

IN THIS MONTH ... OCTOBER 1984

Thoughts on coming to All Saints' Clifton, *written to the parish by Fr Peter Cobb, Vicar of All Saints' 1984 – 2002, before he came here from Midsomer Norton. The local newspaper quoted the parishioners there as voicing 'shock and dismay' at his departure.*

I was at theological college when I first heard of All Saints' Clifton. One of the students, Michael Sanderson, was going to serve his title there and we were all regaled with stirring stories of All Saints' battle for survival. Later, when I specialised in the history of the Catholic Revival in the Church of England, I discovered the role which All Saints' together with St Raphael's had played in that history in Bristol and the West Country.

I am consequently very aware of the heritage of All Saints', reinforced as it was by a strange coincidence. On my first visit to All Saints' after the Bishop wrote to ask if I would like to be considered as a possible candidate for the living, I found a copy of Forster Alleyne's history of the parish in George's bookshop. It is the only copy I have ever seen in the second hand market and I had been looking for one for years. I feel rather dwarfed by the stature of some of the previous incumbents and somewhat awed by the responsibility of following them and trying to build on what they have already achieved.

The Catholic Movement in the C of E has come to a critical point. It has succeeded in many of its aims, notably in the restoration of the Eucharist to the central place in its worship. But it has not yet come to terms with modern scholarship and Biblical criticism – as witness the recent furore over Bishop David Jenkins's views – and its spirituality is still desperately weak. Its response to recent ecumenical and theological developments has been largely negative and defensive; its involvement in current social and ethical issues has been minimal. Too many Catholic parishes have become clubs for the religiously minded. All Saints' has a glorious past and is still

regarded as one of the major Catholic centres in the country. I should like to think that it can be an example of Catholic renewal within the Church of England, intellectually, liturgically, and above all, spiritually.

I already have personal links with All Saints' through two people. The first, Bill Fry, I met when he was giving an organ recital at Walsingham Parish Church. I came to know him quite well because he subsequently taught the mysteries of plainsong and Church music at S Stephen's House, Oxford, when I was a member of staff there. My musical education had been very lacking and I learnt a great deal from him. All Saints' was very fortunate in having him as organist and Musical Director, and I look forward to learning to appreciate the organ which he designed.

I believe music plays a vital part in our worship and spiritual life. One of my favourite texts is from the Letter to the Ephesians: 'Be filled with the holy Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.' The People of God are a people of song, journeying on their pilgrimage with music in their hearts and on their lips. All Saints' has a fine musical tradition, and one thing it can be proud of is that it has always striven to keep a proper balance between choir and congregation. One of the mistakes of the Catholic Movement was to allow the Sung Mass to become a sacred concert.

The other person through whom I feel I already have a link with All Saints' is Fr George Bennett. He was trained at S Stephen's House, and I was very pleased to be asked by him to preach at his first Mass on S Francis's Day, 1977. That was the first of only two occasions on which I have preached at All Saints' (The other was at a Walsingham celebration in December 1980.) I know what wonderful encouragement you gave George, and Rhona, at the beginning of his ministry, and that in itself endears you to me. It makes a tremendous difference if the parish where a newly ordained man serves his title is welcoming and supportive. I am delighted that the Diocese will

continue to regard All Saints' as a training parish, and that I shall have the opportunity of helping young deacons/priests through that stage of their training.

I have received some very encouraging letters, from Fr Norton and Bishop Mervyn amongst others, since my appointment was announced, and I am very conscious of prayers supporting me. I know I am coming into 'a goodly heritage' and that makes me the more sensitive to my own limitations. But 'the chasuble of priesthood is too large for any of us' as my old spiritual director used to say. In any case the strength of a church lies in its laity so I take comfort from a sentence in Alleyne's history: 'All Saints' was projected by laymen, was built by laymen, and has been supported by laymen ever since.'

I would ask for your prayers as I look forward to coming to you.

Peter Cobb

Reflections

John Bradley

continued from last month...

When Henry Orombi was enthroned as Archbishop of Uganda in 2003 greetings were read from, among others, the Archbishops of Kenya, Rwanda, and Nigeria. But nothing from the Archbishop of Canterbury. It wasn't until the open air banquet afterwards that our own Bishop of Bristol was invited to read a letter from Archbishop Rowan Williams. When it was announced there were groans from the people around me – 'We don't want to hear from *him*'. That summed up the attitude of many from around the world to what they regarded as too liberal leadership from

Canterbury in the wake of the consecration of Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire.

The retiring Archbishop of Uganda had written to the primate of the American Episcopal Church telling him not to come to the enthronement: he would not be welcome. There was a closing of evangelical ranks and a strong desire to get together with like minded people.

This was dramatically realised when some 250 bishops gathered in Jerusalem last June for the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON). For most of them this was an alternative to the Lambeth Conference, which they boycotted. One of their leaders is Henry Orombi. Let's look at Anglicanism through his eyes, and then from the point of view of Rowan Williams.

In an important paper delivered in 2007 Henry Orombi writes on **What is Anglicanism?** It is a powerful piece. 'In the Church of Uganda, Anglicanism has been built on three pillars: martyrs, revival, and the historic episcopate'. He links each of the three with the Word of God. 'The Bible is at the heart of our Anglican identity, and we Ugandan Anglicans joyfully submit to its life-giving and transforming authority.....we **understand ourselves to be in the mainstream of Anglicanism – from Thomas Cranmer to John Stott**'.

What Henry Orombi describes as the mainstream we would all recognise as an essential strand in Anglicanism, but there is more to it than that. In '**The Challenge and Hope of being an Anglican Today**' (2006) Archbishop Rowan Williams sets out his thinking on the future of Anglicanism. 'We do have a distinctive historic tradition – a reformed commitment to the absolute priority of the Bible for deciding doctrine, a catholic loyalty to the sacraments and the threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, and a habit of cultural sensitivity and intellectual flexibility that does not seek to close down unexpected questions too quickly. But for this to survive with all its aspects intact, we need closer and more visible formal commitments to each other....**The different components in our heritage can, up to a point, flourish in isolation from each other.**

But any one of them pursued on its own would lead in a direction ultimately outside historic Anglicanism’.

There’s not enough space to deal adequately with these important documents. Both are available on the internet, and both deserve a careful reading. Henry Orombi’s ‘What is Anglicanism?’ can be found on:

www.firstthings.com/article.php3?id_article=6002

and Rowan Williams ‘The Challenge and Hope of Being an Anglican Today’ on:

www.cofe.anglican.org/news/pr6706.html

The truth is, we need each other. Evangelicals have much to learn from Catholics about sacramental worship and the place of the Eucharist in our spiritual growth. Catholics need to acquire the zeal of evangelicals to bring others to Christ.

In this diocese we are well placed to take this dialogue further. The Bristol/Uganda link has helped our mutual understanding. We come from very different Christian and cultural backgrounds, but we share in the fellowship of the Gospel a partnership in mission. On both sides we need to recognise that the precious things we have in common are far more important than the things which divide us.

International Artists series

All Saints Clifton 7.00pm Saturday 11 October

Music
at
All Saints

Anup Kumar Biswas - cello

Christopher Thompson - piano



A born communicator, here is an artist whose physical being, like that of Rostropovich or the young Jacqueline du Pré seems intertwined with instrument and music. THE GUARDIAN

Masterly performance...superb playing by Mr Biswas. THE TIMES

...superb singing quality...a master of dynamics, his energy, vitality, fine delicacy of bowing and a fierce attack, and more fibrous tone suitable to Brahms produced a magnificent account of the Opus 99 sonata. THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

In the prestigious setting of the packed Margravine Opera House, Bayreuth, a delightful theatrical visual experience was owed to the cellist Biswas ... he lived the music in his face and handled the cello as if in ecstasies of love. FRANKENPOST, GERMANY

Valentini - Sonata No.10 in E major Beethoven - Sonata in G minor Op5 no2 Brahms - Sonata in E minor Op38 Chopin - Introduction and Polonaise Brillante Op3 Fauré - Elegie Granados - Intermezzo Paganini - Variation on one string on a theme by Rossini

Tickets £12 (concessions £10, under 18s £2) from Providence Music 0117 9276536 or sales@providencemusic.co.uk ; or from All Saints 0117 9741355

MAKE IT A CONCERT & CURRY EVENING

Catherine and Gareth Greenslade are kindly providing an **after-concert Curry Supper at just £6 a head** in the Randall Room to round off what will be an inspirational evening - tickets from church.
