



All Saints Parish Paper

MARGARET STREET, LONDON W.1

MARCH 2006

£1.00

VICAR'S LETTER

It falls to the Vicar of All Saints to give a good many talks to visitors on the architecture, history and life of our church. You can read about some of the most recent in this issue. I am a priest rather than an architectural historian, so what I say is always of a church-building as a spiritual as well as a practical enterprise. There can be few places where that was more true than here where the influences of the Oxford Movement with its theological understanding of the mission of the Church of England, and the less well-known Cambridge Movement, with its firm views on how churches should be built as sacramental places, combined to glorious effect.

Unlike many of the churches built to cope with London's rapidly expanding population in the preceding decades, All Saints received no public funding. The Bishop of London has recently been speaking about the lack of government support for the Church as it cares for a huge proportion of the country's listed buildings.

The building of All Saints was an act of devotion to Christ and his Church on the part of its supporters. It was their gift to the people of London then and in the future. It was a gift which sprang from a profound vision worked out in disciplined

commitment. It was a gift at a time of conflict and division in the Church. Frederick Oakeley, the Minister of the Margaret Chapel, who might have been expected to preside over the building of the new church, followed his friend John Henry Newman to Rome. This could hardly have lessened the anxiety and suspicion of the church authorities towards an enterprise which seemed at once both radically traditional and shockingly new. It would have been quite understandable for people not to risk their labours, money and reputation, on such a hazardous venture.

Yet they did take the risk. Through all the difficulties, the physical labour was completed and the spiritual work begun which continues to this day. The ravages of time mean that it has fallen to the lot of our generation to take up once more the physical labour to restore what our forebears built.

We live in an age of conflicts within the Church and cynicism without. But we also live in a time of great opportunity. Just as Victorian London was an expanding city, so 21st century London is a vibrant and exciting one with new people pouring into it. This brings with it all sorts of stresses and strains as well as opportunities. Our church is set in a place which makes it

accessible to many more people than live in its official parish. When we commit ourselves to the work of the church here, and particularly funding it, as our forebears did, we are not simply buying a spiritual product or service for ourselves, but helping to provide something for people we may never meet or know.

March 1st this year is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. Our 19th century Tractarian predecessors have sometimes been thought of as rather Lenten Christians. Their emphasis was more on spiritual discipline than on outward show. They were deeply conscious that without the firm bedrock of an ordered spiritual life, the externals would be an “outward and visible sign” of not very much. Lent reminds us of those basic disciplines: prayer and study, fasting and abstinence, repentance and giving. As we embark on the work of restoring our church, we have to see it as only part of the work. Restoration must be accompanied by renewal of our communal and personal Christian life. As St Paul says in the epistle on Ash Wednesday, “Now is the acceptable time”. There is no better time to start than now.

Yours in Christ,

Alan Moses

THE RESTORATION APPEAL AND PROJECT

Work on the Restoration programme and the Appeal is proceeding steadily.

On the planning side, the PCC is taking professional advice on how best to limit the areas of work on which we have to pay VAT.

On the Appeal side, we have established an Appeal Committee and this has, so far, three sub-groups with particular responsibilities.

Grants:

This is preparing approaches to trusts and other grant-giving bodies, as well as potential major individual donors.

Publicity:

This group, which includes a number of our weekday worshippers involved in the world of the media and advertising, is looking at how we might most effectively publicise our plans, both within our existing networks and further afield.

Events:

Will encourage and coordinate events organised by the congregation to ensure that they are well timetabled. The group can be contacted through the Parish Office, if you have ideas for a fund-raising event.

The month of January saw two successful Sunday afternoon musical events — **The Curate’s Egg** and the **Schubert Octet**. The first raised £386 and the second £479. We are very grateful to these two groups of performers for their generosity in helping All Saints in this way. Paul Brough and the choir are planning a major concert for the Appeal in the Spring of 2007. Something to look forward to.

Congregational Pledges

The PCC believes that it is important when we approach other bodies for funding, that we are able to demonstrate the seriousness of our own commitment. We have found this to be the case in our previous appeals for the roof and the organ.

It had been our intention to use the Feast of the Presentation (February 2) as the occasion for the congregation to make their pledges to the Appeal. This turned out to be too optimistic in terms of time and pressure of work over the Christmas season.

We have now re-scheduled this stage of the Appeal. It will be launched with an information pack on Sunday March 26th — the day our Annual Meeting. And pledges will be returned on Sunday May 7th. The material will be circulated to all those on our various mailing lists. Please put both of these dates in your diary and continue to remember the Restoration project in your prayers.

LENT PROGRAMME

Holy Hours

A number of people have suggested to us that it would be good to have something during the day for those older members of the congregation who do not like being out late at night. So in Lent this year, we will have Holy Hour at 2.00 p.m. on Thursdays — beginning on March 9th. The themes of our devotions will be taken from Archbishop Anthony Bloom's "Creative Prayer".

The Way of the Cross

Stations of the Cross will be at 7.05 p.m. on Fridays, from March 10th.

Sunday Evening Sermon Course

The Vicar and Father Aquilina will preach a course of sermons at Evensong on some great Christians of the 20th Century.

Lent 1 March 5

Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Edith Stein
The Vicar

Lent 2 March 12

Charles Gore
Fr Aquilina

Lent 3 March 19

Oscar Romero and Desmond Tutu
The Vicar

Lent 4 March 26

Maximilian Kolbe
Fr Aquilina

Lent 5 April 2

Martin Luther King
The Vicar

The Sacramental Life

Mondays at 7.00 p.m. in the Parish Room

March 13

The Sacrament of Healing
Fr Christopher Gower
Rector of St Marylebone

March 27

The Sacrament of Holy Orders
Dr Colin Podmore

PREACHING AND SPEAKING: HOME AND AWAY

Candlemas saw Fr Aquilina preaching at St Michael and All Angels, Croydon and Fr Gaskell at St James's, Sussex Gardens.

The Vicar went to St John's, Upper Norwood, to address a large group of parish-ioners who meet each Thursday evening for supper, a talk and discussion. His subject was: "Why did Jesus die?".

Meanwhile at home, **Paul Brough** gave a fascinating address as part of our School of Worship series. This was done without a single note and stimulated lively discussion. It is unfortunate that **Canon Lennart Sjostrom** of the Swedish Church has been prevented from giving his planned lecture on the Swedish Liturgy by illness.

Denis Moriarty is one of those people who supports his local church in the

morning and comes to us for Sunday Evensong when his work commitments allow. Fr Aquilina, who is John Betjeman's greatest Maltese fan, persuaded Denis to give a talk on him under the auspices of the Walsingham Cell. This ranged widely over the poet's life, writings and architectural and religious interests.

There was an excellent representation from All Saints when **Paul Brough** was not speaking but conducting away with the Hanover Band at St John's Smith Square. St John's was well filled for a programme of Mozart including the Requiem.

It was a great pleasure to welcome back to All Saints as our preacher at Candlemas, **Canon Donald Gray**, formerly of Westminster Abbey and St Margaret's Church. Canon Gray's sermon is reproduced in this issue. He is one of the contributors to the recently published centenary history of the English Hymnal and will give a lecture at St Mary's, Primrose Hill, on "Percy Dearmer and the birth of the English Hymnal" on Saturday May 27th at 2.15 p.m. This will be followed by Choral Evensong.

Congratulations to:

Prebendary Donald Barnes, who often celebrates the Monday lunchtime Mass, on his 80th birthday (February 13th). A number of us were able to attend a party in his honour at St Alban's, Golders Green, where he continues to assist.

And to

Prebendary David Paton (formerly of this parish) who has been appointed Master of the Royal Foundation of St Katherine, the conference and retreat centre in the East End. At present Fr Paton is Rector of St

Botolph's, Bishopsgate, and Priest-in-Charge of St Vedast's, Foster Lane, as well as being Area Dean of the City.

IN MEMORIAM

Jill Horley

The Vicar writes:

Jill had been in and out of hospital for some time before and after Christmas. Her condition deteriorated rapidly after the New Year and she died on the afternoon of January 7th.

It is sometimes assumed that everyone who worships at All Saints is addicted to the grandest forms of ceremonial and music, but this is not the case. It was not the case with Jill.

As I said at her funeral service, Jill's motto could have been "**No fuss**". This certainly applied to her funeral arrangements. She gave strict instructions that she wanted no great All Saints funeral Mass; just a simple funeral at the crematorium. There was to be no eulogy. When we spoke about this in the hospital, it was clear that her mind was made up and to have tried to change it would have been insensitive. I did, however, suggest gently that her friends would like to have a requiem for her in church. She agreed to this on condition that it be kept simple. I was happy to comply with this.

So we had a service at Mortlake Crematorium including hymns and prayers she had chosen. Members of her family, friends and former colleagues from the BBC, were joined by All Saints folk. Then we had a requiem at All Saints and I am glad we did because a good number of Jill's

friends who had not been able to get to the funeral were able to attend. The family produced a lovely photograph of Jill wearing the British Empire Medal she was awarded for her wartime service at the Bletchley Park code-breaking centre. It captured that familiar and much-loved smile.

In my sermons on both occasions I sailed as close to the wind as I dared, thinking that I might well have to answer for it in the next life. I spoke of a funeral as an occasion for remembering those qualities in someone which had touched our lives: Jill's friendship and kindness expressed in so many small but significant ways for which many of us, including myself, had reason to be grateful; that dependable reliability; her sense of fun. Jill was a regular member of the Sunday lunch group at All Saints and could be seen enjoying a convivial gin and tonic before it. But an alert observer would have seen her writing little notes to Mary Bishop to include her in the conversation in spite of her deafness.

For her funeral, Jill had chosen that popular passage from one of Canon Scott Holland's sermons, much used at memorial services. It can seem to imply that death is not a separation at all, when it is and we feel the pain of loss. But the Christian hope is that, in the Resurrection life and the Communion of Saints, we are not separated from those whom we love but see no longer because we are all enfolded in the love of God.

I quoted some words spoken by the Archbishop of Canterbury in his sermon at the Memorial Service for the victims of the July 7th bombings.

"When we are aware of a deep bond with the departed, it sometimes helps us see that death in itself is not the thing most to be feared. We acknowledge the awful hurt of bereavement. Yet we have an abiding sense that death ...cannot destroy our relationships at the most important level; that love is indeed, as the Bible says, strong as death."

All Saints as a congregation has lost a dear friend, many of us as individuals have too.

A Memorial Service

All Saints hosted a memorial service for **Herbert Fitzroy Robertson** who has practiced as an architect in Portland Place. His family and former colleagues kindly suggested that there be a collection for the Restoration Appeal.

Michael Fleming

Last month, Dr Harry Brama wrote an appreciation of Michael Fleming who had been organist here in the years leading up to the closure of the Choir School. Michael's funeral Mass took place in a packed St Michael's, Croydon, where he had done much to restore the standards of church music. The Durufié Requiem and a feast of other music was sung by a combination of the choirs in which Michael had been involved.

Fr Harry Williams CR was a curate here in the time of Fr Cyril Tomkinson. He died at Mirfield on Monday January 30th and his funeral took place there the following Monday.

There will be an appreciation of him in the next issue of the Parish Paper.

VISITORS

All Saints welcomes a steady stream of groups of visitors, often on study courses. In addition, in this past month, we have had with us on Sunday February 6th a group of the **Friends of St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork**, led by the Dean, Fr Michael Burrows. The Vicar gave a talk about the church and the group stayed on for Evensong before rushing to the airport.

A smaller group came on Friday February 10th from the **Friends of Fulham Palace** one of whom is our secretary **Anne Merritt**.

In grander days, the palace used to be the home of the Bishops of London. It has a chapel by William Butterfield. Again the Vicar gave a talk about the church and was rewarded by being taken out for lunch.

A chance encounter in the courtyard led the Vicar into a fascinating conversation about a former resident of the Vicarage and a glimpse into the “*Upstairs-Downstairs*” world of the Edwardian era. **Mr Thurstan Adburgham** of Leighton Buzzard is researching his family's history. He came to All Saints because he had discovered that a great aunt called Annie Abraham had lived and worked here. Annie had been taken into the North Surrey District School — a residential school for pauper children — after the death of parents. She would go on to the Grosvenor House Training Home — established in 1881 for “*the training of ignorant and troublesome girls who have failed in domestic service*”. It was also one of a number of homes certified by The Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants, whose aim was the provision of “*homes for lodging girls when*

out of place and giving them a short period of training and the opportunity to re-establish their character”. Mr Adburgham has discovered that Annie was taken on by Fr Whitworth, the Vicar of All Saints, as a nursemaid to his three small children. Annie was later recorded in the 1901 Census as a Novice Nursing Sister at Worthing. After that, there is no trace of her but it seems likely that she followed some of her siblings in emigrating to Canada.

(Mary Baddeley, the last matron of the Choir School, used to recall that the third floor room on the courtyard side of the Vicarage used to house no less than five maids.)

Mr Adburgham writes:

“...I have found the story of Annie and her siblings a fascinating one. I hope you find it of some interest to you. It was quite an emotional moment for me to find myself looking at the house where Annie had been taken in by a kindly clergyman, 115 years ago, and given her chance to escape from hardship and poverty. I see that the Revd Whitworth died in 1905. ...Hopefully, he knew by that time... that Annie had made good.”

THE ANNUNCIATION, MARBLE ARCH

Licensing of Priest-in-Charge

On Monday January 30th, the Bishop of London licensed the Vicar as Priest-in-Charge of the Annunciation. There was a good representation from All Saints to support the growing relationship between our two parishes. As we have come to expect from the people of the Annunciation, there was a splendid party afterwards. This

more than made up for the failure of the church's heating system to come on in time.

As well as licensing Fr Alan, the Bishop used the occasion to invest **Dr Christopher Rawll** with the Medal of St Mellitus in recognition of his many years of devoted service to the Church in London, not least as Warden of Readers. Christopher's many friends were glad to see him again.

The Feast of the Annunciation (Lady Day) falls on Saturday March 25th and as last year, instead of having a High Mass here, we will join our friends at the Church

of the Annunciation, for their Feast of Title. The Procession and High Mass will be at 11.00 a.m.

The preacher will be **Fr Alan Wynne**, the Rector of All Saints, Poplar, and Area Dean of Tower Hamlets. Fr Wynne was an honorary assistant priest at the Annunciation when he was a school chaplain.

There will be refreshments afterwards. Please come and support the people of the Annunciation.

DIARY DATES

Tuesday 28 February at 7.00 p.m.

School of Worship. We regret that the talk on the liturgy of the Swedish Church has had to be cancelled because of Canon Sjostrom's illness.

Ash Wednesday, 1 March

6.30 p.m. High Mass and Imposition of Ashes

Preacher: The Vicar.

Low Masses (with ashing) at 8.00 a.m. and 1.10 p.m.

Evening Prayer will be said today at 5.45 p.m.

Saturday 4 March

The Cell of Our Lady of Walsingham and All Saints

Why Walsingham? Other cells and parishes in London have been invited to join us for this day in which we shall explore Pilgrimage and make a spiritual pilgrimage to Walsingham, so that for the day we shall bring Walsingham to London! Fr Philip and a nun from Walsingham will be with us.

Programme for the day:

11.00 a.m. Mass

11.45 a.m. Keynote Speech by Fr Philip North,
Priest Administrator of the Shrine OLW

12.15 p.m. Sprinkling (Fr Philip North)

12.45 p.m. Lunch

1.45 p.m. Workshops — Prayer; Healing; 1st time Pilgrims (choose one topic)

2.30 p.m. Laying on of hands and Benediction (Fr Philip North)

3.30 p.m. Day ends

Monday 6 March

7.00 p.m. Meeting of the Parochial Church Council in the Parish Room.

Thursday 9 March and every Thursday afternoon in Lent until 6 April.

2.00 p.m. Holy Hour

Friday 10 March and every Friday evening in Lent until 7 April.

7.05 p.m. Stations of the Cross

Please see elsewhere in this issue for any other Lenten activities at All Saints.

Saturday 25 March — The Annunciation of Our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary

8.00 a.m. Low Mass at All Saints.

11.00 a.m. High Mass at *The Annunciation, Bryanston Street.*

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

Sunday 26 March — Lent 4 *British Summer Time begins, clocks go forward 1 hour.*

12.45 p.m. Meeting of Parishioners followed immediately by

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Monday 3 April

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

Thursday 6 April

7.45 p.m. Easter Concert 2006 by Chandos Chamber Choir

conducted by **Andrew Arthur** with **Gavin Roberts**, organist.

20th Century Music of Remembrance

Kodaly — *Missa Brevis* and music by Casals, Ireland, Stanford, Messiaen,

Dove and Finzi. Tickets £10 *on the door.*

The Parish Retreat

This will be held at St Francis House, Hemingford Grey, from Friday 19th to Sunday 21st May 2006, the weekend before Ascension Day. It will be conducted by Fr Peter McGearry.

If you would like to come on the retreat, know someone else who would, or have any queries, please will you contact Martin Woolley on 07976 275383 or at **m.g.woolley@btinternet.com**. The cost will be £80. A letter to participants giving more details will follow in due course.

LENT APPEAL 2006

The proceeds of the Lent Appeal this year will be divided between St Cyprian's Theological College in Tanzania, and the Church Army Women's Hostel in Marylebone.

**CHRISTIAN AID SPONSORED WALK
SUNDAY MAY 21st 2006**

CIRCLE THE CITY

**WALK LAUNCH AT 1.30 p.m.
ST MARY-LE-BOW, CHEAPSIDE, EC2**

*Come and explore the City of London from the Tower to Fleet Street
and raise money for Christian Aid.*

A GREAT DAY OUT FOR ALL THE FAMILY.
*Meet jugglers, clowns and acrobats and see some of London's hidden,
as well as famous, sights.*

Have fun and raise funds for the world's poorest communities.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
020 7654 5330/1 or London@christian-aid.org**

**MEETING OF PARISHIONERS AND ANNUAL PAROCHIAL
CHURCH MEETING, SUNDAY MARCH 26th 2006**

A meeting of parishioners will be held on Sunday March 26th 2006 at 12.45 p.m. in the **church** at which Churchwardens will be appointed for the year 2006 - 2007. Members of the Electoral Roll, and residents of the parish on the electoral register, are eligible to attend.

Any person wishing to be considered for the post of Churchwarden must be (a) 21 years or over, (b) on the Electoral Roll and (c) an actual communicant member of

the Church of England.

Nominations must be proposed and seconded, and candidates must indicate their willingness to stand. In addition candidates are asked to submit a *short* typed or clearly written statement giving the reasons for their wishing to stand and the benefits they feel they could bring to the post if appointed. Nominations for the post of Churchwarden **MAY NOT** be made at the meeting.

The Revd L.A. Moses, Vicar

The Annual Parochial Meeting will follow immediately. Only members of the Electoral Roll are eligible to attend.

At this meeting — Six members of the laity will be elected to serve on the Parochial Church Council for the years 2006 - 2009. The retiring members of the Council are Mrs C. Brown, Mr R. Clutterham, Mr T. Halton, Mr I. Marsh, Mr

K. Postance and Mr C. Self. Of these, Mrs Brown, Mr Clutterham, Mr Postance and Mr Self are eligible for re-election. Candidates for election to the Parochial Church Council must (a) have been on the Electoral Roll for at least 6 months, and (b) be actual communicant members of the Church of England. All nominations must be proposed and seconded by persons on

the Electoral Roll, and all candidates must indicate their willingness to stand. In addition all candidates are asked to submit a *short* typed or clearly hand-written statement giving their reasons for standing for election.

Nomination forms may be obtained from the Parish Office or the PCC Secretary. Although nominations may be made at the

meeting, it is requested that completed forms, together with statements, are returned to the Parish Office by Monday March 13th 2006, to enable the papers for the meeting to be available one week before the Annual Meeting.

Sidesmen for the year 2006 - 2007 will also be appointed.

Dr Dilys Thomas, PCC Secretary

THE SOUL OF THE NATION, LOST CHRISTIANITY, Are there signs of recovery?

Fashions come and go, nothing is ever static, truth never changes, only our relationship to it changes. The teachings of Christ have been the main influence and energy source in western civilization since the birth of Jesus. This birth of Christ was the birth of a new era. This birth was God, in an act of total love, intersecting history once and for all, yet it is also the birth of God now, interacting with each one of us in our hearts.

All great movements have their ebb and flow. The last fifty years have seen Christian thought and influence ebb out of the soul of the nation. All of us have become involved in “The Law of Unintended Consequences” — unforeseen events that arrive from well intentioned actions. The tensions between authority and society, the individual and their rights, have resulted in a serious shift in our laws, thinking and attitudes. Christianity believes in the authority of God in the hearts of believers and that this authority holds the principles under which Christian life is lived.

Serious problems arise when the State ceases to assent to such a view, and the general consensus shifts from an understanding of a cohesive society with

citizens responsible to the State and each other, to the primacy of the freedom and rights of the individual to the exclusion of others. Wisdom, experience, authority, order, deference, and respect are derided and abandoned, by an arrogance that believes truth is only to be found in what is new, and that the viewpoint of others is of no account.

Parliament, the Judiciary, the police, the armed forces, God, the Church and other ‘authority’ bodies lose respect. Legislation to correct previous injustices pushes the pendulum swing into laws designed to protect the individual which end up damaging the cohesive collective nature of Society. Human Rights legislation has sought to superimpose moral law because it is no longer taught as proper behaviour. Some of this legislation purporting to enhance freedom of the one, is now in danger of inhibiting freedom of the many, witness the debate over free speech.

There has been an observable downward progression. Abandon God, Christ and authority, and moral teaching disappears. Once morality has gone, then legislation arises to fill the vacuum. ASBOs and

Parenting Laws, arise to fill the moral vacuum. The recently proposed 'Respect Action Plan' which emphasises the need for parenting contracts, is an example. Such laws are promulgated to deal with consequences rather than causes, and these can lead to confusion. For example, there is clearly a problem of conflict between the laws about parenting. On the one hand parents are to have responsibility for their children's school attendance, and on the other they have no parental rights over abortion advice, given to any child under sixteen.

We live in a world of opposites, and life is lived between the pendulum swings. When authority and duty become agents of repression for the individual, then a correction will take place. When the rights and freedom of the individual take precedence over the duty and the stability of society, then another correction will take place. Discerning change is never easy, but when a change is taking place we have to decide whether we are part of it or not. So it matters if we can spot the change and see the opportunity for our involvement.

Post-Modernism has pursued the rightness of Multiculturalism without seeing the cost to a cohesive national identity. Multiculturalism has meant that Christianity must be taught as a religion in the context of others; it can no longer be taught as a confessional faith. The denigration of the Royal Family, (a monarch who believes publicly in the higher authority of God), the cult of apology by the Church for holding moral views, the cult of apology by the nation for its history and its Empire, the slow dismembering of industrial national institutions that bound people together and gave a sense of identity:

British Rail, British Telecom, British Coal, British Steel, British Gas, British Shipbuilding, have all had a pronounced effect on the cohesiveness of the soul of the nation, and their loss has contributed to a sense of loss of "Britishness".

There are signs of 'Cultural Anxiety', a fear that something, some sense of identity has been lost. Applications for Citizenship are now met with a questionnaire and a formal ceremony of acceptance. Is the call for affirmation of the common values of "Britishness" by Mr Gordon Brown, a personal agenda or a sign of something to do with the Soul of the Nation, even though there seems no reference or hint of Christian history and influence in this? Trevor Philips, head of the Council for Racial Equality, has had the courage to suggest that what we had as a nation was important and of value, and that the pursuit of Multiculturalism has not been helpful, because if there is no common concept of a cohesive nation state, then we are the less.

The new Archbishop of York at his enthronement service told us:

"Christ did for us what we couldn't do for ourselves. Through the birth, life and death of Jesus Christ there came into the world a new power that transforms human character and human communities, and liberates us from anxiety, fear, meaninglessness, transience, evil, ignorance, guilt and shame. Created humanity, in need of salvation, must realise that the culture and institutions they create are also in need of redemption, not simply just modernising.

"For me, the vital issue facing the Church of England and the Nation, is the loss of this country's long tradition of Christian wisdom which brought to birth the English Nation.

We face the loss of wonder and amazement that Jesus Christ has authority over every aspect of our lives and our nation.”

This seems to reflect the beginnings of realization that something of value has been lost, and that abandoning our Christian Heritage has left the heart of the Nation without a soul. The Soul is described as “The immaterial part of man regarded as immortal” (*Pocket Oxford Dictionary*). Jung propounded the notion of the “Collective Unconscious”. Does a Christian Nation have a collective soul? How is it Christian?

It seems possible to suggest that when moral teaching has stopped, and there are no longer guidelines within our hearts that come from a higher source, then the individual will become self-centred and divorced from the needs of others. The pursuit of personal pleasure has accelerated the divorce in our minds of the body from the soul. There are few of us left who believe that the body and soul are one, or even that we have a soul. When the divorce of body from the soul takes place in most people, then it seems probable that there will be few left who have a concept of the Soul of the Nation.

Does this call to ‘Britishness’ reflect stirrings about this lost ‘Soul of the Nation’. Does the Archbishop’s call for the recognition of authority, the rôle of the Established Church of England, the need for redemption within our culture and national institutions and Jack Straw’s comment in defence of ‘Christian’ Christmas Cards — “to celebrate Christmas without acknowledging its religious origin and power is simply wrong” — reflect this? Have we lost something ‘essential’ in the pursuit of multiculturalism and the rights of the individual?

If the answer is ‘Yes’, then what response might Christians make?

To start with, we need to have the courage to articulate what we believe in such a way that it does not exclude people. We need to have courage in a certainty that relates to principle but agrees that not all situations should be treated rigidly. First principles for Christians are centred in the teaching of Jesus. There can be no doubt that the working out of the ‘Golden Rule’ by everyone in daily life “*In everything do to others as you would have them do to you*” (*Matthew 7: 12*) would improve things all round, and reduce the need for law. There is no doubt that the Ten Commandments held Moral Law, and influenced legal and economic law in this country for centuries. The post-modernist world has shifted away from the moral content as too prescriptive. Moral considerations have been discarded as subjective and associated with the repressive authority of God. If we recover our belief in God, then the recovery of the truth of Moral or Natural Law will follow.

We must stop apologizing for the teaching of Jesus: we must stop apologizing for the Church. There were and are faults but it was not and is not all bad. We must re-claim what is good, reminding ourselves that Western Civilization has been shaped and formed for the better by Christian thought and action. We must realize that the hunger for spiritual truth is no longer confined within the structures of the Church. There is a genuine secular search and questing by people whose spiritual needs are not met by dogma and tradition. We must be seen to support the Church in its battle to be inclusive. Non-believers think we are mad with our petty squabbles, but these disagreements are about real shifts in perception and at least the Church is open

and honest in its debate with all the pain that that brings.

We must stop worrying that science has all the answers. It has some, but not all, and science often proves what faith has suggested. We need both reason and spirit to make sense of it all. The use of reason is crucial to our faith and we must be quite comfortable that *“faith is the conviction of things not seen”* (Hebrews 11: 1).

We must stop being ashamed of being Christians. We need to have confidence again, even though people may not agree with us, that our way of life is rooted in the teaching of Christ. We need to have confidence in the authority of God, and the compassion of God, and that these both

order and inform our lives. We need to have the confidence to be discernibly different, and to know that this difference is attractive because it shews our care for the conditions of all people.

Does Shakespeare lead us to further reflection on what lies hidden within us all?

“Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have immortal longings in me.”

Antony and Cleopatra Act v: Sc2 282

Are we looking at the signs that point to a re-awakening of these immortal longings in the Soul of the Nation? If so, we must rejoice in this potential and ask how can we help fan these flames of the Spirit?

Gerald Reddington. February 2006

THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST 2006

THE SERMON BY THE REVD CANON DR DONALD GRAY

AT THE CANDLEMAS PROCESSION AND HIGH MASS

THE VISITOR

Afterwards, the Church Wardens and those who greeted him at the church door, could recall being tremendously impressed by what he told them of himself Perhaps it was a visiting card, or something of that sort, which he showed them? Anyway, they didn't hesitate, and took the visiting stranger straightaway to the sacristy to meet the Vicar.

What was he like, they asked themselves later, this stranger who suddenly appeared at the church door before Mass? Again, they couldn't really remember. Very striking — but whether he was dark or fair, whether he was tall or short, they couldn't bring to mind. It just didn't seem to matter at the time.

Certainly the Vicar was sufficiently impressed by the visitor that he dropped what he was doing and engaged him in animated conversation. At least that was what it looked like, but afterwards the Vicar could remember some of the visitor's questions, some of them, but not many of his own answers. Though the questions, he recalled, were deep and searching, going right to the heart of matters and not couched in jargon-speak ('mission shaped church', 'collaborative ministry', for instance). And the amazing thing was that even though the Vicar (like most of us) was not over-fond of having his actions, nor his motives, subjected to examination, he felt no resentment or anger at the questions. In fact

there was a sort of easy compulsion to speak fully without embarrassment — and to a stranger at that.

But **was** he a stranger? Members of the congregation who met him, some members of the choir, said they thought that they had seen him before, but couldn't for the life of them remember where. Was it here — or somewhere else? Was it perhaps a picture in the papers — or on TV? No, he wasn't a stranger, but **who** he was no one could really put a finger on.

Everyone responded freely and easily to the visitor's questions. And what questions they were! Although later they couldn't call to mind the detail, those who spoke with him recalled that they were intimate and discerning. They were questions about life and living, faith and believing, about things at the very centre of being. Fundamental, basic, definitive, essential.

Did the visitor take part in the service? Here there was a great deal of confusion. Some said, 'yes', others 'no', or at least they weren't sure. But many said that they were pretty certain he was around. No one was quite definite that they'd seen him during the Mass — but a number stated that they were very much aware of him during the progress of the service.

Certainly there was no sign of him at the end. Yet it wasn't as though he'd absolutely gone. But it was a fact that no one saw him leave. He'd not said good-bye. He hadn't told either the Vicar or the Church Wardens, or anyone, he was going. As people said, he'd not mentioned how long he was staying — and at the time no one thought it right to ask.

It didn't seem to matter. For in many ways there were those who felt things could never be the same again. Some that is. Among **them** there were those who now felt a twinge of guilt, others a feeling of profound joy, some a deep peace.

However there were also those who had forgotten it all by dinner time — and certainly had no recollection of anything by the next morning.

Nevertheless, it had been very, very important for some — a time never to be forgotten, to be recalled often (with less recollection of the details) still with an increasing sense of what — awe?

**FOR: THE LORD WHOM YOU SEEK
WILL SUDDENLY COME TO HIS
TEMPLE... ..BUT WHO CAN ENDURE
THE DAY OF HIS COMING?**

(Malachi 3: 1a & 2a.)

A SERMON PREACHED BY THE VICAR ON EPIPHANY 4, 2006 AT HIGH MASS

Twenty odd years ago, the actor Alec McCowen toured the country giving readings of St Mark's Gospel. When we heard him do this, he stood on the stage of the Adam Smith theatre in Kirkcaldy, holding a small New Testament — just in case his memory failed (it didn't) — and recited the whole Gospel.

This year at Mass on Sunday we are reading through the Gospel according to Mark. Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels and now generally regarded as the first. On Sundays of course we get rather short sections which hearers, and indeed preachers, can cope with. But this fragmentation means that we miss the

drama of the whole. So I would like to suggest that you do something like Alec McCowen — remember that the Gospels were written to be read out loud rather than silently as we do — and read through the whole book — it should take less than an hour; not much more than an episode of your favourite soap. Doing this gives a powerful sense of how Mark tells the story of Jesus, the way he uses words and events to show the gathering storm, the reaction of people to Jesus.

It gives a feel for the dramatic pace; a pace which begins with a relentless driving sense of urgency, **“and immediately”** — with Jesus constantly moving on. Then it slows as it comes to the last few days — the events of Holy Week which take up by far the longest section of the story — slowing even more when we come to the crucifixion itself. Mark has been called a Passion story with an introduction — an apology — that is an explanation of why Jesus died.

Now, let’s take a look at the passage we have been given this Sunday. We are at the beginning of the Gospel. Jesus has been baptised by John in the Jordan, driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. After John the Baptist has been arrested, Jesus begins to preach and he calls his disciples — Simon and Andrew, James and John, from their work as fishermen. Together, they go into Capernaum — the hometown of these men and the base for Jesus’ early ministry in Galilee. **“And immediately”** — recurring phrase in Mark by which he communicates the sense of urgency — Jesus enters the synagogue and teaches.

“And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.”

The Greek word which our version translates as **“authority”** can also mean **“power”**. It is one of the features of Mark’s Gospel that while he speaks of Jesus teaching with authority, he actually gives us relatively little of the content of the teaching — and here, none at all. We are only told the impact that Jesus made as he taught. This is contrasted with the manner of teaching that people were used to from the scribes. Who were they? They were people, mostly Pharisees — who because of their literacy, were able to study and comment on the Law. By that time, very few people understood Hebrew any more and so when the Law and the Prophets were read in the synagogue a translation and commentary was given. The scribes were familiar with the large amount of commentary on the Law which sought to apply it to different situations.

Their method was one we might compare with that of a lawyer in our society. It was to rely on precedent rather than being original. In the Gospel we will see Jesus exercising his authority over the scriptures.

“And immediately” — those words again — **“there was in the synagogue a man with an unclean spirit.”** It is a feature of Mark’s story-telling to begin with one thing, incorporate another, and then return to the original.

If there is one thing in the Gospels which seems remote and strange to us, which seems like a great gulf fixed between our age and then, it is the language of unclean spirits, of demons. What are we to make of this?

This is not just a theoretical exercise. Only a couple of weeks ago, there was a news story about a Congolese pastor who was alleged to have diagnosed children as

possessed by evil spirits and suggested that they be sent home to the Congo to be killed.

It is significant in the Gospel that this incident happens in the synagogue, the holy place. The power of evil is present there too. As the Gospel story moves on, it is the religious powers that be who are Jesus' most determined opponents. Evil is present in the Church too, and not just in strange foreign imports.

At another level, many would feel that such language makes the whole Gospel incredible. I found something helpful in Austin Farrer, a contemporary and friend of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien at Oxford, the Warden of Keble College, a considerable theologian, philosopher and preacher. Although his sermons are regularly reprinted and his writings studied, unfortunately they are not the stuff of Hollywood blockbuster movies. In *"Love Almighty and Ills Unlimited"* he speaks of how the contemporaries of Jesus understood mental illness as the work of forces beyond the control of the sufferers. This was a way of saying that it was not the fault of these sufferers.

Optimistic rationalists of our scientific era which really got under way in the 18th century, tended to dismiss all this as primitive and outmoded. Human improvement would eradicate such things as progress marched on. Two things happened to dent this sunny optimism.

One was the abundant evidence of the power of evil in the past century — an evil which seems to have been greater than the sum of its individual parts, an evil which seized control of not merely the individuals but communities and nations in a welter of destruction which laid waste not merely primitive societies but some of the most

sophisticated in the world.

The Church has long recognised the dangers which lurk in the language of the demonic. How it can be used to demonise others. How it can be used as a means of evading our own moral responsibility.

It is important for us to note that in this passage, the exorcism which Jesus carries out is secondary to his teaching. It is that **"new teaching"** which is the source of the authority by which he is able to silence the unclean spirit.

In the Gospel Jesus only responds to needs like this. He does not go looking for them to demonstrate his power. He does not use this power to force belief. People are always left free to choose — and increasingly they choose not to believe.

"And he cried out, 'What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God'."

If our world's history has given us a renewed consciousness of the human potential for wickedness, the study of the human subconscious has made us more aware of the power of forces deep within us to distort our lives. We do not have to be mentally ill to recognise the way in which our inner demons, as we often call them, seem to recognise the truth which would set us free, and reject it, preferring us to remain in captivity. We lie to ourselves about addictions or destructive behaviour or hateful prejudices and resentments, justifying and excusing them, rather than realising that in facing the truth we find the Jesus who says to us **"Be silent and come out of him"** the one **"with authority, he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him"**.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

The Vicar wrote on two topics connected with worship: The first was on the subject of receiving Holy Communion.

“I have received, as I expected to receive, some letters of remonstrance, as to my attitude towards the large number of late communicants at the High Celebration. All Saints people would, I am sure, be the very last people in the world to wish their Vicar to refrain from saying what in his heart and conscience he believes to be true and for their spiritual welfare. Moreover, I have always been brought up to say quite frankly what I believe to be the truth, and I am afraid it is too late for me to alter even if it were desirable to do so. On the other hand, I respect the conscientious opinions of those from whom I differ, and I have no desire to *force* my opinions on others in any way. If people continue to communicate late, I shall of course assume their conscientious belief that it is a right thing to do, but I am of the same opinion still that only those well on in years, or those who suffer from some physical infirmity should do so, and that all who can should communicate in the early morning.”

It was the favoured custom in those days, and until the 1960s, to receive Holy Communion fasting, and to this end people were expected to make their communion at an early Mass and then return to High Mass at which only the celebrant would receive. The laudable intention was to increase devotion in the reception of Holy Communion. In fact, it was a practice which was based on a mistaken understanding of the Eucharist — and

especially of the Prayer Book. Liturgical scholarship and renewal led to the overnight fast being abolished in the Roman Communion in favour of one lasting an hour. Anglican clergy who, if parish magazines, devotional books and sermons are any guide, had spent a large amount of energy on this subject, had to follow suit. An object lesson in not tying one's coattails to Rome.

Fr Holden's other comment was about sermons. At All Saints in those days, there were a great many sermons, too many it seems for some, especially in Lent.

“We always in All Saints quite rightly provide our people with a considerable amount of instruction, and of course our annual practice is accentuated in Lent. Now I know that there are many people who prefer to come to church for the service only and who do not wish to remain on weekdays for the sermon. I am all for freedom in these matters, and I am sure in the long run the preacher has as little to complain of as the people if the sermon is treated as separate from the service. He knows that the people who remain have done so *deliberately* in their desire for instruction, and such a thought must always act as a great incentive to pulpit power. For the future, on week-days, (and this of course applies to Lent when there will be addresses on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays after the 5pm Evensong), the choir will come out at the end of the service and there will be a short pause made to enable those to depart who may desire to do so before the address.”

This provision seemed to apply only on weekdays. Sunday sermons were not optional extras.

SUNDAYS AND SOLEMNITIES

MUSIC AND READINGS

WEDNESDAY 1 MARCH ASH WEDNESDAY

HIGH MASS AND IMPOSITION OF ASHES AT 6.30 p.m.

Entrance Hymn: 507

Introit: Misereris omnium

Mass: Missa 'Emendemus in melius'
— Palestrina

Lessons: Joel 2: 1 - 2, 12 - 17
Psalm 51
2 Corinthians 5: 20b - 6: 10

Hymn: 71

Gospel: Matthew 6: 1 - 6, 16 - 21

Preacher: The Vicar

During Imposition of Ashes:
'Emendemus in melius'
— Byrd

Psalm 103

Anthem: Miserere mei, Deus — Byrd

Hymns: 62, 66 (T 63), 445

● SUNDAY 5 MARCH FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

HIGH MASS AT 11.00 a.m.

Litany in Procession: Loosemore

Introit: Invocabit me

Mass: Missa 'Quand' io pens' al
martire' — Lassus

Lessons: Genesis 9: 8 - 17
Psalm 25
1 Peter 3: 18 - 22

Hymn: 67

Gospel: Mark 1: 9 - 15

Preacher: Fr Ivan Aquilina
Creed: Credo III
Anthem: Cast me not away from thy
presence — Wesley
Hymns: Amazing Grace, 507,
65 (T 329 (i))

SOLEMN EVENSONG at 6.00 p.m.

Psalm: 119: 17 - 32

Lessons: Genesis 2: 15 - 17, 3: 1 - 7
Romans 5: 12 - 19

Office Hymn: 59

Canticles: Service for five voices
— Weelkes

Anthem: When David heard
— Weelkes

Preacher: The Vicar

Hymn: 439 (i)

BENEDICTION

O Salutaris: 251

Hymn: 72

Tantum Ergo: 393

● SUNDAY 12 MARCH SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

HIGH MASS AT 11.00 a.m.

Entrance Hymn: 148 (omit *)

Introit: Reminiscere

Mass: Missa 'Crux fidelis'
— Vivanco

Lessons: Genesis 17: 1 - 7, 15 - 16
Psalm 22
Romans 4: 13 - 25

Hymn: 410

Gospel: Mark 8: 31 - 38

Preacher: The Vicar

Anthem: Remember not, Lord, our
offences — Purcell

Hymns: 68, 507, 76

SOLEMN EVENSONG at 6.00 p.m.

Psalm: 135
Lessons: Genesis 12: 1 - 9
 Hebrews 11: 1 - 3, 8 - 16

Office Hymn: 59

Canticles: Collegium Regale — Tavener

Anthem: O vos omnes — Casals

Preacher: Fr Ivan Aquilina

Hymn: 372

BENEDICTION

O Salutaris: 95

Hymn: 382

Tantum Ergo: 295

● **SUNDAY 19 MARCH**
THIRD SUNDAY
OF LENT

HIGH MASS AT 11.00 a.m.

Entrance Hymn: 333 (v 5 Descant
 — Caplin)

Introit : Oculi mei

Mass: Mass for four voices — Byrd

Lessons: Exodus 20: 1 - 17

Psalm 19

1 Corinthians 1: 18 - 25

Hymn: 87 (T 322)

Gospel: John 2: 13 - 22

Preacher: Fr Ivan Aquilina

Anthem: Versa est in luctum — Lobo

Hymns: 328, 507, 206

SOLEMN EVENSONG at 6.00 p.m.

Psalms: 11; 12

Lessons: Exodus 5: 1 - 6: 1
 Philippians 3: 4b - 14

Office Hymn: 59

Canticles: The Short Service — Byrd

Anthem: In ieiunio et fletu — Tallis

Preacher: The Vicar

Hymn: 94 (T 76)

BENEDICTION

O Salutaris: 493

Hymn: 386 (T 385)

Tantum Ergo: 202

● **SUNDAY 26 MARCH**
FOURTH SUNDAY OF
LENT

HIGH MASS AT 11.00 a.m.

Entrance Hymn: Lift high the Cross
 (T A&MR 63)

Introit: Laetare

Mass: Mass in C — Schubert

Lessons: Numbers 21: 4 - 9

Psalm 107

Ephesians 2: 1 - 10

Hymn: 84

Gospel: John 3: 14 - 21

Preacher: The Vicar

Creed: Credo II

Anthem: Gott ist mein hirt — Schubert

Hymns: 72, 507, 413

Voluntary: Fantasie in F moll, K594
 — Mozart

SOLEMN EVENSONG at 6.00 p.m.

Psalms: 13; 14

Lessons: Exodus 6: 2 - 13

Romans 5: 1 - 11

Office Hymn. 59

Canticles: Service in A — Stanford

Anthem: The Lord is my Shepherd
 — Stanford

Preacher: Fr Ivan Aquilina

Hymn: 400 (T A&MR 401)

BENEDICTION

O Salutaris: Harry Brama (No 1)

Hymn: 73 (i)

Tantum Ergo: Harry Brama (No 1)

Voluntary: Lantana — Whitlock

CALENDAR AND INTENTIONS FOR MARCH 2006

1	ASH WEDNESDAY	Our Lenten observance
2	St Chad	Unity
3		Those in need
4		Walsingham
5	✘ THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT	OUR PARISH AND PEOPLE
6		Parochial Church Council
7	Ss Perpetua, Felicity and their Companions	Renewal in witness
8	Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln (Ember Day)	Friends of All Saints
9		Unity
10	Ember Day	Those in need
11	Ember Day	Vocations
12	✘ THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT	OUR PARISH AND PEOPLE
13		Our Restoration Appeal
14		St Cyprian's Theological College
15		Church Army Hostels
16		Unity
17	St Patrick	Those in need
18	<i>St Cyril of Jerusalem</i>	The Holy Land
19	✘ THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT	OUR PARISH AND PEOPLE
20	ST JOSEPH OF NAZARETH	Families
21	Thomas Cranmer	Archbishop of Canterbury
22		The homeless
23		Unity
24	<i>Walter Hilton of Thurgarton; Oscar Romero</i>	Those in need
25	THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LORD TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY	The Annunciation, Bryanston Street
26	✘ THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT	OUR PARISH AND PEOPLE
27		The unemployed
28		Hospitals
29		West London Day Centre
30		Unity
31	<i>John Donne</i>	Those in need

Please note:

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

