

From the Churchwardens

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Happy Easter! And what a wonderful and glorious Easter it has been.

We have been so fortunate to share with each other our journey of faith through Lent, Passiontide, Holy Week and Easter, sharing moments of prayer, teaching, music, witness and spiritual growth. Thanks go to everyone who helped make the journey at All saints so meaningful and uplifting.

Christ is risen – He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

So, our journey of faith and witness continues and we have many things to look forward to along the way. In particular we must mention the organ appeal. Whilst the cost of the organ repair is a challenge the appeal brings with it opportunities for celebrating our musical tradition and there are many events to be enjoyed over the coming months. Look out for these to be advertised here in the parish magazine, on the website and on the boards in the Atrium.

In the spirit of thankfulness to God for all the he has given us we will in the next few weeks be focusing on stewardship. Whilst we enjoy the splendour and wonder of our church and liturgy we need to review, renew and commit our time, talents and financial giving to ensure that All Saints continues to provide the special witness that we hold precious and want to share with the wider community.

The Christian year now looks forward to Pentecost and the work of the Holy Spirit among us and within us. With the help of the Holy Spirit we are confident that All Saints will continue to proclaim the Good News in all aspects of its life and witness.

We look forward to sharing with you all the next step of the journey. And don't forget 9th July when we have the privilege and pleasure of welcoming Fr Kim Taplin as our new Vicar.

With love and prayers

Andrew and Philippa

THE BRISTOL CATHOLIC SOCIETIES ASSUMPTIONTIDE FESTIVAL SATURDAY 16th AUGUST 2014

This year's Festival follows the usual format of Solemn Concelebrated Mass and Vespers of our Lady & Benediction. The Mass is at 12.00 noon in Bristol Cathedral, by kind permission of the Dean and Chapter to whom we give our grateful thanks. Vespers and Benediction will be at 3.00 pm in the Lord Mayor's Chapel, on the other side of College Green. The Principal Celebrant at Mass will be the Rt Revd Roger Jupp, Superior-General of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, who will also preside at Benediction.

We shall again have the services of the choir of St Mary's and St John's, Bathwick, directed by Tim Barrett, who will sing works by Byrd, Sumsion, Elgar, Bairstow and others.

This Festival is organised on behalf of the Bristol Catholic Societies by the Church Union and the Guild of Servants of the Sanctuary, who will be celebrating their annual corporate Mass at the Festival. It has the support of these and other Catholic Societies, in particular the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and the Additional Curates Society.

Priests wishing to concelebrate the Mass are asked to advise Chris Verity (see below) if possible; this will ensure sufficient chasubles and stoles being available.

To those unfamiliar with Bristol, follow the signs to Bristol City Centre; both the Cathedral and the Lord Mayor's Chapel are situated on College Green which adjoins the Centre. There are ample car parking facilities in the area, 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. Country and City bus services stop on College Green and Anchor Road, and there is a frequent bus service from Bristol (Temple Meads) Station.

This Festival is 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.

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All shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.

When I was at university one of my favourite subjects was *Medieval Mystics*, this covered the spiritual writings of men and women from the 7th century to Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross. I particularly liked the English mystics and have written in the Parish magazine about the 13th century mystic, Richard Rolle; and even more special for me were the women mystics, they seemed to have difficulties with Church's teachings at that time. The Church remembers a good number of them.

Thursday 8 May, this is the day that the Anglican and Lutheran churches celebrate a great woman English mystic – Dame Julian of Norwich.

Julian was born in either 1342 or 43, and she died in 1416, which would have made her about 74, quite an age for a woman at that time. She was visited by Margery Kempe, another English woman mystic, a year before her death. She lived through the times of the Black Death, and she was a contemporary of Chaucer.

Some scholars believe she may have been a nun from a local convent, while others think she was a laywoman. Some have questioned that she might have been married and lost her family in the plague. But very little is known of her life apart from her writings. There was an increase in the number of anchoresses in her lifetime, whether this was because of her example we do not really know, but she believed that to live the solitary life she would become more Real. Her writings are full of affirmative imagery; and they are mystical, spiritual with little academic theology – her theology was experiential.

At the age of 30 she prayed to God for three things:

1. To understand Christ's passion
2. To suffer physically
3. And to have as God's gift three wounds –
 - a) True contrition
 - b) Genuine compassion
 - c) Sincere longing of God

Soon after this, when she was 31 she suffered a severe illness and went into a coma and it was thought that she was dying, so she was given the Last Rites. While she was in this coma she received sixteen visions. These progressed from very graphic visions, which were intense in visual detail, almost grotesque, to more imageless revelations which were abstract, but revealing a truth. The reflections became more prolonged and the last half of the longer book is her reflection on her 16th meditation. She says that the third desire – to have as God's gift three wounds – was 'with me continually'.

While she was ill there was a crucifix at the end of her bed and she would gaze on it, and gazing on our Saviour she saw blood trickling from the crown of thorns. She had fifteen 'showings' as she called them, between about 4 am and 3 pm, then she had the sixteenth on the following night. Soon after this she wrote down the showings in a short text. However, she says that she didn't fully understand them and it wasn't until some twenty years later, after continual meditation that she wrote the longer text. She says she received it again in 'ghostly understanding' and she said it was the key to all religious experience. She says,

*What? Wouldest thou wit thy Lord's meaning in this? Wit
it well: LOVE was His meaning. Who showeth it thee?
LOVE. Wherefore showeth it thee? For LOVE.*

She had great difficulty with coming to terms with the Church's teaching with what she had experienced. The Church said that sinners would burn in hell, but Julian saw no anger in God. She believed anger existed only in humans, but God forgives us for this. She writes:

For I saw no wrath except on man's side, and he forgives that in us, for wrath is nothing else but a perversity and an opposition to peace and to love.'

I want to touch briefly on just one or two areas of Julian's theology. For Julian Experience, Thinking, and Prayer all interact and create a greater longing for God. She said that God:

Makes
Loves
Sustains

In prayer she is passionate and sensual, she says *I am drowned of thy beseeching*. She says prayer is essentially natural to us, our yearning for God is our true rest. Later she says '*I saw Him and I sought Him; I had Him and I wanted Him.*

God made everything for Love and she marvelled at the littleness of Creation which she saw contained in the hazelnut. She saw the fragility of Creation in the light of Eternity and the universe in the light of Christ – all depends on God. Apart from God we could not and would

not exist. God's goodness informs us of the goodness of all things; God parents Creation – everything. She saw God in all things, but God transcends all things. And she said there is a close relationship between God and Us, as God is God and our substance is in him she saw no difference between us and God. God said to her,

Look I am God. I am all in all. I do everything! I never cease upholding my work and I never will.

Julian's theology was controversial in that she believed in God as Mother. There are references in the Old Testament towards God's motherhood, and some other European spiritual writers of the High Medieval times made references to this belief. Some scholars think this may be a metaphorical rather than a literal belief. However, she says,

Our Saviour is our Mother for we are ever being born of Him.

She speaks of the three persons of the Trinity in domestic terms, saying in God our nature is complete. She says that God almighty is our kindly Father, God all-wise our kindly Mother and the Holy Spirit their Love and Goodness. Christ is our Mother, brother and Saviour.

It is the way of God to set good against evil. So Jesus Christ who sets good against evil is our real Mother. We owe our being to Him – and this is the essence of Motherhood.....

So we see that Jesus is the true Mother of our nature, for he made us. He is our Mother, too, by grace, because he took our nature upon himself.

She saw three ways of looking at God's motherhood: the first is based on the fact that our nature is *made*; the second is found in the assumption of that nature and that is the beginning of the motherhood of grace; the third is the motherhood of work which flows out over all by that same grace. She tells us,

A mother's is the most intimate, willing and dependable of all services, because it is the truest of all. None has been made to fulfil it properly but Christ, and he alone can.

God told her (and we all have heard this well-known saying):

All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.

. T S Eliot took that phrase and another of Julian's, 'the ground of beseeching' and incorporated it into 'Little Gidding' the 4th poem of his Four Quartets:

Whatever we inherit from the fortunate

We have taken from the defeated

What they had to leave us – a symbol:

A symbol perfected in death

And all shall be well and

All manner of things shall be well

By the purification of the motive

In the ground of our beseeching.

If we hold on to that, 'All shall be well.....' our faith can be strengthened and all will be well in time – in God's time.

Liz Badman, Parish Reader (Lay Minister)

All Saints' Organ Appeal – latest news and forthcoming events

Many of you were present at the Auction of Promises Launch event on 28th February, which was a hugely successful evening, and got the Organ Appeal off to a cracking start. Including all the money raised at that event, so far we've reached a total of over £11,600, which is tremendous. However, we're not resting on our laurels and, mindful of the large amount still to raise, we've got lots more exciting events planned throughout the rest of the year. These kick off with:

BACH To BACH – **Bank Holiday Monday, 5th May**

What better way to spend an hour or so of your Bank Holiday Monday, than dropping in to All Saints to witness a non-stop Bach extravaganza! John Davenport and his team of a dozen organists will attempt to play Bach's entire works for organ – thought to be around 300 works!

This amazing feat of playing will start at 9am in the morning, and will continue all day, so do feel free to drop in at any point and stay as long as you like!

As well as the wonderful music, there will be a Bach-style 'Coffee House', in the Atrium, with coffee (and teas!) and delicious cakes available throughout the day.

Even if you can't be there on the day, you can sponsor the team a 'penny a piece' (i.e. £3), and fixed rate donations are also very gratefully received!

Sponsor forms are available in the Atrium or request one by email from Helen Sutton (helen@helensutton.com).

But that's not all – the rest of the year is packed full of interesting events to suit all tastes. Make sure you put these dates in your diary – further information on each will be available nearer the time:

- **'May Serenades' – Friday 23rd May**
 - Some of Bristol's finest woodwind players come together to perform Serenades by Mozart, Beethoven and Dvorak.
- **'Pimms for Pipes' – Saturday 14th June**
 - Bask in the warmth of a beautiful summer's evening (we hope!), with a glass of Pimms in hand; bring a picnic relax to the sounds of some great background jazz.
 - If you're feeling brave, have a go at Croquet on the lawn – one of the most vicious games known to man, and umpired by none other than our very own Father Charles, who also happens to be a certified Croquet umpire.....
- **Music For Strings – Thursday 21st August**
 - Watch this space for further information on what will be a delight to the ear, featuring beautiful string ensemble music by local musicians
- **Gourmet Supper Event – Saturday 27th September**
 - Come and enjoy an evening of gastronomic delights provided by our resident chefs, Eric Tyson and Father Charles Sutton, in the beautiful All Saints' Sacristy
 - Great food and fine wines – quite simply an evening not to be missed.....
- **'Best of Bristol – mid-September (date tbc)**
 - A musical – rather than gastronomic – feast served up by some of Bristol's finest musicians
- **'Going Places' An Evening of Poetry and Music – mid-October (date tbc)**
 - Ken and Jessica Smith and friends will entertain with an evening of poetry and music

- Not only a wonderful evening's entertainment, but be prepared to come away with some fascinating toponymic facts!
- **An evening of Handel in honour of St. Cecilia's Day – Saturday 28th November**
 - Our annual St. Cecilia's Day event, given by the All Saints Musicians, and this year devoted to the music of Handel with supper included in the interval

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SPEAK, LORD, FOR YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING

These words came at the end of the Old Testament reading at the Diocesan Chrism Mass on Maundy Thursday.

During the Chrism Mass comes the Renewal of Commitment to Ministry, and this involves Lay Ministers, Deacons, Priests and Bishops – All are asked in turn and all in turn respond 'By the help of God I will'. It is very powerful to be asked and to respond and it makes one really think about one's ministry over the past year – and on into the future.

Again I thought about being called to Ministry, whether it be to the ordained ministry or to Reader Ministry, now known in this Diocese as Licensed Lay Ministry. Those are the categories we think of as 'ministry'. But what about other 'ministries'? What about the hidden roles that people fulfil?

'To Minister' means to 'help', to 'take care of'. One very important 'hidden' ministry is that of Listening. How many of us these days take time to sit with someone who is burdened with problems or stressed and overwhelmed with family or work difficulties? Not too many, I fear. But this is so important. That is just one example.

When I worked in Monmouth Diocese I put together a course on Collaborative Ministry one Lent and some of the churches followed this. It was based on the Pauline Church where various ministries began to evolve, and it is also something that, as good Stewards we should be doing – discerning our Spiritual Gifts and using them for the good of others.

Think of the women around Jesus who ministered to his and the disciples needs – homely tasks, but oh, so important. Ministry is not just those of us who dress up in robes and vestments and have an visible role in Church, it is something we all do, or should do. Our OT readers, our intercessors, our sidespeople, our PCC and Deanery Synod members, our Church wardens, the people who clean the church and wash the cottas, to mention just a few, are ministers in some way or another. They ‘help’ others and as a team we all make up the jigsaw that is the Church.

There is much to do at All Saints and it seems to fall on the same small group of people. In a quiet unhurried time sit on your own sometime and empty yourself of noise and worry, relax and in silence ask God to speak and help you discern what your gifts are, and respond.

In the meantime I pray that more will listen to God, and perhaps come forward for Licensed Lay Ministry, or the Ordained Ministry and that they will be supported and nourished – and ministered to – by all of us.

‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.’

Liz Badman, Reader (Licensed Lay Minister)

John Piper Exhibition

The Bohun Gallery at Henley-on-Thames kindly sent us an image of the Tree of Life window which is being shown in their forthcoming exhibition. It would not reproduce well here but you can see it at <http://www.allsaintsclifton.org/picture.html>.

‘As part of our major forthcoming show on artist John Piper (1903-92) we will be showing a rather special stain glass collage, which I think will be of interest to you at All Saints.

The 1963 gouache, ink and collage is a study for the very beautiful Piper/Reyntiens window at All Saints, Clifton. It was not unusual for Piper to undertake such studies when designing stained glass, indeed we also have two studies for the Coventry Baptistery window in this show.’

The painting is available for sale at £8,500 plus 4% Artist’s Resale Right.

Bohun Gallery, 15 Reading Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire RG9 1AB

From the Bishop

I heard recently about a genre of literature about which I had never heard before: “non-factual history”. A contradiction in terms, surely.

Well apparently non-factual history is a speculative kind of writing that asks the question, “What if...?” For instance, what if Franz Ferdinand (The Archduke of Austria-Este, not the rock band!) had not been assassinated and World War I had not happened? What would the world look like? What would be different?

Easter sees a piece of history that invites similar speculation – the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. People who are dead don’t come back to life. They are dead after all. For centuries, people have been curious about this claim. How could this happen?

The Apostle Paul, writing in the Bible, has a bit of a “what if” moment when speculating around the event of Easter, the Resurrection.

“If Christ has not been raised,” he writes, “our preaching is without hope and so is your faith. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all people.”

Paul is basically rehearsing the “what if” question. What he is contending is that if the whole of his preaching is based on a lie, then there are consequences. Hopelessness, futility and a world made up of people who have little hope of change and who are trapped by their innate inclination to selfishness (their “sin”).

When I took part in a recent local radio phone-in, a man predicated his comments by saying, “Well, Mike you sound like a nice enough bloke so how come you believe in those fairy tales?”

I meet this kind of thing a lot in my work. The question amuses me rather than offends me because it rather misses the point.

The point is this: I am what I am because of the Resurrection. It’s not just the case that I am a chap who happens to believe some weird stuff but manages, despite all the odds, to stay “nice”. If Jesus was still lying in a grave somewhere in the Ancient Middle East, I would not know whether to believe what Jesus claimed for himself or know whether he could have any claim on me.

I could not know for sure that he has the power to forgive sins, to give a new start in life or promise a place in Heaven to those who believe.

Maybe this Easter we might like to ask ourselves the “what if” question in a new way. Instead of asking, “What if it’s not true”, we might like to ask, “What if it is true?”

Throughout my ministry as a clergyperson, I have spent much time with those who are bereaved. By far the majority seem to have a deep need to believe that somehow there is a continuation of life beyond death. They sense they can’t really know it, but that somehow they really need to believe it.

The fact that death was not the end for Jesus can give us grounds for our hope. For from his death and resurrection there springs real hope: that those who trust him can know that death

is no longer a brick wall, but a gateway to a different kind of existence called Heaven.

John Lennon famously asked a “What if” question in “Imagine”.

Imagine there's no Heaven / It's easy if you try / No hell below us / Above is only sky.

Maybe this Easter is a time for us to think again. For if we stop to think, maybe the events of Easter help us better to imagine that there is a Heaven and that means there is always a hope.

+ *Mike*