

THE CLARION

The Magazine of The Parish of St Mary The Boltons

April 2008

Seven Stanzas at Easter

John Updike

Make no mistake: if He rose at all
it was as His body;
if the cells' dissolution did not reverse, the
molecules
 reknit, the amino acids rekindle,
the Church will fall.

It was not as the flowers,
each soft Spring recurrent;
it was not as His Spirit in the mouths and fuddled
 eyes of the eleven apostles;
it was as His flesh; ours.

The same hinged thumbs and toes,
the same valved heart
that – pierced – died, withered, paused, and then
 regathered out of enduring Might
new strength to enclose.

Let us not mock God with metaphor,
analogy, sidestepping, transcendence;
making of the event a parable, a sign painted in the
 faded credulity of earlier ages:
let us walk through the door.

The stone is rolled back, not papier-mache,
not a stone in a story,
but the vast rock of materiality that in the slow
 grinding of time will eclipse for each of us
the wide light of day.

And if we will have an angel at the tomb,
make it a real angel,
weighty with Max Planck's quanta, vivid with hair,
 opaque in the dawn of light, robed in real linen
spun on a definite loom.

Let us not seek to make it less monstrous,
For our own convenience, our own sense of beauty,
lest, awakened in one unthinkable hour, we are
 embarrassed by the miracle,
and crushed by remonstrance.

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Gerald Beauchamp's Sermon of 24th February

If you're my age you'll remember that groundbreaking TV show *The Frost Report*. It had a long-running sketch. John Cleese, Ronnie Barker and Ronnie Corbett would stand in a line. John Cleese (very tall and elegantly dressed on the left), Ronnie Barker (medium height in a brown suit in the middle) and Ronnie Corbett (short and wearing dungarees and a cap on the right). Their height and their clothing indicated their social status: John Cleese upper class, Ronnie Barker middle class and Ronnie Corbett working class.

There was a sketch that went something like this

· John Cleese: I was born out of my father's desire that I should inherit his title and family estates and perpetuate the family name.

· Ronnie Barker: I was born out of my father's desire to take over the family business and pass it on to my children.

· Ronnie Corbett: I was born out of my father's desire (full stop!)

Desire. We all know about desire. 'Mummy' and 'Daddy' may have been the first words that we learnt as children but the first phrase we used was 'I want.' 'I want a drink.' 'I want my toy.' And then we were socialized. We were taught to be polite: 'I would like ...,' 'Please may I have ...' We were also taught that 'I want' doesn't always 'get'. We don't always get what we want. We don't just live alone. We live with others. The desire of one person can cut across the desire of another. We have to learn to give and take, compromise and share.

Go into any toddlers group. One child picks up a big shiny orange ball. In no time at all another child will try and take it off them. This is mimetic desire; desire as imitation. Desire comes not from within but from without. We want what someone else has. The children begin to squabble. We intervene. 'Who had the ball first?' The child who had the ball first is the rightful owner. We teach justice. We try and placate the second child.

We offer them another ball perhaps even one that's identical. Sometimes it works; often it doesn't. 'But I want ...' and the tears flow. 'You should be ashamed of yourself carrying on like that!' We learn shame.

We never stop wanting - desiring. As adults we just get better at disguising it. We learn strategies. We institutionalise it. We call it 'competition'. We harness its energy in business, politics and the church. We learn how to dress up what we want for ourselves as what is good for others. But desire never goes away. And so it shouldn't. When we stop desiring we're dead.

But desire let loose, the chariot of desire ridden by our own selfish egos alone, can only lead us into destruction. We call this 'sin'. As the poet W H Auden remarked: All sin tends to be addictive and the terminal point of addiction is what is called damnation. Desire gone haywire (sin) leads us into some bad places. As Einstein said of insanity it's doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. We end up in the barren place: the wilderness.

This is a crazy world. People are out of control. We know shame and are ashamed. This leads to another desire: a desire for order and stability. At its best desire is love trying to happen. Love takes us to the good place. And so we go on the great search: a quest to find that special person, that special place, that special group, which gives us a profound sense of belonging: the place that we can call 'home', the place where our desires are fulfilled, our longings are satisfied: the place where our tendencies to destruction are turned back; the place of salvation.

Honesty in this search isn't easy. There's a great deal of trial and error. Relationships are made and broken as the restless heart tries to find its way. In each situation we have to face the question: 'Is this what I desire?' It's the question that I faced when I became a novice in the monastery in America six months after leaving here in 2004. My reply then was 'My desire is to become a member of this monastery.' In the following two years that desire strengthened and then waned. Why? Because it wasn't the place of my salvation.

What I desired there was in conflict with what others wanted. One way of putting true desire (the love waiting to happen) is to call it vocation. Vocation isn't something purely personal it's also corporate. For monasteries to thrive they have to have structures that help people grow beyond our tendencies to destruction. If they don't do this, they are liable to shed the people who desire more.

So let's turn to today's gospel: the story of the Samaritan woman that Jesus meets at Jacob's Well. We can interpret this as a story of desire. What is one of our great desires? Water. Without water we have no life. The Samaritan woman desires what we all desire: water. But wells aren't only a place to quench our thirst they are also focal points for communities. Wells (the parish pump) is where people meet and relationships are formed. In the Hebrew Scriptures Isaac and Rebecca met at the well: so did Moses and Zipporah. And then there's Jacob and Rachel. Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at this very spot.

But at the well there's not only desire but also shame. The Samaritan woman goes to draw water at midday. No one in a hot climate draws water at midday. You draw water in the morning and at evening when it's cool. To go to the well when it's deserted, means that you're avoiding people. The Samaritan woman has been ostracized. She's been shamed. Why? Well, I suspect it's because of her 'untidy relationships'.

But before we fall into the trap of assuming that sexual sin is all about Eve what about the six men in her life (her five husbands and current partner)? No matter. Let's concern ourselves her strength.

She challenges Jesus' request for water: You, a Jew (and she might have added 'a Jewish man and a rabbi' to boot) ask a drink from me a Samaritan woman? In the ensuing conversation she desires the things of heaven (living water) where desires find their end and their fulfilment. She sees that Jesus is a prophet. She is a believer. She knows that the Messiah is coming and that he will proclaim all things.

On returning home she tells people about Jesus. She is an early missionary. Truth has overcome her shame. She is unafraid. Through her others know that Christ is the Saviour of the World and that the worship of the true God is not tied to any particular location but it is universal. Her true desire is rooted in the Kingdom.

For us to be truly human our desires must always be governed by the Kingdom. When I came back from America I had to find my desire again. I knew that I couldn't just go back into ministry straightaway. I have no transferable qualifications. I'm not a social worker or a teacher. So I decided to learn to drive a bus. And that's what I did and I was offered a job with Transdev, a London bus firm.

The guy who interviewed me looked with interest at my CV and advised me that although I'd probably make quite a good bus driver I should probably return to what I know best - being a priest. Knowing that I could do something else brought back my genuine desire - love waiting to happen, vocation.

And I'd like to think that this is what I have to offer now in a new chapter in ministry in the West End. Part of my role now is developing chaplaincy to the shops and offices in Oxford Street. Oxford Circus tube station is the modern day well and it has its fair share of Samaritan women and their men friends. Love waiting to happen is all around.

Gerald Beauchamp

Thursday Lunch Club

The speaker on Thursday April 10th will be Philip Ziegler, who is an internationally renowned biographer. The title of his talk will be, 'Prime ministers: writing their biographies.'

BROMPTON CEMETERY GUIDED TOUR SATURDAY 19 APRIL

Some hardy souls from St Mary's congregation have asked for a guided tour of Brompton Cemetery, and this has been arranged for Saturday 19 April. If any other members of the congregation would like to join they will be very welcome. Will they please contact me on telephone 020 7352 5127 with any questions, and, if they wish, to enrol? If you would like to bring one or more friends please let me know.

We will start in the cemetery Chapel where tea/coffee/water/biscuits will be available from 2.00 p.m. At 2.30 I will give a short historical introduction, and then we will sally forth to see what we can find.

Arthur Tait.

Police Surgery

The next police surgery will be held in the church office on Tuesday 22 April at 2.00pm

Bible Study dates

The dates for the forthcoming months are 7th and 21st April. For details please call the Parish office.

Christian Aid Week - Can You Help?

Christian Aid Week this year begins on Sunday 11 May. Joanna Hackett who is our Christian Aid Representative will be away on the parish pilgrimage that week and we therefore need to find someone who can organise St. Mary's contribution.

This consists mainly of organizing helpers to collect outside one of the local underground stations on a designated day and to help with counting the money on the Saturday. If you can help in this way, please call the parish office on 020 7835 1440.

APCM

Our Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be on Thursday 24 April at 7.45pm in the Church.

Part of the process of the APCM is to update the electoral roll. If you would like your name added to the roll please fill out a form found at the back of the church. If you would like your name taken off the roll please let John in the Parish office know. Only those on the electoral roll will be able to attend the APCM.

APRIL YEAR MIND

Linda June Beauchamp
Sir Roy Denman
Vera Key Sloane
Alan Field Payne
Geoffrey Charles Payne
Arthur George Hunter Fell
Edward Raymond Mason
William Peter Lionel Rogers
John Ernst Warwick
Karl-Hans Osbahr
Margaret Bissett Stubbs
Molly Kemm
John Alexander Lowery McLean
Dame Gillian Gerda Brown
Jytte Marie Elenor Lynner
Diana Campbell McLean
Claudine Miriam Hawker Allport
Michael Antony Bryceson
Richard Juxon Barton
Jytte Mackenzie-Charrington
James Richard Bolton-Dignam
Yvonne June Mace Madley
Sidney Arthur Perry

**Contributions for the August Clarion
should be sent in to the church office by
23rd April**

ST MARY THE BOLTONS CALENDAR APRIL 2008

SERVICES AND READINGS

SUNDAY SERVICES

8.00am Eucharist

10.30am Sung Eucharist

4.30pm Evening Prayer

The meeting room at the back of the church is available for people with pre-school children. There is a baby changing facility in the wheelchair accessible toilet in the hall.

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Usually Morning Prayer is said at 8.30am (Eucharist on Feastdays) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays except Public Holidays. Wednesday 7.00pm Eucharist

READINGS in April

Wednesday 2

Readings at 7.00pm Acts 5. 17-26; John 3. 16-21

Sunday 6 April

Readings at 10.30am

Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 2. 14a, 36-41; I Peter 1. 17-23; Luke 24. 13-35

No Mid-week Eucharist

Sunday 13 April

Readings at 10.30am

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 2. 42-end; I Peter 2. 19-end
John 10. 1-10

Wednesday 16

Readings at 7.00pm

Acts 12.24 -13.5; John 12. 44-end

Sunday 20 April

Readings at 10.30am:

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 7. 55-end; I Peter 2. 2-10;
John 14. 1-14

Wednesday 23

Readings at 7.00pm

George, Martyr, Patron of England 304
2 Timothy 2. 3-13; John 15. 18-21

Sunday 27 April

Readings at 10.30am:

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 17.22-31; I Peter 3. 13-end;
John 14. 15-21

Wednesday 30

Readings at 7.00pm

Acts 17. 15, 22-18.1; John 16. 12-15

Thursday 1 May

Readings at 7.00pm

Ascension Day

Acts 1. 1-11; Ephesians 1. 15-end;
Luke 24. 44-end

Sunday 4 May

Readings at 10.30am

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Acts 1. 6-14; I Peter 4. 12-14, 5. 6-11;
John 17. 1-11

REGULAR EVENTS

Mondays 9.30am Mothers & Toddlers
Thursdays 9.30am onwards Fabric Group
Saturdays 9.15am onwards Gardening Group
Sundays Sunday School in term time (starts Sunday 27 April)

April

Sunday 6 Parish Lunch

Sunday 6 2.30pm Baptism Amelia Adamson

Sunday 13 Traidcraft

Thursday 10 12.30pm Midweek Monthly Thursday Lunch

Sunday 20 1.00pm Baptism Charles Crampin

Thursday 24 7.30pm APCM Church Hall

Sunday 27 10.30pm Tom & Freddie Lucas

DIRECTORY

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Priest in Charge The Revd Ginny Thomas

The Parish Office 020 7835 1440

ginny@stmarytheboltons.org.uk (day off: Tuesday)

Churchwardens

Arthur Tait 020 7352 5127

Mark Nichols 020 7370 0752

Director of Music Graham Caldbeck

020 8670 0100 / 07774 655028

Parish Administrator John McVeigh

020 7835 1440 john@stmarytheboltons.org.uk

Office open 9.15am – 2.15pm Monday to Friday

Vergers / Caretaker David Ireton

020 7244 8998 / 07881 865386 (day off: Wednesday)

Parochial Church Council Officers

PCC Secretary Joanna Hackett 020 7518 8430 **Electoral Roll**

Officer Sarah Baillieu 020 7341 4141 **Treasurer** Carolyn

Stubbs 020 7835 0074 **Gift Aid Secretary** John Barker 020

8571 0737 **Children's Advocate** Verena Tschudin 020 7351 1263

Co-ordinators: Bible Study Group Betty Greenland 020

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Verena Tschudin 020 7351 1263, vtschudin@fastnet.co.uk **Clarion**

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Malcolm Gregory 01932 355863 **Servers, Sidespeople &**

Social Secretary Sylvia Gregory 01932 355863 **Sunday**

School Jane Dass 0207 370 5309 **Traidcraft** Mary-G Blanchet

020 7352 6958, Dorothy Patrick 020 7352 1396 **Assistant**

Treasurer Bill Gallagher 020 7384 3246.