

Vicar's Letter – May 2015

Dear Friends,

Christ is Risen!

This month of May takes us through Eastertide to Ascension Day and then beyond to Pentecost. The Feast of Ascension can be a puzzle to many. However, the Ascension was not early retirement for Jesus; it marked the beginning of his divine reign and his intercession on our behalf. The New Testament presents us with an image of Christ as our advocate, as a kind of King's Counsel continually defending our interests. St Paul writes in Romans 8.34, "*Christ...is at God's right hand, and indeed pleads our cause.*"

So, having represented God to Man, he is now representing Man to God. He is supremely qualified to do so because he understands the predicament of humanity. He knows what it is like to be hungry, thirsty, tired, under stress and in pain. He experienced the emotional strain of being lonely, misunderstood and hated. He endured the spiritual challenge of temptation and suffered the existential turmoil of hearing God's deafening silence on the Cross. Sometimes we need to let the impact sink in that in our prayers, we cry out to a God who says, "*I know how you feel.*"

Before typing this letter, I looked back at the very first Vicar's letter I produced shortly after being licensed at All Saints. It made interesting reading (even if I say so myself!). I referred to St Paul's image of the Church as being the Body of Christ in which unity is celebrated and diversity is encouraged. I wrote, "*We are a pilgrim people, loving and learning from each other; always thankful for what we have gained on our journey, but still peering into the distance with wide-eyed excitement about where God may lead.*"

We still do not fully understand God's thinking with regard to what has transpired over this last year. Was my appointment at All Saints a mistake? Were our spiritual discernment compasses faulty? Chryssa and I have agonised over these questions and, despite the seeming contradictions and paradoxes, we still believe that our time at All Saints was meant to be. Perhaps, further down history's time-line there will be greater clarity for us all. Ultimately it is for you, the parishioners of All Saints, to decide. All Chryssa and I are able to say is that we are really thankful for our experience of serving, learning, loving and being loved in our all-too-short a time walking alongside you in our shared pilgrimage.

Sunday 17th May will be our final Sunday in the Parish. After that, we must cast our eyes up the M5 to Malvern; I begin as Chaplain on 1st June. I am delighted that Fr Charles Sutton will be licensed by the Bishop as Priest-in-Charge of All Saints on Friday 15th May. You all know Fr Charles well and you could not be in more gifted, experienced and wise hands to guide you through what we hope will be a very brief vacancy period before the next Vicar is appointed. We pray that the next appointee will be God's man or woman to lead All Saints on to the next phase in its glorious history.

In *Four Quartets* (Little Gidding V), T.S. Eliot wrote:

*What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from.*

Viewed from a different perspective, endings are new beginnings. Every time we complete a task, or a job, or an academic year we are free to make a fresh start. We should strive to let go of any past pain, find forgiveness for our failings and move on to embrace exciting new challenges.

In the last chapter of the Bible, the Lord Jesus Christ declares: *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.* (Revelation 22.13) In Christ, we can have confidence that our past, present and future, and all our *endings* and *beginnings* are secure in his love.

For all that has been – thanks.

For all that shall be – yes.

(Dag Hammarskjöld – Swedish diplomat and UN Secretary-General, 1953-61)

Yours in the service of Christ,

Fr Kim Taplin

Vera Price will appear in the BBC2 documentary “*Britain’s Greatest Generation*” which is to be screened on Friday May 8th at 9 p.m.

ST JAMES OF COMPOSTELA – HISTORY, TRADITION, MYTH

So, who is this saint that continues to inspire pilgrimage? St James the Great, so called to distinguish him from the younger apostle of the same name, was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and brother of St John the Evangelist. He was also cousin to our Lord. He was a fisherman, and with his brother and his partners Peter and Andrew, left fishing at the call of Jesus.

Our Lord called the brothers ‘Sons of Thunder’, presumably on account of their fire, zeal and energy. Both were present at the raising of Jairus’ daughter, the cure of St Peter’s mother in law, at the Transfiguration and in Gethsemane. About AD 43, he was arrested during the persecution of Herod Agrippa and beheaded.

Tradition has it that at some time between and Resurrection and his death, James travelled by sea on a missionary journey to the Iberian peninsula. He landed at Padron, where the stone, claimed to be where he moored his boat, can be seen under the altar of the church. Apparently his mission was largely unsuccessful and after an apparition of the Virgin Mary, in AD40 he returned to Jerusalem.

Tradition continues that after his martyrdom, his disciples took his body to the place of his earlier ministry in Galicia, which presumably he had been very attached to. There, near the place we now know as Santiago, they buried him in a Roman necropolis. His two disciples, Athanasius and Theodore were subsequently buried with him (so presumably they must have had some local friends).

The years passed and like Sleeping Beauty's castle, the sepulchre became forgotten and overgrown. Until In AD 813, a 'celestial light' led a local hermit, Pelayo, to the Field of Stars '*Compo Stellae*' and the discovery of the tomb of St James. Endorsed by the local bishop and later by the king, a small church was built to house St James and his two disciples. The great cathedral of Santiago (St James), eventually rose above this spot.

Subsequently, the re-conquest of the Iberian peninsula from Islam was inspired by a vision to Christian troops of St James as a knight dressed in armour astride a white charger.

Pilgrimages to Santiago began around the middle of the 10th century, with routes across Europe. Indeed if you were a medieval pilgrim from Bristol, you would start from St James Priory (Bristol's oldest building – well worth a visit) and then by sea. Santiago became the third most important place of pilgrimage after Jerusalem and Rome.

What therefore can we sceptical Anglican Catholics make of all this? Notwithstanding academic arguments about who is actually enshrined under Santiago Cathedral, the fact is that millions of the good, the great and the ordinary have trod the various caminos (the 'ways') over a millennium. And they still do in very large numbers. People of faith and none, all drawn in some way to St James and his story. All discovering something about themselves and maybe greater faith or the first steps to faith. Certainly, the ministry and mission of St James, the friend and apostle of Jesus Christ, is very much alive and continues in a very real way. This, to me, is the thing that is truly Great.

Roger Hopkins

REFLECTIONS ON A CAMINO PILGRIMAGE

We signed-up a year ago to go with friends from Holy Trinity, Eltham. The three of us soon became four, with Chris Ostler joining us on our weekly training walks. It was going to be 100 kilometres over 5 days. Could we do it? Having trod 200 miles since September, all was going reasonably well, until Chris injured her foot and had to withdraw at the eleventh hour. A great disappointment for her and us. So, with great anxiety but with determination 'the Clifton Three' set off on Easter Day to join our fellow pilgrims at Heathrow. A truly life enhancing experience followed. The following little ditty is in tribute.

For the musically inclined (or just for fun) this can be sung (just about) to the tune of Jerusalem the Golden.

1 O happy band of pilgrims,
Camino way we trod.
Months of preparation,
Will we be fit enough?
With Fathers Brett and Robert,
Our spiritual guides ahead.
Set forth with determination
And not a little dread.

2 O happy band of pilgrims,
All Saints and HTE.
We trekked o're field and 'mountain'
'Stamps' gained along the way.
The cafes were most welcome,
Refreshments much enjoyed.
Locals and fellow pilgrims
Fellowship on the road.

4 O happy band of pilgrims,
Aches and pains endured.
The Clifton Three lacked blisters,
Though others suffered great.
Each day we arrived exhausted,
Hotel to take our rest.
A welcome glass of something,
And food enjoyed then bed.

5 O happy band of pilgrims,
Santiago up ahead.
The final gruelling day;
Cathedral reached at last.
We hugged the Saint and knelt in prayer
Intentions laid before;
Loved ones, healing, faithful priest,
O Blessed James please pray.

3 O happy band of pilgrims
Five days, one hundred K,
Our bags go on before us,
To lighten-up our load.
We sang Regina Coeli,
12 noon as we did walk.
A Resurrection people,
On, on, the pilgrim path.

6 O happy band of pilgrims,
Triumphant Pilgrim Mass.
Splendour of Cathedral,
Packed full with young and old.
Botafumeiro swinging high,
We should have one at home;
Compostelas given,
Renewed in faith we go.

Roger, Janice & Swarna

Safeguarding

We now have a new parish safeguarding policy. It has been drawn up under the guidance of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor to take account of all the changes and recommendations which have been put in place since the last policy was created, and it refers to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults as well as of children. The key parts of the policy are now on display in the porch and on the All Saints website. The full document can be viewed in the Parish Office.

The new policy draws attention to the fact that all members of the congregation have responsibilities for safeguarding. Our ethos statement affirms that:

‘The teaching of Christ establishes the special significance of every human being in the sight of God. Our church is committed to fulfil His law of love and to provide for the safety, wellbeing and proper development of all children and young people in our care and of any adults within our community who may be vulnerable.’

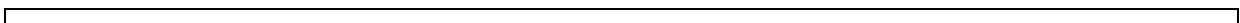
Any member of the Church who suspects any kind of abuse whatsoever should immediately contact the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator (via the Parish Office), who will contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and follow his/her advice.

Far fewer people are now eligible for compulsory DBS checks. However, following a recent safe guarding audit by the Diocesan It is recommended that many of those who carry out voluntary tasks or who are elected to a position of parochial responsibility should use the online safeguarding ‘Basics’ training module which is now available. The list includes members of the PCC, Church Wardens, volunteers providing children’s activities, any other volunteers such as flower-arrangers - even if not working directly with children or vulnerable adults.

To access the training module go to:

<http://www.bristol.anglican.org/parish-resources/safeguarding/training/> and use the parish reference: 52/041.

Your completion of the training will be recorded and Brownie points duly awarded to All Saints!



OFFA'S DYKE CHURCH CRAWL

We are repeating this popular Church Crawl on **9 May 2015**

The plan is to call at Llanthilio Pertholey for coffee and a tour of this beautiful border church, a trip up the tower is on offer for the more energetic amongst us.

We will then drive on to Llanthony Abbey and have a picnic lunch in the Abbey grounds and look at the tiny church dedicated to St David.

On up to the Gospel Pass calling at St Mary's, Capel-y-Ffin, a tiny gem of an 18th century chapel. Then down to St Mary's Hay-on-Wye where we will have a tour of the church and then go on to the vicarage for tea with Fr Richard Williams, who led our Retreat this year.

We hope to be able to get hold of a mini-bus.

More details as I work out the timings etc. But please note this in your diaries. These Crawls are always great fun.

Liz Badman

IN THIS MONTH.....MAY 1895.

In the Tropics

An abridged version of a letter from Forster M Alleyne, Churchwarden, during his time in Barbados.

It is not my purpose to describe the voyage, for nowadays everyone who crosses the Atlantic thinks it necessary to write an account of it, and to myself it is no novelty. I quitted England on Ash Wednesday. and by Sunday we were at the Azores. Being Sunday, the regulation service was held in the saloon at 10.30. How well one knows the procedure! The usual method is for the "clergyman who is to conduct the service," on Saturday evening to take a few young ladies into his confidence and suggest how nice it would be if they would lead the singing. He then proposes, as if the idea had never occurred to anyone before, that we should have Hymn 370, [*Eternal Father, strong to save*], and Hymn 370 it generally is, although it is far more appropriately sung by those on land than by those at sea. However, on this occasion we did not have Hymn 370, but the Old Hundredth instead. The Rector of Monk Sherborne, Basingstoke, took the service, receiving the usual restrictive instructions from the Captain as to the time it was to occupy. It seems to be thought because passengers on board ship have nothing on earth to do with themselves all day, it would be cruelty to inflict on them a service a quarter of the length of that which they submissively attend on land. In the tropics, however, a long service in a crowded saloon, with a choppy sea, would be hard to bear - but then the saloon is rarely crowded. Too often people leave their churchmanship behind with their native land.

Every Sunday of the year there are thousands of British steamers and sailing ships afloat on the seas containing thousands of passengers and seamen. What provision does the Church of England make for the spiritual instruction of these? I mean as regards her Services, not as regards ministration. Every priest at present turns to the "Forms of Prayers to be used at Sea." He begins happily enough, but before long he finds himself praying that we may be protected from the violence of the enemy, when we are at peace with the whole world; or, if he skips that, he jumps into a clause that the raging of the waves may abate, when the sea is as smooth as crystal. No service could be more inappropriate for the ordinary use of an uneventful voyage, which is, after all, what most voyages are. Now, why should not the Archbishop of Canterbury appoint a Committee to deal with this matter, and draw up a Service for the use of our Mercantile Marine?

I have another request to make, this time to Mr Chatterton Dix, who may possibly read these lines, or to some other Hymn writer. Do, please, let someone write another Sea Hymn. Hymn 370 is no doubt very fine, but it is a pity to ride a good horse to death, and after many voyages across the Atlantic I confess I should like to bestride another animal.

I am writing in the library of the Principal's lodge at Codrington College, Barbados. It is Sunday, [*fifth Sunday in Lent*], and an atmosphere of perfect peace prevails. We have had Holy Communion and Mattins at 7.30. The Principal does not follow the universal Barbadian custom, and put the chief Service of the day at 11 am. Early rising is, of course, the rule out here, so why services should not be held in the cool of the morning passes my comprehension. But no - services in England are held at 11, therefore Barbados, every inconvenience notwithstanding, must have hers at the same hour.

The support of the college is derived from the income of the two Codrington estates, and this year, owing to the island having been visited with a severe drought, their crop will be a small one. This has happened before and Barbadians do not complain; it is natural. What they do complain of is that their sugar should be exposed to the Foreign Bounty system of Germany, France and other European countries, which has stimulated over-production and forced down the price of sugar. They are sore that the Mother Country makes no effort to remedy this injustice, but remains inactive while they are in the greatest straits, and the vast Negro population suffering. In this time of bitter tension, it will require all the energies of the S PG [*Society for the Propagation of the Gospel*] to keep burning with its present brilliancy the light of Codrington College.

Green Squares and Secret Gardens

Several private gardens and squares including our own at All Saints will be open for this CHIS (Clifton and Hotwells Improvement Society) event on 6th and 7th June. Music will be played on both days, with a free concert on Saturday at 4.00 pm when **John Bacon** (tenor) and **Helen Mills** (piano) will perform Schumann's great song-cycle 'Dichterliebe', and on Sunday when John Davenport will play a selection on the newly-restored organ during the afternoon. Teas will be available on both days, though will not be served whilst the Saturday concert is in progress i.e, 4-5 pm.

If you are able to help on either day, or provide a cake, please sign the list in the porch.

All proceeds will go to the organ fund.

Details of the event are available at <http://www.cliftonhotwells.org.uk/greensquare.html>

Protecting our children: the dark arts of negative influence...

My heart skipped a beat when I heard on the radio earlier today that 10% of 12-13 year old children fear that they may have an addiction to pornography and a similar proportion have actually taken part in a sexually explicit video clip. This is the kind of statistic that should send a jolt to the adult conscience of the nation.

What worries me is that any discussion of pornography in the media seems to unquestionably accept that pornography for adults is perfectly acceptable. The problem, given its wide spread accessibility via the internet, seems uncontrollable. The idea that pornography is fine for adults but we that must try and keep it away from our children is doomed to failure, both morally and practically.

Pornography is wrong. Graphic images of adults in all kinds of sexually compromised situations involving allegedly group sex and violent sex is wrong. People performing these sexual acts are presumably mostly not in any kind of relationship and have to 'perform' in ways that are camera friendly. This is a great way to train our minds to objectify objects of our sexual desire in a way that can lead to both casual and abusive encounters.

This stuff can get into adult minds, never mind those 12-13 year old children mentioned in the research. Whilst political parties seek to seduce us with campaigns promising prosperity, the western world teeters on the brink of moral bankruptcy. Is this really what we want for our children?

I feel real sympathy for today's generation of parents. Being brought up in the 1960's the only threat to parental influence over the outcomes in their children was the pressure of the peer group. Parents fought hard to stop their children hanging out with the wrong crowd (though in my case, my parents reluctantly had to come to the realisation that, in fact, I was a leading member of the wrong crowd!). It also means that much of what goes on, goes on beyond the supervision and often the comprehension of parents.

Today our children are the targets of ruthless mass marketing and, of course social media, all of which have a massive influence on them. The consequence is that the influence of parents is now receding. Seduced into buying smart phones for children as young as six, (who are well practiced in the art of using them) a whole new and often unhealthy and

influencing world is opened up to our children, which truthfully they are too young to cope with.

Supervising what our children are looking at also becomes more of a problem. Most people know how to delete their browsing history and children find their way around filters on their phones and computers designed to protect them.

Of course, the problem with all this is that it's very easy to diagnose. It's not rocket science to see a very negative prognosis. What is really difficult is to come up with a cure. Seduction is seductive. Watching this stuff at any age is bad for you; watching it during the vulnerable years of adolescence is very mind distorting.

Is there any way that any of this can be turned back? The worrying answer to such a question is 'not easily'. Education will play a part; the protection of the law will play a part; help for parents will be important but most important would be a robust recognition and conviction that pornography for all ages is essentially corrupting. It is naive to think that we can suggest it's fine for adults and then imagine we can keep it away from our children. It's not going to happen...

The problem we have is that the developed world seems to believe in ethical autonomy and the right of the individual to make up their own minds as to the way they behave. This is risky thinking. Not much use telling people to make up their own mind when that mind has been poisoned already by mass marketing and pornography!

But still there is huge resistance should anyone step into the minefield of seeking to rein in the rights of the individual. Yet without some discussion of these things we shall make little or no progress in safeguarding our children from these very harmful influences.

Our children need protecting, not just from the evils of sexual assault from predatory adults, from also the pollution of these virtual assaults on their minds.

Paul wrote "Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind". I think we need a bit less conformed and a bit more transformed in our worrying culture.

+Mike

The Catholic Societies of the Church of England
BRISTOL CATHOLIC SOCIETIES



ASSUMPTIONTIDE FESTIVAL

Saturday 15 August 2015

+

12.00 noon

Bristol Cathedral

by kind permission of the Dean and Chapter

PROCESSION OF OUR LADY

&

SOLEMN CONCELEBRATED MASS

President & Preacher: The Rt Rev'd Martyn Jarrett SSC

+

3.00pm

*The Lord Mayor's Chapel,
College Green*

**VESPERS OF OUR LADY
& BENEDICTION**

*For further details ring 01275-462927
christopher.verity@virginmedia.com*