

Fr Hoyal Writes

As part of a current school project, a junior member of All Saints recently asked me to summarise what All Saints means to me. As Muriel and I take our leave of Bristol, I reproduce my piece here as my final article for the magazine (No.103, I think!)

Why is All Saints Clifton important to me?

- *I have had the privilege of serving as parish priest at All Saints for nearly nine years. That in itself makes All Saints – the congregation, the parish and the building– very important to me. Along with two other churches I have served during this time, it has been my life.*
- *In that time I have spent at least three hours (and often more) in the church building virtually every day, for prayer, worship, seeing people about weddings etc, and practical tasks of many kinds. It is a powerful place to be. It has been a remarkable personal ‘workplace’ as well as an inspiring spiritual home.*
- *My fellow priests and lay ministers and our large diverse congregation make up a church family embracing people of very varied outlooks and talents. But we are wonderfully held together by our unity around the altar in worship.*
- *All Saints is also important to me as a Church of England parish church which, from the start (1868), has been something of a flagship church for our city and beyond. From the beginning it has stood squarely in the ‘Catholic’ tradition of the Church of England, with the Eucharist celebrated daily, all the sacraments available and used, sound Scriptural preaching and teaching, and worship that is rich, dignified and moving.*
- *This tradition has valued the unbroken apostolic succession of bishops, priests and deacons and emphasised the Church of England’s essential kinship in faith and ministry with the great ancient Churches of East and West. It has been important to me, as it was to earlier All Saints priests, to keep faith with the inspiring Catholic vision of the pioneering first Vicar (the Revd Richard Randall) whilst always remaining faithful to the Church of England.*
- *Being parish priest has involved long hours and a great deal of hard work, but it has also been immensely rewarding and a lot of fun! So many people have been wonderfully kind and supportive, and there have been many special occasions. It has been a privilege to be close to people as a pastor in particular circumstances of their lives.*

*The Revd Richard Hoyal
Priest in Charge, March 2004-December 2012*

As I sign off for the last time, Muriel and I take this opportunity to thank you for welcoming us into the fellowship of All Saints and for much personal kindness from so many. We assure you of our prayers and very best wishes, knowing that All Saints has a great future. The best is yet to come!

With warmest greetings for Christmas and the New Year,



A month earlier than usual, and guessing a little about December, I give my final look-back over the year's more public events. It is important not to lose sight of just how much ground we cover in a year.

Guest Preachers

Epiphany (6 January) – **Canon Andrew Greaney** (former Vicar of Little St Mary's Cambridge, and Curate of All Saints)

Baptism of the Lord (Sunday 11 January) – **The Rt Revd Jonathan Baker** (Bishop of Ebbsfleet & our Provincial Episcopal Visitor)

CTCCR United Service (22 January) – **The Revd Michael Docker** (Minister, Tyndale Baptist Church)

Candlemas (2 February) – **Fr Richard Holroyd** (Parish Priest, St Paul's Clifton & St Saviour's Cotham)

Ascension Day (17 May) – **The Revd Dr David Hart** (Minister, Victoria Methodist Church & Superintendent of Bristol & South Gloucester Circuit)

Pentecost Sunday (27 May) – **The Rt Revd Johnson Gakumba** (Bishop of Northern Uganda)

Corpus Christi (7 June) – **Fr Guy Jamieson** (Vicar, Sty Anne's in the Grove, Southowram & St Thomas's, Claremont, Halifax)

SS Peter & Paul/Joint Confirmation Mass (at All Hallows Easton) – **The Rt Revd Jonathan Baker**

Dedication Festival Sunday (1 July) – **Fr Michael Freeman** (Vicar, St John the Divine, Horninglow, Burton on Trent; former Curate of All Saints)

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (15 August) – **Fr Alwyn Jones**

(Eve of) Michaelmas (28 September) – **The Revd David James** (Vicar, St Ambrose' Whitehall & St Leonard's Redfield)

Trinity 18 (14 October) – **The Revd Dr Digby Hoyal** (formerly Director of Tansen Mission Hospital, Nepal)

All Saints Day (1 November) – **The Revd Julian Laurence** (Vicar, Holy Trinity Taunton and Ebbsfleet Area Dean for Salisbury, Bath & Wells and Bristol)

Special Events

All Saints children's Epiphany party (14 January)

Parish Retreat at The Abbey House, Glastonbury conducted by Canon Ray Brazier (2-4 March)

Lent 2012: overall theme '*Seek and ye shall find*' - with weekly Tuesday Lent Evenings on "*Seeking in Romans*" led by the Revd Dr Paul Spilsbury. The annual CTCCR Lent Lectures inspired by the 2011 riots included '*Law=Justice?*' led by His Honour the Revd Judge James Patrick, formerly Curate of All Saints.

Passion Sunday *Come-and-Sing* Sacred Concert (25 March) led by All Saints choir: Passiontide excerpts from Handel's *Messiah*.

Lent appeal for WaterAid's *Jars of Change* appeal and the Rainbow Centre for Children.

Jubilee 'Songs of Praise' (3 June) – celebrating Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee.

'*ALL4JESUS*' Glastonbury Pilgrimage (16 June) – Guest preacher: **The Rt Revd Martyn Jarrett** (Bishop of Beverley)

"*The Opera Picnic*" (16 June) with Ian Yemm and WNO singers – opera concert in church with picnic suppers in the gardens.

Open Evening with Bishop of Ebbsfleet at All Saints (26 June)

All Saints participation in the public Christ Church City to St Mary Redcliffe *Litany Procession* - celebrating the first processional singing of Cranmer's 1544 English litany (30 June)

All Saints Parish Summer Barbecue for all ages (7 July) – a delightful event well worth repeating.

St John's School End of Year Service with presentation of Bibles from All Saints to leavers (18 July)

August – All Saints' month for *Churches Together's* Saturday soup run.

'*BCP Sunday*' (2 September) – all All Saints services (Family Service apart) conducted according to 1662 Book of Common Prayer to celebrate its 350th anniversary.

Bristol Doors Open Day (8 September) with All Saints participating.

"*Start-Back Sunday*" – post-holidays regrouping opportunity for Family Service congregation (16 September).

Day Pilgrimage with Bristol Church Union to Winchester Cathedral and John Keble's parish of Hursley (22 September).

Somerset Church Crawl by minibus (29 September) – led by Liz Badman.

All Saints Harvest-tide appeal for USPG's *A Garden in Malawi* – helping families be self-sufficient in vegetables.

Harvest Supper in parish room (5 October).

Bristol Church Union open annual lectures: Margaret Barker DD, Methodist Lay Preacher, on 'The Temple Roots of the Eucharist' (2 and 23 October).

All Saints' first St Francis-Tide Pet Service (6 October) – led by Fr Roger Durbin & Fr Charles Sutton.

All Saints parish pilgrimage to Walsingham, jointly with St Gregory's, Horfield (8-12 October)

Weekend art exhibition sponsored by West Bristol Arts Trail (12-14 October).

One World Week CTCCR United Service at All Saints '*Sharing Destiny – Moving towards One World*' (21 October).

Remembrance Day observance at Whiteladies Road War Memorial with representation from Belgrave School, Clifton College, Clifton High School, Redland Green School, St John's C of E School, St Peter & St Paul's RC School (9 November)

'An Evening With Purcell' All Saints musicians celebrating St Cecilia – with supper and wine in the sacristy.

"Advent Voices" – candlelight service of readings and music for Advent Sunday (2 December) with special guests the Lord Mayor of Bristol (Cllr Peter Main) and the Bishop of Ebbsfleet. Fr Hoyal's final service as priest in charge of All Saints.

All Saints Christmas appeal for *Christian Aid's* Christmas project: *Healing in this Holy Land* - bringing hope and healing to people living in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory.

Belgrave School carol and Christingle service (14 December)

108th birthday of longstanding All Saints member Vera Price (16 December)

St John's School carol service (19 December)

All Saints Service of Lessons & Carols for Christmas (23 December)

In addition our monthly Walsingham Cell Masses, *MU-Plus* Masses, requiem Masses and Masses for healing have continued, as have our occasional Sunday parish lunches after Solemn Mass and our monthly services at Carlton Mansions and Whatley Court residential homes.

Occasional Offices (to end November)

10 children baptised

1 All Saints member confirmed (Ewan Turner)

2 weddings

5 church funerals and 1 crematorium service

People and Events

In 2012 we welcomed the births of Rebekah to Sarah Bradley, Esther to Tina & Brendan Biggs, Elliot to Johanna Hoyal and Miriam to Zoe Hoyal.

In June Fr Charles and Helen Sutton celebrated the marriage of Angharad Sutton to Dushan Milenkovic on 16 June, and Mary Benton's brother James Monro was ordained deacon at Norwich Cathedral.

Over the year we sadly lost a number of All Saints friends. These included Dulcie Mason, Tony Lea-Hair, Rosemary Bird, Margaret Portman (Peggy), Bernard Macey and Jean Winter (local parishioner and home communicant)

The departed and their families remain in our prayers, as do all with All Saints connections who have lost family and friends.

With the arrival last year of Fr Christopher Kinch at Holy Nativity, Fr Brendan was available to us a little more often again earlier this year. Fr Kinch's deployment on chaplaincy duties in Afghanistan has required Fr Brendan to resume his full-time cover at Holy Nativity until next spring.

Music

The monthly Saturday Concert Matinees at 4 pm sponsored by All Saints Arts (ASA) continued with a varied programme of contributors, both instrumentalists and singers.

They included: Organ Recital by John Davenport – *Just Bach* (4 February); Lucinda Stuart Grant soprano acc. Jennifer Carter (3 March); Dorian Quartet – Haydn’s Seven last Words from the Cross (10 March); Josephine Goddard soprano acc. John Davenport (5 May); German lyric soprano Ada Belidis in aid of All Hallows Restoration Appeal (19 May); recorder concert by Jacob Warn with Andy Warn, guitar (9 June); Lucy Thorn clarinet acc. Jennifer Carter (7 July); Lavinia Redman oboe (1 September); New Bristol Voices – *Voices of Peace & Longing* (6 October); Bristol University pianists performing in aid of Alabaré (20 October); Lana Trimmer violin (3 November); and *Three’s Company* – organ selection played by John Davenport, James Drinkwater & Eric Tyson (1 December).

ASA also presented ‘*Heart’s Delight*’ performed by All Saints singers and players in aid of British Heart Foundation (18 April), a concert of Russian music by St Petersburg Blagovest Ensemble (23 May), *The Opera Picnic* (16 June), and *Celebrating St Cecilia* (23 November).

Other concerts/musical events have included: Clifton High School Choir (2 March); Bristol University Symphonia (3 March); LAMENTA ‘Lent in Renaissance Rome’ - Fitzhardinge Consort (10 March); Alexei Winter performing English songs and poetry acc. by Chris Hopkins (21 April); Soroptomists Concert (15 June); Cabot Choir Concert (23 June); Clifton Singers Concert (30 June); Bristol Premiere of David Bednall’s ‘Welcome All Wonders’ - Fitzhardinge Consort (5 December)

Other Activities

All Saints remains the venue for a variety of meetings and activities. Among them Alcoholics Anonymous, Kindermusik, Bristol Psychology Association, and the Embroiderers Guild. Hollis Morgan have held several Wednesday evening auctions at All Saints.

Christians in Science has met once at All Saints this year - for Dr John Bimson’s lecture on *Thinking through the Fall* (11 May).

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Of course, the foregoing omits a huge amount of ordinary church activity – daily, weekly and monthly – that takes place in connection with our worship, fellowship, maintenance and outreach endeavours. As ever, we must gratefully acknowledge the contributions many by so many to the overall life and work of All Saints. And that we gladly do.

RDH

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LATE AUTUMN 2012 NEWSLETTER

Greetings from a rather cold Georgia! I've decided in this newsletter to concentrate on some of the very exciting work that is just underway, or is about to start, at Alalay. This is in addition to everything else that we are supporting! Up-to-date details are on my website – please look, and encourage others to look also.

It is clear that financial resources are very tight for the organization, as many overseas donors have been forced (as a result of the global recession) to cutback on their giving. However, this gives me renewed hope that the several self-financing projects that I have implemented are the right way forward.

After much discussion, and several revised business plans, we are planning to launch a quail farm, which should result in significant income for the street children. Quail eggs are a particular delicacy in Bolivia and command a good price, and we anticipate substantial orders for what can be produced.

The prevention house continues to do good work in helping to keep families together and stopping the children from being forced on to the streets.

We are supporting a further three older street children through vocational training – in cookery and bakery, in banking (photo of Alejandro on the left) and in beauty care. This means that we are now helping a total of ten children through college, with the result that they have a high chance of employment and the opportunity to lead fulfilling lives.

The English teaching classes continue at the Welcome Houses and are currently being extended to the out-of-town centre (the “aldea”). The very enthusiastic Bolivian lady teacher was joined in October by a volunteer from England, who will help with the teaching programme for the next eight months.

I mentioned in the last newsletter that the medical centre was thriving – here is one of the seven children who were fitted recently for the first time with spectacles (which they wear with pride!).

In addition, over 100 pairs of shoes have been bought for the children.

The carpentry workshop is being re-equipped and should also generate additional income for the children at Alalay, as well as being a useful training centre to help develop their skills. The workshop will repair furniture, window frames and so on at the aldea, and produce new furniture for sale.

On the downside, our chicken flock has been hit by disease and we have lost a number of hens – once the disease has been eradicated they will be replaced with

healthy stock.

I have just one hundred Christmas cards left, hand-made by the children and on sale for £1.50 each or £5 for five. Please contact me quickly if you would like to purchase some.

Finally, world-renowned cellist Michael Jones will be playing in a charity concert for the street kids at St Matthew's Church, Kingsdown, Bristol on Friday evening 1st March 2013. Please put the date in your diary.

These are challenging times and I continue to be very grateful for your support.

Annie Syrett, Zugdidi, Georgia - November 2012

www.alalay.co.uk

HYMNBOOK SEARCH

A gentle challenge each month from the New English Hymnal. A seasonal one to start with:

Find one place that says the infant Jesus did not cry and another place that says he cried just like the rest of us.

Frankincense, myrrh and the blending of incense

By Ruth Baker

One of the first things that strikes visitors to All Saints in Clifton is the evocative smell of incense, and some people come and sit here just to absorb the atmosphere it helps to create. In the atrium, you will find an interesting and informative take-home leaflet describing the history and meaning of its use in the liturgy.

The incense used at All Saints goes by the grand name of *Basilica*, and comes from Prinknash Benedictine Abbey in Gloucestershire, one of the largest suppliers in Europe. The key ingredient is frankincense, or gum olibanum (from the Arabic لُبَّانُ, *lubbān*), a sap from species of the *Boswellia* tree, primarily *Boswellia sacra*. It grows in Southern Arabia and East Africa, and the best quality is said to come from the Yemen. The botanic gardens at Kew describe it as 'near threatened', which means that it is likely to become vulnerable in the near future. It is obviously important to protect its habitat, and as Father Francis the Abbot pointed out, much of it originates in countries that are war-torn or unstable, primarily Somalia.

Prinknash imports around 8000 kilos a year, and sells its blended incense all over the world; the community has been producing it since 1907, and the recipes have been tested and developed since then. They have archives of detailed records of these recipes, which include the use of natural oils from all over the world. Father Francis does most of the blending himself in a large shed, using simple, traditional techniques.

The gum olibanum is first placed in a metal tray, and washed in methylated spirits to remove the dust and give it a shine. It is then mixed with other ingredients and put on mesh racks to dry naturally. The Abbey experimented for a while with an electric drying machine, but some of the aromatic oils were lost in the process so they went back to the traditional method.

Several blends of incense are made; most though not all include the oils mentioned above. Different resins

are also added to the frankincense, including styrax and benzoin (gum benzoin or gum benjamin) which probably both come from the *Styrax benzoin* tree, native to Sumatra, though styrax is also harvested from the shrub *Styrax officinalis*. Styrax is by far the most highly perfumed. It is a sticky, black balsamic gum, and gives the *Basilica* incense its characteristic aroma and dark appearance. Myrrh is also used – the popular Christmas carol speaks of its ‘bitter perfume’, and it is certainly sharper than the heady scent of styrax. It is a natural blend of an essential oil and resin obtained mainly from the thorny shrub species *Commiphora myrrha*, which grows in the same part of the world as *Boswellia*. The various essential oils give each blend its characteristic aroma: rosewood, cedarwood, lemon grass, bay, lavender, clove and cinnamon are the main ones used.

These resins and oils have been highly prized since antiquity, and not only for their perfume. In ancient times, frankincense and myrrh were used in embalming; we don’t go in for embalming much these days, but the same antimicrobial properties which preserved bodies in the past are highly effective in modern herbal medicine. Both are used in the treatment of bronchitis, abscesses and ulcers, and in cleansing wounds, and in their native lands are also chewed as a breath fresheners. Lavender oil is a relaxant, and can relieve headaches and is also used topically for wounds, while cinnamon helps the digestion and circulation. So the next time *Basilica* wafts in your direction, remember that it can help to heal your body as well as your spirit!

If you would like to experiment with the different blends, Prinknash Abbey sells them in small quantities in attractive boxes – the ideal Christmas present.

Priory is frankincense with no added oils

Cathedral is blended with more expensive oils

Sanctuary has a predominance of lemon oil

Abbey has liquid styrax and mixed oils added to the frankincense

Basilica has both benzoin and styrax, and oils

St. Michael blends frankincense with myrrh and benzoin

Prinknash is a lovely place to visit, with wonderful views of the Gloucestershire countryside. It also has an excellent cafe. Telephone 01452 812455.

I would like to thank Father Francis for showing me how the incense is made, and for his help in writing this article. I plan to give an illustrated talk in January 2013, which will stimulate the senses of both smell and taste – though as myrrh is preserved in 90% alcohol, I shall make sure it is diluted!

Main sources: Martin, Fr. (1998). In *Pax*, the Prinknash quarterly magazine

Bone, K. (2003). *A clinical guide to the blending of liquid herbs*

Duke, J. A. (2008). *Duke’s handbook of medicinal plants of the Bible*

Robbins, C. (1995). *The household herbal*

Appreciation of Joanna Morley Fisher 1917 – 2012
given at her funeral on 5th November by her daughter Louise Mclean

I wanted to stand up to give a short tribute to my Mother, Joanna Fisher, on this day of her funeral.

She was the most wonderfully loving and kind Mother, beautiful and vivacious, even slightly ethereal. She had that rare combination of being exciting and fun but also nurturing, gentle, sympathetic and motherly.

I was very, very close to her and she was my best friend. For ten years I lived in Bristol during the nineties, when my two daughters were small and we had the most lovely time together, which we will never forget. She was such great fun and had a really good sense of humour. We spent a lot of time together during those years before I moved to London and she had a huge influence in bringing up my daughters, who adored her. We saw each other all the time or we spoke to each other on the phone every day.

I will give a little background to my Mother's life. She was born just before the end of WW1 in St. Johns Wood, London, the youngest daughter of Percy Morley Horder. Her father was a famous architect who designed Nottingham University, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and even a house for Prime Minister Lloyd George. From an early age she was surrounded by well known writers, artists and important people of the time, as these were friends of her father. In fact her own Godfather was G.K. Chesterton.

She had one sister Barbara Horder who she adored but was 19 years old than her! Barbara became an actress and her father converted the stables of their house in Hamilton Terrace to a 'Little Theatre' where she put on plays written especially for her by playwrights of the day. She was a friend of Laurence Olivier, having gone to the Central School of Drama with him, later playing Lady Montague with Olivier and Vivien Leigh in *Romeo and Juliet* on Broadway in 1940.

My Mother followed in her sister's footsteps and became an actress after studying at the London Theatre Studio in Islington where John Gielgud was a director.

She played in a number of Revues in theatres in Oxford and London and also here in Bristol at the Theatre Royal as Cecily in the *Importance of Being Earnest*.

In 1941 my Mother married my father Dr. Ian Mclean and they lived in Hampton Hill, just outside London.

Before she had children, she starred in the melodrama *Maria Marten* with Julian Somers, appearing on the front cover of Picture Post in December 1942. During her career, she played with some of the great actors of the time, including Sir Richard Attenborough, John Mills, Dirk Bogarde and Peter Ustinov.

Her longest running job was during World War II with Leonard Sachs's very popular Players' Theatre, in Charing Cross, which was later televised as *The Good Old Days*. She sang to the audience while playing her guitar during the Blitz while the bombs were dropping around them. There she worked with actors such as Clive Dunn and John Le Mesurier of *Dad's Army* fame, as well as Hattie Jacques who starred in the 'Carry On' films.

In the early days of television in 1953, she appeared in a BBC nativity play as Mary.

My Mother had six children – Alan, Lawrie, Sally, myself, Alison and Robert. Sadly Lawrie is no longer with us and died in 1995, something my Mother could never get over.

During the 1960s, we moved to Richmond, Surrey and my Mother joined the Richmond Shakespeare Society starring in productions such as Chekhov's *The Seagull* and Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*.

In 1969, my Mother married Thoby Fisher, a rocket scientist. Thoby was first cousin to author Virginia Woolf so she was introduced into the famous Bloomsbury set. They went to live in Clevedon, Somerset to be near his job at Bristol Aerospace. Thoby had one daughter Olivia by his previous marriage, who sadly died in 2009 and who my Mother and sister Sally were extremely fond of.

My Mother's last job was during the Seventies when she worked for BBC Bristol reading out the letters for Radio 4's *Any Answers* with host David Jacobs.

Her only sister Barbara, who had gone to live in California for many years, came back to live in Bristol in 1976 to be near her for the last ten years of her life till she died in 1986. Many people here will remember her and how close they were.

In 1981 my Mother and Thoby Fisher moved from Clevedon to Bristol. Thoby died in 1991 and my Mother eventually moved into a flat she owned close by this church. Both she and my Aunt Barbara were regular attenders of All Saints Church.

In 2007 at the age of 90 my Mother went to live in St. Monica's nursing home where she spent the remainder of her life, dying peacefully at the age of 95 years. We are indebted to the nurses who looked after her so well in her final years.

My Mother will be sorely missed by not only her family but many other people. She truly was a very lovely and very special person.

ALL SAINTS DAY

Sermon preached at the Solemn Mass 1 November 2012 by Fr Julian Laurence, Vicar of Holy Trinity Taunton

Blest are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

My Dad would be so proud to see me here today. Seventy five years ago he was ordained in Bristol Cathedral to a title at St Gregory's, Horfield, as an ordinand sponsored by this parish. His mother was a faithful worshipper here from the late 19th century, although her husband preferred to sing in the choir at St Nicholas, only coming here after the war when St Nicholas – and indeed, All Saints – was no more. Sadly my family's direct connection ceased with the death of my aunt who lived just down the road in 1991. The stole I wear this evening is my ordination stole, and my father's, and I believe it was made by the All Saints' embroidery guild; indeed I have pre-war silk vestments made by them and salvaged by Clifton College students after the church was bombed. As I've said, Dad would be proud to see me here, but he died six years ago, just after celebrating his 70th anniversary of being priested. However, I very much hope that he and all our loved ones are aware of what's happening here and now, and our worship is joined with theirs and all the saints.

No doubt over the years, you have heard many a preacher remind you that we all called to saints, yet it doesn't seem to matter how often we hear this, it still seems impossible – and perhaps even undesirable. After all, a saint could be someone whose head is so far stuck into heaven that their feet aren't on the ground. It has to be said that sometimes sinners are more fun and interesting than saints. And who would actually be willing actually to die for their faith, when all too often we

consider it quite a sacrifice to give up an hour or two on Sunday morning, let alone a Thursday evening. Yet we are called to be saints, and Jesus tells us how we can begin to fulfil that calling in his teachings from the Sermon on the Mount, in that part we call the Beatitudes of which we were reminded in this evening's gospel reading, and especially in that short but direct phrase: *Blest are the pure in heart.*

In a way the Feast of All Saints is a form of Christian hero-worship. We celebrate the lives of countless men and women – and children – , acknowledged and unknown, who through the generations have inspired through their lives and examples on earth those who follow them in the footsteps of the faith, and in heaven continue to support us by their prayers. Their lives encourage us to appreciate that living the teachings of Jesus may be difficult, but not impossible. God does not create us and enliven us with his Spirit so that we can be glorious failures! No, it is his will that we should succeed, and he never demands anything of us beyond our capabilities. All of us have received the call of God, and are given, by God, the means to answer that call. Today is a day when as well as giving thanks for those who have run that race before us, we can take a quick comfort stop in our own race, and remind ourselves of where we are going and why.

Called to be saints? Some people's reaction may be a loud and feigned, *Moi?*, others may say, *No way!*, others *As if!* False modesty, pretension, dismissal and disbelief would be among many reactions to this divine calling. However, most people would aspire to live a good life, even if they didn't feel up to the heroics of some of the saints. After all, the saints were such a diverse bunch, even from Christ's disciples, whose characters ranged from the fickle, the dim, the protective and the treacherous. The church's hagiography shows saints to have a remarkable range of characters, temperaments and professions. Some saints were young and some were very old. Some died violent deaths as martyrs, others peacefully at home, after 'a short illness!' Some were very educated, some had hardly any learning at all. Some were valiant warriors, others monks and nuns who never left their monasteries and convents. We celebrate saints who are ordained and those who are lay people; scholars or farmers; monarchs and homeless wanderers. But if we search a little deeper, going beyond the outward nature and descriptions of all these people, we do find that they all have something in common: they were *pure in heart*. Jesus said, *Blest are the pure in heart for they shall see God*. The saints were holy because they saw God, and walked in the presence of God. People were acknowledged as saints, not only because they lived a good life – and don't forget those of other faiths or none live 'good lives' – not only because the saints lived a good life, but those who encountered them left with the feeling that they had an encounter with God. And these are the people, the saints, that God calls us to be: not just 'good' people, but godly people.

As well as the quality of their lives, the saints were renowned for their faithfulness. That is a hallmark of being a Christian. It was the saints' faithfulness that led them to being pure in heart. Yet we might struggle to know what being 'pure in heart' means and so fear that we shall not 'see God.' Being 'pure in heart' means to understand our spiritual nature, that we go beyond our physical selves and into our divine interior. There is utter goodness at the centre of our being, just as God is at the centre, albeit often obscured, of all things, visible and invisible. Despite the endless distractions that seem to make us feel that we are exclusively part of a physical and material world, we are nonetheless spiritual beings, unique amongst God's creation in sharing his life, here and now, and now pie in the sky when we die. We share the one Spirit of God. That is a fact – we have to believe it, and to be faithful to that belief.

Faithfulness is challenged in so many ways today, and perhaps was ever so. We are not faced with explicit challenges such as persecutions and trials. No, our challenges are far more insidious and pernicious. Apathy, disbelief, ridicule, ignorance – these are some of the challenges to our faith. We face in the world all around us in so many ways and forms. And sadly we seem to be facing this today in the Church. As the Bishop of Ebbsfleet's Episcopal Vicar in this area, you will not be surprised if I dare to address the elephant in the church. In a few weeks' time General Synod will

vote on the legislation enabling women to be ordained to the episcopate. Recognising the ultimate inevitability of this, opponents from both the evangelical and catholic wings of the church, as well as those in between, have tried to ensure a secure future within the church, in accordance with assurances and promises made by Synod and the legislation in and since 1992. All we are being assured of now is that we will be afforded respect for our beliefs. I urge you all to pray hard for those involved in the vote at Synod, and to remain faithful whatever its outcome.

I am also aware of your own sadnesses and uncertainties at this time with Fr Richard's retirement at the end of the month, and please be assured that whatever I can do I will to help. I say this especially because it was announced this week, as you probably know, that the Bishop of Ebbsfleet is to be the Bishop of Fulham after Easter, leaving his present post on Ash Wednesday. However, be assured that there will be a successor to Bishop Jonathan, and that the process of appointing a new bishop is already under way.

Even as a minority with a minority of God's church on earth, we still feel the challenges of remaining faithful, and sometimes our thoughts about the political situation within the C of E – especially mine! – do not display that purity of heart which is the pathway to sainthood. So it is all the more important not be distracted from our true calling, which is to be faithful, not to preserve the church. That's primarily God's job, not ours. And in order to be faithful, recover, and rebuild that purity of heart which is the characteristic of saints, that we and others might see God.

Purity of heart. Achieved by accepting fully our inner spirit as part of God's own life – no matter what are our faults and weaknesses. To see ourselves as we truly are is to see God. To live the life of the inner spirit is to live in holiness. That is why the reading from St John, again which we heard this evening, is so apt: 'Beloved, we are God's children now'. We are holy when we live who we are.

But we live lives of holiness not so that we alone might see God, but so that the world may see as well. It is not us, but others, who may proclaim our sanctity. I guess that most of the saints we remember today would be surprised and even horrified to be called saints. To give an example, in a very practical, way of what being a saint may entail today, I quote from the document, 'The Church Today', from the Second Vatican Council:

Christians who take an active part in modern socioeconomic development and defend justice and charity should be convinced that they can make a great contribution to the prosperity of mankind and the peace of the world. Whether they do so as individuals or in association, let their example be a shining one. After acquiring whatever skills and experience are absolutely necessary, they should in faithfulness to Christ and his gospel observe the right order of values in their earthly activities. Thus their whole lives, both individual and social will be permeated with the spirit of the Beatitudes.'

As we celebrate All Saints, so we give thanks to God for all those whose faithfulness have inspired the Christian community in succeeding generations. We give thanks to God that in encountering them, we encounter him. We remember our own calling as children of God to be saints today, and pray that our lives may be lived as a shining example of the faith we profess, that we as individuals and as a Church, may work for the coming of the kingdom, created for this purpose by the Father, taught how by the Son, and empowered to do so by the Spirit.

Blest are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

ALL SOULS DAY

Sermon preached by Fr Hoyal on 2 November 2012 at the Solemn Requiem

A quotation from the 17th-century poet-priest John Donne: *“Death, be not proud... Those who thou think'st thou dost overthrow, die not, poor death – not canst thou kill me... One short sleep past, we wake eternally, and death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.”*

It is affection and respect for departed friends and relatives that brings us here tonight. We want to remember them, to say thank-you for them; we miss them, and we want to pray that God will keep them safe.

But we can't see through the dark towering walls of death. It is easy to have doubts. The modern mind-set finds it hard to believe in life beyond death. And the loneliness and sadness of bereavement make it easy for us to despair. We seem to have no existence independently of our physical bodies, so how can anyone survive the dust of death?

But we needn't be duped by sorrow, or gulled by unreflective people's instinctive naïve realism about the nature of reality. Let me give a simple example. Take a written message - a short letter, or a brilliant book perhaps. The same message, the same book, can be written on different materials – paper, glass, sand; it can be written with different pens or other implements, and with different kinds of ink or other medium. Rather laboriously the same message can be written in the sky with the vapour trail of an aeroplane. It can be written electronically on an iPad or a television, it can be projected as a light image onto a screen. And so on. It's the pattern that's important. Essentially, the message lies in the pattern, not the particular means the pattern is displayed by.

Or take a tune. It can exist in the composer's head, it can be written in manuscript, it can be played by a live orchestra; and it can be transferred to tape or record or disc or memory stick. The same tune can be embodied in different media.

We need bodies, but we are more than just that. We are living spirits. We think, we feel, we know. We have power to love, worship, work, show kindness, be creative. That's what's really important about us, the spiritual pattern, the spiritual melody of our lives.

Yes, in our physical bodies we die. But what we amount to in God's eyes as spiritual beings – our spiritual pattern, the spiritual melody, needn't be lost. It's ultimately the pattern, the message, the melody, that's important, not the way it's produced. It can be embodied in different forms. It can be produced again, and better.

This power of re-embodiment is what we call resurrection – not a cruel or silly fairy tale, but a basic fact of Christian experience. You and I can only be here, twenty centuries after the Crucifixion; this building can only be here, the whole Christian Church can only exist, because Jesus of Nazareth rose from the dead. Nothing less could have got Christianity off the ground and kept it going so long

Of course, in Jesus the pattern of his life was perfect. It was a total 'yes' to God in everything. His love, his radical obedience to God, brought him suffering and death. But death couldn't destroy holiness and love as perfect as that. That cold dark tomb just couldn't hold back God's love. They burst out of the tomb in the resurrection of Christ – not a resuscitation but a resurrection. A total spiritual re-embodiment, a total newness of life, but entirely continuous with his life and being before he died. That stupendous event has changed the whole of history. We even date our years from the coming of Jesus. Easter changes everything. It gives us hope and confidence in the face of death.

Those we love and see no more are not hopelessly lost to us. The earthly body perishes, but the essential life-pattern, the spiritual genome if you like, the spiritual reality of our departed ones is with God in his keeping. We needn't fear for them, because nothing which has value in the sight of God can ever be lost.

True, none of us is perfect. By the time we die, the spiritual pattern that's built up in our lives may be splendidly attractive, coherent, even saintly. More often, it may be a bit patchy, a little inconsistent, rather underdeveloped, perhaps more like the scrawl of a confused person, or a tune falteringly played by an indifferent musician on a poor instrument.

But this is precisely why we pray for the departed, and hope that they pray for us. With good and bad in the pattern, it needs to be set out again. What is inadequate needs correction or removal. What appears satisfactory may need improvement if the spiritual pattern of our lives is going to be good enough for the piercing splendour of eternity in God's presence. That faltering, poorly played tune that is my life on earth needs, by God's grace, to be gloriously transposed into a full and rich spiritual symphony played so to speak by a splendid orchestra.

It is always that transformation, that transfiguration, that resurrection, that we have in mind when we commend our departed brothers and sisters in prayer to the mercy and love of God.

In this connection, our service this evening is very much to the point. For in our Requiem, in this celebration of the Holy Communion for our departed, we are doing what Jesus said we are to do with bread and wine in order to know his presence.

In this service we enter into the reality of his own death and resurrection. That is what he said it is for- to proclaim his death and celebrate his resurrection. Through it we enter into the presence of the Risen Christ, made known to us now in the Breaking of the Bread, just as when he revealed himself on the first Easter Day to the Emmaus disciples. But perhaps most important of all, we are laying hold of the power of God which raised Jesus from the dead. As we do this 'in remembrance of him', we do so in the assurance that this same power of life-renewing love operates on behalf of those we pray for today. And our prayers needn't be anxious or fretful, for that power is God's power, that power is invincible. God is God. They are safe. And we are consoled.

John Donne is right: *"Death, be not proud... Those who thou think'st thou dost overthrow, die not, poor death – not canst thou kill me... One short sleep past, we wake eternally, and death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die."*

London 2012 : My very small part in its outstanding success.

Training to be a Games Maker

The first training session was held in the Pavilion Theatre Weymouth in March 2012. It was an evening event, attended by approximately 500 volunteers. The programme was an Induction to London 2012 and to the Games Maker role in general.

We were asked to introduce ourselves to persons on either side of you and immediately behind and in front of each of us. The volunteers I met were a pharmacist, a linguist, a logistics manager a security manager and someone who 'dabbled' in computers.

I list them to give you a small flavor of the variety of volunteers and the skills and knowledge they brought to the games.

Then followed a number of speakers, one was a training manager from British Airways (seconded to the Olympics). He explained what training was to be given and how it was to be undertaken, 70,000 to be trained in a relatively short period of time, no mean feat.

Another speaker showed us the Olympic venues across the UK and which sports were being held at them and the timetable.

We were then given our first glimpse of the Games Maker uniform; modeled by young slim people of course. I must admit my first reaction to the colours was not positive, red and purple, not the colours that are usually together. However, having worn and worked in it, the choice was good and we stood out bold in the field and on television, exactly what we needed.

Then followed a talk on the serious topic of security linked with Health and Safety issues. Although the risk of a terrorist attack was not referred to in great detail, we were made well aware of the concerns that the games presented. It was made abundantly clear the safety and security was everybody's concern not just to the security staff.

The second training at Weymouth was at the Sailing Venue. This consisted of meeting the site managers, being given the timetable for sailing events (weather permitting); and a tour of the site. There was much technical jargon at the training, nautical terms etc. which meant nothing to me. It was very obvious however that most of the volunteers were either sailors or associated with sailing to some degree and did understand. Many of them were very patient with me and explained much about the sport as time went on.

The third training event was role specific and held at Hackney College in East London. As it was role specific, what was my role I hear you ask???

I was part of the cleaning, catering and waste disposal team, known in the Games time as C.C.W. I will not go through this day in detail (very dull if I'm honest), but sufficient to say that the CCW team did not cook, clean or dispose of waste.

More of what we did do in my next article which will be entitled Games Time.

Vera Sanders

Confessions of a Gamesmaker

This summer I was fortunate enough to be selected as a Gamesmaker for both the Olympic and Paralympic Games. I spent two fortnights in the Aquatics Centre directing the great and the good to the vols-au-vent and champagne, the Olympic Family seating area, and their chauffeur driven cars, while beating off the press and ordinary ticket holders. This proved particularly difficult during royal visits, and when Michelle Obama came to cheer on Ryan Lochte.

The most coveted job was accompanying the medal and flower presenters. If you had the honour of being selected your shift would start with a special briefing, and a very solemn presentation of access passes to the medal room. We would locate the politician or federation delegate in question, accompany them down to the medal room, and tremble with excitement as the three (or, on one glorious afternoon of relays, twelve) medallists lolloped into the room, swinging their improbably long arms and tossing their wet hair. We, the Gamesmakers, were there to be rarely seen and absolutely never heard, but when I met Michael Phelps, and later Ellie Simmons, I risked a tentative "Hi, congratulations!"

My favourite shift in the aquatics centre was a medal presentation day with a difference. I was en route to the medal room when I was accosted by a Chinese Paralympian who asked me for help. I started to politely explain that assisting athletes was not in my remit when I noticed the blank expression on her face and

realised that I'd already heard the extent of her English vocabulary. I then put her rucksack on my back and followed her to the practice pool, where, luckily, no-one checked my accreditation. Having gathered up her kit and coach we processed to the changing rooms, where she stripped and pointed with her foot to indicate that I should assist her into her other costume. The coach picked one side and I picked the other, and between us we squeezed her into her competition costume, which seemed more like a compression chamber, whilst I tried to look as though I did this sort of thing all the time.

Another highlight was bagging tickets to the Velodrome, the second best Park venue, and the Stadium, which is the third. On the former occasion I sat just behind Jeremy Hunt and George Osborne and shamelessly eavesdropped on their conversation. As the celebrities filed out to their next appointments Princess Beatrice squeezed past me, and, thinking it too good an opportunity to miss, I accosted her as though I was an old acquaintance. She looked at me and without missing a beat gave me an "oh, hi!" and a smile of recognition.

Even on days when I was posted at the entrances to the venue, unable to catch a glimpse of the action within while being very able to hear the roar of the crowd, I was extremely grateful to be inside the Olympic Park soaking up the atmosphere. The spectators and athletes were brilliant, and my fellow Gamesmakers were an inspiration, particularly the pathfinders posted at the entrances to the park, far away from the action but still keeping up a cheerful attitude whatever the weather.

I am so grateful for the experience, the fun I had, the friends I made, the skills I learned and the stories I get to tell. Here's to Rio 2016!

Suzannah Robinson

All Saints Parish Retreat 2013

This year our Parish Retreat is the weekend of 1 – 3 February 2013 at Abbey House, Glastonbury. This is Candlemas weekend.

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. We gather together for Morning and Evening Prayer each day, but if you oversleep and don't appear, that is OK. 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 James Wilson, Parish Priest at St Gregory Horfield, who some of you will know from Walsingham Pilgrimages.

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 £130 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 deposit 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

Liz Badman

Parish Administrator