

*Fr Hoyal Writes*

## **LIKE STARS APPEARING**

Much as I love the long light evenings of summer, and even more the light early mornings, as a stargazer I tend to find the summer disappointing.

It gets dark so late that I am likely to be too tired to go out. Even if I stay up and the sky is clear, there is the frustration that spectacular summer constellations of the zodiac, like Scorpius and Sagittarius, lie low in the sky where visibility is often poorer and lines of sight are obscured by housing or trees, especially in the city.

But I know they are there, and now and again I have seen them satisfactorily – mainly, I have to say, when I have been abroad where the skies are clearer and the summer zodiac higher above the horizon.

And what a thrill it has been on those rare occasions when it has been possible to see elusive constellations in all their splendour.

But even when conditions are less favourable for observation, one often finds solace in familiar objects bright enough and high enough in the sky to be viewed without difficulty. It is easy, for instance, to make out the so called summer triangle of Vega, Deneb and Altair, the three bright stars in the constellations of Lyra, Cygnus and Aquila. And there is always the Pole Star to mark north.

Once you have got your bearings from these objects, you soon find that more stars and constellations visible than you first thought. Sometimes, the planets - Venus, Saturn and Jupiter, in particular - can be strikingly bright even at dusk or dawn, and that is always a delight.

I often think of the star and planets as our friends in the sky, and that leads me to regard the blessed saints in rather the same way as our friends in heaven.

There are of course hugely more saints than we know about, let alone can give names to or locate in Christian history. Rather like stars in the sky, just a very few are prominent by virtue of their spiritual brightness, or their particular place in the Christian firmament.

Sometimes, like stars, they are paired in doublets – the apostles SS Philip & James, for instance, or SS Cyril & Methodius, the brothers who evangelized the Slavs. Sometimes, they are in groups or clusters, like 3<sup>rd</sup> century SS Perpetua, Felicity and their companions, or the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ugandan Martyrs. Sometimes all one can discern is a nebulous cloud of light, as in the case of the Holy Innocents of Bethlehem and many subsequent unnamed martyrs of countless persecutions over the centuries – and today.

My starry ponderings about the saints have been triggered by noting what a rich cluster of luminous Christian souls we happen to find in just one week of our August calendar.

On August 10<sup>th</sup> for example, we have the well-known deacon S Lawrence of Rome. During Emperor Valerian's fierce persecution (258) the city prefect of Rome ordered Lawrence to hand over the valuables of the church in Rome. Lawrence gathered the church's poor and the sick for the prefect, declaring, 'Here is the church's treasure!' This brave rebuff earned him a martyr's death (258) just a few days after the martyrdom of his senior, Pope Sixtus II (7<sup>th</sup>).

Others faithful Christian souls remembered in church calendars for the week beginning Sunday August 7<sup>th</sup> include the great St Dominic (d 1221) founder of the Order of Preachers – the Blackfriars (8<sup>th</sup>), Mary Sumner (d 1921) founder of the Mothers' Union (9<sup>th</sup>), and St Clare of

Assisi (d 1253) founder of the Franciscan Minoreesses – the Poor Clares (11<sup>th</sup>).

We also have the celebrated and Blessed John Henry Newman (d 1890) Tractarian convert to Rome and influential spiritual writer (11<sup>th</sup>), Jeremy Taylor (d 1667) Bishop of Down and Connor and loyal Anglican divine amid 17<sup>th</sup> religious upheavals (13<sup>th</sup>), Florence Nightingale (1920) devoutly Christian pioneer nurse (13<sup>th</sup>), and Octavia Hill (1912) tireless Christian social reformer (13<sup>th</sup>).

How much spiritual richness and diversity in just this small cluster of calendar names. What a wide range of invaluable Christian endeavour they cover. And note how many of them were innovators in one way or another.

Each one of these ‘sky friends’ deserves observation and study. And don’t forget; there are many, many more, visible and invisible.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Hoag". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

### **Finance Update June 2011**

We are now 6 months into 2011 and half year finance report has been prepared.

Our expenditure is very tightly managed and we are fortunate that we are supported by the Trustees for major repairs and the fees for architects plans and advice following the quinquennial inspection.

The All Saints Parish Share for 2010 was set at £67,000 and we were able to contribute £54,000 (but sadly a significant gap of £13,000). This year the PCC decided that in order to try and end the year without a deficit the parish share contribution would be reduced to £50,000.00. This decision was reluctantly taken with the

consideration that any surplus expenditure /income within the current financial year would be allocated to the share.

We have a major expense in heating and lighting the church. With regular monitoring and controlling the heating to a bare minimum we have reduced our annual bill from £5,679.83(first 6 months of 2010) to £4,759.41(first 6 months of 2011.) Other major expenses include insurance and the salary of our Organist and Parish Administrator and the day to day building and maintenance expenses.

In the first half of 2011 Pledged giving dropped by £2,500.00 compared with 2010 and gift aid (white envelopes) also dropped by £2,500.00. Open plate collections remained static. Last year we were able to reclaim £18,000.00 from Gift Aid .From April 2011 this will decrease from 22% to 20%. This will mean a further decrease in income of nearly £3,000. (Taking into consideration the reduction in Gift Aid giving)

In December 2010 we asked the congregation to make a Christmas Gift to All Saints in order to balance the books. Thank you to all those who responded positively to this and to those who regularly give to the work of All Saints. With your support we were able to achieve this.

Predictions are that we are going to fall short of the required income to balance the books. The PCC will be considering this report and their response to the Diocese regarding our commitment to the 2012 Parish Share.

It is hoped that as many people as possible will review their committed regular giving as it is only through the faith and commitment of us all that the life and work of All Saints will continue and hopefully flourish.

Norman Drewett  
PCC Treasurer

## THE KISS: LOST IN TRANSLATION

I WANT to give a gentle reply to Jill Dianna Masefield's sharp contribution to last month's Magazine. It must be said first, though, that she is not quoting from "The Bible," let alone "The Word of God," but from a publication (1971 onwards) called The Living Bible, honestly described on its title page as a Paraphrase. As to handshakes – that book aside -- there is indeed a reference to "the right hand of fellowship" in Galatians 2: 9, but at the close of I Peter [not II Peter actually] the Greek word is unmistakably "kiss."

Now this still leaves open the question of when and how we should greet each other at worship within our own culture, but my immediate point is that the LB is a chatty version that cuts corners for the sake of easy reading and can never be appealed to in serious discussion. It is also inescapably American! Much mirth has been caused by its rendering of I Samuel 24: 3, where King Saul takes advantage of a nearby cave to answer a call of nature. Says the LB: "Saul went into a cave to go to the bathroom." It won't do, will it? To be fair, there are scholarly informative footnotes to much of the Old Testament; good, but it is the New Testament that the reader must beware of. Not only is its folksiness often more hindrance than help, but it is full of questionable turns of phrase that put a 'spin' on the text. Incredibly it even discards the expression "The Word" in the famous opening of John's Gospel, consigning it to a footnote. This is just not good enough.

So, I'm glad that Jill D. Masefield felt free to write in, but I courteously express the hope that she will acquire (and enjoy) a dependable translation, perhaps the New International Version (NIV), from which she can quote with greater confidence.

*Ken Smith*

**THE EDINGTON MUSIC FESTIVAL**  
**Sunday August 21st – Sunday August 28<sup>th</sup> 2011**

For over fifty years the small village of Edington which lies on the edge of Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire has hosted a festival of music and liturgy in its magnificent 14<sup>th</sup> century Priory Church.

The festival commences on Sunday August 21st and throughout the week the offices of Matins and Compline are sung to plainsong . The Solemn Eucharist and Solemn Evensong are the major daily services. On Wednesday 24th Choral Evensong is broadcast live at 4.00pm on BBC Radio 3 and there is a sequence of readings and music on Thursday 22nd at 8.00pm

The theme of this year's festival is *Edington Saints*. Saints associated with the Priory Church, especially St.Mary, St.Katharine and All Saints in whose honour the church is dedicated. Others such as St.William of York, St Paul, St Christopher, St.Audon, St.Cuthbert and St.Leodegar ,some who are less known but associated with the church and depicted in the clerestory windows on the North side of the Nave.

This is a wonderful opportunity to experience the finest music ranging from Tallis and Palestrina to Stanford, Britten and Walton within a very spiritual and prayerful setting.

Details of other services throughout the week are displayed in the porch.

[www.edingtonfestival.org](http://www.edingtonfestival.org)

*Norman Drewett*

## **Deanery Synod 19 May 2011: Discussion regarding the Ordination of Women to the Episcopate**

The Proposed [General Synod] Motion

*The motion proposed for discussion is “**that this Synod approve the proposals embodied in the draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure and in draft Amending Canon No 30**”.*

After a PowerPoint presentation setting the scene, we were given two questions to encourage debate;  
Should the draft legislation be passed to set in motion the Ordination of Women to the Episcopate?  
Was the Code of Practice adequate provision for those who in conscience could not accept the Ordination of Women to the Episcopate?

Most of the initial questions applied to the Code of Practice, and there was disbelief and even disapproval that this was unwritten, would not be written until after all the Diocesan Synods had voted and had to be taken on trust.

There was also displeasure that the Deanery Synod had been advised only to discuss and not to vote, and there was a general request from the floor that there should be a vote to show general feeling specifically about the Ordination of Women to the Episcopate. This was agreed to, but some discussion was held first. The Lay Chair made the point that one difficulty we faced was that some people knew a great deal about the subject, and others virtually nothing; he asked if we wished to break up into small groups but the consensus was that we would all benefit from hearing everyone. There were questions regarding the evangelical stance, whether any male bishop would be acceptable to those who needed provision and

if not why not. The reply to this (sacramental assurance and bishops with a pedigree) proved unacceptable/incomprehensible to the general. There was repeated reference to the fact that both evangelicals and Catholics had difficulties with the legislation, but there was a tendency to move towards a feeling that this was a catholic problem and that in the last resort the Ordinariate would solve any lasting problems. Having said that, there was also a clear feeling that this was a regrettable situation, and twice the Lay Chair emphasised that whatever happened, people would be hurt. There was also the question, if the legislation were to be defeated, could it be brought in again at a later date. The practical answer to this was yes, legally it could eventually be reintroduced, but the gut reaction from perhaps everyone and certainly from a majority was that the legislation must be passed and that the Church needed closure on this issue so that we could all get on with Mission.

When the vote was taken, a substantial majority voted in favour of the Ordination of Women to the Episcopate. One voted against, about half a dozen abstained.

The representatives from the Deanery's ABC parish were then asked to explain the idea of the 'following motion'. The substantive motion cannot be amended, lest chaos ensue, but there can be a request that it be revisited, and the Church of England Evangelical Council has put together a following motion that is acceptable to evangelicals, and also to the Catholic Group in General Synod:

This synod

- desires that all faithful Anglicans remain and thrive together in the Church of England; and therefore
- calls upon the House of Bishops to bring forward amendments to the draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure to

ensure that those unable on theological grounds to accept the ministry of women bishops are able to receive episcopal oversight from a bishop with authority (i.e. ordinary jurisdiction) conferred by the Measure rather than by delegation from a Diocesan Bishop.

Current provision included legislative provision, the code of practice operated on trust; this provision would in fact be even stronger than current provision in that it requested bishops with ordinary jurisdiction. In general, the meeting was uncomfortable with this and the discomfort was expressed in the feeling that this would diminish the status of women bishops.

So, sympathy with those who ask for provision, dissatisfaction with the Code of Practice, acute discomfort with the side effects of the level of provision requested. This was a friendly and constructive meeting, with everyone trying to understand what is happening and with not one rancorous word, and that even so we could not make a clear statement or reach anything like agreement.

*Anne Bradley*  
*21 May 2011*

## **Diocesan Synod 19 July 2011**

The Proposed [General Synod] Motion

***The motion proposed for discussion is “that this Synod approve the proposals embodied in the draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure and in draft Amending Canon No 30”.***

+Mike proposed the motion. He concentrated on the general agreement that the motion must be passed and explained that the debate was now about provision. He spoke well about the importance of acceptable provision and both initially and subsequently urged that the Code of Practice would work; he emphasised that this was a statutory Code of Practice, not voluntary. He is opposed to the existence of a traditional male bishop with ordinary powers because in his experience this can lead to individuals and parishes who are in dispute with their Bishop turning to the alternative.

+Mike has seen the first draft of the Code of Practice. 'It must be balanced,' he said. 'It upset people on both sides'.

Various senior women priests spoke without either heat or excessive emotion of the fact that they could be trusted to be gracious. This became a theme.

Archdeacon Tim McClure spoke in favour of the motion and the Code of Practice. His opposition to traditional ordinary jurisdiction was that it enshrined and set in stone an ongoing church within a church.

Fr Richard had prepared a speech which was somewhat too long and had to be cut short before the peroration. It was part plea for consideration for a fellow Anglican and partly a warning; he mentioned lay disenfranchisement brought about by the replacement of Resolutions A & B with a letter of Request; his main point to my mind was that the make up of General Synod has shifted and if enough members objected to lack of adequate provision the motion could be lost and that this would be a bad thing – ongoing strife and resentment, no chance to get on with being Christians. No one ever addressed that. Maybe it is not generally believed to be possible.

The bell rang; with +Mike's permission he ended his paragraph, with a jest. The next speeches were all for the motion, emphasised the need for trust, but tended to make generous mention of Fr Richard's speech and position. There was no other traditional Catholic or conservative Evangelical there who identified himself or spoke. The debate wound down. The Rev Emma Langley (Bristol West Deanery like us) stood and asked permission to read out the rest of Richard's speech. No problem. Basically he wound up by asking for provision to be reconsidered. +Mike then asked if he would like to propose a following motion. This was a surprise, and Tim the Registrar said it had to be a written motion, but mercifully the CEEC following motion (as supplied to us by the Ebbsfleet Lay Council) was embedded in the Bristol West Deanery and City Deanery reports so Richard went with that. As it had already been defeated at Deanery level it might not have been what we chose, but one doesn't decline an Episcopal gift horse.

Voting on the Motion was thus:

House of Bps 1 in favour

House of Clergy 22 in favour, 3 abstentions

House of Laity 25 in favour, 1 abstention

The Following Motion

This [Deanery/Diocesan] synod

- desires that all faithful Anglicans remain and thrive together in the Church of England; and therefore
- calls upon the House of Bishops to bring forward amendments to the draft Bishops and Priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure to ensure that those unable on theological grounds to accept the ministry of women bishops are able to receive episcopal oversight from a bishop with authority (i.e. ordinary jurisdiction) conferred by the Measure

rather than by delegation from a Diocesan Bishop.

Voting on the following motion was thus:

House of Bishops 1 against

House of Clergy 4 in favour, 20 against, 1 abstention

House of Laity 2 in favour, 21 against, 2 abstentions

Neither FiF nor the Ordinariate were mentioned. The debate was not entirely sweetness and light; there was a tendency to quote percentages and numbers and refer to minorities. But it was certainly generous, courteous and downright friendly to Fr Richard personally. There were, I think, even fewer people present than at the Bristol West Deanery. After the first half hour I went off the word 'gracious'. The trust required struck me as one-sided and in a week when the *Tablet* had devoted most of the issue to the crisis of trust and its failure across journalism, the economy, politics *and the Church* I felt that these nice, gracious people risked sounding naïve. Emma's action was great, Fr Richard was extremely touched, and it made the point that a woman priest could be gracious. Cynicism apart, the evening proved that an extremely liberal diocese and a set of C parishes could work together and debate important and sensitive issues with no enmity. I hope that General Synod will take note of that, or at least count on its fingers and work out that the voting percentages do not match the percentages quoted for numbers of A, B and C parishes.

*Anne Bradley*

*July 2011*

## **TWO PERSONAL OFFERINGS**

I am sure there will be other accounts of the Confirmation in this month's magazine, and I know that Anne Bradley is putting in a Diocesan Synod Report, so I am offering two short personal accounts of these.

**The Confirmation** was a wonderful occasion with 3 young girls from All Saints and 5 candidates from All Hallows being confirmed. The Mass was a friendly relaxed Parish Mass with confirmation – and lots of congregational singing which everyone enjoyed. It was a joy to see Fr James among the congregation, and also Olivia Griffiths, both who have left the C of E to continue their pilgrimage with the Church of Rome.

The Candidates from All Saints were Thea Griffiths, Lottie Rudd and Isobel Sutton. All three girls serve at the 9.30 Family Services, and Thea also serves at 11 am Mass. It was a joy and privilege for me to sit with our three young people and we were joined by two girls from All Hallows. They all looked lovely in their pretty dresses – a great change from when I was confirmed in Hereford Cathedral at Pentecost 1961 and we girls had to wear white dresses and veils!

After the Mass we all went into the marquee in the garden for wine and nibbles and met up with friends and families. For me the only slight cloud on the occasion was the fact that very few of our All Saints congregation were there to support our three young people.

**Diocesan Synod.** This took place on the evening of Tuesday 19 July at the Glendinning Theatre at UWE. I picked Fr Richard and Anne Bradley up from All Saints at 6.30 pm in time to get there for the 7 pm start. This time we did not get lost, as we usually seem to do!

The purpose of the Synod was to vote on the women bishop draft measure.

The debate was on the following:

*That this synod approve the proposals embodied in the draft bishops and priests  
(Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure and in the draft Amending  
Canon no 30.*

The Venerable Christine Froude, Archdeacon of Malmsebury opened the debate with a well prepared speech asking us to vote for this, and she emphasised that women are gracious and, as bishops, would not impose adverse arrangements on priests who wished for the oversight of a male

bishop. She also said that if this goes through it won't be until 2014 that we *may* have a woman bishop and lots of women would not suddenly be taking up Episcopal appointments immediately.

Fr Richard stood up and gave a good speech asking us *not* to vote for the measure. However, the allotted five minutes were up before he had finished, so he had to sit down. There were many other speeches and all were in favour of the measure. We then voted and I think only 2, possibly 3 people voted against.

The Revd Emma Langley, incumbent of St Alban's Westbury Park, suddenly appeared beside me, reached across and asked Fr Richard if she could have his speech. She then asked the Bishop if she might read the rest of Fr Richard's speech to us, which the Bishop agreed. She felt very strongly that it should be heard in its entirety.

The Bishop asked Fr Richard if he would like to put forward the measure on the behalf of those who cannot accept women bishops. This read:

*That this Synod*

- a) *Desires that all faithful Anglican remain and thrive together in the Church of England; and therefore*
- b) *Calls upon the House of Bishops to bring forward amendments to the draft Bishops and priests (Consecration and Ordination of Women) Measure to ensure that those unable on theological grounds to accept the ministry of women bishops are able to receive Episcopal oversight from a bishop with authority (I.e. ordinary jurisdiction) conferred by the Measure rather than by delegation from a Diocesan Bishop.*

The mood of the room was that it is time we moved on and that Christians should trust each other. When put to the vote it was lost and I don't know if anyone apart from Fr Richard voted for it.

In spite of this it was a very good Synod and people were firm in their beliefs, but compassionate towards the few who could not vote for the measure to go through. This will be voted on at General Synod next July.

*Liz Badman*

*Lay Minister*

***Sermon preached at Mass on the Feast of the Transfiguration 6  
August 2010 by Liz Badman  
Luke 9.28-36***

There was a cloud – and there was blinding light.  
On a mountain 2,000 years ago.  
On a city 65 years ago today.

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Transfiguration, and we also remember the terrible act of the Americans dropping the first atom bomb on Hiroshima.

We commemorate 2 events, and in doing so see the radiance of the glory of Christ in stark contrast to the radiance of the destructive power of the atomic bomb.

In the Transfiguration our Lord was revealed as the God of Peace, *he exploded with the spiritual power of non violence and unconditional love into the light of the world, the fullness of love and peace for the whole human race.*<sup>1</sup>

The words of John Dear, a Jesuit and a pacifist.

In the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima, Dorothy Day, who founded the Catholic Worker, called the event the ‘anti-transfiguration’, when we rejected Jesus’s nonviolence and created our own demonic light, the blast of the bomb, the dark cloud. So instead of bringing light and peace into the world to the human race, we bring death and destruction.

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<sup>1</sup> John Dear *Hiroshima Day sermon for the Feast of the Transfiguration*  
5.8.06

In Our Lord's transfiguration, it was only those closest to Jesus who saw what happened and who heard the voice from the cloud saying, 'This is my Son, my chosen One. Listen to Him'.

They saw Jesus in his glory, as he was meant to be.

At Hiroshima the effects could still be seen and felt only too well at 1500 metres. Over 200,000 died, either immediately or more slowly from related illnesses. A nine year old boy described the aftermath, *'I was astonished to see my sister covered in blood. Then I looked at myself and saw the skin of my hands and legs peeling and hanging down. I started crying with fear'*. A sixteen year old girl who was nearer, 600 metres, records: *'My hands were red with blood, my skin hanging down. In my wounded flesh I saw black red and white things appearing. I was alarmed and tried to remove them by taking my handkerchief from my pocket. But there was no handkerchief and no pocket. All the clothes below my waist were burned away.'*

Why am I telling you this? It is not because I want to dwell on injury, it is because we must remember, and we must keep on remembering the terrible things that humankind is capable of doing to other humans and to the whole environment. It must not happen again. Hiroshima happened when I was 7 months old and when I was a teenager and in my early 20s we were very conscious of the threat of nuclear weapons. That threat has not gone away, but there seems to be a complacency amongst many people that is worrying. Governments amass nuclear weapons, that also is worrying.

So there was a cloud and dazzling light – Jesus was changed physically, his face was changed, his clothes were dazzling white and he shone brighter than the sun. And he was talking with Moses and Elijah. It must have been terrifying for the disciples. Then they were enveloped in a cloud and heard a voice.

Clouds can be terrifying, or they can carry beauty. They can bring peace and wonder or they can bring destruction. The cloud of terror has hung over us for 65 years – the nuclear cloud of Hiroshima at 8.15 on 6 August 1945, destroying over 4 square miles of the city and damaging a further 9 square miles. But there is another cloud that has followed its way through history – the cloud of God. The cloud led the people of Israel through the desert. The cloud covered Mount Sinai where Moses met with God. God led his people out of slavery to a promised land by a cloud. A cloud appeared at Jesus's baptism, the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him and the voice of God was heard, *'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'* The cloud appeared on the mountain at his transfiguration and they were swallowed up in the cloud of God and again God's voice was heard, *'This is my Son, my chosen. Listen to him'* Then finally at the ascension he was taken up in a cloud. God was in the cloud.

There is a wonderful 14thC spiritual writing called 'The Cloud of Unknowing' which says that God cannot be reached by our intellect, only love can pierce the cloud of unknowing which lies between us and God.

Takashi Nagai, a Japanese university doctor was among the thousands injured by the bomb at Hiroshima. The flash of light came, brighter than the sun and a thick white mushroom cloud was over the city followed by the blast that destroyed everything from the centre of the city. Dr Nagai was flung into the air and buried beneath a pile of rubble and broken glass. When he escaped he found 80% of his colleagues and students were dead and the university in ruins and about to be burnt to the ground. He and his few colleagues who survived set about helping the wounded and dying around them. He did this because he saw God in the cloud. He

believed that he saw the suffering that the nuclear cloud caused as an invitation to share in the sufferings of Christ.

Christ's transfiguration spoke of Christ's glory even when he was dying on the cross. So he felt the cloud at Hiroshima spoke of the same glory experienced through the great suffering.

Back to John Dear the Jesuit pacifist who believes that the Transfiguration is about the paschal mystery, about the cross as the way toward global disarmament and the new life of resurrection. Jesus turns into the bright white light which is the biblical symbol of martyrdom, and he becomes the risen Christ.

It is for us to follow the transfigured Jesus on the way of the cross to help him carry out his mission of Peace. It is for us to be transfigured and to bring His Love and His Peace to the world, so that atrocities like Hiroshima may never happen again.

We, the Church must look for God in the clouds of fear, apathy, and weakness surrounding us. We the Church must pray and hear God speaking to us. We the Church must see God's glory in the powerful, transfigured Jesus. It is up to us to walk in his light.

Amen

## **EVIL & THE KINGDOM**

*Sermon preached by Fr Hoyal at Solemn Mass 24 July 2011*

### **Readings**

*1 Kings 3.5-12:*

*Solomon asks for the gift of Wisdom*

*Roman 8.26-end:*

*Nothing can separate us from God's love*

*Matthew 13.31-33,44-52*

*Parables of the Kingdom*

Some weeks there are more big stories than the media can conveniently handle, and this weekend is a case in point.

A Stockport hospital nurse, a person dedicated to saving life, seems to have deliberately contaminated drip-feed equipment in order to cause the deaths of patients.

A greatly acclaimed young singer with a huge celebrity following is found dead at her Camden home. Is her death at just 27 the sad outcome of harmful personality and addiction problems?

A man with the face of an angel detonates a deadly bomb in the centre of Oslo; not content to stop there, he indiscriminately guns down 85 teenagers at an island camp - apparently all in the cause of some demented and demonic crusade.

If that's not enough, there is devastating famine in East Africa to cover, revelations of corruption at the highest level in the football world, and the continuing rumpus about phone-hacking as heads roll in Wapping and Scotland Yard and not a few politicians are looking over their shoulder very nervously. It's all front-page stuff, but it's much too much for one front page. And none of it's good news.

So where is the Kingdom of God in all this? Indeed, where is God? Where is there any good news? Why does the devil seem to have the upper hand, as well as all the best tunes? Why so much suffering for the vulnerable and the innocent? Why so much corruption and cunning and greed? Why so little wisdom and decency and godliness?

We have just heard again those popular and pithy little stories of Jesus about the Kingdom – the mustard seed, the yeast in the dough, the hidden treasure, the priceless pearl, the mixed catch of fish. At first hearing, they hardly seem a match for the grim big stories that are dominating our media just now.

But, while the Kingdom can seem elusive and eclipsed, it's actually resilient and very tough. The life force within the mustard seed, the mighty leavening power of the yeast: hidden power for growth and goodness that won't be suppressed. Magnum in parvo. Just because *you* can't see the Kingdom, don't for a moment think that it's not there, or that it's impotent in the face of evil. It ain't.

And hidden for now or not, the Kingdom is of inestimable value; it's worth everything. Sooner or later it will expose earth's most glittering prizes as shoddy and insubstantial. You can't trade ego and vanity in heaven.

And in any case, there is a Kingdom reckoning to be reckoned with, so the dragnet story reminds us. It is a grim reckoning for the bad fish - as it is for those who disregard God and violate the sacred laws of his Kingdom.

Yes, in the meantime, it can all look pretty messy. It looks very messy just as present. You don't need to look far to see hardship, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and sword. In one form or another they are all around us.

Even so, the *Kingdom* is among us too, and *it's* all about us. God's *foolishness* is wiser than human wisdom; how much more his *wisdom*? God's grace is greater than any amount of human perversity. God's power *will* prevail, even against the worst that man and devil can throw at him.

We have much to dismay us, much to pray about, as we look out on our world just now. But we also have that wonderful Kingdom insight of St Paul's we've heard again today - his incomparable assurance that nothing in all creation, not in Stockport, not in Camden, not in Oslo, not in Somalia, not in Westminster, Wapping, Clifton or wherever, nothing, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ

Jesus our Lord. *That's* what the Kingdom's like. It's beyond price, and you won't stop it!

## **PILGRIMAGE TO GLOUCESTER** **Gloucester Cathedral *and* Holy Innocents' Highnam**

*Bristol Church Union 2011 Pilgrimage - Saturday 17 September*

The annual pilgrimage is always an excellent occasion. You are warmly invited to join in this year's event. Travel is by private/public transport; the cost of the pilgrimage is £7 for adults, £4 for children (5–17 years). Please bring sandwiches or obtained lunch locally. The pilgrimage consists of guided tours and services in both places of worship, plus free time for reflection and shopping. Further details from: Keith Taplin 0117 9514509 [k.taplin@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:k.taplin@blueyonder.co.uk)

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## **HILDEGARD OF BINGEN** – Vision and the Fullness of Being Human ***Evening of Celebration with Dr Steve D'Evelyn***

**Tuesday 13 September 2011**  
**7.30 pm All Saints Clifton**



Hildegard of Bingen was one of the most accomplished figures of the Middle Ages. This woman who lived 900 years ago has much to show us about being deeply spiritual and truly human. She broke away from her own monastic community to lead her own community as well as to advise communities which grew from it. She composed the first musical play and a collection of some seventy songs with both words and music, wrote works on medicine and physiology, including human sexuality, and corresponded with emperors, popes, and

common people. She recorded visions which she understood to be given by God and helped to illustrate them. Ahead of Hildegard's feast-day on 17 September, our event aims to highlight some of Hildegard's accomplishments - music, art, poetry -- which celebrate the human and the divine.

All most welcome to this celebration. Admission free.

## **Announcing the *Christians in Science* Bristol local group Autumn Talk**

**8 pm Friday 28 October Randall Room, All Saints Clifton**

### **Speaker: Dr Rhoda Hawkins**

Lecturer in Physics, University of Sheffield (formally postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Mathematics, University of Bristol)

### **Necessary Evils? From Forest Fires to Disease.**

Dr Rhoda Hawkins will give an introduction to the theory of dynamical systems such as forest fires, avalanches, ecosystems and disease epidemics as well as an introduction to some of the science of cancer and its relation to evolution. She will then relate this to some reflections on the theology of God and suffering.

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## ALL HALLOWS FESTIVAL IN HONOUR OF OUR LADY'S BIRTHDAY



*Saturday 3 September*

**All Hallows Church, Easton**  
All Hallows Road, Easton BS5 0HH

**12 noon Concelebrated Festival Mass**  
Catered lunch afterwards

*Guest Preacher The Revd David Prothero*  
*Rector of St Mary's & St John's Bathwick*

**3.00 pm Festival Evensong,  
Procession of Our Lady & Benediction**  
Followed by tea

*Last year's festival was a wonderful occasion. Do join us this year.*

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## ASSUMPTIONTIDE FESTIVAL - 20 AUGUST 2011

Information on this Festival may be found in the July magazine, but details of the music, which have just been finalized, may be of interest.

The Choir will be that of St Mary's and St John's, Bathwick, under its Director of Music, Colin Hunt.

The Mass setting will be Healy Willan in E flat, with motets by

Peter Philips and Pergolesi. As last year, there will be arrangements of the Kyrie by Canon Clover and of the Responsorial Psalm by Kenneth Smith.

At Benediction, motets by Rossini and Saint-Saens will be sung - as well as the usual plainsong.

The Organist at Mass will be Owain Park, nurtured at Holy Trinity, Westbury-on-Trym and Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol, now Organ Scholar at Wells Cathedral and still in his teens.

I would just remind you that the Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe will preside and preach at the Mass in Bristol Cathedral, and hope that there will be a strong presence from All Saints and All Hallows.

*Chris Verity*