

Fr Hoyal Writes

YOU ARE MY WITNESSES

I seldom admit to disappointment in parish life, and I rarely look back. Accentuating the positive is much the best way, as a rule, and in the great enterprise of faith the only direction that makes sense is forward.

But I did regret that the fortnightly Bible study group we began two years ago failed to last the course.

Our intention was to read chapter by chapter through the Acts of the Apostles. But numbers dwindled and I don't think we got beyond chapter 4 or 5.

Partly, no doubt, this was because my leadership style didn't meet group expectations or needs. But was it partly, too, because as a group we lacked a real thirst for the Word of God?

I hope not, for if so I should be anxious. For, almost always, renewal and growth come to a church – and to *the* Church – when people are spiritually attentive to Holy Scripture.

Happily, I know that a good few members of our congregation are faithful users of daily Bible notes, and that others benefit from following the daily readings prescribed for Morning or Evening Prayer.

With a view to encouraging attentiveness to God's Word in Scripture, almost the first change I made on my arrival four years ago was to see that the Sunday readings were printed out in full every week on the pewsheets.

It remains my ardent hope that worshippers will be glad to study these passages at home during the week, perhaps in the light of points made in the sermon or the intercessions.

I suggested that our group should start with Acts because it is pre-eminently Acts, of all the New Testament writings, which highlights the importance of the apostles as *witnesses* for Christ, in particular as witnesses to his resurrection.

Further, it is Acts which emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in all this. In Acts the prime mover is, very evidently, the Spirit, constantly at work to empower the apostles in their witness and mission to commend the gospel of Christ to all who can be reached.

Easter tide gives us fifty days to chew over the wonder and the challenge of the resurrection. And it is no accident that Acts figures prominently in the daily readings and the Sunday readings.

From the start, Acts makes clear that the Apostles are being sent out as missionaries in the power of the Spirit because their personal experience of Jesus of Nazareth makes them reliable witnesses to his life and death and resurrection.

To my mind, this is very much part of our Easter tide mission as latter-day disciples and apostles of Christ. We too are his witnesses, and our primary task during the great fifty days is that of witnessing to him who died and is risen. For this task we depend, of course, upon openness to the Spirit.

I was recently in court as a witness. It was a powerful moment for me when I was called to the stand and, holding the Bible, duly swore that my evidence would be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

The Bible is admittedly complex, and it takes prayer and reflection, as well as sound Church guidance, to discern what God is saying to us in Scripture through the Spirit.

But nothing else takes us closer to the understanding and experience of those who first knew and followed Jesus. It is the best evidence to truth that we have.

Easter tide, I suggest, calls us to give our apostolic testimony to the risen Lord in our daily lives. Our evidence, whether in word or deed, will be the weightier if we give it holding firmly to the all-truthful witness of God the Holy Spirit in Scripture.

And, who knows, perhaps we shall find ourselves eager to have another go at Acts?

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "Richard Hooker".

A day in thy courts

Memories-how precious they can be-but memoirs, how difficult they are to write, what traps they can lay for the unwary memorialist.

I have been asked to write a memoir of Dame Helen Gardner, who was my tutor in English Literature at St. Hilda's College, Oxford. The present seems the ideal time for such a memoir, now that St. Hilda's, the last of the all women's colleges is about to admit men; and to remember her as one of the most distinguished of that now vanished group of single women academics who dedicated their lives to teaching and research.

Helen Gardner is known widely outside her college, and beyond the University, perhaps mainly through her books. Some readers of this magazine may know her through her pioneer work on T.S. Eliot or through her best selling anthologies "The New Oxford Book of English Verse:", the Penguin book of "Metaphysical Poets"

and perhaps best loved of all by some, her selection of verse by George Herbert.

Helen wished herself to be remembered as a teacher first and foremost; she put the value of teaching above research because she thought the primary duty of a teacher was to sow the seed corn for the generations of the future. But here lies the rub.

True she was a formidable tutor and, as she knew herself, she had a very sharp tongue: but it has dismayed me that all the bitterness, jealousies, resentment at past failures and injuries dominate in the memories of those who perhaps might be said to owe her most.

However, a contemporary friend of mine, Delia, not one of her students, has given me a little account of Helen which may entertain some readers, not just those who have visited the Holy Land; and now that Passiontide and Holy Week are over, may give us pause for reflection on the present state of events in Israel and Gaza.

These recollections also bring Helen vividly and affectionately to my mind, for though by no means an outstanding pupil, later in life, through various circumstances, I had come to know Helen as a friend.

Delia married an Armenian Christian guide, Gabriel, in Jerusalem and together they founded the Guiding Star Tourist Agency. About twenty five years after we graduated, Helen, now a Dame, was asked to lecture at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and I asked Delia if she and Gabriel would have Helen to stay. Delia agreed, but as she says, not without some misgivings.

Delia's account follows:

“I need not have worried: she was a malleable, charming and worthwhile guest and my husband and I became her friends for life.

Gabriel had been a guide before we married and he still loved to take special visitors to certain key spots in the country. On Helen’s first day he took her to the Mount of Olives to look over the old city and the intervening Valley of Jehosophat, or Kidron Valley, the site of the Final Judgement. He said:

“Behind is Bethpage where Jesus borrowed a donkey for the triumphal Pam Sunday walk” Helen interrupted “He deliberately chose a donkey to ride like a prince, not a horse, the mount of kings, in fulfilment of an Old Testament prophecy’. Gabriel : “yes, the news of Lazarus’ return to life and the excitement of the crowd were just forerunners of his arrest and crucifixion. But let us return to the Final Judgement. There are Jewish, Christian and Moslem cemeteries in this Valley, and the three religions all say it will be the site of the Resurrection and the end of the world. Up until 1948 the Jews even buried their dead standing to be ready for the coming of the Messiah – but of course it was a different ~messiah from ours.”

“You would think if the three faiths could agree about the place of the Judgement, they might manage to agree on some other points” said Helen.

Gabriel continued “The Moslems have some good words about the last days: they say that when Jesus returns to the Mount of Olives, their prophet will return to Mount Moriah, where you see the beautiful Mosque, the Dome of the Rock: each of them will hold one end of a rope stretching across the valley, and the living and those who have risen from their graves must walk across it from East to West or from West to East. Those who can walk the tightrope will be saved and those who cannot will fall into the abyss and be damned.”

Helen was silent for a while in the car on the way home, and then she said: "It is true. We have to go from West to East or vice versa with minds and ears open; and as for tightrope walking, one needs plenty of self confidence and one's eyes on the goal ahead."

The next day we all went to Latroun, a Cistercian monastery on the old Jordan Israel border. There children could run around under the olive trees; we could admire the spring flowers, picnic, and buy wine and honey from a Lebanese monk. When it was time for Vespers, we found we could attend in the gallery, In the course of the service, which was in French, and had beautiful plainsong, a little bird appeared and flew about undeterred. When we reached home and sat down to a drink, Helen started to quote a psalm: it was Psalm 84 with the verse

"Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young."

And that unforgettable line "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand"

It was the right psalm at the right time, and Helen had it perfectly by heart."

I know some of you at All Saints prefer the newer translations of the Bible, and feel uncomfortable with the old; however, I know Helen would have recited the older version. For her, the way communion with God was through beauty: beauty of words, beauty of music, beauty of harmony and ritual, mysterious though they may be.

Her influence on me has been so strong that in these matters I cannot think any other way: for this I am grateful also that often I can find this inspiration and peace in the ritual of the services at All Saints.

Anne Hancock, 19th March 2008.

Easter Day 2008 Sermon Preached at Solemn Mass by Fr Hoyal

“Do not hold on to me.” John 20.17

I have been puzzled – nothing new for me. I spend my life being puzzled. But in particular I been puzzled over this last week as I’ve thought about those words of Jesus to Mary Magdalene: Don’t hold on to me, don’t be fastening onto me, don’t cling to me.” That is the force of the original phrase. But why not! Why shouldn’t she embrace him in that amazing poignant moment of recognition and realisation?

We don’t know much about Mary biographically. The gospels tell us that she came from Magdala near the northern shore of Galilee; that she was a follower of Jesus whom he had healed of evil spirits, one of the women who helped to look after Jesus and his companions as they travelled round; that she was one of the women present at his crucifixion; and famously, of course, that she met the risen Jesus in the garden and was sent to tell the others.

Of course there are romantic traditions about Mary Magdalene: – that she was a prostitute whom Jesus had saved from a life of shame; that she and Jesus were married and had children – the line taken in *The Da Vinci Code*, of course. But there’s no foundation for any of this in the gospels. And nothing in the gospels identifies Mary with the woman taken in adultery of John ch 8, or the woman with a bad reputation who anointed Jesus at a supper.

As for popular conspiracy theories about suppression of the facts by the Church, they really carry no force. If Jesus and Mary Magdalene had been married, there would have been no problem for the followers of Jesus. It would have been accepted without trouble as part of authentic tradition. There was nothing in

scripture to say that the Messiah had to be celibate. On the contrary, from a Jewish viewpoint marriage is a good thing, very much to be expected and encouraged, and it was perfectly normal to expect that God's Messiah King would marry and have descendants, and why not? If the New Testament is silent about any marriage of Jesus, it is because it did not happen.

Of course, none of this solves my puzzle.

Now, it's reasonable to infer from the gospels that Mary was very devoted to Jesus, strongly attached to him because he had healed her, because he accepted her and treated her with respect. One would hardly expect otherwise of her in the circumstances. His death had been devastating for her. The disappearance of the body was an alarming discovery. No surprise, then, that at that moment of recognition she should want to fling her arms about him, or throw herself down before him and clasp his feet, as St Matthew's Gospel indicates. But, no, she mustn't cling of him.

My puzzle is the greater because of what happens a week later when Jesus appears to Thomas. Now Thomas – in a very blokish way – loves Jesus deeply but just can't believe that Jesus has risen from the dead, for unlike the other disciples he hasn't seen him yet. Showing Thomas the scars of his crucifixion, Jesus invites Thomas to touch: "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side."

What Mary Magdalene is bidden to refrain from, Thomas is actually invited to do. Not that he does, of course. He is so overwhelmed by Jesus' living presence in the flesh that he just gasps in amazement: My Lord, and my God! Obstinate doubt has given way to sheer awe and wonder.

But I have solved my puzzle like this. The risen Saviour graciously accommodates to each individual's particular spiritual needs. He

knows that, on the whole, men are from Halford's and Mars, while women are from IKEA and Venus. He knows that we all different.

So if Jesus says to Mary, don't hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father, he is taking account of her emotional and very understandable possible physical attachment to him. "Yes, I am your Teacher, your great Master – Rabbouni," he is saying. "But you must love me and worship me in the right way. Don't cling to me now simply as a woman who loves a man. Don't hold me back in your joy at seeing me in the flesh again. You will see me again when I ascend to the Father, and what matters most is not my physical presence but the abiding deep spiritual presence that all my followers will experience through the gift of the Holy Spirit I bring you from the Father. You are to love me, not with your heart alone, but also with your soul and your mind and your strength."

I have no doubt that the resurrection of Christ from the dead involved his physical body, the thoroughly human flesh and blood that he took from his holy mother, and I regard this fact as very important, and indeed essential theologically.

But we mustn't cling to anything that distracts us from the demands of true discipleship. We are not to love religious satisfactions of faith or ritual or the emotional highs of personal piety more than Jesus himself, risen, ascended and glorified. He is to be worshipped, adored and obeyed, not pietistically venerated or emotionally idolised for defective human reasons. We must *practise* our faith. Just feeling it is not enough. Indeed it is dangerous.

And if Jesus says to Thomas: "Reach out and touch these wounds" – not that Thomas now needs to – "I understand your grief at losing your leader. I understand your doubts about the possibility of resurrection. But surely you can't doubt now. The tomb was empty, and here I am before you in the body. This isn't

wishful thinking. This isn't emotionalism. This is the glorious work of God whose love is stronger than death and who calls you to share his life for ever."

Superficial rationalism – pub rationalism, if you like – has to give way to sound reason and holy mystery. There is all the proof we need. Intellectual doubts are seldom a convincing obstacle to true faith. Few people are really clever enough to hold out against God with any intellectual respectability. I don't think even Professor Dawkins has managed it, despite his huge sales. Anyway, what we really need is not convincing intellectually but converting spiritually by an experience of Christ's real presence. We need to *feel* as well as to understand.

Body, soul, heart and mind and strength – whatever *you* need to help you be a faithful disciple, the Lord will supply it. Reach out and touch, if that's right for you. But if it's not – for fear of misplaced affection or not seeing the wood for the trees – then don't cling emotionally. Don't let the attractions of what is temporal, superficial and transient distract you from what is spiritual and eternal and essential.

But either way, do go and do what Fr Paul eloquently reminded us about at last night's great Easter Vigil service. As Mary Magdalene did, and later Thomas, do go and tell people what you've seen and heard and now know without any doubt: that he who died is risen and, risen, lives and reigns.

GROWING IN INFLUENCE

Lots of teamwork and group work here!

How did we find All Saints? Who and what influenced us?

The Christian influence of parents.

The influence of Christian leaders like Rowan Williams.

School, individual teachers and a Christian education.

Wives, husbands and friends.

Reaction to/against other liturgical styles.

Bringing one's children to Church.

Toddler groups.

Welcoming – or lack of it – works both ways!

***“You are the salt of the earth.” “Let your light so shine ...”
What should this reading mean for us?***

We must not be shrinking violets – show our conviction and spread our influence in office, staffroom etc – but without being pi.

Some people are so holy their influence is very special and immediately recognised.

Be involved in everyday life, not just in Church but in all suitable places.

Salt is fundamental to the diet and a common and essential ingredient – so we are needed.

If one feels s/he has become tasteless, look to others for a new kick.

If you are to be a leading light, you must be strong and attractive.

Salt – seasoning, preserving, purifying – it must not be diluted.

Must influence through example. Food is awful without salt, and life is awful without Christ.

Light is revelation, declaration, example – being Christ in the world.

Be distinctive – continuous renewal – look for the light in others – give our light to all others without reservation.

Practical Suggestions

(1) Take the 9 30 service, and baptisms, funeral and weddings, need some of original congregation present at these services to represent the core church, form a group, and take on specific tasks, such as welcoming.

Find a contact person for each street, even if s/he does not attend All Saints, to feed back to clergy.

Take pewsheets and magazines home and give them to neighbours.

Discussion:

Church open all day every day – a great influence.

Passers by speak to Tony as he mows the grass – lots enter the Church who never attend services – fortunate in our location – lots of passing trade.

Restore light for Our Lady on the Tower.

Make links with the St John's Residents Association – join it as a Church – offer them a meeting at ASC/discounted use of RR/space in magazine to talk about what the SJRA does.

(2) An exhaustive list led to the question, Are we prepared to give up some activities and ideas and concentrate on a few areas? Eg Doing more for St John's; doing more with the care homes, giving witness at Clifton Down, putting on lectures, putting on musical events while getting the balance right with ASC as a place of worship and promoting our services.

Discussion:

We have to choose just two points under Influence.

Our notice boards and our website are our silent influence: get them right and do them well. Put ASC in the website 'What's on in Bristol'. More noticeboards – reinstate the side door one as well.

(3) At the January workshop, Mark Pilgrim urged us to think of two things we can actually achieve.

Few of the people who use the Randall Room actually know what happens in the Church – we could invite KinderMusik to visit us downstairs – we should make people feel at home at ASC in their own right.

Make religion and faith Fun and Accessible; heavy religion has its place, but not all the time; chill out; make it fun and worthwhile, and they'll go away throbbing.

Discussion:

Notice board important to KinderMusik – great to see prams parked around the atrium but we need people to invite them into Church and make them welcome.

Another notice board by the Alma Vale steps or in the parish room lobby – and brighten the lobby up; put posters and events notices up in the

Randall room and ads for stuff on or near the kitchen door – eye catching.

(4) Extend our environmental work.

Extend our public relations work.

Install PowerPoint in the Randall Room.

Discussion:

We could declare ourselves a Fair Trade Church, engage with the relevant organisations such as Sustainable Redland – is there a Clifton equivalent? We need people to make it happen.

Conclusion:

We need to hone things down and set achievable targets before we lose our Saltiness.

IN THIS MONTH ... APRIL 1915

[Excerpts from the Vicar's, Canon Gillson's, plea for marking St George's Day]

It would have struck our forefathers of the 14th century as strange that it should be necessary to make a solemn announcement in a 'High Church' Parish Magazine that 23rd of April will be St George's day! ... This year it must be different; we are beginning to feel now that we are a nation and that we have a life and a heritage to preserve, for which we are daily giving the best of our Country's life-blood. If we have a Patron Saint, let us at least recognise him, enlist his sympathy, seek the aid of his prayers, and make his Festival a day on which to focus our intercessions for the War and the Empire, and to offer to god our thanksgivings for his mercies to us as a people. In Edward VI's first prayer

book, St George is given a Red Letter Day, in a later edition he is reduced to the rank of a Black Letter Day; but the day is still marked in our Calendar and it should at least form a natural rallying point at which we meet to bring our Country's needs before the King of Saints.

From the MCW

Possibly better known as the Parish Jinx.

In my last I spoke of Fire and Fludde. Now we have earthquakes, lightning and a freeze up.

You'll have noticed we got the heating working? In fact, the last Sunday it worked I got told it was too hot. Pride goeth etc. In the early hours of Wednesday morning there was an earthquake in I believe Leicestershire and the pilot light went out in Clifton. The ceremonial re-ignition was unfortunately combined with the first attempt to cure the thermostat's schizophrenial. To cut a long story short, our resourceful Fr Boss had six butane heaters installed and with any luck and suitable scaffolding it'll be all systems go by Palm Sunday. When there will no doubt be a heat wave.*

The lightning conductor gentlemen have come and sorted us out, so we may escape that one, but I'm touching wood.

The next major work is the lighting, and guess what, Madam Sacristan is already buying up book lights. Probably they are gas fired book lights. Whatever happened to Faith? PTL for Candles.

Next, I don't do Mission Statements but here is my Haiku (Look, no 'ands'):

*Gathering for Christ,
Everyone is Welcome,
@Home@All Saints*

Well, the boilers refused to fire up, and on went the Saga. The weather deteriorated. Not lightning but hurricanes. You just try being up in the bell tower in a strong wind. The windows are not glazed, and the scenario was definitely wuthering heights. But I wasn't worried about wind. Peter and Paul have been very inconsiderate. One pilot light lit between them, two dead solenoids and at least one troublesome thermocouple. Our 21st century plumbing engineers used the most up to date and sophisticated techniques in an attempt to light Peter's pilot, namely a discarded tissue or snitch-wipe from the belfry floor, wrapped round a small twig. But although this lit the gas, once the depressed switch was released it all went out again. Meanwhile, the tower swayed and the control panel clunked gently to prove that IT was working, and I whiled away the time trying to work out which direction the window overlooked. You try it from that angle

14/3/8 Pi day. And silver cleaning day, and second lot of butane gas delivery day. The nice young man who brought it was a former server from SS P & P and wanted to know all about our liturgy. From next week he will be an airline pilot, a job he clearly regards as a sinecure compared with carrying those metal bottles around. Never a dull moment.

Palm Sunday. Chilly, but not unbearable. A friend suggested we keep baked potatoes in our pockets. Nice one. Doubles as lunch. At least we didn't have to light our palms. And the rain stopped just in time for us to go outside for our procession. This meant that all the people who forgot we start at 10 45 were able to attach themselves to the end of the procession with innocent and uplifted expressions and pretend they too had been hanging around for half an hour. But I know who you are

There was of course a second procession, low key but solemn, dignified and exclusive. You may not have noticed. Madam Churchwarden

entered the Church, processed via the choir stalls to the organ, and waited by the sanctuary step. The Deacon rose, they bowed, the elastoplast changed hands and Father Principal Celebrant's finger was saved. Rumour says that Sampson bit it.

17/3/8 They say one or more boiler have fired, but we do not yet know what the control panel will tell it to do. So I am spending a couple of hours living in hope. I had my special palm specially blessed this am, and have been sneezing from the soaking ever since.

Thinks, even if the heating works, I still have ongoing trip switch problems, and the mikes are on strike, so I am yet beset. O, and there is a new leak in the Lady Chapel, right over the minister's chair.

*eithe genoito! No boilers but several snow flurries.

Holy Saturday. Young@AllSaints, in their capacity as the future of All Saints, met to discuss it. Fine, forceful, freethinkers they are. The future is safe, but not as we know it. Then, bearing what I prefer to call flowering currant, we moved on to construct the Easter Garden. Slight problem with the tomb. You've no idea how disconcerting it is to enter the atrium and be greeted with voices crying 'Who's moved the stone?' But we found it, behind a box of light bulbs in the store cupboard. Father Fuchsia is a dab hand with oasis but a bit liberal with the water. There were so many helpers that I got even more confused and in converse with Madam Sacristan referred to the Heavenly twins as Theabelle. She shuddered. Perish the thought; nearly as bad as Fr Boss's occasional assistant Jean Bradley, and just as terrifying.

Later ... the fire went well, the glow lights held out, there were plenty of candles and once we got inside we were warm enough. Only the nails misbehaved. Instead of sticking to the Paschal Candle, they hurled themselves broadcast round the Church, and following Fr Deacon was like trading on caltrops. This is an excellent word, and removes the necessity of spelling chevaux [eux] de frises. I fear I confuse hairs and horses. Anyway, me and Fr Boss found two, but one Nail is still missing.

If one of you is spearing a shopping list to a corkboard with it, please may I have it back? No charges will be brought or levied.

Happy Easter.

Yours,

Jonah

TWO LECTURES

The following may well be of interest:

7 May 2008 18.00-19.00 £6.00/ £4.00 Watershed Media Centre

Charles Freeman on Heretics, Pagans and the Christian State

Charles Freeman follows his stunning *The Closing of the Western Mind* with his study of one of the most important moments in Church history in AD 381, which defined Christian orthodoxy and condemned all other theories of the Godhead heretical and suppressing freedom of thought for the first time in a thousand years of Greco-Roman civilization.

7 May 2008 19.30-20.45 £6.00/ £4.00 Watershed Media Centre

Atheism, Agnosticism and God

John Cornwell, Mark Vernon and Julian Baggini

Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion* has sparked massive debate. One to respond is historian and journalist John Cornwell with *Darwin's Angel*, in which he argues that Dawkins is dogmatic and extremist. He discusses his book with the atheist philosopher Julian Baggini, author of *Atheism: a short introduction* and Mark Vernon, agnostic, who in *After Atheism*, argues that a committed, even passionate, agnosticism is vital for the future of our planet and our souls.

To book contact Watershed Media Centre directly on *0117 927 5100* or visit in person www.ideasfestival.co.uk

140th Anniversary Festival Plans

Following Fr Richard's initial announcement last month after PCC approval, here are a few initial reflections, now that Easter is behind us, as we begin to plan. Many have emphasised the need for the festival to be inclusive and to have something for everyone. Quite right. This should be a major outreach initiative and we will do well to ensure that as many people as possible are involved, both with ideas and in delivery. Do come forward soon if you are keen and willing to help in any way. You will be welcomed.

The young@allsaints will, I'm sure, have much to contribute and all ideas are welcome, especially those which might involve children, and from those of you who have helped make an event like this succeed in the past. Please keep them coming in, either to Fr Richard, Fr Brendan, Graham Davies or Alan Rundle who have so far volunteered to contribute. Tim Stanley is on stand-by to give us our usual exemplary press coverage nearer the time.

For now, the general plan is possibly to fill the Octave from Sunday September 7th to September 14th, which happens to fit nicely with Doors Open Day on September 13th, with a range of activities to include fine worship, visiting preachers, music, refreshment, entertainment, art and flowers and to show off our ecclesiastical treasures and archives. Our vision is to create many and different opportunities to celebrate... and for us to be inviting many families and people, of all ages, from the parish, and others including Friends and music supporters, far and wide (internationally too!), to a variety of events and activities to suit various tastes, with something for everyone. Exciting times and much to communicate!

Alan Rundle

GENERATIONS

at All Hallows' Church

Poems with **Music**

for every age and everyone

read by the Birdcombe Poetry Group

FRIDAY 30 MAY

7.30 pm

Tickets £8 (£6 concessions;
£1 children under 16)
to include refreshments, from:

Jessica Smith, tel 0117 9249203
email tandysmith@talktalk.net

Carol Sapsed, tel 01275 852727
email birdcombe@tiscali.co.uk

Proceeds in aid of All Hallows' Restoration Appeal
All Hallows' Church, All Hallows Road, Easton, BS5 0HH

**Notes of the meeting of Young@AllSaints
on Holy Saturday (22 March) 2008, 10 am
at 1 Buckingham Vale**

Thanks were expressed to the Benton family for their hospitality and for an excellent brunch.

Anne opened the proceedings with a gloomy view of the future based on the fact that most of the congregation of All Saints are as old as she is, virtually all were as old as Fr Brendan, and very few were as young as the assembled company. The Diocese has asked each parish to think about growth, in partnership, in influence, in commitment and in numbers. What could we do to help All Saints grow, and in what ways would they like to see All Saints grow?

Fr Brendan asked for suggestions. What would members of Young@AllSaints like to see happening?

- (1) An After Church Club in the small garden or courtyard, after the 11 am Mass, 12 15 – 1 15, while the adults are standing around with their coffee. Any age group welcome for games of tag rugby and football; the big garden could be used when it is dry and the grass is mown. **[It was felt that things were too busy after the 9 30, but after consideration this may have been too pessimistic a view. After all, there are plenty of adults with time to stand around. Ed.]**
- (2) A Gardening Club.
- (3) Thinner cassocks for the servers to wear in summer.
- (4) The chance to join the choir at a younger age.
- (5) The hymns sung at St John's School are popular with the pupils: it was suggested that these hymns could be used at the 9 30 so that school and church would overlap for some of our number; this might also attract other St John's pupils. We could obtain copies or ask Ken Smith what he has played there.

- (6) Get St John's Choir to visit occasionally to sing at the 9 30: focus on a few occasions so that families get used to it and fit it round their personal schedules.
- (7) Display more picture exhibitions from St John's and other schools.
- (8) More concerts involving Clifton College; Upper School ones might be too big, but Pre concerts would fit in All Saints. Leaflet the Houses.
- (9) Send leaflets to more of Bristol; copy Sainsbury's and suggest that people 'Try something new.'
- (10) Go away camping again, preferably just as a group but possibly at the Walsingham Youth Pilgrimage. Centre Parks recommended.
- (11) If this is difficult to arrange, what about a sleep in at Church, a Rave in the Nave, an all night vigil?
- (12) Lent Breakfasts, like before with a Storykeeper video to watch.
- (13) We have to remember that Clifton pupils have their own chapel to attend regularly and cannot always be at ASC.
- (14) More meetings for Young People, like a School Council but not too boring; stuff like this, a Young People's parish focus group. (General agreement)
- (15) Send a priest to Sunday School every so often and for such visits change the age boundaries.
- (16) Keen to have more guided Masses.
- (17) If our numbers are too low to divide our young people into groups, could we join with other churches and alternate in hosting some services. Fr Brendan would like ASC to host a Youth Mass and call it MegaBite.
- (18) General agreement that Fr Brendan is mad and
- (19) that it would be good to meet occasionally on a Saturday for a dramatic reading of the gospel, with a real loafServers need ether hassocks or knee pads.

How can we make the 9 30 Service more attractive?

- (1) Different hymns – no one knows the ones used.
- (2) Dramatized Gospel.
- (3) Children doing the readings (general agreement here).
- (4) Presentations are popular but more participation would make them better. Planning would be needed, and a leader, but there is a resource there.
- (5) Drums and electric guitars – sometimes.

How can we make the 11 00 Mass more attractive?

- (1) Can we please not sing the Our Father? It's too high. (Agreement here.) The echo Our Father was suggested as a substitute.
- (2) Real bread, not wafers (understood it has to be unleavened).

Good things about the 11 00 Mass

- (1) It is good when Fr Brendan sings it.
- (2) The hymns are good.
- (3) The readings are good to listen to.
- (4) The Choir is good.
- (5) The bar afterwards is good (meeting place for families).
- (6) Lots of people come.

Bad things about the 11 00 Mass.

- (1) Too long.
- (2) We have to sing the Our Father.
- (3) It's weird: the sermons are too long and people fall asleep. The 9 30 presentation is inclusive and snappy.
- (4) We need more splitting off in age groups (ie for the young people).
- (5) Young people could hand out service sheets.
- (6) Young people could ring the Angelus and ring the bell before the service.

Good things about the 9 30 Service

- (1) Short.
- (2) Presentations.

- (3) One reading.
- (4) New hymn book would make it even better though having just one sheet of paper is good.
- (5) Interactive white board would be great.

Bad things about the 9 30 Service

- (1) Too early.
- (2) Need more and different priests.
- (3) More and different hymns.

The 8 am and the 6 pm proved a foreign country to the assembly, except that an older member pointed out that the 8 am meant that 16 year olds could attend Mass and still get to work. Clifton College has an 8 am service, so no room for negotiation there. But there are extra/voluntary services at Clifton, eg Ash Wednesday – could one such visit ASC sometimes?

Anne Bradley
Secretary/Editor
22/3/8

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Passion Sunday March 2008 Bill Fry MUS. BAC., F.L.C.M, A.R.C.M,
A.T.C.L

Formerly organist of All Saints Church would like to thank Rev Richard Hoyal SSC and all the very kind members of the congregation who provide transport on Sundays. Bill feels very at home as he started with Father Albert Luetchford in 1967