

THE CLARION

The Magazine of The Parish of St Mary The Boltons

NOVEMBER 2009

Caring for Creation

In September I attended a one-day course at Sarum College, Salisbury, entitled 'Caring for Creation'. It was led by Brother Samuel of the Society of St. Francis and was given in the context of the summit of world leaders on climate change that will take place in December in Copenhagen.

The course looked at creation from the perspective of St. Francis. St. Francis is often caricatured as a sentimental lover of nature, but this does not do justice to a man who had real sternness of character and an all-pervasive love of God. He was overwhelmed by God's humility, that God limited himself by becoming human in order to reveal His love for the whole of creation. For Francis, creation is pregnant with God, everything that exists reflects the goodness, love and generosity of God.

In the Franciscan tradition the problems facing the world through climate change have a spiritual dimension; climate change is a spiritual problem brought about by brokenness of the relationship between ourselves and God. We human beings have lost our sense of connectedness with God and creation and a sense of the creation as a gift. In the words of Archbishop Rowan Williams, we tend to see the universe as a warehouse of stuff for our convenience and so we have lost a sense of awe and reverence. This lack of reverence can be seen in the amount of rubbish we throw away, and Brother Samuel made the point that a society that dumps rubbish tends to treat people in the same way - a very troubling thought.

To begin to set things right, the first requirement is that we repent. In other words, we must have a radical change of heart. Only this will lead to action, and we were challenged to think about what repentance means for us, both individually and corporately, how we

might learn to see clearly the reality of how our way of life is contributing to the devastating effects of climate change and how we can teach others to see that reality. It is only then that we can begin to care for creation and all who are affected by climate change. As Brother Samuel noted, care for creation is intertwined with social justice: it is the poor who suffer and will suffer the most as a result of our changing climate and they are the least responsible for it. To care for creation means living within limits, with restraint, aware that as human beings we too are limited. We need to live mindfully, having a reverence for all things and all people. We need to understand the interconnectedness of all things and that we are stewards of creation. We need to live in harmony with all things.

We need too, to live thankfully, for the more we give thanks, the more we recognise the gift of all that we have and all that is. Finally we need to pray, and Brother Samuel reminded us that how we pray affects our relationship with the world.

I found the day thought-provoking and I am very grateful to our Green Group – Ruth Lampard, Kathy Loprimo and Philip Challinor – for looking at how we can live in greater harmony with the world around us, being more careful in our use of the earth's resources and becoming more aware of the dangers that face the world as a result of climate change. As December and the summit meeting in Copenhagen approach, please pray for meaningful agreements to be reached so that real changes can be made in the way we live. If this does not happen, I believe the outlook for the world – human beings and the natural world – is very bleak indeed.

Ginny Thomas

Advent Discussion Groups

The topic for the Advent discussion groups this year will be 'Advent: A Time of Waiting'.

There will be two groups. One will meet on Wednesday mornings from 10.30am to 12noon at Margarete Geier's home. The second group will meet at church on Wednesday evenings following the evening Eucharist, from approximately 7.45pm to 9.0pm.

We will look at 'waiting' in the context of three pairs of New Testament figures:

Week 1: 25 November: Waiting in Silence – Zechariah and Elizabeth

Week 2: 2 December: Waiting in Obedience – Mary and Joseph

Week 3: 9 December: Waiting in the Temple – Simeon and Anna

If you would like to attend, please either call the parish office and give your name and which group you would like to attend, or sign up on the lists at the back of the church.

The Environment: Top 5 Tips for home

Care for the environment is one of the most pressing issues of our time; climate change is already having significant effects across the world. We feel them too here in London.

The Church is taking the challenge to care for God's creation very seriously and is calling for prayer and action so that we can all make a difference. This is particularly important as we approach the crucial International Summit on Climate Change taking place in Copenhagen in December. The PCC has asked our Parish Green Group (Ruth Lampard, Kathy Loprimo and Philip Challinor, recently joined by Katrina Quinton) to help us to think about and act on these concerns both at Church and at home.

On Sunday 4 October the Green Group shared our Top 5 Tips: things we can do to make a difference. None of these suggestions will be news to anyone, and some of us may already be doing some of these things, which is good news. But many of us, including the Green Group, need to keep reminding and encouraging ourselves that these small steps are important, make a difference, and that we still need to keep working at them.

The PCC has committed the Church to act on the first two tips.

1. Heat: Turn the thermostat down 1°C

As much as we have enjoyed the late autumn weather, global warming isn't just about Indian Summers. London faces even tougher challenges than the rest of the country, not just to do with global, but also with local warming.

The average temperature in London is expected to rise by over 4°C over the next 50 years. It is already 4°C warmer than when St Marys was built. London can expect temperatures 8°C higher than the rest of the Home Counties by the end of this century. This will lead to increased suffering, especially by people with breathing difficulties. Most of this will not be due to global, but to local warming. This is called the 'heat island effect' caused by urban air pollution and the sheer amount of heat thrown out by buildings and cars. This urban heat problem is so high up the agenda of Arnold Schwarzenegger that in Los Angeles he is threatening to ban all dark coloured cars due to their extra heat absorption causing such heavy use of air conditioning. Adjusting the thermostat, or better still, utilising systems that compute external temperatures as well as internal, will help to improve the environment for us all, as well as saving up to £200 on fuel bills.

2. Light: Switch to low energy light bulbs

Will swapping light bulbs make a difference? Low energy light bulbs use less than 20% of the energy of a conventional light bulb, and can last up to 15 times longer. By swapping a normal bulb to an energy saving bulb you could cut energy wastage by three quarters and save £9 on your electricity bill. This might seem like a small change, but if every home in the UK changed just three light bulbs, enough energy would be saved to light the UK's street lamps. If you fit all the lights in your house with energy saving bulbs you could save approx £590 over the lifetime of all the bulbs. Some people complain that the bulbs are too dim; however, low energy bulbs start out dimmer than conventional light bulbs but gradually build up to a continual wattage that will only take a couple of seconds. If you need lighting for close work, don't rely on overhead lighting, use a desk light. Next time you need a bulb, buy an energy saving one: The Energy Saving Trust has a helpful website with facts, advice and recommendations:
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk;

3. Travel: Do I need to drive?

A key question to ask is, Do I need to drive or can I walk or take public transport instead? Research by the Energy Saving Trust reveals that driving a typical UK car for three miles adds about 2lb of CO₂ to the atmosphere. Driving 6.5 miles to buy shopping emits more carbon dioxide than flying a pack of Kenyan green beans to the UK. Short journeys do not allow the engine to warm up enough; a cold engine uses almost twice as much fuel and catalytic converters can take five miles to become effective. My mother and I (sometimes with my brothers) used to walk to Leicester market on a Saturday morning to do our shopping. The journey down took 20 minutes and 30 minutes coming back uphill with bags full of potatoes, onions, carrots, oranges. It would have taken nearly as long to get the car out, drive down, find a car parking space and get to the market. By walking down and back we had precious time together for unrushed and undistracted chat. I remember it as possibly the best time we had to talk things over; odd that such a simple task opened up such quality time. It's good for us and good for the environment to walk or use public transport whenever possible.

4. PC Food: Watch your Waste

Fifty percent of food produced by UK farmers fails to find its way on to our forks. Half of this waste is down to us buying, and then throwing away unopened packets once they pass their sell-by date. The rest is down to the supermarkets who have dramatically commoditised food, forcing farmers to reject bent carrots or straight bananas. Forty percent of the carbon footprint of this congregation is down to the food that we buy, but only a tiny percentage is grown within sensible delivery distances of our homes and most requires imported feeds to produce it. In addition, food thrown in the bin creates great difficulties for future sorting of recyclables and often leads to additional pressure on landfill sites, which then produces even more greenhouse gases. Yet, farmers are beginning to listen. A farmer who operates the largest pig business in the South West, has reorganised his farm to rely only on locally grown cereals to feed the animals and now completely avoids Brazilian-grown soya beans. All he needs to do now is supply to a

local food chain rather than transport his animals 250 miles to Morrisons' distribution centre!

Watching our waste demands no more than a brief check on the source of the products we buy and a realistic assessment of whether the buy-one-get-one-free offer really will make it to our plates or whether it is destined for yet one more journey, this time to the land fill site.

5. Waste: Bag the Bad Bags

The key ingredients in plastic bags are petroleum and natural gas and the manufacturing of plastic bags accounts for 4% of the world's total oil production. The energy used to make one high-density bag, such as a Harrod's or Gap plastic bag is 0.48 megajoules (MJ). To give this figure perspective, a car driving one kilometre is the equivalent of manufacturing 8.7 plastic bags. WRAP is an environmental organization working with local authorities, businesses and individuals aimed at reducing waste at all levels throughout the United Kingdom. It has shown that in the past three years, the 48% reduction in bag waste has equated to 420 million bags spared from a landfill. In 2006 10.7 billion bags were issued to consumers. Today, that number has been reduced to half, at about 5.6 billion. So, invest in some reusable bags to carry shopping in; they fold up pretty small to go into handbags, glove compartments and pockets. Invest in 'bags for life' that are quite durable. Reuse the bags you have: keeping a stash of bags in the bottom of the bag will ensure that an impromptu stop at the supermarket doesn't leave you caught short and having to add to the existing collection.

www.wrap.org.uk

Ruth Lampard

Thursday Lunch 8 October: Update

Thirty-two people came for lunch on 8 October to enjoy the occasion and to hear Rev. Rob Gillion talk about the work now carried out at St Saviour's Church, Walton Place. Rob is Chelsea Area Dean and Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Square. He has been the leading light in the development of the recent work at St Saviours.

For seven years around the turn of the century St Saviour's was 'redundant', reopening in 2002 under the banner 'Intermission'. The challenge is to help people in disadvantaged positions, including ex-offenders from prison and others at risk of following that path. St Saviour's seeks to help them to re-establish themselves and to unlock their true potential. Success brings them confidence to go out and help others as they have themselves been helped.

With special focus on the arts, St Saviour's provides space for people to relax from the hectic world and find how 'to be'. Within a Christian ethos it offers those from any or no faith a 'home' and 'family' in which to find healing from the barbs of the world outside. It provides Christian services, art gallery space and exhibitions, and creates its own theatrical productions to very high standards with help from professional actors. There are opportunities for people to try their hand at artistic creations in various forms, writing, book launches, and drama production. They 'do not seek perfection, but do seek excellence'

Starting with three staff from Harrods who needed help, the 'cast' of attenders now covers a wide range of humanity, but especially those from the acting community. (Rob was himself once an actor). They come from Brixton, Hackney, and Kensington and Chelsea.

A new theatrical production, *WASTED*, will be performed at St Saviour's at 7.00 pm on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 19 November to 12 December. Attendance is strongly recommended both to support a fine Christian initiative and for its own intrinsic and moving merit. Tickets cost £10.00 at the door or from telephone 020 7823 8979.

This was an inspiring talk and a lovely glimpse into the art of making something apparently impossible and hopeless very possible and hopeful.
Arthur Tait.

John Donne – poet and preacher

John Donne (1573-1631) is justly famous for his love poems; less well-known are his religious poems and the sermons he gave as Dean of St Paul's. He must have been a charismatic preacher, because, according to contemporary accounts, vast crowds who could not get into the cathedral gathered outside and listened intently for an hour, sometimes two, groaning, weeping, even fainting.

*There is not so poor a creature but may be thy
glass to see God in. ...
If every gnat that flies were an Archangel, all that
could but tell me,
that there is a God; and the poorest worm that
creeps, tells me that ...
whatsoever hath any being, is by that very being, a
glass in which we
see God, who is the root, and the fountain of all
being.*

Following Donne's sometimes outrageous erotic poems, those addressed to his wife reveal a deep love that transcends the purely physical. On making a journey, which involved a temporary separation, he wrote 'A Valediction: forbidding mourning'.

*But we by a love, so much refined,
That ourselves know not what it is
Inter-assuréd of the mind,
Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.*

Many years later in his 'Holy Sonnets' he wrote of the profound effect of his wife's death.

*Since she whom I loved hath paid her last debt
To nature, and to hers, and my good is dead,
And her soul early into heaven ravishéd,
Wholly on heavenly things my mind is set
Here the admiring her my mind did whet
To seek thee God; so streams do show their head;
But though I have found thee, and thou my thirst
hast fed,
A holy thirsty dropsy melts me yet.*

Here the lovely image of streams revealing their source (as his wife's example drew him to seek God) leads into the desperately urgent image of unquenchable thirst, 'A holy thirsty dropsy melts me yet'.

In a sermon Donne pursued the idea of a man's life necessarily divided between the worldly and the divine.

Now, in this sea, every ship that sails must necessarily have some part of the ship under water. Every man that lives in this world, must necessarily have some of his life, some of his thoughts, some of his labours spent upon this world; but that part of the ship, by which he sails, is above water. Those meditations, those endeavours which must bring us to heaven, are removed from this world, and fixed entirely upon God.

One sonnet begins with a magnificent evocation of the last trump:

*At the round earth's imagined corners, blow
Your trumpets, Angels, and arise, arise
From death, you numberless infinities
Of souls, and to your scattered bodies go.*

In another of the 'Holy Sonnets' Donne addresses death directly:

*Death be not proud, though some have calléd thee
Mighty and dreadful, for, thou art not so,
For, those, whom thou thinkst, thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
... One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.*

This deep faith in God's mercy is spelled out in a sermon:

*The air is not so full of motes, of atoms,
as the church is of mercies; and as we can
suck in no part of air, but we take in those
motes, those atoms; so here in the congregation
we cannot suck in a word from the preacher,
we cannot speak, we cannot sigh a prayer
to God, but that the whole breath and
air is made of mercy.*

In another sonnet, Donne feels his own weakness and implores God to take him by storm.

*Batter my heart, three personed God; for, you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to
mend;*

*That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force, to break, blow, burn and make me new.
I, like an usurped town, to another due,
Labour to admit you, but oh, to no end,
Reason your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captived, and proves weak or untrue,
Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved fair,
But am betrothed unto your enemy:
Divorce me, untie, or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.*

The repeated verbs 'break, blow, burn', underlined by alliteration, suggest the extreme urgency of his prayer. The image of reason held captive, like the viceroy of an occupied town, is carefully unfolded, and leads to the even more startling image of the poet betrothed to the devil against his will, with again the desperation of his prayer 'Divorce me, untie, or break that knot again' hurtling into the shock of the final line.

In one of his sermons, Donne uses the topical image of a map of the world.

*If you look upon this world in a map,
you find two hemispheres, two half
worlds. If you crush heaven into a map,
you may find two hemispheres too, two
half heavens; half will be joy, and half
will be glory; ... And as of those two
hemispheres of the world, the first
hath been known long before, but
the other, (that of America, which is
the richer in treasure) God reserved
for later discoveries; so though he
reserve that hemisphere of heaven, which
is the glory thereof, to the Resurrection,
yet the other hemisphere, the joy of
heaven, God opens to our discovery,
and delivers for our habitation even
while we
dwell in this world.*

As his life drew to a close, Donne wrote the 'Hymn to God my God, in my sickness' with the half humorous picture of himself as a map 'flat on this bed'.

*I joy, that in these straits, I see my West;
For, though their currents yield return to none,
What shall my West hurt me? As West and East*

*In all flat maps (and I am one) are
So death doth touch the Resurrection.
.... So, in his purple wrapped receive me Lord
By thee his thorns give me his other crown;
And as to others' souls I preached thy word,
Be this my text, my sermon to mine own,
Therefore that he may raise the Lord throws down.*

Finally, in his hymn 'To Christ', besides punning on the two words 'son' and 'sun', the poet makes a pun on his own name, its sound identical to the word 'done'.

*I have a sin of fear that when I have spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
Swear by thyself that at my death, thy sun*

*Shall shine as it shines now, and heretofore;
And having done that, thou hast done,
I have no more.*

The thought that Christ finally possesses him, 'thou hast done', banishes his last fear. This complete faith in salvation is echoed in one of his happiest sermons:

*... when we shall love everyone, as
well as ourselves, and so have that joy
of our own salvation multiplied by
that number, ... how infinitely shall
this joy be enlarged in loving God,
so far above ourselves, and all them.*

It is difficult to pinpoint Donne's genius. Few poets have combined such deep, even overwhelming, emotion with such a piercing intellect and such original, at times idiosyncratic, imagery.
Anne Garten

Eucharist and Thursday Lunch

The next Thursday Eucharist will take place at 11.45am on **Thursday 12 November**. This will be followed by our popular Thursday Lunch club at 12.30pm. The speaker this month will be Malcolm Goddard, and title of the talk is 'What I have learned and gained from being a member of the fabric group'.

Dates for your diary

Sunday 8 November Remembrance Sunday
Tuesday 17 November Kensington & Chelsea Music Society Concert. Giovanni Guzzo, violin and Luis Pares Piano. Mozart, Beethoven, Debussy, Gershwin and Ginastera
Monday 7 December 10am Mother & Toddler Group Nativity Play
Sunday 13 December All-Age Service Nativity Play
7.00pm Carol Service: 'Twixt Heaven and Earth'
Thursday 24 December Christmas Eve
4.00pm Crib Service
11.30pm Midnight Mass
Friday 25 December Christmas Day

**St James's, Piccadilly W1J 9LL
Saturday 12 December 7.30pm**

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John Bassett
Pamela Greig

Charitable donations in 2009

Our annual programme of giving is funded by the profits from the Summer Fair, certain collections from services over Christmas and from Redcliffe Gardens Trust. Two charities, the Earl's Court Community Project, and the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza, will receive two thirds of the total available, and the remaining one third is distributed in smaller amounts among other local and international charities.

Last year we introduced a broader participation in the method by which charities are selected to receive donations by inviting application from members of the congregation. It is now time to make suggestions for 2009. Please complete the application form available from return it to the Parish Office by Sunday 29 November 2009. Applications received after that date will not be considered.

External Giving Programmes work best when there is a wide understanding of the way the programme works and broad support for the charities receiving funds from it. Over the last year we have tried to ensure that there is feedback from charities supported; for example, there have been talks at the Thursday Lunches and we hope that this will continue. But this year as well as inviting applications, the Charities Committee is publishing a list of causes that have already come to its attention and that we could be supported. We have done this because the number of application received last year was not overwhelming, possibly because part of the giving from Redcliffe Gardens Trust is restricted to very local charities, and possibly because the criteria for the giving are narrowly drawn. We hope to give where our funds will make a difference, favouring work in unfashionable and unattractive areas, supporting those on the margins of society, undertaken by smaller organisations. The published list includes both local causes and international ones, which we feel come within these demanding criteria. More information about them is held available in a folder at the back of church. Even if you do not want to make an application, the Committee would find it very helpful to know which areas command support and if there are any areas listed that are less attractive. Please provide your feedback by filling in the comments section of an application form.

Possibilities already being considered by the Charities Committee include the following: The Mustard Seed Programme of the Church Urban Fund, Build Africa, Chelsea Estates Youth. World's End Under Fives, Fine Cell Work, Prisoners Abroad, International Centre for Nursing Ethics Human Rights Award.
Leo Fraser-Mackenzie

An Evening Looking at a Christian Response towards Global Warming and Climate Changing, with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams.

A small group of us from St. Mary's went to hear the Archbishop addressing a packed congregation in Southwark Cathedral. We listened with rapt attention and great respect and eagerness to what he had to say. He emphasized that the eco-system depends for its health on the recognition by people that they and all other creatures are interdependent. We as humans need to accept our responsibility to respect all life forms. This is key to an ethical perspective on creation. We need to look at our society's passion for material and economic growth to explore a more truly human or humane attitude towards the 'Good Life', which our God covenanted with his people. We are responsible for four different levels of thought and action: international government, national government, local government and ourselves as groups of individuals. The solutions for our way ahead are multiple and must be founded on a proper understanding of what constitutes reality. We also need to use our imagination, creativity and ingenuity to struggle with this enormous and essential challenge: to choose LIFE. God is committed to LIFE. This is a challenge that confronts every individual way.

There were two quotations included in Rowan Williams' lecture that struck me as particularly memorable. The first was from Martin Luther who said that, if he was to leave our world tomorrow, he would still plant trees. The second was from Karl Marx: 'Life is something to be lived, not owned'.

Clare Ziegler

Contributions for the December/January Clarion should be sent in to the church office by 23 November.