

CHAPTER SEVEN

Peter Goodrich



Peter Goodrich's ministry opened with a Eucharist at the now traditional time of 7.30 p.m. the next (Thursday) evening. The word 'Eucharist' is not without significance: from this date the Service Register reverts to the practice of its first fifty years and entitles its celebrations Holy Communion and Sung Eucharist, with the addition of the appropriate High Masses. From the first there were four weekday celebrations restored, and almost at once some were transferred to the Lady Chapel where too Evensong was said on four weekdays and Mattins on Mondays. Another innovation of value to the chronicler (even though he has to do most of the counting involved) is the regular recording of numbers attending as well as communicating at all services: that first Sunday there were 180 of them at the Sung Eucharist and thenceforward the Wardens added counting of heads from the back pew to their varied responsibilities on Sunday mornings. Marginal notes in the Registers become more frequent and explanatory: 'Adoption of Revised Calendar begins'; '13 candidates from S.Faith's confirmed' (partly prepared by the laity, they were among 227 taking communion and 350 in church that Sunday); 'Choir Holiday'; 'First full use of Series III Rite'; and 'Series III: attended by P.C.C. prior to meeting' were some from Fr.Peter's first months. Christmas communicants were down to 233, mainly due to the steady decline in attendance over the years at the morning service on Christmas Day.

The 'Parish News' now began to print the collects and lesson details for the month in advance as an aid to devotional preparation. It also continued to reflect the controversial, topical or merely entertaining, debating such matters as the merits of the Appleford setting (abandoned with Series Two) and the dangers of exclusiveness in music, the purchasing of new hymnbooks (A and M Revised) as part of a memorial to George Houldin, the value of coffee in hall, the introduction of advertisements in the magazine, concerts in aid of the Restoration Fund for S.Luke's after its disastrous fire, and an increasing number of jokes of varying standards, for whose introduction this author must accept the blame. It also records the introduction of a new system of P.C.C. Committees during

1973: thenceforward responsibility for the various activities of church life have been shared between the Mission and Pastoral, Premises, Youth and Finance Committees.

Good Friday has always been a barometer of priestly attitudes at S.Faith's. From 1973 we reverted to a non-Eucharistic pattern, based on Veneration of the Cross, having thus experienced over ten years every variation from the traditional Three Hours to Sung Masses. The Series Three Communion service was used for the first time in full and to the music of John Rutter for the High Mass on Ascension Day. The numbers for this were down to 60, reflecting another trend downwards over the years: that of weekday High Masses on the major festivals. On July 1st they were down on a Sunday too, but for a very different reason: the Vicar and a number of the congregation were at S.Peter's, Parr for the making Deacon of Peter Bernard Cavanagh, the next occupant of the Curacy and of 16 Alder Grove and the first man to come here as Deacon to start his ministry for many years. The year continued uneventfully, with communicants staying over 100 save in high summer, and attendances averaging 140 or so. The 8 a.m. services, transferred now to the Lady Chapel, were taken regularly by the Reverend Julian Davey, Head of Divinity at Merchant Taylors' School and the Reverend Owen Yandell of Sefton.

September saw two innovations: the holding of a very successful Harvest Supper and the beginning of a Thursday afternoon Toddlers' Service, which has proved equally and encouragingly successful. From October 1st the daily offices are booked in the Register; Evensong numbers have ranged from one to some six or seven, with lay people regularly officiating. Also in October began the monthly Tuesday afternoon Evensong for the Ladies' Group, inheritors of the Mothers Union meetings. There came too a series of chamber concerts in church arranged by the Crosby Arts Association and the Amici Concert Society as part of a developing policy of providing a welcome for the arts in our acoustically excellent building.

In December the congregation helped to swell the numbers at the Patronal Festival of S.Thomas, Seaforth; a week later a new Carol and Toy service attracted 195 mostly young people to church. There were 258 communicants at the Christmas Midnight service at the end of Fr Peter's first full year at S.Faith's.

The most memorable event of early 1974 was the combined service held in our church during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It took the form of an Anglican Festival Evensong, and our clergy were assisted by Methodist, United Reformed Church and Roman Catholic ministers and priests, while the inspiring preacher was the Roman Catholic Auxiliary Bishop Augustine Harris. There were 310 in church: certainly the biggest turnout for Evensong at S.Faith's for very many years! Another spectacular followed: the revival of the pantomime tradition at S. Faith's with the Curate writing and starring outrageously in 'Aladdin and his Magic Handbag' — a riotous success indeed. Back inside church, numbers began slowly again to rise, congregations averaging 150-170 on ordinary Sundays, with perhaps 200 on Parade or

Baptismal occasions and up to 250 on, for example, Mothering Sunday. An unusual and very successful feature of the annual Missionary Weekend was a Concelebrated Eucharist in the hall with Bishop Baker joined by the Vicar, the Reverend Alan Wright of Seaforth and Canon Eric Lowe. An even more unusual event took place on Sunday, June 30th. The morning saw probably the first recorded instance of a said service in S.Faith's at 10.30, while large numbers attended the Ordination to the Priesthood of Fr. Peter Cavanagh at the Cathedral. And that evening, instead of the usual sedate handful in the Choir for Evensong, there were nearly three hundred present for the Curate's First Mass of the Holy Spirit. It was attended by fourteen priests and ministers from several denominations and celebrated joyfully, at length and with much pomp and circumstance, music for the occasion being specially composed and played by Graham Atherton.

During the year we supported Myles Davies as he was made Deacon, and welcomed Stuart Blanch, Bishop and soon to be Archbishop, for his second visit to S.Faith's. He came on S.Faith's Day, it being a Sunday, to confirm and to preach to a large congregation; there were also some 270 in church and 154 communicants at the transferred evening High Mass that Wednesday, the best turnout for several years. The latter service was followed by further, and more substantial refreshments at the back of the church after the service. By the end of 1974, most normal Sundays were seeing 160 to 180 in the main morning congregation; communicants at about 120 were equalling the figures of five years before, and their total for the year was 9609. The introduction of a Christingle Service in aid of the Church of England Children's Society on the Sunday evening before Christmas drew 255, mainly children with their Smartie tubes full of pennies. The service provided a fitting conclusion to the year and the unforgettable memory of all those happy children processing round the dark church with their candles stuck so perilously in their oranges.

These last two years had seen certain definite trends emerge. There has been an increasing devotion and prayerfulness in our worship which, while in no way detracting from the well-established and characteristic air of friendliness and happy welcome that marks family worship at S. Faith's, seeks to bring together the immanent and the transcendent, the intimate and the remote, in one offering to God. In so doing we hope to provide a firm and lasting basis upon which to build in our seventy-fifth year as we seek, having tried to put our own house in order, to look increasingly outward in mission to the parish and beyond. To this end, and under Fr.Peter's guidance, the laity have been encouraged to take a still greater share in the actual running of the parish: through the work of the Strategic and other committees and in increased involvement in parish visiting and the formation of house groups and churches.

They have also been years of consolidation and stabilisation at S.Faith's. And they have seen new ecumenical initiatives that promise to sweep away the last vestiges of the suspicions and exclusiveness that for so long characterised S. Faith's relationships with other churches, whether Anglican or not. The local clergy fraternal, a product of Peter Goodrich's efforts, is a weekly interdenominational meeting for worship and joint

consultation; such a meeting would have been difficult even a few years before and impossible even ten years ago; we hope that it marks the end of the conscious isolationism that had for far too long been associated with the name of S.Faith's for many of those outside it.

The magazines of recent months reflect much of all this. Increased giving to Missionary work via our project at Magila Hospital, Tanzania, a Talents Scheme aimed not at keeping our own roof on but that of S.Thomas, Seaforth, increased income in Christian Aid Week, as well as the planning of Quiet Days and Retreats and the stepping up of visiting the housebound, lonely and needy of the parish — all these appear in their pages. Talking points now are the merits or otherwise of the Charismatic Movement, population control and how best to celebrate our seventy-fifth anniversary -

Nineteen seventy five, the anniversary and present year, has inevitably been one of activity, of looking back and also to the future. A few of the events of its first six months may serve to give its flavour. The main, if extra-liturgical feature of Lent was a major spring-clean of the church, using industrial equipment and an internal scaffolding tower, but entirely amateur labour. High and hidden recesses of the sandstone have been sucked clear of generations of grime, and choking clouds of dust and debris poked down from ledges visited until then only by pigeons. The wood-tiled floor areas have been laboriously sanded down, reglued in many places, and then four times varnished to produce a warm, rich and attractive finish. Over it have passed processional feet at several major services. The anniversary of consecration, Monday April 21st, was marked by a very special High Mass of Dedication and Thanksgiving. The liturgy was skilfully interwoven with the magnificent music of Haydn's 'Nelson' Mass, sung by the local Capriol Singers to a small orchestra and a large congregation. The Vicar left for a sabbatical term in Oxford the very next day, but by pre-arrangement rather than by a process of cause and effect. He returned briefly for Whitsunday and the next special event. That evening Bishop Baker administered confirmation to some 70 candidates, from S.Faith's, S.Nicholas, S.Luke's, All Saints and S.Stephen's, Hightown, and presided at the Sung Eucharist in which the confirmation was set, with the clergy of all these churches concelebrating. By importing chairs in quantities normally needed only for school services, we accommodated some 610 congregation, exactly 300 of whom took communion; a record unlikely to be overtaken for some time and a most happy and successful addition to the year's celebratory events. Furthermore it was, if one can use the term, something of an ecumenical activity in itself and perhaps a pointer to the future.

Less spectacular, but equally significant, has been the launching of a major campaign for Commitment of Time, Talents and Money, and the success of a 'Birthday Appeal' for money to refurbish the church and its surrounds, the first fruits of which are already being seen. The year continues with a Flower Festival, various musical events, and special services within the Patronal Octave, when Bishop Runcie of S.Alban's will return to preach in the church where he once served at the altar. A bazaar, social events

and, inevitably another pantomime after Christmas, should help further to make this a year to remember, despite the prospect of major expenditure upon our decaying heating systems and boilers. And finally, after a period of trial, the great crucifix which Douglas Horsfall gave forty seven years ago has been set on the wall of what was the Children's Corner as the powerful and moving focal point of a new Chapel of the Cross to commemorate the anniversary year.

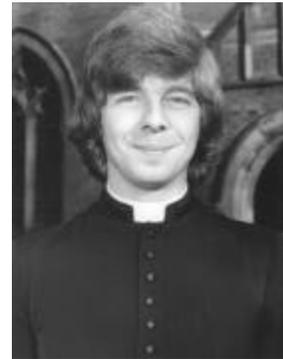
And so history moves into the present and into the blank pages of the unfilled Register. To draw this account to its conclusion, to provide a record of our pattern of worship and life in 1975, and as a means of paying tribute to some at least of those who serve S.Faith's so well today, a portrait of a typical Sunday morning's activities may be of help and interest.

At just before 10.30 on this composite morning the church is comfortably filled. If it is a Parade service, the front pews will be filled with Scouts, Cubs, Brownies and (especially) Guides, and their flags will follow the procession up. If there is Baptism, the back pews will be filled with visitors. And if the two coincide, my fellow-Warden George Smith and I will be hoping the weekly duplicated notice sheets won't run out, and that all the regulars will find their favourite seats. S.Faith's owes George much for his hard work and loyalty over the years, not merely before and after the services and on the committees of the church but in many other ways behind the scenes and around the premises and grounds; no-one in recent years has done more in boiler-house and in garden. The books are kept out on the pews permanently: Series Three for the service order, and hymns from Ancient and Modern Revised (for most hymns) with perhaps one or two from either '100 Hymns for Today' or the Twentieth Century Supplement (the 900's in the blue book). Crucifer, choir, taperers, servers, Reader, Curate and celebrant enter from the back and move forward to the Nave Altar to the accompaniment of the opening hymn. The Sung Eucharist has begun.

And so the service goes its familiar way, and the focus moves from the chancel steps in due course to the Nave Altar itself. The Vicar celebrates today: conducting the service with warmth and a quiet, friendly assurance that sets the tone for those assisting him and for the whole congregation. He often says that things are so well-run at S.Faith's that he merely needs to stand in the middle on a Sunday morning and wave his arms and everything happens round him. In fact everyone else knows full well how much he contributes and that without him our worship would be infinitely the poorer, as would our whole life at S.Faith's. Under the unobtrusive direction of George Goodwin, the servers assist the celebrant with invariable dignity and fitting style: the high standard of reverence they set and maintain has always been one of the marks of S.Faith's. The choir is well-filled with boys, men and women; the latter now an established tradition. The problem of maintaining a full choir, especially with boys, is no less than it was in the past, but under Graham Atherton today both in quantity and quality the choir and its output set the highest standard.

Fr. Peter Cavanagh preaches: children of all ages are de-

lighted to see that he has his complete Winnie the Pooh with him and is going to read a story about Eeyore the donkey, and to talk in his informal, very human style, sincere yet entirely without pomposity. Soon afterwards a server slips away to alert the Junior and Children's Churches: the modern inheritors of the old Guilds and afternoon Sunday Schools; they come in with their teachers to sit at the front for the Ministry of the Sacrament. Meanwhile lay people read the lesson and lead the intercessions, the latter singly or in twos or threes and from the back of the church. Arranging the intercessions is one of several responsibilities of our Reader, Archie Pattison: in this, as in preaching and visiting, another devoted and hard-working servant of the church. In due time further lay people follow the collection plates up, bearing the bread, wine and water to the altar. The Peace of the Lord is exchanged from Fr. Peter through the whole congregation, with smile, handshake and even kiss; stray toddlers are pursued up and down the aisles; others are happily nursed by some of the girls from S.Christopher's, a Community Home in Thornton to which the Vicar is now Chaplain and who attend our services.



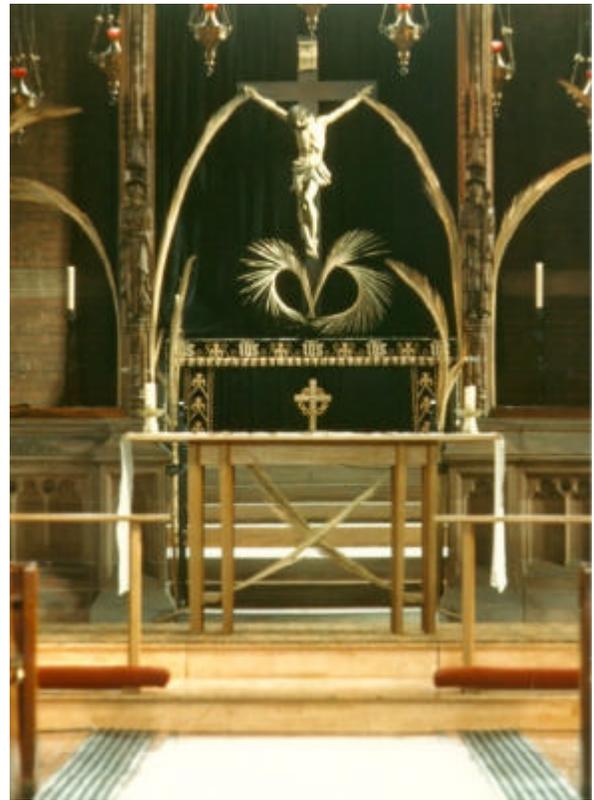
Fr Peter Cavanagh

The service reaches its climax with the Thanksgiving, and the acclamations, sung, as the rest of the service, to the music of Rutter, and general Communion begins. Assistants, Sacristan, servers and then choir file round the altar in quiet order, and the congregation follows: adults and children alike kneel on three sides of the altar to receive the elements or a blessing while the choir sing an anthem. When it is all finished and the ablutions are over, there remain only the final prayers and the notices before the recessional hymn ends the service at about 11.40. A long queue forms to greet the clergy and to get through the only means of escape, while Wardens and sidesmen tidy up the church. In the hall all is noise and bustle: Margaret Goodrich manages somehow to talk to almost everyone and to seek out newcomers: the ideal support to her husband with her friendly concern and welcome. Tickets are sold; lost property returned; coffee drunk; innocent bystanders persuaded to read next week's lesson. And thus a morning of worship and family fellowship is ended and all that remains is Sunday Dinner and a rest before the quiet intimacy of Sunday Evensong.

And what can I say more? To generalise further or to pass judgment on the present incumbency would be premature if not impossible: it is, like all bur life in the church, continually developing yet at the same time rooted in the past. But in the two and a half years of his ministry here, Peter

Goodrich has won the genuine love and affection of those whom he serves as priest and pastor, as counsellor, as tireless visitor and as friend. We look forward with trust and confidence to working with and for him in the years ahead, and to helping him put into action the stimulating ideas with which he has returned from Oxford. We have already much to be thankful for since November, 1972. We look forward, too, to the continuing and developing ministry of Fr. Peter Cavanagh. Whether working with young people; as graphic designer, scriptwriter and comedy star; or as priest and preacher, he has already given much to S.Faith's and has more yet to give.

Those of us privileged to serve the church today owe it and its priests much; not least our loyalty and affection. We are conscious, particularly in 1975, of the responsibility involved in carrying into the years ahead the mission of the parish church and of the Lord whom we serve. We have seen great changes in the past decade, and the forming of a community and of a way of life and worship that those who laid the foundations of S.Faith's might not recognise but of which we hope they would approve. To study, as have done, the history of this church through seventy five often turbulent but never dull years is to be conscious, even in so short a time, of the weight of history and, above all, of the overwhelming love and loyalty that this Church of Saint Faith has inspired in countless people from the very beginning. It is possible, in all humility, to consider ourselves part of no ordinary church, and one which has still a distinctive and valuable part to play in bringing Christ to the world. It is wholly fitting at this time to look back in gratitude and in thanksgiving for all those, named or unnamed in these pages, who have sustained this church through seventy five years and who have given it so much; and then to look forward in prayer and confidence to the next three quarters of a century. For if one thing is certain, it is that with the pace of our rapidly changing world, the church of the future must develop even more startlingly and radically than it has done in recent years: and S.Faith's can and will change with it. And we who love S.Faith's today rededicate ourselves in 1975 to its service in the name of the Lord to whose glory it was built and to whom we pray that it may continue to offer up unbroken praise and worship.



The Great Crucifix above the High Altar and the Nave Altar in the foreground, Palm Sunday 1974.



The St Faith's Dramatic Society with the vicar's wife on the extreme right of the picture and Fr Peter Cavanagh next to her.