



All Saints Parish Paper

MARGARET STREET, LONDON W.1

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VICAR'S LETTER

The Roman god Janus, from whom this month takes its name, looks both backward and forward. Here at All Saints, if we were to look back our thoughts might be dominated by the disappointment at the loss of All Saints House. But even then, it is possible to look back much more positively and see the good things which emerged from our campaign to secure that building for the mission of the parish — the signs of commitment and generosity among so many.

Looking forward, I believe it is vital for our spiritual well-being that we do not sink into a slough of despond over this. We could all too easily become a group of people who sit down by the waters of Babylon and weep. This would, I believe, be the road to decline and ultimately death. All Saints has faced prophecies of doom before. There were those who could not conceive of the church without the Choir School. Now, all these years later, we are still here. Our musical establishment may be different but it remains excellent and continues to make an outstanding contribution to the worship of God which is the heart of the church's life.

So, this spring we will be taking up afresh some of the tasks we had already set ourselves but had to lay aside for a while.

We will be proceeding with the plans for the continued restoration of the church building and the appeal to fund that work. The generosity demonstrated over All Saints House, and our track record over the appeals for the roof and organ in recent years, gives real grounds for hope here. The target date is 2009 when we will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the consecration of the church. That may seem a long way off, but in terms of planning work and fundraising it is not.

In addition to the restoration of the building, there is of course the ongoing work of the renewal of the congregation and its mission. In the review of the Mission and Ministry of the Diocese, parish by parish, which is being carried out at the moment, it is expected that each parish will have a Mission Action Plan; in other words, that it will seek to have a sense of purpose about its life, rather than just drifting along. In the review process it has been recognised that while formal Electoral Rolls are an important measure of our strength, they are by no means the only one for parishes like ours. People worship with us during the week, or on Sunday evening, or when they are in London. There are other connections such as membership of the Friends of All Saints, the subscription list for the Parish Paper, visitors to the parish website. It is our intention to grow all of these.

One of the facts of life in a city centre parish like ours is keeping track of those who belong in one way or another. So this month we will be launching a membership drive to ensure that we have an accurate record of as many of the people who worship regularly with us as possible.

We will start using this up-to-date information immediately in several ways:

- **Intercession**

We already pray for all the members of the Friends of All Saints on a monthly rota at Morning Prayer. When we have an up-to-date congregational list, we will begin praying our way through it each month too.

- **Stewardship Renewal**

We will be carrying out a Stewardship Renewal programme which will culminate on the 4th Sunday of Lent. Levels of generosity and financial realism in the parish have increased substantially in recent years, and we have been able to meet the considerably increased demands upon us. However, we would be foolish to say there was no room for improvement. City centre churches tend to have a high turn-over of people, so it is important that we are businesslike about this.

- **Volunteers**

While our financial giving is vital to the spiritual well-being of All Saints and its work, we also need various forms of practical help. Again, this is an area in which we have been blessed. Many city priests bemoan the dearth of volunteers in their parishes. Some city centre churches employ large staffs to carry out

many of these tasks. This is not the case with us. Our paid staff is very small for the amount of work we undertake. However, it is inevitable that people move on leaving gaps in the ranks which have to be filled.

- **Publicity**

The advent of e-mail means that we can publicise activities at All Saints widely and cheaply both to those who visit our website and those whose e-mail addresses we can send information to.

None of this should suggest that we are going to neglect the spiritual basics of worship and prayer, preaching, teaching, pastoral care and spiritual guidance, and the like. All these will go on with the care and attention which people expect from All Saints. In one sense, they can be taken for granted at All Saints because they are never taken for granted. They are vital to the spiritual well-being of a church and our highest priority.

Easter this year is early, so Lent is even earlier. We will have only a short breathing space between Epiphanytide and Ash Wednesday. Even if we are not given to making New Year resolutions, it is high time for us to be thinking of our Lenten rule: both what we are going to give up and what we are going to take up in the spirit of holy discipline.

I hope you have had a joyful Christmas and wish you all a blessed and peaceful New Year.

Yours in Christ,

Alan Moses

PARISH NOTES

A Retirement

The Vicar attended the farewell to **Prebendary Richard Bewes** at All Souls where he has been Rector for 21 years. As well as two of his predecessors, Dr John Stott and Bishop Michael Baughen, in attendance there were video messages from Cliff Richard, Dr Billy Graham's son Franklin, and Jonathan Edwards the triple jumper.

A Funeral

Another ministry in the deanery came to a different and sadder end with the death of **Sharon Ayadi**, the parish worker at St Paul's, Rossmore Road. St Paul's was packed to capacity for her funeral service.

A 20th Wedding Anniversary Celebration

All Saints past and present was well represented at the festivities to mark the 20th anniversary of the marriage of **Fr Kevin Scully** and **Adey Grummet**. Fr Peter McGeary preached at the Mass in St Matthew's, Bethnal Green, and there were a number of familiar voices in both choir and congregation. After the service we were led in procession by a fiddler to Oxford House where the party took place. Mhairi Ellis was one of those who gave a speech.

The Vicar preached at St Michael's, Bedford Park, on the feast of Christ the King and at the Annunciation, Marble Arch, on Advent II.

Our Retired Clergy

Not long ago someone upbraided one of our

retired clergy unfairly for not being at a particular service. In fact, our 'retired' clergy seem to be tireless. In addition to the Sunday and weekday duties they undertake at All Saints, they take on a variety of outside commitments. **Fr John Gaskell** has been providing Sunday cover at St Saviour's, Pimlico, during a vacancy, as well as celebrating and preaching on the Feast of Christ the King at the Annunciation, Marble Arch. Not to be outdone in good works, **Bishop Ambrose** has been as far as Ankara to conduct a Confirmation.

A Thanksgiving Supper

Fr Allen Shin was the organising genius responsible for a successful supper party for younger members of the congregation to mark "Thanksgiving" (both American and Canadian). A huge turkey prepared by Fr Shin was the centre piece of the meal. A good time was had by all. Thanks to him and all who contributed.

Visiting Preachers

On the Feast of the Epiphany, our preacher will be **Fr Alan Wynne** who is the Rector of All Saints, Poplar, Area Dean of Tower Hamlets and a Prebendary of St Paul's.

At Candlemas (The Feast of the Presentation on February 2nd) we will welcome **Bishop Michael Doe**, the General Secretary of USPG (the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel).

This year, we will have a visiting preacher for Holy Week. He will be **The Revd Dr Joseph Cassidy**, the Principal of St Chad's College, Durham.

ALL SAINTS IN BLOOM

Last year All Saints won the Churches section of the “**Westminster in Bloom**” competition. We have just heard that this year we have won first place in the Public Buildings section of the competition.

Congratulations to **Guy Pritchard** and his helpers who are responsible for this wonderful achievement.

VICAR IN COURT AGAIN

Fr Alan writes:

Having done two weeks of jury service recently, I found himself making another court appearance on December 7. This time I was at Marylebone Magistrates Court to apply for the renewal of the All Saints Club license.

I wasn't anticipating difficulties but had been a little perturbed by the first reading at Morning Prayer that day which had included these words from Isaiah 5: 11:

“Woe to those who rise early in the morning that they may run after strong drink, who tarry late in the evening till wine inflames them.”

However, my mind was set at ease somewhat when the first official I met had worked previously at the Family Court in Wells Street and was more interested in knowing when the court carol service was taking place. I was then passed on to the Clerk of the Court who turned out to be a parishioner at St Michael's, Bedford Park, where I had been preaching a couple of weeks earlier.

In the court room I was ushered into the

witness box and before swearing the oath I was asked:

“Do you have a religious belief?”

As I was clad in black suit and clerical collar this resulted in smiles and chuckles all round.

The District Judge then renewed our license for another ten years without further ado.

SWEDISH VISITOR

Among the worshippers at the Advent Carol Service was the Rt Revd Bjorn Fjarstedt, Bishop of Visby in Sweden. The Bishop had been in England to attend the enthronement of Bishop Christopher Hill at Guildford and was staying with our neighbours and good friends at the Swedish Church in Harcourt Street, the Revd Lennart Sjostrom and his wife Katrine.

THE ANNUNCIATION, MARBLE ARCH

You will recall from an earlier issue that the Bishop had asked me to take over as Priest-in-Charge of the Parish of the Annunciation on the retirement of the present Vicar **Fr Michael Burgess**. In the event, Fr Burgess has decided to delay his retirement until September of next year when he reaches the age of 70. However, he is not well enough to carry out his duties. As Area Dean I have been asked to help in the meantime with the running of the parish. By the time you read this both Fr Gaskell and I will have been there on Sunday mornings. I was welcomed to the Annunciation on Advent II by **Fr Barrie Newton**, the retired priest who has been looking after the parish, as “the vicar of the second most beautiful church in London, to

the most beautiful.” Members of All Saints might contest the order, but The Annunciation is most certainly a lovely building.

In the period leading up to Fr Burgess’ retirement we will be providing what help is needed at both church and parish school. This, I hope, will allow us to get to know the people at the Annunciation and establish a good working relationship with them. I cannot say yet what the nature of the link between our two churches will be exactly, but I hope that it will be an opportunity for

cooperation and mutual support between two churches close to Oxford Street with similar traditions. More than one member of All Saints has said to me that it will be good for All Saints to have somewhere else to think about.

One person in our congregation had kindly been praying for me because of the extra workload involved. I am told that when she heard that Fr Burgess had put off his retirement, said she could stop. Well, I hope she will now start again!

AM

DIARY DATES

Saturday 1 January — The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus

Low Mass at 1.10 p.m. (*only*)

Thursday 6 January — The Epiphany

6.30 p.m. Procession and High Mass

Preacher: Prebendary Alan Wynne, Team Rector, Poplar Team Ministry.

Sunday 9 January

6.00 p.m. Epiphany Carol Service. Readings and Music with the Choir of All Saints.

Monday 10 January

7.00 p.m. Meeting of the Parochial Church Council.

Tuesday 18 January

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity until 25th

7.00 p.m. School of Worship continues in the Parish Room.
Scottish Episcopal Liturgy by Fr Alan Moses.

Tuesday 25 January

6.30 p.m. Low Mass of the Conversion of St Paul

Shrine Prayers and talk by Fr Philip North, Priest Administrator of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. (*The Cell of Our Lady of Walsingham and All Saints — All welcome.*)

Wednesday 2 February — The Presentation of Christ (Candlemas)

6.30 p.m. Procession and High Mass

Preacher: Bishop Michael Doe, General Secretary, USPG

Wednesday 9 February — Ash Wednesday

6.30 p.m. Imposition of Ashes and High Mass

Preacher: The Vicar

11 - 13 February Parish Retreat at St Francis' House, Hemingford Grey led by Bishop Michael Manktelow. *If you would like to join us please contact Martin Woolley for details on 07976 275383, or at m.g.woolley@btinternet.com as soon as possible.*

ALL SAINTS FESTIVAL 2004

THE SERMON PREACHED BY FR ALAN MOSES AT HIGH MASS ON ALL SAINTS FESTIVAL SUNDAY

In days of old at the All Saints Festival there would be a High Mass and Evensong every day of the Octave — the eight days of All Saintstide. That meant 16 visiting preachers. Inevitably there were occasions when one or other could not make it. One Festival it is said that several dropped out of the line-up. At the end of the week Fr Ross climbed wearily into the pulpit and announced that “Tonight I am the Bishop of...”

Well this morning I am the archdeacon of Durham. The real archdeacon, Fr Stephen Conway, has unfortunately been laid low and cannot be with us.

One saint in particular has been in the news here in London over the last few days — St Mary Magdalene. This is because Islington Council — not a body renowned for being very good at running schools — has decided that in these multi-cultural days, a church school called after a saint just will not do. It will offend people of other faiths. As Muslims and representatives of other faiths have quickly said this is complete and utter nonsense. The reality is that people of other faiths prefer to send their children to Church schools because they know that their beliefs will be respected. Secular-minded politicians seem incapable of grasping this.

The reality is, of course, that the people who come up with these daft ideas really believe that all religions are bunk. But the only one they feel at liberty to be rude about and to is Christianity, and especially the Church of England.

The delicious irony is that when the same Islington Council had to hold a referendum about what kind of new secondary school the citizens of that borough wanted, they had to reluctantly include the possibility of a Church of England school. Much to their surprise, I suspect, the Church school option won hands down. Could it be that they are still smarting from this?

It seems that as a concession they would be willing for the school to be called “the Magdalene School”. So it’s alright as long as she is not a saint. But if she has been demoted from the altars, what on earth is the point of naming a school after her. Oh what wonderful egalitarianism. Or is it merely the kind which ends in mediocrity.

All Saints Day is about egalitarianism but it is most certainly not about mediocrity. The Christian faith is radically egalitarian. We are all sinners, yet we are all the children of God. We are all, as the Bishop reminded us the other night, saints. That is what the New

Testament calls all Christians — those who have been called, set apart, consecrated, made holy.

The Beatitudes which we heard as the Gospel this morning, come at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, which Matthew sees as the New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament Law. The Beatitudes speak to us of the life of the Kingdom of Heaven. They speak both of a reality to come and of a reality which can be shared in anticipation through our discipleship, our relationship with Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. This is contrary to what some protestant interpreters have said. They hold that the only thing the Beatitudes do is show us how much we need the grace of God because we cannot possibly fulfil the demands they and the rest of the Sermon on the Mount contain.

The Beatitudes are about grace certainly. One way of classifying them is to see the first four as **Beatitudes of Need**: blessings on the needy.

**“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”**

These beatitudes speak of God’s blessing on those who do not have the things they long for. They promise us the mercy and grace of God. They speak of that blessing which is promised to us regardless of our status or achievements; as long as we recognise our desperate need for it. These put us all in our place, saint and sinner. We are all in need of God. They teach sheer grace. You can’t get

any more egalitarian than that. It’s a great deal more egalitarian than any political party or programme or manifesto.

They are followed by the **Beatitudes of Help**:

**“Blessed are the merciful,...
Blessed are the pure in heart,...
Blessed are the peacemakers,...
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake,...”**

The Beatitudes of Help bless the helpful. They teach human love. Just as Jesus promises salvation to the desperate in the Beatitudes of Need, so he challenges us to action in the Beatitudes of Help.

The challenges of Jesus are as good for us and the world as are his graces. They are just as much part of the good news. The two should not be divided or set against each other: grace against works. The Beatitudes of Help which challenge us and drive us out into the world in service, will also, if we are honest, drive us back to the Beatitudes of Need in penitence for our constant inadequacies and failings in service and love.

The Church soon came to recognise that there were those in whose lives and deaths their fellow-Christians could see the Beatitudes being lived out in some way or other to a degree which was seen as exemplary for others. It began to commemorate first the martyrs and then other categories of saints.

This is all rather counter to the culture of our age. This is an age of *celebrities* not *heroes* or *saints*. Today, we cultivate *“personality”* (a word almost unknown before the 20th century) far more than we do *“character”*. *“Values”* which we decide

upon for ourselves, have replaced objective “*virtues*”.

Until the beginning of the 20th century, the human self had been understood in terms of character, of virtue to be learned and practiced, of private desires to be denied. So the words most commonly used to describe this character included *citizenship, duty, work, building, good deeds, honour, reputation, morals, manners, integrity*. These virtues were all sustained by a belief in a higher moral law.

The adjectives that came to describe *personality* were *fascinating, stunning, charming, attractive, magnetic, glowing, masterful, creative, dominant, forceful*. None of these can easily be used to describe someone’s character. You can be all these without being good. Character is not stunning, fascinating or creative. Character is good or bad, while personality is attractive, forceful, or magnetic. Attention has shifted from the moral *virtues*, which need to be *cultivated*, to the *image*, which needs to be *fashioned*. There has been a shift away from the invisible moral intentions towards the attempt to make ourselves appealing to others; away from what we actually are and toward refining our performance before a public that mostly judges the exterior. The *self-sacrifice* of the older understanding made way for the *self-realization* of the new. Now, it became more important to find oneself, to stand out in the crowd, to be unique, to be confident, and to be able to project oneself.

Nowhere is this disengagement between personality and character more plain than in the way that celebrities have replaced heroes in our culture. A hero used to be someone who embodied what people prized but did so in such a way that others wanted to

emulate him or her. A celebrity may also want to be emulated and we may want to imitate them, but the grounds of the emulation have now changed. A celebrity usually embodies nothing and is typically known only for being known; ‘famous for being famous’. Fame, in our world of images and manipulation, can be manufactured with little or no accomplishment behind it. In the American historian Daniel Boorstin’s caustic comparison:

- **“The hero was distinguished by his achievement;
the celebrity by his image or trademark.**
- **The hero created himself;
the celebrity is created by the media.**
- **The hero was a big man;
the celebrity a big name.”**

Our moral culture used to elevate the hero. Now our commercial culture produces the celebrity. As celebrities replace heroes, image replaces character, and the commercial replaces the moral.

The Church is at its basis radically egalitarian. Yet is also hierarchical. There is an aristocracy; a recognition that we have not all responded to the grace and call of God to the same degree. This aristocracy is not a hidebound class system; based on birth or wealth or power. It is not the same as the hierarchy of the Church although it is possible for bishops to be saints; (there is a long-running theological argument about whether archdeacons can even get into heaven, let alone the calendar of saints). This aristocracy or hierarchy is one in which we recognise that we learn how to be a Christian not from some book but by watching others go about it. We learn to pray by praying with other people. We learn to walk the Christian way by accompanying others.

The people who are elevated to the status of “saints” are not simply those who have done good works, but people whose lives have been marked by devotion to our Lord and utter dependence upon him. They are people in whom we see the truth that those who seek to serve God in his world are thrown back upon his grace; upon the means

of grace which he has provided in his Church. We see in them devotion manifested not only in their works or even their private lives, but in their communion with God and their fellow-human beings. With them we come to kneel at the altar with empty hands. With them we go out to love and serve the Lord.

ALL SAINTS FESTIVAL 2004

THE SERMON PREACHED BY FR KEVIN SCULLY, RECTOR OF ST MATTHEW’S, BETHNAL GREEN, AT EVENSONG ON ALL SAINTS FESTIVAL SUNDAY

“He has rescued us from the power of sin and darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins”.

It was ten years ago when a sometime curate of this church preached at what the new priest called his ‘inaugural presidency at the Eucharist’. This was some years after a former incumbent of this church had asked the would-be ordinand who was now a new priest why one would want to hitch one’s wagon to a crumbling, divisive and fraught organisation like the Church of England. That seemed, to that then worldly-wise, but still confident would-be ordinand, a rather pessimistic view of the world.

The response to the incumbent was jolly and, so he thought at the time, incisive: ‘someone has to hold the hand of a dying patient’. Fourteen years on and the patient, though displaying signs of psychosis, dementia, or just plain overtiredness, is still hanging on. That is because the patient, contrary to the view of many of those waiting for her to die, has a life of her own. And that life is based on something not being

immediately recognised in the symptoms.

From the pulpit of a church in north London, the sometime curate spoke, in a sermon that should have marked him out as something of a stand-up comedian, about the then problems facing the Church of England. At that point, the latest scandal that seemed to be sending all of us down the plug hole was the remarkable misinvestment of a lot of money by the Church Commissioners. Having set the scene for an extraordinary range of disasters, scenarios that might have got him a job as an ideas man in Hollywood in the 1970s — *The Poseidon Adventure*, *The Towering Inferno*, *Jaws*, that sort of thing — he asked himself the question about what may lay ahead. His answer was frank, if to some unhelpful; ‘I have no bloody idea!’

I expect the honest reaction to life — what it can bring in the way of personal attainment, ambition, neighbours, children — the list is endless — I expect the honest reaction to the question of what is in store for us is akin to those words proclaimed from another pulpit in another Victorian church ten years ago: ‘I have no bloody idea!’

Or, if one were to mouth more traditional pieties, it could be slightly more reverential and perhaps slightly more helpful: as God wills, so we will accept. Or, in the words of the Blessed Virgin Mary, “let it be to me according to thy word”.

Yet there is something deep in our psyche that conspires to prevent us thinking, let alone accepting, the acceptable acceptance speech. The reading we have heard from Colossians is one of those times when Paul — if it was Paul — prays that others will get, not the certitude or blessings that he considers his sufferings to be, but a spirit of resolution, a spirit of faithfulness, a spirit to press on.

Faith is not so much a thing we reckon to convince God of our goodness, our worthiness, of our deserving to be loved. Faith is a reaction to the knowledge of the love of God. God pours out his love upon us continually and, once you realise that that love is being poured out on us, faith is a response. And once faith is embraced, then pressing on is part of that response.

And Paul, or whoever wrote the epistle, as he tells those in Colossae, wants the Church there to be ‘filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding’. How refreshing that sounds when we hear — or maybe even contribute to — the blasts and counterblasts that can make up so much of current Anglican life.

Some look to Australia for leadership. Some look to Australia for theological insight. And, as we consider one of the many controversies that may deflect our attention, we could look to Australia again. It was from Australia that Barry Humphries brought the creation of Bazza Mackenzie. And once,

when confronting someone with whom Bazza was not seeing eye to eye, this antipodean philosopher had the ready phrase: ‘I hope your chooks turn into emus and kick your dunny down’. (For those needing a translation, it goes something like this: I hope your hens turn into birds the size of ostriches and kick down your outside lavatory.)

Now Bazza had a brother. He came over to join Bazza and to add decorum. You may remember him. He was an identikit twin, the suit, the tie, the Akubra hat. A perfect match apart from a dog collar. And Bazza’s brother was Kev the Rev. Kev the Rev was calling his brother and his rowdy comrades to order. And he was receiving apologies, as priests often do in public places, for sins and ills that Kev the Rev had neither witnessed nor had knowledge of. What Kev the Rev did not display much of was resolution. But then he was a satirical figure.

But we, members of the Church, the members one of another, are faced with a different dilemma than calling on a bunch of drunken Aussies to behave. If only. When the ear hurts, so does the toe. When the eye hurts, so does the foot. Paul’s metaphor of the body means that we are part of each other. But Jesus is reported to have said that if the eye offends to pluck it out. Or if your foot or hand cause you to stumble to cut them off. Self mutilation as a spiritual discipline is not one that I have seen much in operation. Most seem to be spiritual surgeons, removing the diseased spot in the body of faith.

It is a privilege and a duty to be called to the bedside of the seriously ill. It is often a difficult and unsettling honour to be with those near death. But it is truly a matter of grace when one witnesses a person prayerfully coming to terms with their lot, of their faithful resolution to take what comes. To allow what

needs to happen, happen.

It takes daring to hold on to faith. And it takes a certain stubborn humility to stand back from engaging in the seemingly endless warfare that church politics provides. I do not pretend to be above all this, an East end mystic who never has a harsh word for anyone. Clearly that would be delusional. Especially so when I recently broke a personal rule of life, in never writing a letter to the *Church Times*.

I was so outraged by Reform, Cost of Conscience and Forward in Faith being referred to as conservative organisations. Reform, despite its publicly stated aims on its website to come up with a whole raft of new measures to ensure its view would rule the day, conservative? I was so outraged that I belted out and sent by e-mail my attack on journalists' sloppy use of adjectives saying that calling the conservatism shown by Reform was akin to that of Oliver Cromwell in regard to church statuary.

But I regret the letter. In the same way that

I regret many of my more intemperate Irish Australian outbursts. The Church at Colossae was being urged to stand above disputes by sticking to their guns of faith. And many are trying to do this.

More important is to continue prayerfully. To go back to the rock of Christ, to let the ongoing and disturbing challenges Jesus has for us disturb us. And by looking to God's enormous blessing in Jesus, and resolve to move forward under his banner.

“He has rescued us from the power of sin and darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

With that in mind our views become slightly less important. Our need for prayerful consideration of the future lies not so much in strident confidence. Or in resolute defence. But contemplation of a future that will be as rocky as it will be, whatever we contribute to it, but is resolved in the loving arms of God, stretched out in the pinioned embrace that is the cross.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY TO THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

A few weeks ago, I took part in a discussion that involved a number of people working with children and young people who suffer from different forms of 'autism' — the kind of disorder that seems to cut people off from ordinary communication and shows itself in strange repetitive behaviours and sometimes in violent outbursts. We watched a video showing the work of one of the most experienced therapists in Britain, and then heard her talking about what she is trying to do with her methods.

The first thing we saw on the video was a

young man, severely disturbed, beating his head against a wall, and then walking fast up and down the room, twisting and flicking a piece of string. The therapist's first response was strange: she began to twist and flick a piece of string as well. When the young man made a noise, so did she; when he began to do something different, like banging his hand on a table, she did the same.

The video showed what happened over two days. By the end of the two days, the boy had begun to smile at her and to respond

when touched. A relation had been created. And what the therapist said about it was this. Autism arises when the brain senses too much material coming in, too much information. There is a feeling of panic; the mind has to regain control. And the best way of doing this is to close up on yourself and repeat actions that are familiar; do nothing new, and don't acknowledge anything coming from outside. But when the therapist gently echoes the actions and rhythms, the anxious and wounded mind of the autistic person sees that there is after all a link with the outside world that isn't threatening. Here is someone doing what I do; the world isn't just an unfamiliar place of terror and uncertainty. And when I do this, I can draw out an answer, an echo; I'm not powerless. And so relationship begins.

To see this sort of thing in action is intensely moving. This is real mental and spiritual healing at work. But it gives us a powerful image of what it is we remember at Christmas.

Human beings are wrapped up in themselves. Because of that great primitive betrayal that we call the Fall of humanity, we are all afraid of God and the world and our real selves in some degree. We can't cope with the light. As John's Gospel says, those who don't want to respond to God fear and run away from the light. But God acts to heal us, to bring us out of our isolation — which is as bizarre and self-destructive as that young man beating his head against the wall. And he does this in a way that is just like the therapist in the video. He does what we do; he is born, he grows up, he lives for many years a life that is ordinary and prosaic like ours — he works, he eats, he sleeps. Here is ultimate love, complete holiness, made real in a back street in a small

town. And when he begins to do new and shocking things, to proclaim the Kingdom, to heal, to forgive, to die and rise again — well, we shouldn't panic and run away because we have learned that we can trust him. We know he speaks our language, he has responded to our actions and our words, he has echoed to us what we are like.

Christ does not save the world just by his death on the cross; we respond to that death because we know that here is love in human flesh, here is the creator's power and life in a shape like ours. As we read the Gospels, we should think of God watching us moment by moment, mirroring back to us our human actions — our fears and our joys and our struggles — until he can at last reach out in the great gestures of the healing ministry and the cross. And at last we let ourselves be touched and changed.

That's what begins at Christmas. Not a doctor coming in with a needle or a surgeon with a knife, but a baby who has to learn how to be human by watching; only this baby is the eternal Word of God, who is watching and learning so that when he speaks God's transforming word we will be able to hear it in our own human language. He is God so that he has the freedom to heal, to be our 'therapist'. He is human so that he speaks in terms we can understand, in the suffering and delight of a humanity that he shares completely with us. And now we must let him touch us and tell us that there is a world outside our minds — our pride and fear and guilt. It is called the Kingdom of God.

May the blessing of Christ our incarnate King be with you all at this season.

✠ *Rowan Cantuar*

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A SERMON PREACHED BY THE VICAR AT HIGH MASS ON ADVENT SUNDAY

Year A; Isaiah 2: 1 - 5; Romans 13: 11 - 14;
Matthew 24: 36 - 44.

“The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.”

In St Luke’s Gospel, when Jesus preaches his first sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth, he reads from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and then applies what it says to himself. Throughout his ministry Isaiah is the book of Scripture to which he refers most often. And this is true of the New Testament writers as a whole and of Matthew whose Gospel we will be hearing Sunday by Sunday in this year of the Church which begins on this Advent Sunday.

The Church has continued ever since to give Isaiah a particular place in its worship. During this season of Advent, Isaiah will be read day by day at Mass and the Daily Office. The prophet’s words were to provide the basis of Israel’s hope for the Messiah and then applied by the Church to Jesus. Even those who only attend Christmas Carol Services or performances of Handel’s Messiah, will hear familiar words from Isaiah repeated year after year. These are words and images which are woven into the fabric of western culture.

To compress a great deal of biblical scholarship into a paragraph: the book we call Isaiah is in fact made up of three books; each one a collection of sayings passed down and then edited. The first is made up of the first 39 chapters which come from the period in the 8th century before Christ when Isaiah was active as a prophet in Judah. The next 15 chapters come from the

period of the Exile in Babylon, it contains the “songs of the suffering servant” which Jesus applied to himself and which the Church reads in Passiontide, and the remaining chapters from after the return. They are linked together by the name of Isaiah and the later sections seek to re-interpret and re-apply his message of judgement and hope for the people in new circumstances.

Who then was Isaiah? He seems to have been a prosperous and prominent citizen of Jerusalem, someone with access to the royal court. His call to be a prophet is described in the vision of Chapter 6 of the book — his vision of God in the temple. So some have suggested that he was a priest, just as Jeremiah and Ezekiel were. It is worth pointing out that the post-Reformation tendency to set protestant prophets over against catholic priests is something of a distortion. The Temple and its rituals are at the centre of Isaiah’s world. He presents contemporary events as their fulfilment.

He prophesies at a time when things seemed, on the surface at least, going quite well for Judah, the southern Jewish kingdom with its capital in Jerusalem. Unlike the northern kingdom, Judah had enjoyed political stability under a line of kings descended from David. King Uzziah, who died just as Isaiah began to prophesy, had brought economic and military success. Its people were, as Jesus says of those in the days of Noah, **“eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage”**. Life was going on as normal. Yet to the discerning eye of the prophet all was not

well. Internally, economic change brought social change: small farmers were being taken over by great landowners and reduced to the state of peasants; the promised land was becoming the possession of a few. Externally, to the north, the awesome military machine of the Assyrian Empire was establishing itself as a superpower to rival Egypt and subjugate the surrounding nations. The northern kingdom had already felt the effect of this. The hill country of Judah, off the main route to Egypt, had escaped so far. But for how long?

There were voices which called for military alliances and action. But Isaiah saw the futility of this and put forward another way.

Isaiah had a vision of the holy mountain of the Lord exalted in the last days:

“In days to come, the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be raised above the hills”.

The mount of the Temple represented heaven. Its height reflects the status of its God. When Isaiah sees the mountain of the Lord as the highest of the mountains, he means that the Lord is supreme over all the earth.

Isaiah has a vision of many peoples travelling to Jerusalem:

“all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, ‘Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths’.”

Isaiah would be used to seeing crowds of pilgrims coming to Jerusalem, to Solomon’s great temple, for the festivals which involved

both the king and people. Just as the mountain on which the temple stood became, in his vision, the heavenly mountain of the Lord, so the pilgrim crowds became the nations and peoples of the earth. The visionary sees beyond what is actually there.

He had a vision of the Lord giving his law from Jerusalem:

“For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

This too would have been based on an annual temple ceremony in which the king received the Law and renewed his vow to uphold it.

Once the Lord has appeared to give his Law, Isaiah sees the last Judgement establishing the kingdom of God:

“He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”

Isaiah’s picture of that judgement alters what other voices in the Old Testament say about it in line with his message. There are psalms (2 and 46) which describe the nations coming to attack Zion and being repulsed by the power of Zion’s Lord and King. The prophet Joel speaks of a day when all the people will become warriors and turn their ploughshares into swords and their pruning hooks into spears. Isaiah turns these pictures round. The nations come to Zion because they want to learn the law of the Lord. They destroy their own weapons to put them to better use. It was to be the cornerstone of Isaiah’s message that the security of Zion depended on the presence

of the Lord and not on weapons of war.

Well what of us now? What does Isaiah have to say to us? Can we, as generations of past believers have, find meaning for our day? In fact there seem to be parallels between our situation and that of Isaiah's Judah, and Israel in the time of Jesus. The fact that we are still praying for the peace of Jerusalem points to that. The politics and religion of Zion still matter to us. They are part of the deadly cycle of violence which threatens to bring terror to our city as it did to New York. While the threat of the red Army massed a few hours' drive from the Rhine and backed by a formidable arsenal of nuclear weapons, has gone, we now fear what Professor Samuel Huntington has called "The Clash of Civilisations"; conflict between the West and a resurgent and militant Islam.

There is great temptation for our society to place its trust solely in the weapons of war, rather than in the law of the Lord. This is not to say that we do not have to be prudent about real threats by terrorist groups of rogue states. It is to say, however, that the long term good of our society and our world must be based on relationships of peace with our neighbours. When we have a superpower which lays so much stress on its Christian credentials, but many of whose supporters seem deaf to Our Lord's warnings against speculating about an apocalyptic end of the world, indeed almost gleefully anticipate it, then the words of Isaiah need to be heard again.

Isaiah's vision of Jerusalem is one which is applied in the New Testament and Christian tradition to the Church. The Church on earth is a foretaste, an outpost of the heavenly Jerusalem, the Jerusalem above, which another visionary much

influenced by Isaiah sees in the Book of Revelation.

The Church in our society is having to learn not to put its faith in earthly status and establishment security. In western Europe there is a steady process of "disestablishment". This has been going on for a long time. This church of All Saints was founded by people who saw the Church being reduced to little more than a department of state; useful for the maintenance of public morality, but having no independent existence of its own. This church was called "All Saints" because the holiness of the church, its calling and dedication to serve the kingdom of God, was being lost. That distinctiveness of the Church in witness to the kingdom of God is what it has to offer to the world.

Then and now, the Church is called to renew its relationship, its covenant, with God. It has to go up to the mountain of the Lord, to receive the law — the instruction, that God might "**teach us his ways and we might walk in his paths**". This is not just a piece of Hebrew repetition. Our knowledge of God is not just head stuff. It is about living in a relationship, walking with God and with each other.

The words of Jesus in today's Gospel, "**Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming... Therefore you also must be ready for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour**", and those of Paul, "**You know what time it is, how it is the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near**", echoed in Archbishop Cranmer's collect for this Sunday, sound a note of urgency. Just as it is possible to go on as if

everything is normal — **“eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage”**, Christmas shopping, the office party, going to the football, watching snooker on the telly — or much worse, living in **“revelling and drunkenness, ...in debauchery and licentiousness, ...quarrelling and jealousy”**, so it is vital that we hear that urgent note as one addressed to us.

It is a feature of our society that people are increasingly ignorant of **“the ways of the Lord”**. Generations of people are growing up who have not been taught them and so cannot practice them. This and other churches need to be outposts of Zion by being places where people can receive instruction. That starts with us. Priests in Isaiah’s time were not meant to be mere liturgical operators, their rôle was to teach people the ways of God. If we as a church are to be a royal priesthood, that needs to be one of our priorities today.

Some of that happens, as it did for Isaiah, with the ongoing liturgical life of the Church — its reading and proclamation of scripture — instruction — our meditation on that instruction and application to the circumstances of our world and life. There is great strength and value in this ongoing life. We do learn by repetition, by doing things again and again. Those of us who belong to liturgical churches need to take that more seriously — to be active rather than passive participant.

It also means that we have to pay much more attention to teaching the ways of the Lord to people who do not know them. A generation has grown up which does not know the ways of the Lord and so cannot walk in them. How and where will they learn them? That does seem to be one of

the lessons which we in our tradition can learn from places like Holy Trinity, Brompton, with its Alpha Course or our neighbours at All Souls, rather than just looking down our refined high church noses at their enthusiastic ways. In both places the task of teaching the ways of the Lord is a major priority for the clergy, as indeed it is here, but it is not their task alone. It is something seen as a corporate responsibility, not least in terms of providing the resources of people and money for the task.

There have been efforts in the past which have not been sustained. We have begun again with the **“On the Move”** course which Fr Aquilina is leading. More is required. The challenge is urgent. Are we willing to respond to it.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

It was always a point of concern that the boys in the resident Choir School should receive a good and comprehensive education.

The Parish Paper for January 1905 contained the following advertisement:

“WANTED, a Parisian accent. There is some difficulty about the teaching of French in the Choir School. The staff of the school are fully competent to teach grammar and exercises, but they are very diffident about their pronunciation. They are painfully conscious that their accent is not Parisian. Is there any lady or gentleman who would undertake to give a lesson once a week, either in the forenoon or evening, in reading and conversation, leaving the regular staff to attend to exercises and grammar?”

In the event the Vicar received three

offers of help. It was later reported that Miss N. Paul had been appointed and she ‘gives the boys a charming lesson every Friday evening’.”
C.C.G.R

SUNDAYS AND SOLEMNITIES

MUSIC AND READINGS

• SUNDAY 2 JANUARY CHRISTMAS 2

HIGH MASS AT 11.00 a.m.

Entrance Hymn: 33 (omit *)
Introit: Dum medium silentium
Mass: Missa ‘O magnum mysterium’ — Victoria
Lessons: Ecclesiasticus 24: 1 - 12
Psalm 84
Ephesians 1: 3 - 14
Hymn: 37
Gospel: John 1: 10 - 18
Preacher: Fr Ivan Aquilina
Creed: Credo II
Anthem: A maiden most gentle
(arr Carter)
Hymns: 295, 387, 465
Voluntary: Offertoire sur les Noëls
— Guilmant

Evening Prayer is said at 4.30 p.m.

THURSDAY 6 JANUARY EPIPHANY

PROCESSION AND HIGH MASS AT 6.30 p.m.

Processional Hymn: 50 (T 338)
Introit: Ecc advenit
Mass: Credomesse — Mozart

Lessons: Isaiah 60: 1 - 6
Psalm 72
Ephesians 3: 1 - 12
Hymn: 49 (ii)
Gospel: Matthew 2: 1 - 12
Preacher: The Revd Prebendary Alan Wynne, Rector of All Saints, Poplar, and Area Dean of Tower Hamlets
Anthem: The Three Kings
— Cornelius
Hymns: 48, 52, 55
Voluntary: Prelude in E major, BWV 552.1 — Bach

• SUNDAY 9 JANUARY THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST (EPIPHANY 1)

HIGH MASS AT 11.00 a.m.

Entrance Hymn: 56
Introit: In excelso throno
Mass: Kleine Orgelmesse — Haydn
Lessons: Isaiah 42: 1 - 9
Psalm 29
Acts 10: 34 - 43
Hymn: 58 (T 128 (ii))
Gospel: Matthew 3: 13 - 17
Preacher: The Vicar
Creed: Credo III
Anthem: There shall a star from Jacob come forth — Mendelssohn
Hymns: 413, 431, 339
Voluntary: Prelude and Fugue
in F minor — Bach

EPIPHANY CAROL SERVICE at 6.00 p.m.

A Service of Readings and Music for The Epiphany with the Choir of All Saints.

Evening Prayer is said at 4.30 p.m.

• **SUNDAY 16 JANUARY**
EPIPHANY 2

HIGH MASS AT 11.00 a.m.

Entrance Hymn: 55

Introit: Omnis terra

Mass: Missa Brevis — Berkeley

Lessons: Isaiah 49: 1 - 7

Psalm 40

1 Corinthians 1: 1 - 9

Hymn: 349

Gospel: John 1: 29 - 42

Preacher: Fr Ivan Aquilina

Creed: Credo II

Anthem: Steal away to Jesus

(arr Tippet)

Hymns: 294, 481 (T 462), 495

Voluntary: Sonata in D (1st movement)

— Haydn

SOLEMN EVENSONG
at 6.00 p.m.

Psalm: 96

Lessons: Ezekiel 2: 1 - 3: 4

Galatians 1: 11 - 24

Office Hymn: 46

Canticles: St John's Service — Tippet

Anthem: Call to remembrance

— Farrant

Preacher: The Vicar

Hymn: 155 (T 117)

BENEDICTION

O Salutaris: Paul Brough

Hymn: 308

Tantum Ergo: Paul Brough

Voluntary: Voluntary — Tomkins

• **SUNDAY 23 JANUARY**
EPIPHANY 3

HIGH MASS AT 11.00 a.m.

Entrance Hymn: 494 (T 413)

Introit: Adorate Deum

Mass: Mass for five voices — Byrd

Lessons: Isaiah 9: 1 - 4

Psalm 27

1 Corinthians 1: 10 - 18

Hymn: 483 (T 77)

Gospel: Matthew 4: 12 - 23

Preacher: Fr Allen Shin

Anthem: O ye little flock — Amner

Hymns: 302, 513, 361 (T 493)

Voluntary: Concerto in A minor

(1st movement)

— Bach (arr Vivaldi)

SOLEMN EVENSONG
at 6.00 p.m.

Psalm: 33

Lessons: Ecclesiastes 3: 1 - 11

1 Peter 1: 3 - 12

Office Hymn: 46

Canticles: Service in G — Sumsion

Anthem: Quem vidistis pastores

— Poulenc

Preacher: Fr Ivan Aquilina

Hymn: 484 (T 167)

BENEDICTION

O Salutaris: Laloux

Hymn: 441

Tantum Ergo: Laloux

Voluntary: Variations sur un thème

de Clément Jannequin

— Alain

• SUNDAY 30 JANUARY

EPIPHANY 4

HIGH MASS AT 11.00 a.m.

Entrance Hymn: 52

Introit: Adorate Deum

Mass: Mass in D — Mozart

Lessons: 1 Kings 17: 8 - 16
Psalm 36
1 Corinthians 1: 18 - 31

Hymn: 360

Gospel: John 2: 1 - 11

Preacher: The Vicar

Creed: Credo III

Anthem: O magnum mysterium
— Poulenc

Hymns: 95, 377, 362 (T 185;
v 3 Descant — Caplin)

Voluntary: Placare Christe Servulis
from 'Le Tombeau de
Titelouze' — Dupré

SOLEMN EVENSONG at 6.00 p.m.

Psalm: 34

Lessons: Genesis 28: 10 - 22
Philomon 1 - 16

Office Hymn: 46

Canticles: The Second Service
— Byrd

Anthem: O magnum mysterium
— Victoria

Preacher: Fr Ivan Aquilina

Hymn: 336

BENEDICTION

O Salutaris: Byrd

Hymn: 416 (ii)

Tantum Ergo: Byrd

Voluntary: Voluntary in C
— Stanley

STAFF

Vicar:

The Revd Alan Moses 020 7636 1788 / 9961

Assistant Priest:

The Revd Ivan Aquilina 020 7636 1788

Honorary Assistant Priests:

The Revd Preb John Gaskell 020 7436 3287

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Sundays Low Mass at 6.30 p.m. (Sat), 8.00 a.m.
and 5.15 p.m. Morning Prayer 10.20 a.m.
HIGH MASS and SERMON at 11.00 a.m.
SOLEMN EVENSONG, SERMON and
BENEDICTION at 6.00 p.m.

Monday to Friday Morning Prayer at 7.30 a.m.
Low Mass at 8.00 a.m., 1.10 p.m. & 6.30 p.m.
Confessions from 12.30 - 1.00 p.m. & 5.30 p.m.
Evening Prayer at 6.00 p.m.

Saturday Morning Prayer at 7.30 a.m.

Low Mass at 8.00 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.*

(* First Mass of Sunday)

Confessions 5.30 p.m., Evening Prayer 6.00 p.m.

Confessions are also heard by appointment
020 7636 1788

Instruction in the catholic faith as taught by the
Church of England can be obtained on application to
any of the priests, who will also give help in preparing
for the sacraments.

PARISH OFFICIALS

Churchwardens:

Mr John Forde 020 7735 6799

Miss Frances O'Neil 020 7387 3465

PCC Secretary:

Dr Dilys Thomas 020 7794 3626

Hon Treasurer:

Mr Patrick Hartley 020 7607 0060

Director of Music and Organist:

Mr Paul Brough 01273 686021

Associate Director of Music & Assistant Organist:

Mr Andrew Arthur 020 7884 1677

Honorary Assistant Organist:

Mr Norman Caplin 020 8989 3295

Electoral Roll Officer:

Miss Catherine Burling c/o 020 7636 1788

CALENDAR AND INTENTIONS FOR JANUARY 2005

1	THE NAMING AND CIRCUMCISION OF JESUS	God's blessing on the New Year
2	✕ THE 2nd SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS	OUR PARISH AND PEOPLE
3		The homeless
4		The unemployed
5		ALMA*
6	THE EPIPHANY	Renewal in witness
7		Those in need
8	v of Our Lady	Walsingham
9	✕ THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST (The 1st Sunday of Epiphany)	OUR PARISH AND PEOPLE
10	<i>William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury</i>	Parochial Church Council
11	<i>Mary Slessor; Missionary in West Africa</i>	USPG
12	St Aelred of Hexham	Friends of All Saints
13	St Hilary of Poitiers	Teachers of the faith
14		Those in need
15		Church Army Hostels
16	✕ THE 2nd SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY	OUR PARISH AND PEOPLE
17	St Antony of Egypt	Religious Communities
18	v The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity until 25th	Christian Unity
19	St Wulfstan	World Council of Churches
20	<i>Richard Rolle of Hampole</i>	The Free Churches
21	St Agnes	Those in need
22	<i>St Vincent of Saragossa</i>	The Roman Catholic Church
23	✕ THE 3rd SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY	OUR PARISH AND PEOPLE
24	St Francis de Sales	The Orthodox Churches
25	THE CONVERSION OF ST PAUL	Unity of the Church
26	Ss Timothy and Titus	Theological Colleges
27	r Requiem (8.00 a.m.)	The departed
28	St Thomas Aquinas	Those in need
29		Society of All Saints
30	✕ THE 4th SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY	OUR PARISH AND PEOPLE
31	<i>John Bosco, Priest</i>	Church Schools

Please note:

All Friday Masses are 'for those in need' — intercessions from the board inside Church are used on these days.

r Requiem — the monthly Requiem, 8.00 a.m. only this month

v a Votive Mass

* ALMA — The Angola, London & Mozambique Diocesan Association



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