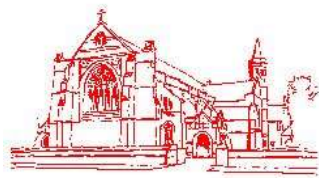


Saint Faith's Church
Great Crosby

NEWSLINK

NOVEMBER 2010

Worship at Saint Faith's



SUNDAYS

10.30am	Morning Prayer
11.00am	Solemn Mass and Children's Church
1.00pm	Holy Baptism (2nd Sunday)
7.00pm	Compline and Benediction (1st Sunday)

WEEKDAY MASSES

Monday 10.30am, Tuesday 9.30am, Wednesday 10.30am (1662 Book of Common Prayer in S. Mary's), Thursday 9.00am (Holy Days only), Friday 6.30pm, Saturday 12.00noon (or Midday Prayer – please check notices)

THE DIVINE OFFICE (The Prayer of the Church)

Morning Prayer: 9.00am daily (except Thursday & Friday)

Evening Prayer: 6.00pm daily (except Wednesday & Thursday)

Please consult the weekly sheets or online bulletin 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.



From the Ministry Team November 2010

Dear Friends,

Listening to the Radio this week I was pleased to hear that some of our soldiers would soon be leaving the war zone in Afghanistan, and returning home to their families and friends. I thought about all those men and women who have been away from their loved ones, and fighting in another country. They were not fighting for themselves, but to help to make life better for others. Sadly, as we know, many have lost their lives and many were injured. But their suffering was not in vain. It is evident that the people they were protecting in the towns and villages, although still having a difficult time, have seen significant change and improvement in their everyday life. I recall seeing the earlier news broadcasts highlighting the suffering of the people, with many innocent lives lost and homes destroyed. Although peace is not yet secured in Afghanistan, there has been an improvement and much of this is with thanks to the brave men and women of our forces. We continue to pray for our armed Forces at the monthly "Service Families Support Group" held at St Faith's. This is a time when families and friends of those serving in the armed Forces may come along for a time of togetherness and support, where they will find a friendly face and a listening ear. There is a time of prayer, usually led by a Forces Chaplain, where focus is on those in active service and their families and friends. The evening ends with light (delicious!) refreshments. Please come along to any of these services and show your support for the brave men and women of our armed Forces and their families, ensuring that they will always receive a warm welcome and meet people who care.

This November sees the annual service of Remembrance where we remember the people who have fought for the greater good, not only recently, but in all times of war and conflict. We remember them for their loyalty and bravery, for the love they had for their country, for their families left at home, and we give thanks that they were forever surrounded by God's love.

says the Psalmist,

I've heard that the common experience of Forces Chaplains is the knowledge that people need to know a strength and love outside of oneself, to look beyond the human and the temporary to values that are eternal. The personal God, the Father who loves us, cares particularly for those who need his presence most and often lets that presence be perceived, however dimly, in moments of deepest anxiety. Many people have said that, during difficult and fearful

times when they have called upon God for his help, they have found an inner strength which has miraculously helped them to cope.

Remembrance Sunday reminds us that every single person matters to God; that goodness and bravery is there to be found in the experience of ordinary human beings, that an individual's faith is a precious gift to be respected and nurtured, and that the message of Christ is one of future hope.

During the earlier part of the month we recall our heroes on Remembrance Sunday, our loved ones during All Souls, and Jesus Christ, the King of Kings. We also see the start of Advent; a time of preparation for observing the birth of Jesus. Although this is traditionally a time of reflection, it is a season which I enjoy. It is a time of waiting and of expectation. My sons tell me that when they were little, they often enjoyed, and were more excited, on Christmas Eve than on Christmas Day. A time of expectation, of waiting for something good, whether it is in receiving Christmas gifts or in rejoicing the birth of Jesus. I love to see the excitement of the children lighting the candles on the Advent Wreath, and singing hymns of expectation, such as "Lo he comes with clouds descending" and "O come, O come, Emmanuel". The expectation, waiting for God's gift to us, that of his Son, born as a human for humankind.

Advent is a special time. The word **Advent** means 'coming' or 'arrival'. The focus of the entire season is the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ in his First Advent, and the anticipation of the return of Christ the King in his Second Advent. It is celebrating a truth about God, the revelation of God in Christ whereby all of creation might be reconciled to God.

Advent is marked by a spirit of expectation, of anticipation, of preparation, of longing. There is a yearning for deliverance from the evils of the world, first expressed by Israelite slaves in Egypt as they cried out from their bitter oppression. It is the cry of those who have experienced the tyranny of injustice in a world under the curse of sin, and yet who have hope of deliverance by a God who has heard the cries of oppressed slaves and brought deliverance! It is that hope, however faint at times, and that God, however distant He sometimes seems, which brings to the world the anticipation of a King who will rule with truth and justice and righteousness over His people and in His creation. It is that hope that once anticipated, and now anticipates anew, the reign of an Anointed One, a Messiah, who will bring peace and justice and righteousness to the world, with no more fighting, and no more wars!

O Come, O come, Emmanuel!

With my love and prayers.

Jackie



For the Diary...

Tuesday 2nd November

6.00pm REQUIEM MASS FOR THE DEPARTED

With prayers by Candlelight to which all those who have been bereaved are invited. Please make a special effort to be present to show our care and concern for those in our community who have lost loved ones in the past year.

*Rest eternal, grant unto them O Lord,
and let light perpetual shine upon them*

'They shall grow not old...'



On Remembrance Sunday 14th November

“We Will Remember Them”

**with a Requiem Mass at 11am to include
the traditional Act of Remembrance.**

Sunday 21st NOVEMBER – THE FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING

11.00am Solemn Mass

Preacher: Fr. Ian Gallagher (St. Mary's, Walton)

Saturday 27th November 10.00 am – 12noon

Young People's Advent Activity & Craft Day

in S. Faith's Church Hall

**This will culminate in an all-age act of worship
in S. Faith's at 11.40am – all welcome**

Sunday 28th November - ADVENT SUNDAY

6.00 pm Churches Together in Waterloo
Advent Carol Service in S. Mary's, Waterloo

St Faith's Memorial Garden

Please note that for some time we have been 'under review' from the Diocese regarding the arrangements in the Garden of Remembrance adjacent to Church. Following the recent Quinquennial Inspection we are now required to maintain a degree of uniformity with respect to the placing of memorials at each plot.

The Diocese requires that no permanent memorial is fixed but allows that flowers may be placed at anniversaries and significant dates. Bearing these requirements in mind and wishing to be sensitive to the feelings of bereaved families and friends, we have settled upon what we hope to be a solution which is acceptable, attractive and respectful.

Flower receptacles bearing the inscription 'in loving memory' have already been placed at the head of the stones of several plots. Only one of these receptacles may be in place at each plot. These vases can be obtained at nominal cost from Crosby Memorials. The staff there are aware of the exact style required in keeping with St Faith's Memorial Garden.

We are hoping to speak or write personally to as many concerned families and friends as possible, but in some cases it is proving difficult to track down correct addresses. If you know of anyone who may be affected by this issue and who could be assisted by the dissemination of this information we would be very grateful for it to be passed on.

Before the New Year we will be posting public notices in the church porch and in the memorial garden so that those concerned may have due notice and time to remove any items or memorials which are no longer appropriate.

In anticipation of the consideration an attention of those concerned...

Maureen and Margaret

Churchwardens

5



Christian Unity

...where and when did it all go wrong?



A sermon preached by Fr. Neil Kelley on Sunday 19th September

These past few days I guess many of us have watched coverage of the visit of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to this land. Watching the service of Evening Prayer from Westminster Abbey was both uplifting and deeply, deeply sad in equal measure.

Where did it all go wrong? Why did it all go wrong?

The short answer to that last question is “for very good reasons”. Unity is not about being chummy—pretending we’re all the same really - that’s simply papering over the cracks. Our Unity has come about as a result of what we, in our different denominations, want to believe and what we do not (in some cases under any circumstances) want to believe! Different emphases and doctrines. And I guess all of us can be guilty of intolerance - that the other point of view is wrong, or perhaps they don’t understand us. We in our turn may wish, over the consecration of women bishops or gay bishops (to name a current debate) to claim we are right and the ‘others’ have got it wrong. Where did it all go wrong? Why did it all go wrong?

In 1976 my Aunt (who is also my Godmother) had to ask permission of her R.C. Parish Priest to enter an Anglican church building for my confirmation. It was lovely when in 1992 I was invited, quite naturally and without asking permission, to share in the liturgy of my cousin’s wedding in Portsmouth RC Cathedral, though whether my presence on the altar there contributed to the break-up a year later I don’t know!

It is scandalous to think that only some 40 years ago, Roman Catholics and non-Roman Catholics were forbidden from saying the Our Father together. We might have a long way to go, and indeed the end of the journey may not be for us to determine, but thank God for the steps which have been taken. Not least the remarkable united witness of church leaders here on Merseyside – a commitment to doing things ‘better together’ which has quite literally had an influence on the ecumenical scene worldwide.

Since 1907 churches have formally set aside a particular week to pray for Unity, and I hope that as the years pass full unity and communion is something more of a reality than a dream.

But does a week in the dark winter month of January actually achieve anything? How many of you place great store by United Worship with Christians of other denominations?

It is true to say, that at most joint events the turn-out is pretty appalling, relatively speaking, for every congregation. Only those who are sad or in need of a life go to those events – some say!

For us to even entertain the idea that Christian Unity is something we can opt for or not is in itself a scandal and an outrage. Christian Unity is something we *might* choose to put on our agenda. In reality it is not our agenda, but God's. Unity is not only desirable but necessary if we are to be an effective church with an credible witness to the world.

Christian Unity is about wholeness - coming together as differing and varying members of one body. It is about healing wounds. We know from our own experience of physical pain that some wounds run deep and take a long time to heal. Despite the deepness of the wound, unity is a necessity if we are to be a Church claiming that it is one, catholic and apostolic and holy.

Where did it all go wrong? Why did it all go wrong?

If we are to be a Holy Church we must first be a whole people. Until that happens our witness and our mission, sadly and perhaps unavoidably, will be impaired. That is cause for concern, and it must be for every Christian a cause for prayer. There are no short cuts. It will happen, we pray, when the time is right. But we must pray for that time; not just during one week of the year but every day, “Thy will be done.’ we pray each day I hope. And we know the Unity of the Church to be the will of God. The prayer of Jesus in St. John’s Gospel makes that clear.”Father, may they be one **so that the world might believe.**’ Our coming together, the unity we seek is more than just a nice cosy idea, it is essential if Christ is to be made known to the world.

There was/is much cynicism about the beatifying today of John Henry Newman. One TV reporter last night suggested that the Church needs to do it... because it is losing members. So, here’s a miracle and people start flocking in – I think not!

The RC Church doesn’t *need* to do it, anymore than we *need* to ordain women or openly gay people as bishops because our numbers are dwindling. We don’t do it because we are desperate or clutching at straws in hope of the popularity vote - what these sceptics forget is that communities grounded and rooted in prayer are moved – by *God the Holy Spirit* – to do things. That in itself is a miracle which if we are not prepared to accept we must in all conscience give up any claim to be people of faith!

You may remember the story of the wedding at Cana; it was the first of Jesus’ miracles. A desire was made possible and, after all, is that not the point of a miracle? Showing what can be achieved? But achieved not on our own strength but in God's.

To achieve the point of full communion might seem little short of a miracle: the prayer of Jesus in S. John's Gospel must be our prayer. Unity is not somebody else's problem or the Job of the clergy. It involves all who have been baptised in Christ's name.

Are we happy to offer the world a broken church? Are we prepared to pray hard? The visit of Pope Benedict I am certain challenges us once again to lay aside our fears and prejudices; we need the courage to have vision.

Where did it all go wrong? Why did it all go wrong?

Our prayer must be that we seek the building up not of our own little empires, ecclesial communities or denominations, but the building up of God's kingdom. Our prayer at this mass must echo those words of Jesus: "Father may they be one, so that the world might believe".

On this momentous day for the Christian Church in this nation, may Blessed John Henry Newman pray for us, and with us, that, together we might seek that Unity which is the will and prayer of Our Lord Himself.

Suffer the Little Children

Dr Giles Fraser, canon chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral, has wise words about noisy children in church



Poor Father Ignatius Harrison, Provost of the London Oratory. His congregation have been having a hard time concentrating on him because of the disruptive racket made by children during the service. The other Sunday morning he snapped. He forced his voice above the din to announce that there was "no point" in preaching against all the noise, and so he didn't. One sympathises. When toddlers are turning church into playtime, the problem isn't finding the concentration to have holy thoughts, it's finding the good grace to avoid unholy ones. The repeated whacking of a toy car on the pew behind can be enough to turn even the most irenic of souls into a King Herod contemplating the massacre of the innocent.

For all this, a survey just released by the Church of England has found that 85 per cent of people agree that young children should be welcome at weddings. After all, Jesus did say: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Pretty clear stuff. The church must be an inclusive community, not just because children are the church of the future — they are, as much as the adults, the church of the present.

All the same, the church cannot claim to be an inclusive community if it allows disorderly infants to drive away noise-sensitive adults who have come to pray, cry or listen. It is widely accepted that a fair society is one that allows individuals as much freedom as is possible, so long as that freedom does not interfere with the freedom of others. With this in mind, it could be argued that more old-fashioned expectations of children's behaviour in church is fairer than the laissez-faire chaos that currently passes for inclusion in too many churches.

The big idea of the Church of England's wedding team's recently published guidelines about how to conduct a child-friendly ceremony is that each child should be given a bag with crayons and a wedding-themed fun-sheet. I suppose this is sensible enough, though the use of crayons in church has reached epidemic proportions. I know youngsters who think of Sunday school as nothing more than colouring-in class. Games and gimmicks are no substitute for the friendly encouragement to sit quietly and listen.

Ultimately, the problem with allowing a free-for-all approach is that it can only ever work in churches that are small and have no ambition to grow. For while the noise from a little group of lively youngsters can sometimes be absorbed within a small congregation, when they multiply, a service becomes 99% chaos management.

I'm not blaming children for being children. Often, the fault isn't theirs but their parents'. I would often begin a family service with a 30-second sitting-still contest between the children and adults. The children almost always won because the grown-ups would keep jabbering away to their neighbours. Sometimes I would catch one tapping at a mobile phone.

Of course, it is not easy to keep a spirited three-year-old quiet for an hour. But interestingly, if you sit all the children together and separate from their parents, then they are often beautifully behaved. It's when the adults give up trying that the priest feels like giving up too.

But Father Ignatius mustn't give up. Children bring wonderful energy and joy to a church, and all but the most unreconstructed tut-tutters realise that a harassed parent is often trying their best and is just having a tricky day.

Although a service shouldn't ever feel like a zoo, some uppity worshippers have a spirituality too much based on a fantasy of pristine silence. Those who require an other-worldly vacuum in which to pray are missing the means by which the sounds and movement of others can be a hook for prayers. After all, what is a carol service without the prop of baby noises? 'Little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes'? Do me a favour....

(The Daily Telegraph)



Bring along a Toy, please!

At the **11.00 am Family Mass & Parade Eucharist on 5th December** there will be the usual offering of toys. Please bring along a new toy (unwrapped). These are given to Sefton CHOICES to distribute to needy families at Christmas. This service will be even more special this year as some young children will be making their First Holy Communion at this service.

Senior Citizens' Christmas Lunch. It was noted at the recent PCC meeting that due to the number of other commitments in December the Christmas Lunch would be moved to **Sunday, 19th December** from 12th December. Further details about this will appear in due course.

Celebrating the Feast – Thanks and Praise

Fr. Neil

St. Faith's Day is always a very special day in the life of this parish and this year's celebration was no exception. A tremendous amount of work went on behind the scenes, as always, in preparation; in the church and in the hall, in Image Press, with cleaning, flower arranging, serving, singing, catering - and from the comments, emails and letters I received the festival was undoubtedly enjoyed by many – near and far. It was special in particular as it included a number of "firsts". Such a joyous celebration wouldn't have been possible without the team-work and loyal dedication of so many. That is something to thank and praise God for.

It was good, once again, to welcome a number of ordinands from the College of the Resurrection at services and concerts and we look forward to seeing more of them over the coming months. And finally... for those who asked for the recipe of the 'punch' served at the Open House Cocktail Party in the Vicarage on S. Faith's Day, I'm afraid it was all inspired by the Holy Spirit and so therefore nothing was written down....!

Home for Christmas?

Would you share your festivities with an international student at a UK university who two or three days for students from China and many other countries? Hosting makes a worthwhile contribution to international goodwill. Please see www.hostuk.org or call HOST's regional organiser Frances Quirk on 0151 924 6269.

Out of the Fire

Chris Price



Readers will remember that, some months ago, we published the story of the terrible arson attack which caused extensive damage to the church of St Andrew, Orford, Warrington. The tale of the devastation, and of the events that followed, was told by Jenny Raynor, wife of St Andrew's vicar, Fr Michael Raynor, one-time curate here at St Faith's.

It is wonderful now to be able to write a triumphant chapter in the story of St Andrew's, following its recent rededication. Some of us who have fond memories of the Raynors' time here travelled to Orford on September 14th to join the large congregation for the thanksgiving service, during which the Archdeacon of Warrington rededicated the splendidly-restored church.

St Andrew's today is not merely as good as new: it is better than new! Thanks to the skill of architects and restorers, the good offices of the church insurers, and the persuasive powers of the incumbent, there have been changes in colour, texture and decoration, and the creation of an excellent small but perfectly-formed kitchen (whose running H. and C. was the envy of our visiting ladies!) where once there was a redundant porch.

The service was joyful and colourful, adorned with a charming gaggle of small girl servers (serviettes, perhaps?) scurrying around with candles, and with splendid mainstream hymns to sing. The Archdeacon endeared himself to many when he spoke of the fire as almost a blessing in disguise, and even contemplated the appointment of a Diocesan Arsonist(!)

Afterwards we were shown round the vibrant building, before partaking of an excellent bun-fight in the adjacent hall. It was so good to see triumph born out of disaster, and to feel something of the powerful community spirit that had so obviously sustained the church and its people in the long road that led out of the ashes and smoke to the resurrected House of God. An impromptu 'shrine' in the sanctuary featured tools and paint-pots from the rebuilding, clustered round a cross fashioned from a piece of the scaffolding used in the restoration. It speaks eloquently, as did the whole evening, of all that has been done to overcome adversity and enable the people of Orford once more to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. We wish them every blessing for their future.

Picture page plus..... for the online edition!



Rick Walker photographed the scaffolding cross referred to above



.Orford today

Home for Christmas?



Would you share your festivities with an international student at a UK university who two or three days for students from China and many other countries? Hosting makes a worthwhile contribution to international goodwill. Please see www.hostuk.org or call HOST's regional organiser Frances Quirk on 0151 924 6269.

With this issue we are reviving the practice of occasional reports on some of the discussions and decisions emerging from meetings of the Parochial Church Council.

Points from the PCC



At the **20th July meeting**, Fr Neil said how pleased he was at the attendance and atmosphere at the first **Liturgy and Lunch** service and event, and looked forward to future 'Fifth Sunday' happenings. He reported on the appointment of Geoff Dunn to the new post of Parish Office Manager. This new post has been created with a view to reducing expenditure in the United Benefice, and the Diocese had agreed to help with his salary.

Following discussion on the poor condition of the **Kingsway entry** to the church grounds, it was agreed that temporary closure of these gates would take place pending repair to the tarmac.

The Treasurer's **Finance and Stewardship Report** revealed that the Easter Gift appeal had raised £7,500, and the Saturday recitals had so far realised £2,000, an increase on last year's recital income to date.

There was discussion of the issues raised by the Diocese's **Creatively Changing Churches** report. We identified the problems it raised concerning declining congregations, increasing costs and the need for vision and would plan for a joint presentation with St Mary's by the 3Cs resource team.

Ministries Rota Review. The most recent system, whereby the Parish Administrator had co-ordinated the rotas, was reviewed. It was agreed that this system now be abandoned and that we should revert to each group being responsible for its own rota. To avoid double bookings, it was accepted that some co-ordination between the rotas would be helpful. Fr. Neil thanked the PCC for experimenting with this process and supporting the initial idea for it.

Eunice Little reported on the success of the **Services Family Support Group** meetings at St Faith's, and outlined future plans.

At the **September 16th meeting** of the PCC there was discussion of the future of the **Friends of St Faith's**. It was hoped that this scheme, conceived in 2003, could be re-invigorated, and that someone could be found to take it on. There was discussion about the value and possible benefits of the scheme for members. The treasurer reported that there were some 60 members regularly paying through the scheme, raising some £1,000; in return they received information via

The **Premises Committee** reported that in the **Church Hall** work had been undertaken on new blinds and relocating the gas supply. In the **Church grounds**, progress was reported on the issues of the Garden of Remembrance. The need to adhere to Diocesan Regulations and achieving some conformity in the Garden had proved complex. We had now purchased standard flower receptacles, and moves are afoot to contact everyone who has an interest in a plot so that we can achieve an outcome acceptable to all. In (or rather on top of) the church, guttering re-installment had taken place *on page 5. Ed*). Guttering which had been blocked by pigeon guano has now been cleared and superior anti-pigeon grills fitted.

The **Quinquennial Inspection** had taken place and various necessary jobs prioritised for action. The problem of loose floor tiling inside church had been categorised as an item to be completed within 18 months. The premises committee consider that this task requires more urgent attention, not least because of opening up church for the Christmas Tree Festival in December.

Finance and Stewardship Report. An insurance survey report had been prepared on the Church Hall by Ecclesiastical Insurance and there is a requirement for us to fence off the Milton Road entrance to the grounds. The Treasurer would seek more information from the insurers about consequences for the policy cover and the Premises Committee would seek quotations for the work.

The **Saturday Recitals** had realised an excellent final surplus of £3,030 and a cheque for £442.82 had been sent to the Pakistan flood relief appeal. Fr Neil explained the rationale behind the new United Benefice **Men's Fellowship**. **Feedback** from the Saturday concert series was circulated, including the hope for refreshments to remain available after concerts. In response to the wish for winter concerts, there would be events on 6th October and 20th November. Because of the lateness of Easter, 2011 recitals would continue to the end of September.

Finally, the printed **Diary of Events** would be discontinued next year, with events published and updated online on the website and a quarterly paper version produced.

Lillie Wilmot (PCC Secretary)

Let there be Light

John Woodley



The interior fittings and furnishings of St Faith's are well documented in the history of St Faith's, written in 1975 by Chris Price and in a later document, published in 1999 called 'Furnishings of Faith'. Both of these publications are available to view on the church's website and are well worth reading.

Whilst recently sorting through some family papers I came across an interesting small design sketch, created by my father, Harold Woodley, then a young architect, living in Waterloo, which sheds further light (excuse the pun!) on the wooden candlesticks at the high altar.

The sketch shows proposals for the design of wooden candlesticks, which were donated to the church in 1946. I believe that my mother gave them to the church, in memory of her mother who had passed away earlier that year.

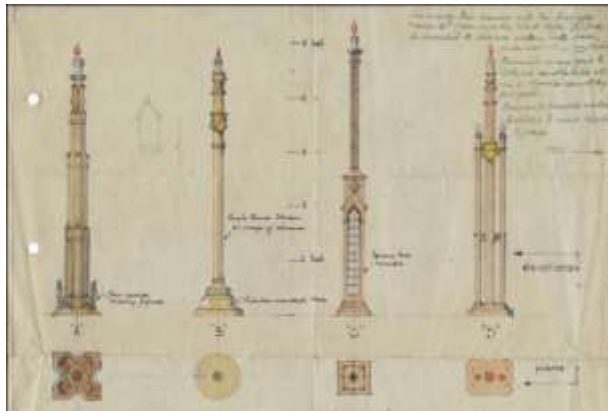
The drawing was produced to illustrate the designs for selection by the then vicar, the Reverend John Schofield and contains some interesting notes concerning design, choice of materials and influences.

All of the designs are traditional to some extent and draw largely upon the architecture of St Faith's for their inspiration. Design 'A' (with some minor amendments) is the one that appears at the High Altar today. The square column has three stages each supported by 'capped shoulders' all reminiscent of the stonework of the church. The foot of the candlestick was to feature four carved kneeling figures, although these were omitted from the final design.

Design 'B' is cylindrical in nature with an attached shield plate, perhaps inspired by the old brass lectern, whilst design 'C' is more elaborate (and taller) featuring a square section lower tower surmounted by a tall thin column form. The base featured a pierced design that mimics the design of the windows in church. Finally, design 'D' comprises a central column with supporting columns at each side.

It would appear that a number of materials were considered for the design of the candlesticks including bronze, brass and oak. The final design was conceived in Spanish Mahogany to match the choir stalls. I assume that this was the cheaper of the options considered, and helped the new design blend in with its surroundings.

We have our forebears to thank for the beautiful fittings and furnishings of St Faith's, often given in memory of loved ones.



Celebrating Saint Faith

Chris Price

The 2010 Patronal Festival week maintained the great traditions of the past decades, while adding, as is only right and proper, several new and distinctive events to mark what is, for the people of our church, one of the great highlights of the year.

The Patronal High Mass usually, unsurprisingly, takes place on the feast day of our patron saint: October 6th. However, as our visiting preacher could not manage that day, the service was brought forward to the eve of the feast: a move which happily shaped the events of the following day.

The High Mass itself was, as ever, colourful, powerful and moving, thanks to the combined efforts of clergy, servers and choir: it was well-attended, and followed by the traditional sumptuous buffet supper in the church hall. Two special features of the service, however, deserve mention. In a radical departure from the usual settings, the service was sung to Bob Chilcott's striking 'Little Jazz Mass', sung by the choir, with the backing of a trio of jazz musicians. And the sermon was preached by the Dean of Worcester, whose stirring and inspiring words are reproduced below.

The Feast Day itself was marked by a most enjoyable concert of organ favourites played by Fr Neil, as the centrepiece of the open church routine familiar to all who attend the summer Saturday recitals. Refreshments were served to a goodly crowd, and – another innovation – soup lunches were provided, and proved a sell-out. That evening, the Vicar threw open the vicarage for a cocktail party: there was company, conversation, nibbles and, of course, drinks (though sadly no little hats on sticks). At

the end of the festivities, those present went across to church for a calm and prayerful service of Compline in the Lady Chapel, followed by prayers at the statue of Saint Faith – a moving and peaceful end to two marvellous days.

Saturday saw another and very different musical event, as bass baritone Ian Gallacher, a priest in the Walton Team Ministry and a distinguished soloist in his own right, was ably accompanied by Fr Neil in what can only be described as a ravishing programme of classical songs. A gratifyingly large audience listened in rapt silence to two sequences of romantic settings, by composers ranging in time from Mozart to Gerald Finzi, of poems (mainly in French and German) celebrating the seasons and the hours of the day. It would be difficult to imagine a better way to round off our celebrations of the saint in whose name our church is dedicated: we can surely hope that she will have listened with gentle approval from above to the words and the music with which her people in Crosby remembered her this year.



The Glory of Faith

The sermon preached on the Eve of St Faith's Day, October 5th

I have lived most of my life under the patronage of St Faith, Virgin and Martyr; though for some of that time, I would not have understood it in that way. When I was four years old, my family moved to Maidstone in Kent, and began to attend St Faith's Church in that town. There I went to Sunday School, there I was confirmed and made my first communion, there I officiated at my sister's wedding, there I attended both my parents' funerals. And while St Faith's, Maidstone, was, and is, a church of strongly evangelical tradition, and the idea of a patron saint formed little part of my Christian upbringing, the name of St Faith still evokes for me a wealth of memories of that upbringing, for which I thank God. I was there when Archbishop Robert Runcie preached, and he spoke of the St Faith's Church he too had grown up in; so it means a great deal to me to celebrate St Faith's Tide with you here in Great Crosby.

The present building of St Faith's, Maidstone, is of the late Victorian period, just a little earlier than your own; but it stands on the site of an older church, consecrated in 1270, at the time when the cult of St Faith was becoming popular in this country. Some pillars of the old church survive in a nearby park. Later, the church served as a place of worship for Huguenot refugees in Kent, and they had a row with Archbishop Laud, who wanted them to use the Book of Common Prayer. So the parish has had a varied history.

I am not sure, but I think, that the growth in popularity of St Faith in mediæval England must be to do with the great pilgrimage to Santiago of Compostela in northern Spain. That famous shrine, which continues to draw thousands of pilgrims every year, established certain pilgrim-routes across Europe: the 'ways of St James'. On the pilgrim-route through western France, the road taken by English pilgrims, stands the town and abbey of Conques, the shrine of St Faith and the place where her body is said to lie. And how could any visitor to Conques fail to remember the extraordinary image of St Faith they saw there – and can still see? The oldest surviving large-scale Christian sculpture in Europe; a strange figure of the tenth century, leafed in gold and encrusted with precious stones; a remote figure, androgynous, barbaric, pagan, unlike the conventional pious figures of later times! This image of St Faith must have impressed itself on passing pilgrims as a powerful saint, a saint to be invoked, a saint whose protection was worth having. At any rate, churches and chapels dedicated to St Faith sprang up in England; and both St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey have them still. St Faith made a particular home for herself in Norfolk in the vicinity of Walsingham; all in all St Faith was adopted by the English and took on an English character.

But more remote from us in time than mediæval England, France, or Spain, is the all-but-lost story of St Faith herself, that thirteen-year-old Christian girl, denounced by her own father to the authorities of Roman Gaul, tortured and killed in one of the intermittent bouts of persecution which Christians suffered in those times. What were the Lord's words in the Gospel reading? 'They will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles ... Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved'. St Faith endured those appalling agonies to the end; not saved for life in this world, but saved for the life of the world to come.

Her story brings home to us one of the extraordinary things about being a Christian: that the life and death of a fellow-Christian, far removed in time and place from ourselves, can, as it were, set out on a journey of its own and make contact with us across the centuries. So the story of St Faith travelled from Provence to Conques, was taken up by pilgrims across Europe, made its home in mediæval England, travelled on down the years, was taken up again here in Victorian Lancashire, and is still remembered today.

Archbishop Michael Ramsey once preached a sermon on St Nicholas, another early Christian martyr whose life is almost lost in legend but who established himself in the affection of Christians across the world. Of St Nicholas, he said: '[the stories of his life] tell of the impact upon Christendom made by a real personality who could not be forgotten or ignored ... Just as when a stone is dropped in a pool the ripples of water circle far beyond the central point, so the impact upon humanity of a [person] of

power and saintliness creates ripples of story and legend across the Christian world.’

So it is too with St Faith. The story of the child-martyr of Provence has appealed to Christians in different ways, in different times and in different places. Look at the image of St Faith in this church, and look at the image of St Faith in the Abbey at Conques, and you would ask: where is the connection? - they are so utterly different from each other. The connection is that whether in Conques or in Crosby, whether in London or in Kent or in Norfolk, Christians have responded to the story of the unimaginable courage of a child-martyr in the face of family betrayal and official persecution.

But how do we respond to it? ‘Martyrdom’ has taken on a sinister connotation for many people today. The phrase ‘child-martyr’ strikes an uneasy chord. We know the devastating and destructive power of the ‘martyrs’ of the terrorist bomb and the suicide attack. Is martyrdom to be praised, or should it be resisted? The answer is both. The Church of the early centuries discouraged – discouraged in the strongest possible terms – any sort of martyrdom for its own sake. No one should seek martyrdom. That was the temptation with which Thomas Becket wrestled in Eliot’s play *Murder in the Cathedral*. The Christian way is not to seek death, but rather to love life, and only part with life if our Christian confession positively demands it. Becket, in the play, puts it like this:

A Christian martyrdom is never an accident, for Saints are not made by accident. Still less is a Christian martyrdom the effect of man’s will to become a Saint, as a man by willing and contriving may become a ruler of men. A martyrdom is always the design of God, for His love of men, to warn them and to lead them, to bring them back to his ways. It is never the design of man; for the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, and who no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of being a martyr. So thus as on earth the Church mourns and rejoices at once, in a fashion that the world cannot understand; so in Heaven the Saints are most high, having made themselves most low, and are seen, not as we see them, but in the light of the Godhead from which they draw their being.

Thus was St Faith a true martyr of God, become the instrument of God, who had lost her will in the will of God, and who now lives in the light of the Godhead from which she draws her being. May we, and all who honour her today, be led back to the ways of God by the glory of Faith and all whose martyrdom was the design of God, and all the Saints.

Peter Atkinson

Dean of Worcester



The Trees are Coming ...!



It's not even Advent yet, but plans for the second St Faith's Christmas Tree Festival are far advanced. Following the success of last year's first event, the same basic pattern is being followed, but with extra features and (we hope) improvements.

This year there will be more trees – no fewer than fifty – filling every corner of the church. The clergy will (just!) have room to conduct Sunday services. There will be extended and slightly altered opening times, including two evening sessions, and a programme of school and other visits with musical performances at various points. This year, thanks to generous sponsorship, there will be prizes for the three trees voted 'Best in Show' – an added incentive to decorators and visitors. And of course there will be an array of sales stalls and refreshments, including our new Soup Kitchen, recently tried and found successful and profitable.

There will be full publicity and information available soon, but we shall be hoping for plenty of volunteers to help with sales, stewarding and refreshments so, when the lists go up, please sign up and help to make the week of Sunday 5th to Saturday 12th December even more successful – and profitable, both for the many charities represented and also for St Faith's – than it proved to be last year.

A Reflection for All Saints-tide

The first words which Jesus spoke when he had begun his public ministry in Galilee, and which were recorded by St Mark in his gospel, contain a summary of the special message that Jesus wanted to give to the whole world. "The time has come", he said, "and the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the good news" (1:15). "The time has come", that is to say, the moment of decision is now, this very day. "Repent". Here the English translation fails to bring out the full significance of the Greek word used by Mark, which really is a call to change absolutely the whole pattern of one's life, and to have trust in God.

At All Saints-tide we recall the numerous saintly people who took to heart these words of Christ, and allowed them to change their lives accordingly. "The Kingdom of God", we are told by St Matthew, "is like leaven which is hid in three measures of meal, until the whole is leavened" (13:33). The Kingdom of God, in other words, stems from small beginnings, from the dedication of individual men and women, who live out the message of the gospel in a truly heroic fashion. Like the leaven of yeast within the dough, the Kingdom of Heaven works from inside. People are never really changed from outside. Better housing, higher financial returns, better working conditions – all these in themselves change one's personality only on the surface. It is the task of

Christianity to make new persons of us from within, and this begins when we find ourselves praying sincerely, and regularly, with the Psalmist: “A clean heart create for me, Oh God, and put a steadfast spirit within me” (Ps 51:10). And God will respond; he will not disappoint us, as he makes clear in the words of scripture: “I shall give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you. I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies, and give you a heart of flesh instead” (Ez 36:26).

The saints have been, and till are, recipients of divine grace in a wonderful way, but not solely for their own benefit. They are God’s leaven within the community. As the leaven turns the dough into a bubbling and expanding mass, so the Christian example of saintly people can bring about a revolution in society. It can cause an upheaval in standards, in behaviour, in outlook, even within the family, as the gospel points out, setting a man against his father, a daughter against her mother (Mt 10:35), something impossible in Old Testament times. Small wonder that the non-Christian Jews of Thessalonika in Greece, according to the Acts of the Apostles (17:6), referred to the Christians as “the people who have been turning the whole world upside down”.

The saints, indeed, were not always the easiest people to live with, because by the way they acted they challenged others to take stock in turn of their personal lives, even to the extent of examining their consciences; and what some individuals saw there did not, very often, flatter them. The thing which characterised all the saints, despite their different personalities, was their faith, their trust in the providential care of God, no matter what befell them. The Kingdom of God was especially promised, not to the sensible and the educated, but to such as retain throughout their lives the spirit of little children, an unconcerned, almost irrational trust in God. And still each of the saints was marked by an individual and very personal sanctity, which reflects the wonderful variety of God’s gifts. No two saints were ever exactly similar in the spiritual gifts which God had granted to them.

The great multitude of saintly souls down through the ages gives testimony to the perfection of God, a perfection which is infinite in its goodness, its beauty, and its variety. Even in an age with little regard for religion, people are on the look-out for men and women of God, and when they encounter souls of rare sanctity, they watch them with a mixture of curiosity and awe. Indeed it is true that just a few such souls, highly endowed with Christian virtue, will rescue the world for centuries to come, because truly committed souls, such as were the Apostles for example, can exert an influence on others which is almost irresistible. But our response to the witness of the saints, if it is not to be tainted with superstition, must be one of true inner devotion to the Holy Spirit who originally inspired those saints; for our true and real happiness consists, not in considering saintly people, but in the thought of God, and nothing short of it. As with all the saints, the human heart can only find rest in the God who made it.

Frr. Dennis

Pontifications

Chris Price



A personal reflection on the Pope's visit, to complement Fr Neil's sermon reproduced earlier in this issue. Other views are always more than welcome!

Popes don't pop in very often. When John Paul visited these shores in the 1980s it was a pastoral visit, he was at the height of his popularity, and vast crowds followed him everywhere. Images of him in our cathedral, and also praying with the blessed Robert Runcie, still linger in the memory.

This time lots of things had changed. It was a state visit, and the Vatican is a (very tiny) nation state, so the Pope was received by the Queen, who is of course head of our church and nation. But he came to a very different United Kingdom, where many resented his presence and sought to protest publicly at his visit. His church works and worships today beneath a dark cloud of hostility over the tragic and still unfolding scandal of child abuse, and more and more people of every faith and none are questioning its right to the moral high ground and its unquestioned leadership of the Christian world. Its numbers have declined greatly over the last two decades (as of course have many churches, not least our own), and it is critically short of priests, at least in European countries. In the weeks leading up to Pope Benedict's visit there was an unprecedented volume of unfriendly coverage, and speculation as to how the visit would pan out. Ticket sales had been slow, and the state's obligation to stump up for the visit was far from popular. This writer admits to having shared some of these misgivings and fears during the build-up.

The reality, thank God, has been far brighter than might have been expected. An actual crowd of 70,000 looks much the same as one of 300,000 (the comparable figure from the last visit). Protests have been made, but the overwhelming fervour of the faithful packing the parks and thronging the streets easily overwhelmed it. The saturation coverage of the events on TV and in the press has brought Christianity to the forefront of the nation's notice more than ever before, and in a heart-warming and most happy way. The papal progresses, the various events, both secular and religious, were colourful and often moving, and the deliberate, gently understated figure of the man himself, so different from the muscular Christianity of the late John Paul, has been strangely appealing. 'Heart speaks to the heart' indeed. Pope Benedict referred more than once, in contrite language, to his Church's shame over the abuse scandal. And for Anglicans, the ecumenical dimension of the visit has been a cause for real rejoicing. In Lambeth Palace and in Westminster Abbey, Benedict came face to face with the established church of our nation: he did us proud, and we did him proud too.

The full splendour of the C of E was on display: music, liturgy, vestments, censing the altar (amazing!), panoply and prayer. Archbishop Rowan Williams and the Pope spoke eloquently, singing, one might say, from the same hymn sheet, and making clear their joint mission to fight the good fight against militant secularism and the sidelining of the Christian message in recent years. Benedict was gracious, warm and even humble: both here and throughout the events of his visit, there was little or no trace of the old-style triumphalism, even condescension, that has characterised the R.C. attitude to Anglicanism in the past. The two of them prayed together at the smoke-wreathed shrine of Edward the Confessor, and pronounced a joint blessing at the end of Evensong. It was all wondrous to behold: you might have been forgiven for thinking that unity was all but accomplished, and even, for a while, that we were still a Christian country.

But of course we are still far apart. For all his gracious charm, the Pope is the man who, as Cardinal Ratzinger, proclaimed unequivocally that Anglican Orders remained absolutely null and void. At the risk of being charged with name-dropping, this writer remembers discussing this fundamental issue with Lord Runcie when he visited us some years after greeting Pope John Paul. Did he think that, if pressed, that Pope would have had to declare that he believed he was praying alongside a well-intentioned but totally misguided layman, no valid priest and certainly not a valid Archbishop, and one incapable of true sacramental ministry? Yes, Lord Runcie said sadly, that was indeed what he would have had to say. Two decades later nothing has changed – except that this Pope has made the answer to that question even clearer.

Two contradictory happenings serve to sharpen our focus on these matters. Archbishop Rowan, we were told, was wearing this week the personal Episcopal ring given by an earlier Pope to Archbishop Michael Ramsey at the beginning of the long road to unity: not a gift, you would think, to bestow on a layman masquerading as a priest. And as Pope Benedict entered Westminster Abbey, he was introduced to a woman priest on the Abbey staff, despite his church having recently declared the ordination of women to be nothing less than a major crime. It may seem confrontational and aggressive to insist on pointing out the blatant inconsistencies here, and to deplore the continuing slur on the work and witness of thousands of Anglican priests whose validity Pope Benedict has so unequivocally denied and even re-emphasised in recent years – and more than one commentator today made these points on air – but the issues need, I believe to be aired and confronted. Two great churches and traditions may, thank God, be seeking to come together to witness to the Gospel to an increasingly indifferent nation, but while one refuses to accept the true worth of the other, the message Benedict and his church gives to the world over this issue must seem a confusing and unhappy one. Is it too much to ask that the monolithic structure of Roman Catholicism thinks again? Of course there are long-standing and fundamental differences of thought and doctrine, which cannot easily be laid aside. But, beleaguered as it is by scandals, and facing growing revolt amongst its own faithful on the issues of women priests and priestly celibacy (the majority of the

Catholic lay faithful now reportedly oppose the official line on these issues), the Roman Church surely needs all the support it can get from us and from the other faith communities struggling to witness to spiritual values in secular Britain today.

Our own imperfect Communion certainly has its problems, but, this writer would say, on nothing like the same scale. It stands for tolerance and a willingness always to re-interpret the beliefs and attitudes of the past, and thus has a very different mindset from Rome and can speak to a constituency that Rome perhaps cannot reach. It is surely time that the Church of Rome treated the Anglican priesthood with the respect they surely deserve. We all have our backs to the same wall, after all...

Food, Glorious Food....?



The title of Fred Nye's recent excellent Harvest sermon reminded us of the great blessings we enjoy on our tables from harvests the world over. We are able to benefit too from the lower prices large supermarkets are able to offer. A more dubious monetary gain, however, is being made from world food prices by those institutions so often in the news – the banks!

BETTING ON HUNGER: The reality of high food prices

A number of factors are having an effect on global food price trends, drought flooding and famine due to climate change, changing diets across the world and increased use of land to grow crops for biofuels rather than food. But the problem is exacerbated by the activities of the large financial institutions. Banks, hedge funds and pension funds are betting on world food prices in unregulated financial markets, causing drastic price swings in staple foods such as wheat, maize and soy. Massive price hikes in recent years are largely due to this uncontrolled speculation. Futures contracts which were created to enable farmers to sell their crops at a future date at a guaranteed price, and thus providing a degree of security are now being bought and sold by bankers and traders who bet on food prices as a way of making money. Bank deregulation has meant that these deals could be made in private without external checks.

In Ethiopia, heavily dependent on importing wheat, the total wheat bill shot up from \$84 million in 2006 to \$465million in 2008. For families whose income is largely spent on staple foods this was a catastrophe. It brought thousands close to starvation. 'There is food on the shelves but people cannot afford it' The American government and the European Commission are both calling for regulation to curb betting on food prices, but there is heavy lobbying against these proposals by the banking industry. The World Development Movement is calling on the UK Government to support international proposals for all future contracts to be cleared through regulated exchanges and strict limits to be set on the amount that bankers can bet on food prices.

Aid is not enough without changing the systems that create poverty. Christians should speak out and act against these unscrupulous and unjust practices. You too can take action to stop them. Check out the World Development website for actions and updates: www.wdm.org.uk/food or search #hungercasino on Twitter.

Kathleen Zimak (Merseyside World Development Movement)

A Recipe for Sierra Leone



Take several pounds of beef (on offer at Sainsbury!), enough vegetables to start an allotment (Aldi special offer), various melons from the ‘cheapy veg shop’, some windfall apples and add lots of planning and hard work, mix together with a team of like-minded volunteers and nearly 60 guests and what do you have? Well over £300 towards the work of the Waterloo Partnership.

The recent lunch towards the charity was a great success and saw members of St Faith’s and St Mary’s congregations joined by Trustees and volunteers from the Partnership for a Sunday lunch fit for a king.

The meal was followed by a short talk from Teresa McLaughlin, Chair of the Partnership and some pictures and the story behind them from Yvonne Daley, both of whom have visited our Waterloo partners, and who gave an impression of the difficulties that exist in Sierra Leone that are met with a cheerful courage by the people there. Simple tasks are made complex by a lack of water, poor sanitation and a lack of materials and skills. Even leaving their township is a hazardous experience as until recently the only bridges over the surrounding waterways were little more than planks of wood.

Since the people of Waterloo have been helping out, the bridges are now concrete, the wells are deep and clean, buildings have been erected, and, very importantly, children have been sponsored through their schooling. Basic health care has been introduced, the result is a community that is regaining self respect, growing some of their own food, training their own youths and living better lives.

Huge thanks to all who helped with the preparation, serving and cleaning up of the meal, and to all who joined in the fun by buying meal tickets, trying their luck in the raffle or investing in early Christmas presents!

Rosie and Rick

The Parish Directory and Church Organisations



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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

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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 0141 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. Sam Austin 07921 840616

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**THE CHURCH
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