

Fr Hoyal Writes

WHEN YOU PRAY...

Not “*If* you pray” but “*When* you pray” – that is how our Lord begins his answer to his companions when they ask him to teach them to pray. And he proceeds to give them the Lord’s Prayer as a definitive pattern of how we should pray to the Father.

Yet huge numbers of good Christian people pray remarkably little except in emergencies and when attending services.

Others may well tell you they pray while they are driving or walking the dog. The latter is no problem to me, but the former could be rather alarming. Personally I’m not at all sure I’m up to concentrating on God and the road at the same time.

Or people say that they pray when they feel like it – just as you might go for a curry, say, when you feel like it, or decide to read some poetry. For myself, I can’t help feeling this is rather too casual an attitude to adopt with almighty God.

Of course, if you’re the vicar you will frequently have people defensively reminding you that you don’t have to go to church to be a Christian, and that you don’t need to a church to pray in, as you can worship God anywhere.

In relation to churchgoing, I suppose it all depends on how the word Christian is being used. But I’m pretty sure that Christians who go to church are more likely to be kept up to the mark as regards discipleship. And I’m equally sure that churchgoers do a lot more praying than non-churchgoers. Those Christians who never pray in church are less likely to pray much elsewhere.

“I never seem to have time, my life is so pressured and erratic.” “I just don’t know what to say.” “God knows what we need before we start, so what’s the point?” “I sometimes try, but I soon wander off and find myself thinking about dinner or our summer holidays.” These are just a few of the excuses we make for not trying. But God is no more impressed than we are.

Books are forever being written on prayer, just as they are on dieting and slimming. Of course, as every one knows, the way to lose weight is by eating less. It’s as simple and as difficult as that.

The great secret of prayer is equally obvious: consciously make time for God. As with any important relationship, giving the time is everything.

So earmark a set period, even a couple minutes will do, and say, “This time is for us, Lord.” Then just hang in there. If it’s all a grim blank, at least say the Lord’s Prayer before closing.

Then have another go to-morrow. And the day after. And keep going.

Good luck!

Though if you give the time, I don't think you'll need luck. Our God of surprises will soon be surprising you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Hoyle".

I wish to say a very sincere thank you to all for the gifts presented to Philip and myself on my 'retirement' from the Churchwarden's pew.

The past 5 years have been very full and rewarding. It has been a privilege to hold office during this time of change and growth.

Thank you for your support, prayers and encouragement. It has been much appreciated.

Norman

Fatima

It was pretty inaccessible. Until the opening of a motorway, it took 3 hours to drive up from Lisbon into the hill country around Leiria. And another 20 miles takes you into the area of rough terrain. In the early part of the twentieth century, sheep and olive farming would have been the way of earning a living for the small communities in this part of central Portugal.

It was here, during the time of the first world war, that three peasant children received some holy visions. The children were Jacinta and Francisco Marto, and their cousin, Lucia Santos. Whilst out minding their families' flocks in 1916, an angel appeared to them three times, preparing them for what was to happen the following year. For in 1917, between the months of May and October, and almost always on the 13th of the month, the Virgin Mary appeared to them. Firstly, she appeared at the Cove da Iria, about a mile from the village of Fatima.

This was the time of the rise of communism, and Our Lady promised peace for all the world if her requests for prayer, reparation and consecration were heard and obeyed. In her appearances, she spoke only to the three children, and conversed only with Lucia, but her arrival coincided with thunder, and the sun appearing to dance. She emphasised the necessity of praying the Rosary and called for the consecration of Russia.

The visions caused considerable excitement, and Portugal at that time was quite a secular society. The local mayor thought the children were fantasists, and decided to kidnap them in August 1917 a few days before 13th. He threatened to boil them in oil, and also put them in the local prison, but the children did not recant. On 13th, the sun danced as usual, but our Lady did not appear to the captive children. They were released, but she appeared on 18th August and then again in September and finally October 1917.

During her appearances, the Virgin confided three secrets to the children. The first was a vision of hell; the second prophesied the outbreak of the second world war, and the third concerned a man in white being shot.

The fame of the visions spread rapidly through Portugal. The early deaths of two of the three children no doubt added to the interest in the story. Brother and sister Francisco and Jacinta died, he aged 11 in 1919, and she the following year aged 10. Their cousin Lucia became a nun and lived until 2005. Devotions in Fatima continued and grew, with a basilica being built, and in due course the bodies of the children being buried within it. A chapel near to the site of the visions was built and the rosary is offered there daily, and the Church keeps 13th May as the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.

It was on 13th May 1981 in St Peter's Square in Rome, that Pope John Paul II was shot. The bullet fired at him missed all his vital organs, and he attributed his safety to the intervention of the Virgin. That might seem to be a surprising conclusion, until one thinks about that last secret, of the man in white being shot. The Pope was certain that the last secret related to him, and so he consecrated the rest of his pontificate to Our Lady, consecrating the world to God. We should note in passing that it was during his pontificate that much of western communism was overthrown. Such was his devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary that he travelled three times as Pope to Fatima, and canonised Francisco and Jacinta. He gave the shrine his Cardinal's ring, and also the bullet that was removed from his body in 1981. It was placed in the Crown which adorns the image on special occasions, and which can be seen in the Basilica's museum.

This year was the 90th anniversary of the first appearance this May, and so it was that a group of Anglican Pilgrims, members of the Ecumenical Friends of Fatima Association, about 100 in number, with 30 priests and 3 bishops, travelled to Fatima. There's nothing much in the town apart from shops selling varying degrees and conditions of religious tat. The town is pretty empty. Until, that is, the 12th and 13th. Then Portugal descends. From all over the country, pilgrims walk or drive, and pitch camp. Then on 12th, there is the Rosary and a vigil mass in the evening, with the square in front of the basilica, larger than that in Rome, filled with lights held by pilgrims. And then the following morning,

there is a procession, and a Mass in the open air. The clergy in the Anglican procession were placed in a privileged position: first came banners, then came the seminarians, then the deacon of the word, then the other deacons, then the Anglicans in choir dress followed by the concelebrants, and Cardinal Sodano, the principle celebrant. We felt something very powerful was being said about Anglican orders. It was quite an occasion. The procession took an hour. And three quarters of a million people received communion. Then, as the statue returned to its home, the pilgrims waved it goodbye.

There will be any number of reactions to a story such as this. Some will be sceptical, others firm believers. Whatever one's view, one cannot fail to be moved by the emotion of the event, and by the devotion of the people to God, and to Our Lady of the Rosary.

Fr James

Churchwarden's Notes

5 May, Saturday evening. I go exploring. Visiting musicians bring the liturgical tale of the little black bull to All Saints. It is a South American piece, with brass, drums and tambourine accompaniment. It is loud. I leave my accustomed glades and tread the long path to the outer reaches of the Baptistery and Hew's Pugh. Young Master H welcomed me to his outpost. Good acoustics back there, and no risk of perforated ear drums (or ear tambourines for that matter).

12 May, Saturday. Wet and windy. To the Cathedral, where our Provincial Episcopal Visitor spoke of the importance of the Word and commended the Bible to us. He advised us not to start at the beginning, and try to read it in order, because we would founder amidst the prohibitions of Leviticus, but rather to take the daily readings and build on those, whether at Mass or at home. This reminded me of the readings on

11 May, Friday, at prayers. Never mind Leviticus, try Deuteronomy (that is 'second law', OK?) Chapter 22, Deuteronomy 22 1 - 8

If you see your brother's ox or one of his sheep straying, you must not disregard it; you must take it back to your brother. 2 And if he is not close at hand or you do not know who he is, you must take it home and keep it by you until your brother comes to look for it; you will then return it to him.

3 You must do the same with his donkey, the same with his cloak, the same with anything that your brother loses and that you find; you must not disregard it.

In my case, it's a pink hairbrush found after the Ascension. Any takers?

4 If you see your brother's donkey or ox fall over on the road, you must not disregard it, but must help your brother get it on its feet again.

5 A woman must not dress like a man, nor a man like a woman; anyone who does this is detestable to the Lord your God.

This worries me, but Fr Boss says that as I intend no deception I may escape The Pit.

6 If, when out walking, you come across a bird's nest, in a tree or on the ground, with chicks or eggs and the mother bird sitting on the chicks or the eggs, you must not take the mother as well as the chicks. 7 Let the mother go, the young you may take for yourself. Thus will you have prosperity and long life.

Don't let the nature lovers see this!

8 When you build a new house, you must give your roof a parapet; then your house will not incur blood-vengeance, should anyone fall off the top.

Health & Safety rules OK!!

But back to 12 May. A late arrival at the Feast was the Director of Music at All Hallows; a very late arrival in fact. So did he lurk behind a pillar? Was he in outer darkness? No, of course not. With impeccable timing he arrived at a point when virtually all seats had gone and the vergins, sorry, vergers had checked on vacancies in the nave (ignoring the spare seat in the side aisle that held my Barbour), and led him majestically up the main aisle ('Come up higher, Brother') to a seat so far forward that he adorned the TV screens from then on.

17 May, the Feast of the Ascension. Norman has taken flight, and settled at Front Pulpit. Thank you, Norman, you are a splendid colleague; I shall try to be a credit to you. Of course, this left me in charge of the ciboria. Not a task I can ever remember to do; not a task I can ever get right, as my lack of inches prevents my doing an accurate head count even if I could count beyond thirty and even if I could remember how many bits of church I had dealt with. But my new colleague has promised to take charge. Deo Gratias.

18 May, Friday: It's raining, encouraged by morning prayer: Psalm 147 v7 – 8

Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;
Make music to our God upon the lyre;

Who covers the heavens with clouds
And prepares rain for the earth;

And unfortunately the rains found the gully that the little birds had blocked with their little feathers. Ugh!

No more for now: the Editor is on my tail!

IN THIS MONTH...JUNE 1888

Something about Sparrows by *Passer domesticus*

Those who live near All Saints' Church, and those who frequent the Services there, may have observed that a pair of pigeons, which of late have chosen to build in one of the houses near the church, have adopted as a favourite perch the niche over the west door, containing the figures of the Blessed Virgin and the Holy child, nay, one of these creatures may often be seen nestling itself within the circlet that crowns the head of the Maiden-Mother. There especially during the storms and gusts of wind which have been so prevalent this Spring, she seemed to love to rest in her chosen shelter, with feathers unruffled by the rude blasts all around her. It is a natural nook for these birds, that niche which holds the sculptured form of the meek Mother with the "wondrous Babe" and one thinks of course of the Divine Holy Dove which once overshadowed her, and then of the turtle-dove, or two young pigeons, "meet emblems" of the "dove-like soul" of her Son, the King of saints, and then too of the long line of saints themselves who have been the result of His incarnation, living His very life, brooded over by the same Holy Dove, till they become moulded into His likeness.

But All Saints' church is visited and haunted by much homelier birds than these, the chosen emblems of such high and holy things, and it is of them we are going to think and talk a little while – of those common, brown, every-day birds, sparrows. They are just the last birds selected by painters or poets, or adorners of any kind to express *ideas* of beauty, or to add effect to productions of art. They are so common and so numerous, and so ubiquitous that nobody thinks much about them, and they go their ways attracting but little notice. And yet these birds, these creatures of God as they are, are not uninteresting really; and in some ways too they have as many privileges, and are just as much thought of and cared for as the doves themselves. They are just as free to fly and perch and build about the churches, and they are not slow to claim their right. They throng the sacred walls, they get near to the very holiest place, no man forbidding them. Indeed they have a very ancient charter to fall back upon – "the sparrow hath found her an house....even Thine altars, O Lord of Hosts," and then too, they, like the doves, are among the very few birds mentioned by our Blessed Master Himself. "One of them," he says "shall not fall to the ground without your Father – not one of them is forgotten before God." And we know that these sparrows are included among those fowls of the air of which He said "your Heavenly Father feedeth them." And it is these words which are their crowning privilege. They are not doves, fair things with gold and silver wings, sacred things, saints – they are sparrows, every-day birds, but they are fed by the same hand and in the same

way as are the doves; noticed by that Lord, watched and guarded by him, great indeed are their privileges.

One of the preachers who has been speaking to us this Easter-tide, in setting before us some of the many lessons of the walk to Emmaus, pointed out to us that the two friends who took that walk were not any remarkable persons, not two of "the twelve," not S. Peter and S. John, not such as Mary Magdalene; and yet to them Jesus Himself drew nigh, and to them he spoke, and made their hearts burn within them while yet they knew not it was He, and then, at last, joy of all joys, in the Breaking of Bread He made Himself known to them. As the preacher put this lesson before us, surely the same glowing thought came to many a heart there, though not perhaps in the same words in which it came to one – "No, they were not doves, but they were sparrows."

Fr John's Reminiscences No.9.

Well, its been a long time since I was able to get down to one of these. Fr Richard tells me the last one, No.8 was published way back in the Autumn of last year. There are loads of problems. Eileen's ins and outs from hospital for fairly lengthy periods, my own myasthenia. However, we must surmount these, including the fact that I've just lost a weeks work through my own carelessness. As sometimes happens all the text suddenly disappeared from the screen. In the old days I was onto that one. The answer is close the file, up comes a box asking you if you want to save changes, the right answer is NO and as if by magic back comes your text. Not this time. Idiot didn't close but pressed the mouse on save realising all too late it was gone!!!

Right, lets stop this nonsense and get on with the real stuff. Fortunately I have a copy of NO.8 to hand and it shows yours truly on the verge of a life's career. Christmass is over and work awaits on a cold January morning. Many of you will recall the musical Oliver. You will no doubt remember that old garret where Fagin and his school for petty crime was situated. There are many similar places in some of our older cities and Bristol was no exception. Not far from the bridge that leads into Victoria Street St Nicholas end you could turn into Temple Way leading to Temple Church, both destroyed in the blitz but St Nick's surviving in its crypt. A short way down Temple Way there was a yard in which such a garret existed, looking just as dilapidated. The yard and its garret were the main base of operations of my boss to be an electrical contractor by the name of C.E. Reed. Over the entrance to the yard was a dilapidated sign with the owner's name and the rather corny advice underneath 'See Reed About It'. How on earth Dad came to decide that I should work for this character I can't imagine. His vocabulary was limited to a few electrical terms over diluted with as much filth and bad language as he could cram in.

I was sent out on the first day with an electrician who was working on rewiring houses that had some rebuilding work done to the previous bombing. All rather odd I thought since there was every chance of the properties being demolished again while the Luftwaffe still had some activity in the area. However, when one is on ones first day of

ones first job it was not ones place to be questioning firms policy no matter how illiterate and uncouth ones boss. I was put to nailing staples to a wall for the reception of new cabling. Then installing the cable and observing the electrician attaching switches, junction boxes and lighting pendants. The district was Bedminster not really noted for its cleanliness and in consequence yours truly became filthy dirty. There was no such thing as washing facilities provided. You had to go home on the bus in all your glorious muck and carry out your ablutions there. Even there, for we dirty men returning from a hard days grime we used the below stairs facilities. Simply a jug of hot water from the water heater in the pantry and carried downstairs and out to the sink in the back washroom and clean up there. Note, there was no common hot water supply other than the water heater, the bathroom geyser or heating it up with a pan on the stove. Electric kettles in those days were a bit of a 'Speedy Gonzales' option. It soon became apparent that working with Mr. Reed wasn't such a good option with the proximity of the ladies at home and a young lad bringing home what was to him quite novel language. It was decided that there must be some change. But as to the wisdom of it is quite another matter.

For the moment we must leave the domestic scene and look at the war situation. 1941 was not all together a brilliant year. We had been having quite a game with the Italians who were not nearly half as keen as the Germans on the idea of war. That was however about to change. Hitler had quite enough of the blustering Mussolini to last him more than a life time. His answer to the North Africa Stakes was to send Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, the great Panzer general of the French campaign with the newly created Afrika Korps and a massive Luftwaffe force under the wily Kesselring. The Mediterranean was to become almost a no go zone for the Royal Navy. In the background in eastern Europe the Germans and their allies were working down through the difficult Balkans. The Italians has tried to take on the Greeks thinking them to be easy meat, because of the German threat we had to send some troops to Greece from North Africa plus air support neither of which we could afford. It was to cost us dear. Greece surrendered at the end of April and the majority of the Greek islands quickly followed. Then in June Hitler took on Russia. Everyone now knew including the German hierarchy that we were dealing with a madman.

Within weeks of the massive panzer launch eastward the Germans realised that they had without previously realising the possibility. They had thousand upon thousand of totally illiterate Russian prisoners on their hands. They could scarce manage to feed them even the barest of diets and as to housing and clothing. Out of this situation was born the Final Solution and what became known in later years as the Holocaust.

I had to work out some time with Reeds. The aunts had laid the law down with Dad after a couple of incidents where some of the boss's fruitiest language had been allowed to leak out by yours truly at home. I think far too much is expected by fathers of their sons and the situation becomes exacerbated when there is only one son and more so when the father has not attained either through circumstance or the fortunes of war, or even God forbid the two combined in a ghastly unity. Dad was died in the wool Navy, real pukka RN. None of your wavy navy or RNR. Bless his heart, he was only an officers' steward. But his ambitions for me were rather over the top. No less than a cadetship at Dartmouth

Naval College with the full commissioned service to follow. The potential was never there either in his resources or in my own personal prospects. With all the moving about and lack of proper family life together with Dad's constant ill health. Apart from this I was not given to the idea of being shoved off in some college for weeks on end at that tender age. I think my subconscious must have slammed the brakes on the learning process in no uncertain terms. So school progress, especially in maths was terrible. Most things weren't that bad, English, History and Geography etc. But anything that seemed destined to take me away from home was kept under firm control. They couldn't understand what was going on, at that age I don't think I did either. One was still in a very fragile development stage and it is only now at the not so tender age of 79 that these thoughts are going straight from mind into neat typescript. The panorama of life laid out? Anyway the whole tribe were determined to get their own way in the finish. They knew that I had a love of classical music though I had not shown any leanings towards instrumental skill. They linked this with the idea of the Royal Marine Band. The preceding period was taken up with some basic music theory instruction from the organist at St Nicholas in the city. I used to go to St Nicks occasionally with my gran who liked old-fashioned evensong in the balmy days before the war. This was to be my first introduction to the converted crypt. I had no problem with this as I had retained the knowledge gained from my failed piano teachers efforts. This was never the problem. Looking a couple of years on I had a theory exam in which I obtained no less than third place and yet I was still not producing on the playing side. Later on it was down to the naval recruiting office for a full medical and signing on for twelve years service after the age of eighteen.

There wasn't too long to wait before the call came, a very official looking letter requiring me to report to the Naval Recruiting Office on a certain date after Easter. I had a pretty hefty suitcase and the recruiting CPO gave me a rather knowing look and remarked to me, 'Most of that will be going back home lad.' I think there was a bit of guilty conscience around for much of the stuff would have been applicable to an officer rather than a mere Band Boy. He was right in his assumption since many of the chaps I was to due to come in contact with were from far worse situations than my own. Many of them were orphans from training ships like Aretheusa.

We were taken later that morning to Temple Meads and put aboard an LMS train for Scarborough. In those days the Midland line trains used the old Brunei train shed which was a terminus. Platforms 10 and 11. It is now a museum of railway artefacts. There waiting for us was a gleaming Midland red train of brand new express stock. Possibly a spin off from the time of the Coronation expresses, at its head a very smart jubilee class engine with a colonial name. I think children, especially young boys are very much creatures of the moment. They rarely fret about what lies ahead and in consequence we all settled down to enjoy the journey. The Midland route north to Birmingham and beyond commenced with a long slow climb up a very stiff gradient to Mangotsfield, part of the old Bristol coal mining area, then on through Gloucester, Cheltenham and up the stiff Lickey Bank at the bottom of which you had to wait for a banking engine to get you up to Bournville, down into Birmingham New Street onto Derby and Sheffield were we changed to a York train and a final change for Scarborough. I am going to close this with

a short explanation of the wartime situation of establishments like the Marine Band. The peace time base was always what was known as The Depot at Deal in Kent. Much too close to the nasty Germans. After Dunkirk everything was transferred into commandeered Hotel accommodation along the Scarborough sea front. The band boys were transferred to a holiday camp on the Isle of Man after kitting out etc at Scarborough. This, apart from a few leave periods concludes the Duchess Road era. I leave you, or rather you leave me at this stage outside the Clifton Hotel on Scarborough front suddenly coming to after a long journey far from home and family and wondering whatever was going to happen to us next. It isn't a good period to remember so I won't dwell on it overmuch. I detested the entire business and the attitude that authority had. It is summed up in a hard but fairly simple phrase; 'Our philosophy is simple, if you are on your way up we will push you all the way but any wavering God help you! Not very nice but it may suit some people certainly not yours truly. See you again with . No. 10.

40 YEARS ON

As All Saints Clifton prepares to celebrate next month the fortieth anniversary of the consecration of its 'new' church, former server and chorister Tim Stanley reflects

Talks about rebuilding the church of All Saints Clifton went on for years following the wartime bombing on the night of December 2, 1940 which destroyed most of George Edmund Street's fine Victorian building.

From 1941, and throughout the 'fifties and early 'sixties, All Saints Church was actually the former parish hall, now Garden Court flats in Alma Vale Road.

Plans to rebuild the church were drawn up by architect Randall Blacking FRIBA but these never saw the light of day. During lengthy and expensive legal proceedings, in which the future of the church was in jeopardy, the present building, incorporating surviving parts of the original one, was designed by Robert Potter FRIBA.

Meanwhile, other options - like relocating to, and merging with, Emmanuel Church in Guthrie Road (long-since converted for residential use) - were considered and rejected.

The plans for the new church were described as 'modern but not modernistic' by the then vicar Father Luetchford (the clergy only had surnames in those days, it seems).

The derelict ruins in Pembroke Road were demolished, and the foundation stone for the new building (which can be seen today in the central aisle) was laid by Mr C. Cyril Clarke and blessed by the Archdeacon of Bristol on November 2, 1963.

Then, in a blaze of music and celebration, the new church was consecrated on July 1, 1967.

Forty years on, some aspects of life at All Saints have changed but, thankfully, others have not.

As young children we attended the ten o'clock Sunday Mass with our parents and the 'conductor' - often Frances Perkins' father, Philip Bird - would give what was, in effect, a running commentary on what was happening. That was how we learnt about the Mass. There was no rolling about on a rug in those days!

How pleased I was that, after years of suggesting that a family service should be re-introduced, Father Richard Hoyal actually did so, very successfully.

In due course I became a boat boy - "You use the spoon to eat the incense," explained my older brother Nick, who was a chorister - and I first served in that capacity with the late Sefton Cross, who was thurifer. Years earlier he had served in the church with my grandfather, Henry Wilson Stanley.

Once a year there was a procession of clergy, choir and servers through the garden into the old church ruins where Sefton Cross, smothered in smoke and sparks from his thurible, 'looked like the very Devil incarnate' my irreverent father would say - and we all giggled.

Appropriately Sefton Cross's ashes have been sprinkled in the church garden.

It was as a chorister at All Saints Choir School at 9 All Saints Road - now a health spa! - that I first processed into the ruins.

Every year the undergrowth which pushed up through what remained of the original floor seemed bigger and bushier - a far cry from the pre-war days when the huge church was so full for Mass on Sundays that some members of the congregation had to sit on the pulpit steps and the extra seats brought in earlier had to be removed before the choir could leave their stalls.

Those were the days when the choir and organ sometimes were accompanied by brass instruments.

In our cramped 'parish hall church' in the 'fifties we sang the great Masses - Stanford, Gibbons and Kirby (one of my favourites - he had been the organist at All Saints in the 'twenties) are among composers' names which come to mind.

We sang Gregorian chant at evensong most nights of the week, including weekends and during school holidays. In some ways the demands and rigid disciplines of life as a chorister ruled our young lives.

More modern were the psalms we sang to the music of the French monk Gelineau. I enjoyed them but haven't heard them for years. Perhaps they could be re-introduced.

Our choirmaster, Edward Fry - now in quiet retirement at St Monica's nursing home on the Downs - put the fear of God into us. Or so we thought. On reflection in later years, I realise that he was actually instilling in some of us a lifelong love of church music, including the organ - which is why the floorboards vibrate when I play organ music CDs at home.

We had High Days and other days, one of which was All Souls Day on November 2.

It was with trepidation that, as a very young chorister, I sang at that day's requiem, nervously eyeing the catafalque draped with its coffin pall, orange candles standing sentinel at each corner. My brother had told me that, on All Souls Day, all the old All Saints people who had died over the years would walk through the church.

Perhaps they did! At the age of nine on cold, dark, windy November nights, it was believable.

On Maundy Thursday we would set off at first light on our bicycles to sing at what, for us, was a very early morning service - but the effort was worth it. We were rewarded with a slap up breakfast in the school canteen in the basement of 70 Pembroke Road.

And every year at Corpus Christi we sang *Panis Angelicus* accompanied not only by Edward Fry on the organ but also an elderly lady in a large felt hat who played the cello. We were never told her name, so we called her Mrs Cello.

A high point in the summer was the All Saints Garden Party held in the church garden. One year I was dressed as pirate but, despite having my face powdered with cocoa by my mother in a bid to make me look swarthy, I failed to win the fancy dress contest and retreated to the side-show I was running with my brother. For several years Nick and I ran The Chocolate Express. There was always a winner. If our Hornby Dublo train ran out of clockwork steam and stopped its circular journey at the station whose ticket you had bought, a bar of Cadbury's was yours!

More sophisticated entertainments marked the opening of our 'new' church in 1967. They included a series of recitals by eminent organists which, indirectly, led me to meet my wife Vivienne.

Subsequently she was confirmed at All Saints by the former Bishop of Southwark, the late Mervyn Stockwood who had himself first been introduced to the church as a small boy, and whose funeral took place there in 1995.

Although his funeral wishes had been 'No fuss,' numerous bishops of the Church of England - including the Archbishop of Canterbury - were ranged behind the altar for the service.

By the end of the lengthy ceremonial, the appearance of pall bearers to carry the coffin away came as something of a surprise; by then we half expected to see it assumed up into heaven.

Years later it is easy to take our present church building for granted. Some love its simplicity. Children are attracted by the John Piper windows - the Tree of Life and the River of Life - or 'Traffic lights' and 'Snakes coming out of a pot' as someone put it on seeing them for the first time.

The architect based the angular roof lines on those of the ciborium (the pillared structure above the altar) which is a relic of the temporary church in the old parish hall. It was donated by the mother of Mary Densham - one-time enrolling member of All Saints Mothers Union - to be the first part of the new church.

As the new building was nearing completion, I spent a day watching with my camera as the timber spire lying in the road outside the vicarage was hoisted into position on the original tower by a huge crane - said to be the tallest of its type in Europe at the time. The aluminium cladding was added once it was in position.

I believe it was largely thanks to the aforementioned Father Luetchford that the new church was finally built. Go into the St Richard Chapel, turn right, and at the bottom of the stained glass window you will see him, holding a model of the new building.

Not portrayed is Miss May, the fearsome housekeeper who guarded him in the vicarage and, I regret to say, was the butt of many cruel (but very funny) jokes by young curates of the day.

An Anglo-Catholic of the old school, it was Father Luetchford who said, when the issue was raised following the demise of the choir school: "There will be women in this choir over my dead body."

And there were - at his funeral many years later.

What else has changed in 40 years?

Unlike many churches, there has been little 'dumbing down' at All Saints. Sadly the birettas have gone - but I have asked Father Hoyal to wear one when he conducts my funeral!

The sung Masses, which in later years some criticised as 'sacred concerts,' led to the introduction of more simple music, enabling greater congregational participation, but now I am pleased to detect a swing back to the old approach as Graham Davies strives to raise standards and reinstate All Saints as a centre of excellence on the music front.

Girls now serve at the altar - something which would have been unheard of in my days as a boat boy.

As choir boys we regarded the clergy - some of whom were also our schoolmasters - as austere and even slightly frightening in some cases; today they are good friends who live in the real world. Some are even married nowadays!

It is easy to be nostalgic and yearn for the past - or the best bits of it, at any rate. Of course we must move with the times, but it is good to return now and then to some of the traditions and standards of yesteryear.

We are fortunate indeed that our present parish priest, Father Richard Hoyal, has enabled us to do both - 40 years on.



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Dear Mr Editor,

I have read with interest the article put together by John Morley Bunker but feel bound to add my pennorth if I may.

I did say to Fr Hoyal that I was the only surviving member of the re - building committee, acting as PCC secretary for a number of years and was also a founder member of the Friends of All Saints' and am saddened to know that my friend Molly has died. The slides I had of the rebuilding progress, as no one seemed interested, are now in the hands of the Central Library for their archives.

I was also sub-deacon myself for over 20 years being around from 1938-1981 whenever Jeremy Younger came and revolutionised the High Mass. Over that time Bp Jackson and later Canon Luetchford were the 'fathers' I lost at the age of 14 and I still mourn them to this day. The school bred priests regularly and I desperately wished to take orders but the chips were down against me and I settled to be a Lay Reader BUT ASC would not countenance those. I applied 10 years previously and was even turned down to try for Readership but AHL DID eventually agree. And this Ministry I spent with 16 years at St Ann Brislington and simultaneously 10 of those years with Seend and Bulkington in Wiltshire. I also fulfilled my role as sub-deacon on set Sundays with All Saints. When Mark Waters (a former ASC curate) came to St Anne he changed things so much the majority of the congregation left and the Bishop sent me to Compton Greenfield, Pilning and Severn Beach, where I have just retired after 19 years. I asked to return as your Reader on two occasions but was not accepted.

All in all, All Saints' was my life and my example, as so many old boys will echo, those of us who are surviving. We have had one or two convivial lunches together and if anyone else would like to join us on the next occasion please let me know.

I just find it sad that long records of service are news that is unwanted today - we are told to forget the past (and I haven't even mentioned the Glastonbury Pilgrimages which Michael Hardwick and I figured in annually) but it is the life blood for me of present day and for evangelisation. The perfection that was the old All Saints (we remember the original building) has *gone* with me from country parish to city churches throughout my Ministry and I am eternally grateful for the privileges that have been granted to me to serve Our Lord in these ways.

Antony Keyworth-Berridge