

THE CLARION

The Magazine Of The Parish Of St Mary The Boltons

APRIL 2004

Easter

At the end of the great forty days of Lent we move into the most solemn and exciting time of the church's year. 'If Christ is not risen from the dead', warns St Paul, 'then our faith is in vain' (1 Corinthians 15. 14). But if we are to know the power of Christ and his resurrection then we then we need to take time to reflect, worship and place ourselves in a very different context from the everyday.

One of the insights that struck me forcefully during the Lent Course was The Revd William Gulliford's remark that in the Russian Orthodox tradition Lent is the time when people recover their sense of being like Adam and Eve, God's original creation. The fast observed by many Russians goes way beyond giving up treats and donating the money saved to people in need. The Lenten diet of vegetables and fruit (so chocolate stays in!) but no meat or fish enables people to sense what it might mean to live as God originally intended. Perhaps this is a thought to keep for next year.

Again, in the Orthodox tradition, to walk into a church is to enter heaven. The icons of the saints lead us to encounter the people that we are called to become. The splendid liturgy makes us soar above. Transcendence re-orientates the words we use so that they are no longer statements to which we assent but become the grammar of our being.

The progress from Eden to the new Jerusalem, however, has been interrupted by the Fall and human sin. The Cross is the remedy - God's provision for human salvation. The Spirit tumbles from the Godhead for our sanctification and works all sorts of apparent lunacy in our lives - turning people into holy wanderers, visionaries and contemplatives. The world encourages us to be rich and settled. But God knows that wealth and comfort can blind us to his glory and turn us in on ourselves.

So the vocation is to go on pilgrimage, to walk the Way of the Cross.

On Palm Sunday we process from the hall to the church symbolic of Christ's entry into Jerusalem.

On the Wednesday in Holy Week we walk around the church contemplating the Stations of the Cross, the events recorded in scripture and tradition that took place as Jesus made his way from being sentenced by Pilate to his crucifixion and entombment.

On Maundy Thursday clergy renew their ordination vows and receive the oils used at baptism, confirmation and for the anointing of the sick. In this diocese it takes place at St. Paul's Cathedral and everyone is welcome to attend this moving and impressive service. At the evening Eucharist recalling the events of the Last Supper the sacrament - Christ's body - is taken from the altar to the south transept. Here a garden is created representing Christ's sojourn in Gethsemane.

On Good Friday at the 10.00am Children's Service we walk around the church visiting the Holy Week scenes of the entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, Gethsemane and Golgotha. At the Three Hour Service in the afternoon the pilgrimage takes us into the deepest recesses of being. We are guided through our humanity by words, music and images that draws together the Christian drama and our own stories.

On Easter Eve, a bonfire is lit symbolising the new light of Easter. From it the Paschal Candle is lighted and brought into church reminding us of the pillar of smoke that led the Hebrews by day and the pillar of fire that led them by night out of slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. In the glorious mystery of redemption we sing of our salvation and renew our baptismal vows.

So, on Easter Day, we celebrate the Lord's resurrection with flowers, candles, Easter eggs and wonderful music. With uplifted hearts we return to the world transformed and set fair to bring the fruits of our redemption to our homes, friends, places of work and all those other avenues that we pursue in life. Come, walk the talk.

Happy Easter

Gerald Beauchamp

Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Wednesday 28 April, 7.45pm, in the Hall

Please make sure that this meeting is in your diary. There are important elections and a chance to review the progress of the parish.

London Visions: Back to the Future: 604-2004

London Diocesan Celebration Eucharist at St. Paul's Cathedral on Saturday 22 May, 3.00pm

This year the Diocese of London is celebrating its 1400th anniversary. There are events planned throughout the year and everyone is invited to St. Paul's on 22 May. The Bishop of London will be the celebrant and the preacher will be the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Parishes in each Episcopal Area are assembling at different churches near to St. Paul's and people from the Kensington Area are gathering at St. Vedast, Foster Lane, which is a five minute walk beyond the east end of the cathedral. The Bishop of Kensington and the Archdeacon of Middlesex will be at St. Vedast from 12 noon to greet people. So why not take a packed lunch and meet the bishop and archdeacon as well as other clergy and people from neighbouring parishes.

At 2.15pm people will walk informally from the gathering points to St. Paul's for the service which is expected to finish around 4.30pm. It's a pity that this is taking place when many members of St. Mary's will be on the parish holiday to Russia. So, if you are not going to Moscow and St. Petersburg please go to St. Paul's and remember the group in your prayers. We will be praying for you.

Why all the fuss? Who was St. Mellitus anyway?

Mellitus was one of the second band of monks sent by Pope Gregory I to England. In 604 he was consecrated the first bishop of the East Saxons with London as his see. Mellitus converted the Saxon king, Sabert, to Christianity, but not his sons. On Sabert's death they drove Mellitus out because he refused to give them communion as they were not baptised and would not profess the Christian faith. Mellitus fled to Gaul. On his return in 619 he became Archbishop of Canterbury. There he built a church dedicated to St. Mary, a fragment of which still remains near the existing cathedral. The historian Bede tells us that Mellitus was 'noble by birth, he was yet nobler in mind'. He died at Canterbury in 624.

Taking the long view historically enables us to put many things in perspective. Life today centres around the immediate. This can make dealing with change difficult. But when we have a sense of history we can sift from the past, garner wisdom, work with those values that are enduring and discern what is eternal. Go celebrate!

The Inclusive Church

I belong to the minority who voted against the inclusive church. It was not easy to swim against the tide. I felt that my faith was severely tested by this issue.

On our annual holiday to Turkey last November my suitcase bulged with books. First and foremost the Bible, A Handbook to the Bible and several publications on sexual orientation.

Over several months I sought counsel from my brother and sister-in-law in Derbyshire, a trusted friend in the States, as well as from two theologians, my family and close friends in England and Germany through conversations, streams of letters and telephone calls.

I was able to attend two debates in Advent on sexual orientation at St. Mary's and strongly objected on the issue of inclusiveness. I wish that I could stay calm, clear and collected in debates, but I find it hard to do so. I was thrown into real mental turmoil when I realized that I was in opposition to the view of many long-term friends of St. Mary's and that I was in danger of isolating myself. My relatives in Derbyshire and their church, as well as friends in England and Germany who knew that I was going to vote against an inclusive church were praying for me and St. Mary's.

No doubt - and somebody brought this up during one of our Advent's sessions - as the daughter of a Lutheran pastor I have had a very traditional upbringing, which is based in the belief that Christians accept the Bible as God's holy Word - changeless, inspired by the Holy Spirit and not subject to any earthly authority. So it was no surprise when I stood in front of the post-box, ready to drop my letter, with my vote against church inclusiveness, that I recalled Martin Luther's outburst at the Diet of Worms in 1521: "Ich stehe hier, ich kann nicht anders, Gott helfe mir", (Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me) and it struck a chord.

We now have the result of the vote by the PCC. What are we to make of it? First of all I think that it took tremendous courage by St. Mary's lead by Gerald, our vicar to tackle this controversial issue.

Three things became clear to me. To keep on reading the Bible, to continue praying for the harmony, stability and unity of our congregation and finally to work harder to understand, respect and love those who hold different views from me.

In spite of our differences the force that holds us together is love. The apostle John sums it up perfectly (1 John 4-7): "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God".

Anne Swift

This is a issue where the discussion will continue for some time but I would like to suggest that unless anyone has anything new to add we draw a line under the Inclusive Church for a while - ed

A New Director of Music - Progress Report

The post was advertised in the *Church Times*, *Classical Music*, on the Royal School of Church Music website and by word of mouth through the music networks.

There were twenty-two enquiries and nine serious applications. A shortlist of four has been drawn up by the vicar and a professional consultant. They are being auditioned on Tuesday 27 April. The church will be closed on that day.

The PCC has appointed a panel consisting of the vicar, churchwardens, a member of the PCC (Metin Mitchell) and two members of the congregational choir (Micki Rogers and Samantha Smith). Ian Curror, Director of Music at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, is acting as a professional consultant.

Once the person has been chosen references will be taken and a check undertaken with the Criminal Records Bureau. All being well the new Director of Music will begin on or before 1 September.

It was gratifying to see such a strong field applying for the post and there will be disappointment among those not selected for the audition.

Please continue to pray that the panel will make the right decision in making such a crucial appointment in the life of any church.

The congregation is very grateful for the support from the various musicians who have helped since Simon Gibson left. Variety is the spice of life but it will be good to have a permanent replacement before too long.

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

Palm Sunday 4th April

8.00am Said Eucharist

10.30am Sung Parish Eucharist with Procession of Palms

Readings: Luke 19. 28-40; Philippians 2. 5-11; Luke 23. 1-49

4.30pm Said Evening Prayer

Monday 5th April

8.0am Morning Prayer

Noon Said Eucharist

Readings: Isaiah 42. 1-9; John 12. 1-11

6.00pm Evening Prayer

Tuesday 6th April

8.00am Morning Prayer

7.00pm Said Eucharist

Readings: Isaiah 49. 1-7; John 12. 20-36

6.00pm Evening Prayer

Wednesday 7th April

8.00am Morning Prayer

10.00am Said Eucharist

Readings: Isaiah 50. 4-9a; John 13. 21-32

6.00pm Evening Prayer

7.00pm Stations of the Cross

Maundy Thursday 8th April

8.00am Morning Prayer

10.00am Chrism Mass at St. Paul's Cathedral

6.00pm Evening Prayer

7.30pm Sung Eucharist of the Last Supper and Vigil until Midnight

Readings: Exodus 12. 1-4 & 11-14; 1 Corinthians 11. 23-26; John 13. 1-17 & 31b-35

Good Friday 9th April

No Morning Prayer

10.30am Informal Service for Children and Adults

Noon- 3.00pm Three Hours at the Cross

'Christ: The Wisdom of God'
No Evening Prayer

Easter Eve 10th April

8.00am Morning Prayer

No Evening Prayer

7.30pm Easter Vigil

and

Lighting of the Paschal Candle

Easter Day 11th April

8.00am Said Eucharist

10.30am Sung Parish Eucharist

Readings: Isaiah 65. 17-28; Luke 24. 1-12

4.30pm Said Evening Prayer