

Fr Hoyal writes

As you know, I try to encourage people to look forward rather than back in parish life. But we need to look back, too, and evaluate. There is always much to be grateful for, and there are always lessons to be learned. The following notes about All Saints in 2007 should help in this.

Guest Preachers

Epiphany – Canon Peter Johnson (Canon Treasurer of Bristol Cathedral)

Candlemas – Fr John Hadley (Holy Trinity Horfield)

Parish Retreat – Sister Margaret Magdalen (Community of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage)

Women's World Day of Prayer at All Saints 2 March – Dr Gervaise Angel

Diocesan Walsingham May Festival 8 May – Fr Peter Cobb SSC (former Vicar of All Saints & Walsingham Guardian)

Pentecost Sunday – Bishop Mike Hill (Bishop of Bristol)

Dedication Festival – Prebendary Geoffrey Sunderland (former Curate of All Saints)

Trinity 6 15 July – Dr Richard Coldicott, Trinity College ordinand

Trinity 16 22 September – Canon George Kovoov (Principal, Trinity College)

Michaelmas – The Revd David Ritchie (St Mary Magdalene, Stoke Bishop)

All Saints Day – Canon George Bennett (former Curate of All Saints)

Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Fr André Hart (Vicar of Westbury on Trym)

Special Events

Mothers' Union children's "Christmas" party

Start of weekly 9.30 am Family Service 21 January

Parish Retreat at The Abbey House, Glastonbury (16-18 February)

Lent Course: *Led by the Spirit* (Fr Paul Spilsbury on *The Holy Spirit & Jesus*, Fr John Bradley on *The Holy Spirit: the Unknown God?*, Canon Malcolm Widdicombe on *The Holy Spirit in the Church To-day*,

Fr Richard Hoyal on *The Holy Spirit & the Future*, and the Revd Dr Francis Miles on *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*

Lent Breakfast Club for *Young@AllSaints*

Lent Appeal: Padre Lerchundi Children's Centre in Tangiers, and Alabare, providing care for ex-prisoners and women at risk, with houses in the Bristol area

MU spring jumble sale

Uganda Praise & Candlelight Supper with Presentation by the Rt Revd Lee Rayfield (Bishop of Swindon) – organized by Andrew Morgan

Joint All Saints/All Hallows Confirmation 1 May at All Hallows by Bishop Andrew Burnham

Attendance at Ebbsfleet Festival of Faith – Bristol Cathedral (12 May)

Christian Aid Week box collection at Clifton Down shopping centre (19 May)

All Saints/All Hallows joint coach party to Glastonbury Pilgrimage (16 June)

Petertide *Day of Prayer for the Apostolic Ministry* (29 June)

July – Saturday Soup Run

Mothers' Union outing to the Botanical Gardens, followed by tea at St Mary Magdalene's, Stoke Bishop

All Saints/All Hallows parish pilgrimage to Walsingham – coinciding with annual Youth Pilgrimage (6-10 August)

Day Pilgrimage to Wantage (CSMV & parish church) with Church Union (1 September)

All Saints participating in Bristol Open Doors Day (8 September)

Cotswold Church Crawl (22 September)

Harvest Appeal for WaterAid and Send a Cow

Mothers' Union harvest lunch for the parish (7 October)

All Saints Day Confirmation Mass (Bishop Andrew Burnham)

Remembrance Weekend observance at Whiteladies Road War Memorial

Church Union Lecture 20 November - Sr Annaliese Brogden (Sisters of the Church, St Paul's) on Religious Community in the City

"Advent Voices" service for Advent Sunday

Parish attendance at All Saints, Margaret Street W1, for Funeral Requiem of Lovinia Miller (8 December)

Belgrave School Carol Service

University of Bristol Chamber Choir Carol Service

St John's School Carol Service

Christmas Appeal for Barnabas Fund (caring for Christian groups under threat, eg in Iraq)

Various special Sunday evening services monthly inc "The Great 'O's" – Advent Antiphon service

Monthly Walsingham Cell Masses, MU Masses, requiem Masses and Masses for healing

Occasional Offices

4 children's baptisms & 1 adult baptism – 1 thanksgiving for a birth – 6 All Saints members confirmed (3 adults, 3 young people) – 5 weddings (inc Jean Knott & Dennis Detheridge) – 1 marriage blessing – 11 church funerals – 7 crematorium services for parishioners

Over the course of the year we had to bid farewell to many notable All Saints members and friends, among them Canon Gordon Pavey (former assistant priest at All Saints), Mavis Heller, Molly Michael, Peggy Cleeve, David Hetherington, Jack Metford, Dianne Willkins, Dee Cridland, Madge Arnold, Mary Densham, Ruby Badman, Harry Sharpe, Lovinia Miller and Gordon Jones.

Work in Church

Major work has been carried out, thanks particularly to the care and initiative of our wardens and the generosity of individual benefactors and the All Saints Trust. Matters attended to include: rewiring of the building – renewal of microphone system – renewal of heating system.

Music

The monthly Concert Matinees at 4pm on a Saturday arranged by Graham Davies – varied programme of contributors from All Saints and beyond, both instrumentalists and singers. This is proving a popular series.

Concert of Passiontide Music (18 March) and Christmas Carol Service (12 December) – University of Bristol Chamber Choir

Bristol Grammar School instrumental concert (24 March)

UWE Concert – *From Monteverdi to Montevideo* (5 May)

Blagovest Ensemble from St Petersburg (12/13 May) – Concert of Russian church and folk music; they also sang at the Solemn Mass to great effect.

David Briggs – major organ recital with a Buster Keaton film improvisation (16 June)

It has been particularly gratifying to see All Saints choir grow in numbers and effectiveness over the last year, and it has been good to have the support of Sue Gregory and John Davenport

People

Roger Hopkins succeeded Norman Drewett as church warden, Norman kindly remaining PCC treasurer. In September Andrew Morgan ran the Bristol half-marathon in aid of The Leprosy Mission, raising £300, and Kenneth Dalglish participated very successfully in the Helvellyn Triathlon, on behalf of the Stroke Association. Also in September Liz Badman began as our new (part-time) parish administrator. In October Fr John Morley Bunker was eighty, and a special Mass was celebrated for Chris and Diana Verity's Golden Wedding. On 16 December Vera Price reached the age of 103.

* * * * *

These notes are far from comprehensive. They omit mention of many regular activities, and of invaluable contributions made by among others our assistant clergy, parish readers, wardens, treasurer and assistants, choir, director of music, assistant organists, servers, cleaners, sacristy helpers, PCC and committees, family service, crèche and Sunday school helpers, social and welcome committee, and other parish organizations and church groups. But they give some idea of the breadth of activities at All Saints. Nor must we forget those who hire All Saints premises for groups diverse as Alcoholics Anonymous, the Soroptomists and Kindermusik, among others.

Please give thanks for all who work so faithfully to make All Saints what it is. And please pray that we may all be glad to do our best for God, for our parish and for one another in 2008, not least as we take up the challenge of the diocese's Growth Programme.

Richard H. H. H.

PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD *CANDLEMAS EVE*

FRIDAY
1st FEBRUARY

7.30 pm

CANDLEMAS CEREMONIES & FESTIVAL MASS

***GUEST PREACHER* Fr John Bradley**
Former Vicar of Holy Nativity Knowle
and Chaplain of St Monica's Westbury on Trym

REFRESHMENTS AFTERWARDS



6 February *First Day of Lent*
ASH WEDNESDAY

7.30 am Mass

9.30 am Mass

7.30 pm

SOLEMN MASS

Ashing available at all Masses



Dear Reader,

Two years ago, the Diocese launched its Growth programme, encouraging parishes to work towards a plan for Growth in four areas: partnership, influence, numbers and commitment.

The Archdeacon recently wrote to the Wardens, explaining that instead of completing Articles of Inquiry next year each parish would be asked to provide the Area Dean with a copy of its own Growth Plan. This is primarily the responsibility of the PCC, but everyone who worships at All Saints is welcome to help, and we hope many (most? all!) will wish to do so.

Four members of the Standing Committee have attended Diocesan workshops. Our initial suspicion that this might be a paper exercise proved unfounded; the enthusiasm and the support were manifest. We are also greatly cheered and encouraged to find that without realising it we are already on track. This means we already have our starting point, and can feel confident that we can achieve the difficult bit. The actual paperwork is minimal: one side of A4, bullet points. Then we have to deliver. So the bullet points have to enthuse us, the plan has to be achievable, the aims have to be what All Saints really needs. Some of it will be action packed; some of it will be taking stock, being what we are, confirming what we stand for.

This is not just for the PCC and Standing Committee. We cannot impose growth. Come and tell us what.

On January 19th, there will be a parish brain storming event. Come to the 12 noon Mass, then join us for lunch. Do bring food to share, but we are expecting to provide bread and butter and cheese and fruit, and

possibly a biscuit. Drinks are on the house: I've been wondering how to celebrate a recent anniversary Then group discussion on the four growth areas, then a plenary session (probably! we're still at the planning stage); finally, we'll share our ideas, and close with a rousing revivalist hymn or two.

See you there.

Best wishes,

Anne

Diocesan Growth Programme

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow."

St Paul, 1 Cor 3:6

When Jesus described the "kingdom of God", the stories he used showed it to be a kingdom that grows. It is clear that God call us to be fruitful as well as faithful (John 15). St Paul stresses that it is God that gives growth. But for God to play his part, we must play ours with purposeful effort and activity.

The Bristol Diocesan Growth Programme aims to give direction to that effort and activity within the Diocese and the communities that make it up. It takes a holistic approach to growth and therefore has four key components:-

Commitment

Partnership

Influence

Numbers

(<http://www.bristol.anglican.org/resources/growth/index.html>)

Parish Growth Plan

Each parish is to deliver a growth plan to the Archdeacon in May. The key to a successful parish growth plan is to look at each component and then set a small number of attainable goals with the realities of that parish and community in mind. A long list would be unachievable and thus discouraging to all.

Members of the AS Standing Committee have attended briefing meetings and read diocesan material on the subject, and what follows aims to be a list of points for consideration by the parish. NB we have achieved an appreciable number of these already

Growing in Commitment

- serious undertaking of discipleship; loss of personal and community comfort zones inevitable
- prayer and spiritual disciplines at the heart of all
- worship should aim to allow people to express their love and commitment to God.
- high quality learning in services and through training.
- small groups to help people learn and grow and attend to pastoral care and encouragement others.
- help every believer to exercise their gifts.
- teaching and encouraging people to give sacrificially.

Growing in Partnership

- look for opportunities to work with others, both within the Church and beyond it.
- strategic partnerships with other churches both locally and further afield, to share resources and people, do things together that we are unable to do on our own and thus learn from each other.
- beyond the Church, find organisations and people who share our aspirations; some Christian, many not; education, health, poverty, world development, environmental and social justice concerns form common ground and opportunity to show others

how God's kingdom works.

- membership of boards and councils, local and national.

Growing in Influence

- engage with people where they are, living with integrity and speaking prophetically into the world around us.
- live as individuals and as churches in a way that earns respect.
- many of the concerns of those around us will reflect God's concerns.
- listen to what is going on in our neighbours' lives, our communities and the culture in which we live.
- stand up for and speak out the values of God's kingdom against the tide of culture, often prophetically and counter-culturally.
- practise what we preach, develop coherent strategies for communication and take advantage of new technology.

Growing in Numbers

- encourage people to believe in Him and belong in His Church.
- re-connect with those who used to belong to the Church.
- connect with those who have never been a part of it, perhaps making our church life more user-friendly.
- encourage experiences of being welcomed and belonging in the lives of our churches.
- focus on children and young people, crucial to the Church of today and tomorrow.
- explore evangelism courses like Alpha and Emmaus.

**In Celebration of a Very Special Friendship and a Tribute to my
very bestest of Friends – Vinia Miller
September 1945 to November 2007**

Imagine if you will, 76 apprehensive 11 year olds, waiting to know what to do, where to go and to which class they have been assigned, either to the A class or the B class according to their scores in 11+ exams taken three months before. All in our new school uniforms, some in wartime navy blue blazer with the school badge on the pocket. Some with the very distinctive maroon, black and silver stripes bought via the school's clothing shop – all recycled for re-use with new pupils. Both Vinia and I were fortunate to have had the striped blazers for our first day at Finchley County Grammar School. Both of us were allocated to the B class, and as were then Lobb and Long, we sat together in paired seat/desks. We were also only children, born of 'elderly' mothers (those over 30 years of age!), so we quickly formed a close bond.

We both took the last School Certificate of education, both didn't pass Maths high enough to matriculate, but both getting 8 passes – enough to go on to higher education. Vinia stayed in the Lower 6th until she transferred to Acton Technical College to study Catering and Hotel management. I stayed to the end of the Upper 6th doing the Preliminary State Nursing exams in A Level subjects in preparation for my transfer to the Westminster Hospital for a 4 year course to become a State Registered Nurse.

Our friendship carried on; she was my only bridesmaid at my wedding and Godmother to my older child, Elizabeth. I was present at her marriage to John Miller at St Michael's, Chester Square. We maintained a close contact during which time my second child, Robert, was born and she produced Stephen and Alexander in quick succession.

We never lived in each other's pockets but were always there for one another in times of joy and also of sadness. We visited the family in Turkey, in Ashford and in Bristol, and were ready to help out at anytime, emotionally, physically and practically throughout the years.

Once we were both married it was easier to “up” the contacts and to rejoice in joint activities.

17 of our class group at school had chosen to join the local church, St Mary at Finchley and the youth group as a ‘bonding’ closer together. When one considers that we also had a Jewish group of 8 children in our class as well as the 17 Christian ones, that only left 9 who left in the class of 36. We were confirmed in May 1954 by the Rt Revd Gerald Ellison, the Bishop of Willesden in St Mary’s Finchley, and maintained those close links with the church until we went our separate ways at the end of our school days. A wonderful preparation for our future lives and friendships that have remained constant and solid ever since.

With Vinia’s move to Bristol came her involvement with All Saints, Clifton, where we were both “officially” designated to the Church wardens as the pair responsible for the cleaning of the Chapel.

Now today, 28 November 2007, that wonderful, generous and positive friendship has ended in Vinia’s death. I had made a promise that I would come to her wherever she was to look after and care for her until the moment of her death, and with God’s grace I have been able to honour that promise, which I had sincerely made to her.

I was one of the very few people who she told could call her Vinia, all others were told to use the fuller version, Lovinia – the ‘O’ being the most important letter in her name. The usual version is Lavinia, but she abhorred the the thought of being called ‘Lavy’. The spelling is Lovinia on her birth certificate so she had not changed it herself, her parents had already thought that one through. 62 years of solid friendship is today longer than a good many marriages, one to be thankful for, one to be treasured in my heart. In this day and age it is very rare for friendship to last and will become even rarer in the future due to the pace of life at which the modern world lives, and also the demands on individuals to maintain such friendship.

Vinia and I climbed mountains and went into glaciers on a school trip to Montreux-Switzerland in 1947, then we descended into caves and tunnels in Cappodocia, Turkey, on the Pilgrimage in the footsteps of St Nicholas in 2005.

Can you imagine, shock, horror, on the TV at the Chelsea Flower Show, there is Alan Tichmarsh wearing our old school blazer. He had admitted that he wasn't a pupil of this school, but had seen the blazer in a charity shop and had bought it as "distinctive to wear" and be followed by a TV crew for the coming Flower Show, making it easier for the crew to follow him during the live updates from Chelsea for the viewing public. Only to be followed by an article in Woman's Own magazine with a photograph of him in 'our' blazer as part of the editorial story. But it didn't put Finchley County Grammar School back on the map, long after it had ceased to be a grammar school and been assimilated into a more 'modern' educational facility.

We were tennis doubles partners at school, playing for our class, our house and our school. There was a tennis playing month together in Montrieth, Scotland just before we left school and went on to further education. So many things we have done together before our marriages and since losing our husbands.

We, as you can well imagine, being feisty individuals, did not always see 'eye to eye', but when we did disagree we were able to see it through from both points of view, knowing that the other had our best interests at heart, would give sound advice and then let the other make up our own minds as to which was the best course of action, having thrashed all the pros and cons in the process. There was never any recrimination or anger and if we disagreed, then we agreed to disagree. In one very last exchange of views, she told me I was wrong, but then 10 days ago she called me and said that in the light of her imminent death, I should take every opportunity given to me to make the very best of the rest of my life as life is too short and 'if only' is

not an option. Thank you Vinia for that, it couldn't have been an easy decision for you to make, but you did it for me.

We used each other as sounding boards to draw upon our lives experiences to sort out our personal problems, knowing that we would give each other considered and truthful advice, it was always valued by both of us.

November 28th 2007

Thank you Vinia from the bottom of my heart for 62 years of wonderful friendship and fellowship. I shall be lost without your counselling, nagging, laughter and tears, but I'll always know that you will be telling me what you think from 'the other side'. You will find a way of letting me know your views if I get things wrong, not an infrequent occurrence. Friendships like ours do not happen by chance or that frequently these days, but when they do they are to be valued, cherished and treasured, especially when they happen and are encompassed in our Christian faith. I thank God every single day for our friendship and hope that other people who have had lasting friendships like ours has been, will be similarly rewarded.

Vinia, God grant you a restful peace and that when my time comes, we will be able to resume our earthly friendship in this wonderful afterlife.

With my love, now and always, a friend without equal
Jean.

MCW's Christmas notes

27/11/7 To the PCC, where, I am grieved to relate, I encountered a new variant in non politically correct behaviour. Rampant soxism. There I sat, inoffensive as ever, and I became aware of whisperings

across the floor. 'If we get bored,' muttered Fr Recorder to Dr Editor, 'we can just sit and admire the Churchwarden's socks'. My favourite pink Bagpuss socks, worn to cheer me up. In the event, no one even looked at them. The cynosure of all eyes was the youngest PC Councillor ever, Young Master Nicholas. Apart from taking a stroll across Hugh's papers, he sat more attentively than the rest of us put together. It may be significant that he later barked at me in a challenging fashion round at the pub.

2/12/7 Amid the storms of Advent Sunday, the wardens were particularly aware that the choir wished to sing from the Baptistery, and preferably without wearing wellies. We would have been able to offer Total Immersion, if things had got any worse, but by diligent mopping and the careful arrangement of towels and bath mats the deluge was deferred.

6/12/7 Young Nicholas failed to turn up for his patronal feast. To be reprimanded.

7/12/7 Found Fr Boss with a worried expression and a lot of money. Relieved him of care and cash, but later wondered if I was as trustworthy as I claimed, after finding this dreadful crime in the St James archives:

1677 Jan 19

'Decree of commission of enquiry into use of monies received at St James' Fair; Churchwardens had not distributed fair receipts to poor as should have, alleging that Mayor and Corporation were demanding tithe; Commission found against churchwardens Anthony Wood and Godfrey Van Itterne'.

9/12/7 There is a new and unsightly control panel in place for the heating. Fear not, it will receive a handsome wooden overcoat when the lighting's been done as well. I was amazed that no one had a go at me over the monstrosity – no one that is except three people who had

been at all the meetings when I explained the Plans. Who needs friends??

15/12/7 Saturday noon Mass; very nice, very calm, very relaxing. Drove home. Reached the top of Parry's Lane, and achieved one of my greatest ambitions. There were cop cars everywhere, stopping the traffic. Would Madam pull over? Madam obliged. Has Madam been drinking this lunchtime? When I finished laughing, I said, Yes, I have attended Mass and consequently I have taken wine. But communion wine is non alcoholic, said this nice young policeman. Oh no it isn't, it's something like 11% proof ... at which point I remembered just how much I had taken on board the previous evening. So I blew into this little white tube, and 'Zero' it said. Thank you, St Christopher. This is a true story, and there is a witness.* When I got to work the next morning a fellow member of staff eyed me quizzically and asked if he had seen me conversing with a policeman on Saturday. 'You bet, I replied, I was breathalysed – after Mass!

17/12/7 Chatted to Julian and John about the plumbing;

19/12/7 Must check if Gary has seen to the roof;

20/12/7 Dennis and Nick to see to the mikes. Fr Boss says he's lost count of the gentlemen in my life.

Also, a very big thank you to Ruth and Richard. The S Richard Chapel is now clear of fans, wiring, innards and plumbing, and I was contemplating with no enthusiasm at all the prospect of getting it respectable enough for use. Turned up this afternoon to lock the microphone stuff away, saw a light in the SRC, and went and found this stunningly clean transformation, washed and polished (or 'bottomed' in my native dialect) within an inch of its life. One of the best Christmas presents I shall have had!

23/12/7 From here on, I fear you'll just get highlights and snapshots. One's head was spinning. Why is there a loo roll behind one of the sanctuary heaters?

*Would you believe it? There were two witnesses. A member of our serving team was also in Parry's Lane at the time in question, and paused (as he says) to see if I needed a character reference. But he saw I was laughing and drove on. It just shows, there is no point trying to get away with nuffink.

Fr Recorder seems to be angling for a change of name. The Communication cord was pulled on the clergy procession – no Gospel – and Fr Greyhound legged it back to the Sacristy with a really startling turn of speed. Fr Anticipation subsequently stood half way through the notices, and had to be rebuked by Fr Fuchsia.

24/12/7 The 7 30 was the usual old lags; happy birthday Lois! The 5 30 was significantly rowdier. 'Collect your Christingles as directed' turned out to mean, 'Trample the nearest Churchwarden' and peanut shells covered all the floor. I was enjoying a quiet jujube when I realised that there were jelly babies impaled through their tummies, and I had to eat fast to put them out of their misery. Poor things. The new Baby Jesus looks very happy to be with us. He has come all the way from Spain. The 11 30 was splendid, but I was clearly past taking anything in by then. Except that it rained! How dare it?

25/12/7 9 am: a select congregation, plus the angelic host. I lit lots of candles again to brighten an initially drab day, and settled to listen attentively to Father's Stella sermon. Regretfully, neither of these pious actions did me any good at all. In the interval between the 9 and the 10, I carried the pair of low Mass candles back to the Wardens' pews; I was too bone idle to extinguish them, and my suit has gone to the cleaners to be de-waxed. Never mind, here comes the Interactive version of the Astral Address. Where's the first star? On the tree. Where's the second star? Over the crib. Where's the third star? Silence. No raised hand. Ever eager to help, I raise my right hand, and loud and clear over the radio mike I get my come uppance, 'Mrs Bradley doesn't count. *She* heard it at 9 o'clock.' Yes, she did, but she didn't have to listen!! And she might not have remembered! How many of you can remind me now where that third star shines?

Other delights from that service included antiphonal babies in the baptistery and on the carpet; Fr Fuschia in the Fatima Chasuble – very dashing and keeping it well under control; and the Collection. Thank you all very much for your generosity. I do not know the total yet, but three heavy bags of swag, sorry, offerings, went into the safe for the Barnabas Trust. However, we should not pressurize our congregation. My own row at the 10 am was basketed by the Warden Emeritus, Professor Fossil *and* the Head Sidesperson. Simultaneously. Not surprisingly, they kept their hands firmly in their pockets and slipped me a quiet fiver later. Poor things. Young Master Nicholas led the Offertory procession, adding to the roll call of ox and ass, sheep and lambs the no less reverent dachshund. Thea the Thurifer thwung the thurible. And I got trampled yet again by the Throng. But it was worth it.

Let me commend to you the peacefulness of Evensong. Fr Boss won the race to light most candles. Fiat lux.

30/12/7 Ever seen a ravening horde? A Viking invasion? Heathen sweeping from east to west with fire and sword? No? Try the 11 am at All Saints this morning, then. A respectable lady from Portishead went off with the silver: a huge flat basket full of knives and forks. The Head Sidesperson clasped two dozen flutes to her person and made for the door. Worst of all, a prominent mother-of-two filled the lift with china and snook out by the side door. Comes of being married to an organist, that's what I say!

Thank you all very much for your cards and your good wishes and for your very considerable support during 2007. 2008 will be even busier. Liturgical wonders aside, it kicks off with the Children's party on the 12th, continues with the Parish Groath Plan Workshop on the 19th, includes a Quinquennial Inspection and a lot more Works, and then probably spirals out of control. Don't miss it. Keep smiling. Happy New Year, and lots of love, MCW

All Saints Parish Retreat 2007

Our Parish Retreat is the weekend of February 8-10th 2008 at Abbey House, Glastonbury. Fr Paul Spilsbury will be our Retreat Conductor this year.

Those of you who have been on our retreats before will be able to extol the virtues of Abbey House to others and encourage them to join us in February. Abbey House is a large, elegant early 19th century house set in beautiful gardens overlooking the Abbey ruins. It is peaceful, comfortable, warm, and the food is excellent and there is a bar – all to ensure 48 hours of spirituality and ‘winding down’ from the stresses of our everyday life. The delights of Glastonbury with its interesting High Street and the beauties of the countryside are an additional attraction. Many of us take advantage of a weekend in the country to intersperse our spiritual activities with fresh air – and there is always the Tor to climb.

The cost of the Retreat will depend on the number of retreatants. Ideally, we will fill all 20 places and the cost will be around £100 each. Unfortunately, if we are a smaller number we still have to pay for the empty places and this will inevitably increase the cost for those taking part. Time is getting short, so **please think hard about this opportunity** and sign up in the porch. You will not regret it. Perhaps you could bring a friend along as well.

Liz Badman

A Server's Nightmare

Dedicated to all the servers at All Saints Church Clifton.

One evening in the parish of All Saints,
a server with a stomach cramp complaint

ate too much onion, cheese and cashew nuts,
and went to sleep with griping in the guts.

He tossed and turned, he dreamt of this and that,
he thought of stodgy pies with lots of fat,
he burped and groaned and nearly wrecked the bed
and then a nightmare came into his head.

It's Sunday morning and he's on the list
to serve, a duty that he's never missed,
and so he ventures out down Pembroke Road
to Mass, not knowing what might forebode.

There Father Peter, James and Roger too
inside the porch await their Sunday flock
-the old and young, alike, they all come through,
and time ticks on towards eleven-o'clock.

But in the sacristy our server frets
because with very little time to go,
in spite of desperate prayer and dire threats
there are no other servers, woe oh woe!

What should he do, wherever shall he turn?
And how on earth will just one mortal man
be crucifer, and make the incense burn
and serve, without a very careful plan?

At once he tells the priests he cannot cope,
and as they don their copes they ponder ways
to help the server, perhaps to stop him mope;
at this late hour, everyone is fazed.

The Vicar says "We'll simply be austere",
while Father James looks for a volunteer

and Father Roger searches for his specs,
-they use a mobile 'phone to make some checks.

Alas they find that all the ones who're trained
are ill, away, asleep or badly pained
and Father James reports from the church
a blank, and they are truly in the lurch.

Oh dear, what will our only server do?
He'll simply have to see the service through,
he cannot let a fine tradition fail,
although it makes his deepest innards quail.

For all his colleagues, for the Church, for God,
through this adversity he has to plod.
There is no choice, he cries, the die is thrown,
I'm simply going to do it on my own!

In spite of being buoyed by faith and hope,
what he can use right then is rope,
so with a whoop he scrabbles in the drawer
and empties all the contents on the floor.

Although at first he thinks he's nearly floored,
he finds the curate's surplus girdle cord.
And with it, in a panic-driven haste,
he ties the cross quite firmly round his waist.

He holds aloft a candle on his left,
and with a stylish flourish bold and deft,
he proudly swings the thurible on his right
and tries to walk ahead as best he might.

The congregation goggle in uproar
to see a single server at the door:

“whatever’s this and what is going on,
above all, where have all the servers gone?

There are some tricky moments in the Mass
when matters come to a pretty pass:
the Gospel with a candle and the smoke
would probably have stumped a lesser bloke.

And even though he cannot use the mat,
to kneel, there is the famous point, when at
the Elevation, even now he tells,
he bravely has to manage smells and bells.

He struggles through the Mass until the end,
but then, despite his efforts, heaven forfend,
he fears this day may not be just a freak:
a voice behind says “do it evr’ry week!”.

That was too much – he woke up with a start,
his tripes were sore, he thought he had to part
With any hope of sleep, but then the ‘phone....
The Head Server, with slightly urgent tone
“a server’s got a painful kidney stone,
can you stand in? If not, I’ll be alone!!”

Jonathan Bradley

January 2001

(This poem received its first public reading on the occasion of the
Curate’s Revue on 19th January.)

Family Life?

*Address given by Fr Hoyal 8 am Sunday 30 December 07 on
Matthew 2.13-23 – the flight into Egypt, massacre of the*

Innocents and subsequent return of the Holy Family to settle in Nazareth

A dangerous world. A family at risk resorting to a series of migrations. A dutiful husband protecting his family. Terrible cruelties perpetrated by a wicked ruler.

It happens. It happens a lot. Here in Bristol there are plenty of families because they have fled from troubles in their own countries. There are plenty of rulers capable of massacre – and the massacre of children. It's happened often enough in our own lifetimes. Almost certainly it's happening now somewhere.

It is into this dangerous world that the Christ Child is born. Almost immediately he is a refugee. One tyrant is just replaced by another. So even when things quieten down following the massacre, it is unsafe for the family to return to Judaea. The Christ Child must be content to live and grow up in Galilee, a district rather off the map from a Jewish viewpoint and regarded as backward and prone to paganism.

The holy glow of the Bethlehem birth seen through sentimental Christmas Eve spectacles rapidly evaporates. We immediately connect with a real world that is dangerous and violent. We are immediately reminded how much the real world needs saving, needs a Saviour who can bring this about.

Wisely, the Wise Men got out of the situation early, while they still could. Happily, Joseph in his own way was wise too. He was the quiet dependable type. So quiet, indeed, that he never actually says a thing although a key figure in the situation. He *does*, though; he acts. He is a doer of the world. He is portrayed as a man who hears and acts upon what God is saying to him, and without delay. He is the quiet godly protector of his special family.

One of the titles given to Joseph is Patron of the Universal Church. He is certainly guardian and protector of Jesus and Mary within the immediate Holy Family of Bethlehem and Nazareth. The whole Church is meant to be a holy family centred on Jesus, of course, and I personally find it devotionally illuminating to see St Joseph as patron or guardian-protector of the Christian family under God. And to-day, when satisfactory role models for men as fathers and husbands and men are hard to identify, we have the example of Joseph: strong, gentle devout, able, effective. No crisis of masculinity there.

The big man in the story is of course Herod the Great. His is the name in all the papers and news bulletins, so to speak. He is the big player with all the clout, the one who, from the viewpoint of his day seemed to be making all the waves. Yet at another level he plays a very minor role, king or no king, great or no. In the drama of our salvation it is Christ who is king; it is God who is in control. Herod's actions serve only to show that God's plan is unfolding despite the pride and cruelty of tyrants. As the wise protector of the Holy Child and his mother, strong silent hardworking Joseph, carpenter-builder of Nazareth, has a much more privileged role than the king in Jerusalem.

Remember the Holy Family. Remember that it was a far from privileged family in terms of status and safety. Pray for all families, especially those in need of wisdom and care and protection, and those obliged to flee. Pray for Egypt and the Holy Land. Bless God for Joseph as well as for Mary. Pray that your own part in God's holy family, the Church of Jesus, may accord with their example. As with them let the Christ Child be at the heart of it all.

