

Fr Hoyal writes

2010 RETROSPECT

Following custom, I take advantage of this January 2011 magazine to help us take stock as we glance back over the last year. Of course, many significant events and activities will not figure under the categories given. So much of what happens is unseen or taken for granted, but nonetheless often very important.

Guest Preachers

Epiphany 3 (24 January) & Third Sunday before Advent (7 November) – **The Revd Kim Taplin** (Chaplain, Clifton College)

Candlemas (2 February) – **The Rt Revd Lindsay Urwin OGS** (Administrator, Shrine of Our Day of Walsingham)

Funeral Requiem for Rodney West (11 February) – **Canon Neville Boundy**
Sunday before Lent (14 February) – **Canon John Poarch** (Bristol Diocese representative for USPG)

Annunciation (25 March) – **Fr Graham Oakes** (former Curate of All Saints)

Easter 2 (11 April) – **Fr Peter Keeling** (Hon Asst Priest at Walsingham – formerly Vicar of Cudworth, Wakefield diocese, and Rector of Downham Market, Norwich diocese)

Ascension Day (21 May) – **Fr Alwyn Jones** (former Bangladesh missionary, UK prison chaplain and Bedminster incumbent)

Easter 7 (16 May) – **Miss Pat Reeves** (CMS Representative and Lay Minister at Wick, Doynton & Dyrham, former mission worker)

Fr Peter Cobb's Funeral Requiem (10 June) – **Fr Michael Goode** (former Solihull curate, where Fr Cobb served his title)

Dedication Festival & 10th Anniversary of Fr James Patrick's Ordination to the Priesthood (5 July) – **Fr James Wilkinson** (Parish Priest, St Laurence, South Hinksey, & St John, New Hinksey, Oxford)

St John's School End of Year Service (21 July) – **The Rt Revd Lee Rayfield, Bishop of Swindon**

Michaelmas (29 September) – **Canon David Sansum** (hon asst priest at Christ Church City)

All Saints Day (1 November) – **Prebendary Peter Clarke** (our Ebbsfleet Area Dean, and former Vicar of All Saints Weston)
Third Sunday Before Advent (7 November) – **Mr Matt Wallace** (Trinity College ordinand)

Special Occasions

Mothers' Union children's Epiphany party (10 January)
Parish Retreat at The Abbey House, Glastonbury conducted by Fr Richard Hoyal (5-7 February) – Theme: *The Mother of God*
Lent 2010: overall theme *Celebrating the Faith: We Believe and Trust*; with weekly Tuesday Lent Evenings on "*Celebrating the Bible*" conducted by Fr Paul Spilsbury, and Thursday afternoon groups (at home of Beryl Banks)
Lent appeal for Bristol SANDS (stillbirth and neonatal death charity) and Friends of Alalay (helping street children of Santa Cruz, Bolivia)
Day of Prayer (for discernment about Ordinariate and Synod issues - 22 February)
Easter Monday parish walk (5 April)
Low Weekend (10-11 April) – guest choir *Cantamici* performed a special Easter Concert Matinee for us and also sang for Solemn Mass and Evensong the next day.
"Help For Heroes" St George's Day Celebration, Auction & Supper (23 April)
Alan Rundle Memorial Concert – in aid of British Heart Foundation and All Saints organ fund (7 May)
"*Poems Inspired By Nature*" – Birdcombe Poetry Group – in aid of All Hallows restoration (14 May)
"*PEACE MEAL*" Festival Youth Mass and hog-roast (15 May)
Matt Wallace, Trinity College ordinand, on placement at All Saints, All Hallows and Christ Church City during June
Barton Camp Weekend for church children and parents (4-6 June)
All Saints/All Hallows joint coach party to Glastonbury Pilgrimage (19 June)
Petertide Day of Prayer for the Sacred Ministry (29 June)
St John's School End of Year Service with presentation of Bibles from All Saints to leavers (21 July)

“The Opera Picnic” with Ian Yemm and WNO singers Naomi Harvey, Joanne Thomas & Owen Webb – opera concert in church with interval for picnic suppers in the garden (24 July)
Summer Fun Day for All Saints & All Hallows children (26 July)
August – All Saints’ month for Churches Together’s Saturday soup run
Bristol Doors Open Day (11 September) with All Saints participating
Day Pilgrimage to Downside Abbey & Tyntesfield with Church Union (18 September)
“Start-Back Sunday” – post-holidays regrouping opportunity for Family Service congregation (12 September)
“A Tudor Treat” – Birdcombe Court Concert: Music and Food from time of Henry VIII (18 September)
Harvest appeal for Christian Aid’s *“Winds of Change”* for irrigation projects in Afghanistan
All Saints parish pilgrimage to Walsingham, jointly with St Gregory’s, Horfield (5-8 October)
Local artists’ weekend autumn exhibition in atrium (15-17 October)
Belgrave School harvest service (21 October)
Remembrance Day observance at Whiteladies Road War Memorial with representation from St John’s C of E School, Clifton College, Clifton High School, Redland Green School and SS Peter & Paul RC School (11 November)
Fr James Patrick’s Farewell Sunday (24 October)
“From Darkness to Light” - special service for Advent Sunday (28 November)
Bristol SANDS carol service (4 December)
Belgrave School carol service (9 December)
Christmas appeal for *Children’s Relief Bethlehem*
All Saints carol singing in aid of charity outside former St John’s church (11 December)
University of Bristol Chamber Choir/Bristol University Music Society carol service (14 December)
St John’s School carol service (15 December)
106th birthday of longstanding All Saints member Vera Price (16 December)
All Saints Service of Lessons & Carols for Christmas (19 December)

In addition our monthly Walsingham Cell Masses, *MU-Plus* Masses, requiem Masses and Masses for healing have continued, as have our occasional Sunday parish lunches after Solemn Mass and our Christmas services at Carlton Mansions and Whatley Court residential homes (Glenavon home in St John's Road is closing down). "*Christians in Science*" – a most gratifying development that it is a privilege to host at All Saints – has met on several occasions in 2010, and with excellent attendances.

We were not able to hold our customary *Christian Aid Week* Saturday collection in Clifton Down Shopping Centre, because of a policy review by the Centre management. Instead, we invited donations from church members at All Saints. If permission to collect is withheld on a permanent basis, we shall have to reconsider how best we can support *Christian Aid Week* in future.

Occasional Offices

6 children's baptisms – 1 All Saints members confirmed – 3 weddings – 1 wedding blessing – 9 church funerals – 2 church memorial services – 8 other crematorium services for parishioners

People and Events

In 2010 we welcomed the births of Frederick Emmanuel to Rachel and Steve D'Evelyn, of Archie to Lucy and Richard Scott, and of Martha to Hannah and Jason Dickson. Isaac Greenbury was confirmed at Clifton College. Church members Ashley Palmer and Ruth Dollard were married at All Saints on the Saturday of Easter week.

Richard Eddy, our chief server, fell seriously ill in January and remained in hospital for eight months or so. It was a worrying situation but we are delighted that Richard is now home, having made huge progress, and that he is able to be with us again for worship on a regular basis.

Over the year we lost a number of All Saints friends. These included several long-standing church members, among them Margaret Glasow, Rodney West, Fr Dick Meredith-Jones, Martin Henwood (an old boy of the choir school), Dorothy Stephens, Barabara Kerr, Bill Fry (for many years director of music at All Saints) and, perhaps most notably, my predecessor

as parish priest, Fr Peter Cobb. Tributes to many of these have been paid in prior issues of this magazine and elsewhere.

2010 also saw the deaths of Sean Martin (partner of Fiona Bristow), Raymond Tong (Joan's brother-in-law), Rachel Platt (Jim Thawley's cousin), Richard Brown (father of Sarah Brown), Tina Stallon and, in a tragic accident, Mark Rogers (partner of Charlotte Hopkins). Charlotte, Isobel and the Hopkins and Rogers families remain in our prayers, as do all with All Saints connections who have lost family and friends.

On 30 November Robert Potter, the distinguished architect of the new All Saints, died at the age of 101, 43 years on from the consecration of his church here.

After eleven years' continuous service as honorary curate at All Saints, Fr James Patrick stepped down from office in October following his appointment as a Circuit Judge based in London. Fr James has made a huge contribution to our worship and fellowship at All Saints and, glad as we are for him in his preferment, we shall continue to miss him.

Fr James Brown of Holy Nativity Knowle fell ill in December 2009. All Saints clergy having been covering Sunday services at Knowle ever since, with Canon Brendan Clover valiantly officiating three weeks out of four. Sadly, Fr Brown died last Easter, so Holy Nativity is in a vacancy, and may continue to require help from us for some time to come.

With Fr Brendan involved at Knowle, and Fr James Patrick no longer with us, there is inevitably less play in the system, particularly as All Saints clergy are now covering **four** parishes: All Saints, All Hallows Easton, Christ Church City and Holy Nativity Knowle. The situation is manageable at present, but if we lose clergy for any reason, there could be problems. We would be wise to consider how we might attract more clergy to All Saints. At the same time we should, I believe, give attention to identifying and encouraging vocations from within our own congregation.

After ten years as Bishop of Ebbsfleet and Provincial Episcopal Visitor for the South West, Bishop Andrew Burnham officially resigned from office on 31st December to join the new RC Ordinariate for former Anglicans. In

difficult times, and in a difficult ministerial situation, Bishop Andrew has been an excellent bishop, and certainly a good friend to All Saints. We must respect his decision and wish him well as he prepares to minister as a senior priest in the Ordinariate along with several other former Church of England bishops and quite a number of former Anglican priests.

Church-people of traditionalist sympathies, both those who are lay and those who are ordained, will make different decisions about their future in the Church of England. For some, a final personal decision will have to await General Synod's final decision about what provision to accord church members unable to accept the new changes to the Sacred Ministry.

The longer-term future for any PEV is uncertain. For the present, however, the Archbishop of Canterbury is committed to seeking a successor for Bishop Andrew. Until a new bishop is appointed, the Right Revd John Ford, Bishop of Plymouth in the Exeter Diocese is kindly serving as acting Episcopal Visitor for our area at the Archbishop's request. Bishop John will be with us at All Saints on 18 April (Monday of Holy Week) to celebrate a Chrism Mass for the Ebbsfleet constituency.

Bishop Andrew's last service at All Saints was the Funeral Requiem for Fr Peter Cobb, when he concelebrated alongside Bishop Keith Newton of Richborough (now also entering the Ordinariate).

Music

The monthly Saturday Concert Matinees at 4pm continued with a varied programme of contributors, both instrumentalists and singers.

They included:

Erika Eisele (violin) & Jennifer Carter (piano) 23 January; Song Recital by Josphine Goddard (soprano) & Susan Gregory (piano) 27 February; Cantamici Choral Concert (10 April); Noctutus Ensemble playing Haydn, Walton, Arrieu & Abreu (24 April); Classical Guitar Concert by Profesor John Mitchell of Royal Holloway College (29 May); Organ Recital by Jonathan Price, Christ Church City (27 June); Organ Recital by Luke Bond, Truro Cathedral (31 July); Concorde Saxophone Ensemble Summer Concert (28 August); Special Children's Concert (25 September); Song Recital by Aurélia Jonvaux (soprano) & Jennifer Carter (30 October); Organ/Piano Recital by Richard Johnson (20 November)

Other concerts/musical events have included: Clifton High School Choral Society Concert – Britten, Tippett, Vaughan Williams, Rutter (5 February); Armonia Apprezzata concert of Music for Lent – including Scarlatti *Stabat Mater* (6 March); Bristol University Symphonia Easter Concert (14 March); Stainer's Crucifixion – All Saints *Come & Sing!* performance (21 March); Bristol Festival of Music, Speech and Drama - Harp performances (26 March); Bristol-wide *Gathering Voices* Festival: Choral Concert with Exultate Singers (22 October); and concerts by Bristol Grammar School and Colston Girls' School.

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These notes inevitably omit mention of many regular activities, and of the enormously valuable work done by among others our tremendous team of assistant clergy, our parish readers, treasurer and assistants, choir, director of music, assistant organists, servers, cleaners, sacristy helpers, PCC and committees, family service and children's helpers, children and young people's committee, parish growth committee, social and welcome committee, and other parish organizations and church groups.

Please remember with gratitude all who work so faithfully at All Saints. And please pray that in our worship, witness and service we continue celebrate to the full God's faithfulness to us.

With very best wishes for 2011,

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

CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Sermon preached by Derek Jay, Lay Minister of St Paul's Clifton, at a Church Union Eucharist at St Mary Redcliffe on 8 December last

What do you have that you did not receive? Words from Paul to the Corinthians 4:7

Charlie Kaufman's film Being John Malkovich was a box office hit in 1999. One of his lesser known films is Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind. The characters played by Jim Carrey and Kate Winslet fall in love but their relationship becomes so dysfunctional that they opt for a new brainwashing treatment. Wired up to helmets with electrodes, every memory of each other is erased. The film ends tantalisingly.

They meet each other again, as strangers now, and go on a date. We're left wondering whether they will start a new relationship. Will it be a disaster again? Or will the brainwashing mean that they behave differently.

One of the characters says, 'Everything that happens to us in life shapes who we are.' So if I get laughed at for saying what I think, I'll become less honest. If I am rejected in love, I won't risk giving myself to anyone again. We build up defences. Defences that make us less free to be ourselves, less open.

It's bad form for a preacher to talk about himself but I hope you will see why I making this an exception. When I was younger, I was a socialist. I assumed that future generations would learn from our mistakes. In the words of New Labour's theme tune, 'Things can only get better.' But it's not true.

Each generation seems destined to repeat the mistakes of the past. We can inherit certain limitations from our parents. Only six years ago I discovered that my father had bi-polar disorder (manic depression.). So did his three siblings. I had a breakdown and found out that I had inherited it. It's in the genes.

Humans are born less than free. Jung talked of the 'collective unconscious' and I wonder whether we inherit memory and inclinations from our ancestors. My parents were strong atheists but I had an attraction to churchgoing in my teens and was baptised against their wishes. (Nowadays they'd probably rule that out as some sort of abuse by the church.) Some time ago, I did some research on my family tree and I was surprised to discover certain things about my maternal grandfather, who died before I was born. He was well over six foot.

Neither of my parents was but I am. He had a house full of books. So do I but for my mum, a book was a Woman's Own magazine. Most interestingly, he was a churchwarden of St. Katherine's Southbourne. I visited it. Strong whiff of incense, votive candles, statues, big six and tabernacle. Just the sort of church that I had 'discovered' in my home town. Do I have **any** choices?

The sort of theology I did at Leeds University can best be described as 'liberal protestant' Miracles probably don't happen. They're symbolic. But across the city, in the red light district, the church I attended and where Forward in Faith's Geoffrey Kirk was then curate, had Benediction every Sunday and I wondered what to make of the phrase towards the end: Blessed be her holy and immaculate conception. It's a bit Roman Catholic isn't it? We're Anglicans. A wise old priest told me to view doctrine like a family photo album. Some of the people you've never met or you don't like. But don't throw away your heritage. One day, someone you haven't met, didn't like or understand will become very significant to you. And so it is with the Immaculate Conception.

Each generation seems destined to repeat the mistakes of the past. We inherit limitations from our parents. Defences make us less free to be ourselves, less open. Do I have **any** choices? We're Anglicans

We're Anglicans. In 1571, Bishop John Jewel's Homily on Repentance, endorsed by the 39 Articles, spoke of 'the Blessed Virgin...and...her undefiled substance.

Cranmer's Preface for Christmas Day: and that without spot of sin [the Latin version, *idque*, "for that reason" indicates that it is speaking of Mary].

Anglican Bishop of Chester, John Pearson calls our Lady "immaculate" *Exposition Of The Creed*.

Seventeenth Century Bishop Jeremy Taylor spoke of Mary going to the temple for purification 'though she was sinless.'

Twentieth Century American Episcopalian theologian, Dr. Francis J. Hall: it was fitting that the Blessed Virgin should be sanctified for her unique function of hearing the Eternal Word; and the salutation of Gabriel implied that such sanctification had **already taken place - before** the Holy Spirit caused her to

conceive...the Blessed Virgin's sanctification was...an effect, **anticipatively realized**, of Christ's redemptive work."

Do I have **any** choices? A typical protestant response to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is that Mary had no choice. If God had preserved her from original sin, she could not sin, so she could not say no to the angel Gabriel. Well that depends on your definition of sin. We've heard a lot this year about the Blessed John Henry Newman. He can help us here. He wrote a Letter to Pusey. - 170 pages (How would he have coped with text messages?) He said that the Immaculate Conception is a stumbling block to non-Catholics because they do not know what we mean by original sin. "Our doctrine of original sin is not the same as the Protestant. We with the Fathers think of it as something negative, Protestants as something positive." (By 'negative' he meant an absence of something.)

"They hold that 'it is a disease, a radical change of nature, an active poison internally corrupting the soul, infecting its primary elements, and disorganizing it; and they fancy we ascribe a different nature from ours to the Blessed Virgin, different from that of her parents, and from that of fallen Adam.'

"We hold nothing of the kind.

"We consider that in Adam she died as others; that she was included, together with the whole race, in Adam's sentence ... but we deny that she had original sin; for by original sin we mean something negative, the *deprivation* of that supernatural unmerited grace which Adam and Eve had on their first formation." (*Difficulties of Anglicans*, ii., 48, 49)

Adam's sin reduces his children. Newman was being very modern. It was later that theologians would use negative terms for sin: the lack a right relatedness, 'separation', 'estrangement', alienation from God, from other people and within the individual self

The protestant image of sin can be sub-Christian, Manichaeic: sin as somehow a substance or something existing in its own right. I hope you might go home this evening thinking, 'I never knew what sin was until I encountered Derek Jay.' For Newman, sin makes us less, not more, fully human; less, not more, fully ourselves as God intends us to be. We know that we are less ourselves, when we feel ill because we have eaten and drunk too much and slept too little.

We know that we are less, not more, ourselves, when we have been hurtful towards others. When the Church talks of 'deadly' sins, it is because they deaden us, they make us less alive, and therefore less fully human. Sin wounds our humanity. So to be sinless makes Mary not less, but more human: human from the very first moment of existence, more able, not less, to make choices.

Each generation seems destined to repeat the mistakes of the past? Well, our faith is about the future. When we remember, at the Eucharist, we do so 'until the Lord comes.' We remember the past in the light of the future: a past in which God has been working to secure the future. Karl Barth wrote: God, 'in the beginning of all his works and ways...conceived humanity as his covenant partner. He purposed to bring the human race not only into existence but into loving communion with himself.' *Church Dogmatics*

So one step in unpacking the idea of an Immaculate Conception is to go back to the original conception in the mind and purpose of God. No individual exists in a vacuum, but always in a stream of history and in a culture. The individual becomes unique by interacting with this context. For Mary, this background was Israel. We call Israel the 'chosen people', because it had been elected by God to a peculiar destiny within the broader history of humanity. The Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission was adamant that we should not view Mary through some distorted, medieval lens but in the whole context of God's plan for God's people. So texts originally written about one individual or circumstance can be applied to God's people as a whole and, thus, to Mary:

Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. And before you were born, I consecrated you' *Jer. 1:5* God....had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace *Galatians 1:15*

From our epistle: God chose us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless. *Ephesians 1:4*

Jesus Christ is Mary's Saviour just as much as he is ours. In no way is Mary exempted from the need to be redeemed. As Pope Pius IX taught when defining the dogma, she is redeemed **in anticipation** of the saving work Christ accomplished for us on the cross. His work is timeless, cosmic. The saving power of his merits can reach **backwards** as well as forwards, as we see in the eternal sacrifice of the altar.

My film's title, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, echoes the title of the hymn, *Eternal Ruler of the ceaseless round* which talks of 'the power that makes Thy children free' As we rejoice with Mary on the feast of her conception, we thank God for His love and mercy which embraces us right from the moment of our own conception.

What do you have that you did not receive? Everything is gift, everything good in us is God's grace. All of us, children of God, are also favoured ones and heirs of God's grace.

UNDER SIEGE

Sermon preached by Fr Hoyal at Solemn Mass at All Saints on Advent 4, Sunday 19 December

Isaiah 7.14 The young woman is with child, and shall bear a son, and shall name him Emanuel

Perhaps we are finding the current cold spell wearing and disruptive. But it is of course nothing compared to the long harsh Russian winters endured during the German invasion of the Soviet Union in the Second World War.

It was 66 years ago, now, that the 900-day siege of Leningrad by Nazi forces finally came to an end. It had been horrific for the city. Virtually every building was destroyed. People lived through biting cold and endemic starvation. They slept in cellars and basements, in the shelter of destroyed walls and in the shells of shattered buildings. For months they had nothing to live on except the most meagre bread rations – if they were lucky. Tens of thousands died, yet somehow the people managed to resist the overwhelming power of the German army. Despite everything, they refused to capitulate, and the siege was defeated. It was a turning point in the war. The Germans began to draw back.

Amazing though it seems in the midst of so much destruction and death, babies were conceived and born. But what was the point, you

might ask? Didn't these people know that they were all soon to die? Didn't they know that there was no hope. Why give a child the gift of life, only to have it cruelly snuffed out? Yet amid the madness and terror of the siege, every new-born child was a sign of hope for the future. Some survived. And so did the city, now once again the great city of St Petersburg.

In 8th c. BC Jerusalem, King Ahaz and his people were threatened with invasion by the Assyrians in alliance with Samaria. The enemy armies were at the gate. Fearing for his life, and fearful of the destruction of the city, Ahaz is tempted to submit to the Assyrians, making his kingdom of Judaea a vassal state. Through the prophet Isaiah the word of the Lord is given, declaring that the city will not fall. As the inhabitants look out on armies ready to strike, this message seems incredible. Isaiah knows it seems hard to believe, so he invites Ahaz to ask for a sign of validation. Ahaz declines – he is too intent on his own plans.

But Isaiah makes a prediction anyway. His prediction is simply that a young woman is about to conceive and bear a child. This is a sign of almost laughable insignificance. What possible meaning could the birth of a child have in the face of two advancing armies? But this child has a symbolic name – Emmanuel. Amid all the dangers of the situation, “God is with us” declares the child's sign-name. So there is nothing to fear, claims Isaiah; before the child is weaned, the threat will have dissolved.

Ahaz comes out of this with little credit. He shows little faith in Isaiah or God. He remains more interested in dodgy deals and disreputable alliances. Yet a child is born, no doubt in the royal household, perhaps the infant who was to become King Hezekiah, Ahaz's eventual successor. The armies pull back, and Jerusalem is saved. Not indefinitely, though. For 130 years or so, Judaea and Jerusalem are spared. But the cumulative faithlessness of leaders like Ahaz is eventually punished in the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC. But

even then, the prophecy of Isaiah has not reached its sell-by date. It is to find its truest fulfilment centuries later when Emmanuel, God with us, becomes a reality in the birth of Jesus.

Joseph, like Ahaz, is a son of David. But unlike Ahaz, he is an honourable, godly man who listens attentively to what God is saying, and quietly obeys. So despite earlier anxieties, Joseph is willing to give protection and support to the young woman - this time the Blessed Virgin - who is with child, and not of man but by the Holy Spirit.

This child too is to be Emmanuel, God with us, but in a unique, and altogether more fundamental way, in an amazingly personal way, a way that will be profoundly life-changing and history-changing. And he is a child more truly royal than any earthly king's child. What human king can save his people from their sins? Jerusalem was to fall yet again, in 70 AD, but the kingdom of Jesus born of Mary will have no end. The city of the heavenly Jerusalem is a city that cannot fall. So the child whom Mary will bear and Joseph will protect is a sign of hope.

In this world we are always under siege, and the enemy is always at the gate. But it is not deals with the enemy that will save us, the Ahaz way. If you are willing to sup with the devil, if you are content to be part of a vassal state under Satan's control, good luck to you.

But if you want to enjoy the glorious liberty of the sons of God, if you want to be saved and free with a real future, then the courage of Leningrad must be your inspiration, and the wise faithful obedience of Joseph must be your model.

For it is faith and courage like that which, by the holy might of the Emmanuel, will enable us to withstand our adversary as we put our trust in the little child who will lead us.

A personal view

I should like to thank Fr Richard for his sermon at the 11 am Mass on Advent Sunday. It reminded me of the many qualities of Bishop (now Father) Andrew Burnham. It did not however for me compensate for his action in defecting to the Roman Catholic Church. The words betrayal, rejection and abandonment spring to mind.

One of the outward tokens of a Bishop in the Church of England is a crozier or staff displaying his role as a shepherd to his people. One member of the congregation saw Bishop Burnham's action as leading his people. To where, I ask?

Father Richard's description of the Bishop's last celebration of the Mass in the Church of England told of how the Bishop placed his crozier and mitre at a statue of Our Lady. Therefore his intention of leading his people was not being displayed.

So here we are in the middle of what could be described as the worst crisis in the Church of England for hundreds of years and our Bishop leaves us! This is the very time when we need his guidance, wisdom and pastoral care. Sadly, I repeat the words betrayal, rejection, abandonment.

As frequently happens in discussions of faith and doctrine, the question is put "what would Jesus have done"? I do not need to give the answer as I'm sure we all know it.

Am I alone in the sentiments I have expressed?

Vera Sanders

All Saints Parish Retreat 2011

Our Parish Retreat is the weekend of 18-20 February 2011 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.

Our Retreat Conductor this year is Fr Thomas Seville CR, who some may remember as Revd Christopher Seville when he was curate at Holy Nativity, Knowle in early 1990s.

The cost of the Retreat will depend on the number of retreatants. There have been changes at the Retreat House and the Trustees have put the cost up, but as a Church Group we still get a good discount. Ideally, we will fill all 20 places and the cost will be around £120 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 think hard about this opportunity** and sign up in the porch. You will not regret it. Where else would you find 48 hours full board in such glorious surroundings for such a low cost? Perhaps you could bring a friend along as well.

We will have to ask for a non-returnable deposit of £30 to book a place, the remainder to be paid on arrival at Abbey House. Please make cheques out to All Saints with St John.

Please sign list in porch.

For further details please contact Liz Badman at All Saints, Clifton on 0117-9741355 or allsaintsclifton@tiscali.co.uk

Liz Badman
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