

*Fr Hoyal Writes*

## MAKING ALL THINGS NEW

“The Church of England is part of the one, holy Catholic, and apostolic Church, worshipping the on true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” So begins the Declaration of Assent that all Church of England clergy are required to make when they take up a new appointment.

The declaration continues: “It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, *which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation.*”

Of course, this statement begs key questions, namely: “What precisely is uniquely revealed in the Scriptures, and how can we know? What is clear from the historic creeds, and how far can we regard it as authoritative?” And different church people give very different answers.

Happily, there is more agreement about the phrase above in italics, about the need for fresh proclamation of the faith in each generation, and for now it is this I would draw attention to. There is no doubting that to be effective in proclaiming the faith we need to take seriously changes in the circumstances and priorities of our fellow citizens.

Traditional forms of pastoral and evangelistic outreach appear to leave most people untouched. UK Sunday church attendance has fallen by one million in the last ten years, and it is reckoned that more than 60% of the UK population are entirely beyond the reach of traditional local churches.

There were important initiatives in the 1990s – inaugurated as the decade of evangelism /evangelization. Overall, the outcome seemed disappointing, and opportunities afforded by the turn of

the millennium in 2000 were also less successful than was hoped. But perhaps we need to take the longer term. Some things grow very slowly, but are eventually spectacular.

There is little doubt, however, that the church as a whole was becoming more actively evangelistic, more missionary minded, despite unencouraging results. Traditional churches have certainly tried hard to be relevant and inviting, and they continue to try. Some do well. Some at least halt decline.

And alongside this, it was noticed that new kinds of Christian initiative have for some while been springing up, specifically seeking to reach out to new groups and new networks of people in our changing culture. The ground-breaking bestseller church report *Mission-Shaped Church* (published 2004) drew attention to a whole range of such initiatives.

The authors described them as fresh expressions of church, and they identified a dozen or so types. These were: alternative worship congregations, base ecclesial communities, café church, cell church, churches arising out of community initiatives, multiple and midweek congregations, network focused churches, school based and school linked congregations and churches, seeker churches, traditional church plants, tradition forms of church inspiring new interest, and youth congregations. Some might be simple and modest. Others might evidently vigorous and extensive.

By 2006 a fresh expression of church was being defined as a form of church for our changing culture established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church. In any event, the appearance and growth of fresh expressions of church has gained marked official backing. Those who can are increasingly being encouraged to see what might be possible and to have ago.

We shall have to see how things develop. Where fresh expressions catch on, there is the challenge of seeing that they develop the essential hallmarks of authentic Christian congregations. On all sides there is the challenge to be creative and cooperative. Newer examples of church will have things to learn as well as things to teach. So will traditional churches, and they will need to be understanding too.

Many traditional local churches – All Saints perhaps – may be well placed to complement the newer forms of church. There will continue to be people and networks and groups that we are better able to relate to than some of the fresh expressions of church will be.

In this I am reminded of Our Lord's approbation for the scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven and is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new *and* what is old (*Matthew 13.52*). The key thing is less whether we are old or new; rather, it is whether we are and remain fresh.

For us at All Saints, perhaps that is still the main issue if we are to be effective in God's service in changing times. It is with these things in mind that our theme this Lent is "Making All Things New".

"Behold, I make all things new" is the Lord's powerful promise in *Revelation 21.5*. For me it is one of the great Scripture promises, and I hope we shall know its power as we meet for worship and for study this coming Lent.



25 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*



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### CONCERT MATINEE

Afternoon Recital

### LIGHT CLASSICAL PROGRAMME

With Graham Smith – Violin

Vicky Bremner - Soprano

Nigel Davies - Piano.

**4-5pm Sat 28 February**

Admission free – Retiring Collection

Tea and cakes afterwards

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Music  
at  
All Saints

## **IN THIS MONTH ... FEBRUARY 1983**

### **ALL SAINTS' IN 2013? by Peter Graham**

I have just completed the calculation of the Diocesan Quota for the Clifton Deanery in 1983 which will be 16.5% more than the quota for 1982. Also, a senior member of the diocesan administration recently said that to maintain the present church structure there would have to be an increase of at least 10% each year for the foreseeable future. Already parishes, even though declaring themselves to be willing, are showing signs of being unable to meet their quota. Now the majority of this quota is for paying the clergy, so 'unpaid quota' equals 'unpaid priests'.

Not only do we have to face these difficult financial matters, but we hear compelling prophetic voices saying that we in England, and, in particular, in this well-heeled part of Bristol, are hogging more than our share of the Church's resources, and that we must learn to do with much less, if we are to be true to our calling to be the Body of Christ in the world. This leads me to two central questions:

1. Will All Saints' exist in 30 years' time?
2. Should All Saints' exist in 30 years' time?

If you think these questions are alarmist, consider that 30 years ago in 1953, St John's church was thriving.

Looked at in a purely organisational way, it would be possible for the Clifton Deanery to be served by three parishes centred on Christ Church, St Saviour with St Mary, Cotham and St Peter's Henleaze, with Abbots Leigh as a chapel of ease served with other villages from the Bath and Wells Diocese. Indeed with only a little reorganisation the daily Eucharist with High Mass on Sunday, which we so value, could be superimposed on the rich parish life already enjoyed at Christ Church so that both congregations could be catered for in one building.

"But," you will be crying, "All Saints stands for something distinctive. Many 'catholic parishes' in the West of England look to All Saints for leadership." Is this true? Is this catholic witness relevant any more? If it is – and I believe that it is – then we must begin reorganising our structures now from our position of relative strength. We are still one of the few parishes which contribute more to diocesan funds than we receive from them.

Perhaps we should no longer have stipendiary ministers at All Saints. The business of the parish could be organised by seven elders led by the church wardens, and the spiritual needs of the parish could be met by ordaining, after suitable training, twelve ordinary members of the congregation. They could be supported by a full-time lay administrator. This is just one idea!

Already radical re-organisations are being hinted at in Diocesan and Deanery Synods, but they do not originate there. Where are the real decisions being taken? When we find this out, this is where we need to be. There must be some better way of proceeding than by making last-ditch stands before the Privy Council.

All that I have said so far has been very parochial, but there are a number of political spectres to face. Even if we avoid being blown into sub-atomic particles, there is no certainty that in the future we shall enjoy the same religious freedoms we have come to take for granted. The time has come for prayer, study,

# **“Making All Things New”**

*“Behold, I make all things new” Revelation 21.5.  
LENT 2009 at ALL SAINTS*

## **HOME GROUPS**

*Our Growth Plan researches last year identified a desire for home groups for Bible study, discussion and prayer.*

*This year we hope to form a good number of smallish Lent home groups meeting weekly till Easter to discuss different areas where things new and old can be renewing for faith, worship and mission. Notes will be provided, and each week’s topic will be the subject of the previous Sundays address at the 11 am Solemn Mass.*

*If you would be interested in joining a home group, or would be prepared to host one, please sign the notice in the atrium or contact Liz Badman, our parish administrator 0117 9741355 or [allsaintsclifton@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:allsaintsclifton@tiscali.co.uk).*

## **EVERY TUESDAY**

**7.30 pm** *Short Lent Mass*

## **8.15 pm LENT HOLY HOUR**

*Gentle atmospheric worship with music and silence, prayer and adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.*

## **SUNDAY at 6**

**“Poets for Lent”**

*Evensong Addresses with a Christian message on favourite poets*

**network:training**

## **‘BEING THERE’ (BT09B)**

**A 12-week Introduction to Basic Listening and  
Counselling Skills**

**Tuesdays from 7 pm to 9.30 pm  
at Network Training, College Park Drive, Henbury  
Road, BRISTOL BS10 7QD**

**21<sup>st</sup> April to 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009 (Closing date for  
applications: 17<sup>th</sup> April 2009)**

**N.B.** Late applications will be considered subject to the availability of places.

Registration form available from <http://www.network.org.uk>