



All Saints Parish Paper

MARGARET STREET, LONDON W.1

JANUARY 2008

£1.00

VICAR'S LETTER

The scaffolding which has surrounded the Vicarage for the last two months has just come down with the completion of the works undertaken by the diocese. It is good to be able to see out properly again. Scaffolding, on a smaller scale, has been up in church too. The remaining three panels on the north wall and the triptych on the west wall have now been cleaned. It does make such a difference. The amount of light reflected from the walls brightens the whole place and the tile pictures themselves have been transformed. This is particularly true, I think, of the ones on the west wall which receive little natural light and where the artificial light is poor.

Two of the newly-cleaned characters on the north wall, Elijah and John the Baptist, have already featured in a sermon I preached at Evensong when they were the central characters in the readings. We need to produce some kind of leaflet which explains all the biblical characters and identifies the saints. It is not just the "big picture" which is cleaner. All sorts of details are now clearer: for example the Eucharistic host held in its beak by the raven which fed Elijah at the Brook Cherith; a piece of Eucharistic typology. Butterfield clearly expected worshippers to have or to acquire a high degree of

biblical literacy; something we cannot expect from all our visitors.

Our crib figures will be home in time for Christmas, having undergone the second phase of their "face-lift".

All these newly-cleaned faces remind me that we are coming both to the New Year and to Lent which begins on February 6th, the earliest for a century! So we might combine our New Year resolutions with thinking about our Lenten Rule.

The tiles, the newly-cleaned and the still grimy, speak of the state of our Christian lives; in need of a spring clean; indeed of repeated cleaning and maintenance. Lent provides us with the opportunity for such a cleansing process, for an overhaul of our Christian life. So Lent is a time for self-examination and repentance, to clear away the grime. But when it comes to our tendency to sin, this is a process which needs to be repeated often. It also requires that we establish better habits and disciplines which enable us to grow in the Christian life, rather than simply be let off for the things we have done wrong. What is cleaned must be kept clean!

Advent is a season when the clergy seem to spend a lot of their time eating

and drinking. This week I have had three lunches, a school staff Christmas dinner, a lunch at home for the clergy who helped out while I was sick, and two carol services with mulled wine and mince pies! I can feel the effects already and will have to do something about it.

There is the need to improve our spiritual muscle tone, to get ourselves fit. Again there are two sides to this. We need to identify those things in our life which lower our spiritual energy, which distract us from prayer, which deaden our sensitivity to God: too much food and drink, too much business and noise, too much entertainment and distraction. Many of us complain about these but fail to do anything about it, failing or refusing to recognise that the remedy is in part in our own hands.

At the same time, we need to develop positive practices, spiritual disciplines, which help build up our Christian life; in my case not so that I can become a puritan killjoy who refuses all invitations, but so that I can continue to grow in discipleship.

I often hear laments about how much money, time and energy get wasted at Christmas. In the New Year we will be undertaking a renewal of our stewardship. This involves both our use of money and of time and energy. One issue which is very much in the public eye these days is our use and abuse of the environment. There is much that we think we can do little about, but there are practical measures of energy saving — as simple as turning off lights and turning down the heating — that we

can undertake which make a difference; even if it is small. Small actions add up.

The current difficulties in the financial world may lead us to think that we are hard up. It would be more useful if they prompted us to examine our lifestyles and spending habits. This should not be with a view to being miserly but to allow us to be more generous by cutting out waste and extravagance.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Yours in Christ,

Alan Moses

PARISH NOTES

Lovinia Miller RIP

Lovinia has been a much loved visitor to All Saints whenever she was staying with her son Stephen. Sadly cancer was diagnosed during the summer and she came to stay with Stephen while receiving treatment, first at King's then at Guy's. She died on November 28th and her funeral Mass took place here at All Saints on Saturday December 8th. A coach brought a large number of her friends from Bristol, including Fr Richard Hoyal, the Vicar of All Saints, Clifton, where Lovinia worshipped. Fr Richard led the prayers during the Mass. Fr Allen Shin came from Oxford to serve as deacon of the Mass.

There was an enjoyable reception after the service, which included a moving display of photographs of Lovinia.

The committal was conducted by the Vicar at West Norwood Crematorium on Monday 10th. Just outside the crematorium is the grave of Spurgeon, the great 19th century Baptist preacher and founder of the Metropolitan Tabernacle.

The Vicar's sermon at the funeral Mass appears in this issue.

Fr Gerald Beauchamp has moved into No 6, been licensed by the Bishop of London, celebrated and preached at his first High Mass, and is generally getting used to the ways of All Saints and getting to know its people.

Advent Sunday

We began the season with the Litany sung in procession before High Mass and the music and the readings of the Advent Carol Service: the one austere in its beauty, the other breathtaking.

Walsingham Cell

December 8th: The Cell was addressed by an old friend of All Saints, Fr Bill Scott, now the Sub-Dean of the Chapels Royal. He spoke on the Immaculate Conception and addressed some of the controversies surrounding this dogma. We hope to have the script of his talk available for distribution.

St Luke's Hospital for the Clergy

Fr Alan and Fr Gerald, as chaplains, were at St Luke's for the hospital's carol service. This began with a group of the nurses (in capes and old-fashioned head gear) singing a carol on the patients' floor before descending to the chapel to join other members of the staff and the Council for the service. St Luke's opened a hundred years ago, so this was an opportunity to give thanks for a century of care and for the recent refurbishment of the hospital.

The Restoration Appeal

Our latest fund-raising event is Andrew Arthur's playing of all of the organ works of Buxtehude. This marathon exercise will take from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. on Saturday December 22nd. It has already attracted over £3,000 in sponsorship.

SUNDAY LUNCH

At the Annual General Meeting of the All Saints Club on Sunday October 28th 2007 it was agreed that the price of our Sunday Lunch should be increased to £5 with effect from January 1st 2008. Bar prices will also be increased from the same date. This is the first price increase for several years and continues to represent excellent value for money as well as an opportunity for members of the congregation, both new and old, to get to know each other.

Chris Self, Churchwarden

**ALL SAINTS
MARGARET STREET, W1
www.allsaintsmargaretstreet.org.uk**

Friday February 1st

**THE PRESENTATION OF
CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE
(*CANDLEMAS*)**

6.30 p.m.

**CANDLE CEREMONY,
PROCESSION
AND
HIGH MASS**

***Preacher:* The Revd Angela Tilby,
Vicar, St Benet's, Cambridge**

***Music includes:* Mass in G — *Schubert*
Nunc dimittis — *Holst***

“SPIRITUALITY AND THE POETIC”

A Series of Sermons
at 6.00 p.m. Solemn Evensong and Benediction
on the Sundays in Lent 2008

10 February	Lent 1	<i>T.S. Eliot</i> The Revd Stephen Tucker Vicar of Hampstead
17 February	Lent 2	<i>Gerard Manley Hopkins</i> The Revd Peter Groves Vicar, St Mary Magdalene, Oxford
24 February	Lent 3	<i>W.H. Auden</i> The Revd Peter McGeary Vicar, St Mary, Cable Street
2 March	Lent 4	<i>Edwin Muir</i> The Revd Canon Ian Paton Rector, Old St Paul's, Edinburgh
9 March	Lent 5	<i>John Betjeman</i> A.N. Wilson Author
16 March	Palm Sunday	<i>R.S. Thomas</i> The Most Revd Dr Barry Morgan Archbishop of Wales

DIARY DATES

Friday 4 January

6.30 p.m. Low Mass with hymns and Confirmation of Gregory Mginah and Jeremy Tayler by Bishop Edward Holland, Honorary Assistant Bishop in London.

Sunday 6 January — The Epiphany

11.00 a.m. Procession and High Mass

Preacher: The Venerable Christopher Lowson,
Director of Ministry, Archbishop's Council

6.00 p.m. Epiphany Carol Service

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

Friday 18 January

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity until the 25th.

Tuesday 29 January

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

Friday 1 February — Presentation of Christ (Candlemas) transferred from the 2nd.

6.30 p.m. Procession and High Mass

Preacher: The Revd Angela Tilby, Vicar St Benet's, Cambridge.
(Low Mass also at 8.00 a.m. on Saturday February 2nd.)

Wednesday 6 February — Ash Wednesday

6.30 p.m. High Mass and Imposition of Ashes

Preacher: The Vicar

Thursday 7 February

7.05 p.m. Holy Hour led by Fr Gerald Beauchamp.

FUNERAL MASS FOR LOVINIA MILLER SATURDAY DECEMBER 8TH, 2007

A few hours before Lovinia died I went to the house to anoint her and give her Holy Communion for the last time. With me at her bedside were Stephen and her dear friend Jean. I administered the sacraments and said the prayers of commendation for the dying. Although she was in some distress, Lovinia was conscious and aware of what we were doing and she was able to receive Holy Communion with Stephen and Jean.

When the time came for me to say my personal farewell, I said to her that I would kiss her on the lips because this has been how she has greeted me for years now.

In that little group around her bed were represented important things about Lovinia:

- Family
- Friends
- Faith

As many of you know, I was off sick over the summer, but was still able to get to church. One Sunday, I realised that Lovinia was there, but my pleasure at seeing her was accompanied by shock at seeing her looking so unwell. That of course was the beginning of that journey which has brought her and us here. So she came up to stay with Stephen and went into King's College Hospital. There Bishop Ambrose and I were able to visit her. I found her making friends with the staff, chatting away, full of hope that a cure might be found; a hope which was soon to be dashed when the tumour proved inoperable.

By one of those coincidences which are more than coincidence, Lovinia belonged to two churches called All Saints. The Communion of Saints is not just about people on the walls of churches. It is about all Christian people, our relationship in God with each other, caring for one another, bearing one another's burdens, praying for each other. It is about a relationship which transcends space and time. Both Lovinia and I had reason to know how much that means and to be grateful for it.

We come today with sorrow in our hearts because we have lost someone dear to us. That is especially true of course for Stephen and Alex, the sons to whom she was so devoted and of whom she was so proud.

But we come thankfully for the gift we knew in her. I believe that one of her special gifts was friendship. She had this great capacity for making friends with people; that warm, bubbling personality broke down barriers and made connections. Now friendship can simply be a term for

something skin-deep and short-lived, superficial and transient, but this was not Lovinia's way, as was demonstrated by the presence in that little group around her bed of Jean. The two of them had been friends since they were schoolgirls. How many of us can say that? And then, that last weekend in Paris a little while ago when she was able to see friends she had made when working there years ago. Lovinia knew that real friendship was about loyalty and faithfulness. She knew and demonstrated those same qualities in her marriage and family life, as a wife and a mother.

She gave a lot in friendship, but she also admitted that she received too. She drew strength from the friendship and prayers of her friends here and in Bristol. These are not the kind of things you can enter on a balance sheet or plot on a graph, but as Christians we do need to take seriously our calling to bear one another's burdens.

Lovinia enjoyed people and she enjoyed life. She was interested and interesting. She was a great talker, but she was a good and positive talker. I do not recall her speaking ill of anyone.

Churches like this one tend to have people who get very serious about religion, and that can make us cross and glum. We can give the impression that God is cross and glum too; censorious and judgemental. So we need people like Lovinia who simply enjoy the people and things God has made; they cheer us up; they bring something of the joy of heaven into our lives. God sends them to us that we may glimpse something of the light of heaven.

Lovinia loved clothes and parties and

dressing up. There was a delightfully childlike quality about her. Surprisingly perhaps, this is not a very dressy sort of congregation. Ladies here are not much given to the wearing of hats, but Lovinia was a splendid exception; especially at Easter. So it is appropriate that she now lies beneath the beautiful Comper funeral pall. Its restoration was her gift to us, so it's right that it should be used again for the first time at her funeral. We should have had one of her Easter bonnets on top of it!

And so we come in that faith which is

hers and ours, as those who believe in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the dead; that faith which guided Lovinia in life, sustained her in sickness and gave her hope in the face of death; that faith expressed in that final act of Communion as she prepared to meet her Lord, and in our Communion with God and all the saints in this Mass; we come with love and thanksgiving and prayer to commend her, our beloved friend, into the loving mercy of God; that loving kindness of God of which she reflected more than a little in her life.

ALL SAINTS FESTIVAL 2007

THE SERMON BY FR ROBERT MACSWAIN OGS, RAMSEY FELLOW AND CHAPLAIN, ST CHAD'S COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM ON ALL SOULS DAY, NOVEMBER 2 2007

Lamentations 3: 17 - 26; Psalm 27; 1 Peter 1: 3 - 9; John 5: 19 - 25

The Un-preached Preface

When Fr Alan Moses asked me if I would preach at the 2007 All Souls' Requiem Mass at All Saints', Margaret Street, I replied that it was always dangerous to ask a PhD student to speak in public. Dangerous, because no matter what the occasion, the student's research topic was bound to be mentioned. Whether or not it was interesting, relevant, or even appropriate, it was inevitably bound to be mentioned. Fortunately for me — and I trust also for my hearers that evening — my research topic is the late Austin Farrer (1904 - 1968), recently described by Archbishop Rowan Williams as *'possibly the greatest Anglican mind of the twentieth*

century'. So I told Fr Moses that it was rather likely the sermon would be inspired by Farrer's life and thought. Imagine my surprise and delight, then, when he replied that Farrer's daughter Caroline was likely to be present in the congregation that night — as indeed she was. So I trust that this sermon, preached in her presence, does some justice to the memory of her father, and also bears witness to the truth that the Church proclaims on All Souls' Day.

The Sermon

I would like to begin this sermon with a story about Austin Farrer, 1904 to 1968, the seventh Warden of Keble College, and widely regarded as perhaps the

greatest Anglican theologian of the 20th century. Actually, it's not a story about Farrer directly, but rather about an event that occurred during his centenary celebration. Farrer was born in 1904, and so in September 2004 a great international centenary conference was held at Oxford. Since Farrer had spent 25 years as Chaplain and Fellow at Trinity College, one of the events of the conference was a special service of Evening Prayer in Trinity College Chapel.

And someone had the brilliant idea that instead of a sermon preached by a living person, we should hear from Farrer himself. Several of Farrer's sermons were broadcast by the BBC, and one of his very last sermons — preached just seven days before his death and titled '*The Ultimate Hope*' — had recently been recovered and made available on compact disc. And so, the person with this brilliant idea reckoned, what better way to celebrate Farrer's legacy and honour his memory, what better way to learn from what he had — and still has — to teach us, than to hear his very voice speaking to us from beyond the grave, and in the very spot where his living voice had been so often heard. Not, of course, through the dark art of a séance, but through the modern magic of recording technology, Farrer would preach again in Trinity College Chapel.

It was a brilliant idea, but a total failure. Through an unexpected combination of the scratchy, static-y quality of the recording and the sharp, echo-y acoustic of the Chapel, the recorded sermon was almost completely unintelligible in that space. Farrer's voice was recognisable, and disconnected patches of meaning

came through, but for the most part we simply sat there for 16 minutes, straining to understand, but unable to clearly hear — and thus grasp — the substance of the sermon. In addition to being a great anti-climax, it was, quite understandably, intensely frustrating.

Now, I will get to the text of Farrer's sermon, '*The Ultimate Hope*', in due course. But I want to first reflect on this incident as in some way allegorical and representative of our current situation as a Christian Church vis-à-vis our secular society, both in regard to our general attempts to communicate the substance of our faith, and our particular attempt to understand for ourselves what we are doing in an All Souls' Requiem Mass. Let me start with the latter.

What are we doing — or what do we think we are doing — in this Requiem Mass? This question can be answered on many levels — musical, liturgical, sacramental, devotional, and so forth — but let me focus on the theological. Requiem Masses are of course Masses offered for the *dead*, and the All Souls' Requiem Mass is offered not for an individual soul, but for *all* the faithful departed. But why do we offer Requiem Masses for the dead? Well, the traditional text of the liturgy — as heard, for example, in Fauré's *Requiem* — focuses on *judgement*, and this indicates that our primary motive is *fear*: fear for our loved ones' — and thus eventually *our* — fate in the hands of a justly wrathful deity inclined to condemn us to the eternal torment of a fiery hell — or at least a very long stint in purgatory. And so we plead for clemency, plead that God would stay his just wrath and regard our loved ones

— and, again, eventually us — with mercy instead.

The doctrinal focus in the traditional All Souls' Day liturgy, and indeed all traditional Requiem Masses, is a 13th century Latin prayer, the *Dies Irae*, the 'Day of Wrath'. By sheer coincidence, Austin Farrer published an English translation of the *Dies Irae*, first in 1956, and then a revised version in 1960. I won't read the whole thing, but here are some extracts:

*That day, the day of anger, must
Prove old prophetic warning just
And burn away the world to dust.*

*The book, once open, will rehearse
Deeds that merit bliss or curse
In all the summoned universe.*

*So the hidden will be plain
When judgement shall our souls arraign
And no unrighted wrong remain.*

*O King of fear and majesty
Saving whom thou savest free,
Fount of pity, pity me.*

*Remember all thy arduous way
In quest of me, and hear me pray:
Lose not the found on judgement-day.*

*Weigh not the worthless prayer I frame;
Have mercy — Mercy is thy name —
And spare me everlasting flame.*¹

So, the question presents itself: do we still *believe* this theology? Do we still see humanity hanging by a hair over the raging pit of hell, with God as the angry judge ready to cut the thread and let us plummet to our doom? Do we still see God, poised as it were in uncertainty

and confusion, not knowing whether he is an opponent needing our placation or an advocate seeking our acquittal, with our desperate pleading prayers as the necessary counterweight to possibly tip the balance in our favour? These are serious questions, they don't necessarily admit of simple 'yes' and 'no' answers, and yet — depending on our answers to them — this liturgy is *either* a sincere act of prayer and supplication, *or* a curious period piece of antiquarian doctrine, chiefly of interest for its musical and theatrical value: a *spectacle* rather than a *sacrament*. I will come back to this dilemma in a moment.

But let me now turn more briefly to the second allegorical application of those sixteen incomprehensible minutes in Trinity College Chapel, listening to a recognisable voice but having no earthly idea what was being said. This, I suggested, may well represent our faltering attempts to communicate the substance of our faith to our secular society. If anyone bothers to listen to the Church anymore, what do they hear? Is it even comprehensible, let alone compelling? Are we, as Saint Paul said of those who speak in tongues without an interpreter, simply speaking into the air?² Or, are we speaking into the hearts and souls and minds of real, live, flesh and blood people? Are we speaking solid, shining words of shape, weight, mass, and volume, persuasive in the density of their beauty, truth, and goodness — or hollow phrases as insubstantial and tasteless as Yorkshire pudding?

These two dilemmas — of understanding what we ourselves believe, and of convincingly communicating those beliefs to others — are of course intimately

related. Saint Anselm said that unless he first believed, he would not understand — but unless *we* understand, we will not be understood. So let us then strive to understand the substance of our faith as manifest tonight in this All Souls' Day Requiem Mass.

Let's start with our reading from First Peter. Note how it begins with eager joy and hopeful anticipation at the prospect of our inheritance, 'reserved in heaven for [us], which nothing can destroy or spoil or wither'. Those who 'put [their] faith in God... are under the protection of his power until the salvation now in readiness is revealed at the end of time'. A fiery trial is indeed mentioned, but this is the purifying flame of the assayer that consumes only the dross, while making the true gold shine all the brighter. Our Gospel reading from John also deals with judgement, but emphasises the merciful jurisdiction of the Son. Those who put their trust in him come *not* to judgement, but have already passed from death to life.

These 1st century texts, so close to the crucial events of our Lord's life and teaching, seem a world away from the 13th century vision of the *Dies Irae*'s judgement, even as translated in the 20th century by Austin Farrer. But we should not dismiss the *Dies Irae* too quickly. For of course there are many, many New Testament passages which speak of divine judgement in far more fearful terms than First Peter, Chapter 1, and John, Chapter 5. So what are we to say?

In 1968, Farrer prepared a Keble undergraduate named Anthony Acton for confirmation — almost certainly his last such candidate. In a letter published

in Philip Curtis's biography of Farrer, *A Hawk Among Sparrows*, Acton wrote that in their discussions Farrer spoke:

*...of suffering, judgement, and salvation with such clarity that he bolstered my faith tremendously. He explained that 'He shall come to judge the quick and the dead' meant to him that when he died he would see clearly how far short he had fallen of the standard God required, and how utterly he had failed to fulfil all the potential for goodness that was within him. He was convinced... that God's mercy extended to everyone, although he was not prepared to say that it was impossible to put oneself beyond redemption.*³

Farrer's view of suffering, judgement, and salvation is parallel to the one articulated by Rowan Williams in *Tokens of Trust*, his recent, luminous meditation on the Creeds. In a very similar vein, Archbishop Rowan writes:

*We have had so much silly and downright wicked talk of hell in Christian history that it isn't surprising if we turn away in disgust from all the sadistic fantasies and emotional manipulation involved. But once again there is something we shouldn't write off. There is a proper adult awareness of the risk of our habitual unwillingness to face truth... No one can know of anyone else how deeply they have made themselves unable to see the truth; no one knows if there is a state of self-deceit so profound that someone becomes eternally impervious to love... And that is the point of thinking about hell. We cannot know if anyone is ever in such a condition, but we have to know the proper fear that the choices we make are capable of destroying us.*⁴

We have to know 'the proper fear that the

choices we make are capable of destroying us'. That, I think, is indeed the 'proper fear' that may still animate our All Souls' Requiem Mass. *Not* fear of God, but fear of ourselves — fear that we may put ourselves beyond the reach of divine love, if such a thing is possible.

So if our theology has changed since the 13th century — and it has — it is because we now think of God more as an emergency ward physician, fighting to save the life of a desperately injured patient, than as an angry judge passing sentence. But even the older imagery is not without value, as it highlights the urgency of our case. Confidence before the throne of God is acceptable; complacency is not.

Why then pray for the dead? Well, that's such a Protestant chestnut I hesitate to even crack it from the pulpit of All Saints', Margaret Street. Why should we *cease* to pray for our loved ones, just because they are no longer with us? Why should we *not* continue to pray for them, all the more so now that they are in those realms of the purifying, transformative fire of God's love? The communion of saints reaches from earth to heaven and from heaven to earth: death does not sever the departed baptised from the living baptised, for we are all one in Christ Jesus:

*One family, we dwell in him,
one Church, above, beneath,
though now divided by the stream,
the narrow stream of death.*⁵

So if we are truly engaged in a sacrament here this evening, and not just a spectacle, how does grasping this truth help us communicate the substance of our faith to those around us? Well, very briefly, because

— ironically and paradoxically enough — divine judgement just *is* our salvation, because it means we *have* a Saviour. We should not be ashamed to speak of divine judgement as if it were an embarrassing relic of a best forgotten Christian past. It is, rather, the very essence of the good news of Christ. For — again, ironically and paradoxically — it is those *without* judgement who are lost, rather than those *under* it, because they have no one to save them from themselves. To acknowledge God at all is *ipso facto* to acknowledge judgement — that is, to acknowledge a standard higher and other than our own. But it is precisely that standard that delivers us from the absurd belief that we are God — that *we* are the highest and best beings in the cosmos. Those who are saved are those who are judged, not the other way around.

In the final paragraph of Austin Farrer's sermon '*The Ultimate Hope*', incomprehensibly played three years ago in the chapel of Trinity College, Oxford, he movingly and eloquently said everything this sermon has sought to say. And so I will conclude with his words:

Even today, when we pray, the hand of God does somewhat put aside that accursed looking-glass, which each of us holds before him, and which shows each of us our own face. Only the day of judgement will strike the glass for ever from our hands, and leave us nowhere reflected but in the pupils of the eyes of God. And then we shall be cured of our self love, and shall love, without even the power of turning from it, the face that is lovely in itself, the face of God; and passing from the great Begetter to what is begotten by him, we shall see his likeness in his creatures, in angels and in

blessed saints; returning at long last the love that has been lavished on us, and reflecting back the light with which we have been illuminated. To that blessed consummation, therefore may he lead all those for whom we pray, he who is love himself, who came to us at Bethlehem, and took us by the hand. ⁶

Notes:

- 1 Published under the title, ‘The Great Assize’, in Austin Farrer, *Said or Sung: An Arrangement of Homily and Verse* (London: The Faith Press, 1960), pages 9 - 10.
- 2 1 Corinthians Chapter 14, Verse 9.

- 3 Philip Curtis, *A Hawk Among Sparrows: A Biography of Austin Farrer* (London: SPCK, 1985), page 163.
- 4 Rowan Williams, *Tokens of Trust: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2007), pages 150 -151.
- 5 Charles Wesley, ‘Let saints on earth in concert ring,’ *New English Hymnal*, Number 396.
- 6 Austin Farrer, *The Essential Sermons*, edited by Leslie Houlden (London: SPCK, 1991), page 203.
First published in Austin Farrer, *A Celebration of Faith* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970).

ALL SAINTS FESTIVAL 2007

THE SERMON BY THE VERY REVD NICHOLAS FRAYLING, DEAN OF CHICHESTER, AT HIGH MASS ON FESTIVAL SUNDAY

When I was Rector of the parish of Our Lady and St Nicholas with St Anne in Liverpool, we were more than once accused of greed in claiming three patron saints. By the same token, you are positively profligate in your own dedication, enjoying as you do the patronage of a great multitude which no-one can number: every one of them.

Be that as it may, it falls to the preacher, in the Octave of your patronal Festival — greedy or otherwise — to find something new to say, if not about saints and sanctity, then certainly about the nature and life of the Church of which we are constituent members.

Fortunately for this preacher, the Church has come to his aid by giving us as today’s Gospel the Sermon on the Plain — St Luke’s take, we may assume, on the better-known

Sermon on the Mount. The connection between the themes in that sermon and a celebration of the saints ought not to escape us. Mount or Plain, the claims of Christ’s Kingdom are made explicit, not just for the disciples of Jesus, but, as Luke makes clear, for everybody who, for whatever reason, was there to hear the Lord.

Of course, he pulled no punches: his theme was the love of God for those who have been the least ones in human history. God’s concern for such as these is at the heart of Jesus’s teaching, particularly in Luke’s Gospel. His injunction to his hearers to live unselfishly, like the Father, was to begin with enemies, who were to be loved into friendship.

This startling new teaching, so at odds with anything they had known, was taken

up from the first by the early Church which took very seriously the priorities of the poor and the hungry, the weak and the persecuted.

These were courageous priorities. The Church was not favoured or protected by the State, but existed on the edge, often at odds with Roman laws or outside them, and its membership was correspondingly diverse.

To follow Jesus's *way* (a word often used to describe the Christian Church) was to make a choice — it was a brave thing to do because it was counter-cultural and put you at odds with the mainstream. 'Blessed are the poor' was certainly not the prevailing norm in society, but it was basic to every church community. Concern and welcome for the exiled, the alien, slave and slave master, widow and orphan were basic to the philosophy and behaviour of the emerging Christian community. It was what most set the Church apart from the rest, and invited the wondering observation, "See how these Christians love one another!"

The new faith offered new life and freedom within a new kind of community. From the outset, of course, there were squabbles about how to use this subversive freedom, as there are in any family: the first letter to the Corinthians, to name but one, addresses the danger of factions and false allegiances very early on.

The decision to seek baptism, to join the Church, was a voluntary one, but as for all volunteers, as members of this congregation will be well aware, if you *do* volunteer, you are required to offer real commitment. In the case of the early Church, that did not just mean spare time and loose change...

This community of Jesus provided for its

adherents a new sense of *self* and *purpose* — in effect *new life*. You joined, and were offered in return love, acceptance and meaning.

By contrast, look at our contemporary Church. Its community life is seldom quite like that; more to the point, when we talk about 'new life' we are usually referring to eternal life. Equating new life with life after death has become a way for the Church to avoid its responsibility for life *now*, and to blunt the disciplines and demands of membership and discipleship.

This matters, because the New Testament Church and the community which comprised it, set itself against what it regarded as unjust and unacceptable political policies and decisions. From out of the community of faith, inspired by their worship and common life, people wanted to make a difference to the life of the wider society.

To be blunt, in contemporary British society, it is hard to imagine that the early Church would not have been deeply concerned, for example, about punishing singlemothers, expelling aliens, building more prisons, restricting benefit entitlement for disabled people, and giving tax cuts to the wealthiest at the expense of the poorest.

The question for the Church, and therefore for us, leaps from today's readings; it is this: Does new life in Christ mean creating a community where those who are most vulnerable and despised are welcomed and protected? Are we prepared to take seriously the idea of new life *here and now* rather than in the crematorium, and make it a reality?

The problem is, we have been so conditioned to religious life as it is lived,

with its scant demands upon us, that we convince ourselves — clergy and laity alike — that prudence is the better course; we tell ourselves that silence on such controversial issues is really a sign of wisdom, maturity, sound judgement, keeping religion out of politics. As one of our regulars in Chichester puts it “Better not to rock the boat, padre, don’t you think?”.

Well, for sure, Jesus avoided aligning himself with any political movement, as far as we can tell, but he did not hesitate to attack injustice, corruption, oppression and, most of all, hypocrisy among the most religious and their leaders.

The Church needs to grasp the fact that a policy of avoiding reference to current ethical concerns and political issues is wrong; first because silence is often taken for assent — something Bishop George Bell of Chichester understood very well in the 1930s and 40s — and secondly, for a reason which has more to do with theology.

At Christmas, we shall be celebrating the Incarnation, the Word made flesh, who came, as St John will remind us, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. That divine Word is not isolated in some spiritual realm, but is in the flesh.

The Old Testament prophets kept on breaking into the political realm — read Amos, Hosea, parts of Isaiah — and pronounced judgement on secular affairs, foreign and domestic, as part of their prophetic vision — not only *foretelling* disaster, but *forthtelling* stories of injustice and oppression.

It troubles me greatly, and I know it troubles many members of our congregation in Chichester, at least, that so much energy

in the Church is expended on issues of secondary importance: the gender of its ministers or the way people conduct themselves in the privacy of their own homes. Do not misunderstand what I am saying. I am not criticising people’s legitimate opinions, conscientiously held, on such matters. What I *am* getting at is a woeful sense of priorities about issues on which the Lord Jesus never saw fit to pronounce, in a world which is perishing for want of the Good News of Christ’s Kingdom.

You see, Jesus *did* pronounce — and very explicitly — upon issues of injustice, poverty, sickness, release to captives, sight for the blind, freedom for the oppressed — most of them, incidentally, much more boardroom than bedroom! He consistently made a priority of the relationship between religious practice and the way life is lived. He emphasised the priorities of the Kingdom and the new life which they presupposed. Those are the issues, neglect of which might legitimately split the Church.

In the cathedral where I minister, or a city centre church, come to that, we try to be as open and inclusive as we can. Yes, our worship is formal, and so is our building, but our *mission* is to be as welcoming, as open, as caring and sensitive — in short, as Christ-like as we possibly can.

We fail, of course we do: we are human, but the values of Christ’s Kingdom are what ought to guide all our thinking and speaking and doing. And if, in our attempts to fulfil those characteristics of what a Christian church should be, we seem to be a bit undogmatic, un-judgmental — a bit wet, even — we need make no apology for that.

If I may be very honest, it troubles me that in our age people are being offered

false choices in the churches, which are increasingly polarised between extreme doctrinal conservatism and hand-waving fanaticism. What is a genuine seeker after faith to make of it? She may well be turned away from the church, which would be a pity, or from the faith which would be a tragedy.

That is why cathedrals and churches like this must have the courage to *keep their theological nerve*: to stand-up for the historic Catholic faith proclaimed in the Creeds — yes, of course, that is basic; but at the same time to confront the prevailing materialist and secularist culture that surrounds us and fills the media, but in a language — as Thomas Cranmer said — “understood of the people”.

In short, we must think out what the priorities of Christ’s Kingdom might be, and try to live accordingly, here and now. The African-American theologian, James Hall Cone, observed in relation to the Church in his own country, but in words which we would do well to ponder, that the sickness of the Church is intimately involved with the bankruptcy of theology. “When the Church fails to live up to its appointed mission,” he wrote “it means that theology is partly responsible.”

A Presbyterian Theologian, David Read, wrote these words, after a lifetime of teaching and preaching, shortly before his death two years ago:

“(It is high time to) demonstrate that the Christian Gospel is not an escape hatch for the timid, a drug for the depressed, nor a suicide pact for the intellect, but is still the most morally challenging, the most spiritually refreshing, and the most

mentally satisfying good news that ever sounded on this planet.

Which brings us, belatedly and finally, back to your patrons the saints — all of them: God’s forgiven and forgiving ones, who have learned, in the streets and in the sanctuary, in desert or drawing-room, and occasionally by fire and sword, the practice of God’s golden rule of love — those who, in the conviction of their own opinions, can yet offer love — even, or perhaps especially, to those who have been their enemies. Truly we have a Gospel to proclaim! It is made explicit in the teaching, the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and repeated and developed by the author of Ephesians:

‘I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power

100 YEARS AGO

The Anglican Communion and the Church of England are going through a time of turmoil and it is by no means certain what the outcome of it all will be. 100 years ago there were disputes too — in those days over worship. With a hint of exasperation, the Vicar wrote:

“What the Church needs more than all else in these days is men of peace in high places. The time has surely come when the truce of God might be proclaimed, and parties vie with each other as to which can do most in the Master’s Service.”

SUNDAYS AND SOLEMNITIES

MUSIC AND READINGS

● SUNDAY 6 JANUARY THE EPIPHANY

PROCESSION AND HIGH MASS AT 11.00 a.m.

Processional Hymn: 50 (T 338)

Introit: Ecce advenit

Mass: Missa Brevis — Kodály

Lessons: Isaiah 60: 1 - 6

Psalm 72

Ephesians 3: 1 - 12

Hymn: 49

Gospel: Matthew 2: 1 - 12

Preacher: The Ven Christopher Lowson
Director of Ministry,
Archbishop's Council

Anthem: There shall a star from Jacob
come forth — Mendelssohn

Hymns: 48, 52, 55

Voluntary: Prelude to a Te Deum
— M-A Charpentier

EPIPHANY CAROL SERVICE at 6.00 p.m.

*A service of Readings and Music for The
Epiphany with the Choir of All Saints*

Evening Prayer will be *said* at 4.30 p.m.

● SUNDAY 13 JANUARY THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST (EPIPHANY 2)

HIGH MASS AT 11.00 a.m.

Entrance Hymn: 55

Introit: In excelso throno

Mass: Missa 'O magnum mysterium'
— Victoria

Lessons: Isaiah 42: 1 - 9

Psalm 29

Acts 10: 34 - 43

Hymn: 12

Gospel: Matthew 3: 13 - end

Preacher: Fr Gerald Beauchamp

Anthem: O magnum mysterium
— Victoria

Hymns: 57, 347, 56

Voluntary: Improvisation on 'O magnum
mysterium' — Paul Brough

SOLEMN EVENSONG at 6.00 p.m.

Psalms: 46, 47

Lessons: Joshua 3: 1 - 8, 14 - end

Hebrews 1: 1 - 12

Office Hymn: 46

Canticles: Collegium Regale — Wood

Anthem: O thou, the central orb — Wood

Preacher: Fr Neil Bunker

Hymn: 460

BENEDICTION

O Salutaris: No 2 — Harry Bramma

Hymn: 292 (ii)

Tantum Ergo: No 2 — Harry Bramma

Voluntary: Adagio — Bridge

● SUNDAY 20 JANUARY EPIPHANY 3

HIGH MASS AT 11.00 a.m.

Entrance Hymn: 53 (T 238)

Introit: Omnis terra

Mass: Missa Brevis — Berkeley

Lessons: Isaiah 49: 1 - 7

Psalm 40

1 Corinthians 1: 1 - 9

Hymn: 200

Gospel: John 1: 29 - 42

Preacher: Fr Gerald Beauchamp

Creed: Credo III

Anthem: Steal away to Jesus — trad
Spiritual, arr Tippett
Hymns: 353, 481 (T 462), 361 (T 185;
v3 Descant — Caplin)
Voluntary: Psalm Prelude No 1, Set 2,
'De Profundis' — Howells

SOLEMN EVENSONG at 6.00 p.m.

Psalm: 96
Lessons: Ezekiel 2: 1 - 3: 4
Galatians 1: 11 - end
Office Hymn: 46
Canticles: Dafydd Bullock
Anthem: See, see the Word is incarnate
— Gibbons

Preacher: Fr Neil Bunker
Hymn: 155 (T 117)

BENEDICTION

O Salutaris: Laloux
Hymn: 302
Tantum Ergo: Laloux
Voluntary: Voluntaries I & II — Weelkes

● SUNDAY 27 JANUARY EPIPHANY 4

HIGH MASS AT 11.00 a.m.

Entrance Hymn: 216 (v 5 Descant
— Caplin)
Introit: Adorate Deum
Mass: Missa Brevis in D, K 194
— Mozart
Lessons: Isaiah 9: 1 - 4
Psalm 27
1 Corinthians 1: 10 - 18
Hymn: 360
Gospel: Matthew 4: 12 - 23
Preacher: The Vicar
Anthem: O ye little flock — Amner
Hymns: 87 (T 486), 206, 377
Voluntary: Voluntary in C — Tomkins

SOLEMN EVENSONG at 6.00 p.m.

Psalm: 33
Lessons: Ecclesiastes 3: 1 - 11
1 Peter 1: 3 - 12

Office Hymn: 46
Canticles: St John's Service — Tippett
Anthem: Videntes stellum — Poulenc
Preacher: Fr Gerald Beauchamp
Hymn: 422

BENEDICTION

O Salutaris: Paul Brough
Hymn: 389
Tantum Ergo: Paul Brough
Voluntary: Trivium— Pärt

FRIDAY 1 FEBRUARY THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE (CANDLEMAS) (Transferred from the 2nd)

HIGH MASS AT 6.30 p.m.

During Candle Ceremony:
God is light — Harry Bramma
Processional Hymns: 33 (omit *), 157
Introit: Suscepimus, Deus
Mass: Mass in G — Schubert
Lessons: Malachi 3: 1 - 5
Psalm 24
Hebrews 2: 14 - end
Hymn: 156 (T 288)
Gospel: Luke 2: 22 - 40
Preacher: Revd Angela Tilby, Vicar
St Benet's, Cambridge
Creed: Credo II
Anthem: Nunc dimittis — Holst
Hymns: 187, 44 (T 282), 338
Voluntary: Mit Fried' and Freud' ich fahr'
dahin, BWV 616 — Bach

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Sundays Low Mass at 6.30 p.m. (Sat), 8.00 a.m.
and 5.15 p.m. Morning Prayer 10.20 a.m.

HIGH MASS and SERMON at 11.00 a.m.

SOLEMN EVENSONG, SERMON and
BENEDICTION at 6.00 p.m.

Monday to Friday Morning Prayer at 7.30 a.m.

Low Mass at 8.00 a.m., 1.10 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.

Confessions from 12.30 - 1.00 p.m. and 5.30 p.m.

Evening Prayer at 6.00 p.m.

Saturday Morning Prayer at 7.30 a.m.

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

(* First Mass of Sunday)

Confessions 5.30 p.m.,

Evening Prayer 6.00 p.m.

Confessions are also heard by appointment

020 7636 1788

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

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CALENDAR AND INTENTIONS FOR JANUARY 2008

1	THE NAMING AND CIRCUMCISION OF JESUS	
2	Ss Basil and Gregory	God's blessing on the New Year
3		The Bishop of London
4		Unity
5		Those in need
		Society of All Saints Sisters of the Poor
6	✕ THE EPIPHANY	OUR PARISH AND PEOPLE
7	r Requiem (6.30 p.m.)	The departed
8		The unemployed
9		Friends of All Saints
10	<i>William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury</i>	Unity
11	<i>Mary Slessor, Missionary</i>	Those in need
12	St Aelred of Hexham	Religious
13	✕ THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST	OUR PARISH AND PEOPLE
14		The homeless
15		Hospitals in London
16		Church Schools
17	St Antony of Egypt	Unity
18	The Week of Prayer for Christian unity until 25th	Those in need
19	St Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester	World Council of Churches
20	✕ THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY	OUR PARISH AND PEOPLE
21	St Agnes	Roman Catholic Church
22	<i>Vincent of Saragossa</i>	The Free Churches
23		The Orthodox Churches
24	St Francis de Sales	Unity
25	THE CONVERSION OF ST PAUL	Those in need
26	Ss Timothy and Titus	Vocations
27	✕ THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY	OUR PARISH AND PEOPLE
28	St Thomas Aquinas	Theological Teachers
29		Parochial Church Council
30	St Charles	The Queen and Royal Family
31	<i>John Bosco</i>	Unity

Please note:

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

r — Requiem — the monthly requiem 6.30 p.m. this month.



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