

# THE CLARION

The Magazine of The Parish of St Mary The Boltons

JULY/AUGUST 2010

## **Summer Holidays: Rest and Recreation**

Summer is well and truly upon us, and for many people, summer brings with it the prospect of holidays ahead, and perhaps memories of holidays past. Many are familiar with the historical roots of 'holiday' in 'Holy-days', the celebration of saints' days and the keeping of the Sabbath. Today the holiday is, I suspect even for Christians, very much a 'secular' matter and a time for pleasure, relaxation and a letting go of the normal regimes of life that keep us on track and up to speed. I suspect also that whether people want to plunge into a new city or country, or simply plunge into a pool and then lie on the beach, at the heart of hopes for a holiday is the hope that we will find rest in our chosen activity or inactivity.

This very human desire for need for rest is at the heart of the biblical concept of Sabbath, and perhaps we can understand the concept of 'the Sabbath' better by thinking first of rest, holidays and good 'time out'. The roots lie deep in the Old Testament, and at the heart of the first creation story in Genesis: 'And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.' If rest is seen in the Old Testament as important for Almighty God (and there is no suggestion that God rested because God was tired), and the Sabbath as rest for us that comes with a blessing from God, then perhaps we can see good and relaxing holidays as an important part of our Christian life: a simple and important blessing.

In our busy 24/7 lifestyle, with the loss of Sunday as a corporate time of rest, we have to work hard to carve out time and space to rest and to place ourselves in a different context and allow ourselves to be. The role of worship on the Sabbath is precisely about placing ourselves in a different context from the everyday busyness of life with all its stresses and demands. In worship we place ourselves into the context of God where we can re-orientate ourselves and find our true value and worth, and true rest and peace.

An idea of the Sabbath that some people find helpful is that it is a feast of 'enoughness': a time for all our striving after doing, having, getting 'more' to stop. The concept of sabbath encourages us to 'call time out', to say 'enough' and to attend to deeper things. While there is an important place for all our fruitful activity, our achieving and acquiring, these things do not define us, or have the ultimately important place in our lives. Life in God is where the deepest fulfilment of the human spirit is to be found, God is the source of genuine meaning, and putting ourselves in God's context is where true peace and rest are to be found. This is the importance of the sabbath as a time for worship, for finding our true rest in God.

So this summer, keep in touch with the thought that the opportunities we have for rest and recreation (whether a day or two or a week or two), are a blessing from God to be received and to be enjoyed. I suspect that it is when we are at rest that we are most likely to be in touch with ourselves and open to the touch of God.

*Ruth Lampard*

## **'...And in due course come to confirmation...'**

These words come from the commission towards the end of the baptism service and point forward to the next stage of the Christian journey. For many of us who have been baptised as children that means taking the promises made on our behalf by our parents and godparents, and making them our own. This conscious and formal commitment of faith is made by young people and adults at a confirmation service. However, the service is more than a simple declaration of faith. Confirmation is a sacrament, an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace, a profound acknowledgement of the presence of God at work in our lives. The Bishop prays 'Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit'.

At St Mary The Boltons we prepare young people over 12 and adults (there is no upper age limit!) in two separate courses of eight sessions in the autumn, and this year confirmation preparation sessions start in the week beginning 5 September (with times to be arranged). The confirmation

service will take place at St Paul's Cathedral on Saturday 6 November. If you would like to prepare for confirmation (or baptism), or simply to talk about it, please contact Ruth.

**Great Garden Adventure –  
Saturday 10 July**

Open your eyes to the nature under your nose for primary school children and parents. Storytelling by Roberto Lagnado, bughunt art and creativity in Bramham Gardens. Sessions start at 10.30; 11.00; 11.30. Book your space now! Venue: Bramham Gardens, SW5 0HF Tickets £2 from the Earl's Court Festival Office, 020 7370 0015

**Parish Outing to Salisbury,  
Saturday 17 July.**

Please sign up on the sheet at the back of the church if you would like to come. We will leave the church at 08.15am and return by 19.00. The cost of £25.00 is now due: please let Ruth or the parish office have your payment as soon as possible. Cheques should be made payable to St. Marys PCC.

**Text of sermon preached by  
Rev Dr Marsha Fowler on Sunday 6  
June 2010. Theme: Redemption**

A full Jewish Passover meal, a ritual meal called the Seder, is about four hours long, and filled with recitations, scripture, questions, symbolic foods, hymns, songs in Hebrew, and a wonderful meal in the middle. I love the songs of the Seder meal and particularly the thousand year old, upbeat song *Dayenu*. *Dayenu* can be translated as 'it would have been enough for us' or 'it would have been sufficient,' or 'it would have sufficed'. The song is about being grateful to God for all God's gifts to the Jewish people, including rescue from slavery, the gift of the Sabbath rest, the gift of the Torah by which God continues to be known. And had God given only one of the gifts, *Dayenu*, it would have been enough for us. Of the 15 stanzas, the first five sing of being freed from slavery, the next five describe God's miracles for the people, and the last five speak of the closeness to God that God gave to the people. These are the last five stanzas:

If He had given us the Sabbath, and had not brought us before Mount Sinai: *dayenu*.

If He had brought us before Mount Sinai, and had not given us the Torah: *dayenu*

If He had given us the Torah, and had not brought us into the land of Israel: *dayenu*

If He had brought us into the land of Israel, and had not given for us the Holy Temple: *dayenu*

Today's lection is about the God who is both creator and redeemer and whose redemption is excessive to the point of extravagance, and aggressively providential. And as Christians our own *dayenu* continues:

If God had given us the Holy Temple, and had not given us the Messiah: *dayenu*

If God had given us the Savior, and had not given us the Holy Spirit: *dayenu*

If God had given us the Holy Spirit, and had not given us the Scriptures: *dayenu*

If God had given us the Scriptures, and had not given us his Church: *dayenu*

If God had given us the Church, and had not given us one another in fellowship: *dayenu*.

If God had given us fellowship, and had not given us daily gifts of providence, redemption, and grace: *dayenu*

It would have been enough for us. It would have been enough for us but it was not enough for God whose redemptive action on our behalf is excessive. In today's Old Testament lection we find Elijah fleeing the unspeakably evil King of Israel, Ahab. Elijah lands in Zarephath of Sidon and is taken in by a Sidonian, i.e. a Canaanite/Phoenician woman, not an Israelite. She is not one who worships Yahweh of Israel as indicated by her reference to 'your God' in verse 12. She supplies Elijah with water willingly but balks at giving him the bread, the ingredients for which she has reserved for herself and her son in anticipation of their death by starvation in this drought-stricken land. Here Elijah performs his first miracle, the miracle of the never-emptying jars of flour and oil. If God had given the widow flour and oil for bread that they might never starve, *dayenu*. But her son dies. God, through Elijah, then revives her dead son and the woman recognizes and proclaims Elijah as the bearer of the word of the Lord.

In the Gospel passage we encounter a crowd of mourners in Nain at the city gate. A widow is weeping for she has lost her only son. Jesus is touched by her grief and tells her 'do not weep.' If Jesus had simply joined the mourners to comfort her, it would have been enough. But Jesus goes on to raise her son from the dead, then to give him back to her. The entire crowd sees this and glorifies God.

In the epistle passage we see Saul, the persecutor of the Church, intent on going to Jerusalem and destroying it. But he is diverted into Arabia and to

Damascus and only after three years does he go to Jerusalem. Between his intent to go to Jerusalem and his arrival there he encounters the risen Lord. Saul, *The one who formerly was persecuting us is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy* has now become Paul. In his redemption from sin, he is also re-routed both literally and figuratively. Had he simply turned from violently persecuting the faith to belief, it would have been enough for us. But instead he becomes zealous for the faith and reaches out to the world in Christ Jesus' name.

The influence of the Latin tradition of the church leads us to think of redemption as a deliverance from sin. But redemption is far more expansive than that. Yes, it is deliverance from sin, and suffering, and death; but it is also (as emphasized by the Greek tradition) a restoration to the divine life, to an experience of the transforming effects of grace in our lives, a drawing closer to God. And it is a part of God's providence. In each of these narratives, the individuals experience redemption in the first sense and they might have said, *dayenu*. But they also experienced the transformative nature of grace and what it means to live within the divine in their redemption – and we see their recognition of this in their praise of God.

Had we simply been redeemed from our sins, once for all, it would have been enough for us. But daily we find God eager for 'grace to rise to the very neck of our souls (Theresa of Ávila), that moment-by-moment we might be transformed, redeemed, and drawn closer to God in a continuing gift of redemption (and that we might proclaim God's glory).

*Dayenu*, it is enough. The problem is, we humans, we Christians, we settle for what is 'enough' for us. What is enough for us is not enough for God. We simply do not ask enough of God so that God might respond in extravagant measure. As outrageous as providence is, as outrageous as redemption is, as outrageous as grace is, so should our requests of God be. The more we ask of God the more God delights in responding to us, the more we draw nigh to God, and the more we ask of God, the more immoderate God is in bestowing grace. Our God does not settle for enough; neither should we. Ask and ye shall receive for it is in the asking and the receiving that we experience, again and again, the excessiveness of our redemption.

*Marsha Fowler*

## **Spring Art Exhibition – St Mary the Boltons**

The parish of St Mary the Boltons has long been known for its community of fine artists. This tradition was successfully upheld in the Spring Exhibition of Art held at the Church in June of this year. Over eighty works of art were displayed in the nave, south and north transepts of the Church, and the result was an exciting combination of creativity with a variety of style, colour and texture. The exhibition opened on the evening of June 17<sup>th</sup> with a well attended and successful preview. Ginny Thomas, the Parish Priest of St Mary the Boltons, gave a warm welcome to all the guests, who included the Lord Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea, his wife, parishioners, the artists, family and friends. It fell to Richard Smith, artist and illustrator, to open the exhibition, after which the artists and guests relaxed in the convivial atmosphere of the evening.

This successful combination of Church and art came together to provide not only an opportunity to enjoy the artwork, but also to welcome friends old and new to St Mary the Boltons. A special thank you must surely go to Ginny for allowing and supporting the exhibition and also to the artists who shared so generously of their creativity and talent.

*Ann Mulcare*

## **Summer Fair**

A big thank you is owed to all members of the congregation who helped make this year's Summer Fair a wonderful success as always.

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> June was a dry, though not terribly warm day, and by ten o'clock in the morning work was well underway in the north garden (by kind permission of the Boltons Gardens Association). Stalls needed setting up with tables, chairs and gazebos and many deliveries kept coming in. Volunteers turned out in good number to help with the pricing of goods, setting up stalls and organising raffle prizes etc.

As usual curious visitors started approaching from late morning onwards, but we just about managed to keep to our formal opening time of 2pm, announced by the ringing of the church bells.

The fair provided plenty of entertainment for children, adults and the young at heart. Children's delights included the Sunday School stall, coconut shy, treasure island and face painting. For adults there was the book stall, plant stall, bric-a-brac and some excellent prizes in both the raffle and silent auction. The BBQ, Pimms tent and Krispy Kreme

donuts kept hunger away on what was a very happy afternoon with a lively atmosphere aided by the ever popular visiting band.

The organisers would like to sincerely thank everyone who participated in the fair, especially those who manned stalls, came early to set up or stayed late to take down.

Initial calculations show that the fair has made over £3,500 profit for this year's two charities, The Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza and the Earls Court Community Project. Thank you to all those came, brought friends and made donations.

*Katrina Quinton & Joanna Hackett*

## **A successful Summer Fair but what happens to the money raised ?**

The short answer is: the money goes into our charitable giving fund, the Charities Pot.

**Q** What is the Charities Pot ?

**A** The Charities Pot is the fund in which we gather all the money we raise for charitable purposes and that we give away each year. A lot of this money comes from the Summer Fair, but it also comes from

1 Loose collections at the Carol Service, and from the Crib Service on Christmas Eve. (Loose collections do not include amounts in planned giving envelopes received at any of these services.)

2 Surplus from the Coffee Fund.

3 Other Parish fund raising efforts, such as the bookstall.

4 The Ground Rent from 11 Redcliffe Gardens, currently £5,000 pa

**Q** What charities are supported by our charitable giving?

**A** In 2010 one third of the total raised will be given to the Earls Court Community Project, one third to the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza, and the following charities will receive a share of the remaining third: The International Centre for Nursing Ethics, Gogos Support Group, Earls Court Community Trust, Worlds End Under 5s, and Chelsea Estates Youth.

**Q** How are these charities selected?

**A** The PCC make a final decision on recommendation proposed by the Charities Committee. Usually we have made a two-year commitment to the main charities that we support, but at the beginning of this year the PCC decided to support in 2010 the same charities as we supported last year. This was done so that we can follow best practice in charitable fundraising and always announce in advance what charities we are raising funds for.

**Q** When will decisions be made about beneficiaries from our 2011 fund raising activities?

**A** During September we will be asking for nominations and a final decision will be made by the PCC in November. We are looking for a mix of very local and international charities that are generally very small and where our funds can make a difference. We also like to have some feedback from the organisations that we support. So you must be prepared to be actively involved in the process. Full details of the selection process will be published in the September Clarion.

*Leo Fraser-Mackenzie*

## **Farm Sunday**

Climate change, population growth, resource depletion, rising input costs, globalisation of markets – whatever your view on any one of these important issues, Rev Sarah Brown, speaker at the 10.30 service on Farm Sunday 13 June left us in no doubt about their combined effect on 21<sup>st</sup> century agriculturists: farmers in more ordinary language. This perfect storm of issues has a very real effect on their daily life and work. There is a hidden but very real crisis in farming today, where social isolation and financial difficulties cause stress to both the business of farming and to farming households, shown most poignantly by the high rate of suicide among farmers. Farm Crisis Network, the charity of which Sarah is Executive Director, aims to help farming people through difficult times. This was a stimulating sermon, with a quart of issues pushed into the normal pint sized sermon slot. Slicing an apple in front of us on the pulpit, our preacher demonstrated graphically that just one thirty-second (just over 3%) of the world's surface is available to cultivate to support a still rapidly growing global population. She left us with the question of who will be the 21<sup>st</sup> century Joseph. The story of Joseph is told in Genesis 37-50. For me, another practical but nonetheless relevant question arose that day: what to do with that sliced up apple that I spotted in Sarah's hand as she was leaving with her two children on their way back to Northampton. Rubbish to be discarded or valuable food not to be wasted? Answers to the Editor or to me.

*Leo Fraser-Mackenzie*

## **Green Group Top Tip for July and August**

Earlier this year one member of our group met a tree surgeon who was pruning the big Plane Trees in The Boltons Gardens. He reckoned that the tree by the entrance to the Church would be about 150 years old and so probably planted when the Church was newly built. It's lovely to think of the Church and the tree as being of the same age, watching generations of worshippers come and go.

London Planes make a huge difference to our city as they are the most common tree in London. They provide a lovely dappled shade in the summer and increase humidity, they absorb CO<sub>2</sub> and air pollution through their leaves, they will drink up rain water, easing our drainage system, they absorb sound and reduce noise pollution. The bark, which absorbs air pollution and CO<sub>2</sub> drops off and is absorbed into the ground. They are tolerant of harsh city life: they cope with air pollution, compacted soil, life under pavements and do not mind being regularly pruned.

Our top tip for July and August is to appreciate the trees in the streets and squares, and especially the London Plane.

*Ruth Lampard*

## **Dates for your diary:**

**Wednesday 13 October: 19.00**

**Institution and Induction of Ginny as Vicar of St Mary The Boltons**

More details in September *Clarion*

**Wednesday 20 October: 20.00-21.30**

**An evening with Jeff Randall at St. Mary The Boltons**

Jeff Randall, the award winning journalist, presenter of 'Jeff Randall live on Sky News' and The Daily Telegraph's Editor at large commenting on British business, will talk and answer questions on the current state of the British economy and what the future might hold. This is a fund raising event for St. Mary's with tickets at £20 each, to include a glass of wine and other refreshments.

## **Memories of St Mary's... but where do I start?**

As I will be leaving St Mary's shortly to move to America to join my husband who is working there, I asked Ginny whether I could capture some of my memories in the *Clarion* as a sort of farewell and to give me the opportunity to thank so many people for giving me and my family such a sense of belonging over the years.

I started coming to the church with my daughter Sophia when she was five years old, to attend the Sunday school, then run by the wonderful Sara Bossom who welcomed Sophia into the fold and is still today in touch with her. My mission was just to bring Sophia to church each Sunday (as my church attendance had very much lapsed since leaving my convent school, although my faith was still there), but to my amazement I found that I started to enjoy coming to the services, and especially the warmth of Gerald Beauchamp and the congregation. So when

Sunday school was on holiday break, I found myself still attending, much to my husband Martin's surprise. I encouraged him to move over from St Stephen's Gloucester Road, and before we knew it, we were all attending regularly. I met Simon Gibson and then joined the choir, and Martin and I have had various duties over the years, from the PCC, to the Summer Fair, lesson readers and sidespeople. Such an interesting variety of roles, all of which brought us closer to the community of the church and hopefully to God.

Rather than go through a chronological list of events over the last 13 years, I thought I would pick out some memorable 'gems' about people and incidents that some of you may also remember:

Bee Spicer: how can we ever forget her ginger cake and marmalade! I think that this was the main reason why my father liked coming to the church when he was down for the weekend, and just to have a laugh with Bee and eat her produce. She adored my dog Lucky as she had had Shelties previously and always liked him sitting on her lap.

Aida: her welcome (and her wonderful coloured nails) to the choir after we had sung carols at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. She always had a smile and a laugh; she was such fun!

Alice Lidderdale: such fond memories of Alice. Especially when I 'interviewed' her for an article in the *Clarion* years ago, in a series about members of the congregation and she told me all about her life in the theatre, in Stage Management, and her experiences through the war. Despite her age she was a girl in her mind and was such a delight.

Vera Sloane: I met Vera at one of Gerald's pancake parties. She told me that when she had prematurely lost her husband she was in despair. Somebody recommended the book 'The Power of Positive Thinking' by Vincent Peale and it changed her life. At that time I was in a pretty dark place, having been made redundant yet again. I bought the book and to this day I think of Vera as it also changed my life. We became good friends.

Dorothy Coleman and Dorothy Patrick: both such class acts! I was terrified when I first encountered Dorothy Coleman as a fellow sidesperson as she was so ultra efficient, having been a head mistress, but she was such a warm person once you got to know her. Dorothy Patrick – she always reminds me of a 'weeble': always bounces straight back up when knocked down (well when she has fallen down) and Dorothy certainly does that every time!

Ann and Arthur Tait: what dear people they are and they have been such friends. They both have helped me through the last two years with Martin over 3,000 miles away.

Summer Fair: the funniest memory is of the year that the committee on which I sat decided to have Morris Dancers as an act, and the only troupe that was available was a ladies one. Not daunted, Gerald and Simon Gibson hired them, but when they arrived in black leather on their motor bikes, there was a shudder of apprehension! Nonetheless, they performed very well and were a great success.

The children: I never thought I was any good with young children so when Ginny and Ruth asked me to help with singing with the Sunday School I was pretty apprehensive. Yet, God works in mysterious ways, and to my astonishment I loved it and found the children so fresh and alive. Then to be asked to 'direct' the nativity play last year; I really thought Ginny had truly lost it. I talked to her about my misgivings but we agreed that I would have a go. A book that comes to mind over this, which is worth reading, is *Feel the Fear and do it anyway* by Susan Jeffers. The title says it all and it is a great read. Anyway I so loved the madness, chaos and joy of the Nativity Play. Thank you to the two Janes for all their support and to my daughter Sophia for being the accompanist.

The choir: what a hoot I've had! Right from the auditions with Simon Gibson, and then him encouraging me to sing solo for the first time in my life as a cantor. Memories of Audrey and Malcolm (Malcolm always telling me off for tapping my foot to keep in time and telling me that what you do is tap your toes within your shoes!). And of course to all the other members for their tolerance. Finally to Graham. Thank you.

The death of my father and brother:- my memories would not be complete without a heartfelt thanks to all the people who got me through the death of my father and especially my brother. Particular thanks to Gerald Beauchamp and Anne Swift. God bless you.

I am sorry that I could not name everybody – wonderfully there are too many – but you are all in my thoughts. I do hope to see some of you Stateside one day! All the very best  
*Samantha Smith*

## **Franciscan Tertiaries at St Mary's**

(This is the second of a series of contributions by Franciscan Tertiaries in the congregation of St Mary the Boltons)

Hugh Beach writes:

Towards the end of World War II I was posted to the Land Forces Headquarters in Kandy (Ceylon) and Singapore. The head of my branch was a sapper major called James Fenwick, a man of remarkable gifts, as well-read in English literature as in astronomy, as competent in the kitchen as on a building site. He was also a convinced, devout and persuasive Christian. In the course of long walks he sought to persuade me of the compelling rationality of such arcane concepts as the substitution theory of the atonement. Never mind that: it was his forceful personality coupled with his evident conviction that got me going; from rather lukewarm public school religion to a determination to go for sainthood!

The next year I was back at Cambridge, reading mechanical sciences, and immersing myself in most of the available brands of Christian enthusiasm: the Christian Union, Student Christian Movement, mission to fruit-pickers and of course college chapel. James soon appeared on the scene, himself by now determined to leave the army and to become an Anglican Franciscan Friar. He introduced me to the friary, a Victorian mansion on Lady Margaret Road inhabited by such striking figures as Frs. Dennis Marsh and Michael Fisher (later bishop of St Germans). I attended occasional services and retreats at the friary, and made Easter visits to the mother-house at Cerne Abbas (now called Hilfield). There I met Father Algy, the Founder of the Society of Saint Francis and a famous eccentric. Bird-like and charismatic – like Saint Francis – he preached about wild flowers and the origins of best loved hymns.

In my last term at Cambridge, having been defeated in an effort to leave the army and train for ordination, I was summoned to Lady Margaret Road where Fr. Algy invited me to become a member of the Third Order of the Society, a body which he himself had created with the help of a formidable lady called Dorothy Swain. I agreed eagerly and was duly made a novice at Francistide (4 October) 1949. Meanwhile I attended a meeting of a tertiary house group at Peckham Rye and on the way home was joined by a young medical student also going to Victoria. The acquaintance blossomed (if rather slowly on my side) and a year or so later we became engaged. We were invited to attend upon Dorothy Swain at her house in Wokingham and apparently passed muster; at all events we got

married in 1951, being the first pair of tertiaries to do so.

A few weeks later I was professed. My novitiate had been guided by another friar, Fr. Lothian Sumner. He had been my fiancée's spiritual director before I knew her and told us once that he had been praying for us together long before we became engaged. Lothian was a quiet, understated man, diffident to a fault. 'I think' he once said 'that I could just bring myself to say I believe in God'. His sense of humour was dry, and he was greatly pained by clumsy use of English. The rule of life that I wrote under his guidance has served me ever since.

Our married life began at Chatham: my wife was a house physician at All Saints hospital and myself a teacher of mathematics at the School of Military Engineering. The Third Order in those days was a select body, only about 400 strong countrywide, mainly consisting of ladies in the caring professions (often clergy wives) with a smattering of priests and very few laymen. It was not exactly a secret society but was certainly a reticent one. The manual was classified as 'Confidential' and only senior friars, or other church people closely connected to them, were expected to invite newcomers to join. There was an annual meeting, normally at St. Margaret's Westminster, at which several brothers would speak, followed by what was elegantly known as 'tea and *conversazione*'. Other gatherings were rare.

The Army stipulated that, in exchange for the three years at Cambridge, I must serve for another five years before they would release me. When the five years were up I had already fathered two offspring, graduated from the Staff College, and been posted to the operations branch in the War Office. With mounting responsibilities this was the wrong time to quit. Successive postings took us to Germany, Kenya and the Ministry of Defence, interspersed with tours at the Staff College and Cambridge and Edinburgh Universities. As each new job came up - and it was always an interesting and demanding one - I kidded myself that I would do just this one more and then retire, but until my time ran out (aged 58) I never did. Nor have I any regrets.

By the mid-1970s the Third Order started to expand, largely due to the work of another Friar called Br. Edward, a priest with a genius for friendship. Twenty years later the Order was over 2000 strong and had developed a strong sense of its own identity as an Order, largely independent of the Friars. While I was in the army my connection with it had been somewhat episodic, and sadly my wife decided to resign from the Order, due entirely to the ham-fistedness of the Brother who received our annual reports. This set her free to rib me mercilessly about my failure to live by the

Franciscan Rule, particularly the commitment to poverty, which was difficult to reconcile with the life-style of a general!

After leaving the army I became warden of the Christian conference centre in Windsor Castle for five years, running courses for the clergy and attending every service in St. George's Chapel. Brother Edward catapulted me into the upper echelons of the Third Order, serving as a Regional Guardian and as Assistant to the Minister Provincial. These stints completed, I sank gratefully back into the rank and file, where I have served ever since. Saint Francis was much concerned with issues of war and peace. I turned my attention to the subject of arms control. It is obvious that the world spends far more on its armed forces and armaments than it can afford; the figure for NATO alone in 2008 was over one trillion dollars. The logical way to attack this problem is by negotiating force reductions, while increasing trust between the parties, if not by treaty then by mutually reinforcing unilateral reductions. The 1980s and 1990s were to see a rich crop of such agreements and the momentum has now picked up again with the arrival of President Obama. To begin with I directed a small organisation called the Council for Arms Control. For the last twenty years I have acted as a freelance writer, lecturer, broadcaster and preacher mainly on nuclear arms control, human security and the principles of the Just War.

As things have turned out, my membership of the Church of England has become more a matter of loyalty to an institution than of a search for sainthood. But underlying it has been membership of the Third Order as kind of *Cantus Firmus* or ground bass. In old age I am able to spend much more time in private prayer (dare I call it contemplation - probably it is more like dozing) and I have become more aware of life as a succession of daily miracles, and cause for thanksgiving. Sixty years as a member of the Third Order is one of the things I am most grateful for.

*Hugh Beach*

**Contributions for the September Clarion should be sent in to the church office by 23 August.**