

August 2016, Oswald and Aidan, a reflection, from Father Charles:

Oswald and Aidan

Saints Oswald and Aidan are 'lesser festivals' in our lectionary. Oswald's festival day occurs at the start of August and Aidan's at the end. In life, these two were connected in a very turbulent and violent Britain of the seventh century, and nowadays they are often connected in the dedication of schools or churches.

Oswald's reputation as a 'saint' has grown from his attempt to re-introduce Christianity to Northumbria. In about 634 Oswald marched south to claim the throne of Northumbria after the death of his father (and the poor reputation of his older brother Edwin), and with a small army of followers, he met the larger and combined Welsh/Mercian army at Heavenfield (beside the Roman Wall). It's said that he had a vision of St Columba on the night before the battle, who assured him of victory; Bede goes on to describe how Oswald raised a cross prior to the battle and held prayers at its foot. Following his victory he marched to York and established his kingdom, and then set the Royal Court at Bamburgh.

However, the monks who were part of his army, failed to make any real success in converting the 'northern pagans', so Oswald requested for an evangelical bishop to be sent from the Iona Community. The man sent was Aidan, Bishop of Scattery Island (in Ireland) and he set up a strong and successful missionary movement based on Lindisfarne.

There is a myth that Aidan was soon impressed with Oswald's personal value set as he observed an Eastertide banquet at which food was given to starving beggars at the King's command. Aidan is said to have blessed the arm that gave the food so that it might never decay – as a result, Oswald's arm is said to have lain 'uncorrupted for nine centuries' following his death.

Great story, but.....

That was all some 1400 years ago and a key part of the history of the British Isles, as the idea of building a single Kingdom of England was beginning to capture the imagination of some. But why remind ourselves of this account now? I'm going to offer two reasons:

- A Time of Violence
- The Goal of Unity

A Time of Violence

Looking around our world now, we see a turbulent and divided world. For many it seems to be becoming increasingly more dangerous. This, of course, is not the case. Academics such as Steven Pinker, the Harvard Professor of Psychology, have demonstrated violent acts between people and wars between peoples have very significantly declined over the centuries. Yet when we read and watch our news we would be forgiven for thinking that

the reverse is the case – especially in recent times with the atrocities close to home in France and Germany and the murderous acts of ISIS.

In reality this is a time when violence is reducing. Our world is less violent than that of Oswald and Aidan. Pinker suggests that this is a product of people increasingly anticipating the long-term consequences of their actions, and the willingness to take the thoughts and feelings of others into consideration. Stephen Jay Gould, the evolutionary biologist, has suggested that for every hostile act there are 10,000 act of kindness. Whilst, as a ratio, this is un-evidenced, it is a useful thought to have in mind; it's a reminder that as people we are more driven by co-operation and collaboration, than we are by hostility and violence.

The Goal of Unity

In the month following the Brexit vote and the consequent increase in racial tension in the UK – and whilst Trump calls for a “total shutdown” of Muslims entering the US, and the “big, fat beautiful” wall between the US and Mexico – it's hard to see unity as a goal.

Yet unity **should** be a goal. With it comes greater strength, common understanding and identity, wider tolerance, shared values, and better security. Though Oswald used violence to achieve greater unity, he seems to have well understood the benefits. His objectives were to unify some of the Northern Kingdoms, to establish a ‘more popular’ monarchy, to create strategic alliances across the boundaries: to the south with the Kingdom of Wessex, and to the north with the kingdoms in Scotland, and to the west with Ireland. All this unifying effort to build a society in which his people could feel more secure and benefit from better order.

Values of the Church

This is why I draw our attention to Oswald and Aidan in the month of their festival days; it is because that even though the historical account is set about by legend and myth, and belongs to a time well past, it does serve to remind us of two of the fundamental Christian values – peace and unity.

Paul's letter to the Ephesians provides a useful insight into this. Paul sets out an explanation that God's plan is being worked out in history, and the purpose is to establish a church, made up of his sons and daughters, that will reunite his divided universe in Christ; a plan that preceded creation.

Our purpose, as sons and daughters, is to co-operate with God's plan to the best of our ability. This means actively seeking peace and working for the common good.

With blessings and prayers,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

The Uganda Link

"Building relationships of wholeness across cultures with Christ at the centre"

Between the 30 September and the 13 October there will be eight Ugandans visiting our Deanery. Here at All Saints we will host one of the visitors, the Revd Jane Too-dera, between 30 September and 6 October. She is a tutor at Janani Luwum Theological College. There will be more news about the visit and any activities people may be interested in during September. Meanwhile please read Jane's letter.

Letter from Jane Too-dera:

24 June 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I greet you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I am Rev Jane Too-dera, a Tutor at Janani Luwum Theological College. I was born in 1972, I am single but I am taking care of three children. I love the lord as my Lord and Saviour. I started my ministry when I was young, with teaching Sunday school class. Little did I know that it was a step to ordained ministry!

I was priested in 2000 in the Diocese of Kitgum and served in a parish there for a few months before being called to teach at the college. While in Gulu, the Diocese of Northern Uganda placed me as vicar of St. Philip's Cathedral. I have been wanting to go back to university but finance has been my challenge.

During the eight years I have served in the college, I have been a school chaplain for three secondary schools in Gulu. I was really humbled and thankful to learn that you have accepted to support my studies for a Master in Theology and Development at Uganda Christian University. I thank you and thank God who in Jesus Christ has made us one family.

We have completed the first module, and we shall return for the second module at the end of August. I believe that this study will help develop my knowledge so that I can be more effective in teaching my classes at the college. This time of study will also enrich me spiritually.

I am so excited for this opportunity to pursue further studies. It was through the encouragement and prayer of the College Principal, Rev. Sandra, that I finally took the steps needed to move forward with this. I had little hope of financing it, but God is faithful and has provided in an amazing way. Thank you for being a part of how God has moved to provide for my studies.

I look forward to getting to know you and to share more in the future.

God bless you,
Rev. Jane Too-dera



PARISH RETREAT 2017

This is a date for your diaries.

Our next Parish Retreat will take place from Friday 3 February to Sunday 5th February, at Abbey House, Glastonbury.

There is the opportunity to arrive on the Thursday afternoon and stay until 10am on the Monday, at an extra cost. If this appeals to you, please could you let me know.

A notice will appear in September when I have finalized some details.

Liz Badman

IN THIS MONTH...AUGUST 1970

Excerpts from the Vicar's letter

My dear Friends,

I am sure that you find, as I always do, that attendance at other churches during holidays sharpens one's consciousness and appreciation of our worship at home. This holiday has been no exception.

I have been in the Republic of Ireland. On each Sunday morning, I was present at the early Eucharist at the Parish Church of the Church of Ireland,(the Anglican Church in Ireland). The Service is almost word for word that of the 1662 Prayer Book, thoughtfully and reverently conducted. Of course it was nice to hear the old, familiar words again - but, with such a rite presented in such a way, no one could possibly have come to the conclusion that here was the local manifestation of the body of Christ come together to celebrate His Resurrection!

Crammer's liturgy was a great achievement in its day, but very much of its day, a piece of medieval devotion, cross centred and sin ridden. What can you make of a Eucharistic Liturgy which leaves out Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, (except for references in the Creed), and any dynamic conception of Christ living and working in His Body the Church here and now? It is for this reason, above all others, that I am personally convinced that the right course for our Church now is liturgical development along the lines of the Series II Service, for whatever its defects and inelegances, it contains the essentials of a Eucharistic Rite.

On the second Sunday, I also attended the 10 o'clock Mass at Killarney RC Cathedral. This was celebrated, as all Masses now seem to be in that country, at a simple westward-facing altar. Insofar as it was possible to tell, the Rite seemed to be a good one, very closely in line with our own Series II. But it hardly had a chance! I would guess that even those who are most firmly convinced that a Service should not exceed sixty minutes would raise their eyebrows at a Mass with four (short) hymns, a sermon and 150/200 communicants which was over in forty minutes dead. I was confirmed in my conviction that it remains the responsibility of the Anglican Church to preserve its standards of dignity and spaciousness in worship, to combine new liturgical insights with the best that we have known in the past.

At the last PCC meeting, a matter was raised which I was asked to bring before you through the Magazine before a decision is made. This is the possibility of the administration of the chalice by our lay SubDeacons.

We are faced with the encouraging fact of a steady increase in communicants at the Solemn Mass. But this sometimes means that the actual administration of the Sacrament is prolonged in such a way as to distort the liturgical act. In fact, I have always found it impossible to expand beyond the 180 communicant mark unless something is done to shorten the time of the administration. Particularly with the prospect of fewer Priests being available, an obvious solution to this difficulty is to extend the ministry of our Lay SubDeacons by asking the Bishop to license them to administer the chalice.

There is a tradition, going back to the Early Church, of Lay Administration following Priestly Consecration and this practice is well established in other parishes. But the PCC is naturally reluctant to proceed if there is any likelihood that this ministry would be unacceptable to the congregation as a whole. I should be glad to hear views. Remember: the motive behind this proposal is purely pastoral - and to say "We haven't had it before, therefore I'm against it" is hardly an argument!

Yours very sincerely,

JOHN NORTON

St John's School remembers its World War I fallen

As a school, we have recently regained contact with Lt Col (Retd) Steen K-E Clark OBE of the Royal Engineers, who used to attend St John's school. He has become a much valued reading volunteer but has recently involved the Year 5/6 children in a truly unforgettable project. To honour the ex-pupils of St. John's who were killed during WWI conflict, Lt Col Steen has made it his mission to deliver a wooden cross to every grave to commemorate their efforts and sacrifice. There are 37 crosses in total and 27 were laid last month in France and Belgium with Iran, Iraq, Greece, Italy and Egypt to go. Due to Year 5/6 interest, he asked whether the children could write messages on each wooden cross. From poems to incredibly sincere messages of thanks, the children wrote beautifully. So much so, that the French Media were very interested and we are awaiting a copy of the radio interview. Well done Year 5/6 and thank you Lt Col Steen for allowing us to be involved.

SERMON PREACHED AT ALL SAINTS, CLIFTON ON

SUNDAY 11 JULY 2016 @ 8 & 11 am

Luke 10.25-37

Who is my neighbour?

An updated version of the Gospel reading we have just heard -

An educated chap put Jesus on the spot by asking what it was he needed to do to have eternal life. Jesus replied by asking him a question in return, "what's the simplest way of describing what it means to be a Christian?". The man recited a summary of what he knew, "Love God with everything you've got, your heart, your mind, your strength, and love your neighbour as yourself". "Exactly!", said Jesus, "Do that and you'll live".

Jesus knew he needed to explain this a bit more so he told the chap a story, "There was a Syrian man, his wife and children has been killed, his whole town reduced to rubble, so understandably he fled from his country. As he journeyed through Europe he was called names, spat at, and beaten up. He had to live in makeshift shantytowns and his physical and mental health deteriorated through no fault of his own. Some powerful people campaigned in a strong and persuasive way to limit how many people in this sort of situation should enter the UK. Others responded in fear by committing race crimes which increased in number across the country. Yet others welcomed this man and were more than willing to put their hand in their pocket to pay for his healthcare and accommodation through their taxes."

Jesus asked the chap, "which of these turned out to be the Syrian man's neighbour?". "Surely that's obvious isn't it?" said the chap. "Well," Jesus said, "if you want to live, you need to be able to recognise who you are a neighbour to as well."

In this morning's reading from Luke's gospel we have just heard a typical discourse between a Jewish lawyer and a rabbi/teacher, but this is a bit of an 'upside down' dialogue. It is a parable full of cultural differences. (Teacher is Luke's word for rabbi.) It is not an easy parable.

The lawyer stands in front of Jesus and asks a question, Jesus doesn't give an answer but asks another question and so this goes on through the dialogue of four questions and four answers.

It starts differently from traditional discussion – in Middle Eastern traditional culture the teacher sits and the student shows respect for the teacher by standing to recite. But in this account the lawyer *stands* in order to *test* the teacher.

The lawyer asks what he must do to inherit Eternal Life. Now this may sound odd, but in the 1st C rabbis were beginning to seriously discuss eternal life.

So the lawyer asks, 'what must I do to *inherit* eternal life?' This is out of place for a start, as inheritance is a gift not a payment for services rendered. The lawyer should know this. You can inherit from your family, friends etc, but it is a gift. Jesus asked the lawyer, 'what is the law?'

The lawyer answered 'to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul ; and with all your strength; and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.'

A brief story – Aman went to Rabbi Hillel who was the founder of one of the famous rabbinic schools of the 1st century and he said to Rabbi Hillel, 'Teach me the whole law while I stand on one foot.' Rabbi Hillel said, 'What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor: that is the whole Torah – the law – while the rest is commentary. Go and learn it.'

This sounds negative, but Jesus answers the lawyer and says, 'do this and you will live.' He turns the negative into the positive.

So:

1. Love God
2. Love your neighbour.

But the priest and the Levite didn't stop to help the man who was attacked, and left naked and for dead. Was there more to this than just pretending they didn't see him?

Well, to start with let us look at the terrain where he was attacked and I am going to read you a description of that road from Jerusalem to Jericho written by Martin Luther King the from his 'Mountainside' sermon, preached the day before he was assassinated:

("Now, you know, we use our imagination a great deal to try to determine why the priest and the Levite didn't stop. At times we say they were busy going to a church meeting, an ecclesiastical gathering, and they had to get on down to Jerusalem so they wouldn't be late for their meeting. At other times we would speculate that there was a religious law that one who was engaged in religious ceremonials was not to touch a human body twenty-four hours before the ceremony. And every now and then we begin to wonder whether maybe they were not going down to Jerusalem, or down to Jericho, rather, to organize a Jericho Road Improvement Association. That's a possibility. Maybe they felt it was better to deal with the problem from the causal root, rather than to get bogged down with an individual effect.)

"But I'm going to tell you what my imagination tells me. It's possible that those men were afraid. You

see, the Jericho Road is a dangerous road. I remember when Mrs. King and I were first in Jerusalem. We rented a car and drove from Jerusalem down to Jericho. And as soon as we got on that road I said to my wife, 'I can see why Jesus used this as the setting for his parable.' It's a winding, meandering road. It's really conducive for ambushing. You start out in Jerusalem, which is about twelve hundred feet above sea level. And by the time you get down to Jericho fifteen or twenty minutes later, you're about twenty-two feet below sea level. That's a dangerous road. In the days of Jesus it came to be known as the 'Bloody Pass.' And you know, it's possible that the priest and the Levite looked over that man on the ground and wondered if the robbers were still around. Or it's possible that they felt that the man on the ground was merely faking, and he was acting like he had been robbed and hurt in order to seize them over there, lure them there for quick and easy seizure. And so the first question that the priest asked, the first question that the Levite asked was, 'If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?'

"But then the Good Samaritan came by, and he reversed the question: 'If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?'"

Well we now have a picture of the lonely wild road that these people were travelling, but let us look at the cultural side of the lives of these people.

The Priest was from the temple in Jerusalem, where the hierarchy was strict – somewhat like the Church today. There was what one might call a threefold ministry of Priest, Levite, Laity. Many priests at that time lived in Jericho and would travel up to Jerusalem for 2 week long assignments in the temple. Priests were wealthy and he would therefore be riding not walking and so he had transport.

He also had a special problem. In the Middle East various ethnic communities were identified by their clothing and accents or language, they still are in certain areas. Languages spoken were Hebrew by Jewish scholars, Aramaic by the peasants, Syriac around the Sea of Galilee; tribesmen in the south spoke Arabic and the government officials would have knowledge of Latin. Language, dress, accent made it easy to distinguish between 'Them & Us.' However the wounded man was unconscious, and naked, so the priest did not know if he was a law-abiding Jew or of another ethnic community. If a law-abiding Jew the priest's responsibility was to reach out and help him. He could have been dead and then the priest would have been ceremonially defiled and would have had to go through a week of ceremonial purification, and also there were other complicated laws.

As for the Levite, well they functioned as assistants to the priests in the temple and a Levite would not upstage a priest, so he could pass by with an easy conscience, could the Levite ride into Jericho with the wounded man whom the priest had ignored? It is possible he knew the priest was up ahead of him on the road.

It is the hated outsider, the Samaritan, who is moved with compassion and binds the wounds and pours oil and wine on them.

Now we begin to see the contrasts –

The robbers steal and injure

The priest sees and does nothing

The Levite sees and does nothing

The Samaritan:

Sees and shows compassion

He treats the wounded man's wounds and this is the

Levite's failure

He transports the man, takes him to the inn and takes care

of him, and this is the priest's failure.

Then the next day he spends money on him by giving the inn keeper two denarii and this compensates for the thieves robbing him.

Two denarii would cover food and lodging for at least a week and maybe for two. In this final act of taking the man to a Jewish inn the Samaritan is risking his life, he would have to come out of the inn and escape the area. We do not know what happened to the Samaritan. As with many of Jesus's parables we are left to supply the conclusion. We must wonder why the Samaritan exposed himself to potential violence. This parable turns everything upside down: we don't earn eternal life, it comes as a free gift. Not who is my neighbour, but 'to whom must I become a neighbour?'

Compassion reaches way beyond the limits of the Law, its demands are limitless. In an atmosphere of racism it is the hated Samaritan who rescues the wounded Jew.

Jesus is talking about himself when he speaks of the Samaritan, he offers a costly demonstration of unexpected, unconditional Love.

Look at parallels in the world today. After the results of the referendum there were outbursts of racist hate crimes in this country, against Poles, against Muslims, against anyone who was a bit different.

Earlier this year in the north when there was all that flooding the Muslim communities came out and provided food, blankets, clothing, companionship to those who were flooded out of their homes, showing the compassion and love of God. Who was the neighbour?

Today people who feel abandoned by the Church may find grace in other people, things and strangers. If you never quite know where the grace of God is coming from, you never really know when you will be called upon to bring it. The neighbor is the unexpected outsider who pops up quite unexpectedly to deliver the grace of God.

Let us love God with our whole selves and be a neighbor to those who are in need.

Amen

Liz Badman

Rev. Dr. Kenneth Semon

Fr Ken has been a frequent visitor at All Saints over a number of years and has worshiped with us and at the Cathedral. More recently he has been taking an active role in the leading of worship and preaching, whilst he's been staying in Bristol.

During October of this year he would have been moving permanently into Clifton, and was very much looking forward to joining us here at All Saints as a regular member of the team. We were very much looking forward to welcoming him and his wife, Caroline, as part of our worshipping family.

Sadly, during the last week of July, he died following injuries received in a cycling accident. This was on the day prior to travelling to the UK during which he would have been preparing things for the move in October.

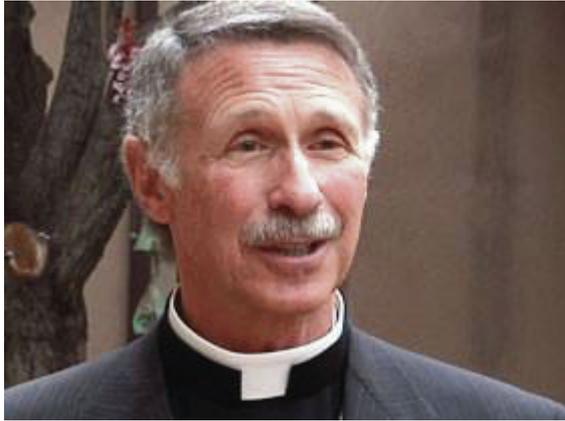
This is a shocking and profoundly sad event. Our prayers are with Caroline and his family, remembering in particular Jennifer and family (who attend the 9.30am Family Service), and with his parish in Santa Fe, the worshipping community of the Church of the Holy Faith.

The following article was published in the regional newspaper:

Rev. Dr. Kenneth Semon: Lived up to St. Francis' example

(Article published 30 July 2016 in 'The Santa Fe New Mexican' written by Andrew Oxford)

The rector of the Church of the Holy Faith, a certified skiing instructor and former professor of English literature with a penchant for quoting Shakespeare, had a long, colourful journey through human spirituality that ended abruptly Thursday.



The Rev. Dr. Kenneth Semon, 70, died Thursday of injuries sustained in a bicycling accident two days earlier. He had struck a hazard while riding near his home off Caja del Rio Road west of Santa Fe and never regained consciousness, according to a statement from the church.

Bishop Michael Vono remembered Semon as living with a passion.

“He loved God, the church and people, and he loved celebrating Mass and serving the needs of the poor,” Vono said.

Though Semon had a strong academic pedigree and was interested in ancient Greek as well as Aramaic, friends remember him as dismissing any pretence of being an intellectual. Instead, colleagues describe him as living up to the example of the parish’s patron saint, Francis of Assisi, by ministering to the homeless and advocating for the poor.

“Father Ken was a man of contemplation. But also a man of action, as his work for the homeless showed,” said the Rev. Jim Gordon, acting rector at the Church of the Holy Faith.

Semon was one of about 40 religious and community leaders who worked together to establish the Interfaith Community Shelter after several dozen deaths from hypothermia during two particularly brutal winters.

Even with a busy schedule of teaching, Semon regularly worked shifts at the facility, the Very Rev. Peggy Patterson recalls.

“It made a big impact on the congregation to see someone with such discipline and dedication,” she said.

Born into a Jewish family in Milwaukee, Wis., and a convert to Christianity in his early 30s, Semon graduated from the University of Wisconsin and got a Ph.D. from the University of Washington before working as an assistant professor of English literature at the University of Kentucky. Semon said he had been attending an Episcopal church in Lexington for a few years when he met a bishop who would change his life.

The bishop wanted Semon to become a priest.

“I told the bishop all the reasons why I couldn’t and shouldn’t and wouldn’t,” he later recounted.

But he left with a list of seminaries and would leave only a few months later to attend Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in Chicago.

Semon served as rector for parishes in Sturgis, Mich., El Paso, St. Louis and Paradise Valley, Ariz. He also served as a curate in Lake Forest, Ill., and was an assisting priest in Vail, Colo.

Semon and his wife, Caroline, planned on retiring to Taos when he joined Church of the Holy Faith as priest-in-charge in 2007 during a period of upheaval. The vestry went on to unanimously elect him rector.

After nine years leading the church, Semon once again had plans to retire. He intended to step down from the church later this year and move to England to be closer to family.

Along with his wife, Semon is survived by his daughter Jennifer Muller of Bristol, England; daughter Kathryn Johnston of Chicago; son Jeffrey Semon of San Jose, Calif.; brother Mark Semon of Lavina, Mont.; stepson Scott Maynard of Frankfort, Ky., and several grandchildren.

A Mass of the Resurrection is planned at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 10, in the Church of the Holy Faith.

From the Bishop

In this lighter summertime piece, Bishop Lee looks at the sport of road cycling to draw some parallels with what is expected of Christian disciples.

Those who know me well appreciate that two things are very close to my heart – road cycling and the Lord Jesus Christ. With the Tour de France still fresh in our minds and the Tour of Britain coming soon this seems a good moment to ask “What do professional road cyclists and Christian disciples have in common?” Here are a few thoughts with some Bible references for further reflection and exploration:

Teamwork – although some still believe that the 198 cyclists who line up for the Tour de France are all out to win the competition for themselves they are mistaken. It is all about the team working with and for one another. Being a follower of Jesus is not about a solo performance but working with others in the Church, the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16).

Gifting – the team contains cyclists who can maintain high speed on rolling terrain (rouleurs), sprinters who can ride for one hundred miles or more yet still finish the last 200m at over 40 mph, and climbers who can fly up steep hills or one mountain gradient after another. Every person’s gift is valued and honed for the good of the whole team (1

Corinthians 12: 12-31).

Serving – some cyclists spend their whole career as domestiques. They have no aspiration of winning; their role is to ensure that others – especially the lead rider – are protected, provided for, and given every opportunity to win either a stage or the overall race (Mark 10: 41-45).

One Leader – in any race, but particularly in a stage race such as the Tour de France, one person is the nominated leader in the overall competition. When there are two potential leaders, or occasionally even three, it usually spells trouble! For followers of Jesus it must never be about us but about Christ (1 Corinthians 3: 1-11).

Suffering – a word you will hear a lot among amateur road cyclists as well as professionals. Getting better as a cyclist does not abrogate suffering, rather it means learning how to bear it for longer. Road cyclists have to dig deep and learn to keep going when their body is telling them to stop, to give up (John 19: 23-27).

Sacrifice – on long mountain stages, the pace will get faster and faster as one member of the team after another rides on the front to provide cover for their leader and bear the brunt of the wind resistance. Team members sacrifice themselves by giving everything they have before dropping back totally spent and plummeting down the ranking (John 21: 18-19).

Courage – mountain descents and bunch sprints require tremendous nerve. Crashes during the madcap sprint are all too common, often ending in broken bones and smashed faces. Following the cyclists down mountains at speeds of up to 70 mph has caused journalists in their cars to be in tears because they have been so frightened. (Esther 7: 3-4).

Cheating – sadly professional road cycling, and even some amateur competitions, have been tainted by doping. From the very beginning of the sport there have been those who have taken drugs and other substances to improve their own chances. In the Lance Armstrong era doping was not only endemic but part of a culture of fear and corruption. (1 John 1: 5-2: 2).

Joy and Thanksgiving – at the end of each stage, and far more so at the conclusion of the entire race, the joy on the faces of the whole team and the gratitude that the winner expresses to his teammates is wonderful. In a competition such as the Tour de France the winnings are shared by the whole team (Romans 12: 9-21).

In penning this I want to conclude with two thoughts. First, men's road racing is more familiar than women's because of events such as the Tour de France, but each dimension above

applies as much to women road cyclists as it does to men. (I chose Esther as an example of courage as a reminder of this). Unlike professional cycling, discipleship requires us to work in close partnership across gender, not in separate compartments.

Second, one of the reasons I find road cycling a powerful illustration for discipleship is because it says something I believe men need to hear about the nature of following Jesus Christ, namely that it is demanding, tough and deeply rewarding. My sense is that men need more help in recognizing these dimensions of the Christian life. Perhaps hanging a racing bike inside or outside the church might promote an interesting engagement around this by men and women?

+Lee

August 2016

PRAYER GROUP

We will be holding the first meeting of this Prayer Group on Monday 9th September at 6.30pm immediately following Evening Prayer. We thought to start with 30 minutes and meet on the second Monday of each month.

Hopefully each person will be able to lead a session and that way we will broaden our Prayer Life by a variety of traditions.

I will lead the first one and it will be quiet and contemplative, though with a short introduction.

Anyone is welcome to join us, if so moved; it is not an exclusive set up!

Liz Badman



FRIENDS OF ALALAY (SANTA CRUZ)

Registered charity no. 1123425

SUMMER 2016 NEWSLETTER

I'm still working in East Ukraine, with child protection as an important part of my remit. However, as always the Internet means that I keep in close contact with Alalay and my work amongst the street children in Bolivia.



Annie and the kids in 2006
– some of them are now at university!

In June of this year the Harlequin Singers performed in a wonderful concert in Bristol and raised substantial funds to help the children – it was a truly great evening!

I mentioned in my last newsletter that 2016 is the 10th anniversary for my charity and that I would begin to describe some of the many things that have been achieved. I'm going to start the list in this newsletter, as it's far too long to include in just one end-of-year page! It is sometimes easy to forget how much has been achieved with your support - wherever practicable in ways that were self-sustaining and with nothing spent on administration.

As some of our earliest supporters may remember, in 2006 I volunteered at Alalay, in Santa Cruz, Bolivia for six months, at the end of which time I left with a determination to help the children to help themselves for many more years to come.

One of our first investments was in outdoor play equipment – there was none previously. It may seem a strange place to start our work but having some basic equipment opened up many opportunities for the kids. We also re-plumbed and re-drained much of the aldea (the out-of-town centre where the children live). Then Alalay hit a financial crisis (because of cutbacks in international funding) and we provided money towards food and other basic needs for a short period.



playground

Thanks to a healthy donation from a Bristol school we refurbished the Alalay bus and replaced the gearbox, meaning that our children could travel to the city for their vocational training courses and other activities.



Vegetable garden

We set up an extensive vegetable garden complete with irrigation system, so that the children could grow their own food and sell any surplus for extra income. Many of the children were anaemic when we first worked with Alalay – this has now been completely relegated to history! In difficult financial times we also paid the salaries of house mothers and fathers.

We bought five hundred chickens and established a very successful egg production unit, the children eating the eggs and selling the surplus locally.

There was an existing small bakery and also a textile unit. We funded new equipment and significantly increased the production from each of these. The children baked their own bread and cakes, and for a long period made their own school uniforms. They also started producing their first hand-made Christmas cards at that time and this has continued every year since.

We set up a fully equipped medical unit in a refurbished house on site and employed a local volunteer doctor to care for the children, staff and local villagers. Part of the house was then renovated and turned into basic but good accommodation for other volunteers from all over the world.

The chickens had been so successful that we decided to buy pigs and later on we also set up a quail farm of 3,000 birds and were able to sell surplus eggs and birds to raise further income. Each of these projects proved less profitable in the end than planned but we learned quickly and worked together with Alalay to solve any unforeseen challenges.



Medical unit

To be continued...!

Annie Syrett, Eastern Ukraine – July 2016

www.alalay.co.uk

