



# All Saints Parish Paper

MARGARET STREET, LONDON W.1

DECEMBER 2008

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## VICAR'S LETTER

In a Remembrance Day Sermon, the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of the remarkable revival of public interest in and enthusiasm for the act of remembrance in recent years. When I was newly ordained it was widely thought that Remembrance Sunday would soon be a thing of the past. Like an old soldier, it would just fade away. This has proved not to be the case. Remembrance now seems to embrace people of all generations and even most political persuasions. Young people who work in the media or fashion industry around All Saints, whose "uniform" is very "dress down" every day of the week, sport poppies just as much as the elderly and smart-suited. The observance of silence on Remembrance Day itself, as well as on Sunday, has struck a real chord.

A number of factors seem to have contributed to this: the various commemorations of significant anniversaries and the involvement of our armed forces in a number of conflicts fought out on television, have brought home the reality of war for generations otherwise spared direct involvement. I remember having to preach at an ecumenical commemoration of the 40th anniversary of VE Day at which a major part of the congregation was made up of veterans of the Polish Parachute Brigade who had

fought at Arnhem and never been able to return home. As we worshipped, Poland languished under martial law and I pointed out the tragic irony that this country had gone to war to save Poland, yet Poland was still in chains.

The Archbishop suggested that this revival of interest is a "**testimony to the need in our society for common acts of looking beyond our immediate concerns**".

Last month I mentioned the Noho Square development on the site of the old Middlesex Hospital. Since then, the scheme has collapsed, another casualty of the financial crisis which has engulfed us. By the time you read this, we will be into Advent; the season in which we both prepare for Christmas and focus our attention on "the last things". These are traditionally listed as "**heaven and hell, death and judgement**". But I would suggest that we should think of them as pointing us to those things which are of ultimate concern and of lasting significance. The Credit Crunch is causing many of us to consider what really matters. In the short term this may just be a matter of belt-tightening by individuals to weather the economic storm. But in the longer term, I detect a feeling among many I talk to, that it is more than time for a re-evaluation of the way we run our

common life which looks “**beyond our immediate concerns**”.

Churches and charities are understandably anxious about the effect of economic woes on giving. I have been heartened by people who have said to me that they know that they need to cut their expenditure but believe that must not be at the expense of the church and other good works they support.

The Christmas lights are already lit on Oxford Street and the pre-Christmas advertising campaigns in full swing. One of them features a well-known TV personality, usually associated with expensive cars, setting off on a dog sled to discover a “**real Christmas**”, one that consists of eating and drinking, in Lapland with Santa Claus. But the huskies pulling the sled take him back home to a well-known supermarket.

Anglicans are not puritans like those in Cromwell’s time who suppressed Christmas as a pagan and catholic affair. We celebrate the Saviour’s birth with food and wine and gifts. But we know that the “**real Christmas**” is to be found not amidst the lights of Oxford Street or the groaning shelves of a supermarket but at church as we celebrate with carol and crib, story and sacrament, the birth of the Christ child in humility, to reveal to us the ultimate reality of God; with our families and friends as we share the love and joy of the Holy Family; in our care for those who are deprived of these gifts.

With every blessing for Christmas.

Yours in Christ,

*Alan Moses*

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## THE FESTIVAL IN RETROSPECT

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The Festival this year was crammed into an extended weekend. Our preacher at the First Evensong was **Fr Michael Bowie**, the Rector of Berkhamsted. Fr Michael is a familiar face in the congregation at Sunday Evensong. In an earlier phase of life he was the Vicar of Christ Church, St Laurence in Sydney, a parish with which All Saints has many links. Our preacher found some of his former parishioners in the congregation; both those who had settled here and others who happened to be in London (see below).

Our preacher on All Saints Day itself was **Bishop John Flack**, sometime Bishop of Huntingdon, then Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome, now a country parson and assistant bishop in the diocese of Peterborough. In my welcoming remarks, I said that I was beginning to worry about inviting Bishop John to preach because the last time I did, for all Souls Day some years ago, he appeared with his arm in a sling and on industrial strength painkillers, having been knocked over by a car outside All Saints, Huntingdon, the night before. This time, it was his wife Julia who was wearing a sling, having broken her wrist in two places while walking the dog a couple of days earlier. Since being with us, she has been back to hospital to have the wrist broken again and re-set and has been ordered to stay off work for three months.

In the congregation that morning was Fr Allen Shin who had brought his organ scholar from Keble College, Oxford. The latter’s response included the question: “**How do you get so many people to come**

## **to church on a Saturday morning?"**

Festival Sunday was the next day and our guest preacher was the **Archbishop Valentino Mokwa** of Tanzania. Archbishop Valentino was in Britain for a series of events and meetings which included the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the foundation of UMCA — the Universities' Mission to Central Africa. As I am the chairman of USPG (which incorporates UMCA), I took the opportunity to invite him to preach. In the afternoon, I took him to Cambridge where there was to be another UMCA commemorative service at Great St Mary's, the University Church. The Archbishop preached and I had the lighter task of reading a lesson. It seemed very strange not being in All Saints for Festival Sunday Evensong for the first time in 14 years; not least because I missed the opportunity to hear **Fr Simon Butler** preach.

As some of you will know, **Bishop Michael Marshall**, sometime Vicar of All Saints, is now developing a post-retiral ministry at the Annunciation, Marble Arch. So it was good to be able to welcome him back to his old pulpit here on All Souls Day for the High Mass; this year the final service of the Festival. Bishop Michael remarked that the congregation at this service was far bigger than it had ever been in his days here.

**Peter Jewkes**, an organ builder and organist, a member of Christ Church-St Lawrence in Sydney, a member of the Friends of All Saints who was with us for the Festival, writes:

"I couldn't let another day go by without saying to you how splendid I thought this year's All Saints' tide was. It will hardly

be surprising to you that I always look forward to returning to what is, if not my parish church, then at least my 'home away from home' — a feeling heightened after a more than customarily long absence this time. My first weekend, though somewhat arduous, was however greatly rewarding, and while it was not mere lucky coincidence that we happened in on the first weekend of November, finding Fr Michael Bowie (former Vicar of Christ Church-St Lawrence) in the pulpit was a complete and pleasant surprise... The other services were predictably marvellous, with clergy, choir and servers all excelling themselves.

"It was Monday night's Requiem however which was perhaps the most moving event for me, and the one which prompted me to write. There is a real danger for an organist who has spent 28 years playing in 'shrine parishes' to become blasé about such things, but there was no risk of that on Monday. The music was exquisite, the sermon extraordinarily moving, and the commemoration meaningful and tasteful (even to one not familiar with most of the names). As it happened, I had to rush off afterwards, which was in some ways no bad thing, and by chance (not by failure of parishioners to make me welcome) I didn't speak to anyone before or after the Mass. I have however *never* felt so surrounded by friends here and 'there' (certainly more than just some pleasant fuzzy 'great cloud of witnesses' euphoria which might have been engendered by the moment) and I felt I should express that to you."

I know from what others have said to me that these thoughts are echoed by many.

In the Parish Paper a century ago, Fr Mackay rather played down the amount

of work involved for the clergy at Festival time and pointed to all the others who help. I would echo his sentiments and express my gratitude to our visiting preachers and to all the members of the home team who made the Festival such a momentous occasion.

Not least among its blessings was that the **Festival Appeal**, which was for our Mission Projects and the Restoration Appeal, raised **£8,000**. This is the largest sum so far, and very commendable given the state of the economy.

**AM**

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## PARISH NOTES

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### John Lewis and Waitrose Arts and Crafts Club

*Dear Father Moses,*

*The committee has asked me to write and thank you for allowing us to use All Saints for our exhibition. Over 200 guests and partners (John Lewis staff) attended the preview evening, and during the following four days another 300 members of the public came to have a look.*

*The venue was perfect for an exhibition, over-looked as it was by the Burne Jones memorial to Christina Rosetti.*

*Cedric Stephens  
Chairman*

The guest-of-honour at the private view of the exhibition was the Deputy Lord Mayor of Westminster. As well as being able to view the exhibition, guests were also able to see the church which was kept open for the evening with some of our servers acting as stewards.

## Gillian Dare

*At Gillian's Investiture with the Cross of St Augustine, the Archbishop of Canterbury said:*

Last year, a journalist on Robert Mugabe's state-owned newspaper, *The Herald*, wrote that Gillian Dare deserved to die.

Her crime? "Speaking out", as Gillian herself put it, "against the continued mis-governance and human rights abuses" in Zimbabwe. This "speaking out" has made Gillian, a First Political Secretary in the Foreign Office, respected wherever she has gone. Even in "man-dominated" Nigeria, her plain speaking has been admired by all, along with her loyalty, energy and personal courage. She often travels alone, or lightly escorted, even to war zones.

She certainly took no notice of President Mugabe's threats. She stayed fixed at her post in Harare.

But Gillian would argue that diplomacy is mostly about listening. She had a former career in local government so she keeps her ear close to the ground. Also a committed Anglican — long a member of the congregation of All Saints, Margaret Street, where her Sunday lunches were legendary — she believes that African Christians have a huge part to play in politics.

She has encouraged them to speak out — on conflict, on reconciliation and on poverty — and has made sure that they are listened to, both by the United Kingdom Government and the international community. Aided by people like Gillian, the African Church has found its own, powerful voice.

Gillian has also observed that, outside the capital cities of Africa, Bishops can eclipse politicians. To counter the tyranny of Mugabe, Gillian has built a network of support for Bishops in Zimbabwe — Catholic and Methodist as well as Anglican.

For fusing her Christian practice with political awareness, Gillian is never sectarian in her approach: she works and worships ecumenically. Her contacts include both the Papal Nuncio and the Head of the Supreme Council of Islam — as well as everyone in between.

Perhaps it's those "in between" people, often forgotten by the mainstream, who make Gillian's witness so special. Tolerant, friendly, warm and welcoming to everyone, with the lightest of touches, Gillian brings her Christian faith to bear in every aspect of her work — from the way she respects her domestic staff to her handling of international politics.

Perhaps her political adroitness comes from all those years on the Parish Council at Margaret Street...

This year Gillian has been posted to Liberia, where we wish her "God speed", certain that the Church there will learn more about government. And the government more about the Church.

I have great pleasure in awarding Gillian the Cross of St Augustine.

✠ Rowan Cantuar

**Paul Hunter** has also joined the diplomatic service. He has been posted to Japan but was home with us over the Festival to attend a course on economics.

## Mark Seymour Taylor Memorial Service

Cedric Stephens, Juliet Windham and the Vicar, attended the annual memorial service at the Royal National Hospital for Neuro-disability in Putney where Mark was a patient for the last months of his life. The service was conducted by the Revd Geoff Coyne, the hospital chaplain, who also spoke at Mark's Funeral Mass here at All Saints.

## Gospel Imprint

One of the quiet ministries we revived some years ago is the literature stall in church which provides not only the Pitkin Guide to All Saints, but a variety of pamphlets produced by religious communities like the Sisters of the Love of God and the Community of the Resurrection, as well as material of our own.

We now have a considerable addition to the provision in the form of free leaflets under the heading of "Gospel Imprint". This is an initiative of two Anglican Societies, Affirming Catholicism and the Society of Catholic Priests, to support catechesis, liturgy and pastoral care, rooted in Anglican theology, liturgy and spirituality, informed by scripture, reason and tradition.

Gospel Imprint allows parishes to reproduce the leaflets in order that they may be given without charge.

## No 8 Margaret Street

Work is under way on the renovations at No 8. The large wooden structure in the corner of the courtyard is a receptacle for the waste such work inevitably produces. It means that we will not need to have a skip outside in the street. It is providing us with

some extra notice space while the regular board is blocked off.

## Visit to All Saints, Notting Hill

One of our servers, Ross Buchanan, is living and working as a pastoral assistant at All Saints, Notting Hill. We have had a number of visitors from Notting Hill during the past year, especially at Corpus Christi when we were joined by servers and members of the Mothers' Union. The hospitality was returned on Friday November 7th when a group of us were guests at an evening Mass and Holy Hour, followed by refreshments and a chance both to meet people and explore the splendid church.

Our thanks to Fr John Brownsell and his people for their generous welcome.

## THE PARISH RETREAT

We have provisionally booked next year's retreat at Hemingford Grey for March 13th to 15th, quite early in Lent. We do not yet have a conductor and suggestions (or, indeed, volunteers!) will be welcomed.

I would be grateful if anyone able to

make a firm booking could send me their name, contact details and a £50 deposit in the form of a cheque made payable to All Saints Margaret Street PCC. It would be helpful if this could be done before Christmas but in any case no later, please, than Friday January 16th.

We need a minimum of 15 people to break even. If this number has not been reached by the deadline, all cheques will be returned and the booking cancelled. If we do have 15 - 18 people, the deposits will be non-returnable. If more than 18 (full house) apply, the deposits of those applicants applying after the figure 18 has been reached will have their deposits returned to them.

These arrangements, this year, helped to ensure that the retreat was not a drain on parish resources. I hope you do not mind the process being repeated.

I look forward to receiving your bookings, which should please be addressed to me at 8 Margaret Street, London WIW 8JG. I can also be contacted by 'phone on 02074362858 or by email at m.g.woolley@btinternet.com.

*Martin Woolley*

## CONFESIONS BEFORE CHRISTMAS

### Thursday 18 December

12.00 - 1.00 p.m. Fr Gaskell

5.00 - 6.00 p.m. Fr Beauchamp

### Friday 19 December

5.00 - 6.00 p.m. The Vicar

### Saturday 20 December

5.00 - 6.00 p.m. Fr Beauchamp

### Monday 22 December

12.00 - 1.00 p.m. The Vicar

5.00 - 6.00 p.m. Fr Beauchamp

### Tuesday 23 December

12.00 - 1.00 p.m. Fr Beauchamp

5.00 - 6.00 p.m. The Vicar

### Wednesday 24 December

12.00 - 1.00 p.m. The Vicar

The **Card Aid** Charity Christmas cards shop is open here again, for the third year, until just before Christmas. Normal hours will be 11.30 a.m. - 5.30 p.m. Monday to Saturday.  
*Card Aid have also produced our new Christmas card — The Holy Family — the Crib at All Saints Church. Sold in packs of 10 @ £5 per pack, they are available from our Sunday Shop, the Parish Office and in church at selected times. Sold in Aid of All Saints Church.*

## DIARY DATES

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**Sunday 30 November — THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**11.00 a.m. Litany in Procession and High Mass**

**6.00 p.m. Advent Carol Service with the Choir of All Saints**

**Thursday 4 December**

**7.05 p.m. HOLY HOUR led by Fr Gerald Beauchamp**

**Saturday 6 December — Conception of Our Lady**

*The Cell of Our Lady of Walsingham and All Saints*

**11.00 a.m. Low Mass with Hymns**

**11.30 a.m. Talk “Our Lady, Queen of the Church — of England?”** by Father Gerald Beauchamp, followed by buffet lunch. *All are welcome. (Please note that due to illness Michael Robson’s talk “Various Views of Mary” has had to be postponed.)*

**Thursday 11 December**

**7.45 p.m. Chandos Chamber Choir**

*Voices and Brass — Music by Bruckner, Gabrielli, Purcell and Hassler.*

*The programme will be interspersed with audience carols.*

*Wine and mince pies will be available in the interval.*

**Chandos Brass Ensemble led by Robert Farley**

**Gavin Roberts, Organ, Andrew Arthur, Conductor.**

*Tickets £12 on the door.*

**Wednesday 17 December**

**5.15 p.m. Wells Street Family Proceedings Court Carol Service**

**Thursday 18 December**

**Carol Singing in The Plaza and in and around Oxford Street from 6.30 p.m.**

(starting from the Courtyard). All welcome, particularly those with good voices!

*Names please to Janet Drake (T: 020 72789930).*

**Friday 19 December**

**12.30 p.m. LUNCHTIME CAROL SERVICE** followed by mince pies and mulled wine in the Courtyard (NB no lunchtime Confessional or 1.10 p.m. Mass that day).

Volunteers are needed on the day to help with refreshments, and about 10 days in advance to circulate leaflets about the service around the parish. Please contact Janet Drake (T: 020 7278 9930). Donations of mince pies, or money for the wine, will be gratefully received.

**Monday 22 December**

**6.00 p.m. FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS**

with the Choir of All Saints

**CHRISTMAS AT ALL SAINTS**

**Wednesday 24 December**

**11.00 p.m. MIDNIGHT MASS**

**Thursday 25 December**

**8.00 a.m. Low Mass**

**11.00 a.m. HIGH MASS**

**Tuesday 6 January — THE EPIPHANY**

**6.30 p.m. Procession and High Mass**

*Preacher:* Canon Graham Kings, Vicar, St Mary's, Islington

**Sunday 11 January**

**6.00 p.m. Epiphany Carol Service with the Choir of All Saints**

**The Byzantium Exhibition**, at the Royal Academy. Fr Alan and Fr Gerald invite you to join them at this important exhibition. Fr Alan is going on the evening of **Friday 16 January** (meet at the RA at 7.45 p.m.) and Fr Gerald on the morning of **Saturday 7 February** (meet at the RA at 9.50 a.m. with entry at 10.00 a.m.). Please indicate if you are a RA member. We hope there will be sufficient members to enable those who aren't to get in for free.

**Monday 2 February — THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST (Candlemas)**

**6.30 p.m. High Mass and Procession**

*Preacher:* The Bishop of Chelmsford

**Thursday 26 February**

Fr Gerald is organising another theatre outing to see **King Lear** at the Young Vic. If you would like to go please sign the list at the back of the church and buy a ticket online ([www.youngvic.org](http://www.youngvic.org)) or by phone (020 7922 2922). Seats are unreserved. On the night we'll meet at the Young Vic at 7.00 p.m., go in together and then have a drink afterwards.

***Looking further ahead:***

**Friday 13 - Sunday 15 March**

**Parish Retreat to Hemingford Grey**

*Please contact Martin Woolley for details.*

**Sunday 29 March — Passion Sunday**

**12.45 p.m. Annual Parochial Meeting**

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## THE SERMON ON 5 OCTOBER, 2008 (DEDICATION FESTIVAL) BY FR BILL WILSON, VICAR, ST JAMES', SUSSEX GARDENS

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There can't be many churches in this country that have caused such a host of people to comment, led them to faith and sustained them in it. Or simply led them, jaw dropped, into this dazzling interior. Ian Nairn in his 1966 Nairn's London says this:

*To describe a church as an orgasm is bound to offend someone; yet this building can only be understood in terms of compelling, overwhelming passion. Here is the force of Wuthering Heights translated into dusky red and black bricks, put down in a mundane Marylebone street to rivet you, pluck you into the courtyard with its harsh welcoming wings and quivering steeple.*

Barbara Pym, Rose Macaulay.

Rose Macaulay, who was an inveterate church-hopper, reported regularly to her distant relative, Fr Hamilton Johnson, always reporting the previous Sunday's experience. On one occasion she wrote:

*The church I like best, after Grosvenor, is All Saints, where the service is very beautiful and dignified, and much more Prayer Book, though the chairs are not adequately anchored and slide about.*

And Betjeman of course. It was his work on English parish churches, coupled with the outrageously antagonistic Secret History of the Oxford Movement, which, as some of you may remember my saying before, drew me here on a cold early morning in 1960 to discover whether it was all true. I had no idea that one day I would stand in this pulpit.

I can't resist bringing Betjeman in again, and quote irrelevantly a letter he wrote to Anthony Barnes in 1946:

*I had to preach a sermon in a very large Gothic revival church (1890-Perp) in Northampton. It was terrible. Quite six hundred people at Evensong. I sat in the choir and remembered that clergy always go down on their knees during the penultimate verse of the hymn before the sermon. I went down on mine. All I said was 'Oh God! Oh God!' and sweated. Then as I bowed politely to the altar and ascended to the pulpit, the congregation was singing the last two lines of the hymn — and may the music of thy Name refresh my soul in death.*

Poor man. I know the feeling. Beautiful, inviting, compelling, uplifting. Dangerous. Dangerous, because our love for a building, for its part in our life can so easily become idolatrous. Quite simply, we can turn it into God. This building is not God. Nor is the tradition and ethos of All Saints'. Only God is God. There is a fine line. Because clearly people have been brought to God, led to faith, simply by being here.

The architect J.L. Pearson believed that a church should be designed so as to bring people to their knees. And it's true. The greatest of the Church's buildings actually do this. I've experienced it, as I stood in the narthex of the pilgrimage church at Vezelay, attended Mass at St Mark's, Venice, or at the cathedral in Le Puy. And often this comes over one in spite of the quality of the liturgy being offered. I've felt it here, and in the refined, lofty space of St Augustine's, Kilburn. And, I have to say, at the cubic altar of Street's swansong church, St James', Sussex Gardens. But these buildings only really work for two reasons, I think.

First, because of the passion, conviction and devotion of those who designed and built them. You only need to look at the details of William Butterfield's working regime to realise that here is a man who, though on the exterior austere, has a deep devotion to the God who made all that is.

Secondly, these buildings really work because they are home to communities. Because they are prayed in, because the sacred liturgy is celebrated in them, they acquire an atmosphere. Often there is a stillness in these places that persists even when the sound of the traffic can still be heard, and the sirens, and the sound of people shouting in the streets. It's an urban thing, and thank God we have it — our open churches which provide an oasis of stillness in a busy world.

All of this can be so, all of this is so, because here heaven and earth meet in the eternal now of the sacred mysteries, and because we gather around the altar to celebrate and to make present the eternal verities on which our tradition is founded. We are God's building.

Christians are only really called to do two things: to worship God and to build community. It's not always true that individual Christian communities manage to do both. Either they focus on the worship of God and shut the rest of the world out, or they launch out into a waiting world with nothing to offer but soup kitchens.

What I remember from my earliest days as a churchgoer is the importance attached to Sales of Work. These went on for days, and throughout the year people bought coupons to spend at the sale, where they could buy shoddy goods at inflated prices — all for the good of the Church. There were 'socials'

too, and potato pie suppers. All these events were well-attended. But hardly anyone ever went to church. When John Moorman was rector of Holy Innocents, Fallowfield, in Manchester during World War II, he was visiting a woman in the parish who said she 'belonged' to Holy Innocents. He expressed delight and said that he hoped she found the services helpful. 'Oh, I don't go to services' she said, 'but I have been to two whist drives'.

Churches with a highly developed devotional and liturgical life often suffer from the opposite problem. They can so easily turn their back on the world and create a holy huddle that is difficult for anyone from outside to penetrate.

I'm sure most of you will be familiar with the speech of Bishop Frank Weston in his concluding address 'Our present duty' at the Anglo-Catholic Congress in 1923. It was a rallying call to the movement which at the time felt itself poised to take over the Church of England. It was a call to devotion, to commitment, self-sacrifice and discipline. But above all it was a reminder to the movement of the primacy of mission — the recognition that Christ came for all, died and lives for all. He ends:

*You have got your Mass, you have got your Altar; you have begun to get your Tabernacle. Now go out into the highways and hedges where not even the Bishops will try to hinder you. Go out and look for Jesus in the ragged, in the naked, in the oppressed and sweated, in those who have lost hope, in those who are struggling to make good. Look for Jesus. And when you see him, gird yourselves with his towel and try to wash their feet.*

Have times changed? You see, as Jeremiah pointed out, you can't stand at the Temple,

the dwelling place of God on earth, feeling safe, if you are not prepared to proclaim and live the conviction that lies at the centre of your tradition. We all fail in this, and very few if any of us would be capable of standing on street corners proclaiming our faith. And I know I cringe when I have to join in the Palm Sunday procession, even when it only means walking round the block and scuttling back into the church. But much of our outreach — how I hate that word — is hidden and normal and routine.

For those of us who welcome many visitors to our church it will be a one-off encounter, the chance to say a kind word of welcome, a smile. We will never know to the full the good we have helped to bring to a person's life when they passed through our doors.

By now they may well be back in Peru, or Poland, China or Russia, or Carlisle. But we will have played a part in their pilgrimage, and perhaps reminded them that God is love and desires them. So it's balance.

This place, the open door, the fine building, your liturgy, your music, your communal life, are all vital evangelistic tools. They all help in their own way to proclaim the Gospel. But lose the balance, begin to venerate this place as if it were God, and you are lost. We are all lost. It is a means, not an end. If it speaks at all, if we speak at all, the only word must be of the living Word, Jesus of Nazareth, who out of love for us poor sinners became flesh and is with us on our pilgrimage today.

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## ALL SAINTS FESTIVAL 2008

### THE SERMON ON 31 OCTOBER BY THE REV'D DR MICHAEL BOWIE, RECTOR OF BERKHAMSTED

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*Ecclesiasticus 44: 1 - 15; Revelation 19: 6 - 10*

Our lessons this evening do tell us something about being a saint: you have to be dead. Well, as I heard a preacher say one Remembrance Sunday evening, '*We have heard a great deal today about the glorious dead. What's so glorious about being dead?*'

Quite right — what is it about, this obsession with dead Christians? Is it the sheer number of them? There's a Latin colloquialism for the death of a friend, preserved for us by Petronius: 'He's gone to join the majority'. Most Christians are indeed dead Christians. Is this feast a great opportunity to cheer ourselves up by celebrating the ghosts in our empty pews?

Our first lesson might lead us that way, tainted further with the cult of celebrity. 'Let

us now praise famous men...' Do we really want to do that? We can't help ourselves, of course, but I think you're very fortunate to be dedicated to *All Saints* — simply to the Majority if you like — rather than a particular star in the calendrical firmament.

The second lesson is more cheerful: at least this is a *nameless* multitude (so you and I have a fighting chance of being on this list). And of course I must rejoice with *you* that there will be liturgical services and even choral music in heaven. We can all die happy.

Let me give you a third text:

**'He knew now that at the end there was only one thing that counted — to be a saint.'**

I'm going to give you some more of that text. It's from near the end of Graham Greene's novel, *The Power and the Glory*, set in Mexico in the time when the church was persecuted and outlawed and the central character is a fugitive priest. Graham Greene is my parish's modern claim to fame and, as it happens, my favourite novelist too, from my schooldays. He was born in Berkhamsted, where his father taught at (and was later head of) Berkhamsted School. As headmaster's son, Greene predictably hated his schooldays, which helped to form many of the preoccupations of his novels — suicide and death, bullying and betrayal, the proper object of loyalty. He rejected the religion of both school and Anglican parish church, of course, in favour of Tridentine Roman Catholicism (though there was a woman in the case, even then). But I'm able to tell you something more which pleases me, at least: Greene's daughter Caroline, attends our annual Graham Greene festival in the town; Caroline is a lifelong Roman Catholic, but is now churchwarden of her local *Anglican* church in Switzerland and reports that her father, who became less enamoured of Roman certainties (and Roman liturgies) as he grew older, preferred the Anglican chaplaincy and chaplain there to the local RC parish church. Thus the battered and generous old C of E welcomes so many of us home in the end! Even here can saints be found.

### **But, back to *The Power and the Glory*:**

The lieutenant said, 'You had better know everything. You've been tried and found guilty.'

'Couldn't I have been present at my own trial?' 'It wouldn't have made any difference.'

'No.' He was silent, preparing an attitude. Then he asked, with a kind of false jauntiness, 'And when, if I may ask...?'

'To-morrow.' The promptness and brevity of the reply called his bluff. His head went down again and he seemed, as far as it was possible to see in the dark, to be biting his nails.

The lieutenant said, 'It's bad being alone on a night like this. If you would like to be transferred to the common cell...'

'No, No. I'd rather be alone. I've got plenty to do.' His voice failed, as though he had a heavy cold. He wheezed, 'So much to think about'...

...When he woke up it was dawn. He woke with a huge feeling of hope which suddenly and completely left him at the first sight of the prison yard. It was the morning of his death. He crouched on the floor with the empty brandy-flask in his hand trying to remember an Act of Contrition. 'O God, I am sorry and beg pardon for all my sins... crucified... worthy of thy dreadful punishments.' He was confused, his mind was on other things: it was not the good death for which one always prayed. He caught sight of his own shadow on the cell wall; it had a look of surprise and grotesque unimportance. What a fool he had been to think that he was strong enough to stay when others had fled. What an impossible fellow I am, he thought, and how useless. I have done nothing for anybody. I might just as well have never lived. His parents were dead — soon he wouldn't even be a memory — perhaps after all he wasn't really Hell-worthy. Tears poured down his face; he was not at the moment afraid of damnation — even the fear of pain was in the background. He felt only an immense disappointment because he had to go to God empty-handed, with nothing done at all. It seemed to him, at that

moment, that it would have been quite easy to have been a saint. It would only have needed a little self-restraint and a little courage. He felt like someone who has missed happiness by seconds at an appointed place. He knew now that at the end there was only one thing that counted — to be a saint.

Graham Greene's understanding of the Christian faith was exactly that, distinctively *his own* — but then distinctiveness is at the heart of all attempts to tell the story of our relationship with God, including the unique witness of Jesus himself. It is reductive to talk about the 'point' of a novel, but the 'point' of this moment in this one is that the priest — who never has a name in the book — is as certainly a saint in all his weakness and sense of failure as *he* is certain that he has weakly failed.

The priest sometimes calls himself a 'whisky priest', for drink is among his weaknesses, which also include the fathering of an illegitimate child. He has not managed to keep what Greene himself always insisted on calling 'the rules': for Greene, sin was not this sort of thing. Sin was failure in love, compassion and generosity. And there he understood, and communicated, something which is the heart of the Christian faith, of Christ's self-offering in love: forgiving love which can be found in unlikely places, by the grace of God.

That is not the end of the novel. There is a coda, in which we meet a young boy whose mother is reading to him an improving story, pious slush about a young boy-saint, Juan. Listening impatiently, the boy nevertheless understands and articulates the connection between the story and the

death of the priest, whose execution by firing squad he has overheard; his mother piously remarks that the priest is a 'hero of the faith'. Later that night the boy hears a knock at the door:

...He unlocked the heavy iron door and swung it open. A stranger stood in the street, a tall pale thin man with a rather sour mouth, who carried a small suitcase. He named the boy's mother and asked if this were the *senora's* house. Yes, the boy said, but she was asleep. He began to shut the door, but a pointed shoe got in the way.

The stranger said, 'I have only just landed. I came up the river tonight. I thought perhaps... I have an introduction for the *senora* from a great friend of hers.'

'She is asleep,' the boy repeated.

'If you would let me come in,' the man said with an odd frightened smile, and suddenly lowering his voice he said to the boy, 'I am a priest.'

'You?' the boy exclaimed.

'Yes,' he said gently. 'My name is Father...' But the boy had already swung the door open and put his lips to his hand before the other could give himself a name.

There you have it, precisely one of the nameless multitude, neither famous nor particularly attractive: on the contrary this is a real Greene-land priest — 'a tall pale thin man with a rather sour mouth, who carried a small suitcase'. But he is faithful, genuinely *faithful*, in his perseverance (note he gets his foot, literally, in the door), an example of apostolic *succession*. That's it: true and truthful love, *handed on*. That's what tradition means. May we all be found at *that* feast, in the company of All the Saints.

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## ALL SAINTS FESTIVAL 2008

### THE SERMON ON ALL SAINTS DAY, 1 NOVEMBER, BY THE RT REV'D JOHN FLACK, HONORARY ASSISTANT BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH

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When I was first ordained 42 years ago I went to serve my title at St Bartholomew's, Armley — then definitely a slum parish in the western suburbs of Leeds. My training incumbent was Fr Norry McCurry, later to become Rector of St Dunstan's, Stepney, in this Diocese.

Perhaps there are some people here this morning who remember him. He was one of the last great training incumbents of the Church of England. 11 deacons began their ministry under him at Armley, and a further 10 at Stepney—21 in all. He never achieved high office in the Church of England, but his influence has spread far and wide, because among those 21 curates are 3 Bishops and a good number of Deans and Archdeacons, as well as many talented and effective parish priests.

In 1993, only a short time after he had retired from St Dunstan's, Fr McCurry died very suddenly, I think from a leukaemia related disease. There followed what I think was the most amazing funeral I have ever been to in this country. St Dunstan's was packed, all 21 of Norry's curates were present, many of them robed and concelebrating at the Requiem Mass. A Jewish rabbi was also present in the sanctuary in full fig. But the most memorable thing of all was the sermon, which was preached by Prebendary Gerard Irvine, then still Vicar of St Matthew's, Westminster. Gerard mounted the pulpit of St Dunstan's and said that he

had had the doubtful privilege of sharing a room with Norry at St Edmunds Hall in Oxford at the end of the war. He went on to list Norry's **faults**, in complete contrast to normal funeral sermons, which always concentrate on the deceased's good points. In the next few minutes we heard a great deal about post-war life at Teddy Hall, as well as several paragraphs on "Norry and the curates". At the end of this catalogue of faults and worse, Gerard drew breath and said "But that was why we loved him, because of his faults" and went on to quote those words from St Paul's second letter to the Corinthians "***my strength is made perfect in weakness***" (*2 Corinthians 12 v 9*).

Over the years our image of the saints has been one of "Paragons of goodness". You have to scale the heights of goodness to get into the calendar of saints. Indeed, if you look round many churches, including this one, you can be forgiven for thinking that to be a saint you also have to wear the right clothes "***clad in fine linen and girded with a linen ephod***" (*1 Samuel 2 v 18*). But I have long been of the opinion that what ought to make Christians stand out in the crowd is not goodness but a genuine understanding of your own weaknesses and the daily need for penitence. To follow Christ to the end you have to know your need of him. And that means understanding yourself, your tendencies, your weaknesses and where you go wrong. And doing so humbly, and being ready always both to say sorry and to make

amends. Fr Norry McCurry knew his faults and his need of God, and that was why we loved him, and why we could learn so much from him. As St Paul said of himself “my strength is made perfect in weakness”.

I’ve just become the priest of four delightful villages in East Northamptonshire, one of the most unspoiled and delightful corners of rural England, so please don’t tell anyone about it. I have four notable mediæval church buildings and one of them is dedicated to St Leonard, about whom I know nothing. But as his feast day is November 6th, I’ve had to do some research on him before I can preach a Patronal Festival sermon. It turns out that St Leonard was not unlike Fr McCurry, despite the fact that he spent some of his life in a cave near Limoges as a hermit. It seems that Leonard loved people with problems, many of whom came to see him in the cave. And so he has become the patron saint of prisoners, bell-ringers and, believe it or not, peasants. To be so loved by people in these categories, Leonard must have been a humble person himself, knowing his own propensity for failure.

To be a saint then is to know the truth about yourself. To be a saint is to know your own need of God and to come to rely wholly on his grace. That is why it is not easy to become saintly in today’s world, where the emphasis is on self-fulfilment and personal success. I reflect on this every time I read someone’s application for a job. We are required to fill in our strengths and our accomplishments on such forms, but only rarely is there a space where we can list our weaknesses. Yet we all have them. And writing a reference for anyone today is a minefield. If you list anyone’s weaknesses in a reference, you can be pretty certain you have lost them the job.

The Mass of All Saints Day begins, as every Mass does, with penitence for our sins, and with the great cry of the Church for God’s mercy, *kyrie eleison*. This is followed by an outpouring of God’s grace in word and sacrament. In the Word this morning we hear again the words of Jesus himself “blessed are those who know their need of God, for they shall obtain mercy”. We listen to those divine words as though we were seated on the grassy hillside above Galilee. And then we meet with Jesus himself as we stretch out our hands to receive his life at the altar, in that amazing moment which is both personal and corporate. Coming to Mass, whenever we do it, is to know our need, to ask for forgiveness and to be filled with God’s wonderful mercy and love in the sacrament. It is never, never, to blow our own trumpets.

My Vicarage is in the County of Northamptonshire and the Diocese of Peterborough, but at the bottom of my garden runs the River Nene which divides us from the County of Cambridgeshire, the Diocese of Ely and the parish of Elton. The incumbent of Elton in the early 1840s was one Frederick William Faber, the writer of over 200 hymns, some of which we still sing today. In the best of all his hymns he writes that “there’s a wideness in God’s mercy like the wideness of the sea” and “the love of God is broader than the measure of our minds”. God’s mercy and love are endless and are there for the taking, if we know our need of them.

So the road to sainthood is to know ourselves, and so to know God’s mercy and love. The Church down the ages has been hugely blessed by people who have followed this road and brought joy and real fulfilment to themselves and to many others. We have noted today Fr Norry McCurry and

St Leonard. There are countless thousands of others, known and unknown, for whom we give thanks today and to whom this church is dedicated. May we all follow in their footsteps, as we participate in this Mass today.

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## 100 YEARS AGO

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### Notes from the Vicar

The Festival this year was favoured by the most beautiful weather, and was consequently attended by larger crowds than usual. The Retreat in the previous Friday was very largely attended indeed, and the church presented a well-filled appearance during the greater part of the day. I hope that the Retreat will now be an annual occurrence. We expected a crowd on All Saints Day, but the increase in numbers at the First Evensong, on Saturday, at 5, when the Church was crowded out, and at the Solemn Requiem on All Souls Day, was very satisfactory. About 250 more communions were made during this octave than in 1907. For this we have partly to thank the fineness of the weather and partly the large number of "pilgrims" who came up from the country for the Feast.

Even the organ behaved well, and I believe Mr Vale spent the whole week on the surface of the earth. It was generally felt that the music of the Festival was extraordinarily beautiful, and we all owe a great debt of gratitude to Mr Vale and to the gentlemen and boys of the choir.

The clergy have received many kind condolences on the fatigue which the Festival is supposed to involve for them. As a matter of fact, it is perhaps our easiest week in the year. Beyond the bodily fatigue of performing and attending many beautiful services, our work in the Octave is mostly

the pleasant task of receiving distinguished preachers and greeting many friends. No, it is the lay officials of the church upon whom the burdens of the Octave falls, and our heartiest thanks are due to the Churchwardens and Sidesmen and to the Vergers of the patience and firmness with which they discharged heavy and difficult duties.

Last but not least, the congregation generously gave the Churchwardens all and, indeed, rather more than they had asked for. It is no doubt the duty of a Christian community to support its Church and services; but when their duty is ungrudgingly and willingly fulfilled it earns the benediction of the Widow's Mite.

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*People often assume that worship and other aspects of life at All Saints have gone on unchanged for a century and half. There is a timeless quality about the worship at All Saints that does mean that people who have not been here for years can fit back into it without difficulty. The reason for that, I suspect, is a concentration on the essentials of word and sacrament and a faithfulness to the liturgy of the Church of England.*

*I learned from the December 1908 Parish Paper that there was no Midnight Mass at Christmas in those days. There was Festal Evensong and Procession at 5.00 pm on Christmas Eve. There were said celebrations at 6.00, 7.00 and 8.00 am, a Sung Eucharist at 9.00 am, Choral Matins at 10.30 am, Solemn Eucharist at 11.45 am and Evensong at 4.00 pm. As a concession to domestic Christmas celebrations and exhausted choirboys, the second Evensong at 7.00 pm was dropped!*

### Holy Smoke

*It will come as a surprise to some that incense was not used at All Saints for the first 50 or*

*so years of its life. Fr Mackay wrote of the new addition to worship at All Saints:*

“I must now speak about an addition to the adjuncts of our worship.

“When I arrived here in May, I found that my predecessor had not finished carrying out his intentions with regard to the services. I am told that he had intended to give the Acolytes their tapers at Easter, and I found that he had accepted and placed in the safe a beautiful thurible.

“The thurible was first used at one of the services connected with his funeral, and it has been used occasionally since.

“I have therefore decided after much reflection that, for the future, incense shall be used at some of our services. Incense has been used in the worship of God from time immemorial. It was one of the symbols selected from among those of the natural religions for the worship of the chosen people, when others were discarded. It was again one of those selected from among the Jewish symbols as appropriate to Christian worship in the Book of Revelation, when others were discarded. It was used throughout the East and West in the worship of the Christian Church and has always been used except during the 250 years when the heathen made the burning of incense before the Emperor’s statue a symbol of apostasy...

“Those of us who are not greatly moved by the fact that the use of the symbol is so ancient and so universal will naturally have a preference one way or the other, so I am glad to think it will continue to be possible to attend morning and evening prayer and one of the Choral Eucharists every Sunday without encountering incense.

“Incense will be used in processions and

at the Solemn Eucharist. It will be first used at the four penitential processions after Evensong on the Sundays in Advent.

“We shall take care that our use of incense is quiet and unobtrusive, and that the restraint and dignity which characterise the services of All Saints are not lessened in completing their symbolism.”

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## SUNDAYS AND SOLEMNITIES MUSIC AND READINGS

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### ● SUNDAY 7 DECEMBER ADVENT II

#### HIGH MASS AT 11.00 a.m.

*Entrance Hymn:* 501

*Introit:* Populus Syon

*Mass:* Missa ‘Alma redemptoris  
mater’ — Victoria

*Lessons:* Isaiah 40: 1 - 11

Psalm 85

2 Peter 3: 8 - 15a

*Hymn:* 5

*Gospel:* Mark 1: 1 - 8

*Preacher:* Fr Gerald Beauchamp

*Anthem:* Rorate cœli desuper — Byrd

*Hymns:* 3, 15, 7

#### SOLEMN EVENSONG at 6.00 p.m.

*Psalm:* 40

*Lessons:* 1 Kings 22: 1 - 28

Romans 15: 4 – 13

*Office Hymn:* 1

*Canticles:* The Short Service — Byrd

*Anthem:* Vigilate — Byrd

*Preacher:* The Vicar

*Hymn:* 466

## BENEDICTION

*O Salutaris:* 493

*Hymn:* 483

*Tantum Ergo:* 490

## • SUNDAY 14 DECEMBER ADVENT III

### HIGH MASS AT 11.00 a.m.

*Entrance Hymn:* 501

*Introit:* Gaudete

*Mass:* Mass in C — Schubert

*Lessons:* Isaiah 61: 1 - 4, 8 - end

Psalm 126

1 Thessalonians 5: 16 - 24

*Hymn:* 12

*Gospel:* John 1: 6 - 8, 19 - 28

*Preacher:* Fr Gerald Beauchamp

*Creed:* Credo III

*Anthem:* Rejoice in the Lord alway

— Purcell

*Hymns:* 6, 57, 55

*Voluntary:* Fantasy on 'Helmsley'  
— Leighton

### SOLEMN EVENSONG

#### at 6.00 p.m.

*Psalm:* 68: 1 - 19

*Lessons:* Malachi 3: 1 - 4, Ch 4  
Philippians 4: 4 - 7

*Office Hymn:* 1

*Canticles:* Service in G minor — Purcell

*Anthem:* Gaudete in Domino semper  
— Robert Hughill

*Preacher:* The Vicar

*Hymn:* 170 (i)

## BENEDICTION

*O Salutaris:* Byrd

*Hymn:* 8 (T 128 (ii))

*Tantum Ergo:* Byrd

*Voluntary:* Conditor alme siderum

— Lemmens

## • SUNDAY 21 DECEMBER

### ADVENT IV

### HIGH MASS AND HOLY

#### BAPTISM AT 11.00 a.m.

*Entrance Hymn:* 501

*Introit:* Rorate

*Mass:* Mass for Double Choir  
— Martin

*Lessons:* 2 Samuel 7: 1 - 11, 16

Psalm 89

Romans 16: 25 - end

*Hymn:* 4

*Gospel:* Luke 1: 26 - 38

*Preacher:* The Vicar

*At the Procession to the Font:*

Litany of Thanksgiving for the  
Resurrection (arr Kitchen)

*Anthem:* O Sacrum Convivium

— Messiaen

*Hymns:* 295, 444, 10

### SOLEMN EVENSONG

#### at 6.00 p.m.

*Psalms:* 113, 131

*Lessons:* Zechariah 2: 10 - end  
Luke 1: 39 - 55

*Office Hymn:* 1

*Canticles:* Fauxbourdon — Byrd

*Anthem:* Komm, Jesus, komm — Bach

*Preacher:* Fr Gerald Beauchamp

*Hymn:* 11

## BENEDICTION

*O Salutaris:* 238

*Hymn:* 14

*Tantum Ergo:* 295

**MONDAY 22 DECEMBER**  
**FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS**  
**AND CAROLS**  
**at 6.30 p.m.**  
**With the Choir of All Saints**

**WEDNESDAY**  
**24 DECEMBER**  
**CHRISTMAS EVE**

**MIDNIGHT MASS AND**  
**BLESSING OF THE CRIB AT**  
**11.00 p.m.**

*Entrance Hymn:* 29 (v 4 Descant  
— Willcocks)

*Introit:* Dominus dixit  
*Mass:* Missa Sancti Nicolai — Haydn  
*Lessons:* Isaiah 9: 2 - 7  
Psalm 96  
Titus 2: 11 - 14  
*Hymn:* 37  
*Gospel:* Luke 2: 1 - 14  
*Preacher:* The Vicar  
*Anthem:* O magnum mysterium

— Victoria  
*Hymns:* 28, 35  
*Motet:* Hodie Christus natus est  
— Poulenc

*At the Procession to the Crib:*  
30 (omit v 4, vv 6 and 7  
arr Willcocks)

*At the Crib:* Infant holy, Infant lowly  
— Polish Trad

*Voluntary:* Toccata-Prelude on ‘Von  
Himmel hoch’ — Edmondson

**THURSDAY 25 DECEMBER**  
**CHRISTMAS DAY**

**HIGH MASS OF THE DAY**  
**AT 11.00 a.m.**

*Entrance Hymn:* 30 (omit v 4; v 7 Descant  
— Fleming)

*Introit:* Puer natus est  
*Mass:* Jugendmesse — Haydn  
*Lessons:* Isaiah 52: 7 - 10  
Psalm 98  
Hebrews 1: 1 - 4  
*Hymn:* 19 (ii; omit \*)  
*Gospel:* John 1: 1 - 14  
*Preacher:* Fr Gerald Beauchamp  
*Creed:* Credo II  
*Anthem:* Hodie Christus natus est  
— Sweelinck  
*Hymns:* 22 (arr Sidwell), 41 (i), 26  
(omit \*; v 3 Descant  
— Willcocks)

*Voluntary:* Radetzky March — J. Strauss I

**• SUNDAY 28 DECEMBER**  
**THE HOLY INNOCENTS**

**HIGH MASS AT 11.00 a.m.**

*Entrance Hymn:* 24  
*Introit:* Ex ore infantium  
*Mass:* St Ignatius Mass — Laloux  
*Lessons:* Jeremiah 31: 15 - 17  
Psalm 124

1 Corinthians 1: 26 - 29  
*Hymn:* 203

*Gospel:* Matthew 2: 13 - 18  
*Preacher:* The Vicar  
*Creed:* Credo III  
*Anthem:* Balulalow — Britten  
*Hymns:* 39 (v 5 arr Willcocks), 387,  
See, amid the winter’s snow  
*Voluntary:* In dir ist Freude — Bach

Evening Prayer is *said* at 4.30 p.m.

# CALENDAR AND INTENTIONS FOR DECEMBER 2008

1	<b>ST ANDREW THE APOSTLE</b>	The Church in Scotland
	<i>Charles de Foucauld, Hermit</i>	
2		The unemployed
3	<i>Francis Xavier, Missionary</i>	USPG
4	<i>John of Damascus; Nicholas Ferrar</i>	Unity
5		Those in need
6	St Nicholas	Cell of OLW and All Saints
7	<b>* THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b>	<b>OUR PARISH AND PEOPLE</b>
8	Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Mothers
9		The homeless
10	Ember Day	Friends of All Saints
11		Unity
12	Ember Day	Those in need
13	St Lucy; <i>Samuel Johnson</i> ; Ember Day	Theological Colleges
14	<b>* THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b>	<b>OUR PARISH AND PEOPLE</b>
15		ALMA *
16		St Luke's Hospital for the Clergy
17	<i>O Sapientia</i> <i>Eglantyne Jebb, social reformer</i>	Wells Street Family Proceedings Court
18		Unity
19		Those in need
20		Society of All Saints Sisters of the Poor
21	<b>* THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b>	<b>OUR PARISH AND PEOPLE</b>
22		Local businesses and stores
23		The Samaritans
24	<b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b>	Preparation for Christmas
25	<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b>	Thanksgiving for the Incarnation
26	<b>ST STEPHEN, FIRST MARTYR</b>	Witnesses to the Faith
27	<b>ST JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST</b>	Proclamation of the Gospel
28	<b>* THE HOLY INNOCENTS</b>	<b>OUR PARISH AND PEOPLE</b>
29	St Thomas Becket, Archbishop	Archbishop of Canterbury
30		World Peace
31	<i>John Wyclif, Reformer</i>	Social reform

## Please note:

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

\* ALMA — The Angola, London, Mozambique Diocesan Association.

