

Saint Faith's Church

Great Crosby

Parish Magazine

JANUARY 2012



Worship at Saint Faith's

SUNDAYS

11.00am SOLEMN MASS and Children's Church

1.00pm Holy Baptism (2nd Sunday)

6.00pm Evening Service and Benediction (1st Sunday & as announced)



On 'Fifth Sundays' there is one joint Eucharist for both congregations followed by a shared lunch – please consult the Diary of Events, website or notices for details

WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday 10.30am, **Tuesday** 9.30am, **Wednesday** 10.30am (1662 Book of Common Prayer in S. Mary's), **Thursday** 9.30am (Holy Days only), **Friday** 6.30pm, **Saturday** 12noon (or Midday Prayer, as announced)

THE DIVINE OFFICE (The Prayer of the Church)

Morning Prayer: 9.00am daily (except Thursday)

Evening Prayer: 6.00pm daily (except Thursday)

Night Prayer: 9.15pm Saturday (Vigil of the Resurrection)

Please consult the weekly sheets for any variation in times for the Daily Office

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

Fr. Neil and Revd. Denise are available by appointment to hear confessions or to talk about any matter in confidence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is always available in preparation for Christmas and Easter and at other advertised times.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK AND DYING

Please contact Fr. Neil at any time, day or night, if someone is ill and requires the ministry of a priest.

HOME VISITS to the sick and housebound and those in hospital

If you, or someone you know, are unable to get to church and would like to receive Holy Communion at home, or be visited in hospital or at home, please ring the Vicarage or another member of the Ministry Team. We are always happy to make home or hospital visits to the sick and housebound so please call us to arrange this.

JANUARY



From the Ministry Team January 2012

Dear friends,

“What can I give Him, poor as I am?”

These are words from the familiar and rather beautiful hymn ‘in the bleak mid-winter’ which we sing at Christmas. For every Christian taking their discipleship seriously, it is a question which must be asked each day. What can we give to God in thanksgiving for the blessings He has given us? Is any gift adequate? Yes, we are poor. Spiritually poor a lot of the time. The Church speaks a lot about its work ‘with the poor’ but those of us who come to church week by week do so because we recognise our spiritual poverty. We might be facing difficult financial times, as the daily news programmes remind us, but the issue of spiritual poverty goes right back to the start of creation.

The Church has the awesome and humbling privilege of speaking about God to those who recognise their need of him. We preach a God who humbled himself to be born of a Virgin and dwell among us “and we beheld his glory” (Jn 1:14). The love which shines out from the Crib must surely inspire us to consider the question “What can I give him?”

Churches are not exempt from the financial difficulties facing many groups, businesses and organisations at this time. The vast display of trees in church recently, each raising funds for a worthwhile cause, gives a taste of the way society is served by those who give selflessly in charitable ways. But even charities require money to exist and organise themselves. Churches do not run on thin air either. Nor do we receive any support from the state. You’d be surprised how many people think we do!

At the start of 2012 each one of us who counts St. Faith’s as his or her spiritual home will be encouraged to consider afresh their response to God’s love through the financial support they can give to the Church. A Stewardship Campaign can be an unwelcome challenge to some people, even a threat. But like many so called threats, they can also be seen as opportunities. Are you a person whose glass is half full or half empty?

As we are challenged to consider our financial commitment to the life of the Church, it is an opportunity to make a very bold statement – to ourselves, our families and friends – about the place of the Church in our lives. Does God come first? Do we really place the ministry of the church to all in our parish high on the list of priorities? The challenge to support and sustain a large Victorian building is no easy feat in today's world, but we believe it to be important that worship can be offered to the Lord in the beauty of holiness. The financial support we give to the church says something about our response to God's love in Christ. In a society where organised religion meets at best with indifference, where other faiths are sometimes perceived to be higher on the agenda than Christianity, we must rise to the challenge of putting Christ at the centre of our lives.

We must consider our giving in the light of God's love, his gift to us in Christ. And when we do that, we may well find we echo the last verse of the hymn I mentioned:

*"What can I give him, Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him — Give my heart."*

As the 2012 Stewardship Campaign gets under way, please welcome this opportunity to consider your giving with a prayerful, generous and open heart, remembering the words of the Gospel: " where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Luke 12:34)."

With my love and prayers

Father Neil



Many Thanks

... are due to the Sunday School Teachers and helpers who gave the children yet another wonderful joint Christmas party at St. Mary's, complete with Father Christmas! And it was no ordinary weekend to be holding this party as it also saw the start of the third highly successful **Christmas Tree Festival** (about which you will read fuller reports elsewhere in this magazine). The Festival was a truly uplifting experience and has certainly helped us to look to Christmas with not a little excitement. So many thanks to the many people who not just made it work but made it

work so well. I'm grateful also to our celebrity guest, Andrew Lancel, for making our *Celebration of Advent in Words and Music* a truly remarkable and moving evening which was shared with members of the other Waterloo Churches. What better way to prepare for the Christmas Feast?

We are grateful to St. Mary's for hosting the November Quiz Night and to all who supported that and helped to raise a goodly sum of money for the Senior Citizens' Epiphany-tide lunch. It's been a couple of years now since we have needed to dip into PCC funds for this event, so very many thanks to all who supported this.

We at St. Faith's are truly blessed to have such a large number of people who are so committed and dedicated. That is truly something to thank God for.

Fr. Neil



Going Places

I have been in many places, but I have never been in Cahoots. Apparently you can't go there alone. You have to be in Cahoots with someone.

I've also never been in Cognito. I hear no one recognizes you there.

I have, however, been in Sane. They don't have an airport. You have to be driven there. I have made several trips there, thanks to my family, friends and those where I have worked.

I would like to go to Conclusions, but you have to jump and I am not too much on physical activity anymore.

I have also been in Doubt. That is a sad place to go and I try not to visit there too often.

I've been in Flexible, but only when it was very important to stand firm.

Sometimes I'm in Capable, and I go there more often as I'm getting older.

One of my favourite places to be is in Suspense. It really gets the adrenalin flowing and pumps up the old heart. At my age I need all of the stimuli I can get.

Now if I can just avoid getting in Continent....

Poems for Christmastide

A Christmas Carol

G.K.Chesterton

The Christ-child lay on Mary's lap,
His hair was like a light.
(O weary, weary was the world,
But here is all alright.)
The Christ-child lay on Mary's breast,
His hair was like a star.
(O stern and cunning are the Kings,
But here the true hearts are.)
The Christ-child lay on Mary's heart,
His hair was like a fire.
(O weary, weary, is the world.
But here the world's desire.)
The Christ-child stood at Mary's knee,
His hair was like a crown,
And all the flowers looked up at him,
And all the stars looked down.

Before the Paling of the Stars

Christina Rossetti

Before the paling of the stars,
Before the winter morn,
Before the earliest cock-crow,
Jesus Christ was born:

Born in a stable,
Cradled in a manger,
In the world His hands had made
Born a stranger.

Priest and King lay fast asleep
In Jerusalem;
Young and old lay fast asleep
In crowded Bethlehem;



Saint and Angel, ox and ass,
Kept a watch together,
Before the Christmas daybreak
In the winter weather.

Jesus on His Mother's breast
In the stable cold,
Spotless Lamb of God was He,
Shepherd of the fold:

Let us kneel with Mary Maid,
With Joseph bent and hoary,
With Saint and Angel, ox and ass,
To hail the King of Glory.

Carol

Eiluned Lewis

Sing, happy child, Noel, Noel,
Bright shines Orion's sword
Where every star stands sentinel
And watchful of their Lord.

Sweetly the carol singers speak,
They fill the firelit hall,
Singing of Mary, fair and meek,
And Jesus in the stall.

Hark, happy child, to what they say,
Lock in your heart their song
Lest you should lose it on the way
When every road seems long.

You will recall the spiced scent
Of leaves where no winds stir,
When gold and frankincense are spent,
And nothing's left but myrrh.



The Silent Gift

Nigel Beeton

The gift of God came silently, with surreptitious grace,
To a dark, concealed, stable block in an unfamiliar place.
No ceremonial pomp was there, no fanfare in the street,
When the sacred gift from God was given - and creation made complete.



To no rich men were tidings given, but to shepherds in the fields,
The angel-song, so clear for them, was from other men concealed.
The nobles of the neighbourhood saw nothing of a star;
The heavenly sign of divine love came to Wise Men from afar!

When the Son of God came down from heaven to give his life for all,
A rough-hewn cross of wood was his outside Jerusalem's wall.
The greatest gift that ever was, that freed us all from blame,
Was thus wrapped up in pain and blood and ignominious shame.

So, how shall we, this Christmas time our varied gifts present?
How shall we be mindful, then of what they represent?
No matter what we buy, or give or what we can afford,
However well we wrap them up, we can't outgive the Lord.

From the magazine of St Mary, Davyhulme, Manchester

Tree Festival Fanfare

Chris Price



The trees have come and gone, the last pine needles swept up and it is time to look back in thankfulness on the third Christmas Tree Festival at St Faith's.

There can be no doubt that the week was a wonderful success. Building on the experience and achievements of the first two years, Margaret, Maureen and our team of hard-working, tireless helpers provided a spectacle for the church and the community like nothing else. Elsewhere in this issue, Eunice has written about the splendid carol concert under the auspices of our Services Family Support Group... so what follows are a few highlights of the rest of the week.

Preparations had of course started weeks – months – ago, with planning meetings and all the detailed arrangements for charities and trees. The pace began to hot up with the clearing of the clutter for the arrival of the trees, followed by their positioning, and two days of decoration and illumination. With this finally done (sounds simpler than it was!) and the refreshments and sales stalls laid out, it was time on the first Sunday for the packed and colourful morning service (where a multitude of toys were offered up for distribution to needy local families) and the start of the festival proper. From then to 4.00 pm the following Saturday we opened, afternoons and some evenings (over 40 hours in all) to welcome people, refresh them, sell them cakes, the wonderful craft work on sale and the prolific products of St Faith's famous Jam Factory (who were to sell over 400 assorted pots of preserves before the week was out) – and to hope that they would give generously to the 45 different good causes, local and national, represented by the trees which adorned every part of the church.

People came and went, and often lingered on, throughout the daytime sessions, but the busiest times were for the special events. On the opening Sunday, a service of Celebration of Advent featured actor Andrew Lancel (forsaking his current role as Coronation Street's villainous rapist!) giving biblical and poetic readings, while a choir from Churches Together in Waterloo performed for us. On the Wednesday evening, it was the turn of the military band to perform. And on the final Saturday at noon, strings and woodwind groups from the Liverpool Saturday morning Music School – regular performers at our summer Saturday concerts – entertained another full house. And, each weekday lunchtime, choirs from local schools came to stand amongst the trees and perform to visitors, parents and partakers of soup and sandwiches at the back. They came from Crosby Road, St Mary's, St John's, Stanfield and MTS Junior Boys, together with the 'tinies' from Waterloo Primary – several of whose classes came down from time to time to look around. On all these occasions, the church buzzed with happy activity.

When it was all over, the trees un-decked and carted off and the pine needles swept up, the team could reflect on a job well done. The photos in the middle of this issue, the wonderful comments in the visitors' book, and the touching prayers on our prayer tree, reflect on a week of very real outreach to our parish and the wider community, as well of course to the many good causes on display. You can read more – and see many photos of the week's happenings – on our website, together with the comments and porayers mentioned above. It is too soon to provide a balance sheet – and in any case it was about mission rather than just money – but the many comments about the warmth of the welcome, the free entry, the events on offer, the standard of the refreshments and sales goods, the shop-window offered to the charities: these all spoke of the Church in action and doing the Lord's work in this place. Thanks be to God indeed – and to all those who in his name made it all happen.



Liturgy and Lunch

Peter Garner



Liturgy and Lunch always brings a new approach to our Sunday mornings. Helen Coffey, and Father Neil, at the last liturgy and lunch took us much further - to a different continent and another time. Speaking for myself, I know that while I attend the celebration of the Eucharist fairly regularly and very seriously, there are times when I am on automatic pilot.

Not this time, though. Experiencing the same content in an entirely different setting, totally stripped of all “the trimmings,” enabled us, I think, to see and give thought to the Eucharist as it must have appeared in the time of the early Church and – as Helen Coffey showed – even now on the Chaco of Paraguay.

As a lover of classical music, I found it was like hearing a Mozart symphony performed on original instruments, contrasted with the sounds of the great ensembles of Berlin or Vienna. Wonderful music from the great orchestras, but more real, perhaps more true to the original concept, when performed by some small village ensemble fresh from the pen of the composer.

We can marvel at, and greatly enjoy, the splendour of the Liturgy in the Cathedral style of worship which we are privileged to take part in on most Sundays at St. Faith’s, but going back to basics enabled us to experience what was the Eucharist in its earliest days and is to this day in places like the deprived areas of Paraguay.

Wherever and however it is experienced, the eternal mystery of the Eucharist comes shining through.

The next “Liturgy and Lunch” will be in St. Faith’s on Sunday 29th January at 10.30am – although, on this occasion only, a certain age has to be reached in order to qualify for the lunch!

Would You Believe It?

Give witches pink hats to fight racism, says equality expert

From the Wicked Witch of the West in The Wizard of Oz to Meg, the good witch from the Meg and Mog children’s books, witches have always dressed in black. But now equality experts claim that the traditional attire could send a negative message, to toddlers in nursery and lead to racism.

Teachers should replace the pointy black hat with a pink one, they say, and dress fairies, generally resplendent in pastels, in darker shades.

Another staple of the classroom - white paper - has also been questioned by Anne O'Connor, an early years consultant who advises local authorities on equality and diversity. Children should be given paper other than white on which to draw, and paints and crayons should come in 'the full range of flesh tones', reflecting the diversity of the human race, says the former teacher.

Finally, staff should be ready to lie, if necessary, when asked by pupils what their favourite colour is and, in the interests of good race relations, answer 'black' or 'brown'.

The measures, outlined in a series of guides in *Nursery World* magazine, are aimed at avoiding racial bias in children as young as two. Ms O'Connor, who has worked with Newham and Tower Hamlets councils in London and devised equality material for Lancashire council's child care service, said the approach developed children's empathy and helped teachers to explore their own possible prejudices.

'People who are feeling defensive can say "well there's nothing wrong with white paper", but there could be if you don't see yourself reflected in the things around you. The minute you start thinking, "if I give everyone green paper, what happens?" you have a teaching potential.'

'People might criticise this as political correctness gone mad', she admits.

Margaret Morrissey, a spokesman for the Parents Outloud campaigning group, disagrees. She said: 'Not allowing toy witches to wear black seems to me nonsense and in the same vein as those people who have a problem with Baa Baa Black Sheep. Children just see a sheep in a field, whether it be black, grey, white or beige. I have worked with children for 41 years and I don't believe I have ever met a two-year-old who was in any way racist!'

An Epiphanytide Reflection

Fr Dennis



'Arise, shine out Jerusalem, for your light has come; the glory of the Lord is rising on you, though night still covers the earth and darkness the people... The nations come to your light... everyone in Sheba will come bringing gold and incense.'

These sayings of the prophet Isaiah must have been very much in the mind of St Matthew when he described the coming of the Magi to worship the new-born Saviour of the world in Bethlehem. So too must have been the words, which were recorded by Matthew but uttered by Jesus during his public life, when he praised the Roman centurion, a gentile, a foreigner, for his great faith: 'I tell you solemnly, nowhere in Israel have I found faith like this. And I tell you that many will come from the east and the west to take their places at the feast in the kingdom of heaven, but the subjects of the kingdom (meaning the Jews) will be turned out in the dark' (8:10f)

Roughly twenty-five years after his death on Calvary, this acceptance of Christ by the gentiles was described in his gospel by Matthew, in his beautiful story of the Wise Men in the east being drawn to Bethlehem by a star that shone especially bright in the darkness of the night sky, resulting in the epiphany of revelation to them of God in the person of the infant Jesus. The Apostles, when trying to understand the events of Christ's life, had been taught by Christ himself to look for their meaning in certain passages of the old Testament, and so it is more than likely that Matthew linked the star of Bethlehem, shining serenely in the sky while night covered the earth and darkness the peoples, with a prophecy in the Book of Numbers, which promised 'A star shall come out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel' (24:17)

Originally, this was seen as a reference to the founding of the royal house of David from which the Messiah would come. But Matthew went on to link the star with Bethlehem, which was the city of David, and moreover the town foretold by another prophet (Micah) as being the place chosen by God where the promised Messiah would be born. Since the royal line of David had long since vanished, the Messiah would not be a political leader but rather a spiritual one, and his coming, to a large extent, would be ignored by his own people.

It was mainly the gentiles, represented by the Wise Men, who were to be drawn to this Star of Bethlehem, and came to believe in God's greatest self-revelation, through the person of Jesus Christ. We are told nothing of what the Magi said, but the gospel, in a concrete way, describes the sublime act of their perfect faith in him, whom they sought: 'Falling to their knees they paid him homage.' Then they offered him gifts, gold as befitting a royal person, frankincense reserved for the worship of God, and myrrh, a substance used in dressing wounds and embalming bodies, signifying that this child was truly man, capable of suffering, and destined one day to die.

We may perhaps say that we have no gold, frankincense, or myrrh. That is true, but we have something more valuable, precious treasures that we can present to Christ, our Saviour and our King. We bring gold to Christ when we try and make him the king of our hearts. We offer frankincense when by our worship and prayer we proclaim his divinity. And we can, in some small way, alleviate the pain of the wounds he suffered for us by applying the myrrh of our own sufferings, our sorrow, our humiliations and tears.

The departure of the Magi from their own country is symbolic of every response of faith. When we make an act of faith, we abandon something, the kind of outlook which urges us to rely only on the tangible material world and we allow ourselves to be drawn, as were the Magi, by someone who, although invisible, is more real than the world of sense around us. But we must always remember that we could never begin to seek God, draw nearer to God, unless God had already found us. The desire for God, the secret thirst for salvation that arises within us, is not begotten of any human emotion, but rather kindled by God himself.

When we are baptised in this faith, we become the enlightened; we carry within us the light of faith; we are marked with the sign of God; we become Magi to others in our turn. As Pope St Leo the Great once said, ‘Whoever preserves in himself, or herself, the brightness of a holy life, becomes for many a star which lights the way to the Lord.’



“Where There’s a Will...”

Making a will and keeping it up to date is good Christian stewardship. Churches should be encouraging, whether or not church members are likely to include their church in their will. For nearly 500 years, the Church of England has encouraged its members to keep their wills up-to-date. The Book of Common Prayer gives firm guidance on will making. In the section on ‘The Visitation of the sick’, people are ‘admonished’ to make their will and the more general point is made that they should often be reminded about settling their estate whilst in health. Much of the land and some church buildings have been built on the generosity of previous generations. There is a strong tradition of leaving a legacy to support the mission of the Church.

Out-of-date wills (e.g. old addresses, missing beneficiaries) can cause unnecessary complications, distress and costs for the surviving family and friends. A new will can be made at any time with a solicitor, and shouldn’t cost much. It may be tempting to write a will yourself, but home-made wills can be tricky, and leave your loved ones with problems. A will made with a solicitor is far more reliable.

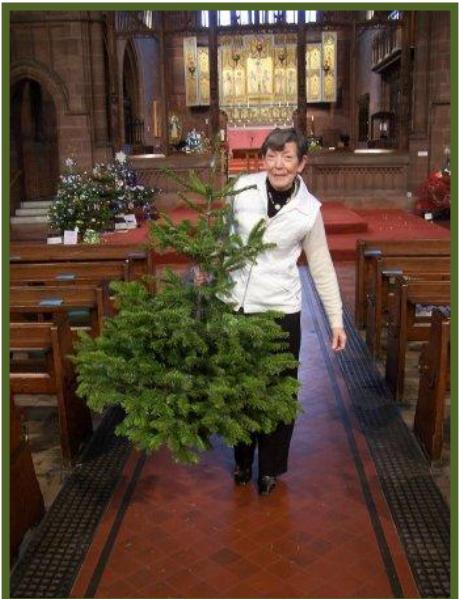
Most people will only leave gifts in their wills if they think the church will use them well. So, it is good practice for PCCs to agree a policy on how legacy income will be spent; things such as development or mission projects and not just to fund operation costs.



ONLINE EXTRA PICTURE GALLERY

Eight more pictures of the Christmas Tree Festival at various stages from the first positioning of the trees to their removal on the final Sunday afternoon





It is a good idea to discourage people from leaving restricted legacies because circumstances change and wills are seldom kept up to date. This is the Legacies Policy that was approved by St Faith's PCC on the 22 November 2011:

"The policy of the PCC is to use legacies to help fund significant development projects in the parish, whether buildings, equipment or staff. As circumstances change over the years, it may not be possible to fulfil specific donor requests, so church members are encouraged to leave gifts in their wills for the general purposes of the parish. The PCC will discuss with executors the most appropriate use of the gift in the light of current projects and the donor's known areas of interest in the church (e.g. young people, music, buildings)."

Please consider leaving a legacy for St Faith's Church. It enables us to make a lasting contribution to our church family and helps secure the work of St Faith's Church for future generations.

David Jones
Treasurer

Coffey Time!



Dear Friends at St Mary's and St Faith's,

I've never known four weeks to go by so quickly – it seems that no sooner had I settled in than it was time for me to say goodbye! I want to thank both congregations for the warmth of your welcome and for all the ways, large and small, in which you have accepted, supported and encouraged me during my placement; for opening your homes and your hearts to me; sharing the excited build-up to my daughter's wedding and also for your financial contribution to my placement in Paraguay.

I may only have been with you for four weeks, but Father Neil certainly ensured that every day was packed full of services, visits and meetings! I spent time with the older people's holiday club, visited members of the congregation at home with Communion, I sat in on a PCC meeting, ate delicious chocolate brownie at the Sunday School party, I met the support group for Service Families, spent time with most of the Readers and leadership team and attended a service at Greenheys. I arrived with you having no experience of leading morning or evening prayer; no experience of assisting at a wedding, baptism or funeral; and no idea at all of the liturgical delights of Corpus Christi! But I left you having had the privilege of participating in all of them.

Thanks to your patient and prayerful example I had the privilege and pleasure of worshipping and working alongside you and learning from you. Assisting to lead worship in St Mary's and St Faith's led me to reflect on the differences and similarities of both churches and church families. It seems to me that you are blessed to have this variety of settings – it's what will hold you together and help you to continue to reach out **beyond** the walls of each church into the rest of the parish – to people who need to know how much Jesus loves them – through your words, actions, prayers and presence. That which you have in common as well as that which is unique to each congregation are God's gift to you to make the most of. His call is often to leave the familiar view – whatever that is for us, and to follow his lead into new and exciting ways of service within the community in which he has placed us.

I leave you with a deeper understanding of parish ministry and with a greater confidence in my ability to lead a richer variety of worship. Thank you! May I offer you prayerful encouragement for the future – in the overall mission of the parish as a whole; in your new ventures like Liturgy and Lunch; in the decisions about buildings and upkeep, and the exciting opportunities to draw more families and children into both church families.

It was wonderful to see you all a few weeks ago when I came to share some of my experiences in Paraguay, and I look forward to seeing some of you during the Christmas Tree festival. Please continue to pray for all those training for service, especially my fellow students and I at Mirfield – we need it!

May I wish you and those for whom you care all the blessings of a peace-filled Christmas, With love in Christ

Helen Coffey

(Helen apologises for the lateness of this piece: the editor apologises for its title!)

Dates for the Diary...



Sunday 1st January 2012

THE NAMING AND CIRCUMCISION OF JESUS

11am Solemn Eucharist followed by a glass of 'fizz' to welcome the New Year

Saturday 7th January

7pm Epiphany Quiz Night with Fish & Chip Supper in St. Faith's Hall to raise money for Hall refurbishment

Sunday 8th January - THE EPIPHANY

11am Solemn Eucharist

Sunday 15th January

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST & COMMITMENT TO MISSION SUNDAY

11.00am Solemn Eucharist and launch of the 2012 Stewardship Campaign

Sunday 29th January

10.30am Liturgy and Lunch; joint Eucharist in St. Faith's at 10.30am followed by the Senior Citizens' Epiphany-tide lunch

And watch this space for details of the...



“The Royal Variety Show”

February 17th, 18th & 19th 2012 in St. Mary’s Hall.

An evening of varied entertainment skilfully performed by young people from the Uniformed Organisations of both churches.

A Sweet Point of Law?

A court in Spain has ruled that it has no jurisdiction over a case brought against a man dressed as one of the three Wise Men for injuring a woman with a sweet, because he was a ‘foreign dignitary of unknown origin’.

On January 6th, Spanish children gather in the streets to watch parades where the Three Wise Men – Balthazar, Melchior and Caspar – are borne aloft on floats distributing sweets to the crowds. But when the court received a complaint that a woman had been injured in the eye by King Balthazar, the judge was forced to make an extraordinary decision.

He ruled that the court had no jurisdiction over this foreign dignitary, whose true nationality could not be established. He made it clear that he did not want to set a precedent which would make the fiesta difficult to stage. And he added that although those responsible for distributing the sweets were not in fact the actual Three Kings, but people dressed as them, it was Balthazar who had still been named as the culprit – and so, quite properly, he threw out the case...

Carols and Christmas Trees

Eunice Little



With the Christmas Tree Festival in full swing, Wednesday loomed and as this was the night for the Service Families Support groups monthly meeting what better way to hold this than to have a Carol Service with Military Band. The church looked stunning with all the beautifully decorated trees. Once again our tree was decorated with the photographs of the service personnel who have sadly lost their lives in the last 10 years in Afghanistan. Sadly there was an increase in their number this year bringing the total to 390. Christmas will not be the same this year for 45 families who have lost loved ones in the 12 months from December 2010 - 2011.

After a flurry of phone calls and e-mails to get the Military band in place, members of Merchant Taylors' cadet force to act as stewards, carol sheets printed, refreshments in the form of industrial quantities of shortbread and mince pies made we were ready to go!

And what an evening we had! The band arrived first, all 18 members, with a percussion section this year and a new Bandmaster. They began to tune up before playing an introductory medley of Christmas tunes as people started to arrive. So with 100-120 people sitting comfortably the service began. After a number of carols and readings, Padre Cole Maynard led the prayers asking us to remember the families of the 9,500 service personnel who will be away from their loved ones this Christmas. The carols continued to the superb accompaniment of the band, and the service ended with the band playing a wonderful compilation of the carols we had sung. Refreshments followed to end a truly wonderful evening and a lovely start to the Christmas season.

As for 2012, the group will continue to meet on the first Wednesday of each month, 7.30 pm – 9.00 pm, in church, to which all are welcome. We are hoping to arrange for speakers to come along to some of these meetings to talk about the different types of support given to servicemen and women and their families and also how the servicemen/women are helping to rebuild the infra-structure in Afghanistan and other places around the world. So if you would like to hear more and also give your support please come along and join us. Watch for the information about these meetings.

Thank you all for the support that you continue to give and may I wish you a joyful Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

'The King of the Bibles'?



In a lengthy article under this heading, London Anglican priest Peter Mullen, in a recent *Daily Telegraph*, launched a powerful attack on the language and thinking of most modern translations of the bible. The occasion was the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible, whose sidelining by the C. of E. he greatly deplores.

'The King James Bible,' he declares, 'is a work of literary and spiritual genius', whose 'words and phrases have penetrated deeply into English literature. For centuries, people of all walks of life have carried around with them echoes of the King James Version. Sidelining the King James Version especially deprives our children. There is no such thing as noble truth expressed in ignoble words. The choice of words determines what is being said. Therefore, we should choose the best.'

Mullen proceeds to quote, selectively of course, a selection of what he reckons to be inept, inadequate and sometimes totally inaccurate translations to be found in modern versions. Here are a few...

"Strips of cloth" is no substitute for "swaddling clothes". And Mary was "with child" – she had not "fallen pregnant" as it says in one of the modern versions. You cannot satisfactorily replace "through a glass darkly" with the crass literalism "puzzling reflections in a mirror" or "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal" with "noisy gong and clangng cymbal"... The King James Bible was designed to be read aloud in churches. All the modern versions sound as if they have been written by tone-deaf people with tin ears and no rhythm.

What level of vacuity is reached when "Son of Belial" (the devil himself) is rendered by the New English Bible (NEB) as "a good-for-nothing"? As if the son of the devil is only a truant from the fourth form who has been stealing from the housemaster's orchard. Occasionally it is mindlessly un-poetic and banal, as in the substitution of "Acclaim Yahweh" for the mesmerisingly beautiful and timelessly familiar "make a joyful noise unto the Lord". But in one example of supreme idiocy the meaning becomes impenetrable: The King James Version says, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord ..." In the New Jerusalem Bible this degenerates into tasteless obscurantism: "If you live in the shelter of Elyon and make your home in the shadow of Shaddai, you can say to Yahweh ..." The RSV makes a habit of iconoclasm, as for instance in its destruction of that very familiar phrase: "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." The RSV says, "Take up your pallet and go home." Because we must on no account be allowed to imagine that the poor paralytic slunk off carrying his four-poster, we have forced upon us the literalism pallet: and the result sounds like instructions to a sloppy painter.

The NEB, for “wolves in sheep’s clothing” gives us the pantomime howler “men dressed up as sheep”. And then the end of the world itself is described as if it were only an exceptionally hot afternoon at Goodwood: “My dear friends...” (that is the voice of the NEB’s urbane, house-trained St Peter) “...do not be bewildered by the fiery ordeal that is coming upon you, as though it were something extraordinary.” The end of the world not extraordinary?

There is a sort of discreet charm about the KJV’s saying, “It ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.” This is marvellous. It seems to ‘reach up the underclothes of words’, as that other great admirer of biblical prose, Dylan Thomas, said. But the Jerusalem Bible comes straight out with “ceased to have her monthly periods”. And the KJV’s “great whore of Babylon” seems to have lost what is left of her character when the New Jerusalem Bible refers to her only as “the famous prostitute”. Who is this – Eskimo Nell?

The KJV translates Psalm 139: 16 – a beautiful poem in which the Psalmist declares that God knew him “while he was yet in his mother’s womb – as thine eyes did see my substance yet being unperfect.” This is allusive, evocative, tender. Unbelievably, the NJB gives us instead, “Your eyes could see my embryo” – as if God were a member of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority.

There is a pervading irreverence bordering on blasphemy. The translation of the Psalms in the Book of Common Prayer is by Miles Coverdale and he renders the Hebrew, “O let thine ears consider well ...” The NJB gives this as “Listen attentively Yahweh”. But is that the way to speak to God? What more is there to be said when we notice that the NJB renders “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity” as “Sheer futility. Everything is futile.” That phrase will serve as the motto for all the modern translations: “Sheer futility”.

How hypocritical and sordid of the church authorities relentlessly to suppress the KJV, only to take it out and gawp at it in an anniversary year, as if it were a museum piece and we were all blundering tourists. The proper place for the KJV is on the lectern in every parish church – to be read, marked, learnt and inwardly digested, week in, week out.”

Thus speaks the righteously indignant Dr Mullen, and for those of us brought up on the King James version he will probably strike a chord of sympathy. It’s a one-sided selection of course, and he naturally fails to give any credit for the many times when modern versions make sense of the obscure, or produce poetic modern terms to replace words which have dropped entirely out of the language. But to this writer he is right to deplore the loss of poetic resonance and awesome ringing declamation in most modern translations. At St Faith’s we strive to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, with the best of ancient and contemporary ritual and music. Should we not therefore be giving worshippers a taste of the sublime also in the reading of the scriptures?

It's not that simple, of course. We oldies could probably happily accept, even delight in, doses of 17th century English. But such language is increasingly alien to younger generations, and the growing dominance of the language of email, text and twitter is only widening the gap. We need to speak to the up and coming generations (or at least those few who enter most of our churches) in a language they can relate to. But there is also a compelling case for presenting them with the very best that Christianity has to offer: challenging, not bland; demanding, not patronisingly simple.

As with so many contemporary issues, there is no obvious solution. Where can the balance best be found between the high language of state occasions and the everyday speech of the man (and especially child) in the street? Peter Mullen's arguments are powerful and his examples sometimes embarrassingly accurate in their exposure of contemporary church attitudes. Do we do the un-churched any favours by awkwardly and patronisingly pretending to be on their wavelength? Ought we instead to be saying that the 'old' language, a distillation of our rich history and heritage, is far better, and that they can take it or leave it? In any case they've mostly left it, and us, already...

What do you think?

Chris Price

First Communions



Please remember in your prayers those who received their First Holy Communion in December...

**Thomas Dixon, Lauren Dixon, Abigail Jackson, Charlotte Jones, Gavin Jones,
Ethan Voce-Pascoe**

A person is admitted to Holy Communion on the basis of their baptism, the sign and pledge of incorporation into the death and resurrection of Christ and the new life of the kingdom of God.

Thomas, Lauren, Abigail, Charlotte, Gavin and Ethan have been baptized, and they now receive the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ with us.

They are taking a new step in the life to which God has called them in baptism and which we trust they will later affirm in confirmation. We welcomed them and look forward to learning with and from them as we journey together on the Way of Christ.

The 100+ Club



A message to all existing members!

We are looking to boost the membership of the Club, thus making more money for the four lucky winners each month, and for the church! If you take an extra number or introduce a new member to the Club, you will be entitled to an extra, free entry for one month. You will pay as usual for your membership number and, on receipt of payment, we will add one extra number in your name for the following month's draw.

To take advantage of this offer, or if you have any questions, please contact Gareth Griffiths at 6, Lawton Road, Waterloo, L22 9QL.

Club Winners for December 2011

1	36	Eric Salisbury
2	48	Chris Spence
3	179	Jackie Williams
4	119	James Crooke

Don't be Ridiculous!



You wait for an absurd story for weeks then five come along at once... all in the Daily Telegraph' of Saturday, November 26th

A scheme to spruce up parts of central London by putting offenders to work with paintbrushes has had to be cancelled after the probation service said there were no available criminals within commuting distance.

One of Britain's largest bottled water companies has refused to comply with a new EU ruling which bans it from stating that drinking water can prevent dehydration.

Rotherham Council has refused to remove a pantomime poster it erected without planning permission.

A narcoleptic burglar has been spared a community service order after telling a judge he cannot work because he often falls asleep for two days.

A pilot who accidentally locked himself in his plane's lavatory caused a terror scare when he asked a passenger to bang on the cockpit door to raise the alarm. The co-pilot told ground control someone with a thick foreign accent was trying to break into the cockpit. Fighter jets and the FBI were alerted before the pilot returned.



Devilish Diversions

For most people it is a way of staying in shape while soothing the stresses of everyday life, but the Catholic Church's best-known exorcist says yoga is evil.

Fr Gabriele Amorth, who for years was the Vatican's chief exorcist and claims to have cleansed hundreds of people of evil spirits, said yoga is Satanic because it leads to a worship of Hinduism and 'all Eastern religions are based on a false belief in reincarnation'.

Reading J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books is no less dangerous, said the 86-year-old priest, who is the honorary president for life of the International Association of Exorcists, which he founded in 1990, and whose favourite film is *The Exorcist*, the 1973 horror classic. The Harry Potter books, which have sold millions of copies worldwide, 'seem innocuous' but in fact encourage children to believe in black magic and wizardry, Fr Amorth said. 'Practising yoga is Satanic, it leads to evil, just like reading Harry Potter,' he told a film festival in Umbria this week, where he was invited to introduce *The Rite*, a film about exorcism starring Sir Anthony Hopkins as a Jesuit priest.

'In Harry Potter the Devil acts in a crafty and covert manner, under the guise of extraordinary powers, magic spells and curses,' said the priest, who in 1986 was appointed the chief exorcist for the Diocese of Rome. 'Satan is always hidden and what he most wants is for us not to believe in his existence. He studies every one of us and our tendencies towards good and evil, and then he offers temptations.'

Science was incapable of explaining evil, said Fr Amorth, who has written two books on his experiences as an exorcist. 'It's not worth a jot. The scientist simply explores what God has already created.'

His views reflect previous warnings by the Pope, when, as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, he was the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Vatican's enforcer of doctrinal orthodoxy. In 1999, six years before he succeeded John Paul II as Pope, he issued a document that warned Roman Catholics of the dangers of yoga, transcendental meditation and other 'Eastern' practices. They could 'degenerate into a

cult of the body' that debases Christian prayer, the document said. Yoga poses could create a feeling of wellbeing in the body but it was erroneous to confuse that with 'the authentic consolations of the Holy Spirit', it said.

Italian yoga schools said Fr Amorth's latest criticism was absurd. 'It's an accusation that has nothing to do with reality,' said Vanda Vanni, the founder of the Mediterranean Yoga Association. 'Yoga is not a religion or a spiritual practice. It doesn't have even the slightest connection with Satanism or Satanic sects.' Giorgio Furlan, the founder of the Yoga Academy of Rome, said yoga had nothing to do with religion, 'least of all Satanism'. 'Whoever says that shows that they know absolutely nothing about yoga,' he said.

Fr Amorth has previously said that people who are possessed by Satan vomit shards of glass and pieces of iron. He has also claimed that Catholic sex abuse scandals are proof that Satan is waging a war against the Holy See.

Nick Squires, Daily Telegraph

(The editor who, readers will not be surprised to hear, takes the Telegraph, will be more than happy to print oddities and absurdities from papers of other persuasions, if only in the interest of political balance.)

Magazine Matters



As from this month's issue, we are, as explained over recent months in these pages, asking readers to pay 75p for their monthly copy (£9 for a year's issues). By now all readers should have been contacted in one way or another, asking them either to pay a (preferably annual) subscription, opt for this free, full-colour, online edition (and receive a monthly email telling them when each issue goes online) – or to stop getting the magazine delivered or posted. After this issue, only those who have responded will receive a magazine in future months. Once again, our apologies for having to do this – but the end result should be the provision of a much-needed source of income to the church, as well as savings of time, paper and postage.

The editor wishes those who remain with us a very happy New Year – and hopes they have not been out off by more than the usual quantity of (possibly dubious) humorous articles in the preceding pages.

The Parish Directory and Church Organisations



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928 3342; fax 920 2901

ASSISTANT PRIESTS

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Canon Peter Goodrich, 16 Hillside Avenue, Ormskirk, L39 5TD. 01695 573285
Fr. Dennis Smith, 16 Fir Road, Waterloo. L22 4QL. 928 5065

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Mrs Jacqueline Parry, 21 Grosvenor Avenue, Crosby. L23 0SB. 928 0726
Mrs Cynthia Johnson, 30 Willow House, Maple Close, Seaforth, L21 4LY. 286 8155

CHURCH WARDENS

Mrs Margaret Houghton, 16 Grosvenor Avenue, Crosby. L23 0SB. 928 0548
Mrs Maureen Madden, 37 Abbotsford Gardens, Crosby. L23 3AP. 924 2154

DEPUTY CHURCH WARDENS

Mrs Christine Spence, 52 Molyneux Road, Waterloo. L22 4QZ. 284 9325
Ms Brenda Cottarel, 6 Lawton Road, Waterloo. L22 9QL. 928 4275

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Mr David Jones, 65 Dunbar Road, Birkdale, Southport PR8 4RJ. 01704 567782

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Email: sfsmparishoffice@btinternet.com

GIFT AID SECRETARY

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Mrs Lynda Dixon, c/o the Vicarage. 928 7330

BAPTISM BOOKINGS

Mrs Joyce Green, 14 Winchester Avenue, Waterloo, L22 2AT. 931 4240

SACRISTANS

Mr Leo Appleton, 23 Newborough Avenue, Crosby. L23 3TU. 07969 513087

Mrs Judith Moizer, 1 Valley Close, Crosby. L23 9TL. 931 5587

SENIOR SERVER

Ms Emily Skinner, 1 Valley Close, Crosby. L23 9TL. 931 5587

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

Sunday 11.00 am in the Church Hall. Angie Price 924 1938

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

Mrs Linda Nye, 23 Bonnington Avenue, Crosby. L23 7YJ. 924 2813

CHURCH CENTRE

1, Warren Court, Warren Road, Blundellsands

UNITED BENEFICE MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

James Roderick 474 6162

CUB SCOUTS

Tuesday 6.30 - 7.45 pm. Adam Jones 07841 125589

Thursday 6.30 - 7.45 pm. Mike Carr 293 3416

SCOUTS

Tuesday 8.00 - 9.30 pm. George McInnes 924 3624

RAINBOWS

Monday 4.45 - 5.45 pm. Geraldine Forshaw 928 5204

BROWNIE GUIDES

Monday 6.00 - 7.30 pm. Sue Walsh 920 0318; Mary McFadyen 284 0104

CHOIR PRACTICE

Friday 7.15 pm - 8.30 pm.

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The **February 2012 'Newslink'** will be distributed on or before **Sunday, January 22nd**. Copy by **Sunday, January 8th**, please - but all contributions are welcome at any time.

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