

Churchwardens June magazine letter

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Good news. We are delighted to be able to announce that both the Deanery and the Diocese have supported our request for a full time Priest in Charge at All Saints. Over the past two months the PCC have been working very hard to draw up a Parish Profile, Job Description and Person Specification all of which will go to the Diocesan Leadership team on 4th June for final sign off. We will then go out to advert. All of the documentation will be posted on the All Saints website for everyone to see. There will also be copies available in the Atrium.

The past few months of the Interregnum have seen some very positive support from a number of quarters. We are very pleased to welcome Fr Peter Dill who is celebrating Mass regularly at the 10.30am on Fridays, Fr Kim Taplin who is celebrating Mass at 9.30am on Wednesdays and Fr Paul Roberts and Fr Paul Hawkins who are supporting the clergy rota on Sundays. See 'New Faces' article further on in the magazine. We are also grateful to Fr Mark Pilgrim (Bristol West Area Dean) and Fr James Wilson for helping us to ensure that Sunday services were covered after Easter.

On Easter Day the Dean of Bristol, Very Revd David Hoyle came to celebrate and preach and this was a very joyous occasion. At Pentecost we were very privileged to have Bishop Mike (Bishop of Bristol) who celebrated and preached at both our 9.30am Family Mass and 11.00am Festival Mass. A very successful parish lunch was held afterwards with over 60 people in attendance. Bishop Mike and his wife Anthea were able to join us and spoke to many of the congregation underlining the support and recognition of the special place that All Saints has in the Diocese and in the future.

On Trinity Sunday we celebrated the ministry of Fr Roger Durbin at All Saints for over twenty years. Fr Roger has been tireless in his priestly care over these years and particularly we are grateful to him for his care over the last six months of the Interregnum. Looking forward to a much needed rest Fr Roger was joined by the congregation to wish him well and present him with a cheque. We look forward to welcoming Fr Roger back for the Assumption and as 'guest' celebrant and preacher as we go forward into the next stage of the appointment process.

Of course we must also express our thanks to Fr Charles Sutton who has shown remarkable ability to slip seamlessly into the role of assistant priest. We are very fortunate indeed to have such dedicated and special support from all our Priests.

One of the very powerful outward signs of our continued witness has been the commitment of the Daily Office team. A group of laity who say morning and evening prayer every day. The Angelus is rung, offices are said publically and the church is seen to be active and open daily.

So what happens next? As mentioned earlier the advert for our next full time Priest in Charge will be published shortly. We expect that there will be huge interest so we are hopeful that we will find the right person to take All Saints forward in the Catholic faith to which we are all committed. This is very exciting – but we ask everyone to

pray that we are guided by the Holy Spirit. A candle is lit everyday at Our Lady to light the way for All Saints, its future, the congregation and the future Priest in Charge (who ever they may be) who is waiting to join us in our journey of faith.

Looking forward to the life of All Saints in the coming months we would like to bring to everyone's attention the Opera picnic on 29th June with singers from the Welsh National Opera, Dedication Sunday on 7th July and parish barbeque on 13th July. We are inviting guest preachers on a monthly basis the first of which is former Archbishop of Canterbury Rt Revd George Carey on 30th June. Bishop Lee, Suffragan Bishop, will be preaching and Celebrating on 28th July.

Monthly matinee concerts are held on the 1st Saturday of the month and we have several special musicians lined up.

September will soon be upon us and we hope that interviews will take be taking place. So enjoy the summer months and all that All Saints has to offer.

With love, prayers and faith in our future.

Philippa and Andrew

Churchwardens

“He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30)

One of the great benefits of being a Catholic Christian is our connection with the saints. By our creeds we affirm belief in the ‘communion of saints’ As the chosen vessels of God’s grace and lights of the world in their several generations, (to quote Thomas Cranmer,) they are not only our example to follow in discipleship, but our friends in heaven who keep their watch and pray for us. In our household, as soon as we buy our calendar in the autumn for the following year, one of the first things we do is to write in the principal saints’ days, and they give a particular rhythm to the year. This month, on Midsummer Day, we celebrate the birth of St John the Baptist.

Usually it’s the day of a saint’s *death* that we mark, sometimes called his or her ‘heavenly birthday’. Besides Our Lord himself and his mother, however, there is only one other whose birthday is celebrated in the Church’s calendar and that is John the Baptist, exactly six months before Our Lord’s birthday. This is partly because we have a fairly accurate idea when it was from S Luke’s gospel. When the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will conceive the Son of God, she is told “your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren.”

John is a most important link between the Old Testament and the New. Jesus speaks of him as a sort of boundary line when he says, later on in S Luke, “the law and the prophets were in effect until John came; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is proclaimed ...” He is the representative of the past and the herald of the new. His father, the elderly priest Zechariah, was visited at the altar by the angel of the Lord, who told him of the remarkable son his post-menopausal wife Elizabeth would bear. “... even before his birth” said the angel “he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him ... to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” We have that wonderful detail of his being filled with the Holy Spirit before birth when Mary visits Elizabeth and “the child leapt in her womb” as he hears Mary’s voice greeting Elizabeth, in the kind of heart-warming detail we have only in S Luke’s gospel.

Zechariah was struck dumb for the nine months of his wife’s pregnancy, because, the angel told him, he did not believe the message brought to him from God. He didn’t regain his power of speech until their son was born. Part of his function as a priest would have been to prophesy, so it was almost as if there had to be that pregnant silence until the prophecy of the new age began with John as “the voice of one crying in the wilderness,” quoting from Isaiah 40:3. The home of Zechariah and Elizabeth must have been very quiet indeed during those months awaiting John’s birth, a quiet broken only by the voice of the Mother-of-God’s greeting causing excited movement from the unborn child who was filled with the Holy Spirit from his conception.

The birth we celebrate on Midsummer Day is second only in importance to the one we celebrate six months later. In their earthly lives Christ and John the Baptist were blood relations and contemporaries, possibly knowing each other in infancy and as they grew up. The gospels don’t tell us that, but countless artists, among them Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael, have painted the two young boys together with Our Lady and sometimes other saints as well. Such representations are much more than just fanciful appealing pictures. They repay our contemplation because they foreshadow the wider importance of the relationship between the two after their ministries began. In the fourth gospel, the Baptist likens himself to a kind of ‘best man’ to Jesus as bridegroom. (Christ is spoken of in the New Testament as Bridegroom and his bride is the Church – all of us). He says in John 3 “He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled. He must increase but I must decrease.” John recognises early on that he must hand over to the one who is greater. It’s interesting therefore that his birth is celebrated as the days begin to shorten and Jesus’s birth as the days lengthen. None of us could hope to imitate John the Baptist’s unique role as forerunner and preparer of the way, but we can follow his example by looking away from ourselves towards Jesus, at the same time pointing others to him.

Collect for the Birth of John the Baptist:

Almighty God, by whose providence your servant John the Baptist was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way of your Son our Saviour by the preaching of repentance: lead us to repent according to his preaching and, after his example, constantly to speak the truth, boldly to rebuke vice, and patiently to suffer for the truth's sake; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Jessica Smith
Parish Lay Minister

'New Faces'

You may remember, back a bit, there was a talent show on the TV (ITV network – I think) called **New Faces**. This would be in the 1970s and 80s? The contestants performed in front of the panel of four who awarded them marks out of ten for 'presentation', 'content' and 'entertainment value'. The largest possible score was, consequently, 120 points. I am delighted to say that our 'new faces' in the 'clergy team' are not asked to perform to gain the largest score to go through to the next round!

However, the show's theme tune was "**You're a Star!**", and that is far more appropriate to be applied to Fathers Kim Taplin, Paul Hawkins, Paul Roberts and Peter Dill. This month we have included short biographies of Paul Hawkins and Kim Taplin and next month it will be Paul and Peter. To all the team, as Andrew and Philippa have mentioned in the letter, a resounding "Thank you!"

Father Paul Hawkins

Fr Paul's not new to the West Country having spent some eleven or twelve years in a parish in Plymstock (Plymouth) and as Prebendary at Exeter Cathedral. He has also moved around in his ministry and in his youth. As a child of a naval family he has lived in Malta and New York, and has also lived in various locations through the UK. His decision to seek ordination was taken quite early and this led him to read Theology at Oxford and then stay on at St Stephen's House Theological College.

I think it's probably safe to say that Fr Paul continued with his travels whilst a student – both metaphorically and literally. He drove to India and then spent some time exploring the country and gaining a different perspective on our world.

After ordination, curacies and marriage, he went on to a multiple role as Warden of the Eton-Dorney Project, Vicar of Dorney and Assistant Chaplain at Eton College. Interestingly, the vicarage at Eton was huge! It had 30 beds, and the Hawkins and Project Staff, kept it occupied with troubled young people who were on residential courses as part of the Eton-Dorney Project.

Then Fr Paul moved on to another multiple role at Sidney Sussex College Cambridge as Fellow, Chaplain and Director of Studies in Theology. Meanwhile, back to Marriage, Fr Paul and Jackie have been married for 43 years and have two children and two grandchildren.

After Sidney Sussex Fr Paul and family headed West, to Plymstock, before moving into London and becoming the Vicar of one of the great London churches and landmarks - St Pancras, on the Euston Road (and right next to the so-named railway station). The location of St Pancras probably has a significant impact on its ministry. During his time at St Pancras Fr Paul became involved with the university neighbour UCL; in ministering to an ever changing population (in central London only about 25% of the population is 'permanent'); and in supporting a proportion of the population who suffer abuse and who tend to congregate in cities and at major transport centres (St Pancras, Euston and Kings Cross). Also, as can be imagined, he was involved with the impact and fall-out of the London bombings which had been so significant in this part of the city. It required serving and supporting the local community and also outreach to the local Muslim communities.

In 2011 Fr Paul finished his role at St Pancras and moved to Bristol. He continues to be extremely busy and generous in his support of life in Bristol and we are very fortunate to have him as part of the team at All Saints.

Father Kim Taplin

He is, of course, better known to us as a near neighbour and Chaplain of Clifton College, where he has been for the last twelve or so years. And also through his regular support of the weekday mass (Wednesday).

Fr Kim has worked in a number of schools, prior to Clifton College. He read Theology at London and then spent some time working in a factory before training to be a teacher of Religious Studies and Games.

Fr Kim is married to Chryssa, they met at university, have two grown up children and a granddaughter. Chryssa originates from Greece and is clearly very talented in a

whole range of creative and practical matters. It is rumoured that her Malteser Traybake is a 'must' and the recipe keenly sought.

Following a period of teaching, Fr Kim went back to his studies and completed postgraduate studies in education and theology at both Oxford and Cambridge before being ordained priest in 1995. In addition to the schools that Fr Kim has worked in he has also served in a number of rural and urban parishes.

When colleagues talk about Fr Kim they emphasise his willingness to 'pitch-in' and get on with things, to provide a ready and careful ear and wise counsel, and to enjoy the rough and tumble of football, the quickness of table tennis and the intensity of philosophical thought. And he lists, amongst his passions, Southampton Football Club, Modern Greek culture, walking, reading and real ale. It is also rumoured that Fr Kim has gained a reputation for the quality of his humour, the suggestion is that this is a requirement if Southampton is your favoured football team which, in this case, it is!

Again, we are exceedingly fortunate in having Fr Kim on the team.

Fr Charles Sutton

A Matter of Translation and the Pandita Mary Ramabai

During Eastertide, Fr. Charles talked about a passage from the Gospel of John, during which Jesus is sharing his last meal with the Disciples. The particular passage was included in the reading John 13.31-35. Coincidentally, the feast day of Pandita Mary Ramabai was celebrated within a day or two of this reading, so Fr. Charles linked the two and focused on a 'matter of translation'. This summary of the sermon is constructed from his notes.

The Text:

"I give you a new commandment,

that you love one another, just as I have loved you.”

Story of Pandita Mary Ramabai

Tuesday is the Feast Day of Pandita Mary Ramabai, she was born in Western Maharashtra, India in 1858 and died in 1922. Though she is celebrated in our calendar as a translator of the Gospel, she was a great deal more than this. Nevertheless, the notion of 'translation' is very much alive in everything she did.

She was the daughter of Anant Shastri, an intellectual Brahmin, and his second wife. And, in an act of direct conflict with existing tradition, he decided that she should be educated. She appears to have been a very capable student with a natural affinity with language! It is said that by the age of twelve she had memorised 18,000 verses from the Puranas. Additionally, she was fluent in Sanskrit, Marathi, Kanarese, Hundustani and Bengali languages. This can be seen as an indicator of what was to come.

However, many might think that all this education was in error because of the significance of the consequences. As a direct result Mary's family were ostracised and outcast. They were forced to leave the relative comfort of their existence and try to scratch a living traveling around India. Sadly, during a time of famine, before the opportunities for major national distribution of foodstuffs existed, her parents both died of starvation in 1877. Mary was nineteen year old.



To some extent her education saved her (and her brother). She found employment as a traveling translator, interpreter and teacher of Sanskrit scripture. In this role she was virtually unique and represented a wholly unknown quantity as an expert in Hindu scripture - she was a woman.

Not surprisingly she built quite a reputation and was invited to deliver a 'guest lecture' at the University of Calcutta. She must have been quite remarkable in this because, as a result, she conferred with the title Pandita, and awarded a position in the following of Saraswati (the Hindu god of music). Sadly, tragedy struck again and her brother died in 1880.

She continued with her calling to translate scripture, interpret and teach. Also, during this period, she was becoming increasingly focused on the 'social and political

translation' of scripture; she was beginning to shape ideas about women and children in Indian society and the caste system. On a happier note, she met and married a Bengali lawyer and had a daughter. Her husband, however, was a Sudra making her marriage inter-caste, and even worse, he was of lower caste. Tragedy, struck again. Her husband Bipin Behari Medhvi died in 1882.

I suppose you could say that all this culminated in the Pandita developing a strong social awareness informed by the errors and consequences of traditional dogma. In her mind she saw that a 'quality education for all' was likely to provide a path through these problems. An opportunity came to share these views at the Indian Government's commission on education. She gave evidence to the commission in 1882 concerning the opposition to female education and the position of women in society. Her evidence caused such a sensation that it was published in Western media. And, as a result she was offered a scholarship to a British university - which she accepted.

I'm pretty much going to leave the story of the Pandita at this point, save from adding a few pretty critical points:

- She came to Britain in 1883 and studied Education
- She converted to Christianity and became an Anglican
- She translated the New Testament into Hindi, from original Greek and Hebrew
- And she worked until her death for woman and children in society, and the against the caste system

For me it's not so much about the translation of the Gospel that she should be remembered, but for the translation of her beliefs into action. Action that brought about real change. She must have been an 'extra' ordinary woman.

'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another'

Sticking with the theme of translation, there are two words I want to revisit in today's Gospel reading and in this text; they are 'new' and 'love'. There was nothing 'new' in this commandment, we can see this sentiment occurring within scripture of the Old Testament (e.g. Leviticus 19:18). And of course examination of the word used shows it to be *kainos*, as in fresh or unique; and not *neos* as in a new car, book or house.

So the message of Jesus here, is that what he's saying is something quite straightforward, simple even, and, he says, you've listened to it before. But he wants is for the disciples, and us, to understand these words in a fresh and different way.

Similarly, with the word 'love'. We just have the one word, but in Greek there are several with rather different meanings. The choice here is very specific - *agape*. This refers to a 'Godly love'; this is the love of God for humankind, which, in this passage, we are called to reciprocate. It is love without reason or condition, it is love that is active and thoughtful.

A Final Translation

So if we were to look for near perfect translation of this element of text, it wouldn't, for me, be in the words that the Pandita carefully wrote, as she worked on the original texts, searching for the right words to express the full meaning.

No. For me the near perfect translation of this text is shown in the activity of the Pandita. It is her translation of this text into action; her demonstration of the reciprocation of Godly love; that through her work she embraced the unloved, the outcasts and those who were seen to be of no value.

Agreed; Mary Ramabai is an extreme case, and we are unlikely to follow her example. But we are called to translate this text into action in our own lives; sometimes visibly, but most often in ways unseen by those around us, yet always seen by God.

HYMN BOOK SEARCH No 6

Last month (Lost in wonder, love and praise)

Wesley 408 (3) and Addison 472 (1)

Now. Which two authors, referring to the stars,

use the world spangled?

Discovering our true worth

In this month's letter, Bishop Mike argues the way the world around us measures our value is actually devaluing – and reminds us of where our true value comes from and lies

Maria Miller's first speech as Culture Secretary delivered now some weeks ago will certainly be remembered. Her thesis on the basis of current thinking in a recession was simple and, in a way, understandable. It was this: judgements about which art should be Government sponsored (and, by implication, which should not be sponsored) should be made grounds of the economic potential of the art in question.

This of course is indicative of a wider trend in our rapidly changing culture. For we are drifting towards a world where people, ideas and institutions are increasingly valued only in terms of their potential cash value. We should have some sympathy with the Culture Secretary at one level. With a limited pot of money available in a troubled economy, there is a kind of logic to sponsoring those facets of art and culture which will generate more money to put into the pot.

The longer term danger of this, however, is that we stop believing that art for art's sake or education for education's sake is a good thing. Of course, there is the irritation we can feel about sponsorship money only being used for art, drama and opera that appeals to a few elite people. There is the kind of modern art that infuriates people. However, it must be debatable whether the best source of inspiration for an artist of any kind is simply the economic outcome of their creations.

I doubt that Michelangelo when painstakingly painting the roof of the Sistine Chapel thought that one day millions of people, having paid 'muchos euros' would file through to admire his work.

Already people experience our education system as one that is tilted towards economic outcomes, efficiently turning out people with bits of paper that will be exchanged for fat salaries. Indeed, the whole idea of students having to pay their own fees is a product of this thinking. Your university education must now be thought of as an economic 'investment' for the future and no longer a place simply to have your mind stretched for the sake of learning. Intellectual capital is now exclusively valued in terms of its cash value.

This, in the end, will create the kind of society that we are inexorably drifting towards. One where people and the results of their God-given creativity are valued only in terms of their economic potential. Even our benefit system has been re-crafted so it doesn't penalize just those who won't work, but also those who really genuinely can't work and those who have low paid work.

Of course my point is not that wanting to achieve is a bad thing. It focuses human endeavour to enable some people to do great things. The point is that if we only value people in terms of their cash value or their attainment, a lot of people will feel undervalued and disempowered.

The Bible suggests that our value as human beings is intrinsic because we are God's creation. We are says St Paul (Eph. 2:10) God's 'poiema', his workmanship (in the Living Bible his 'masterpiece'). The suggestion here is that we are very simply of intrinsic value to the God who made us, the God who loves us and the God who remarkably demonstrated His love by sending His Son to a Cross that we might be redeemed.

Little wonder that in a world which has lost any sense of the God's workmanship has to revert to other ways of measuring human value. The problem is that in the end the worldly assessment of value is actually very devaluing. We learn our true worth in the light of Him who made us and who loves us so let's thank God for that. You are His masterpiece!

ALL HALLOWS EASTON

is hosting an exhibition of works by local artists

for the EASTON ARTS TRAIL

*on Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th June, 11 a.m.
onwards.*

Tea, coffee and cakes served throughout the day.

On Sunday 16th there will also be

a Barbecue, Sale and Bouncy Castle outside.

*Do join us as we celebrate the completion of the latest
restoration works!*

THE BRISTOL CATHOLIC SOCIETIES ASSUMPTIONTIDE FESTIVAL

This annual Festival takes place this year on Saturday 17th August. The format is as usual - Procession of Our Lady and Solemn Concelebrated Mass in Bristol Cathedral at noon, and Benediction in the Lord Mayor's Chapel (on the opposite side of College Green), preceded this year by Vespers of Our Lady, at 3.00pm. The Principal Celebrant and Preacher at Mass will be the Rt Revd John Ford, Bishop of Plymouth.

We are fortunate in that we shall again have the services of the choir of St Mary's and St John's, Bathwick, who, directed by Tim Barrett, will sing works by Monteverdi, Britten, Farrant, Rossini and Gounod. Members of the All Saints' Clifton serving team will assist at Mass and Benediction.

The Festival is organised jointly by the Church Union and the Guild of Servants of the Sanctuary on behalf of the Bristol Catholic Societies, and has the support of the Council of the Catholic Societies of the Church of England, and other Catholic Societies, including the Church Union and the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament.

Thanks are due to the Dean and Chapter of Bristol Cathedral, and the Lord Mayor of Bristol and his Chaplain, for the use of their places of worship. The Cathedral Coffee Shop will be open, as will local restaurants, cafés and pubs. College Green and the secluded Cathedral garden are ideal for picnics.

This Festival a wonderful opportunity for Catholic Anglicans to mark the Glorious Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and, through her, to worship Almighty God in the manner that they would wish. Please make every effort to attend, and persuade friends and colleagues to do so. Further information may be obtained from the writer.

Chris Verity

