

The Vicar Writes...

Dear Friends

Mahatma Ghandi once said,

'When I despair I remember that, all through history, the way of truth and love has always won.

There have been murderers and tyrants and, for a time, they may seem to be invincible, but in the end they always fail.'

It's easy for us to focus on all the bad news, which is what the media give us, spreading gloom and doom. We can't spend all our time worrying nor praying about it.

We need to focus on the God who cares more for this world than we ever can; who gave himself in Jesus to restore it to harmony.

The cross of Christ is the symbol of trust in the face of desolation which has become the tree of life. It stands in contradiction to the tree of knowledge from which Adam and Eve ate, seeking control over their lives. To our acceptance of the cross we say simply 'Thy will be done' confident that God is acting in the world and never stops loving us and caring for us.

Anything which brings us back to him, which helps us to reflect his love and acceptance, strengthens us and lifts us out of gloom, is the answer.

God's changes come about through people who never give in to despair nor give up hope. Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for 27 years in a small cell with just a pallet to

sleep on, but he became the peace-maker for South Africa, not full of bitterness and revenge.

Socrates said ` Countless people realise there is no future, in hatred, violence and division and also all concerns of men go wrong when they wish to cure evil with evil.'

*Dear Lord,
help me to keep my eyes on you
You are the incarnation of divine love
You are the expression of God's infinite compassion
You are beauty, goodness, gentleness, forgiveness and
mercy
In you, all can be found;
outside of you, nothing can be found
You have the words of eternal life
You are the light that shines in the darkness.
God be our comfort and our strength
God be our hope and support
God be our light and our way now and always. Amen*

With all good wishes
Andrew

You will have seen on the news that church buildings can now open for private prayer. There are a number of conditions and recommendations for safe opening and at this time we have decided these are too complicated for the Church of the Transfiguration to open. We are keeping this under review and when restrictions are further relaxed the church will be open. There is no date yet for the commencement of public worship.

CURATE'S CORNER

Dear All,

This is a very short curate's corner for two reasons, the second of which I will get to in a moment. Firstly, though, Sarah and I are delighted to announce that we are having a baby, due in late November. Sarah is very well, and has not suffered too badly so far! We value your prayers and support at this time, and are sorry that we haven't been able, due to COVID-19, to tell you all in person on a Sunday. We hope to see you all soon though!



The second reason is the article below, sent by David. David has been organizing a trip to see the new(ish) RNLi complex in Poole. The RNLi, of course, need no introducing anywhere, but particularly not to a seaside parish with so many sailors! If you are interested in joining us please let David know (one ticket for me please!).

If you were at the RMYC service in January, you will have heard about my familial connections to the RNLi, as my Great-Grandfather was a coxswain in the Littlehampton Life Boat Station. In any case, it's always interesting to hear about the career of a congregant, so thank you for the article David.

Blessings,

Tom

My RNLi Days - a rewarding experience

As we applaud the selfless and unstinting work of the NHS and other associated services my thoughts turn to the volunteer crews of the RNLi.



I had admired and supported the RNLi for many years so was delighted when asked to join the technical department in January 1983 as Senior Marine Hull Designer.

In July 1988 I was appointed

Chief Technical Officer

[Technical Director] following 4.5 years as Deputy CTO.

It was an exciting time to be at the RNLi and perhaps the most rewarding period of my career as a Naval Architect.

The RNLi had come through a lean financial spell during the late 70's and was beginning to modernize their fleet of boats.

'Operational trials' of the new fast slipway launched Tyne Class lifeboat had been completed and the program to build 30 of these boats got under-way.

The Tyne class boats were all built of steel and although I introduced a number of modifications during the build program, perhaps the most important change I brought to the RNLi was the introduction of fibre reinforced composites [FRC] as the building material for modern lifeboats.

When I joined the RNLi there was an urgent need to replace the very traditional and aging 8 knot Oakley and Rother class carriage launched boats.

Required to be of similar displacement [14 tonnes] and length [37ft], the 16 knot Mersey, as the class was named, is a very different vessel from the Oakley/Rother class boats.

In addition to the higher speed, the boat had to provide enclosed accommodation for a crew of 6, a doctor and 12 survivors. An extended range of 250 nm at full speed was specified and we must not forget that all lifeboats have to self-right from a fully inverted position.

To satisfy these requirements it was necessary to consider carefully the hull form and hull weight.

The form chosen was of the semi-displacement type which would be built from either Aluminum Alloy or FRC.

In making this choice a number of materials including aluminum alloy, steel, GRP, wood and FRC had been evaluated for strength, durability, cost and ease of build and repair and weight.

It was agreed to build the first 12 Mersey Class boats with aluminum alloy and the remainder of FRC . This was subject to further structural tests of FRC proving satisfactory. These tests were extensive and successful.

During the production of the Arun, Tyne and Mersey Class life-boats was continuing, the Technical Department were asked to design and build 2 prototype vessels to replace the Arun, Waveney, and the last few 47 foot Watson class lifeboats.

The 15m Trent and 17m Severn , designed and developed during my tenure at the RNLI, were again constructed from FRC. The later Tamar and Shannon are also of FRC construction.



Not only was the Technical department responsible for the design and construction of new lifeboats but also repair and maintenance of all RNLI hardware. This included tractors, carriages, boathouses, slipways and crew rooms.

The RNLI had 214 Stations during my time with the RNLI. Many stations had 2 boats – an 'all weather' lifeboat and an

Inshore boat. Together with the relief fleet the total number of boats owned and operated by the RNLI was about 400.

Shortly after leaving the RNLI , the College was built and judging by the very enthusiastic reports from crew members, it has been highly successful.

The building of the college was followed some years later with the opening of the boat -building yard.

That's a brief summary of my years at the RNLI- a very busy and fulfilling end to my career.

If you would like to visit the RNLI College or Building Facility, which I am sure you would find interesting, I have reserved a tour of each starting at 4.30pm on Wednesday 9th September subject to the Coronavirus. Max Number 24 people - Cost for College tour £7.50 and for the ALB Centre £5.00 – Either or both available.

Please contact me David Hudson on 01202 748031
There will be more information nearer the date.

ST. WILLIBALD - the first ever Anglo-Saxon travel writer (7th July)

Where do you go on your summer travels? If you enjoy including a Christian element to your trips, such as making a pilgrimage, or visiting places rich in Christian history, then St. Willibald (d. 876) is the saint for you this month. He was one of the most widely travelled Anglo-Saxons of his time.

Willibald began life in Wessex, becoming a monk at Bishops Waltham (Hants). But he obviously had the curiosity that besets all keen travellers – what is it like over there...just over the next hill, round the next corner? And so Willibald set out... for Rome, Cyprus, Syria and above all, Palestine. It was an amazing achievement, just to survive such journeys back in the early 8th century.

In Palestine, Willibald made his way round all the Holy Places associated with Jesus, as well as the numerous communities of monks and hermits living there. On his eventual return to Europe, Willibald decided to tell his story. He dictated an account of all his travels to a long-suffering nun, Hugeburc, who wrote it up under the title of *Hodoeporicon* – the first ever travel book to be written by an Anglo-Saxon

After a long stay in Constantinople, the year 730 found Willibald back in Rome, where he settled at the monastery at Monte Cassino. Under his reforming influence, the monastery began to prosper. That got Willibald 'noticed', and soon Boniface asked Pope Gregory III to send him on to Germany, where Willibald was made bishop of Echstatt. Here he founded a monastery that became an important centre for the diffusion and development of monasticism. After 45 years as Bishop at Echstatt, Willibald died in c. 786. His relics remain there till this day.

The Frailty of Life

According to one survey, during the lockdown, a quarter of adults in the UK have watched or listened to a religious service and one in 20 have started praying. While the majority of people who contract Covid-19 survive, it

reminds us that we are much more frail and weak than we like to think. As the prophet Isaiah says:

'All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures for ever.' (Isaiah 40:6-8).

Isaiah's words really resonate at this time. In more normal times we can avoid facing up to our vulnerability, but this pandemic has forced us to recognise our weakness and fragility.

However, this shouldn't lead us to despair or fear; rather it is an opportunity to worship and praise for His constancy and care. In Peter's first letter he quotes this passage from Isaiah and says, *'For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God'* (1 Peter 1:23). Peter contrasts our mortality with the eternal Word of God, which bring us new birth and life through the power of the Spirit. Jesus died for our sins and rose again to make us right with God, so that through faith in Him we can know eternal life. We don't need to be afraid of our frailty, for God is a dependable foundation on which to build our lives and face eternity.

'We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree. And wither and perish, but nought changeth Thee.' (Immortal, invisible, Walter C Smith).

The Rev'd Canon Paul Hardingham

MAUNDY MONEY 2020

This year for the first time in her reign, the Queen has distributed Maundy money by post. My cousin James is a motorcycle courier, and was amazed to be summoned to Buckingham Palace to collect and deliver the Maundy gift to one of this year's recipients.



The Maundy gift is usually distributed personally by the Queen at the Royal Maundy Service in St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. This ancient Christian ceremony reflects Jesus' instruction to His

disciples to love one another, and is a call to the service of others. The Queen regards this as one of her most rewarding duties as Sovereign and it is a highly significant ceremony at such an important point in the Christian calendar.

The coins - 94 pennies, which come in red and white bags - were blessed at the Chapel Royal in St. James' Palace. Bill Allen, 100, received his from James, fittingly by motorcycle. As a young man, Bill worked as a motorcycle courier, delivering military secrets and orders for General Montgomery during the Second World War.

Anna Castley

(P.S. Many of you have met James and his brother, Alasdair, who come to stay with me each Summer.)

Local is back!

Odd things have been happening to my world in these past weeks of lockdown.

It's got bigger. I've been speaking regularly via the web with friends in Australia and the United States. Worshipers from Canada and South Africa are taking part in our online church services. Other churches are telling the same stories, with increasing numbers of people logging on.

It's got smaller. Even with the relaxation of regulations, many people are still working from home, home-schooling and mostly exercising within walking or cycling distance from where they live.

It's got faster. Arrangements for a funeral in my family were speeded up, with registration and funeral planning carried out over the phone. A doctor's appointment by telephone significantly cut down waiting time.

It's got slower. Shopping takes longer with queues that people would have complained about before the lockdown. The shops have done a great job to keep the shelves stocked and maintain social distancing.

I've been thinking about what the long-term impact of the Covid-19 lockdown might be. One of the key outcomes is that local is back.

For decades, we've been hearing about globalization, and how the world is a much more connected place. It is, and the internet has kept many vital businesses running these past weeks.

But we've also come to value what's on our doorstep and in our local streets.

Neighbours have become more important. We're valuing local shops, pubs and restaurants, parks and open spaces. All the people working hard to keep local services going.

Christianity is now a major global religion, with billions of followers around the world. But it began local. It began with Jesus Christ, travelling by foot, preaching and healing around a small area of the middle east. From its local roots, the faith spread around the world.

Today, churches around the world are deeply rooted in their local communities and are seeking to follow Christ's example of love and caring.

Each of us is rooted into our family, into our key relationships and into where we live.

During this pandemic, each of these has grown in importance.

Peter Crumpler is a Church of England priest in St Albans, Herts, and a former communications director for the CofE.

The reasons for going to church

Strange times we are living through. The future consequences of coronavirus are going to be challenging, to say the least. How will our churches fare when our buildings are allowed to re-open?

One could say that the reasons for churchgoing can be put into three slots, 'Culture', 'Faith' and 'Community'. Many

churchgoers would probably recognise in themselves elements of more than one.

Culture is for those who feel comfortable in church. They like the history, the language, the buildings, the liturgy and the music, which have probably been a part of their lives since they were children. All hold comforting memories.

Faith is a link with the meaning of life and its eternal promise, somewhere to seek guidance through worship and sacrament, and on which to lean in times of trouble. A belief in the words of Jesus that they are not on their own, even if sometimes it feels like it in this world.

Community is for those who like coming to church or being associated with it as a flying buttress (a phrase of Winston Churchill, who described himself as someone who supports the church from the outside). They don't have to have a commitment to the faith of the Church but are sympathetic and don't mind being with those who do.

It is likely that the 'old normality' will not be the 'new normality' and this provokes a few thoughts:

* *How many people, now out of the habit of regular community worship, will wish to return to it?*

* *How many people on the periphery of church life, will come back to it, at least in the short term?*

* *How many of those who have had a regular commitment to the church, for example by serving at the altar or in its refectories, singing in choirs, doing flowers, ringing bells and polishing brasses will feel that this is a good time to make a break and do something different?*

As church people, we must consider where we go from here. The Church, everywhere in the infected world, will

need to know our answer to its call. To thrive, it needs us back.

Terry Warburton

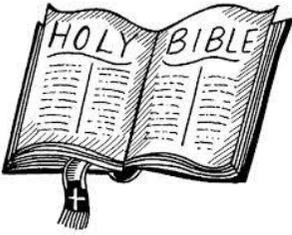
Remembering the man who founded Barnardo's

It was 175 years ago, on 4th July 1845, that Thomas Barnardo, the humanitarian and philanthropist, was born in Dublin. He founded Barnardo's, a charity which continues to care for vulnerable children and young people.

The son of a furrier, he worked as a clerk until converted to evangelical Christianity in 1862. He moved to London, intending to study medicine and become a missionary in China. He never qualified as a doctor – despite being known as Dr Barnardo – and soon decided that his real calling was to help poor children living on the streets of London, where one in five children died before their fifth birthday.

He opened his first home for boys in 1870 and soon vowed never to turn a child away. Most Victorians saw poverty as shameful, associating it with poor morals and laziness, but Barnardo refused to discriminate. He made sure boys were trained and found them apprenticeships.

When Barnardo died in 1905, he left 96 homes caring for more than 8,500 vulnerable children, including those with learning difficulties. Because he believed that children should ideally grow up in a family setting, in 1887 he introduced an early form of fostering – boarding out children to host families.



SUNDAY READINGS **IN JULY**

Sunday 5th July: Trinity 4

OLD TESTAMENT: Zechariah 9.9-12

Zechariah predicts the entry into Jerusalem on a donkey of the Messiah.

NEW TESTAMENT: Romans 7. 15-25

In this passage Paul is describing his personal struggle with sin and, implicitly, the struggle that all Christians face.

GOSPEL: Matthew 11.16-19, 25-30

In our reading from the Gospel of Matthew, the writer compares Jesus and John the Baptist. John the Baptist being criticised for not drinking and Jesus for the opposite.

Sunday 12th July: Trinity 5

OLD TESTAMENT: Isaiah 55.10-13

An invitation to the thirsty that those who seek God will be blessed abundantly.

NEW TESTAMENT: Matthew 13.1-9, 18-23

The reading from Matthew's Gospel is the wellknown passage of the parable of the sower and from verse 18 the explanation of the parable.

Sunday 19th July: Trinity 6

OLD TESTAMENT: Isaiah 44.6-8

Our reading from the prophecy of Isaiah declares that we should follow the Lord not idols.

NEW TESTAMENT: Romans 8. 12-25

Paul describes how our present sufferings mean nothing in view of our ultimate redemption for which we eagerly and patiently wait.

GOSPEL: Matthew 13.24-43

The passage tells the parable of the weeds and Jesus gives his interpretation of the parable.

Sunday 26th July: Trinity 7

OLD TESTAMENT: 1 Kings 3.5-12

The reading tells of how Solomon asks God for wisdom and because he does not ask for wealth or the destruction of his enemies God gives him a wise and discerning heart.

NEW TESTAMENT: Matthew 13.31-33, 41-52

These readings give us the parable of the mustard seed and the yeast and then from verse 44 the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl and the parable of the net.



SUMMER FETE 2020

It is with sadness that we have decided to cancel the Summer Fete this year. I think you will all understand that with the present social distancing regulations and the problem of obtaining raffle prizes and items for stalls, etc. it would be very difficult to have an enjoyable and social event in the present circumstances. So we look forward to next year and an extra special fete!

THE 'OTHER' MARY

As the traditional Easter story is remembered again this month, you may notice that there is one name that frequently occurs. It is that of the 'other' Mary – not the mother of Jesus but Mary of Magdala, who stood by her at the cross and became the first human being, male or female, actually to meet the risen Christ. That's quite a record for a woman who, the Gospels tell us, had been delivered by Jesus from 'seven devils'. As a result, her devotion to Him was total and her grief at His death overwhelming.

In church history Mary Magdalene became the 'fallen woman', a harlot who was rescued and forgiven by Jesus. And while there is no evidence to prove she was a 'fallen woman', the contrast is sublime: Mary the virgin mother, the symbol of purity and Mary Magdalene, the scarlet woman who was saved and forgiven, the symbol of redemption. Surely, we all fall somewhere between those two extremes.

What we do know is that the two Marys stood together at the cross, the Blessed Virgin and the woman rescued from who knows what darkness and despair.

The second great moment for her was as unexpected as it was momentous. She had gone with other women to the tomb of Jesus and found it empty. An angelic figure told them that Jesus was not there, He had risen – and the others drifted off. But Mary stayed, reluctant to leave it like that. She became aware of a man nearby, whom she took to be the gardener. She explained to Him that the body of 'her Lord' had been taken away and she didn't know where to find Him.

The man simply said her name 'Mary' and she instantly realised it was Jesus. She made to hug Him, but He told her not to touch Him because His resurrection was not yet complete. She was, however, to go to the male disciples and tell them she had met Him. She did – but they couldn't believe her.

Her words – 'I have seen the Lord' – echo down the centuries, the very beating heart of the Christian gospel.

A Scientist Reflects: Suffering and the Image of God

As I write, volunteers are distributing food to people who have been deprived of their usual ways of earning an income during the lockdown in a Majority World country. I became involved in raising money for this initiative very recently, and saw videos from the first people to receive packages. There were expressions of happiness, hope, quiet sadness, resignation, desperation – most often a mixture of several of these feelings at the same time.

I believe that our cries for answers at times like this, and our deep longing for things to be better, kinder, more just, less painful and chaotic, are a sign that we are made in the image of God. The Bible describes God creating men and women, instructing them to rule over the earth, and giving them the freedom to choose what they will do. The world God made was described as "very good", but human wrongdoing caused a rift between people and God, and also between us and the rest of creation.



From a scientist's perspective, it seems that the *potential* for accidents, disease and death – for both animals and humans – may have been part of God's very good creation, and there was a real threat of famine, albeit far rarer than in our current mismanaged version of creation? How would we have managed life in what Genesis describes as an un-subdued world if our relationship with God hadn't broken down, and evil hadn't been unleashed? Maybe painful experiences would have been experienced as challenges that brought us closer to each other and to God, rather than bringing us the experience of suffering (which I would define more particularly as involving distress, isolation and fear)? Of course, these are theoretical questions that no one can answer, but perhaps they are worth exploring.

God has already responded to suffering at a root level by taking it on Himself. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus broke the power of sin and death. We do not yet see the final results of those decisive actions – the end of suffering for all those who trust Him – but we can already feel their impact. For example, many people have experienced the wonderful effect, either in their own lives or by receiving kindness from others, which is described by these words: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26).

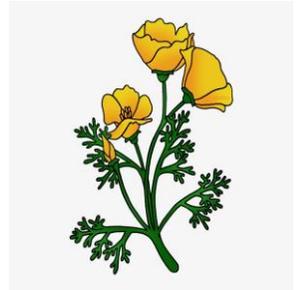
Some of the people who received food yesterday were, in the words of the community team leader, "really desperate", but yet they still trust God to meet their needs. My hope is that the worldwide Church will, with God's help, be part of the answer to their prayers – demonstrating our true status as people made in the image of God.

Dr Ruth M Bancewicz, who is Church Engagement Director at The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion in Cambridge.

BUTTERCUPS - treasure in our countryside

Buttercup! What a delicious name! Rumour has it that, as they were frequently to be found in meadows where cows grazed, they were responsible for butter's yellow colouring. So the name was an obvious choice.

However, since buttercups are poisonous and therefore are avoided as far as possible by our four-footed friends, this is somewhat unlikely. But surely, we all remember having a buttercup held under our chin to see whether the reflection proved that we liked butter! The shiny surface of the petals actually has two real purposes. Firstly, to help attract insects and secondly to act as a kind of mirror to aid the temperature regulation of the plant's reproductive organs.



We are fortunate that buttercups do not suffer from the same unpopularity as other poisonous plants, because if eaten, not only do they taste nasty, but the poison will also cause blisters in the mouth of the consumer. Extensive handling can also damage the skin, but presumably the size of bunch that many of us picked as children did not count as 'extensive'. Fortunately, Health and Safety experts do not yet seem to have forbidden this source of pleasure for little people. Incidentally, the poison is reduced as the plant dries, and hay that includes buttercups is safe for cows and horses to eat.

Buttercups help form the traditional view of the British countryside. Differing varieties range in height from small to quite tall and although at their peak in early summer, the golden blooms can often still be seen in mid-autumn. Jan

Struther, who wrote 'Lord of all hopefulness' also wrote a children's hymn entitled 'Treasure' It starts:

*Daisies are our silver, buttercups our gold:
This is all the treasure we can have or hold.*

Kirsty Steele, a retired teacher and active church organist.

MAGAZINE DEADLINE

The deadline for the August issue of the
Church Magazine is
Friday 17th July