

St Faith's Church, Crosby

Newslink

October
2015



Worship at Saint Faith's



SUNDAY SERVICES

11.00 am **SUNG EUCHARIST and Children's Church**
Holy Baptism by arrangement
6.30 pm **1st Sunday: Evensong**

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Morning Prayer:

Monday-Wednesday and Friday-Sunday: 9am; Thursday 8am

Evening Prayer:

Monday *at Christ Church* 5pm

Tuesday 6.30pm; Wednesday-Thursday 5pm; Friday 6pm

The Eucharist

Tuesday 7pm; Thursday (Term Time only) 7.30am;

Friday 6.30pm

Around Waterloo: The Eucharist:

2nd and 5th Mondays & Feast Days as announced - Liverpool Seafarers' Centre
10am; Wednesdays 10am - St Mary's; Wednesdays 7pm - Christ Church

See the weekly online bulletin for full details of services and any variations.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

The Clergy are available by appointment to hear confessions or to talk about any matter in confidence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is always available in preparation for Christmas and Easter and at other advertised times.

HOME VISITS to the sick and housebound and those in hospital

If you, or someone you know, are unable to get to church and would like to receive Holy Communion at home, the Eucharistic Ministers are happy to undertake this - please call 928 3342/07976 901389 to arrange this, or to arrange a visit to someone in hospital or at home.

IN A PASTORAL EMERGENCY

Please telephone as for home visits, or a member of the ministry team.



From the Ministry Team : October 2015

The late Cardinal Hume (Archbishop of Westminster) began one of his books with this paragraph:

“Life,” he wrote, “is a pilgrimage. We are on the march, and sooner or later, we shall reach our destination. Then we shall see God as he is and that experience will be the cause of happiness and will have no end.”

That was all very well for Cardinal Hume, we may well think, for he has made up his mind about the purpose of life and if he had not believed in God, he would not have been made Archbishop of Westminster – but what about the rest of us?

There is no doubt that for all of us life is a kind of pilgrimage, but many spend their time on the road in some confusion and therefore do not make much progress. Some eventually come to the conclusion that there is no god, others go through life with severe doubts and therefore have difficulty in finding their way. Some, however, seem to forge ahead with such certainty about the faith they profess that it can be off-putting to others unless they share the same conviction. But in whatever position we find ourselves, important questions do have to be asked. Why am I here? What is the meaning of life? Are we part of a universe devoid of sense of purpose? If there is a God, what is he like and what does he require of us?

If, of course, we could see God, we would not need to ask these questions and life would be different. It would be easy to believe and we should be able to take the next step on our pilgrimage, clear about the direction. In fact, faith would be unnecessary because it would have “vanished into sight.” We have to accept, however, that in our present life this is not the case.

Furthermore, because we are unable to see God, it is all too easy to push any thoughts about him or about the purpose of life to the backs of our minds. We become engrossed with all kinds of interests so that often we are so busy working, enjoying ourselves or tired that important questions remain unasked. At other times, we are so

horrified by the innocent sufferings of others in times of earthquake, famine, flood or as a result of accidents, that we dismiss any idea of a God who loves us and who leads us to a destination where we shall experience, in the words of the late Cardinal Hume, “the cause of happiness.”

Yet, if we do dismiss religion completely, we miss out on one important aspect of life, the spiritual dimension. Religious believers would say that our lives are then impoverished and pointless, with no ultimate future or destination to which we can look forward. Whenever pilgrims or travellers lose their way, they stop to think and to reconsider before they decide on the next step. There are times when it would be wise for us to follow their example and take a similar course of action.

There is a well-known story about three head-teachers discussing the kind of education they were aiming to give their pupils. The first claimed that he was training his to become law-abiding citizens. The second explained that she was preparing hers to be public-spirited and of service to the community.

The third gave a very simple answer: “Preparing them for death”, he said quietly, “for death is the only certainty in life.”

In Angela Huth’s novel “Wives of the Fishermen”, a fisherman’s widow visits the fish market. The writer describes how, when the woman looks at the dead fish:

“She sees how in death every one is different. Some look resigned. Some are still open mouthed in indignation. Some have a chinless, weary look as if the catastrophe of being caught in the net was of no consequence.”

The paragraph raises the whole question of how death should be approached. With resignation? With indignation? With indifference? Or is there another more positive way, which the late Cardinal Hume not only wrote about but also demonstrated?

Richard Baxter, the seventeenth century Puritan, poet, hymn –writer and theologian, wrote:

“Lord, it belongs not to my care
Whether I die or live;
To love and serve thee is my share
And this, thy grace must give.”

With love, prayers and every blessing,

Fr Dennis



All Change!



You might be familiar with the joke – ‘How many Anglicans does it take to change a light bulb? ... CHANGE??’ – the outraged tone suggesting that, well, we Anglicans really rather like things as they are!

However, unfortunately, things don’t stay the same – I’ve written in the pages of this magazine in the last few months about ‘Fit for Mission,’ the new Archdeaconry boundaries, and the hope ultimately in this Diocese to move to fewer parishes. Some of this is driven by harsh necessities and clear-eyed realism – there are fewer clergy than there were, and whilst there has been a bit of an increase in vocations, those retiring from full time stipendiary ministry are not being replaced by new people. However, it is also driven by faith, and hope and love: faith that God continues to call his Church to proclaim the joy and hope of the Gospel afresh in each new age, hope that is ‘trust in those things of which we are not certain and the assurance of things not seen,’ as the Letter to the Hebrews has it. ‘Fit for Mission’ is both shaped by the hope, that the Church can grow, be a bigger Church and make a difference, flourish be renewed, and informed at the same time by reality. I believe this is absolutely at the heart of our Christian calling – to be both mediators of hope, and agents of reality. As Cardinal Newman once wrote, ‘to live is to change, and to have changed often is to be perfect.’

There are immediate and very practical consequences of this for St Faith’s. We have, as you know, been working hard with the Waterloo Group Council to promote structures of collaboration between the four Anglican Churches in Waterloo. The hope here is that, in future, Anglican clergy in Waterloo (and, perhaps, hopefully, beyond) – will have a structural commitment to one another in oversight of the parishes – not just cover, but regular prayer together, a common ministry team, and a shared commitment to all of the parishes, even if within that there are (and properly should be) particular responsibilities for particular churches. We clergy are not simply responsible for the pastoral care of our congregations (in which it makes sense for people to have one ‘go-to’ person, their own shepherd, or ‘named nurse,’ as I’ve sometimes put it) but also for the whole of the parish; and in taking parish funerals, for example, or in visiting local care homes, it makes sense for the clergy and ministry team to share. Alongside this, there are, in the Group Council, the green shoots of a common task in mission across the four churches – towards the elderly, young people, and in communications, for example.

With all this going on – and it is in the right direction – it makes sense for me to think about moving on from here; indeed, I have to – there needs to be a proper process and appointment in Waterloo. I was imposed on St Faith’s in difficult circumstances – it is now time for you to begin to think about what shape of stipendiary ministry can enable you to be God’s people here into the future: the appointment here is not entirely in your hands, of course. The hope is to build in to it that dimension of collaborative ministry, and also, clergy appointments are Diocesan - and that is

proper too, because the Church of England is not congregational. However, although clergy posts are made as Diocesan appointments, modern practice is to try to give people a say in appointing those who have responsibility for them – it is a balance between the pastoral needs of the parish and congregation and the calling to mission and ministry in the wider church. Another way in which, as the C of E, we are both Catholic and Reformed – episcopally led and synodically governed.

A good place to start to think about the future is by prayerful, thoughtful, hopeful yet realistic, reflection about what St Faith's is now, and what it is possibly called to be. So, I'm going to ask you to think in that way – prayerfully, thoughtfully, hopefully yet realistically, about a few questions – here they are, and I plan also to send them out to people:

1. What is St Faith's really good at? What are the best things about this Church?
2. What are we less good at? What do we maybe need to learn from others? Where are we vulnerable?
3. St Faith's is proud of its Catholic tradition: what does 'Catholic' mean to you?
4. What in our worship and life together is attractive to those outside the Church?
5. Is there anything in our worship and life together that is off-putting to those who come through our doors?

Incidentally, even as you are called to be shaped by hope and realism – so am I! I don't yet have a job to go to – though I am now very actively looking. I was always clear I took on this role on an Interim basis – and part of that is letting it go, with the faith that God has a plan for me, as well as for you. Indeed, part of my calling as I see it in these last few months with you is to model to you that it is alright to live with uncertainty – indeed to 'trust in things that are uncertain and have the assurance of things unseen.' I do believe St Faith's has a vocation into the future, though its shape is not yet clear; and I also believe I have a vocation, that 'he who calls is faithful' – in other words, we all need to keep calm, continue to trust God and to pray that the future to which he is calling us will unfold in ways that bless us, the whole church, and the area in which we are called to be a Christian presence:

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and will break
In blessings on your head.

Sue



Fingers and Toes - a Digital Quest

Chris Price



No-one who has been into St Faith's can fail to have noticed the fine statue of the Madonna and Child which stands in the Lady Chapel, and which we know as the 'Rabbit Madonna', as there are two bunnies depicted, one at each of Mary's feet. Almost equally certainly, few will be unaware that the endearing figure of the infant Jesus has one toe short on his right foot. Why this should be so has always been a puzzle, but recent events have provided a possible explanation, as well as shedding more light on the provenance of the statue and of its sculptor, Mother Maribel of Wantage.

The unravelling begins with a recent visit by this writer to Rufford Old Hall, a fine National Trust property in Lancashire. Our visit coincided with an entertaining talk by a lady guide in the Great Hall. She focused in depth on the unique 'movable' screen: a massive structure carved from black oak and designed to hide the sight of scurrying servants from the great and the good feasting in the hall. This was familiar stuff – until she mentioned that there were three deliberate flaws in the intricate carving: two on the front and one at the rear. The front two were decorative panels carved the wrong way up; the third, which she challenged those present to find, turned out to be on the figure of an angel high up on the monumental structure. Peering into the gloom, it was possible to see that the figure had an extra finger on one hand. Photos on the centre pages show both digital oddities.

What struck a chord was the guide's confident statement that these apparent aberrations were in fact deliberate imperfections, incorporated by pious craftsmen to demonstrate their belief that only God could create perfection. The inference was that this was a common practice.

It was some time later that I began to wonder whether the missing toe on our statue might be another example of the practice. So began a piece of research which, at the time of writing, has provided some answers but also provided further mysteries.

Apart from the digital deficit issue, we had long hoped to find out more about the 'Rabbit Madonna'; clearly the time had come to dig deeper. I found the contact details for the Community of St Mary the Virgin, an order of Anglican nuns in Wantage, Berkshire. We had known that this was the home of Mother Maribel, since 'C.S.M.V.' is inscribed on the base of the statue plinth. I fired off an email, asking if they could fill in any details about the piece in general and the toe shortage in particular. It was not long before a reply came. The sister who wrote hadn't heard of the statue, but hoped it might be listed in their inventory of Maribel's works. She asked for photos and dimensions and ended with this entertaining paragraph.

'It is quite probable that the "sick cow" story is true as M. Maribel had a wicked sense of humour; her studio was in the farm buildings and had been a cowshed.'

The reference is to words from our church website, which states that, in order to discourage visitors, M. Maribel had posted a notice saying 'sick cow' on her studio door! This revelation from the nuns naturally spurred me on in pursuit of more information. I sent photos and dimensions and soon received further enlightenment. Sister Jean Frances wrote that although she wasn't supposed to be involved in the investigation, she was intrigued! She had now found mention of two statues, 3' tall, entitled 'Seated Madonna and Child with rabbits, made in 1925, cast in plaster: Winchester and Portsmouth'.

She wondered if we knew when and how the statue came into our possession. The fact is that we have yet to find this out. I had thought for some reason that it might have been in the 1950s, but there seems to be no record in registers, magazines or church histories at any time. Were the statues made for churches in Winchester and Portsmouth? Here again, not even Google has yielded anything of use to me or to sleuth John Woodley, so that the story of the statues (and obviously 'ours' is one of the pair) is unfinished, not least concerning the Madonna's journeying between 1925 and whenever she arrived in our Lady Chapel. Investigations are ongoing and Wantage has promised further help.

The other intriguing matter is that of the 'deliberate imperfection' theory. In pursuit of further enlightenment, I surfed the web, and found plenty of references to the concept. It is a Muslim practice, notably but not exclusively in the weaving of Persian rugs, and seems also to be a feature of American Amish art. But I cannot find any reference to it whatsoever in mainstream Christian art, other than a Wikipedia reference to the Rufford imperfections. Undeterred, I emailed Rufford to see if they could fill the gap, and am promised an answer.

Finally, a further thought entered my consciousness a few days ago. An equally fine furnishing of our church is of course the splendid Salviati reredos above the High Altar. Curiously, this also has its imperfections. The folding 'wings' of the reredos feature angels looking inwards towards the centre – but two of them, one on each side, are facing outwards. It has been assumed that when the reredos was restored and repainted, these two figures were accidentally transposed. But the similarity to the Rufford panel carvings is striking. The jury are out over this one, but there's more. These side panels are decorated with a series of what are clearly hand-painted 'ihs' monograms (the first three letters of the Greek name for Jesus, although often taken to mean Iesu Hominum Salvator – Jesus saviour of mankind). One of them, on the right hand wing, lacks the 'i' in the lettering. A careless apprentice of Salviati, which escaped quality control – or another deliberate imperfection?

As one question is answered, others seem to emerge. The quest continues. If any of ye can shed further light on these matters, ye are to declare it... Oh, and don't forget the superfoetation theory about bunnies.

Another in our occasional series in which priests whose vocation was to some degree rooted in St Faith's is told below. Nine such journeys are accessible on the church website and more are promised (but then these priests are so busy...)

Brian Prothero's Confession



St. Faith's Parish Church was very kind to me as a confused pilgrim and teenager. The liturgical life at St. Faith's was for me a real oasis in an arid desert and I hope and pray that it still functions as that for many of God's people.

I remember vividly speaking with Fr. Charles Billington one day after a midweek Mass: 'Father, Charles,' I said, 'could I please make an appointment to see you sometime soon?' To which the Reverend Father quickly replied, 'You want to be a Priest, don't you!' Fr. Charles was psychic, apparently, as well as possessing bucketfuls of priestly charisma which marked him out as one of God's very special priests. To him I am eternally grateful for seeing the hope-seed of a priestly vocation in me - of all people! I'm pretty sure it had lots to do with him saying his prayers.

I was sent to see the Bishop of Liverpool, who seemed to think this was a good idea, and he sent me to a selection conference in 1971. I was 'warmly recommended for training for ordination' and did nothing about it until 1983, by which time I was a teacher, married to Jocelyn with 2 children (Adam and Lucie) and the final one (Tom) on the way.

Whatever 'it' was would not go away, so off I went to another selection conference because, apparently, the writ of the Holy Spirit is deemed by the Church of England to have a shelf-life of about three years - and once again I was 'warmly recommended for training for ordination'. This time it was very much a case of 'action stations'. Lincoln Theological College offered me a place, to which we went in 1984 where, as an added bonus, Fr. Nicolas Aldritt (another St. Faith's ordinand) became my personal tutor.

Ordained to the Diaconate in 1986, I began to serve my title at St. Mary's Thornbury and at 7.30 p.m. on July 6 1987, ordained priest the day before I presided at the Holy Eucharist for the first time.

I am now Rector of Weybridge in the Diocese of Guildford, and very proud to be one of only seven people in my parish who try to read 'The Guardian'. The other 11,093 do not read 'The Guardian'.

Job done? No.

Job started? Yes!

Thank you, St. Faith's, for your love, care, acceptance and fellowship. Long may God prosper you and long may you bring smiles to the angels of heaven.

A Hymn for the Patronal Festival

Lord of our life, we lift our hearts
In thankfulness and praise.
Your guiding hand has kept and held
And led us all our days.
How great your mercies through the years;
How great your love outpoured.
Make of our lives an offering,
Our living, loving Lord.

We have no gifts but those you gave,
No worth except in you.
Yours is the power to heal and save:
In us your gifts renew.
Through daily faithfulness and prayer
We walk our Saviour's way;
Help us to show your loving care
To others day by day.

Here at the font your sign is given
To mark each child your own;
So as we grow you lead us on
Towards the heavenly throne.
Here we have come to love your word:
Its wisdom, strength and truth,
Lighting the path we tread through the
Uncertainties of youth.

Here at your altar day by day
Your people still are fed;
Broken for us you give us life
In form of wine and bread.
Strengthened for service by your love
In all we say or do;
A living sacrifice to bring
Our daily lives to you.



For those who raised this house of Faith
And served it through the years;
Who worshipped in this family
And shared its joy and tears;
Within these walls they found the grace
To see their journey through;
Victors at last in life's long race,
We gave them back to you.

Lord, for a century of praise
Here on this holy ground;
For Faith in whose strong sacrifice
Our watchword still is found,
We give you thanks, and ask your grace
For holiness like hers:
To serve your world and keep the faith
Throughout the turning years.

All of our life, in every step,
By you is known and planned;
All of the future, yet unknown,
Is safely in your hand.
Here we remake a living story:
Here we your grace implore;
Christ be our light, our power, our glory,
Now and for evermore.



Bridges not Walls

Some reflections on the barriers to peace in the Holy Land written to mark the World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel 2015 (an initiative of the World Council of Churches supported by Pax Christi)

“In expressing my closeness to those who suffer most from this conflict, I wish to state my heartfelt conviction that the time has come to put an end to this situation which has become increasingly unacceptable. For the good of all, there is a need to intensify efforts and initiatives aimed at creating the conditions for a stable peace based on justice, on the recognition of the rights of every individual, and on mutual security.”

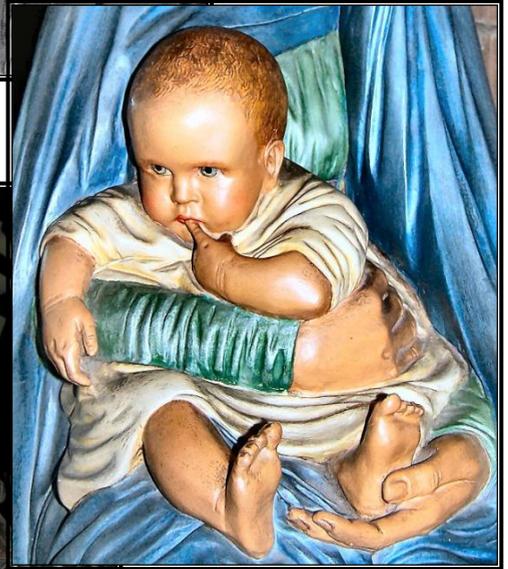
Pope Francis, at the separation wall in Bethlehem, May 2014



'Fingers and Toes'

See the article on page 6 for the background to this page of photos.

This is Mother Maribel of the Anglican Community of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage



Above This close-up of the right foot of the Christ child from our statue shows the shortage of toes



Left The carving of the rear of the great oak screen at Rufford Old Hall shows the corresponding excess of fingers on the right hand.



**‘In an English Country
Garden...’**

or

**‘Hunger and Thirst
after Righteousness’**

The sun shone (well at least the rain kept off) for the parish barbecue in the vicarage garden following the morning service on Sunday, August 30th.



A Good Time was Had by All.

Left Fiona is all smiles for Jackie Parry's camera

Below Dennis and Gareth putting the world to rights. It is evident that several of the ample array of bottles before them are already all but dead.



CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

When I was a child, Auntie Gladys used to tell me about her visit to Palestine and Egypt when she was on a trip around the Mediterranean many years before. I used to listen, entranced by her stories. (She was a very good story teller.) As time went on I forgot about Palestine as Israel became the new word and the word, Palestine, seemed to be banned apart from Biblical references. As a teenager I read the novel “Exodus” and was fired by it. It was well written as a potboiler and kept on using the expression “A land with no people for a people with no land”. I believed it quite uncritically. A film also spread this lie round the world.

Many years later in 1986 I was given a opportunity to study at an Ecumenical College called Tantur, just north of Bethlehem. My study title was The Teaching of Jesus in a Multicultural Setting. This fitted in with parish experiences of very mixed populations both in Peckham, and Liverpool 8 (now generally called Toxteth.)

It was both an eye opener and a life changing experience for me. The word Palestine became real to me again after many years, and as I studied scripture and history in the setting of the Land of the Holy One (There is very little holy about it now) I began to question all my presuppositions. The domestic staff at Tantur were all Palestinians from Bethlehem and explained the situation from their point of view, especially the British responsibility for the Balfour Agreement, the Mandate and subsequent United Nations creation of the State of Israel – all without consulting the population of Palestinians.

As I studied Biblical history in its real setting, and the teaching of Jesus whilst looking at the land as he knew it, my faith became alive in a way it had not been before. The parables in particular were now really vivid and far more understandable. Also and most importantly, I worshipped with local Christians in Jerusalem, many of whose Churches I didn’t know existed. English theological studies are not over enthusiastic about so called Monophysite, i.e. heretical Eastern Churches. (We now more politely call them Pre Calcedonian.) It was wonderful to meet my fellow Christians and worship in languages I never knew existed, following the liturgy with my heart and guts, rather than my usual English. They were nearly all Palestinians, and some spoke Aramaic still – the language of Jesus.

Tantur was also a home for discussion between Jews, Christians and Muslims, the three Abrahamic faiths all going back to experiences from the desert, as we chewed over what we held in common, differences, and views on the present political situation, all with real gusto. Some Jewish Rabbis were working on behalf of Palestinians and their rights, incensed about the treatment of them by their fellow Israelis and especially by the government. The following years I went on a special pilgrimage organised by “Living Stones,” helping people to meet Palestinian Christians as part of a pilgrimage as it had always been in the past, not just going round old buildings in a pious manner.

This increased my commitment to Palestinians in general, and the Christians in particular. They had been forgotten by the Western Churches – a cause of embarrassment rather than joy and shared faith. I took a few groups of pilgrims myself over the next few years and tried to raise consciousness about the issues. The situation now is infinitely worse, although I think the general public is becoming more aware of the unjust suffering of the people through the Separation Wall, the bombing of Gaza, living in property built illegally on Palestinian land in what is often call the West Bank.) Our Government generally refuses to criticise Israel’s actions that are illegal by international law, and prefers to sell arms to the Israeli Government, which makes us partners to war crimes. And of course many people are very afraid of being called Anti-Semitic.

Through Churches Together in Waterloo, a few of us have tried to make people in many congregations more aware of the full horror of what has been, and is still going on. I hope we will set up a Kairos group locally, following the work of Palestinian Christians, initially led by Naim Ateek – a one-time canon of St. George’s Anglican Cathedral in Jerusalem. I hope that we will send out publicity about this in the near future. Do pray for your fellow Christians in particular that they may be safe to practise their faith, have security in their land and a very welcome resource when we go on pilgrimage.

Colin Oxenforth



IMAGINE...

How would you feel if you were Welsh and you lived in Wales and the English built a wall between England and Wales? And if the English built a wall actually into Wales dividing up villages and farms and stopped you from going into England, even to a nearby hospital?

And then built English towns inside Wales and joined their towns with roads that only they could use? And then made it impossible for you to build houses in your country and destroyed houses already there that they said were illegal? Suppose the English did all this and forced it on you by military force, what would you feel then?

Angry, depressed, full of despair? The whole idea is ridiculous. It would be so unjust. **So how do you think the Palestinians feel?**

BUILD PEACE NOT WALLS

worldweekforpeace.org paxchristi.org.uk/campaigns/israel-and-palestine

Kathleen Zimak

'One Body'

Fred Nye



Words from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: 'We who are many are one body, because we all share in the one bread'.

This Sunday our gospel reading continues the theme of 'the bread of life'. Because the bread of the Eucharist is so central to us at St. Faith's, it's worth taking a few minutes to think together about what it means to us. And, because none of us are strangers to estrangement, it's worth re-visiting St. Paul's trust in the bread of the Eucharist as the means of unity and transformation.

I came to baking bread rather late in life, well after retirement in fact, and although I'm not much good at it I only wish I had tried it earlier. There is a sort of parable of the Kingdom, a parable of unity, about baking: the simplicity of the raw materials, the mixing together, the pounding and kneading, the waiting while the dough miraculously and of its own accord proves, rises, and grows; and the transformation that then takes place, out of sight in the oven. The separate ingredients become inseparable in the finished loaf, which is greater, and other, than the sum of its parts.

In St. John's gospel, Jesus's teaching on the bread of life follows just the day after he fed the multitude on the mountainside. Whatever the Eucharistic implications, there can be little doubt that the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand was prompted by the crowd's empty bellies, and by Our Lord's compassion for their hunger. So much of his healing ministry was also a response to basic physical needs: a response that included the healing of embarrassing bodies and the ritually unclean: lepers, Romans and sick women.

So I think we can safely take the bread of the Eucharist as a sign of Our Lord's concern, not just for humanity's spiritual welfare, but for its most basic physical needs. Taken in this way the Eucharist will save us from the piety that undervalues the material world. It will also save us from secularism: the sort of secularism that wants the church to confine itself to so called 'spiritual' matters. Politics are a spiritual matter too, especially when people's fundamental welfare is at stake.

I thank God that with your help and generosity the Waterloo Partnership has been feeding the quarantined and those left orphaned during the Ebola epidemic, and can now provide treatment for survivors whose sight has been damaged by the virus. This is bread-of-life stuff, Eucharistic stuff. But there are also bread-of-life issues nearer home: child poverty, the social care of the elderly and handicapped, the lack of affordable housing, tax credits for poor working families. When we share the bread of the Eucharist we cannot remain entirely at ease with the world as we find it. We are brought together and transformed into a community of compassion.

Jesus said ‘The bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world’. What did he mean: was it mere metaphysics, perhaps just a bit of comforting poetry? The manna in the wilderness wasn’t mere metaphysics to the starving Israelites. To the exhausted Elijah, trying to put a distance between himself and Jezebel’s hit-men, the food God provided wasn’t just a way of speaking.

And so it is for us: Jesus provides real food for our journey, our pilgrimage. Our Lord commissions us to find him, to follow him and to join him in his work of self-giving love: ‘This is my commandment: that you shall love one another as I have loved you’. And the food that he gives to sustain us in this task is himself. He is our constant companion along the Way, our leader, guide, example, inspiration and friend.

We must never forget the purpose of Our Lord’s heavenly food: he gives us the power, the energy, to bring good news to the poor, recovery of sight to the blind, and freedom to the oppressed. If we eat only for ourselves, if we don’t burn this energy off so to speak in following Christ, then we become spiritually flabby and weak. Sometimes we say, rather wistfully, that what the church needs is ‘bums on seats’. Maybe, but God’s call is more like ‘on your feet!’ If we receive the Sacrament standing, we express this readiness, this preparedness, to follow Christ. When we eat the bread of the Eucharist, we pledge ourselves to live and work to God’s praise and glory. We are brought together and transformed into a community that has been given Christ’s commission.

Jesus said ‘Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them’. During his earthly ministry, Our Lord entertained at his table the outcast, the sinner, and the unclean. A motley crew no doubt, but all united in their acceptance of Christ’s invitation, and a need to know him better. Those who accept Christ and follow him are offered an ever-closer relationship with him. And if with him, then also with one another. As St. Paul put it ‘The bread that we break, is it not a sharing of the body of Christ?’ The mystery of it all is that Christ’s broken body on the Cross, and the broken bread of the Eucharist, become the sign and the means of unity and reconciliation for us all. We are the new Israel, the new creation, a community of love.

But we are not quite there yet: we are still in the process of becoming what we are. After the group of Waterloo churches’ prayer service three weeks ago I was disappointed to hear that some members of the congregation felt uncomfortable because others prayed for unity out loud. I even wondered what St. Paul might have thought about it! There seemed to be a disconnect between our sharing of the one bread, and our embarrassment when we tried to pray together.

But of course I shouldn’t have been disappointed; because growing together is God’s work, not ours. The Kingdom *will* come, as the wheat grain grows hidden in the earth, as the invisible yeast leavens the loaf. So please go on praying, silently or out loud or in any way the Spirit moves you, that together we may indeed become the Body of Christ in this place. As we share the bread of the Eucharist, we are brought together

and transformed into members of Christ's community of love. Every time we eat this bread, may we celebrate, with joy, the unity with one another that we find in Him.



A Reflection for St Luke's-tide

St. Luke's little summer approaches. These autumn days grant us some sunshine and mild air. We are refreshed before the cooler days, and all that is meant by winter-tide, overtake us. Luke's name suggests some gentleness and a healing warmth in life. The gospel writing, which bears his name, is none the less challenging, and personally searching. Yet it is generally agreed that the telling of the good news in the Lucan version is, attractively human, good news artistically presented.

This writer's message strikes many a modern note for us as we read the third gospel. We remember also that a second volume by the same author follows with that early piece of Christian history, the Acts of the Apostles. To begin with, Luke has a world view. He helps us to appreciate that what happened in one small country at a particular period is of the greatest importance to people everywhere. Luke's world was probably limited to the Mediterranean, and the countries surrounding that inland sea, yet the significance of the life and death of Jesus for all kinds of people, irrespective of race, culture and tradition, is repeatedly emphasised as he puts on record what actually happened. The death followed by resurrection, ascension, and the Spirit's continuing are all set out in order. His writing has a modern ring, a missionary drive, and a universal message.

He writes with some detachment. He was not one of the twelve disciples. He helps us to see the figure of Jesus through the eyes of outsiders. He encourages argument and inquiry; questions often come from strangers, with views that are far from traditional, quite unlike our own. Conversations, dialogue, and discussion, involving many human types, produce fresh insights about life's meaning under God. An army officer in the Roman Imperial forces and a travelling Samaritan, for example, shed light upon the place of authority in ordinary life and the enrichment, which out-going neighbourliness can bring to any one of us.

We may think that there is something new and original about living today in a questioning generation. Spiritual matters are often vigorously discussed; there are changes in ways of worship; new words are coined to express fresh insights about our relationships with God and with one another. Yet Luke writes with a rich and versatile vocabulary about the value of questions which create fresh understanding. We learn from him, especially in those memorable human parables which he records with fine powers of description, that protests and grumbles can stir up new thinking and changed attitudes. Jesus met objections with shining illustrations of life's possibilities and fulfilments. He matched negative complaints with positive measures.

In our world of conflicts and sufferings, Luke's concentration on identifying and curing social ills, provides a spiritual tonic. The Christian's care for the poor and oppressed, the role of women in society, the healing of the whole person, body, soul and spirit all receive prominence and a tender sympathy from this evangelist, remembered each October, in and out of medical circles. Luke never disguised his sense of wonder as Christ healed the sick who were brought to him. The orderliness and coherence of this writer's narrative provide valuable sources for study, thought and prayer. He helps his readers to perceive the truth which makes us free.

Fr Dennis



Every Cloud...?

A new and exciting event is coming to St Faith's Church Hall on 24th October! SILVER LINING EVENTS are hosting Health and Well-being days once a month from 11.00 am to 3.00 pm.

Would you like to know more about complementary therapies, and how they can benefit chronic conditions and help with pain relief and general health and well-being? This is a chance to see what is available locally and to discuss with therapists how each particular therapy could benefit you.

This is an excellent opportunity for people to experience complementary therapies for very reasonable prices, and also to shop at beautiful stalls selling genuine gemstone jewellery, other locally sourced healthy foods, and gifts. It is also an opportunity for local therapists to offer taster sessions in complementary therapies. Stall prices are kept to a minimum.

The aim of this event is to encourage people to try the vast range of therapies offered by local therapists, and benefit from the range of therapies. This will increase spending in the local economy. Research has shown that for every £1 spent locally, 63p stays in the local economy, as opposed to 40p per £1 when spent with larger national businesses.

The ladies from St Faith's will be providing delicious lunches at reasonable prices during these events. All proceeds from the lunches served goes towards the upkeep of the hall, which is used for many community activities.

So come and spend an hour or so being pampered, have a lovely lunch, and chat to the stallholders and therapists.

Fading respect for religion

John Bingham



Publicly identifying with any religion has become an act of courage in many western countries because believers are routinely assumed to be naive, unsophisticated and narrow-minded, according to Britain's most senior Jewish and Roman Catholic clerics. Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis and Cardinal Vincent Nichols warned it is becoming increasingly difficult to voice arguments based on faith in debates about vital social and political issues such as assisted dying or family values. They also said the brazen persecution of Christian, Muslim and Jewish minorities in the Middle East and other regions was one of the most pressing and shameful issues of our time.

The leaders called for greater tolerance and understanding as they travelled to Rome together for an audience with Pope Francis to discuss faith relations. It comes as Jewish and Catholic communities prepare to mark the 50th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* - meaning 'in our time' - the landmark declaration by the Second Vatican Council to condemn anti-Semitism and help to transform relations between the faiths.

'Jewish and Catholic shared history has been so deeply stained with the blood of innocent men, women and children whose only crime was a sincerely held personal religious conviction, that the thought of such a warm relationship as we share today would have once seemed absurd,' they wrote.

They said that the lessons of the transformation of relations between Judaism and the Catholic Church should now be applied to a 'new but no less troubling set of global issues'. 'In many places, to be a person of faith can be, in and of itself, an act of courage,' they wrote.



Who was Saint Faith?

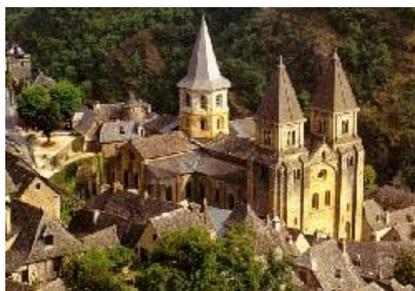
Little is known of our patron, and no-one seems sure why Douglas Horsfall, our founder and benefactor, named his new church, consecrated in 1900, after a young French virgin and martyr. It is believed that Faith lived in the 3rd and 4th centuries at the time of the Roman Emperor Maximilian (286-305 AD) and died in Agen in the Garonne Valley in French Aquitaine. According to Jean-Claude Fau's 'Visiting Conques', 'a young Christian girl named Foy' (from the Latin 'Fides') refused to make a sacrifice to pagan gods and was put to death by the occupying Roman authorities on the orders of the Governor Dacian, who had her roasted on a brazen bed and then beheaded. Other versions of the story record a miraculous shower of rain extinguishing the fire and necessitating the subsequent beheading. Faith was just twelve years old at the time. 'Other Christians from Agen,' Fau relates, 'among whom were Bishop Caprais, moved by her example, submitted in turn to an agonising fate.'

Her body, secretly buried, was transferred two centuries later to the basilica constructed on the actual place of her martyrdom. 'It is quite certain', Fau says, 'that the various accounts of her Passion, related well after her death, evoke more the feeling of 'The Golden Legend of the Lives of the Saints' than any historical reality.' Five centuries later, it appears that romantic legend became closer to reality when 'the names of Sainte Foy and Conques became associated for ever.' Towards the end of the 8th century, a hermit called Dadon settled to a life of contemplation in that remote valley, and a community of monks joined him, following the Benedictine rules. Following a grant of land from the Emperor Louis the Pious (son of Charlemagne), the community began to flourish. At a time when the worship and valuing of holy relics was growing – and the possession of relics were coming to be seen as conferring great prestige - the Conques community set about obtaining some. 'After several fruitless attempts', Fau recounts, ' they set their heart on obtaining the precious remains of Sainte Foy at Agen. The theft, obliquely referred to as the 'discreet transfer'(!) took place in the year 866 AD.'

Other accounts tell the entertaining story of the Conques monk who apparently attached himself to the Agen community, won their confidence and was entrusted with the task of guarding the relics. Once alone, he took to the hills with Saint Faith, evaded his righteous pursuers and found sanctuary in Conques, on January 14th, 866, where our saint's remains (if that is what they actually are) remain to this day.

The abbey was rededicated to Sainte Foy and, discreetly glossing over its highly questionable acquisition, grew and prospered. Crusaders and pilgrims going to the shrine of St James at Compostella invoked her intercession and heaped treasures and gold on the community. The celebrated reliquary jewel-encrusted statue of the saint dates from this time and has long revered as a memento of her life and death.

There were two other, more historically-authenticated, dramatic episodes in Saint Faith's journey down the centuries. In 1568, at the height of the Reformation, the Huguenot Protestants set fire to the abbey, burning the roof down and doing much damage. At the time of the French Revolution, in 1792, the monastery was suppressed and scattered, and its mediaeval treasures, including the 'Majesty of Sainte Foy', were taken out of the decaying abbey and hidden in villagers' homes, walls and outbuildings to avoid being requisitioned and melted down. The monastic buildings did not survive, but the abbey was restored and its treasures recovered and reinstalled.



The Trees are Coming Again!

For the last 50 years I have always been rather irritated by the sight of Christmas stock in shops in September and people who have done all their Christmas shopping by October 1st . I am a Christmas Eve shopper myself . So I am surprised to find myself planning the Christmas tree festival in mid-September . But successful events take lots of planning and hard work and we asked for volunteers. One of the things I love about St. Faith's is the way there are so many people ready give up their free time, abandon grandchildren or in my case give up my important work among the sinners in the public houses of Waterloo, and work cheerfully and enthusiastically for church events. As usual we have had loads offers of help and we had our first planning meeting recently. So I can now reveal to your readers the plans so far, though some details have yet to be confirmed .

The festival will run from Sunday 6 December till Saturday 12 December . It will take its traditional form with a Jam Factory stall, a cake stall , a refreshment stall and by popular request Rick will play his organ. And of course there will be 35 to 40 Christmas trees and there will be a £50 prize for the most imaginatively decorated tree. We are hoping to have a live music spot every day including a military brass band on the evening of Wednesday 9 December . On the evening of Friday 9 December we will be having an evening of wine and cheese and fine music from a number of groups. We will also be having a souvenir brochure

Do we need any more help ? Yes we do! Rotas will be going up at the back of church for stewarding and the various stalls. Please sign up if you can. We need donations of home-made jams and preserves, items for the craft stall and donations of stuff to make cakes and toiletries (small) for the Secret Santa stall. I shall be donating the 6 bottles of after-shave that I have been given lately

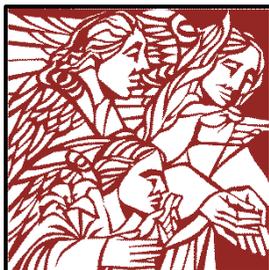
I think I now have a better understanding of how hard Margaret Houghton has worked over the years to build and maintain what has become a much loved institution for Saint Faiths and the community. Without her instructions and advice my job would be so very much harder . It hardly needs saying, but I will say it anyway , without the hard work of the lovely people of Saint Faith's my task would be impossible . God bless you .

From your Master of the Christmas Trees,

Gareth Griffiths



The Parish Directory and Church Organisations



VICAR

The Revd Dr Susan J. Lucas, The Vicarage, Milton Road, Waterloo, L22 3XA
Tel 0151 928 3342; 07976 901389. Email revsue85@icloud.com

PARISH OFFICE

32 Brooklands Avenue, Waterloo. L22 3XZ. 0151 928 9913

Parish Administrator: Wendy Trussell; email: sfsmparishoffice@btinternet.com

ASSISTANT PRIESTS

Fr. Dennis Smith, 16 Fir Road, Waterloo. L22 4QL. 928 5065

Revd Denise McDougall, 27 Mayfair Avenue, Crosby L23 2TL. 924 8870

READERS

Mrs Jacqueline Parry, 21 Grosvenor Avenue, Crosby. L23 0SB. 928 0726

Miss Paula O'Shaughnessy, 30 Curzon Rd, L22 0NL. 286 2764 / 075823 19440

READER EMERITUS

Dr Fred Nye, 23 Bonnington Ave, Crosby L23 7YJ Tel 924 2813

CHURCHWARDENS

Ms Brenda Cottarel, 6 Lawton Road, Waterloo. L22 9QL. 928 4275

Mr Rick Walker, 17 Mayfair Avenue, Crosby. L23 2TL. 924 6267

ASSISTANT CHURCH WARDENS

Mr Bill Dagnall, 14 Duddingston Ave, Crosby. L23 0SH. 928 4997

Mrs Christine Spence, 52 Molyneux Road, Waterloo. L22 4QZ. 284 9325

TREASURER

Mr David Jones, 65 Dunbar Road, Birkdale, Southport PR8 4RJ. 01704 567782

PCC SECRETARY

Mrs Lillie Wilmot, Flat 7, 3 Bramhall Rd, Waterloo L23 3XA. 920 5563

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Mr Robert Woods, robertwoods1986@hotmail.co.uk. 07847 251315

GIFT AID SECRETARY

Mr Rick Walker, 17 Mayfair Avenue, Crosby. L23 2TL. 924 6267

TUESDAY OFFICE HOUR: 6.30 – 7.30 pm (wedding and banns bookings)

Mrs Lynda Dixon, 928 7330

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

Sunday 11.00 am in the Church Hall. Mrs Angie Price: 924 1938

VULNERABLE ADULTS OFFICER

Mr Gareth Griffiths, 6 Lawton Road, Waterloo. L22 9QL. 928 4275

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

Mrs Linda Nye, 23 Bonnington Avenue, Crosby. L23 7YJ. 924 2813

BAPTISM BOOKINGS

Mrs Jackie Parry. 928 0726

Mrs Brenda Cottarel. 928 4275

BEAVER SCOUTS

Thursday 5.00 – 6.15 pm Mike Carr. 293 3416

CUB SCOUTS

Thursday 6.30 – 8.00 pm. Mike Carr. 293 3416

SCOUTS

Thursday 8.00 - 9.30 pm. Mike Carr. 293 3416

RAINBOWS

Monday 4.45 - 5.45 pm. Geraldine Forshaw. 928 5204

BROWNIE GUIDES

Monday 6.00 - 7.30 pm. Mary McFadyen. 284 0104

CHOIR PRACTICE

Friday 7.30 pm - 8.45 pm.

MAGAZINE EDITOR and WEBSITE MANAGER

Chris Price, 17 Queens Road, Crosby. L23 5TP. 924 1938



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