

Newslink

March 2009

Worship at Saint Faith's



SUNDAYS

10.30am Morning Prayer

11.00am SUNG EUCHARIST and Children's Church

1.00pm Holy Baptism (2nd Sunday)

7.00pm Compline and Benediction (1st Sunday)

WEEKDAYS: HOLY EUCHARIST

10.30am Monday

9.30am Tuesday

10.30am Wednesday (S. Mary's, Waterloo)

9.00am Thursday (Holy Days)

6.30pm Friday

12noon Saturday

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

Father Neil is 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.

HOLY COMMUNION to the sick and housebound and those in hospital

If you, or someone you know, would like a visit from a member of the Church, please contact the Vicarage to arrange this. The Eucharistic Ministers are always happy to bring Holy Communion to the sick and housebound. If you are unable to get to church and would like to receive Holy Communion at home please contact Joyce Green (931 4240). If you or someone you know would like to be visited in hospital please let Fr Neil know. Fr Neil will normally try to take Thursday as his day off.



From the Ministry Team : March 2009

And finally

What is essential to Christian belief and what is peripheral? Amid all the theological arguments going on in the church at the current time that seems like quite an important question.

I remember when I was preparing to leave theological college it became clear that some of my colleagues believed that unless you wore one of the cassocks with the 39 buttons down the front (as in the 39 Articles of Religion in the Prayer Book) then you weren't considered to be a proper Christian. Such are the excesses of religious intolerance!

Helpfully, the Christian tradition has something to say on the matter of what is essential and what is not in terms of matters of belief. The mystics of the Christian tradition, those women and men of prayer who are generally counted as being the expert practitioners of the faith, distinguish between ultimate divine reality and humanly thinkable and experientiable forms of divine reality. Or to put it much more simply, because God is God there are many things about God which are beyond our comprehension.

I am indebted to John Hick in his recent book *Who or What is God?* for helping me to think through some of this. He points out that this distinction between a level of knowledge of God which is possible for us human beings, and that which is beyond our understanding, is found not only in Christianity but in Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, and Islam as well.

I am immensely encouraged by this, because it suggests to me that so many of the parts of the main religious traditions to which some people cling as if to life itself are actually just provisional. By this I mean that they are the best that mere human beings can do within a particular culture, within a particular historical epoch, and with all the limitations of any human being trying to fathom the mysteries of God. I am also encouraged because I hope it means that there are probably far more things about God which we hold in common with other religious traditions than we think.

A quote from the Sufi tradition (which you could call mystical Islam) written by al-Arabi in *The Bezels of Wisdom* sums some of this up:

“God is absolute or restricted as He pleases; and the God of religious beliefs is subject to limitations, for He is God contained in the heart of his servants. But the absolute God is not contained in anythingThus, He is not known (as Allah) until we are known.”

It seems to me those words chime almost perfectly with words of St Paul in the First Letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 13: ‘Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I am known’.

Would that some of those Christians who proclaim their views with such absolute certainty could achieve something of this humility.

Fr Mark

(With thanks to Fr Mark for his thought-provoking articles and sermons over the years, and renewed good wishes for his future ministry. Ed)

Moved by Mission

Fr. Neil writes:



Lent will be a very different affair for us this year. Discussion groups and Bible studies over the years have helped us to grow in our faith, I hope. But this year we are doing something which seeks ultimately to put others first, but I hope will also be fruitful for our own spiritual development. On five Monday evenings we will be engaging in the “*Mission Shaped Introduction*” course facilitated by the Diocesan Evangelist, Phil Pawley. I sincerely hope and pray – and I hope you will too – that this may be a spiritual springboard to help us focus more sharply on the need to be more ‘mission-minded’ in all we do.

Church leaders and indeed others have said much of the way they perceive Christianity to be marginalised in this country. You may well agree with them. The question is – what you are doing about it? If people do not come into contact with the living God, are we to blame? Is our faith a bit like private treasure which we keep to ourselves, or is it something we feel driven and privileged to share? If it is the former, then we are contributing to the spiritual decline in this country.

As part of our discussion about this at the last PCC we faced some multiple choice questions. Perhaps you would like to consider your answers to the same questions? They are printed below.

3

I am enormously heartened that nearly forty people from our two churches have signed

up for this. That is Good News to be shared! Please pray for all involved in this endeavour and pray particularly that it will enable us to be a little more confident to give 'an account of the hope that is within us' (1 Peter 3:15).

*Lord, You give the great commission: "Heal the sick and preach the Word."
Lest the Church neglect its mission, and the Gospel go unheard,
Help us witness to Your purpose with renewed integrity,
With the Spirit's gifts empower us for the work of ministry.*

*Lord, You show us love's true measure: "Father, what they do, forgive."
Yet we hoard as private treasure all that You so freely give.
May Your care and mercy lead us to a just society.
With the Spirit's gifts empower us for the work of ministry.*

*Lord, you bless with words assuring: "I am with you to the end."
Faith and hope and love restoring, may we serve as you intend
And, amid the cares that claim us, hold in mind eternity.
With the Spirit's gifts empower us for the work of ministry.*



Mission – whose job is it anyway?

These are questions considered at St Faith's P.C.C. meeting on 19th January and the answers given. How would you answer these questions?

How bothered am I about the spiritual poverty and spiritual hunger in this community?

- A. Not bothered at all = 0
- B. Don't think about it = 1
- C. bothered to some degree = 5
- D. bothered enough to want to do something about it = 6

How often do I talk about my faith to others?

- A. Never = 0
- B. Sometimes = 10
- C. I'm C of E – we don't do that! = 0
- D. Whenever I get the opportunity = 2

When did I last invite someone (non church member) to come with me to church?

- A. Can't remember! = 2
- B. Within the last year = 4
- C. Within the last month = 3
- D. Within the last week = 0
- E. Never at all = 3

Whose job is it, do you reckon, to spread the Good News of Jesus?

- A. The Bishop = 0
- B. Churchwardens and Ministry Team = 0
- C. PCC members = 0
- D. Mission Committee = 0
- E. Mine = 12

How often, outside service times, do I set time aside for personal prayer?

- A. Daily = 11
- B. Weekly = 0
- C. Monthly = 0
- D. When I feel like it = 1
- E. Never = 0

Am I prepared, with others on the PCC, to give a lead in the parish's mission and outreach?

- A. Yes = 11 ½ (!)
- B. No = ½

Which best describes my church attendance (tick more than one if that is appropriate)?

- A. I come for my own personal reasons = 6
- B. I come to be with other Christians = 3
- C. I come to pray for those who aren't Christians = 2
- D. I come to be spiritually 'recharged' for the week = 6
- E. I come to be changed by God? = 7

What priority do I give to speaking to people in church I do not know? (either those who have attended as long as you but who you have never spoken to, or visitors)

- A. I always speak to people I don't know = 3
- B. I sometimes speak to people I don't know = 9
- C. I prefer to stick to my own friends = 0
- D. I'm too busy doing 'other things' to have time to speak to strangers = 0

Am I prepared to get more involved in issues concerning the community we serve?

- A. Yes = 6
- B. It would depend what they were and the time commitment involved = 6
- C. No = 0

Do I feel confident explaining the Christian faith to non-believers?

- A. Yes = 4
- B. No = 2
- C. It would depend upon the situation = 6

Would you appreciate some help in learning to share your faith?

- A. Yes = 11
- B. No = 1
- C. That's not what coming to St. Faith's is about = 0



LENT 2009

Wednesday 25th February

ASH WEDNESDAY – the First Day of Lent

7.30 am	Holy Eucharist and imposition of ashes (SF)
10.30 am	Holy Eucharist with hymns and imposition of ashes (SM)
8.00 pm	SOLEMN EUCHARIST and imposition of ashes Preacher: The Reverend Frances Shoesmith (Pioneer Minister, Liverpool Diocese) <i>followed by Baked Bean Supper (SF)</i>

Fridays in Lent in S. Faith's or S. Mary's at 6.30 pm

Stations of the Cross and Holy Eucharist

27 February	S. Mary's
6 March	S. Faith's
13 March	S. Mary's (*)
20 March	S. Faith's (*)
27 March	S. Mary's
3 April	S. Faith's

(*) these services will take the form of a meditation on the Way of the Cross with poetry, visual imagery and music, both classical and contemporary.

Sundays in Lent in S. Faith's at 7.00pm

Devotional Meditation and Benediction led by Fr Neil

“The Journey to the Cross, in words and music, as seen by...”

1 March	Pilate
8 March	Barabbas
15 March	Simon of Cyrene
22 March	Mary, the Mother of Jesus
29 March	The Centurion at the foot of the cross

Pantomime Time!

Fr. Neil

By the time you read this we will have enjoyed yet another fantastic pantomime by our United Benefice Dramatic Society. Next month there will be reports and pictures to give a flavour of what you missed if you didn't see it! I simply want to record at this stage my grateful thanks to all who have given up so much time, talent and skill to work together to produce it. The team work is second to none as I'm sure you will all agree. And before we know it, Leo will be casting the next one..... oh yes he will!!

Evolution or Revelation?

Fred Nye

February 12th this year marked the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin. There has been quite a razzmatazz in the media about it, and rightly so. Darwin's ideas are perhaps even more important now than in 1859, when he published his famous book *On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection, or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life*.

In this great work he proposed that all the different forms of life, from flies to jellyfish, from monkeys to mankind, had not been created separately and once and for all. Instead, all life became progressively modified to its environment, changing in form and behaviour over millennia. When creatures are poorly adapted to their environment they die before they can reproduce themselves, leaving those better equipped (the 'favoured races') to produce progeny. These in turn inherit the qualities necessary for survival and transmit them to their own offspring. In today's language we would say that small genetic variations, when acted on by this process of 'natural selection', lead over immensely long periods of time to dramatic changes in living organisms and the emergence of 'new' species. Moreover Darwin also realised that this process, traced backwards in time, implied that all living things had a common ancestry. In one of his notebooks he drew a rough 'Tree of Life' showing that many species may have budded from a single ancestral stem, writing tentatively above it - 'I think'!

In the 150 years since the *Origin of Species*, much evidence has emerged to support Darwin's ideas. Nevertheless they continue to provoke both scientific and religious controversy. Fundamentalist Christians and 'creationists' reject them completely on the grounds that they contradict the book of Genesis. On the other hand scientists such as Richard Dawkins (who some regard as equally 'fundamentalist'!) use evolution as a weapon to attack the very nature of religion.

Why am I writing about Darwin in a Church magazine? It's because he raises absolutely fundamental questions that affect Christian belief and behaviour. Number one: how much do we value truth? If it conflicts with our ideas about our status, if it makes us uncomfortable, how do we react? Do we reject the truth or try to argue it away, or do we instead begin to examine ourselves and our values a little more closely? Do we see ourselves as lords of creation produced by a special Act of God? Or do we see ourselves as part of a long, painful, painstaking and sacrificial process of creation, a process moreover that may not yet have reached its conclusion?

Number two: do we fully appreciate what it means to be part of the Tree of Life? DNA analysis has shown that there are few differences of any consequence between human beings, and not many more between ourselves and chimpanzees. Even more startling,

we share much of our genetic material with 'lowly' creatures we might find difficult to accept even as distant relatives – as an example, there is a gene which governs the formation of the eye, both in man and the house fly! There is thus an almost mystical unity to life on earth. It is as if we were not many organisms, but one living creature, sustained and nourished by its Origin over aeons of time. And any threat to a part becomes a threat against the whole. We have a responsibility to conserve and protect all species and individuals. We have a responsibility to treat the Family of Man as just that. Men and women around the world are our brothers and sisters: that is a matter of fact and not a way of speaking, or a bit of wishful thinking.

Number three: the idea of Evolution teaches us how intimately moulded the earth is to life, and life to the earth. For better or worse, the environment changes life, and increasingly we ourselves are changing the environment. The future of the earth and the life it bears now depends on whether as human beings we really understand our place within it. Are we the Lords of Creation? Or are we mere creatures, the stewards of Creation and the servants of its Creator? Genesis tells us that we are to 'have dominion over ... every living thing that moves upon the earth'. That dominion, that power, is not a right but a privilege and a responsibility. We have the power to ruin or renew the earth; the buck of Creation stops with us.

As you may have realised by now, I am not a creationist, but that is not to say that I don't believe in creation or the Creator. What I do believe is that truth is one and indivisible and that God speaks to us, not just through the Bible and the creeds, but also through the evidence of the natural world which he has created, and which bears the signature of his self-giving and loving handiwork. It may seem controversial, but to me the theory of evolution is every bit as revelatory as the book of Genesis.

In portraits taken towards the end of his life Darwin in his long white beard looks like one of the Old Testament prophets. Maybe the resemblance is more than superficial!

Fred Nye

Calling all Jumblies!

We are holding a jumble sale in aid of church funds on **Saturday 14th March** at the Church Hall, Milton Road. Admission will cost 20p and doors will open at 1pm.

If you have any items of clean, saleable goods, please bring them to church from Sunday 1st March or drop them off at the Hall on Friday, 13th March any time from 4.00 pm.

If you can help in any way, manning stalls, helping with refreshments etc, please see Corinne. This sale is in aid of church funds, so we really want to make it a success and raise plenty of money for church whilst giving everyone the opportunity to beat the credit crunch and bag a bargain!

Yorkshire Explorers

The Men's Group Retreat 2009



Wat Zakairen

Ten of us made the trip to Yorkshire, the largest number we have ever had at David's House. Four cars headed north on the morning of 22nd January and in keeping with tradition we assembled at The Bolton Arms in Downholme for lunch. After this we drove the final five miles to David's House and unpacked for our stay. A number had pre-assigned jobs but most of us were simply fetchers and carriers. We noticed that the cold winter had delayed much growth in the garden and surrounding woodland; there was no sign of the custard plants and even the snowdrops had not appeared. However, their cousins in Crosby gardens were already in bloom.

One of the first jobs was to light the fire, a task previously undertaken by our departed brother Kevin, who always kept a blazing fire going throughout our weekends. Sad to report his latter day apprentices have much to learn and it took some time to get a blaze going and over the weekend large amounts of firelighters were consumed. Geoff and his catering team set to work in the kitchen preparing crumpets and toasted tea cakes for Fr Charles and anyone else with space to spare after lunch. (*Photo top right, centre page spread*) When this task was complete the hard fried eggs were cooked and frozen for the weekend's breakfasts.

Normally Saturday morning is devoted to a discussion followed by a Eucharist but this year we had a scheduling problem. A group of us wanted to venture north in order to visit the Open Air Museum at Beamish but this was shut on Friday and so we decided to transfer the days; after all if you can do it for Saints' days it would be OK with us. Hence Friday took place on Saturday and Saturday was moved forward a day to Friday. Still with me? Don't worry if you aren't: we confused quite a few people over the next two days.

This year's discussion was on the subject of Friendship, and this was followed by the Eucharist, as usual presided over by Fr Charles. The "In House" Eucharist is normally accompanied by lots of smoke but Fr Charles has a cough and so we had to forego the incense, however, the event was as moving as ever, particularly when we remembered Kevin, his name having recently been inscribed on the communion paten.

Following lunch, four of us set off in search of the ruins of Easby Abbey which are situated just outside of Richmond. We had studied the map and thought we would find the place easily but we were wrong. After doing a circuit of the “Richmond Ring Road” we decided to call on the help of the barmaid in a local hostelry. Her directions were pinpoint accurate and the beer was also good. The abbey ruins are spectacular, well worth the extra miles it took to find them. The weather was perfect, a clear sunny day even though it was cold. Looking at ruins like these you have to admire the skill of those who built such structures so many centuries ago and thank English Heritage for preserving what remains.

We engaged in conversation with the only other person at the abbey and he told us about the old railway station at Richmond. That would be our next stop. We had actually seen it during our circumnavigation of Richmond so finding it again was easy. The main part of the station had been converted into a lecture/exhibition area with café facilities but there was another area devoted to small businesses. In that we found a micro brewery, a cheese maker and a confectioner. The micro brewery was the first stop followed by the cheese maker. We were so engrossed watching the hard working confectioners making fancy patterns on chocolates and packing fudge that we forgot the time; we would be too late for afternoon tea at David’s House.

On Friday evening after dinner Leo organised a read-through of the pantomime script; despite the fact that of the ten people present only he has a part in the pantomime. Naturally, the reading bore little resemblance to the actual script but was great fun and very amusing. *(Photo lower right)*

On Saturday (transferred from Friday) the Easby Abbey four headed north to Beamish and the others had a lazy morning followed by a trip to Richmond in order to replenish the larder and, at the insistence of Fr Charles, test the local beers. Although the winter season meant that only the town and tramway at Beamish were open, the visit was well worth the journey. Beamish town is based upon life in 1913 with the shops and houses offering a brilliant example of life during that period. Naturally we had a drink in the local hostelry but unfortunately it was at 2009 prices. Typically the print shop was educational and we learned a number of new things including the derivation of the phrases “to coin a phrase” and “mind your ps and qs”. In the stable area we encountered a display of riding equipment including several bottles of embrocation. You don’t see this around these days but all of us remembered being saturated in it as youngsters to combat sprains, aches and pains. *(Photos bottom left and bottom centre)*

Last year our Saturday evening meal was a “delayed” Christmas dinner and so this year we decided to have a formal dinner preceded by canapés and sparkling wine. Arrayed in our dinner jackets and black ties (or whatever colour we felt like wearing) we gathered in the “West Wing” of David’s House for official photographs. The four course meal provided by Geoff and his catering team was a classic (as usual) and even Fr Charles waited until he had said grace before tucking in. *(Photos top and centre left: in these exposures all are fully dressed (!))*

Sunday morning meant church at St Edmund's where the visiting Men's Group have been made welcome in previous years. Three of our party (Leo, Ron and Brian) had to return home on Sunday morning and Fr Charles was the visiting preacher so six of us doubled the congregation. Sadly the locals had forgotten that we were coming this week and so the promised coffee (not Fair Trade) did not materialise but we have been assured that there will be coffee when we are at St Edmund's next year. After lunch we headed for Reeth via Marrick Priory. Unfortunately the local authority had decided to close the convenient access to this ruin and the next was on the other side of the river so we decided to give the priory a miss and refresh ourselves in Reeth. After warming ourselves in the bar of The Buck Inn (*Photo centre right*) we bought an ice cream in remembrance of Kevin.

We all approached the weekend with some apprehension, as this was the first time that Kevin would not be at David's House, at least not physically. We missed Kevin and thought about him daily, frequently laughing at the things he would do or say. That is the way it should be: we only pass this way once but we should make a difference and Kevin did. As it turned out we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, remembering Kevin with affection and humour.

Rick and Michael (H) left on Monday morning and so after lunch the remaining five, Geoff, Paul, Michael (T), Fr Charles and I headed to Richmond in order to visit the castle. (*Photo upper centre*) Although the Men's Group have been visiting David's House for over ten years we have never visited this beautifully maintained ruined Norman castle. The weather was fine and sunny but there were few people in the castle so we were able to explore at our leisure. As four of the party had not seen the station, we went there for a coffee and look around then returned to Richmond for bags of chips. Although only half of our original contingent remained Monday evening was jovial but we were also making ready for departure the next day.

The "Weekend" was excellent and the fine weather meant that many people ventured further afield than they normally do. We enjoyed good company and good food but all good things come to an end. However, as Kevin would have said "Only 51 weeks and two days".

(PS The author tells us that his nom de plume is based upon a phrase used constantly throughout the weekend by at least one person; it is believed to come from the television comedy "Gavin and Tracy" (he may have meant 'Stacey'). His photographs, linked in the text above, grace the centre pages, where sharp-eyed readers may winkle out his name. Ed.)

Squeezing it in...

Editorial apologies to contributors who have been squeezed out of this issue through lack of space. These include Michael Holland and 'Mrs Beamish', but you read his piece next month and sample her on the church website's jokes page now...



**'Dressing for Dinner!
Denis Griffiths' pictures from the
Men's Group January 2009 retreat
in Yorkshire. Read his account in
this issue.**



O Deus Ego Amo Te

I am not moved to love thee, my Lord God,
by the Heaven thou hast promised me:
I am not moved by the sore dreaded hell
to forbear me from offending thee.

I am moved by thee, Lord; I am moved
at seeing thee nailed upon the cross and mocked:
I am moved by thy body all over wounds:
I am moved by thy dishonour and thy death.

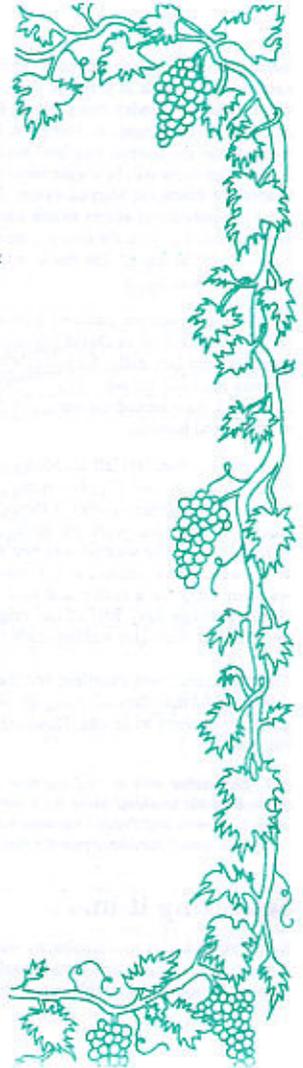
I am moved, last, by thy love, in such a wise
that though there were no heaven I still should love thee,
and though there were no hell I still should fear thee.

I need no gift of thee to make me love thee;
For though my present hope were all despair,
As now I love thee I should love thee still.

Miguel de Guavera, translated by Samuel Beckett

O God, I love thee, I love thee -
Not out of hope of heaven for me
Nor fearing not to love and be
In the everlasting burning.
Thou, thou, my Jesus, after me
Didst reach thine arms out dying,
For my sake sufferedst nails and lance,
Mocked and marred countenance,
Sorrows passing number,
Sweat and care and cumber,
Yea and death, and this for me,
And thou couldst see me sinning:
Then I, why should not I love thee,
Jesu, so much in love with me?
Not for heaven's sake; not to be
Out of hell by loving thee;
Not for any gains I see;
But just the way that thou didst me
I do love and I will love thee;
What must I love thee, Lord, for then?
For being my king and God. Amen.

Gerard Manley Hopkins





Dressing Up for the Panto

Lillie Wilmot's images of the rehearsal costume photocall for 'Rumpelstiltskin'. More pictures on the back cover... and the real thing in next month's magazine!



Praying for Unity

Fr. Neil with the Revd Ian Smith (Ecumenical Development Officer, Churches Together in Merseyside Region) who preached in Saint Mary's and Saint Faith's on Christian Unity Sunday, 2009.



**Rita Woodley
R.I.P.**

Rita died on 31st January, and her funeral took place on 10th February.

Read Fr. Dennis's appreciation elsewhere in this issue

Rita Woodley R.I.P.

Fr Dennis

For many of us an abiding memory of our very dear sister in Christ will be that of Rita on her bike, cycling up and down College Road. She was one of the very few remaining parishioners whose memory and strong links with St Faith's spanned a period of seven or eight decades, back to the incumbency days of Canon Brierley in the 1930s and Father Schofield in the 1940s.

Born in Endbutt Lane, Rita attended Seafield Convent School and at the outbreak of war, while in the course of her teacher training at St Katherine's College, Woolton, was evacuated for a year to the Lake District.

In the 1930s Rita was confirmed at St Faith's and amongst her friends were Audrey McCulloch, mother of our friend Nigel, now Bishop of Manchester, and the Merchant Taylors' schoolboy Robert Runcie, later to become the 102nd Archbishop of Canterbury. As a teenage girl Rita enjoyed membership of the Church's Guide Company and Sunday School, and in 1941 she married Harold, a local architect.

Throughout her many years at St Faith's, Rita was a dedicated and enthusiastic supporter of overseas missionary work and other good causes, and Bring and Buy Sales were often held at the family house in College Road, a property formerly occupied by the assistant clergy of St Faith's.

A very active member of the Mothers' Union and, later, the Horsfall Club, Rita was also a keen supporter of the ecumenical movement, and was happy to make her home available as one of the church's Parish Centres.

She enjoyed travel and took delight in attending Guide camps as a girl and going abroad, including to Germany, when she had the opportunity in later years. Once her family were old enough she returned to teaching on a part-time basis at St John's C of E Primary School and at Sacred Heart High School. She had an enquiring mind and was always eager to learn. Amongst subject classes she attended at night school were those in dress-making, psychology and foreign languages.

In the mid-1960s, along with Alan Rigby, Caroline (Bunny) Mountfield, Emily Conalty, Beatrice Brooker, Chris Price and myself, Rita played a major and invaluable role in helping to relaunch the parish magazine from its moribund state into the excellent vehicle of news, information and entertainment which it is today. The typing, cutting and pasting of the magazine in those days was Rita's expertise, which she did with typical patience and efficiency.

Rita was good at keeping in touch with some of those who had moved on from St Faith's to pastures new, and the reliable way in which she kept them in contact with the church was greatly valued and appreciated.

Following the diagnosis and treatment of leukaemia in the early 1990s, Rita showed great fortitude and resilience and was able to continue her interests and involvement in church life right up to the time of her final admission to hospital.

Rita will be sorely missed by all of us who were privileged to have known her. She was a cheerful, warm-hearted, faithful and devoted member of the church to which she gave exemplary service and loyalty over so many years. In praying for the eternal rest and repose of her soul, we assure Richard, Angela, John, Margaret and Henry of our prayers and deepest sympathy, and we give grateful thanks to God for the life and witness of our much-loved friend.

This 'housewives' prayer' comes from a book called 'I've Got To Talk to Somebody God' by Marjorie Holmes. It was given to my Mum by a dear friend of hers in 1969.

The Message

Oh, God, my God, you have taken my mother away and I am numb with shock.

I see her apron still hanging behind the kitchen door. I see her dresses still in the wardrobe, and her dear shoes there upon the floor.

Her house is filled with her presence. The things she so recently used and touched and loved. The pans in the cupboard. The refrigerator still humming and recent with her food. The flowers she had cut still bright in their bowl upon the table.

How quickly you called her, how mercifully. She simply stopped what she was doing and looked up – and you were there.

She was ready. She was always completely ready. Yet she must have known that she was going soon. There were bookmarks in her Bible at these passages:

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity. . . .”
Surely this was her message to us – to be at peace between ourselves. And:

“When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.”

To the end. She loved us too to the very end.

Help us, who were her children, to draw her near to each other now. And near to her. And through her, nearer to you.

Taking up the Baton

Chris Price

Last month, under the title ‘The Food of Love’ I wrote about the admirable ‘Sistema’ scheme in Venezuela, whereby a quarter of a million disadvantaged children are immersed in classical music and finding their lives transformed for the better. I made brief mention of a developing ‘spin-off’ scheme in a deprived area of Scotland, led by Bishop Richard Holloway, and hoped it might be able to achieve equally great things in our own land.

What I didn’t then realise was that there is a strong local link between Sistema Scotland and our own community. Robin Panter is one of six professional musicians spearheading this exciting project to bring music to some 200 children from the severely deprived Raploch estate in Scotland. He is a talented viola player, who has taken a sabbatical to work with the project. He has played for us in more than one of our Summer Saturday concerts, and his father, Ricky Panter, is the Archdeacon of Liverpool, the vicar of St John and St James in Bootle, and happy to describe himself as a friend of St Faith’s.

He pointed me in the direction of a recent article in *The Guardian* by Charlotte Higgins, explaining the project its purposes and its Latin American origins, and from which I quote. The Venezuelan scheme’s aim is ‘to instil discipline and comradeship, with the orchestra as both its instrument and guiding metaphor. The Sistema has also produced some of the most exciting young musicians working today, among them the 27-year-old conductor Gustavo Dudamel, music director elect of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Edicson Ruiz, the bassist who, at 17, became the youngest ever member of the Berlin Philharmonic. According to Simon Rattle, “There is nothing more important in the world of music than what is happening in Venezuela”.’

The article goes on to outline the special aims of the Scottish offshoot, and to bring it even closer to us. ‘It was for its powers of social transformation that the Sistema caught the eye of Richard Holloway, chair of Scottish Arts Council and the radical former Bishop of Edinburgh. It has also attracted the attention of musicians in England - Julian Lloyd Webber is launching a similar scheme, starting with three groups based in London, West Everton and Norwich.’

Richard Holloway’s proposals coincided with a big project by the Scottish Executive to regenerate the area – and it has had its critics. ‘They have focused on two points: first, that the nation already has its own, successful music education system; and second, that importing a scheme based on the social and economic particularities of Venezuela could either be simply ineffective in Scotland, or require so much adaptation to local

circumstances as to fatally dilute it.’ But Holloway doesn’t agree, believing that existing schemes do little for young people in estates like Raploch, and he is sure that “the Sistema can be made to work anywhere. The kids are different, but they have the same need for love and a capacity for joy.” And both Charlotte Higgins, visting the scheme, and Robin Panter, immersed in it professionally, can see real signs of progress in the relatively short time Sistema Scotland has been going.

Half the children in the Raploch scheme have some involvement with social services. ‘We can’t fix the problems,’ the scheme’s director Nicola Killean says, ‘but we can equip the child with an alternative community and the skills to grow up and make their own choices - and, I hope, be whatever they want to be.’ Robin Panter takes up the story. ‘All of us are stunned by how interested the children are and how much they are working together - and how the parents have come on board. People ask: are these the same kids? They walk in a straight line. They have respect for the instruments and each other. It’s amazingly powerful. I feel personally responsible for them - how you speak to them, what environment you set up, seems so precious to their development. You become part of those children’s lives. If that goes well, it’s so invigorating.’

One of Killean’s first jobs was to appoint the music teachers, part of whose task has been to turn European music-teaching methods on their head. In north American and Europe, the focus tends to be on individual tuition and practice. In Venezuela, the idea is always communal: children are taught through playing together in orchestras, right from the beginning. Older kids teach younger ones; the inspirational Gustavo Dudamel was already conducting as a young teenager.

Parents, children and the local community are increasingly enthusiastic about the scheme. ‘The potential stumbling block is money. Holloway and Killean want to extend the scheme, and Glasgow is interested. But, says Holloway, “I need another couple of million to guarantee the next five years.” It’s small beer when put in the context of, say, the £180,000 it costs annually to keep a child who turns to crime in secure accommodation. “I think the government should step up to this,” Holloway says. “This is how the country should be thinking. We can’t afford not to do this”.

Hats off, then, to the dedicated people who run this scheme and are seeking to expand it further – and on our own doorstep. Two last comments. It is heartwarming to see the church, even if peripherally, involved in this sort of splendid enterprise. And secondly, wouldn’t it be marvellous if Liverpool, always so wonderfully passionate about all kinds of music, could take up the baton with equal success. Might the West Everton children be performing for us at St Faith’s one Summer Saturday before too long?

Squeezing it in again...

We’ve got colour printing again and at a competitive price, thanks to the Archdeacon’s Magic Machine. For a paltry £20, sponsors can fund a run of a front and back cover or two pages of colour photos. The editor or the vicar will be delighted to hear from you!

Observations on Modern Life

A bus station is where a bus stops. A railway station is where a train stops. On my desk I have a work station...

A flashlight is a case for holding dead batteries.

A good scapegoat is nearly as welcome as a solution to the problem.

Why do they lock petrol station toilets? Afraid that someone will clean them?

Did you hear about the dyslexic, agnostic, insomniac who stayed up all night trying to decide if there really is a Dog?

Why is it that when we talk to God we're said to be praying, but when God talks to us, we're said to be schizophrenic?

Here to Worship: a Dialogue

First church member:

I didn't like the hymns much,
Or those modern tunes, did you?
And as for Common Worship –
Give me 1662.

Second church member:

This worship is so boring,
Rigid, staid, un-free.
Old hymns, old prayers, old everything,
So un-cool, so un-me.

Both together:

We really love you, Father God,
And want to learn to love you more,
So, please, will you remind us
Who this Act of Worship's for?

From 'Focus', the magazine of St Mary the Virgin, Davyhulme, Manchester

The St Faith's 100+ Club

The February Winners

- 1 19 Peter and Karen Lunt
 - 2 123 Fred Vitty
 - 3 71 Jacky Dale
 - 4 100 Linda Nye
- 21

Praying for the President

Chris Price

It is so easy – and trendy – to be cynical about the U.S.A. And indeed from our ‘cool’ British viewpoint there is plenty to have been cynical about in recent years. Not just what we may choose to think about the Iraq war, or Guantanamo Bay, or the previous President’s foreign policies in general and command of our language in particular. There are the easy assumptions of superiority we make towards an ex-colony, its modes of speech, its brashness and lack of proper tradition, not to mention the dress sense and growing obesity of many of its citizens. The liberal press has had a prolonged field day over these issues and many more and, even if in many cases it has appeared to be a case of the pot calling the kettle black, such attitudes have been understandable. But a few weeks ago everything seemed to have changed.

Like millions more, I followed the long process that led up to January 20th and, of course, the day of pomp and circumstance culminating in the colourful and moving inauguration of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States of America in front of an audience of some two million spectators – and half of the world..

Quite obviously, the day was special for many reasons. This was the first African American president in history, the first with roots outside America – and many other ‘firsts’ to boot. He has been feted throughout the free world as one who can change the face of America and make a new beginning in the world. The tears of those whose quite recent ancestors were heartlessly segregated, denied franchise and status and, indeed, treated as slaves spoke volumes. An amazing approval rating of 80% gives him an unrivalled base for doing what he has pledged to do.

All of which gave me cause for rejoicing as I watched the day unfold. And if all this leads to the vast power and influence wielded by the world’s most powerful man in charge of the world’s greatest superpower being used for the good of that world and its suffering nations, and if it begins to bring an end to the divisions which have prompted our cynicism and coldness in the last decade or so, we shall be truly blessed in the years to come.

What actually prompted these reflections was the opportunity to compare and contrast the way two nations celebrated great state occasions. Both are accomplished at stage-managing ceremonial and handling great crowds. Both are aware that they are producing great theatre and orchestrating occasions which will make history. Both understand the importance of tradition and ritual as constants in a changing world. Both (if you are talking about our coronations and other major royal events) pay homage to religion and incorporate its rituals to a greater or lesser degree. But there are significant differences too.

In Washington the ceremonial was basically secular: senators and the like acted as MCs and made the introductions, while judges administered the oaths of office. There is no equivalent to the Established Church in America, nor daily worship in schools and debating chambers – quite the reverse in fact. But there were impassioned bidding prayers and an eloquent and lengthy blessing, both by evangelical ministers, unashamedly and publicly invoking God’s help and strength and speaking as if to a nation of faith and belief. The Lord’s Prayer was said resoundingly by all (as far as one could tell) of the vast crowd present, including the great and good from the President down – and of course President Obama very clearly put all that he hoped to do in a religious context, and with honourable mention of the Muslim faith. There were no signs of fashionable scepticism nor public unbelief, and the people of America were seemingly entirely happy that this should be so.

Of course, our great royal occasions are, for Christians, rightly enshrined in the Church and its rituals. But not so with our State. The notorious Alistair Campbell made it clear that ‘we don’t do God’ – and Tony Blair was at pains not to bring God into public debate nor to voice his undoubted Christian convictions in public. He was even mocked on TV for not denying the possibility that he and George Bush might have prayed together – as if owning and practising faith somehow invalidated rather than enhanced judgement and integrity. Such evasion, and such mockery, would be entirely foreign to the leaders and people of the U.S.A.

This writer joins all those millions in wishing Barack Obama every blessing and success in his great and daunting task and hopes and prays that under God the world may become a more peaceful and happy place. Unlike Mr Campbell, he, like the new President, does ‘do God’. But he remains intrigued by the contrast between a nation which enfold its ceremonies in the trappings of received religion while publicly repudiating and often undermining it – and one which gives its churches no public place in its state rituals yet which is not ashamed to commit its leaders and policies to an openly Christian statement of faith. Which of the two best deserves to shape the future of a world in crisis?

Spirit of the Age

The Happy Egg Company’s new six-pack of eggs bears the warning: ‘Allergy advice: contains eggs’ inside the lid. A spokesman defended the decision from criticism, saying: ‘We have to cover all eventualities.’

UK Coastguards must now fill out a risk assessment before responding to emergencies, detailing ‘reason for journey.’

A Reflection for Passiontide from Fr Dennis

Three Trees

Once upon a time in a forest in Palestine there were three young trees. These trees had been planted at the same time and grew next to each other, and as they grew they used to share their hopes and their dreams for the future. Although they had seen nothing of the world they knew from deep within themselves that something special and wonderful was planned for each one of them.

“I know what I shall be,” said the first tree. “I shall be made into royal furniture. I can just see myself as a great throne covered in gold. A great king will sit in me when he receives all his courtiers and subjects and ambassadors. I can’t wait for this to happen.”

“I also know what will become of me,” said the second tree. “I shall be used to make a great ship. I will travel all over the world seeing wonderful, exciting peoples, carrying rich passengers and splendid cargoes. I can’t wait to grow up so that I can be cut down and begin this great journey.”

But the third tree was different. “I don’t want to be cut down,” he said. “I want to stay here and provide shade for people to sit in and shelter from the heat. I shall then be a sign pointing them up to heaven and giving them protection from the bad weather on earth.”

The day came when the woodcutters arrived in the forest. When they reached the three trees the first two trees were excited. “Hooray,” cried the first tree as he fell. “Now I shall go to become a throne for a great king.” “Hooray,” cried the second as he fell. “Now I shall become a ship to carry great people.” “No, no!” screamed the third tree, as the woodcutters started on him. “I want to stay here and be a protection for families and a sign pointing to God.” But woodcutters do not listen to trees, and he fell too.

Unfortunately when the trees were chopped up they turned out not to be very good wood. The first tree did not become a throne in a great palace. But a farmer took parts of his wood and made them into rough farmyard furniture. He was deeply ashamed to find himself carrying hay for animals to eat, stuck in the corner of a dirty stable, until one cold night a small baby was placed in the hay and he found himself bearing the King of all Kings, the Lord of all Lords.

And the second tree did not turn out to be a great ship. He was right, though, that he would become a boat: a small, dirty, fishing boat on a small lake. And he began to smell of the fishermen’s feet that walked over him, and of fishes and other filth. He too was ashamed until one day he realised that a new pair of feet were standing on him as the greatest teacher of all time stood in this boat to speak to the crowds of people.

But the third tree had the worst time of it. No one wanted him. Not even the firewood sellers. He lay somehow forgotten in a corner of the yard hoping someone would notice him and use him. And then when someone did take him he wished they hadn’t. To his terrible

shame and grief, he found soldiers nailing a man to him to hang him up until he died. But as he man hung there the tree realised that after all his great dream had come true. He would stand there for ever casting a shade to shelter people from the storms of life and pointing upwards to heaven and God.

Dorothy Parry R.I.P.

The sermon preached by Fred Nye at the funeral of another much-loved member of St Faith's congregation.

When we have lost someone close to us, words fail us. How could even the greatest poet express for us a whole human person, a whole life? And so it is with Dorothy today – it is perhaps our affection for her, our feelings, our memories which will speak louder than mere words.

I first met Dot in the late 70's when she joined one of our church House Groups. My first impression was of someone very warm and very gregarious. Just joining that group was so typical of Dot: getting involved with her church, trying something different, getting to know new friends. She has been described by one of her family as 'a breath of fresh air'. Throughout her life she always enjoyed other people's company, and sharing with them her love of the countryside and the seaside, of travel and of music. And so she was a great enthusiast for outings of all kinds, whether it was weekends with the Ramblers Association, church coach trips or visits to the Phil. She travelled extensively in Europe, and was fond of reminiscing about a visit to the Holy Land which had left a lasting impression on her. I believe her love of travel had started very early on - she took her teenage sister Rosemary on a trip to Paris soon after the war; quite an intrepid venture before the days of package holidays.

After working as an office manager, Dorothy became a Social Worker with 'the Corpy'. She got involved in the field of Mental Health, which she obviously enjoyed greatly. Her robust and often wry brand of Liverpudlian humour no doubt saw her through! But here was revealed another aspect of Dot's character, her caring nature and her concern for those in need, both as is so often the case reflecting her upbringing. Dot had grown up in a warm and loving family and she spoke with much affection, not only about her parents and sister, but also about her extended family of cousins and aunts. For years she helped look after her mother who had lost her sight, and after her mother's death Dot cared for her Aunt Polly, in the family home. I'm pleased to say however that this relationship was not entirely one-sided. In her time Polly had been a wonderful cook, and she passed these skills on to Dot. You never refused if you received an invitation to Dot's for tea and cakes!

Dorothy had known her beloved Charles long before they were married, as a close companion on many social occasions and on Ramblers walks and Holiday Fellowship breaks. At last, when Dot's family commitments came to an end (and also when Charles had arranged the house in Courtney Avenue to Dot's satisfaction!) they were

married, in 1978. The two of them were very close, and particularly so after Dot was the innocent victim of a horrifying road crash in 1982, sustaining fractures and a severe brain injury. It is a great tribute to Dot's fortitude, and to Charles' care and understanding, that few people were aware of the severity of Dot's injuries or their aftermath. Sadly, Dot never had children but always enjoyed their company and was in great demand as a godmother. To say that that Dot and Charles' short marriage was a happy one is an understatement, and when Charles died from a heart attack in 1987 Dot found the subsequent loneliness hard to bear. Just days before he died, Charles had told her 'It just gets better and better, doesn't it?'

Dot's final years were marred by chronic illness and by slowly diminishing mobility and independence. At times she would yearn for the old days when she could still socialise, and walk the fells, and travel the world. Yet one journey she would always undertake whatever the odds, and however she was feeling: and that was the trip to St. Faith's every Sunday morning to join her local Christian community in worship – the weekly celebration of Our Lord's death and resurrection - and in sharing in the fellowship meal of the Eucharist. I'm sure she did this, not through a sense of obligation, but because her faith was as familiar and as natural to her as any other part of her daily life. And incidentally you may be wondering why we are singing a hymn about the Wise Men at Dorothy's funeral. It's because Dot was born on 6th January, the feast of the Epiphany, and of course we are still in the Epiphany Season. And the words seemed particularly appropriate for someone with a life-long love of travel, someone who has at last reached her journey's end: 'And when earthly things are past, bring our ransomed souls at last, where they need no star to guide, where no clouds thy glory hide.'

It is indeed difficult to find words to describe a personality and a life. It is even more difficult to know or to find words for that place beyond death which we cannot visit until we die ourselves. And so for all of us today we come up against the mystery of death and are faced with the problem of how, in our grief we can make sense of it. But Christians down the ages have always seen in the love and care that we give to one another, a small reflection of the love and care which God our Creator gives to us his children. And in the resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ we share, with Dot, God's promise that even death itself cannot separate us from his love. None of us can know with certainty what lies beyond the grave, we only know that nothing in this world or the next can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus Our Lord.

Dot, we wish you Godspeed on your journey to that Holy Land where you will find fulfilment, light and peace. We pray that, surrounded by the love you have given and received on earth, you may be enfolded for all eternity in God's boundless love. We pray that you will enter joyfully into that new community which waits to welcome you, the community of heaven. And we pray that you will forever enjoy the nearer presence of Our Lord 'where mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things will have passed away'.

For the eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

The Parish Directory and Church Organisations

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

CHURCH CENTRE

1, Warren Court, Warren Road, Blundellsands

MEN'S GROUP

Sunday 8.00 pm monthly. Rick Walker 924 6267

CUB SCOUTS

Tuesday 6.30 - 7.45 pm. Alan Jones 284 7038/07761 960671

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. Sam Austin 07921 840616

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Copy by **Sunday, March 8th**, please - but all contributions are welcome at any time.

Church website <http://www.stfaithsgreatcrosby.org.uk>

email cdavidprice@gmail.com



This month's cover

Front
the cover of the 1975
History of St Faith's Church
(now out of print), as
designed by Graphia Design
and Print of South Road,
Waterloo. The 'Great
Crucifix' is seen through an
impression of the pulpit aisle
arch.

Back
The United Benefice
Dramatic Society's 2009
pantomime 'Rumpelstiltskin'
- costume photocall at a
rehearsal in St Mary's Church
Hall: the Animals and the
Dame pose for the camera.