

THE CLARION

The Magazine of The Parish of St Mary The Boltons

FEBRUARY 2012

Mindfulness and Lent

In Lent 2012 we may not find much coverage in contemporary public life and debate of the Christian disciplines of prayer and fasting. It is interesting to contrast this silence with the positive coverage in papers and open advertisement in secular institutions, such as public libraries, of the practice of 'mindfulness', which stems from Buddhist life and thought. These are often falsely placed in opposition to one another: mindfulness as a liberating practice, the discipline of prayer as an external imposition of duty. Both can be liberating and both require discipline.

Taking 'mindfulness' as an approach towards Lent may be a means by which we can talk to friends and neighbours about what it is we are seeking to do this Lent, and be a conversation 'opener', rather than a conversation stopper.

Prayer and mindfulness

There are many ways to pray, and our Lent course, informed by John Rogerson's *The Art of Biblical Prayer* will explore some ways of praying with the bible, and our quiet morning at St Mary The Boltons on Saturday 17 March will be an opportunity to try a variety of ways of praying. For me, the heart of prayer is cultivating a real sense of the presence of God – not just in principle, but in reality – in our everyday lives. Some of the intuitions of the Buddhist practice of mindfulness – of attention to breathing, simply being present, here and now – chime for me with some of the great Christian classical writers on prayer. For St Teresa of Avila, in prayer 'the soul collects its faculties together and enters within itself to be with its God', the soul is 'centered there within itself.' In today's multitasking world, which demands that our attention is split in many directions all at once, cultivating a still centre is vital. Each of us will need different ways to get to that still centre, and I commend the Lent course and the quiet morning here at St Mary The Boltons on Saturday 17 March, as ways to be mindful in prayer this Lent.

Eating and mindfulness

I wonder if being 'mindful of what we eat' may be a helpful way to approach what we might choose to do this Lent in terms of our food. Being mindful of what we eat is also about being mindful of our bodies – of distinguishing between the food and drink that truly feeds us, and the food and drink that stimulates us, but is ultimately not so good for us – and taking our bodies seriously as gifts from God to be nurtured and cared for. Giving up chocolate or alcohol for Lent may help us to be mindful of our bodies, of the effect of these foods on us, mindful of the strength of our desire for 'treats', even for what we know is not so good for us. In some senses it is a simple noting, being aware of our bodies, our cravings and the impact of what we eat, which in turn may lead us to reflection and long term change.

Shopping and mindfulness

Mindfulness is not just an inward-looking gaze – it is outward looking too – being intentional and purposeful in our daily activity. Lent is also about being aware of and alert to the impact of our decisions and our lives on the lives of those around us. The hidden life of prayer impacts on our 'outward' day to day lives: love of God and love of neighbour go hand in hand. The Fairtrade movement is a simple example of how mindfulness in our daily shopping can have a huge impact on the lives of people far away. Fairtrade fortnight (27 February to 11 March) celebrates the way in which the lives of farmers and their communities are transformed by people who buy their Fairtrade produce, eg tea, coffee and cocoa. Farmers get a fair wage for their work and their communities get schools and education and a hopeful future for their children. We are celebrating Fairtrade fortnight on Sundays over coffee with a Fairtrade cake sale, and cup cake icing and Fair Trade Coffee tasting. If you fancy baking a Fairtrade cake, recipes will be available from the back of Church!

Celebration and mindfulness

It is important to be mindful of and to mark achievements. The Diocese of London has become a Fairtrade Diocese, as over half of the Churches have committed to be Fairtrade Churches, as we have. To celebrate this, the Diocese is holding a special service at St Paul's Cathedral on Sunday 11 March at 6.0pm, when Dr Harriet Lamb will present the Fairtrade Diocese certificate to the Bishop of London. Put the date in your diary and let John in the office know that you can join Ginny and me on the day.

Ruth Lampard

Taizé Service

The next Taizé service is on Thursday 2 February at 7.30pm.

For more information about Taizé go to <http://www.taize.fr/en>

Lent Course 2012: Exploring Prayer

The Lent course this year is called 'Exploring Prayer' and will be based on John Rogerson's book *The Art of Biblical Prayer* (published by SPCK). Professor Rogerson is Emeritus Professor of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield, and Canon Emeritus of Sheffield Cathedral. Rogerson writes that many people think of prayer primarily as petition or intercession where we take the initiative, rather than understanding that prayer is God's gift through which God's grace is worked. His book has been described by John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford, as 'an anchor' that will 'encourage anyone trying to pray or to pray more realistically.'

In order to encourage a greater depth of discussion, groups will be limited to 10 participants. Discussion groups will be offered as follows:

- On Sunday mornings following the service from 12noon to 1.0pm in the Upper Hall on 26 February, 4 March, 11 March, 18 March, and 25 March
- On Monday evenings at Dorothy Patrick's from 7.0pm to 8.30pm on 27 February, 5 March, 12 March, 19 March and 26 March

- On Wednesday mornings at Katrina Quinton's from 10.30am to 12noon on 29 February, 7 March, 14 March, 21 March and 28 March
- On Wednesday evenings following the Eucharist at 7.30pm in the Upper Hall on 29 February, 7 March, 14 March, 21 March and 28 March.

If you would like to take part in one of the groups you will need to buy the book. If you sign up for the course **before 10 February** (when the order will be placed) we will order a copy of the book for you (cost £9.99). **If you sign up after that date you will be responsible for buying your own copy.**

In addition to the course there will be a 'Quiet Morning of Prayer' at St Mary's on Saturday 17 March from 9.30am to 12.30pm when there will be an opportunity to learn about and pray in different ways such as *lectio divina*, with icons or pictures, or with poetry or other texts.

During Lent Ruth and I will be available to anyone who would like a 'Spiritual MOT' to talk about their personal prayer life.

As an introduction to the course, the Revd Ann Coleman, Director elect of the North Thames Ministerial Training Course and Assistant Dean of St Mellitus College, will be preaching on Sunday 12 February. The title of her sermon is 'Prayer – an exercise? an experience? an encounter?'

The course aims to be both interesting and challenging and will, I hope, encourage us all in our life of prayer, which is vital to our faith and so to our personal lives, our life at St Mary's and beyond. Ruth and I very much hope that the course will appeal to many of you and will be well attended.

Ginny Thomas

Parish Lunch

The next Parish Lunch will be on Sunday 5 February. If you would like to attend please put your name on the sign up sheet at the back of the church.

Thursday 9 February 11.45
Eucharist followed by the
Thursday Lunch at 12.30

Our speaker this month will be John McVeigh, parish administrator at St Mary's. The title of the talk is 'Life in the office and behind the scenes at St Mary's. If you would like to attend, please put your name on the sign-up sheet at the back of the church.

Pancake Day



On Tuesday 21 February there will be the annual Pancake Party at the vicarage from 7.30-9.0pm. If you would like to attend, please put your name on the sign-up sheet at the back of the church.

Fairtrade Fortnight:
27 February - 11 March 2012

The Fairtrade fortnight will give us the opportunity to promote Fairtrade in the Church and community.

On Sunday 4 March, after Church, there will be a Fairtrade cake sale and cupcake icing competition for young and old, with prizes for best decorated cakes. Below is a link for recipes for Fairtrade cakes or recipes sheets are available at the back of church. On Sunday 11 March there will be a Fairtrade coffee tasting.

Fairtrade is not just for Fairtrade Fortnight. We will need to keep telling the story. Please do join us in supporting Fairtrade in the parish, but also as a world wide venture that supports Christian values.



For more information about Fairtrade please go to www.fairtrade.org.uk/products/recipes.aspx

Women's World Day of Prayer

You are invited to the international Women's World Day of Prayer (WWDP), which takes place on Friday, 2 March at 11.00 a.m. at Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Street. This year's

program has been prepared by Christian women in Malaysia. They have chosen the theme: 'Let Justice Prevail'. A wave of prayer sweeps the world on this day, with 170 countries taking part and more than 6,000 services being held in the British Isles alone.

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. Its people come from Indian, Chinese and indigenous Malaysian backgrounds. Malaysia is one of the wealthiest and most developed countries in South East Asia, but it also attracts many migrants from all parts of Asia. Human trafficking has become a sophisticated and organised operation.

Women have made important contributions to its social and economic development but, nevertheless, they still face discrimination and violence at all levels of society. Even today a girl child is seen as less valuable than a boy. Worship is permitted but proselytizing is not.

It is a great privilege for me to represent our congregation on that special day as a member of the Kensington and Chelsea branch of WWDP.

The service lasts approximately one hour and is followed by light refreshments. The Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea is usually in attendance. <http://www.worlddayofprayer.net/>
Anne Swift

Planned Giving Programme 2011

Many thanks to everyone who responded so positively and generously to our Planned Giving Programme which we held last autumn through which we received an additional £22,390 towards our annual budget. Of that amount £10,905 came in one-off donations, and £11,485 was received in new and increased pledges. This is a good result, especially in these very difficult economic times and I am very grateful to everyone who helped to make the programme a success.

We are still waiting for some responses to come in and the above figures are likely to change, although not substantially. It should also be remembered that the amounts do not include Gift Aid, which will be applicable to most but not all the money promised and received.

I am also extremely grateful to those who have continued to maintain their annual pledges; they continue play a very important part in the income we receive.

Our finances are kept under regular review by me, the Treasurer, the Church Wardens and members of the PCC. Over recent months it has become clear that the planned giving programme needs to be ongoing and highlighted each autumn in order to sustain St Mary's and our life of worship, mission and ministry.

I would like to thank Mark Nichols, Leo Fraser Mackenzie, Ann Mulcare, Timon Molloy and John Barker who all worked hard to devise and run the programme, and also Gesa Stolting who helped with the layout and design of materials.

Two parish events were held to coincide with the programme; a Quiz Night in October and a St Nicholas Sunday lunch in December. Both events were very well supported and greatly enjoyed. Many thanks to all who came and to all who helped, especially Joanna Hackett, Margarete Geier, Sheila Gibbs and Raymond Kyle.

Ginny Thomas

Upcoming Dates for your Diary

February

Sunday 5, Parish Lunch, 12.30pm

Thursday 9, Thursday Lunch Club, 12.30pm

Tuesday 21, Pancake Party, 7.30-9pm

Wednesday 22, Ash Wednesday service
7.00pm

Thursday 23, 2.30-4.00pm Time for Tea

March

Sunday 4, Parish Lunch 12.30pm

Thursday 8, Thursday Lunch 12.30pm

Sunday 18, Mothering Sunday, All Age
Worship

Thursday 22, 2.30-4.00pm Time for Tea

April

Sunday 1, Palm Sunday

Holy Week begins

Monday 2, 7.30pm Taizé Service

Tuesday 3, 12 noon Eucharist

Wednesday 4, 7.00pm Eucharist

Thursday 5, Maundy Thursday

10.30am, Blessing of oils at St Paul's Cathedral

7.30pm Sung Eucharist followed by Vigil

Friday 6, Good Friday

10.30am Children's Service

12.0-3.00pm, Three Hours Service

Saturday 7, Easter Eve

8.00pm Vigil Service

Sunday 8, Easter Day

8.00am Said Eucharist

10.30am Sung Parish Eucharist

Sunday 22, Annual Parochial Church

Meeting, 12 noon

Thursday 17 May

6.30pm Dedication of Craigie Aitchison
Window

Sunday 3 June

Jubilee Lunch

Thursday 14 June

Opening of the 2012 Art Exhibition

Saturday 16 June, Summer Fair

Thursday Lunch Meeting Report: 8 December: Remembrance of Christmases Past

We were entertained by three sets of recollections at the monthly lunch.

Anita Dowbiggin spoke of having lived in Buenos Aires for the first 13 years of her life.

Christmas Dinner was in the evening, with all the usual trimmings, and crackers.

Anita remembered going with one of her sisters to friends who had a farm in the country and sitting outside at long tables under the stars.

Dorothy Patrick moved to Cambridge on the day the First World War broke out and she and her brother were taken to King's College Chapel for the Christmas Eve carol service.

A Christmas memory is of the St Thomas' Hospital Nativity play of about 1946. Her elder daughter was an angel 'playing' a trumpet. The younger daughter was one of four cherubs who were kneeling in adoration, one at each end and one at each side of the crib. She suddenly turned round, still on her knees, looking a bit anxious and searching the audience with her eyes looking for her mother.

Margarete Geier's recollections are of three Christmases in Schlesien during the war. All these Christmases were without Christmas trees, but with candles. Lit by candlelight, the service could start when the family arrived, as they had to walk about 2km through deep snow. The Priest was her uncle, an aunt the Cantor and another uncle the Organist. The Choir was the rest of the relations.

John Barker

Clothes for Earls Court Community Project

The Earl's Court Community Project would particularly appreciate donations of: men's clothes (size L to XXL); women's clothes (size L to XL) and winter gear, i.e. gloves, scarves, hats, thick socks and coats, and toiletries such as soap, razors, shaving foam, toothbrushes, toothpaste. For more information go to <http://www.eccp-ywam.org.uk/>

Remember the Crib Service?

On Christmas Eve, when London has fallen silent, we have our Crib service. The church blazes with light, the decorations glitter on the Christmas tree, and outside in the darkness, the houses opposite are magical with twinkling lights. Families make their way to our Crib service.

It starts for me with Ginny's concerned face, then a crush of children all wanting to dress up as a nativity figure; all girls want to be angels, boys are never sure about any of it and the really little ones just bumble about while their mothers rummage.

No matter how early you think you are, someone is usually waiting by the costumes. 'She would love to be Mary', then at the last moment you realise you are short of shepherds, a quick wander around the church 'would you like to dress up?' 'No!' 'Go on darling it'll be fun!' says a parent. I come back with more angels!

By now the pushchairs are parked hither and thither, the children are hopping about, unable

to keep still or keep quiet. Ruth is standing at the back next to the plaster nativity figures, Ginny is at the front, David's eyes are watchful, and Marguerite is hidden away in a pew with the happiest smile you ever saw in your life!

Suddenly it starts: A welcome, and the next thing you know, Graham is playing and carols are being sung, the Nativity story is told, and when their turn comes, the children fetch a plaster figure to carry it up the aisle, often by the throat, to be helped, by a relieved adult to place it in the manger box. They then remain on the stage gazing out at the congregation, in a dream.

This year saw an minor altercation between the star and an angel, the angel obviously thought the star needed guiding in some way and kept getting off her step to remonstrate with the star, both of them leaving the stage to vanish down the aisle. They were only three years old, and as I latter realised twins. Back they came and it continued during the prayers, right next to Ginny. What was being said?

When the service was finished none of the children left the stage, they just stayed sitting there, when usually they are so keen to be off home. The adults were happy to leave them be, while they had a glass of the Challinor's delicious mulled wine.

Then we packed away the costumes until next year, before stepping out into the dark twinkling night. The Service is always very lively and increasingly well attended. We don't know who most of these families are, but I am starting to recognise some who come every year to our Crib service.

Jane Dass Sunday School

Remember the Christmas Nine Lessons and Carols Service?

The annual Christmas Nine Carols Service took place at St Mary's on Sunday 11 December at 7.00 p.m. Ginny took the service, aided by Ruth. The church was full, with people seated in the South Transept. It looked beautiful with wonderful flower decorations. Director of Music, Graham Caldbeck had prepared a musical feast to complement the readings, prayers and worship. The professional choir

comprised two each of sopranos, altos, tenors and basses, and Richard Pearce played the organ. The Readings were taken from the King James version of the Bible to mark its first publication four hundred years ago.

Organ voluntaries set the scene before the start of the service, and provided a splendid conclusion at the end. As the service started, candles were lit for each member of the congregation, creating a lovely intimate worshipful setting; for many a welcome change from the overly party atmosphere, which some had brought into the church earlier. The nine lessons came from Genesis, Isaiah, Luke, Matthew and John, and were read very well by various members of the congregation.

The choir sang eleven carols, some familiar like 'In Dulci Jubilo' and 'The Holly and the Ivy', and some new to most of those present, including two exceptionally fine contemporary carols created by composers still living. A further eight carols were sung by the full congregation, all familiar and popular, including 'Once in royal David's city', and 'While Shepherds watched their flocks by night', 'In the bleak midwinter', and 'Hark the herald angels sing'.

After the service refreshments, including wine and mince pies, were served in the North Transept, helping to provide a lovely start for many people to the Christmas season.

As we left I heard people commenting that it was one of the best, or the best of the Carol Services they had attended at St Mary's. I agree with those who thought it was the best.

Arthur Tait.

The Tables of the Moneychangers

The antics of the 'Occupy' movement forced themselves on the consciences of the Church of England when, denied use of Paternoster Square outside the London Stock Exchange, they pitched their tents on the West Steps of St Paul's Cathedral. Posters were quick to appear asking 'Whose side is Jesus on?' Almost the first episode in Jesus' ministry, as recorded in St. John's Gospel, bears on this point. 'And the Passover of the Jews was near and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And he found in the temple the sellers of oxen and sheep and

doves and the changers of money sitting. And having made a scourge of small cords he drove them all out of the temple, both the sheep and oxen; and he poured out the changers' money and overthrew the tables' (John 2: 13-15, KJB). This was a clear challenge to the Temple authorities. The high priests insisted that the Temple dues should be paid in Jewish coins – not the Roman coins stamped with the image of a heathen emperor – and provided an exchange for the convenience of worshippers. They also provided a market selling the animals needed for sacrifice. These 'booths of Annas' were hated, but they had the sanction of long custom and were certainly not illegal. The 'scourge of small cords' was an offensive weapon, if a rather feeble one. Jesus' action was a violent demonstration, clearly illegal, and designed as a direct provocation to the priestly ruling class.



As told by St Mark, this episode took place at the end of Jesus' ministry and led directly to the decision by the authorities to do away with him, as he clearly intended. 'And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and sought a way to destroy him; for they feared him because all the multitude was astonished at his teaching' (Mark 21:13-16, and also in Luke 19:47). The story of the Cleansing of the Temple is not only well-attested (only St Matthew omits it) but records a crucial turning point in the whole passion narrative. One could say that, from this point onwards, Jesus' fate was sealed and by his own deliberate act. Why then did he do it?

The explanation given by St. John, as fulfilment of prophecy, is unconvincing to our ears: 'His disciples remembered that it is written "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up"' (John 2:17, quoting Psalm 69:9). Jesus' own explanation is much more to the point: 'Is it not written "My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? But you have made it a den of thieves"' (Mark 11:17 quoting Jeremiah 7:11). As William Temple points out, the money-changers and the live-stock dealers were doing nothing illegal in itself. Their functions were necessary ones, assisting in the fulfilment of religious duties, but they were

transacted at extortionate rates, with a handsome slice of the profits no doubt destined for the temple coffers. (William Temple, *Readings in St. John's Gospel*, 1949, Macmillan, p. 39)

The equation of St Paul's Cathedral - national temple of the English - with the first-century Temple at Jerusalem; the Dean and canons of the former with the high priests of the latter; and the whole financial sector of the City of London with the money-changers in the Temple courtyard, is both facile and misleading.

Jesus' preferred method of teaching is by parable: a very short story (by modern standards) making what often seems like a simple point but almost always containing surprises, a touch of paradox and not infrequently an element of tongue-in-cheek. One of the most puzzling is the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30, and Luke 19:12-27). A master is setting out on travels and, before going, entrusts his property to his servants. One servant receives five talents, a second two talents, and a third one talent, according to their respective abilities: in all some eight talents or about £4 million in modern currency.

Returning after a long absence, the master asks his servants for an accounting. The first two servants explain that they have put their money to work and doubled the value of the property they were entrusted with. They are both rewarded, the lord saying 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.'. The third servant, however, has merely hidden his talent in a hole in the ground and is punished for being lazy. 'He also who had received the one talent came and said, "Lord I knew you are a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter. I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the earth. Behold you have what is yours." But his lord answered him, "You wicked and slothful servant. You knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter. Why then did you not put my money in the bank and at my coming I would have received back mine own with interest. Take away therefore the talent from him and give it to him that has the

ten talents. For to everyone that hath shall be given, and he will have abundance, but from him who does not have, even that which he has will be taken away. Throw out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Over the years this story has received a variety of interpretations. Traditionally, the parable of the talents has been seen as an exhortation to Jesus' disciples to use their God-given gifts in the service of God, and to take risks for the sake of the [Kingdom](#). These gifts have been seen to include personal abilities ('talents' in the everyday sense), as well as personal wealth. Failure to use one's gifts, the parable suggests, will result in judgment. One Protestant biblical scholar believed that the original meaning of the parable was not an ethical one about every man. Instead, he saw it as aimed at the scribes, who had withheld 'from their fellow men a due share in God's gift.' In his view, Jesus is saying that these scribes will soon be brought to account for what they have done with the Word of God which was entrusted to them. He also believed that in the life of the early church the parable took on new meaning, with the master having become an allegory of Christ, so that 'his journey has become the ascension; his subsequent return... has become the [Second Coming](#), which ushers his own into the Messianic banquet.' (Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 1954, Scribner)

Another scholar has given a reading in terms of [liberation theology](#) where the image of the absentee landlord, who reaps where he did not sow, is taken literally. On this reading, the third servant is a whistle-blower who has 'unmasked the "joy of the master" for what it is, the profits of exploitation squandered in wasteful excess.' He is punished for speaking the truth, not for failing to make a profit. The point of the parable is the need to act in solidarity when confronting injustice. (William R. Herzog II, *Parables as Subversive Speech; Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed*, 1994, Westminster John Know Press)

For my part I find these would-be interpretations far fetched. At the very least it is clear that Jesus recognizes the necessary role of bankers in society and the principle of

lending at interest. It is interesting that the Greek word for 'table' is 'trapeza', as in the 'tables of the money-changers' which incurred Christ's wrath in the Cleansing of the Temple, is the same as that for the 'bank' whose role is commended in the Parable of the Talents. What made Jesus angry was not so much usury as such, but exploitation of the worshippers by extortion. He called it making of God's house a 'den of thieves.' Americans call it 'gouging'. Is that what the Dean and Canons do? Or even the Stock Exchange? Perhaps we should not be too hasty in concluding where Jesus would stand on the steps of St Paul's today.

It might be more useful to study the toxic culture that infected the whole financial sector, its regulators and indeed governments. How was it that some account executives were paid a commission seven times higher from sub-prime loans rather than from prime mortgages and so concentrated on the least sophisticated and most vulnerable borrowers? Why, when the bubble burst, did governments rescue highly paid bankers and protect their shareholders and creditors, while mostly turning a cold shoulder on their hapless borrowers? (And note, as a further twist, that this was exactly the outcome proclaimed by the master in the parable of the talents!) As it happens, the staff of St. Paul's Cathedral have led the way in promoting such studies. See www.stpaulsinstitute.org.uk

Richard Harries, one-time Bishop of Oxford and an outstanding speaker, is giving a talk that addresses this among other topics, in the Cathedral on Sunday 4 March, 1-2 pm. There is time to get there after our own Eucharist at 10.30 and I hope some people will.

Hugh Beach

Earl's Court Community Project

The Christmas Day sponsored lunch for the ECCP was a great success. We collected £375, from which six beautiful turkeys were bought and two were cooked at St Mary's. We also supplied mince pies and stuffing, which fed between 125-150 people. We also gave them a Wiltshire ham and I am pleased

to say we were able to cover the expense of holding the lunch at St Barnabas.

A very big thank you to everyone who contributed.

Margarete Geier

My Christmas Morning Swim

Christmas is about celebrating the birth of Jesus, giving and receiving presents and of course Christmas lunch. For me, Christmas 2011 was about swimming in the Serpentine Christmas Day Race: the famous Peter Pan Cup, a 100-yards sprint. The Peter Pan Cup has taken place every Christmas since 1864. The author JM Barrie was the patron of the first race.

I have wanted to compete in this race for the last couple of years and back in September 2011 I took my first step and started training on Saturday mornings. The mild autumn meant that initially I did not find the water too cold (52°F), but by the time it got to December the water temperature had fallen to 40° and it was very cold.

On Christmas morning I awoke excited and nervous. I was too nervous to have any breakfast. I arrived at the Serpentine, where over 70 swimmers were getting ready. There was a bagpiper playing and television and radio reporters getting ready to capture the race. One reporter slipped at the edge of the Serpentine and fell in the water while presenting live on radio.

At 8.45am I lined up with all the other swimmers. I stood for what seemed like ages before the 9.00am start. The race is a handicap race and swimmers start at different times depending on the times they have achieved in previous races, so everyone has a fair chance of winning. As the race started I had to wait until my time was called. I was terrified. Once I started I swam as fast as I could. I felt I was swimming well and although the water was crowded with swimmers I managed to swim very well and I finished in the top 10.

Swimming in the Peter Pan Cup was a really big challenge. I was the second youngest competitor; the water was very cold, which

makes it hard to breathe while you swim. I had to get up very early and just look at my beautifully wrapped Christmas presents without opening a single one as there was no time and I had to cope with being terrified at the start of the race. But it was the best day of my life. I will never forget Christmas 2011.



Felicity Challinor

February Top Tip

We can all dream of escaping from the bleakness of a damp and grey English winter and a weekend break or a family holiday in half-term to give a boost to the spirits and stimulate the brain. An art gallery, alternative architecture, a change of diet, different horticulture, a chance to meet with friends or family: the positives are enormous. People are increasingly aware of the environmental cost, and then that leads to questions: should we fly, or could we go by train, or could we drive? If we have to get to the airport, do we drive or use public transport? Do we need to go at all?

A large part of me gets rather grumpy with the insinuation that I should feel guilty about going away. A little tiny part of me realises that that is a selfish viewpoint if it is damaging our environment. Then another little bit of me hankers after the perceived romance of travel in the past, when people dressed for travel with style and comfort in mind and that travel was a luxury for the few - but then again, that is not right, why should the beauties of the world be enjoyed by a few who have money and time rather than many who appreciate pleasure and enjoyment equally as much? Selfish reality then kicks in for today's world where time is so valuable that a dash to the airport and two or

three nights away from the office is all that we can manage. Personally, I try to find the silver lining to every cloud, so for me if any travel involves seeing family, it is perfectly acceptable, no matter how brief the visit, and in an ideal world we would all have the time, energy and resources to travel leisurely and enjoy the journey as much as the destination. I can but hope!

Katrina Quinton

Art Exhibition

The Art Exhibition at St Mary the Boltons will commence with a preview on the evening of 14 June 2012, as part of the annual Summer Fair. The exhibition will be opened by Professor Ken Howard, OBE, RA and will be an open evening with light refreshments and wine. This will give you the opportunity to view the paintings and also to meet the artists.

To all the artists who have expressed an interest in exhibiting their work, thank you. To any artists in the congregation who would like to exhibit but have not as yet expressed an interest, please let us know. You can do this by leaving your details in an envelope marked Art Exhibition, at the Church, and you will be forwarded details regarding a pre-exhibition meeting for the artists, dates for submission and collection. We look forward to hearing from you.

Ann Mulcare & Lorraine Baxter

Street Pastors

Not long after 9.30 on a Friday night in October, wearing my dark blue fleece and baseball cap emblazoned 'STREET PASTORS', I push my bike through the door of Duke Street URC church for my first night in a team of Street Pastors. Time for a hot drink and a few biscuits with Gary, who runs the Richmond Street Pastors, and a briefing to remind me about things I have been taught, such as body language, before we quieten down for a few minutes of prayer before Gary, Yvonne, Rob and I hit the streets just before 10.30, leaving three others as Prayer Pastors.

Gary leads us towards Richmond Green pointing out where Andy sleeps rough each night. Two policemen by the river are intrigued and glad to meet us. Gary introduces us to bouncers at the various clubs; they know him and are grateful to see us. A girl without shoes gets some flip-flops. Her companion is so relieved by our coming and opens her wallet. Out come the £10 notes, but we refuse the donation.

Surprisingly, we have been out nearly two hours. I risk a coffee and allow myself to be tempted by the biscuits. Jennifer has now arrived to join us. There is a further brief time to pray before our next foray.

We head for the clubs near the river that will close soon. Outside one of them, a girl called Nina wobbles in the direction of Hill Street on incredibly high heels as her friend Charlotte supports her. I offer her some flip-flops. 'How much?' 'They're free.' 'Really? I've been dancing on these shoes since six o'clock. Let me give you some money.' 'No, we don't take money, but we do want you to get home.' She has got her shoes off and I am struggling, and just about succeeding, to get the flip-flops on her. 'You are awesome. I must give you some money.' The £10 notes are coming out and we continue to refuse. Charlotte wants to know why we are doing it and we explain that we do it because we are Christians and as such must do something to care for those around us. It transpires that Charlotte is looking for a church to attend. Nina leaves with a Street Pastors business card as we call to base for prayers for Nina and Charlotte.

Another club is to close at two o'clock, so we go and wait at a discreet distance across the road. We soon head back to Duke Street, picking up a few empty bottles at the bus station.

Turning out of an alley, a girl called Susan about 50 yards away, shouts 'Street Pastors' and runs towards us flinging her arms round Gary. The men with her catch up looking bemused. 'These are good people' she says and explains that her handbag had been lost in an incident about a month ago and the Street Pastors retrieved it and returned it to her.

There is the inevitable post mortem, a call to the police, some closing prayers and I'm on my bike and heading home.

Over 10,000 Street Pastors are working in over 125 boroughs in the UK. They bring a caring Christian presence onto the streets at times when people, who may have made themselves vulnerable, need help, may need a listening ear and when tensions can run high. They are trained Christians from all denominations – they have to come from four different ones for a local group to be set up – working with the support of the Ascension Trust, which provides the 'uniform' and organises training. Evangelism is expressly prohibited unless someone being helped specifically asks about Christianity. Although the 'Church Times' has referred to them as 'Flop-Flop Angels', each team also carries a first aid kit, water and metallic blankets for free issue and bins any empty bottles before they are broken for use as weapons. The presence of Street Pastors generally reduces the crime rate by over 20% (and sometimes much more) during the hours they are out and about and that has to be effective Christianity!

Paul Russenberger (parishioner of St Mary's 1975-1986)

<http://www.streetpastors.co.uk/>

Report from the PCC

Each meeting of the PCC starts with a speed study of the Gospel reading for the following Sunday. It is a good way of ensuring that we do not forget to place our deliberations in the right context. In January there was a lively discussion about the story of the wedding in Galilee, where water was turned into wine. At one level this story is about finding the very best resources for an important celebration.

This is a good paradigm for the work of the PCC. We too want to have the very best resources for our celebrations, for our worship and for all we do as a community building God's Kingdom. In January we concentrated a lot on our resources, which, like the water, will need transformation.

We reviewed the outcome of the 2011 Stewardship Programme and looked at what we

will need to do to release resources for 2013 and we set in motion plans to upgrade the sound system.

We approved a report from the Sustainability Group on what we need to do in order to reduce our consumption of electricity and gas. There are ambitious targets set by the wider church for reducing carbon emissions. There is much that can be done and we encouraged the Group not to shy away from getting on with costing the obvious ways in which we can meet the targets.

We adopted a written Health and Safety Policy and appointed Anthony Williams as our Health and Safety Officer. We can expect to have to find resources to ensure that our premises are up to standard, and we started by approving a deep clean of the hall kitchen.

There are important events to celebrate in 2012 and we heard about the preliminary work being done by Ginny and Ruth for them.

We also started to look much further ahead with some preparatory work for the PCC Away Day at the end of January. We have to prepare a Mission Action Plan; at its most mundane, this is a series of objectives that are set and reviewed each year. At a more exciting level it is about establishing what our vision is for the future of the Parish: where do we want to be in five years' time? We have somehow to bring these plans together in a written document to send to the Bishop.

There is a lot going on and we will need to find all sorts of resources to do it all. This may seem an impossible task, but we should be encouraged by the events that took place at the wedding feast at Cana.

Leo Fraser-Mackenzie

St. Martin-in-the-Fields WC2N 4JJ

Friday 3 February 2012 at 7.30pm

I was glad

Great British Choral Music

Tallis	O nata lux
Byrd	Sing joyfully
Purcell	I was glad
Parry	I was glad
	& Blest pair of Sirens
Stanford	Beati quorum via
Elgar	Give unto the Lord
Vaughan Williams	O taste and see & Valiant for truth
Howells	Magnificat (<i>Collegium Regale</i>)
Britten	Rejoice in the Lamb
Walton	Jubilate
& hymns for all	

Arr. Vaughan Williams The Old Hundredth
Parr Jerusalem

NONSUCH SINGERS

Richard Pearce *organ*
Graham Caldbeck *conductor*
Box Office 020 7766 1100
Online www.smitf.org

Year's mind

Edward Lidderdale
Mary Pilkington
Peter Hamilton-Davies
Robert Priest
Thomas Spicer
Anthony Clives
Storm Larkins
Thomas Barclay
Anjoli Fernando-Kleinsorge
David Hancock
Simon Perkins
Lily Dwight
Lynette Hopper
Gary Marshfield
Derek Priest
Iris Warwick
Madeline Habgood
Kinbarra Morse

**Contributions for the March Clarion
should be sent to the church office by
17 February 2012**