

Fr Hoyal writes

As I wrote last year, I try to encourage people to look forward rather than back. But we need to past events, lest we forget to be grateful and fail to benefit from our experiences. Accordingly in no particular order of importance I note various All Saints events in 2006.

Guest Preachers

Epiphany – Canon George Kovoov (Chaplain to the Queen, and Principal of Trinity College Bristol)

Candlemas – Fr Robert Pyne RN (formerly curate of All Saints)

Parish Retreat – Canon Jeremy Winstone (St Mary's, Abergavenny)

Eve of Palm Sunday: Mass of the Chrism – The Rt Revd Andrew Burnham (Bishop of Ebbsfleet)

Ascension Day – The Revd Kim Taplin (Chaplain of Clifton College)

Corpus Christi – Canon Berj Topalian (Vicar of Pilning with Compton Greenfield)

SS Peter & Paul – Canon Brendan Clover (Bristol Cathedral)

Dedication Festival – The Rt Revd Peter Firth (formerly Bishop of Malmesbury)

Trinity 4 – The Revd Dr Howard Peskett, retiring Vice-Principal of Trinity College

Michaelmas – Canon Gordon Pavey (Clifton Cathedral)

All Saints Day – Prebendary David Houlding SSC (Vicar of All Hallows, Gospel Oak, and Leader of Catholic Group in General Synod)

All Saints Sunday – Paul Hunter, Reader at St Christopher's and St Cuthbert's, Brislington, and member of Bishop Mike's *Good Giving Team*

CTCCR 25th Anniversary Service – David Carter (Methodist Local Preacher & County Ecumenical Officer)

Special Events

Mothers' Union Children's "Christmas" Party

All Saints party to *Forward in Hope* conference at Central Hall Westminster (28 January)

Parish Retreat at The Abbey House, Glastonbury (3-5 February)

Lent Course: *Now is the Healing Time* (with Fr James Patrick on *A Time to Heal*, Farooq Siddiqe of the Bristol Muslim Cultural Society on *Healing Between Faiths*, David & Loraine Izzard of St Edyth's Sea Mills on *Healing*

Ministry in Parish Life, Ian Will, Bishop's Advisor, on *The Ministry of Deliverance*, and Fr John Morley-Bunker on *Healing the Soul*)

Lent Breakfast Clubs (*Storykeepers* in church; *Young@AllSaints* in various homes)

Lent Appeal: *Cows for Africa*, and *Baggator* Youth Project (Easton)

What are Bishops For – Saturday conference led by the Revd Dr Paul Roberts (General Synod member & Vicar of St Paul's Clifton)

Parish visit to *Love's Labour's Lost* (29 April)

Send Forth Your Spirit, O Lord Eve-of-Pentecost Day of Prayer

All Saints/All Hallows joint coach party to Glastonbury Pilgrimage (17 June)

Petertide *Day of Prayer for the Apostolic Ministry*

St John's School Leavers Service

July – Saturday Soup Run

Mothers' Union outing to Wells (15 July)

Women Bishops Bishop Mike Hill at All Saints (18 July)

All Saints/All Hallows parish pilgrimage to Walsingham – coinciding with annual Youth Pilgrimage (7-11 August)

All Saints participating in Bristol Open Doors Day (9 September)

Church Crawl to Welsh/English border churches (16 September)

Christine Malet's 90th birthday celebrations

Michaelmas Day farewell to Ken Smith as All Saints Organist & Choirmaster after 28 years

Harvest Appeal for Farm Africa's *Get Your Goat* campaign

Mothers' Union Harvest Supper for the parish

Events Committee (preparation, communication, catering for concerts etc) is formed (15 October)

Confirmation of All Saints/All Hallows candidates at St Mary's Bathwick (18 October)

Admission & Licensing of Liz Badman as our second Lay Reader at All Saints (21 October)

Remembrance Day observance at Whiteladies Road War Memorial

Churches Together in Clifton, Cotham & Redland – 25th Anniversary Celebration, with the (RC) Bishop of Clifton attending (17 November)

Mothers' Union Deanery Advent service hosted by All Saints

"Advent Voices" service for Advent Sunday

Advent service with Britten's "*Ceremony of Carols*" (Clifton College choir members)

Parish outing to *The Wind in the Willows*
Belgrave School Carol Service
University of Bristol Music Students' Carol Service
St John's School Carol Service
Christmas Appeal for BibleLands (working for children, the disabled and the needy in the Holy Land, Lebanon & Upper Egypt)
Various special Sunday evening services monthly

Occasional Offices

9 children's baptisms & 2 adult baptisms – 3 All Saints members confirmed – 3 weddings – 6 church funerals (including those of Mary Ensor and Nicholas Turnbull) & 1 memorial service (Dr John Zorab) – crematorium service for Raymond Freeman

Music

Handel's *Messiah* (Bristol Grammar School Choir)
Bach Birthday Concert (Graham Davies & Bristol Brass Consort) in aid of our Lent charities
Taste & See – evening of religious dance, drama and music from 3in1 International
University of Bristol Chamber Choir sang Sunday Mass (18 June – directed by James Bradley)
Carlo Curley Organ Spectacular
Celebrating St Cecilia – 60th birthday recital by Graham Davies

People

Canon Brendan Clover granted permission to officiate at All Saints and All Hallows on his move from Bristol Cathedral to be Senior Provost of the Woodard Corporation – Liz Badman began her new ministry as parish Reader – Graham Davies appointed as Director of Music in succession to Ken Smith – Pam Parker retired as Parish Administrator after 25 years' faithful service – James Bradley completed his year as student lay assistant

These notes are not comprehensive, and they omit mention of many regular activities, and of invaluable contributions made by among others our assistant clergy, wardens, treasurer and assistants, choir, assistant organists, servers, cleaners, sacristy helpers, PCC and committees, crèche and Sunday school helpers, social and welcome committee, and other parish

organizations and church groups. But they give an idea of the breadth of activities at beyond the regular services.

As I write, of course, we are preparing to launch our additional new weekly 9.30 half-hour family service – an exciting but challenging development. We are looking for practical support from church members new and old as we seek to provide helpful worship and welcoming fellowship for those who will appreciate a structured but shorter, earlier and slightly less formal service.

Please give thanks for all who work so faithfully to make All Saints what it is. And please pray that we may all be glad to do our best for God, for our parish and for one another as we embrace the responsibilities and challenges of a new year.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Hoyle".

IN THIS MONTH.....JANUARY 1981

[Some readers will remember Theodora Martin, one of our best loved characters, who died on 19th November 1980, aged 93. Those who do will have their own favourite recollections of her. One stewardship visitor remembers calling on her to find her complaining of a painful back and (this is his story anyway) her removing layers of clothing so that massage could be administered. The year before she died she had informed the then Vicar, Father Norton, that she felt the Feast of All Saints' 1979 would be her last. He made the characteristically robust response that this would not be a convenient time to die, the festival already being such a busy time for the clergy. Could she please leave a bit later, he requested. So she did, and by that time Father Norton had left us for Penistone in Yorkshire. Here are excerpts from the Funeral Address given by Father George Bennett.]

When a Christian dies at the grand age of 93, our tears are not for her, but for ourselves. Today is an occasion for joy and thanksgiving -- as her dear nieces have said, Theodora would have wanted this to be a 'fun funeral'.

Theodora, or Dorrie, as she was known to the family, was born in 1887, the daughter of a country doctor at Temple Cloud in Somerset. Her parents were a study in contrasts. The father loved his home, his bees and his horse. Her mother Jessie had yearnings to travel, yearnings which her daughter inherited.

She also inherited her father's gifts of mind. To us who knew her 80 years later it is strange to think of her as a Victorian bluestocking, winning the prestigious Canadian Literary Prize and attaining the status of Head Girl at her school.

In her early contacts with the Continent she fell in love with France and Germany and it says much for her genius for friendship that her German contacts survived two world wars. In the holocaust of World War 1, a VAD. After WW1 she worked as a missionary in Central Africa under the auspices of the UMCA. Her time in Africa, her years of teaching at Kazera, were perhaps the happiest and most fulfilling of her life.

But then on 1930 came the summons home to nurse her ailing parents. Her years of energy and vigour were spent at their side when her heart was in Africa. With their deaths, she returned to Bristol, and to her beloved All Saints' Clifton, which she had known only briefly in WW1. Here she developed into that rich and delightful character whom we have all known and loved. Although sundered from the missionary field of Africa, she remained always a missionary at heart.

Sister Pat told me a story about a tramp who appeared at the door of All Saints' when she and Theodora were there. Sister Pat was frightened but Theodora's response was "I will introduce you to my friends." "I wish I could be like you," he said. For a moment we glimpsed the young woman in her missionary tent writing an article for the Magazine and describing herself as "a Bohemian for Christ", with her equipment in a homely muddle and her comb in the butter dish!

Theodora was always young at heart. She never accepted that she was old at all. Three and a half years ago, she insisted on coming to auditions for a Shrove Tuesday Parish Pantomime. She came through snow and ice and

demanded a part. She was delighted to play the part of the old crone who hands a poisoned apple to Snow White, and on she came with a pink net bag, word perfect at 90. Her cackle was a masterpiece. But the most delightful memory is a comment she made to my wife Rhona, who was acting as a make-up girl, "My dear, you must paint on some wrinkles!"

Theodora was outstandingly devout and reverent in a congregation full of devout and reverent people. She always stood to attention for the Creed, and although she lagged a few words behind everyone else, she said them with such devotion.

A Bohemian for Christ who put the entire parish in a flap looking for her keys and then found them under her hat! A gifted missionary who never stopped bringing others into the fold. The darling friend of all her young men -- and what a genius she had for being looked after! A cheerful, joyful Christian. A lady who hated war and loved the underprivileged. Who in all things remained steadfast. For all that we have seen and known about Theodora, we thank God.

AND FINALLYa short excerpt from the Family News page of January 1976

Congratulations to Roger Hopkins (PCC member, Server, Magazine Team etc.) on his engagement to Janice McLean, (Choir Member, Magazine Team, etc.). Is this the first romance arising from DIY magazine production, we wonder? We understand the wedding will be in June.

Churchwarden's Notes

23 November

7 30 am. Did you all notice the roadworks outside Church? Did you notice the traffic lights either side of them? I know we want to encourage more people into Church, especially for Mass, but I am not

convinced that jamming both sets of lights permanently on red outside All Saints is the way forward. The bell at the elevation was drowned by impatient horns or hooters. Also the Junior Churchwarden was seriously delayed in the execution of her duties until, deliberately and with malice aforethought, she Drove Through a Red Light. Gosh.

W/c 27 November: And while I am in minatory mood, would one of you like to explain the following conundrum? After Monday morning Mass – the one without an explosion, right? – the Sacristan and I replaced the Blue Cloth upon the fair linen of the Lady Chapel altar. Later in the week I found it gorn. Yet later still I found it neatly folded in the Sacristy. Father Boss, when questioned, replied that he hadn't done it, he had simply found it, wet, draped over a radiator. He had removed it to dry in a place of safety and had then folded it etc. There was no sign of a leak, drip or other ingress of H₂O into the Lady Chapel, so please tell me, What had happened? And Who did it?

3 December: Advent Sunday: Jupiter Pluvius back with a vengeance. I could have understood the above problem had it been today. Given the number of people who told me there were puddles, I'm surprised the altars had not been stripped. I shall be honest with you. I had not noticed. I was too busy with the game of origami better know as the pew leaflet to look at the floor. But the hymns made up for it: starting last Wed with the MU Advent Service, and moving on to today's gems I have revelled in some of my favourites, 'Lo he comes', 'Watch it, Alf' and that well known Middle Eastern financial institution, 'Jordan's Bank'. And candles ... Father Pyromaniac had a field day. A visitor told me sternly that we should have had buckets with sand in. I replied that if we had had sufficient buckets with sand in them, they would have constituted a health and safety risk in themselves.

19 December: why the long silence I hear you ask. Wall to wall carol services and concerts, that's why. I do not wish to hear Hark ther Herald Angel ONCE MORE. Still less do I wish to hear Once in Royal David's City trilled by yet another breathless treble. And a

moratorium on Away in A major would be no bad thing. If Scrooge had been closely connected to three schools like what I am, no mere ghost would ever have reconciled him to Christmas. So why did I go? Well, er, actually, er, it's their faces, especially by candlelight. Makes my day. Humbug.

I hope we have had It came upon a Midnight Clear by the time you read this. And Orientis partibus. And I'd like The Angel Gabriel from heaven came once more please.

Time to put this to bed. Happy New Year!

All Saints Parish Retreat 2007

The time has come to start thinking about our Parish Retreat for early next year. We have booked the weekend of February 16th – 18th 2007 at Abbey House, Glastonbury.

Those of you who have been on our retreats before will be able to extol the virtues of Abbey House to others and encourage them to join us in February. Abbey House is a large, elegant early 19th century house set in beautiful gardens overlooking the Abbey ruins. It is peaceful, comfortable, warm, and the food is excellent and there is a bar – all to ensure 48 hours of spirituality and 'winding down' from the stresses of our everyday life. The delights of Glastonbury with its interesting High Street and the beauties of the countryside are an additional attraction. Many of us take advantage of a weekend in the country to intersperse our spiritual activities with fresh air – and there is always the Tor to climb.

This time we have been very fortunate to book Sr Margaret Magdalen, CSMV, who has led retreats for many years. She is a biblical scholar and for some years led bible studies at the spring Conference in Caister. She has written many challenging, but deeply spiritual books

and if anyone would like to borrow one of them in order to see where Sr MM is coming from, please see Liz Badman.

The cost of the Retreat will depend on the number of retreatants. Ideally, we will fill all 20 places and the cost will be around £91 each. Unfortunately, if we are a smaller number we still have to pay for the empty places and this will inevitably increase the cost for those taking part. Please start planning now; book your place as soon as possible and encourage your 'friends and relations' to do the same. You will not regret it.

Liz Badman & Janice Callow

'N' IS FOR NUMBERS

We heard it for ourselves on November 19th from the pulpit, and now (December magazine) we have it in black and white. Not the "good news" this time, but the "bad news". We're apparently in financially dire straits. In fact, the word was (and is) "broke". That's pretty serious and I'm sure that there are many of us who are worried about what the long-term implications will be if we don't find a way of fixing our finances. More revenue from each of us is, of course, one way. But another way is to increase our volume - the Numbers. We probably have to do both - £s and Numbers - if we are to survive. But talking of "survival" is surely too pessimistic: let's be more "glass half full".

The Bristol Diocesan growth strategy is being communicated with the help of a catchy mnemonic - P.I.N.C. - Partnership, Influence, Numbers and Commitment. Numbers (presumably Bp. Mike means bums on pews and not that Old Testament book) are really the corollary of having done something about the other three. Do P. I. and C. energetically and well - there are

lots of ideas to do that - and the Numbers will surely follow. But what Numbers do we want at All Saints with St John, Clifton? What should be our goal? Should we have a goal? Do we even want a goal?

As a starting point, some Numbers are clear. We have about 80 or so on a Sunday morning and 6-15 (excepting special festivals) at Evensong. We also know that the church holds somewhere around 400, but even with around 320 (remember Carlo) it's quite tight! So we mustn't be too successful or there won't be enough space to put out the chocolate biscuits and shortbreads after Mass! And anyway, who wants to serve coffee to 320 every week? Surely 80 is about right? After all "where two or three are gathered together..."

The fact is that we have but three choices - decline, stay as we are, or grow. Decline, or nosedive, is not really an option because, putting it bluntly, that way leads to closure and churches do actually close for good. Look around Bristol. Staying as we are would be very inward looking and frankly wrong (we aren't meant to be a closed and cosy club...), so growth has to be. We are, at least, embracing the wider strategy if we accept that we, too, will grow by being a culture which warmly invites others. But grow to what? 85? 90? 100? 160? 250?

The latest management wheeze is that targets don't work (NHS?) but a headline in yesterday's Daily Telegraph did catch my eye. *"It pays to have a plan if you want to grow"*. So what could be *our* Numbers plan? How about 320 in just two steps - 80 today, 160 tomorrow (that means each of us brings a friend regularly) and 320 the day after? Possible... but highly unlikely!

In management planning speak, it is always a good idea to have a goal which is - another acronym, I'm afraid - S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-based.) So just suppose we were to set ourselves the goal of doubling our regular Sunday morning congregation in five years? (Fr Richard thinks *three* years by the way!). How would that sound to all of us? Specific, measurable and time based, certainly. But is it achievable and realistic? Could we cope? Would there be enough biscuits? Would the beer and wine run out? Can we do it and if so how? Would that be ambitious enough, or too ambitious perhaps? Would we, or do we, all sign up, individually and collectively, to an All Saints Clifton plan to try to double our numbers by 2009 or 2011 as the purpose for all our activities?

Could the "back pew" baptistery battalion become a brigade? Maybe the "front organ" organ grinders will overflow? Will the "front pulpit" professors proliferate? Perhaps we could measure our finances and Numbers on Christ the King next year and celebrate the success of our recruiting as a result of our many (individual and group) outreach activities. Is it to be "still broke", survival or growth? As our Junior Churchwarden has wished us for the New Year: "may we be out of the red and in the pink" ... or P.I.N.C.

If we could each bring a friend ...

Alan Rundle

**Address by Fr Richard Hoyal 8 am Sunday 31 December 2006
Gospel Reading Luke 2.41.52 - Finding Jesus in the Temple**

“Why were you searching for me? Didn’t you know that I must be in my Father’s house.”

Baby’s first words are fondly remembered, aren’t they? Was it Mama or Dada, perhaps. I have to tell you that our eldest daughter’s first recognizable word was “More”, rather setting the pattern for later.

We don’t know what the first words uttered as a human child by the Word of God incarnate were. But his first recorded words are contained in to-day’s Gospel: *“Why were you searching for me? Didn’t you know that I must be in my Father’s house.”*

Mary and Joseph have been sick with worry, of course, and it’s not surprising that, when at last they find their missing boy, Mary says just what you might expect any distraught loving mother to say in the circumstances: *“Why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been terribly worried.”*

At one level, Our Lord’s reply, his famous first recorded utterance, has just the exasperating tone you might expect from a precocious adolescent. *“Why did you need to look. Didn’t you realize I’d be in my Father’s house?”* I expect Our Lady could have throttled him, if it’s not too blasphemous to say so!

But Luke’s account of this boyhood incident has a lot to tell us. For one thing, note that Luke is perfectly happy to describe both Mary and Joseph as the parents of Jesus, even loosely referring to Joseph as Jesus’s father although Luke knows very well that Joseph is not biologically the father of Jesus.

But Jesus is not, on this occasion, found at home in Nazareth in the carpenter’s workshop of the good man who, informally, he is happy to call father. He is found in the company of Jewish religious teachers in the temple of Jerusalem which he refers to, very tellingly, as his Father’s house, and here “father” clearly means *the* Father, God. What’s more, he doesn’t say “*our* Father’s house” but “*my* Father’s house.”

That is a daringly intimate way of putting things. But Gabriel said, didn't he, that Mary's special child would be holy and would be called the Son of God. In this brief childhood vignette we begin to glimpse something of what this might mean, even if, like Mary and Joseph, we don't fully understand, indeed far from it.

But I love the ending of the story, a happy one. Jesus contentedly accompanies his parents back to Nazareth and, as Luke puts it, he is "obedient to them" or, as the AV puts it "he was subject unto them."

Bossuet, the famous 17th century French spiritual writer, wonderfully and shrewdly comments that "thirty years of our Lord's life are hidden in these words of the gospel: "He was subject unto them.

Mary certainly has a lot of things to treasure and ponder in her heart as her strange wonderful boy increases in wisdom and stature and in favour with both God and man.

But I leave you to ponder the twelve-year-old Galilee lad who knows that he is the Son of the Father, God who is *his* Father, but who obediently chooses to honour his mother and father on earth, glad to live simply with family and friends in Nazareth for the best part of thirty years in unassuming preparation for his unique ministry to come.

There is a godliness and a humility and, not least, a considerable patience in this which have something to say to all of us. And it particularly shows Our Lord's essential deep respect for his earthly family despite tensions and misunderstandings that will inevitably surface one day.

Looking to the Holy Family we pray to-day for all families, and not least for godliness, humility, patience – and due obedience – with loving respect on all sides. Even the life of the Holy Family wasn't perfect, as to-day's gospel and later gospel passages make clear. But it was holy, and God gave himself to us in a family, and we need to run with that. May God make our less than perfect families holy too.