

## ***Fr Hoyal Writes***

### **BETHLEHEM BOUND**

Another Christmas! And once again the most famous story ever told is being celebrated in Christmas concerts, carol services and nativity plays in churches and schools and public halls throughout the world. Even in shops and supermarkets the usual background music gives way to the carols we love, telling of a Saviour's birth. For a week or two, even those with little time for Christianity are reminded of Mary and Joseph, of shepherds and angels and wise men. And at the centre of it all an infant in a manger.

Somehow, in this child God is with us humbly and lovingly in a uniquely personal way. The Lord stoops low to raise us high. He becomes very little so that he can make us great. He becomes what we are, so that we can become what he is. It is the wonderful mystery of God's love, and it brings a new dimension of hope and healing for humankind.

Explanations have their place but, however sound, they seldom satisfy completely. We do better simple to make our heart's way to Bethlehem and humble kneel before the rough manger throne. With the Blessed Virgin let us be faithful and pure. With good St Joseph let us be loyal and decent and persevering. With simple shepherds let us bring our good-hearted ordinariness. With wise men let us seek for God with all our heart and mind and gladly offer him the best we have. With Christmas angels let our hearts sing with joy of God's love and glory.

Above all, let the Christ child be at the centre of our Christmas story. If he is, this Christmas will bring us great, great blessings.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Hoyal". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.

Mr N Drewett  
All Saints Parish Office Pembroke Road  
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Thank you very much sending us donations totalling £938.30 from your recent harvest "Winds of Change." What a wonderful result! I enclose our receipt and please pass on our thanks to everyone involved. Thank you, too, for the gift aid forms covering £530.00 of this amount.

Christian Aid partner Rehabilitation Association and Agriculture Development for Afghanistan (RAADA) works with more than 50,000 people in 17 communities to bring comprehensive rural development, providing people with the skills and technology to make a significant difference to their livelihoods. RAADA has provided goats, along with training in animal husbandry and veterinary skills. The partner has provided vital new technologies to rural areas and is supporting women through income generating projects.

Before settling in Baz Girha, Golah Nurzei led a nomadic life. Now she is head of the village women's council and is grateful for RAADA's support, including the amazing wind-powered well that provides water for 2,000 animals. RAADA taught Golah and other women from the village how to make yoghurt and cheese from the milk from their goats and they have set up a milk processing centre, which enables them to make an income from selling these dairy products locally. Six year old Habibe Nurzei helps her mother Golah with the goats which they received from RAADA. Habibe holds the goats' heads while her mother milks them. She likes playing hide and seek too!

With our best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Mary Wood  
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## **SOLEMN EUCHARIST OF ST ANDREW THE APOSTLE ST JOHN, NEW HINKSEY, OXFORD**

The Mass was to have been +Andrew's celebration of the tenth anniversary of his consecration as Bishop of Ebbsfleet on St Andrew's Day, 30 November 2000. In the event it was his farewell Mass to his clergy and people, as his resignation takes effect on 31 December and he will be ordained deacon in the Roman Catholic Church in the New Year. Despite difficult weather conditions the large number of people attending testified to the success of his pastoral ministry and the goodwill that goes with him as his caravan sets off.

He has lived near Oxford during his time as our Provincial Episcopal Visitor, so it was appropriate that the Mass was held in one of his Oxford churches. The Church of St John the Evangelist was built in 1900 and the architect was Sir Ninian Comper; one notes first that it's a lovely church, and welcoming, and then that the altar is in the traditional ad orientem position. The celebrant is leading his people in worship.

+Andrew celebrated Mass with deacon and sub deacon. Many of us remember and keep in touch with James Bradley, recently ordained deacon and wearing appropriate and magnificent vestments. He sang the Gospel and wielded the thurible (aka the Bishop of Ebbsfleet's 'smoking handbag') – a complex operation but well within his grasp. Also within his grasp was a very fine biretta, and the deacons' synchronised birettas added a lighter touch to the occasion. The music throughout reflected the fact that +Andrew was a musician before he was a priest, and was chosen gloriously to reflect the Anglican patrimony he will take to the Ordinariate: hymns set to Guiting Power, Coe Fen, Corvedale, St Catherine's Court and choral music by Martin Shaw, Byrd, Howells and Bairstow. Very English. Guiting Power, unusually for an Ebbsfleet occasion, accompanied not 'Christ triumphant, ever reigning' but words composed by alumni of St Stephen's House praising Our Lord, Our Lady, the apostles, saints and martyrs. This was stirring stuff, and reflected the feast day.

The Bishop had also chosen to use an English rite, though in the various Episcopal masses I have attended he has always followed the Roman rite.

For his sermon he chose the text 'In my father's house there are many rooms'. He denied suffering from delusions of grandeur, but he is crossing the Tiber ahead of members of his ecclesiastical family and drew a modest parallel. There was humour, but not many jokes. He thanked a great many people who had helped him over the years, including his former source of (free) legal advice, Father James. Possibly the sermon will appear on his website, but his final pastoral letter is currently at <http://www.ebbsfleet.org.uk/plnov10.htm>. This is worth reading; it gives the flavour and reflects the sentiments he expressed. It was an atypically restrained sermon – Fr Richard used the word 'poignant'. Wholly typical was the fact that it avoided politics (he saved state of the nation orations for occasions like the Chrism Mass), and it reminded me of the scrappy notes I still use of a Walsingham sermon from a few years ago: what matters is the Bread and the Book. Attend Mass, read the Bible (it helps one to avoid shopping lists, he said) and go on a Journey. He was plugging the Walsingham Pilgrimage, but crossing the Tiber surely counts.

The organist played the introduction to the final hymn, and broke off as the Episcopal eye met his. 'Let's take that as the fanfare to the notices', said +Andrew. 'You can't have a Church of England service without notices.' So he invited us all to a feast in the Church School across the road, then we sang the final hymn, 'In our day of thanksgiving one psalm let us offer', then he gave the blessing and the deacon gave the dismissal. The retiring procession was lengthy, including a great many attendant clergy. +Andrew let them go, and went another way to kneel in front of Our Lady's statue. The congregation waited, anticipating the customary Episcopal recession with crook, mitre and lavish blessings, but when he left he was bare headed and empty handed. As Father Richard explained on Sunday, he had left the

outward signs of his episcopate with Our Lady. All the same, I wasn't the only one to kneel for his blessing and I'm certain it was as lavish as ever even without external manifestation.

The feast was worthy of the name, especially the chicken tikka chunks on sticks. As usual at Ebbsfleet gatherings I got a chance to trade insults with our PEV. Someone over the weekend said +Andrew is the most approachable Bishop they'd ever met, and as one of the All Saints Ebbsfleet reps in recent years I'd go with that. It may have been Fr Richard who used 'approachable' in his sermon, and if that sermon is in this magazine, do read it, alongside +Andrew's last letter to us. We live in interesting times, and the two together make a useful Apologia (in Newman's sense) for the Ordinariate.

In my capacity as Ebbsfleet rep I can report that the word on the street is that a successor will be found as soon as possible, and in the interval several bishops are fighting to take care of us. But I doubt if they'll find anyone to replace him.

*Anne Bradley*  
*Feast of St Andrew 2010*

### **CHRISTINGLE MAKING**

Please could you spare an hour on Thursday 23 December at 11 am to put Christingles together for the Christmas Eve Christingle service? Tea, coffee and lots of cake will be provided for all who help.

Also could a few willing souls put together the sticks with sweets and fruit during the week leading up to the 23 December?

Please let Liz Badman know if you can help.

## SACRIFICE

*Sermon preached at All Saints by Fr Hoyal 8 am Remembrance Sunday 14.11.10*

During the 1939-1945 war a British troop ship, taking advantage of stormy conditions and poor visibility, was ploughing its way through heavy seas towards its destination. Unfortunately, it was spotted by a German U-boat, and soon two torpedoes were speeding with deadly accuracy towards the helpless vessel. The explosions tore terrible gashes in the hull, and within minutes the ship was sinking.

Lifeboats were immediately manned, and those who were able to do so scrambled aboard and were lowered away to safety. One person who was offered a place was the Revd Hubert Pugh, an RAF chaplain. But he declined the offer and made his way to the edge of the ship's hold. Looking down he was appalled to see hundreds of men, looking up at him, without any hope of escape; most of them were under twenty. Pugh grabbed a coil of rope, tied one end around his waist and persuaded an officer nearby to help him as he lowered himself down into the hold to be with the doomed men. Pugh was warned that he would never come out alive, but Pugh replied, "Believe me, my faith in God is far stronger than my fear of death at this moment."

Hubert Pugh went down with the ship, but he died seeking to give courage and comfort to the men trapped in the hold. For this act of selfless sacrifice he was posthumously awarded the George Cross.

To-day as a nation we remember. We remember conflicts past and present: two horrific world wars in particular, yes, but many conflicts since, not least the current costly - costly in suffering and heartbreak, that is – the current costly campaign in Afghanistan.

In conflict there is appalling evil and terrible injury. Hate, fear, brutality, wickedness – all thrive in war. Ordinary people do – and

suffer – terrible things. Yet many try to be honourable, and heroic sacrifices are made. Against disillusion and terror and destruction must be set loyalty, courage, comradeship, defence of crucial values, protection of the vulnerable, sometimes sheer heroic goodness amid all the horror of things.

Those who answer the call to military service are putting themselves on the line, and they are usually doing it for others. They know that they may have to sacrifice their lives. Sometimes, very sadly, that has to be. It is certainly very humbling when people have the courage to make the sacrifice of themselves. But we mustn't as if we sacrifice them. We must see we stay acutely aware of what they face and what it costs in commitment and danger, and we must see that have the best support possible. Morally, we don't have the option to shrug our shoulders and turn to another page.

This means that we must stay informed, that we must go on remembering, go on praying. We honour huge sacrifices made by many. We honour those who have lived and died honourably. And we remember with tears millions whose lives were made unutterably ghastly by war, millions whose deaths were cruel and tragic. We are jolted out of our shallow comfort zones. In dust and ashes we offer our repentance and pray for God's mercy on all.

And as Christians we see everything in the light of that one true pure immortal sacrifice, Christ's own sacrifice of himself on the hill, the sacrifice which alone can purify and redeem and complete all sacrifices. That sacrifice is at the heart of the kingdom he has told us about, the kingdom that will make sense of all our strivings. Hubert Pugh knew this, and that is why he did what he did.

## OCTOBER'S CONUNDRUM

was solved by Dr Peter Thompson.

The 'familiar hymn' referred to is 'Abide with me.' The way to the answer is:

Mispronounce "Gideon Staiconby" as "Guide 'n' stay c'n be".

Prefix that by "Who like thyself?" (*Quis ut tute?*) and there you have it..

Who like thyself my guide and stay can be? NEH 331, third line of verse 3.

Not to be outdone, the winner, mindful of the hymnwriter's name, claims to

have thrown Lyte on the subject .....

May Dr Thompson enjoy the Damson Cheese as much as he enjoyed the challenge!

*Ken Smith*

## My Christmas Gift to All Saints

As we approach the end of 2010 it is now time to review our financial situation. As I have indicated in previous updates our position is not as we would like it to be. Planned giving, which is our major source of income, has reduced by £7,000 (sadly due to a number of regular givers who have died or economic circumstances reducing the level of giving). Despite very carefully managing of our day to day expenses we forecast a significant shortfall. We are already committed to meet £54,000 of the diocesan parish share. But, this is a shortfall of our total parish share by £13,000. We are now predicting an additional shortfall on this year's 'in house' budget of £3,000.

The likelihood is that to balance the books we will have to dip into our diminishing reserve of £13,000. If we paid the full parish share we would have no reserves at all.

In order to try and rectify this shortfall the PCC are asking all of us to consider making **MY CHRISTMAS GIFT TO ALL SAINTS** as part

of our Christmas celebration giving thanks for the parish and life of All Saints and with confidence build on the future.... 2011 and beyond. This will be in addition to our annual Christmas charity which is Children's Relief Bethlehem ([www.childrens-relief-bethlehem.org.uk](http://www.childrens-relief-bethlehem.org.uk)). Special envelopes for the All Saints Christmas gift will be distributed on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December. Envelopes for the Christmas charity will be available at all Christmas services.

### **All Saints Parish Retreat 2011**

Our Parish Retreat is the weekend of 18-20 February 2011 at Abbey House, Glastonbury.

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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

Our Retreat Conductor this year is Fr Thomas Seville CR, who some may remember as Revd Christopher Seville when he was curate at Holy Nativity, Knowle in early 1990s.

The cost of the Retreat will depend on the number of retreatants. There have been changes at the Retreat House and the Trustees have put the cost up, but as a Church Group we still get a good discount. Ideally, we

will fill all 20 places and the cost will be around £120 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. **Please think hard about this opportunity** and sign up in the porch. You will not regret it. Where else would you find 48 hours full board in such glorious surroundings for such a low cost? Perhaps you could bring a friend along as well.

We will have to ask for a non-returnable deposit of £30 to book a place, the remainder to be paid on arrival at Abbey House. Please make cheques out to All Saints with St John.

Please sign list in porch.

For further details please contact Liz Badman at All Saints, Clifton on 0117-9741355 or [allsaintsclifton@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:allsaintsclifton@tiscali.co.uk)

*Liz Badman*

*Parish Administrator*

## The Resignation of Bishop Andrew

### A Message from the Vice-Chairman of the Council of Priests

I have expected that I would have to write this letter for some time now, but the writing of it is no easier for the passing of time. While many of us have been able to glean Bishop Andrew's intentions from his public comments and statements, the actual announcement of his resignation on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November still was an emotional moment for many people.

Bishop Andrew's final Pastoral Letter to us all is available on the

Ebbsfleet website and has been widely reproduced in parish publications. In it he is able to finally speak from the heart and relate to us his personal journey in making this decision. The Bishop has long predicted that there would be three responses to the continuing crises in the Anglican world and that each of them has their own integrity. There will be those who will take a solo journey into another Communion; there will be groups of people forming a caravan to do so together; and there will be those who decide, like the Non-Jurors, to remain and witness to the 'faith once delivered to the saints' within the Church of England. Bishop Andrew and others have decided to form that second group to which they see others joining as time goes on. Some have already taken the first route, including some faithful brethren known to us personally. Others are hoping that the General Synod will come to its senses and agree to a negotiated settlement with those who wish to remain "obedient" (as the Archbishop of Canterbury expresses it) to Scripture and the Tradition of the Church.

It is to assist that final group that I have been, for reasons beyond me, elected by the Ebbsfleet Council of Priests as its Vice-Chairman during the Episcopal vacancy with, as Bishop Andrew puts it, "the express approval of the Archbishop." The Archbishop stated on the same day that the announcement of the resignations was made that he would be appointing new Bishops of Ebbsfleet and Richborough, and the Bishop of London has said that he will appoint a new Bishop of Fulham. On the Wednesday after the resignation was announced an appointment was made for me to see the Archbishop of Canterbury next month at Lambeth Palace so that we can discuss the future needs of the See of Ebbsfleet and in order that I can convey to the Archbishop the views of the Council of Priests as to the type of man we would like to see as our next Bishop. Needless to say that discussion will need to remain private, but I would

value your prayers as I prepare for this important meeting and for the Council of Priests itself which will continue to meet as usual during the Episcopal vacancy.

During the vacancy the work of the Gospel must continue; we must continue to be faithful in public worship and private prayer, continue to avail ourselves of the Sacraments of the Church and pray that we may be faithful witnesses of Christ. There could so easily arise among us temptation to sink into an 'us & them' mentality which seeks to be negative about those who are leaving or those who are staying. If there must be a parting then let us remain friends. In our parishes let us continue to be faithful and in the Ebbsfleet Apostolic District let us get on with 'business as usual.' We have the announcement by the Archbishop that we will have another Bishop of Ebbsfleet and if we are to continue as a strong viable constituency then the structures already in place will need to be supported by prayer and maintained financially as in the past. Please continue to use the Ebbsfleet Monthly Cycle of Prayer at Mass and at home for this helps to forge our common life. Each year we encourage our parishes to donate a minimum of £100 - £250 depending on the wealth or size of the parish. That will usually give the Bishop a budget of around £12,000 in the Mission Fund per year with which he can lead us in mission, and just consider what it has achieved so far with the Parish Evangelism Weekends and Youth Initiatives to name but two. Wouldn't it be good to have that fund replenished so that our next Bishop can help us to grow in faith, hope and love?

This weekend, throughout Holy Mother Church, we begin a new liturgical year with the Season of Advent. While Advent has a penitential aspect to it, and despite its themes of Death, Judgement, Heaven and

Hell, it is primarily the Season of Hope. The early Christians lived in expectation of Christ's return; for them his return was not something to be feared, but welcomed. The past with its reassurances as well as its problems they knew would be swept away, but they still lived in Advent Hope. As we await news of who will take the solo journey, join the caravan or for news of whom the Archbishop will appoint we all surely are tempted to look back, and yet God our heavenly Father points us forward. Whether this will lead us into another Communion or into a new future with a new Bishop, with all the uncertainty that still remains about our common life in the Church of England, we are called to be a People of Hope.

In the meantime we must thank Bishop Andrew for all he has done for our parishes and in helping us to forge a common life. He has not only been our Bishop but a constant and faithful friend who lovingly encouraged us and yet was not afraid to challenge us where necessary. As he begins the next phase of his Pilgrimage we also pray that God may continue to bless him and all who seek Christ's will for their futures while seeking to remain totally committed and obedient to the 'faith once delivered to the saints.'

*Fr Ross Northing SSC*  
*24<sup>th</sup> November AD 2010*

***Advent Sunday sermon preached by Fr Hoyal 11 am Solemn Mass 28 November 2010 All Saints Clifton***

*Key phrases from to-day's readings: Now is the Time – Wake Up – Put on the Lord Jesus Christ*

Yesterday, at St John's Parish Church, South Hinksey, in Oxford, Bishop Andrew Burnham, the Bishop of Ebbsfleet and Provincial Episcopal Visitor for the southwest region of our province, publicly celebrated the Holy Eucharist for the last time as a bishop of the Church of England. He officially resigns on 31st December. The beautiful, rather Prayer-Book style, anglo-catholic service was a most poignant blend of thanksgiving and farewell as Bishop Andrew prepares to become a Roman Catholic within the new Ordinariate. In January he is being ordained as a deacon in the Roman Catholic Church, and his ordination as priest will follow before Easter.

In his ten years of office Bishop has looked after us with love and warmth. He has been with us on numerous occasions, often two three times a year - most recently for Fr Peter Cobb's funeral - and he has been in close touch at all times. He has been a wonderful priests' bishop. He has throughout been friendly, caring, accessible (amazingly accessible for a bishop), wise, humble, theologically thoughtful and instructive. In the sanctuary he has appeared appropriately grand. Outside it, he has not been in the least prelatical, however.

Much of yesterday's service was about thanksgiving, thanksgiving to God for all Bishop Andrew has received and shared as a lifelong son of the Church of England with a strong commitment to the

Catholic Faith of the universal Church. It was a thank-you not least on the tenth anniversary of his St Andrew's-tide ordination as Bishop of Ebbsfleet. But, rather painfully, it also marked a moving on, and a parting of the ways.

Along with others, lay and ordained, he is engaged in a journey he feels compelled to make. It's not really about women, you know; it really isn't. That's very secondary. It's about what makes the Church the Church, and whether the Church of England, as by law established, can still claim, credibly and convincingly, that she is the ancient Church of this land, Catholic and Reformed. It's about whether she can still claim she is adhering to the shared faith and ministry of the undivided universal Church of East and West of the first thousand years of Christianity.

However you see things, I hope you will not feel angry or disappointed with Bishop Andrew. Wish him well and be generous in your prayers. He is following his informed conscience, and I hope that you and I would always have the sincerity and the commitment to do the same, whether or not that might lead us to similar conclusions.

And what he is doing is not at all easy. He is leaving behind so much that he loves, so much that is part of him, part and parcel of the fabric of his upbringing, his experience, his loyalties. No doubt God will look after him, and no doubt there will be many blessings. But the future is all very uncertain. The Ordinariate has yet to find its shape, its identity, its particular place within the life of the Roman Catholic Church as a whole, and its particular contribution to the life and mission of the Church.

At the end of yesterday's Mass, something happened which for me as totally unexpected. Already our hearts were filled with

conflicting feelings of joy and sorrow, thanksgiving and regret. It really had been a most moving service. As the sanctuary party and special guests processed down, Bishop Andrew gently veered off to the statue of Our Lady and knelt down. I thought it was a matter of private devotion at the end of the service. But when he resumed his place in the procession we noticed that he was no longer wearing his mitre, and he no longer had his pastoral staff. When I went over to light a candle at the statue, I saw why. He had laid them down at the feet of her who is the Mother of our Saviour and also the Mother of the Church – ‘Son, behold thy Mother,’ said Jesus to his beloved disciple.

You many profoundly disagree with Bishop Andrew. But you see that for him **now** is the time. In his way he is now **waking up** to a new stage in his Christian calling. He is now preparing to **put on the Lord Jesus Christ** in new circumstances. Like all of us, he know that putting on the Lord Jesus Christ and taking up the armour of light means setting aside so much of what we normally cling to and prioritise and surround ourselves with.

Only he and God know quite how much he is laying down and quite what he will be required to take up for Christ. But part of the sacrifice is a discarding, a letting-go of his episcopal office, and Fr Andrew Burnham (should we now call him?) has now clearly shown his willingness to do this as he seeks to put on Christ for a new phase of his Christian discipleship. As a married Anglican priest he can indeed be a priest in the Roman Catholic Church. But no married man may be a bishop either in the Roman Church or the eastern Churches. Yet mitre and crozier, and all they represent (and that is a lot for people with Catholic convictions about the nature of the sacred ministry), he willingly lays at the feet of Christ and his Blessed Mother. They are nothing, if they are not part of **God’s** future for him.

No doubt you will reflect on your own stage of discipleship. For you and me, this Advent Sunday says, be ready for God's time and for God's timing; above all be ready for God's time for **you**. Wake up, stay alert, be prepared to do new things, **or** to do the old things with much greater commitment and vigour and sacrifice, as you throw off everything getting in the way of God's plans for you and really try to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, never mind the cost.