

Newslink

The online journal of St Faith's Church, Great Crosby

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Welcome to the first electronic issue of our new-look church magazine, which features news, reports, announcements, comment and comedy from St Faith's and elsewhere. During the course of each month, material is uploaded as it arrives and as each month ends, the issue will be archived and a new month opened. The editor welcomes contributions of every kind at any time.: the latest article is at the top of the page.

Contributions, comments or complaints to cdavidprice@gmail.com

February 28th

A gentle cartoon to round off the first month of our online magazine. We hope you like the new format and look forward to welcome visitors on March 1st when a new journal will open.



February 24th



Churches can scrap Sunday services

Churches will no longer be legally required to conduct a service every Sunday after the General Synod voted to end a law that has existed since the 17th century. Canon laws, first passed in 1603 and updated most recently in 1964, stipulate that weekly Sunday services must take place in every Church of England church.

However, vicars in rural parts of the country, who have increasingly become responsible for several churches in their area due to the decline in clergy, say they are left with little choice but to break the law. In recent years, growing numbers of parishes have held one combined Sunday service when previously each church would have held separate worship.

Although no vicar has been punished for breaking the canon, yesterday's changes mean that they can now conduct a single Sunday service for several congregations without having to seek written permission.

The Bishop of Willesden, the Rt Rev Pete Broadbent, who first suggested the changes three years ago, said it "clears the way for people to be honest".

Admitting that weekly service "is a centuries-old tradition", the bishop said: "What we have been saying is that this canon does not work, it is out of date and we are operating differently in the countryside now. It cuts out the bureaucracy. This change merely reflects what has been practised for the past 20 years."

The first amended law is Canon B11, which requires morning and evening prayer to be "said or sung audibly in every parish church every Sunday". This has been changed to "in at least one church" in every group.

A second clause, known as Canon B14, previously required Holy Communion to be celebrated "in every parish church". This has been substituted for *(does she mean by. Ed)* "in at least one church in each benefice". The number of multi-parish benefices - groups of churches that are looked after by one priest - has grown significantly in the past 50 years. Figures from the Church of England's Growth Research Programme show that 17 per cent of parishes were in multi-parish benefices in 1960. But by 2011 the number was 71 per cent. According to members of the Synod, the traditional canon law on weekly services has been broken regularly for several decades. If a member of the clergy is believed to have deliberately broken the protocol, they *(does she mean he or she? Ed.)* would be made to face a disciplinary panel. However, the Church is not aware of this ever happening.

The Bishop of Salisbury, the Rt Rev Nicholas Holtam, said: "This change is a sensible step which matches resources to reality and gives encouragement to clergy and laity to hold services in one of the churches in a benefice each day. This will be much appreciated in rural areas."

The Rev Tiffen Robinson, who is responsible for four rural churches in the diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, said: "It brings our legislation into line with the reality on the ground. Most churches do not have morning and evening prayers every Sunday, but the expectation was still there and there was a feeling, legislatively speaking, that you were not living up to your duties if you did not do so."

A Church of England spokesman said; "Sunday worship continues to be central to the Church of England's ministry. The recent adaptation is designed to make it easier for multi-church parishes who rotate services between a group of churches. This is often already the case in rural parishes where it is impractical to hold weekly services in every church. This reflects the movement over the past 200 years of people from the country to cities."

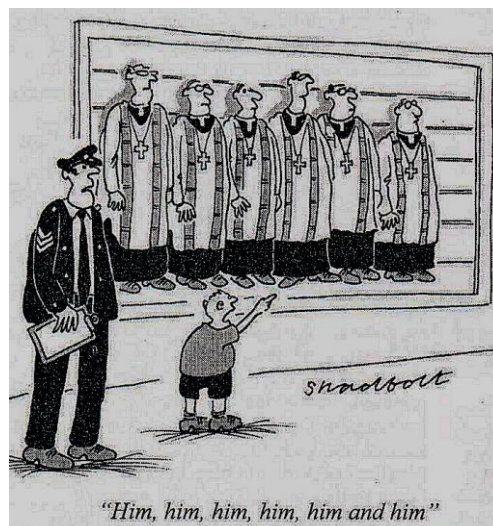
Yesterday's amendments were voted through almost unanimously by 20 Bishops, 92 Clergy and 118 Laity, with only two voting against the motion.

Izzy Lyons

The Daily Telegraph

22nd February, 2019

It's not just in remote rural areas that the pattern exists. Our own suburban patch has shared worship, albeit on special occasions – so far on Patronal Festivals – for some years now. The incumbents of the Waterloo Group will be relieved that the threat of episcopal repercussions will soon now be lifted. The experience of shared worship, with the illusion of sizeable gathered congregations, is an uplifting one.



Thanks to Denis Griffiths and the pages of that scurrilous journal. 'Private Eye' for this wicked cartoon. Its publication coincides with Pope Francis's powerful Vatican Council condemnation of clerical abuse. We can but hope and pray that he will be successful in his admirable determination to cleanse the stables of his and every church – and that actions will speak more powerfully than words...

February 22nd



In the course of unearthing and chronicling the story of St Faith's, your editor – a highly qualified pedant – has discovered more than one mistake to be found around our beloved church. There are in fact so far at least four to be enjoyed (or ignored) and they are brought together here for your entertainment.

We start (as is only right and proper) at the Holy End. There are two oddities to be seen on our splendid High Altar Salvati reredos. As most people will know, the outer wings of the reredos fold inwards to present a plain wooden front against which is hung during Lent a black curtain and the magnificent Great Crucifix normally displayed in the Chapel of the Cross. Each wing is divided into four decorative panels depicting angels. These latter face inwards towards the centre, but two of them, one on each side, face outwards instead. It has been suggested that this happened during a later restoration and repainting but may have been this way from the start. We shall probably never know why these two angels have turned their backs on the crucified Lord.

And there's more while we're up there. Around each angel are a series of painted gold stars and other flourishes, together with a series of monograms of the letters **ih̄s** in elongated lower case. There are several explanations of these letters, but the simplest is that they stand for **I**esus **H**ominem **S**alvator – Jesus saviour of mankind. Unlike the angels they accompany, these have clearly been hand-painted, if looked at closely, but one of them, on the right hand rpanel, merely says **hs**. Lacking any other explanation, the likeliest explanation seems to be that this was the work of a hasty or careless painter at Salvati's Venetian workshop.

Two down: two to go. The third and probably the most entertaining aberration is what can only be described as a stained-glass typo. I spotted it after a talk on one of the saints in our aisle windows, notably the Venerable Bede. Reading the dedication at the foot of the window, to a past St Faith's worthy, I noticed that in the phrase '**Headmaster of St Philip's School, Litherland, & for ten years a chorister in this church**' instead of the '&' ampersand, the 1924 artist has substituted 'o'. Whether it had been spotted at the time, or I was the first to recognise the mistake, we will never know, but it made an old man very happy, and almost made up for the jesting to which he was subjected when he ventured to point it out.

And finally, a mistake unlikely to be spotted by the casual observer, The location is the Chapel of the Cross, where there is displayed a roll of honour listing the names of men associated with our church who lost their lives in two world wars. It records the name of Neil Brook among the fallen, but sadly the spelling is wrong. The correct spelling is **Niel**, an unusual variant, but which is authenticated in the Crosby Herald's obituary, which records the young man's death in a flying accident. Further and more poignant authentication comes in the dedication of the nearby statue of the Boy Jesus, which reads *In devoted memory of Niel Brook a choir boy and server at this church who gave his life in the service of his country 24th July 1941 this statue and pedestal are given to the glory of God by his loving mother 1948.*

The scroll was created in 1948, the year of his mother's gift; and this writer, and the late John Woodley, to whom we owe much diligent research on all the St Faith's fallen, could only wonder whether Mrs Brook was aware of the unfortunate mistake.

Chris Price

February 19th

Refugees

Brian Bilston

They have no need of our help
So do not tell me
These haggard faces could belong to you or me
Should life have dealt a different hand
We need to see them for who they really are
Chancers and scroungers
Layabouts and loungers
With bombs up their sleeves
Cut-throats and thieves
They are not
Welcome here
We should make them
Go back to where they came from
They cannot
Share our food
Share our homes
Share our countries
Instead let us
Build a wall to keep them out
It is not okay to say
These are people just like us
A place should only belong to those who are born there
Do not be so stupid to think that
The world can be looked at another way

(now read from bottom to top)

With thanks to the magazine of St Peter's Church, Formby

February 16th



Practical steps on the Rule of Life: Bishop Paul outlines steps you can take.

Called to pray, read and learn. Sent to tell, serve and give.

Over the past six weeks I've looked briefly at each of the six dimensions of our Rule of Life. I've tried to suggest what it might mean in each of these dimensions to live as a disciple in the Diocese of Liverpool, as we make the inner and the outer journey together.

Here at the end of the series I just wanted to make some practical suggestions for you to consider and perhaps to include in your daily and weekly routine. As with everything in the Rule of Life, let me say clearly that these suggestions are not a whole new initiative for you to pile on top of what you're already doing. Instead of that, here are six simple suggestions for now which will help you take your place with the 60,000 other disciples in the Diocese as a practical follower of Jesus.

1. Called to Pray.

Say the Lord's Prayer each day. If you already pray the Lord's Prayer as part of your daily pattern, this is great.

Before you pray it, simply say something like this in your heart: "Together with all disciples in the Diocese of Liverpool and across the world, as our Saviour has taught us, so we pray..."

2. Called to Read.

Read a short passage from the Bible each day. Some will want to use the daily readings set by the church. There are many other reading plans, and in the next week or so I shall be offering my "Called to read: Summer challenge", which will recommend a book of the Bible and a commentary (if it helps) for you to read over the Summer.

Before you start reading, simply say something like this in your heart: "Together with all disciples in the Diocese of Liverpool and across the world, I open my heart to God's inspired Word."

3. Called to Learn.

Commit yourself to finding other people in your church, school, fresh expression or chaplaincy who want to learn together. Learning happens when we meet others, whether in person, or in the pages of a book, or online.

If you're already in a house-group, study group or similar, simply continue. If not, talk to your church leaders about the right way to join a group.

Before you study, simply say something like this in your heart: "Together with all disciples in the Diocese of Liverpool and across the world, we commit ourselves to learn from Jesus through His Church."

4. Sent to Tell.

As a disciple you will want to see more people knowing Jesus. Commit yourself to bringing one friend to church each year, and to speaking to them about your faith as and when the moment comes. Pray that you will know the right moment to invite that person.

As you pray about whom to bring, simply say something like this in your heart: "Together with all disciples in the Diocese of Liverpool and across the world, I commit myself to sharing my faith with another person."

5 Sent to Serve.

As a disciple you will want to see more justice in the world. Commit yourself to doing ten things each year that will contribute to the common good. These may include volunteering for a charity, visiting a neighbour who is unwell or housebound, campaigning on behalf of people on the edge of things, and many others. Pray that you will know the right things to do.

As you pray about what to do for justice, simply say something like this in your heart: "Together with all disciples in the Diocese of Liverpool and across the world, I commit myself to work so that God's Kingdom may come closer."

6 Sent to Give.

As a disciple you will want to give your time, your talents and your material resources so that God's work may go forward. Commit yourself to a generous lifestyle that will help and bless others.

As you pray about how to live the generous life, simply say something like this in your heart: "Together with all disciples in the Diocese of Liverpool and across the world, I will seek the right way to give back to God what God has given me."

None of this is rocket science. But if we make these simple beginnings I believe we will be sharing in God's work in the Diocese and beyond. Resources and materials will be made available to us all over the next few months. Meanwhile, may God bless you as you take these simple steps.



Bishop Paul Bayes

February 13th

The Cat Sat on the Mat



What would the church conclude if the statement “The cat sat on the mat” was found in the Bible?

The liberal theologians would point out that such a passage did not of course, mean that the cat literally sat on the mat. Also, cat and mat had different meanings in those days from today, and anyway, the text should be interpreted according to the customs and practices of the period.

This would lead to an immediate backlash from the Evangelicals. They would make it an essential condition of faith to believe that a real physical, living cat, being a domestic pet of the species *Felix Domesticus*, and having a whiskered head, a furry body, four legs and a tail, did physically place its whole body on a floor covering, designed for that purpose, and which is on the floor but not of the floor. The expression “on the floor but not of the floor” would be explained in a leaflet.

Meanwhile, the Roman Catholics would have developed the Feast of the Sedentation of the Blessed Cat. This would teach that the cat was white, and majestically reclined on a mat of gold thread before its assumption to the Great Cat Basket of Heaven. This is commemorated by singing the ‘Magnificat’ and ‘Felix namque’, lighting three candles, and ringing a bell five times.

This would cause a schism with the Orthodox Church, which believes tradition requires Holy Cats Day [as it is colloquially known] be marked by lighting SIX candles and ringing the bell FOUR times, this would partly be resolved by the Cuckoo Land Declaration recognising the traditional validity of each.

Eventually, the House of Bishops would issue a statement on the Doctrine of the Feline Sedentation. It would explain that traditionally the text describes a domestic feline quadruped superjacent to an unattached covering on a fundamental surface. For determining its salvific and eschatological significations, we follow the heuristic analytical principles adopted in dealing with the Canine Fenestration Question [How much is that doggie in the window?] and the Affirmative Musaceous Paradox [Yes, we have no bananas]. And so on, for another 210 pages. The General Synod would then commend this report as helpful resource material for clergy to explain to the man in the pew the difficult doctrine of ‘the cat sat on the mat.’



That was very good but how is this for a corollary. Replacement theology will tell you that the cat has been replaced by a dog. the cat stole the mat from the **canine ite**. Then came the **cat astrophe** so now the owner of the mat is a **dog mat ic**.

Thanks to Susie Greenwood for passing this splendid piece of theological exposition on!

February 11th



Apocalypse Now?

The leader of the Russian Orthodox church has warned that the popularity of smartphones is paving the way for the coming of the Antichrist.

In an interview on state television for Russian Orthodox Christmas, Patriarch Kirill warned that the widespread use of gadgets connected to the internet had opened the possibility for “universal control over humanity”. He said the “devil acts very wisely” in offering people such a “toy”.

“Such control from one place forebodes the coming of the Antichrist,” he said. “The Antichrist is the person who will be at the head of the World Wide Web, controlling all of humanity.

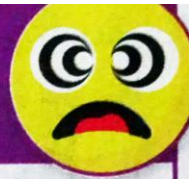
“That means that the structure itself poses a danger. There shouldn’t be a single centre, at least not in the foreseeable future, if we don’t want to bring on the apocalypse.”

By Alec Luhn , The Daily Telegraph

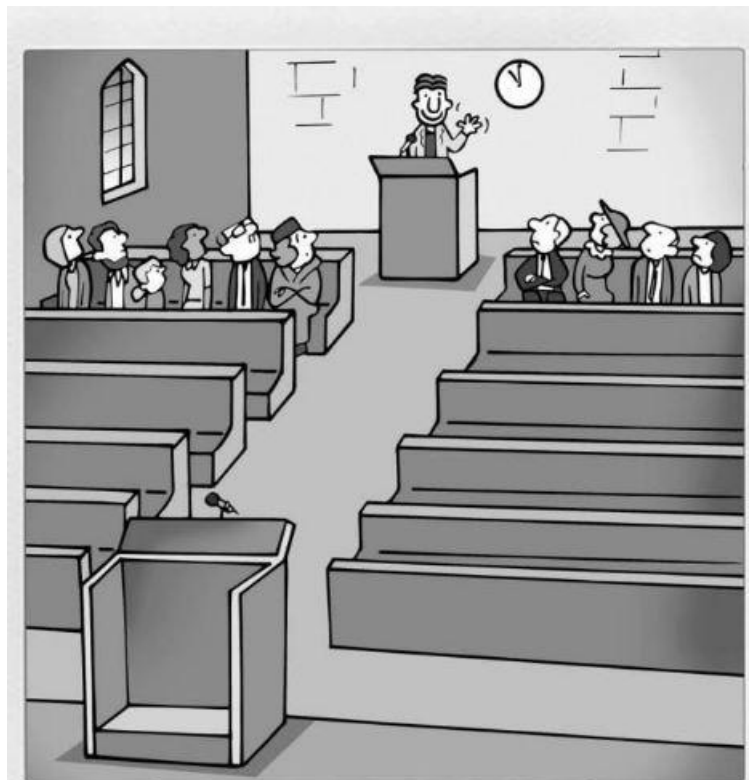
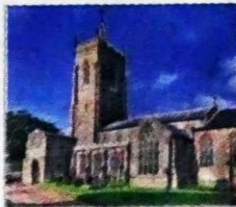
February 9th

A curiosity and a cartoon. No resemblance to any priest of our acquaintance is intended!

THE WORLD'S GONE MAD!



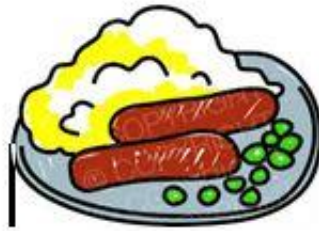
If someone bows their head in church, you'd probably assume – rightly – they were praying. But not in Aylsham Parish Church (pictured), buried in deepest Norfolk, where Reverend Canon Andrew Beane wants his flock to use their phones to vote on issues such as favourite hymns. The results will be shown on a projector screen during the service.



Derek figured that if you
can't beat 'em...

February 7th

Get your tickets now!



QUIZ NIGHT

WITH BANGERS AND MASH SUPPER

SATURDAY 23RD FEBRUARY 2019

DOORS OPEN 7PM - QUIZ STARTS AT 7.30PM.

ST. FAITH'S PARISH HALL,

MILTON ROAD, WATERLOO L22

A fun quiz night including a scrumptious Bangers and Mash Supper.

Tickets cost £6.00, payable in advance.

Phone Corinne on **07510219705** to buy tickets

In aid of Disabled Access at St. Faith's Church

Why not get a team together and win a prize?

Raffle on the night

Vegetarian sausages available upon request.

As it's almost St. David's Day,

why not wear something with a Welsh connection?

Spot prizes on the night.

ST. FAITH'S PARISH HALL HAS FULL DISABLED ACCESS.

February 5th

Regular readers of the old magazine will be familiar with a series of rants (his term!) by Denis Griffiths, holding forth on matters sacred and secular. This one contains both elements, but you will have to read to the last few paragraphs for the 'holy' content

Air Pollution Control: Gone Up in Smoke

Denis Griffiths

Although CO₂ is the major problem with respect to climate change there are many more chemicals which contribute to air pollution and, as usual, humankind is to blame for most of them.

At individual, national and international celebrations pyrotechnic displays appear to be a requirement with families, city mayors and governments spending large sums of money to pollute the planet. The reason for this would seem to be ego; the necessity to outdo neighbours, other cities and other countries. The "celebrations" to welcome in 2019 illustrate this very well and TV screens showed skies from Auckland to San Francisco obliterated with smoke to satisfy the collective egos of politicians. There is no reason for such harmful pollution when other means of celebratory expression are available.

Fireworks are not new and they are basically a series of chemical reactions which produce sound, light and heat. Chemicals are in powder form for easy storage and transport; they are normally packed in cardboard containers which take no part in the reaction. The main constituent of any firework is black powder (gunpowder) which consists of a fuel (carbon in the form of charcoal and sulphur) and an oxidiser to provide oxygen for the combustion of the charcoal. Ignition of the gunpowder produces the explosion which fires other chemicals in the firework skywards; this initial explosion produces the big bang and light. Basic details of the chemical reactions are described below but more details may be obtained using a Google search on the computer.

Oxidisers are mainly nitrates (usually potassium nitrate which decomposes to potassium oxide, nitrogen gas, and oxygen gas). The oxygen gas is used to burn the carbon. Typically black powder is composed of 75% potassium nitrate, 15% charcoal, and 10% sulphur and the hot gas generated by the burning of carbon and sulphur in the cardboard container generates high pressure which projects the firework into the air. This is the initial thrust but the pretty colours and star bursts follow through other chemical reactions. These "star burst" elements also have chemicals designed to produce different effects but they still rely on high temperature explosions. Instead of potassium nitrate, chlorates or perchlorates are used in star explosions, because their reactions produce a temperature high enough to energize the metal salts which produce the pretty colours.

That is enough chemistry but it is worth indicating some of the metallic salts used to produce the colours if only to illustrate what chemical cocktails fireworks are.

Red – lithium carbonate or strontium carbonate

Orange – calcium chloride

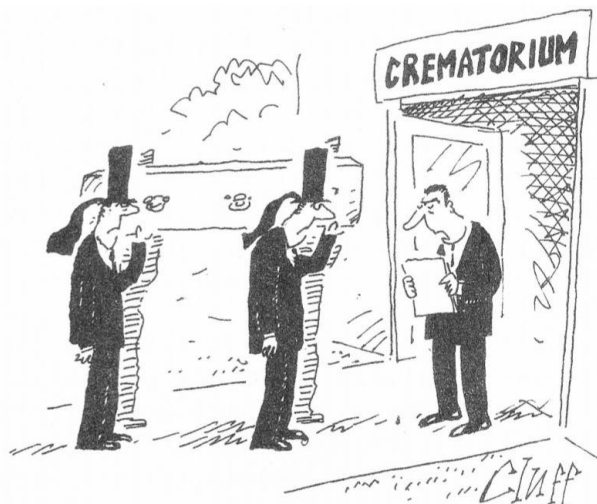
Yellow – sodium chloride

Green – barium chloride

Blue – copper chloride

Silver – metallic aluminium, titanium or magnesium.

The firework releases CO₂ and some oxides of nitrogen, both of which are damaging. If you drive a car you will be taxed on the fuel because CO₂ contributes to global warming and oxides of nitrogen pollute the atmosphere. This NO_x is why petrol cars have catalytic converters and your car must undergo a pollution control check at its MOT. No such restrictions apply to fireworks.



"So, whose particulates are we releasing into the atmosphere today?"

The bigger problem is, however, the metallic compounds which produce the pretty colours. Not all are burned, as the explosion breaks them into microscopic particles which are spread throughout the atmosphere. Just look at the smoke clouds formed after firework displays and that smoke contains microscopic metallic compounds. These remain in the atmosphere for people to breathe. The effects of many of these chemicals on young (and old) lungs is unknown as little research has been done. However, returning to the car situation, all diesel cars are supposed to be fitted with a particulate filter which will remove fine particulate matter from the engine exhaust. If particulate matter in diesel engine exhaust is dangerous to people, the same must be true for the fine particles produced by exploding the chemical cocktails which are fireworks. I have not looked at a packet of fireworks lately but I doubt that there is a comprehensive list of contents printed on it as there must be for foodstuffs. At the 2019 New Year celebration firework display in London some 8 tonnes of fireworks were exploded; that is a large amount of particulate matter in a small area.

At the risk of being labelled a killjoy, I would not take young children in my care anywhere near a firework display. I believe that they are dangerous to health as well as causing distress to many elderly people and small (as well as not so small) animals. Setting fire to money is not a good way to celebrate anything, especially when there are safer and more environmentally friendly alternatives.

Laser light shows with musical sound are available. They can also be made more environmentally friendly using solar and wind generated electricity stored in batteries. They produce no smoke or particulate matter to poison the onlookers. It makes sense to me. There is also the possibility of using illuminated drones to add to the effect of the lasers but

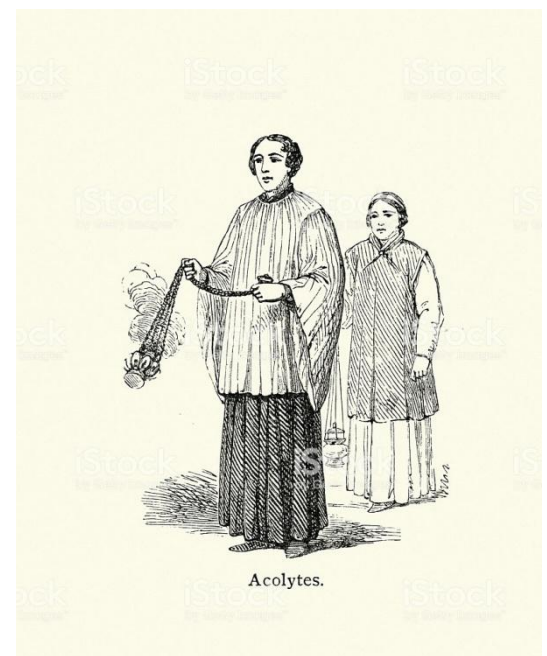
in London drones might be a sensitive issue as the authorities there do not seem able to track drones around Gatwick airport with any success.

Fireworks are not the only culprits, smoke comes from other sources. Some such sources of smoke have been the subject to restraining orders but others are still allowed to harm people. Remember the black buildings of Liverpool such as St Georges Hall and the Liver Building. As a youngster I always thought that they had been constructed from black stone. Returning from a trip to sea in the mid-1960s I was amazed to see the cleaned buildings as they had been before the smoke from coal fires had blackened them.

Remember bus journeys when cigarette smokers had to go upstairs on double-deckers or sit at the back on single-deckers. I recall my early flights when smoking was allowed at the back of the plane. Such obvious stupidity lasted for many years but now the damage caused by tobacco smoke has been recognised and bans are in place. Bars and restaurants provide outdoor places for the smokers but they still disfigure the areas with ash and cigarette ends.

But there are still other sources of smoke which are allowed, through neglect, ignorance or dogma. I am referring to the source which is very close to home, that of incense. I cannot see any theological reason for its continued use in churches. As far as I can perceive, it does no good and must be very harmful as can be witnessed from the number of people in our congregation who start coughing when the holy smoke descends. To deliberately harm people in this way does not seem very Christian. Maybe it is time we took a long look at such practices which have no actual grounding in our faith. As with fireworks, the reader can look at this matter further by searching the internet and a quick overview can be found at Wikipedia. I am not an advocate of Wikipedia for specialist research but it can be used carefully to give an insight into the topic. Some articles are well referenced and this is the case for one discussing the links between incense and breathing difficulties.

Like cigarette smoking (which has not been outlawed but has been moved away from the general public), those who wish to perform their incense rituals can do so where their practices will not harm others. It can be reasonably argued that people have rights to do whatever they wish; how often do you hear the phrase "It is my human right to". I agree, people do have the right to do whatever they wish, but with the caveat that the actions must not, knowingly, harm anyone else. We must not impose on other people, anything which will harm them. The air that we breathe is too important for our wellbeing to be polluted by anything, whether that "anything" gives some people entertainment, provides for luxurious transportation or is via arcane practices.



February 4th, 2019

Your **SHAPE** for God's Service

Course Organizer
Fr. John Reed

St. Faith Great Crosby & St. Mary Waterloo Park



Do you wish...

- You could discover your gifts;
- You could live a more joyful and fruitful Christian life;
- You could serve God more fully;
- You could become the person God has designed you to be?

**Take part in exploring
“Your SHAPE for God’s Service”!**

What will it involve?

“Your SHAPE for God’s Service” involves six meetings in a small informal group. It will be enjoyable and interesting!

We will help each other to explore our unique God-given “SHAPE,” and how we can use it in his service. We will look at:

Your Spiritual gifts

Heart's Desire

Abilities

Personality

Experiences

for God's Service

(God's unique gifts to you)

(what motivates and excites you; what you love to do)

(your talents, knowledge and skills)

(your character, personal qualities and strengths)

(your life experiences and what you've gained from them)

Why?

Most of us are very aware of our own weaknesses and failings, and so lack confidence in our Christian lives. We need to discover more of our gifts and strengths!



What will we do?

There will be some input from the leader on the topics, and on Biblical teaching. There will also be practical exercises, plenty of lively discussion and prayer.

Between each session, you will be asked to do about an hour of Personal Reflection and activities to help you discover more about yourself. By the final session you will have created a picture of your "shape", and gained insights about how God has designed and grown you.

It's important to come to all six of the sessions, as they build on each other.

At the end, you will be able to have a private sit-down with one of the Church leaders, to talk and think through how you might be using your "SHAPE" to serve God in the church, at work, with your family and friends, in the community and your voluntary/leisure activities.

Do join one of the groups!



Choose between:

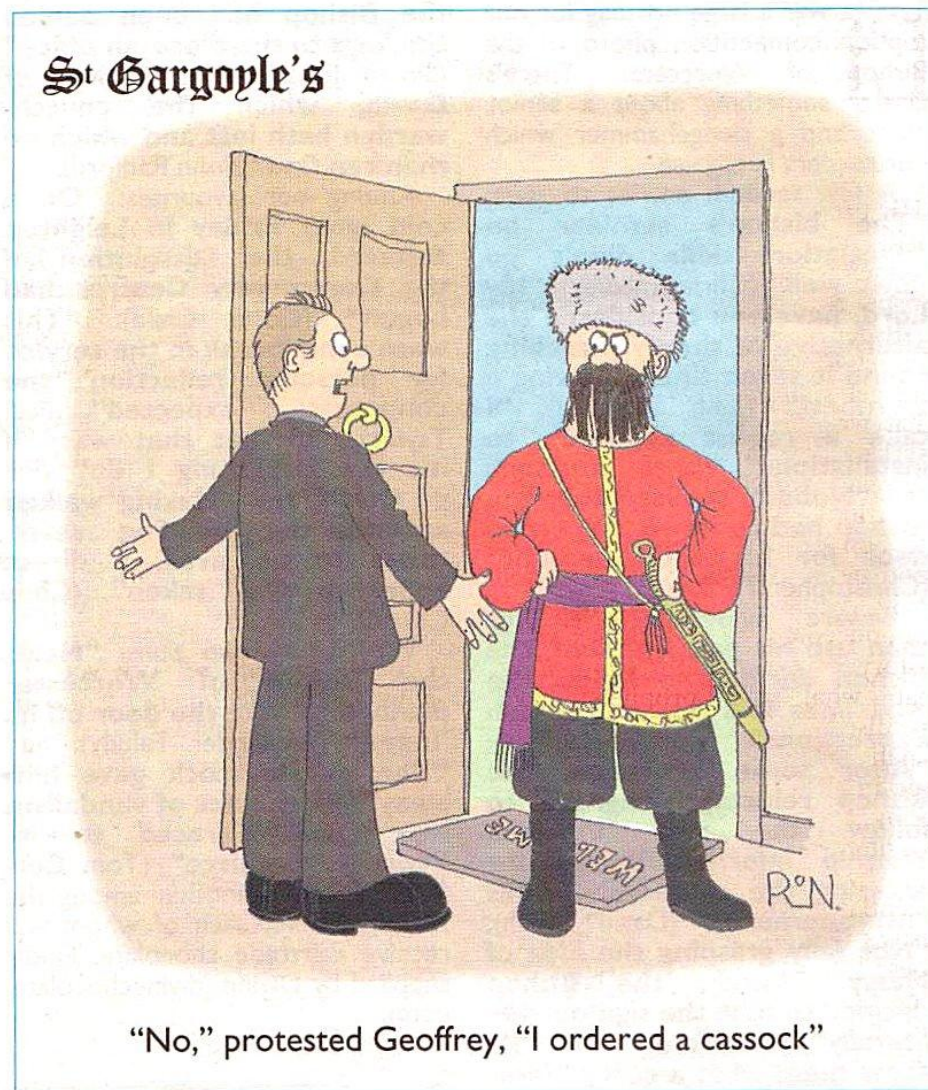
1. Monday 7.30 pm at St. Mary's from March 4th
2. Tuesday 7.00 pm at St. Faith's from March 12th

Contact : Fr. John Reed Telephone 01519283342
Email: reed926@btinternet.com

By : Sunday 10th February 2019

February 2nd, 2019

For some years, cartoons, stores and comments have been uploaded to the website, variously on the pages labelled as 'Funny you should say that' (jokes and cartoons), 'Curiouser and curiouser' (assorted absurdities from the world in general) and 'What the papers say' (church-related stories from the national press). In order to make them more easily accessible and (who knows?) seen by a wider audience, they will in future be posted to this journal. This first one is not new, but like all St Gargoyle's offerings, is well worth another airing. The editor welcomes contributions.



February 1st, 2019

A journey of faith

Fr Bill Matthews



Part I – Widnes and Warrington.

What forms a priest? How do people know when they're called? There's no one answer, of course, but as I retired from full time stipendiary ministry in April 2018, it occurred to me that it may help some people to read my own reflections on how it worked for me and our little family.

Asking my Dad if I could look at the round (rose) window at St Paul's, Widnes at 3 years old, my Mum said the only time that I'd been before was when I was baptised. We never know how much a young child takes in and the sense of God's presence can be great even in the very young. Anyway, only a year later, two big (6 year old) girls held each of my hands as I kicked up the autumn leaves all the way to begin seven years weekly Sunday School at the parish church of St Michael, Widnes. Within a few years I was attending Mattins as well and, as far as I recall, never missed. Perhaps it is no surprise that, at 9 years old, I believed that I first heard God's call to the priesthood.

The sunbeams were streaming in through the stained glass windows of St Michael's and I was sat in a pew at the back as the vicar preached about calling. Maybe it was childish imagination but I was convinced that God was calling me to be a vicar. I couldn't know then that it would be a long journey with many twists and turns but I told my teachers and school friends and was ridiculed for it for another three or four years.

It was during that year that I transferred from my unhappy time at a town centre school to the little CofE school next to the church. Two joyous years followed. During that time I collected a number of books on Theology and some Biblical commentaries. Despite reading some chapters, it's hard to tell how much I understood.

Having been confirmed soon after moving to my senior school, I excitedly moved up to Bible Class where I vividly recall studying St Paul's journeys under the tuition of a gifted and inspirational Reader. Another holy memory is of being taken along with that Reader, the vicar and the lovely Sunday School Superintendent, Mr Beasley, to Liverpool Cathedral for the glorious official opening of the first bay of the nave and Dulverton bridge in 1961. Work on the nave had begun the same year I was born. I loved the weekly rhythm of Evensong and was delighted when, one evening, a string quartet played for and just after the service.

The spine of the Bible I'd received from Sunday School was broken so when it, frequently, fell from my overfull book case, it always opened at II Kings 20 – which I always read. However, from a year or so after this, arrogantly believing the faith of some of the worshippers to be hollow (because of their behaviour) and that Science offered a more reliable world view, I declared myself an atheist and wouldn't sing hymns or adopt a prayerful posture in school assemblies. At 16 I started work in the Chemical Industry and became a laboratory assistant.

However, a recurring dream that came true (a close shave with death – outside St Ambrose church, Widnes) persuaded me that there were more things in heaven and earth... and I returned to my parish church where I had last glimpsed the numinous. This coincided with the start of a life time's relationship with Eileen. Her church was more 'evangelical' and I was struck by the power of a woman's preaching when I joined a youth outing to Lamberhead Green, Wigan. Both the BCP communion and the experimental liturgies then being trialled made the Eucharistic prayers live and worship became more visceral, immediate, numinous and alive.

Eileen had been baptised as a baby in the parish church of St Mary, Great Sankey. Her mother sent her along to a very large Sunday School in Friar's Green Independent Methodist Church in the centre of Warrington. Eileen was working as secretary to the Managing Director of a large auto electrical business in Widnes. We'd met at the farewell party of her long time school friend who was about to leave to become a WRN writer.

Following my experience in Wigan and Eileen's preference for the worship in my parish church, we visited the new vicar in Hough Green to offer our services as Sunday School teachers. This was met with corruscating rejection when I explained that I'd been, born again, converted. His reply was that, whilst he'd heard about that sort of thing before, he knew I'd get over it, hinting that when I did, I might only then be considered for Sunday School teaching. I felt humiliated and crushed and that the Church of England did not want me. I'd put aside my nine year old sense of vocation.

Eileen's brother, John was a leader at the Independent Methodist church in Stockton Heath. He'd arranged for her to be allowed to practise on the church's pipe organ. The organist at her own church guarded the instrument and repelled almost all boarders. Twenty years later, Eileen would play for NATO ships on exercise in UK waters – but we're getting ahead of ourselves. Those early years in Stockton Heath saw us establishing a successful youth club, teaching at Sunday School and for me, preaching and studying for the Independent Methodist ministers course – becoming one of their ministers in 1973 after four years of weekly tutorials, termly residential courses and annual summer schools led by very capable academics. In addition, I sat on a range of denominational and ecumenical committees taking leading roles at local and regional level in ecumenical and civic bodies and being invited to speak at services, conferences and other events in many places. It was ministry on a much bigger map but soon the map would get even bigger.



Magazine Matters

The piece below is reproduced from the final old-style final printed issue of *Newslink* and is a fuller explanation of the changes to our magazine. You can access the full issue [HERE](#)

Readers will have noticed that this edition is a good three months late – and is just catching up with Christmas. This is due to a chronic shortage of material in the last three months, together with the editor's recent indisposition. While the latter factor is temporary, the former is ongoing. For a long while it has proved increasingly difficult to get together enough original material to publish every two months, let alone monthly. At the same time the circulation of the printed edition, once not far short of 350 copies, has fallen to under 50, while more and more folk are accessing the magazine online. After much thought we think it makes sense to cease producing a deadline-dependent and costly printed magazine and instead upload contributions as and when they arrive in the more flexible medium of online publication. This will mean that, with very real apologies to the few remaining loyal printed version readers, this will be the last paper issue. We hope that those who can will access the new online journal. It will be added to and updated whenever there is news, and an announcement on the church website will proclaim that there is something new to read, without you having to await the printed version. At the end of each calendar month this incremental journal will be archived as usual and a new month begun.

So this is both a farewell and a welcome, as we move with the times and look forward to a bright future with our magazine journal on the church website. It goes without saying that contributions of any kind at any time will always be welcome. See the back page for website access details and join us on the other side.

For the past – thanks. To the future - yes!

Chris Price