

# The Vicar Writes...

Dear Friends

On a Wednesday morning at St Nicolas we join together for holy communion and celebrate the feast day or remembrance of those whose anniversaries fall on or near that date. Sometimes it is a Saint we can easily relate to and at other times perhaps less so. I have decided not to celebrate Charles 1<sup>st</sup>, King and martyr, for example, not really understanding his inclusion and not really sure in what ways he reflects the example of Christ. Very often the people who we remember are a great example and have lived remarkable lives having achieved so much in a very short period of time. Those who have learnt languages and translated scripture in far off lands in their mid twenties! I came across Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a philosopher and Jesuit priest, who was not only a chemist and physicist but also an eminent paleontologist.

His writings bring together evolution and the Christian understanding of creation so that both work in harmony with one another. He has a holistic view of the world: it's a world where science, ethics and belief all work in perfect union. In this way he grapples with the big questions of life. Why are we here? How can we live a good life? Why does evil exist?

In the final analysis he says, "The question of why bad things happen to good people transmits itself into some very different questions, no longer asking why something happened but asking how will we respond? What do we intend to do now that it has happened?"

I feel this is a much more positive response as so often we want to blame someone or something for a particular event rather than seeing ourselves as agents of change. If we find ourselves in a difficult situation then our response should be how can we resolve the problem. How are we going to make a situation or the world a better place?

With all good wishes  
Andrew

## **HENRY VENN OF THE CMS**

(1<sup>st</sup> July)

Most Christians in the UK have heard of the Church Mission Society or CMS. Far fewer have heard of the Revd Henry Venn (1796-1873), whose father, the rector of Clapham, founded CMS in 1799, and who himself became the greatest missionary strategist of the 19th century.

Not that Henry Venn ever became a missionary himself; after Cambridge he served his curacy at St Dunstan's in Fleet Street, and then an incumbency at Drypool in Hull, before becoming vicar of St Johns, Holloway in 1834. But Henry Venn's parish-based ministry did not obscure his passionate interest in overseas evangelism, and in 1841 he accepted an invitation to become the honorary secretary of the Church Mission Society. That decision was to shape the history of overseas missions, and to make CMS into the most effective force in Britain for delivering effective overseas mission.

For Henry was an outstanding administrator, and his wisdom and management of the missionaries enabled CMS to grow and flourish. When Henry first began work on CMS, it employed 107 European clergy and nine local indigenous

people. When he died in 1873, there were 230 European clergy and 148 local people in service.

After his resignation from St Johns Holloway in 1846, Henry devoted himself almost exclusively to the work of CMS. He was directly responsible for sending out 498 clergymen, all of them chosen by him, and with most of whom he continued in regular correspondence. He also established eight or nine bishoprics for the supervision of CMS missionary clergy and was usually involved in the appointments made.

Henry and a missions colleague in America were the first to use the term 'indigenous church', and they were way ahead of their time in seeing the necessity for creating churches on the mission fields that in time would become not only self-supporting, but also self-governing and self-propagating. In fact, Venn wrote with enthusiasm on this "euthanasia of missions," meaning that missionaries were only ever meant to be temporary, and not permanent.

All in all, Henry Venn's exposition on the basic principles of indigenous Christian missions was so powerful that much of it was later adopted by the Lausanne Congress of 1974. But alongside Venn's passion for evangelism was his concern for social justice, and he frequently lobbied the British Parliament, especially the closure of the Atlantic slave trade.

In 1873, when he was 76, Venn died at his home in Mortlake, Surrey. He is buried in the churchyard.



From the first planning meeting, we have welcomed some new helpers and, as ever, requests were made for others to come forward. Please give all helpers your support and respond to requests for items for sale if you can (which should be delivered in good time for pricing and preparation.) *Please remember that this is a Fête and not a jumble sale!* As always, assistance will be required in setting up and dismantling the stalls.

| <u>STALL</u>         | <u>STALLHOLDER</u> | <u>TEL</u> |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Books                | Perry Jeandren     | 706107     |
| Raffle               | Michael Wright     | 707735     |
| White Elephant       | Graham Luker       | 723305     |
| Handbags             | Tessa Yeoman       | 707629     |
| Jewellery            | Nina Crane         | 376325     |
| Flower Guild Stall   | Susanne King       | 707265     |
| Home Produce & cakes | Margaret Marcham   | 707328     |
| Toys                 | Julie Bailey       | 701020     |
| Bottle Tombola       | Andrew O'Brien     | 700341     |
|                      |                    |            |
| Teas/Cakes/Kitchen   | Wendy Bales        | 709850     |
| Crafts               | Joanne O'Brien     | 700341     |
| Car Park             | Richard Goodall    |            |
| Gate                 | Clive Gameson      |            |
| Treasurer            | Michael Wright     | 707735     |

**Items for all the stalls would be very gratefully received by the stallholders. Susanne has put in a special plea for the Flower Guild stall and Nina would be very grateful for any unwanted jewellery. As usual we would be very grateful for cakes for both refreshments and the cake stall.**

## **OLYMPIC GOLD**

This month should see the start of the Tokyo Olympics, having been postponed from last year due to the Coronavirus pandemic. A number of New Testament letters refer to Olympic sport including Hebrews: 'Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith' (Hebrews 12:1-2).

The Christian life is compared to a long-distance race, but despite the struggles and obstacles, there is a great crowd of witnesses cheering us on. We have a heavenly Father who loves us and a Saviour who has run the race before us. If we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, He will enable us to finish the race.

During the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, the British athlete Derek Redmond was running in the semi-finals of the 400 metres. About 250 metres from the finish his hamstring tore. He fell to the ground in pain and stretcher bearers came over to him. However, Redmond was determined to finish the race and so he started hopping toward the finishing line. Suddenly Jim Redmond, Derek's father, ran out of the stands towards him. "You don't have to do this," he told his son. "Yes, I do," said Derek, to which his father said, "We're going to finish this together." They completed the lap with Derek leaning on his father's shoulder. As they crossed the finish line, the spectators rose to give Derek a standing ovation. Although he didn't win an Olympic medal, Derek Redmond finished the race with his father at his side. Let's not forget the encouragement we have to finish the race!

*The Rev'd Canon Paul Hardingham*

## **TIME FOR A CHANGE**

I have had my walking boots for a few years now, and they have been faithful companions. We have walked many miles together during that time, on my daily walks as well as on holiday. They are partly responsible for my physical recovery after Covid-19, so they have a place in my heart. They fit me very well, and we have adjusted to one another. But they are very thin now on the soles and heels, and it is reluctantly time for a change.

So, one recent Saturday I bought a new pair. They are clean and smart, and fully waterproof. The soles are strong and new. There are no signs of wear and tear. But I know that change is never easy. They will take some time to wear in. They may rub and I may get a blister or two.

Occasionally I will long for my old boots, and wonder, 'Did I make a mistake?' Hopefully, they will become as much a part of me as my old ones as we tread the miles together. But there is always a risk with something new, Isn't there?

Change is never easy in whatever form it comes. But change is inevitable because life does not stand still, and we have to keep adjusting and adapting and being open to fresh winds of the Spirit. Never more so than in these present, troublesome days.

Strangely enough as I have been meditating on this, my reading this morning (Isaiah 9) contained a reference to 'Every warrior's boot used in battle ... will be destined for burning (v5).' Oh dear. I'm sure like me, warriors were fond of their boots too and found it hard to part with them.

*Tony Horsfall*

## **CHALLENGE TO THE BBC**

A Church of England bishop has recently called on the BBC to be more imaginative in its religious broadcasting. The Bishop of Ripon, Helen-Ann Hartley, urged the BBC to go beyond 'preaching to the converted' to producing documentaries and dramas that challenge and inform people's world views.

Writing in a recent edition of Radio Times, Bishop Hartley noted that the BBC is promising 'more content than ever before' but added:

"If most of it fails to get beyond the 'God slot' normally reserved for 'Songs of Praise', what's the point, beyond keeping the faithful happy?"

Bishop Hartley chairs the respected Sandford St Martin Trust, which "promotes thought-provoking, distinctive programming that deals with religion, ethics and spirituality." By running annual awards, the Trust "promotes excellent broadcasting about all faiths, from major networks, independents and online sources, at local and national level."

In the hard-hitting article, she asked "Where are the documentaries that challenge us to rethink the world we live in? Or the dramas that ask us to re-imagine the human relationships? Instead of congratulating itself on producing more content than ever, I wonder if it's time for the BBC to ask just what *is the point of religion on the telly*, or the radio for that matter?"

Bishop Hartley described the BBC as focusing unduly on ritual "because that's what the BBC thinks religious people do or are interested in."

She said "I'm far more motivated by programmes that explore the big questions in life. You can't really understand the world and what motivates people if you're not able to interpret or understand religion."

Bishop Helen-Ann Hartley issued a strong challenge to the BBC to up its game on what the Corporation describes as 'religious broadcasting.'

She does so from an influential position, as the Sandford St Martin Trust has long championed insightful, imaginative programmes that go beyond stereotypes and superficialities to depict the role played by faith in the lives of millions of people.

Bishop Hartley makes clear in the article "I don't just want to watch a multi-platform worship service at Easter. I'd like to ask hard questions and explore what the answers might be."

She applauded the Channel 4 drama series, 'It's a Sin' set in the AIDs crisis of the 1980s, commenting "Drama can shine a light on how generations have faced issues and challenges, many of which resonate with our current pandemic crisis.

"We all have world views, the question is how much these help us understand one another, and the things that motivate us. That's what great TV like 'It's a Sin' can do.

*The Rev'd Peter Crumpler*



## CALENDAR FOR JULY

Fri 2 10.30 am

***Coffee Morning in hall***

### **TRINITY 5**

Sun 4 8.00 am  
10.30 am  
6.00 pm

Holy Communion  
Parish Communion  
Evening Prayer

Wed 7 10.30 am  
Fri 9 11.00 am

Holy Communion *at St. Nicolas*  
Mums and Toddlers

### **TRINITY 6**

Sun 11 8.00 am  
10.30 am

Holy Communion  
Matins followed by Pre-fete meeting

Wed 14 10.30 am  
Fri 16 10.30 am

Holy Communion *at St. Nicolas*  
***Coffee Morning in hall***

### **TRINITY 7**

Sun 18 8.00 am  
9.30 am  
10.30 am

Holy Communion  
Family Service  
Parish Communion

Wed 21 10.30 am  
Thurs 22 3.30 pm  
Fri 23 11.00 am

Holy Communion *at St. Nicolas*  
Magazine collation  
Mums and Toddlers

**TRINITY 8**

|            |           |                     |                                      |
|------------|-----------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Sun        | 25        | 8.00 am<br>10.30 am | Holy Communion<br>Matins             |
| Tues       | 27        | 10.00 am            | Craft Group <i>in hall</i>           |
| Wed        | 28        | 10.30 am            | Holy Communion <i>at St. Nicolas</i> |
| <b>SAT</b> | <b>31</b> | <b>2.00 pm</b>      | <b>SUMMER FETE</b>                   |

**PATRONAL FESTIVAL**

|     |   |                                |  |
|-----|---|--------------------------------|--|
| Sun | 1 | 8.00 am<br>10.30 am<br>6.00 pm | Holy Communion<br>Parish Communion<br>Evening Prayer |
|-----|---|--------------------------------|--|

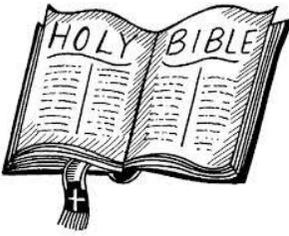
**ALL IN THE MONTH OF JULY**

It was:

60 years ago, on 2nd July 1961, that Ernest Hemingway, American novelist and short story writer, died. Winner of the 1954 Nobel Prize in Literature. Best known for For Whom the Bell Tolls, A Farewell to Arms, and The Old Man and the Sea.

Also 40 years ago, on 17th July 1981 that the Humber Bridge, linking Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, was officially opened. It was the world's longest single-span suspension bridge at that time.

Also 40 years ago, on 29th July 1981 that the marriage of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer took place at St Paul's Cathedral in London.



## **SUNDAY READINGS** **IN JULY**

### **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July - Trinity 5**

OLD TESTAMENT: 2 Samuel 5.1-10

*All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and David was made king over a united Israel.*

NEW TESTAMENT: 2 Corinthians 12. 2-10

*Paul had enemies in Corinth and is writing in defence of their criticism.*

GOSPEL: Mark 6. 1-13

*Jesus was amazed at the lack of faith in his home town. He sends out his disciples to preach, drive out demons and heal the sick.*

### **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> July - Trinity 6**

OLD TESTAMENT: 2 Samuel 6.1-5,12-19

*David gathered all his best men to bring the ark of the covenant to the city of Jerusalem. When it arrived at Jerusalem David distributed to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece of meat and a cake of raisins.*

NEW TESTAMENT: Mark 6. 14-29

*This passage recounts the death of John the Baptist.*

### **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July - Trinity 7**

OLD TESTAMENT: 2 Samuel 7.1-14

*Nathan, the prophet, is sent to David to tell him to build a permanent home for the ark. God also promises David that Israel would be secure and that David's legacy would endure.*

NEW TESTAMENT: Ephesians 2. 11-end

*All mankind is reconciled to God and dwells with him in a kingdom founded upon the prophets and apostles with Christ as the cornerstone.*

GOSPEL: Mark 6.30-34, 53-end

*Crowds follow Jesus and his disciples and he sets about teaching them. Wherever he goes the sick are brought to him to be healed.*

### **Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July - Trinity 8**

OLD TESTAMENT: 2 Samuel 11.1-15

*The story of David and Bathsheba whose husband Uriah is put in the front line of battle so that he might be killed.*

NEW TESTAMENT: John 6. 1-21

*Following the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, Jesus walks on water to rejoin his frightened disciples.*

### **Church notices that didn't quite come out right....**

The preacher for Sunday next will be found hanging on the notice board in the porch.

Ladies, when you have emptied the teapot, please stand upside down in the sink.

There will be a procession in the grounds of the monastery next Sunday afternoon. If it rains in the afternoon, the procession will take place in the morning.

## **ST. WILLIBALD - THE FIRST EVER ANGLO-SAXON TRAVEL WRITER**

(7<sup>th</sup> 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.

## What is the 'Kingdom of God'?

We're nearly 2000 years on from when Jesus told these parables recounted in Mark, and we're still not really sure. Or at least, there are a number of very different ideas about what it might be, and they've all been jostling for position for a very long time.

When you study theology, you quickly realise that most of the arguments we're having today are much the same as the ones Christians have been having for a very very long time. I'm still not sure whether that's encouraging or depressing.

Is the Kingdom of God something that is? Or something that was? Or something that will be? Is it something tangible, or is it just an idea? Will there be a literal 1000 year reign of Christ, a time of justice on this earth – is that the kingdom of God? Or is it something which we build in each one of us? Is the 'Kingdom of God' synonymous with the church, or the works of the church? Is it built by us, or is just beheld by us?

I think we had better start by going back to the beginning to see which of these might or might not be true. And the starting point of a Kingdom is quite simply – the king. Monarchical, total authority of the king is what defines a kingdom, not the subjects, or the land area. So our starting point for the kingdom of God is God's authority and power.

In human terms this sort of model of authority has rather gone out of favour: it has flavours of excess, arbitrary rule, unhealthy structures of power, injustice and nepotism. But it's important that we work the other way round with the Kingdom of God, we don't work from our imperfect political models to God's perfect one and get confused, but realise that in the human structure of a kingdom are glimpses of

the heavenly kingdom: even in the kingdom of God's beloved, King David, we hear of abuses of power and an imperfect king, but this will not be in the Kingdom of God.

If Kingdoms start with a King, and that King is God, then we can rule out some of the more trendy definitions of the Kingdom of God. As John Piper points out "*The kingdom creates a realm, the kingdom creates a people, but the kingdom of God is not synonymous with its realm or its people.*" The kingdom isn't what we do, or who we are – it's not the church or the work of the church in the world, but it is first and foremost the place where God is acknowledged as authority, as king.

We see this in the Lords Prayer:

*Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.*

These three clauses – the hallowing of God's name, the coming of God's Kingdom, and the manifesting of his will – are all linked by their structure in the original Greek, a literal translation might run

*Our "In heavenly" Father,  
Hallowed be the name of you,  
Come the kingdom of you,  
Be done, the will of you*

Linked like this we can see that each clause relies on each other: the kingdom is where God's will is done, and his name is hallowed – made holy, and you can rearrange this any way you like – wherever God's name is made holy – i.e.

he is given due regard and proper worship, his will is being done, and his kingdom is present.

This is why, in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells his disciples *"The kingdom of God will not come with observable signs. Nor will people say, 'Look, here it is,' or 'There it is.' For you see, the kingdom of God is in your midst."*

If we have begun to answer the question of *where* the Kingdom of God is, this latest quote only opens up the thorny question of *when*.

It's explicit from the passage I just quoted that the kingdom of God was with those who Jesus was with – *it is in your midst*, among you, present here.

But then why do we ask for the kingdom to *come* in the Lord's Prayer? And why, slightly later in Luke, does Christ tell a parable, to quote from Luke 19, *because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once*.

John Piper proposes this answer to the question:

*How can the kingdom of God be both not yet present and already present? He says, "Pray for it. It's coming. It's not yet here. It's not going to be immediate, and yet already, it's present in your midst, upon you, at hand." How can he say all that?*

*The answer is, the kingdom of God is God's reign — his sovereign action in the world to redeem and deliver a people and then at a future time finish it and renew his people and the universe completely.*

God's reign is, was, and will be: on earth it will never truly be completed, the earth is too marred by the fall, it *groans* for redemption, as Paul writes in Romans.

But we know that the kingdom has been shown to us – dramatically, upon the Cross, the king who dies for his people, Lord Jesus Christ: he was not present on earth to be made king and lead a political revolution, as the Jews thought, but he was there to die, and through that sacrifice redeem his people – and become king, as we read in Chapter 2 of Paul’s letter to the Philippians:

*And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
by becoming obedient to death—  
even death on a cross!  
Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,  
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.*

We often miss subtleties of translation in English bibles but the Greek for lord – *kurios* – was used to translate the Hebrew word Yahweh – the special name for God. So when Paul writes that Jesus is Lord, he is assigning Yahweh’s special name to Jesus – a statement both of Christ’s divine sonship, his almighty kingship but also fulfilling that important clause of the Lord’s Prayer – that God’s name be hallowed, be made holy, by being ascribed to the Lamb of God, who undertook the most holy, most hallowed action ever taken on earth.

Finally - and I know this has been a long, and maybe complicated sermon – Sorry Andrew - finally we turn to our parables we heard today.

The Kingdom of God grows in inscrutable and impossible to understand ways. The Kingdom of God starts small and grows to mighty things. I just want to finish with something

that Ian Paul, a theologian from Nottingham, wrote about these passages:

*Given that Jesus tells parables with one focus or the other, it is worth pausing on this parable, and asking whether this is a particular word we need to hear in this season. Like other western denominations, the Church of England... is obsessed with Mission Action Plans, strategies, church planting, and reorganisation... the danger is that these things give the false impression that, if only we got our strategies right, then the growth of the kingdom will come.*

*This parable... tells us that this is a lie. The kingdom of God will grow because God is sovereign, and Jesus is Lord, not because of any resolutions of Synod, grants of funding, or strategies of dioceses.*

*The Rev'd Tom Pelham*

*(We thought people might like to read Tom's sermon from Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> June, so asked if we could include it in the magazine for this month.)*

**TO MAKE YOU SMILE .....**

A woman took her four-month-old baby to visit her neighbour, but the baby began to fuss as soon as they arrived. The neighbour's five-year-old son asked where the baby had come from. "He was sent down from Heaven," the mother replied, above the screams.

The little boy watched the baby crying for a few more minutes, and then turned to his mother. "I bet I know why he was sent from Heaven. God wanted some quiet up there!"

## **FROM THE REGISTERS**

### **Baptism**

12<sup>th</sup> June Eloise Alison Grace Plant

### **Wedding**

10<sup>th</sup> June Andrew Allan & Katherine Coe

### **Funerals**

9<sup>th</sup> June John Edmond Anderson Morgan (76)

17<sup>th</sup> June Elisabeth Anne Kilvington (80)

## **ALTAR FLOWERS**

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July Grace Martin

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> July Grace Martin

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July Gilly Bourne

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July Gilly Bourne



## **MAGAZINE DEADLINE**

The deadline for the August issue of the  
Church Magazine is  
**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> July**