> | Walsingham Pilgrims |
| 31 | ✘ PENTECOST (Whitsunday) | Parish and People |

