



HIGH TIDE

October 2021

PARISH MAGAZINE
SAINT PAUL'S, WEYMOUTH



This Magazine contains: *Letter from the Vicar - Notices & News - Articles from Fr Bruce & Kathy, Fr Tony, Katherine Harrison, Jeanne James, Sharon Waight, Gill Cox - On the Psalms - Save the Parish - and more*

You can detach pages 15-30 and use it for Morning & Evening Prayer

<http://www.stpaulsweymouth.org>

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*Many thanks to all who have contributed to this issue of the Parish Magazine,
and to Liz Evans for the proofreading.*

*The next Magazine will be published on **Sunday 31st October**. Please, send all articles,
information, news you wish to be publish by Sunday 24th October.*

From the Vicar

Dearly Beloved,

During her turbulent history of two-thousand years the Church has often cried out to God in times of peril, hardship, and persecution. Indeed, I commend the commentary on Psalm 13 in this month's Magazine to you to read.

Pharaohs, Roman Emperors, and Dictators; persecutions, wars, and conflict; too much power and wealth or too little of it; schism and heresy; committees, financial boards and bureaucracy; indifference and shrinking numbers; Sunday shopping and rugby. The list is endless. Different times different challenges - all seemingly able to endanger the very existence of the Church. Yet, here she stands, rooted in faith, adorned with virtues, glorious in her saints, trusting in the Divine Oath: "*the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*" (Mt 16,18).

A few days ago I received the Diocesan Budget Guide: 5 clergy posts (Vicars and Rectors) abolished in 2021 in the Diocese and 13 more planned to be abolished in 2022-2024. Vicarages sold, churches closed down, benefices split up. We are told that priests and their theological formation are too expensive. Pensions are too expensive. The document reminds us again and again that a Vicar costs £40.000 a year. Very little or none is said about the more expensive Archdeacons, CEOs, Secretaries, Committees, Diocesan Boards, Suffragan Bishops. They almost seem to suggest that the Diocese maintains the Parishes and Clergy... and not the other way around. The total income of the Diocese was £14.200.000 in 2020 with £10.500.000 coming from Parishes like ours.

We are explained that the £9.2 billion (!) investment fund of the Church Commissioners is spent wisely: 51% goes to Cathedrals, Bishops, and Dioceses. 23% is spent to raise more money... They used to pay the local clergy and to support the Parishes.

It is discouraging to be told by the Diocese - especially when we have always paid our Deanery share in full - that if a vacancy had occurred now here at St. Paul's, the Parish would only receive a part-time Vicar (or Priest-in-charge). Changes are being made to neighbouring Parishes without us being either consulted or even informed.

Do we have a future??

Should I end my letter to you on this note, this would be perhaps the most depressing and discouraging Parish Magazine ever. So of course I am not going to! There are four things we can and *must* do.

As St. Paul writes: “*So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.*” (1 Cor 3,7) Growth depends on God only - yet it is our duty to plant and to water.

Open the Bible where you want, prayer and fasting will be there, especially in times of need. So **first**, we must be rooted in prayer. In personal and in collective prayer. Pray! Love prayer! And come to church. Sunday Mass is a non-negotiable minimum (unless frailty due to health or age prevents us from coming) but also try to come at least to one mid-week service (Mass or Morning/Evening Prayer). Just to one! - and it will make a difference.

On the next page, read about all that is going on and be part of it.

Observe the traditional days of fast and abstinence, and if you can, do some more as “free offering” to God. In the Bible, fasting averted disasters, opened the heavens, caused forgiveness of sins, obtained grace and heavenly gifts, converted sinners, brought healing and reconciliation.

Second: “*where charity and love are, there God is.*” Let us live in mutual kindness, respect, forgiveness, and generosity. There is no place for disaccord, gossip, maliciousness, judgements, division. Those will shrink, choke, and kill any community! Each one of us must examine our own conscience and follow Christ’s teaching. Whatever happened in the past, put it behind you - as God put your (my) sins behind him. “*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*” (Ephesians 4,31-32). Also: Hebrews 8,12 and 10,17; Isaiah 43,25; Jeremiah 31,34; Psalm 103,12; Micah 7,19; etc.

Third, as a congregation, we need to acknowledge our low numbers and high average age. We all must partake in outreach and mission. Pray for our church; courageously invite family, friends, and neighbours again and again; be welcoming and helping with new people. Show them around, help them with the books, sit with them, introduce yourself to them. Be kind. Show that we rejoice in their presence.

Fourth, defend what we have: our Parish. You will find various articles at the end of the Magazine about the “*Save the Parish!*” movement. Read them carefully and act. Make your voice heard.

Prayer, fasting, mutual charity, welcoming kindness, and courage - little things, difficult things, not impossible things. This is all it takes to plant and to water and then God, our generous and loving God, will give us growth in abundance.

Assuring you of my prayers, I am,
ever yours in Christ,

Fr. Gregory

Evensong & Benediction (E&B) - every Sunday at 5pm (from 31 October at 4pm). Traditional language, Book of Common Prayer, King James Bible - the quintessential Anglican service followed by short prayers in the present of the Blessed Sacraments. Every first Sunday of the month E&B is made solemn by organ and full assistance. *Next solemn E&B: 3 October.*

First Friday (“A morning with Jesus”) - the first Friday of every month is traditionally dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus - or in other words, we think especially about Jesus’ redeeming love on those days. We pray for the sick and dying; for the conversion of sinners; we offer prayers in reparation for all the offences, neglect, and sacrileges that Jesus received and continues to receive in the Blessed Sacrament. The Blessed Sacrament is placed on the Altar from 9am (Morning Prayer) until 12noon (with a simple Benediction to conclude). There are no “public” or “official” prayers - it is simply a silent time during which you are invited to come in when you can, for as long or short a time as you can. Come, and offer your worship, thanksgiving, petitions, acts of love, and devotion to Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament. Light a candle in front of him. Ask his blessing on you, your family, and your friends. Pray for this Parish, for the sick and dying. Pray for those who have abandoned or never known Him! I hope this will be an occasion when our Parish is united in prayer for the future of St. Paul’s. *Next “A morning with Jesus”: October (9am-12noon).* - Help with prayers: see page 29.

End of British Summer Time - please, remember, the clocks are going back on the night between Saturday and Sunday 30 & 31 October. From that Sunday Evensong & Benediction will be at 4pm.

Walsingham Pilgrimage - a plead to our pilgrims: please, could someone write an article with photos about our pilgrimage at the beginning of September? Thank you.

School Mass - children from Beechcroft will come to St. Paul’s and have “their” Mass on the following dates: 19 & 21 October (Harvest); 23 & 25 November (Advent); 1 & 3 March (Ash Wednesday); 5 & 7 April (Easter); 20 July (Thanksgiving for the year). The Mass starts at 2pm and all are welcome to join!

Bible Group - all are welcome to join our fortnightly discussion group. “What happens after death?” “Did God die on the Cross?” “Euthanasia” - feel free to bring your own questions and opinions, or just listen to others. Next date: 29 September at 4.30pm in church.

Service times - There are some changes to service times during the first two weeks of October - please, check page 15!

What to do in your garden in the month of October

Katherine Harrison writes:

Autumn is officially here! If you are like me you have 'to do lists' for everything, and then I realised that I don't actually have one for my garden. So I thought each month I would share this with you for the next coming 12 months. I am not an expert in the garden, so my disclaimer: please don't blame me! So, here is the garden to do list for October:

- Keep deadheading throughout this month. You may just extend the flowering season.
- Cut the grass (as long as it is growing). October may be the last chance to mow the lawn.
- Rake the fallen leaves off the lawn. Renovate the lawn.
- Prune climbing roses.
- Cut back perennials that have died down.
- Collect any seeds from the garden for next year (can save you some money) and keep them in paper bags. Remember to label the bags.
- Start planting your spring bulbs except for tulips (wait another month to do this).
- I have never done this, but I am going to... Sow sweet peas. You will need to protect them in the winter time if there is a heavy frost. Germinate on a windowsill or greenhouse and then when you get the first leaves place them outside in a cold frame or protected place. You should then get some lovely flowers in the spring that will be bigger and stronger and will last longer. Plant out in April.
- Trim hedges.
- Sit back and enjoy your handy work.



Blessing of a garden - Almighty and merciful God, all green things that grow and the trees that blossom and bear such rich and nourishing fruit reflect your kindness, mercy, generosity, and love. Bless our garden, make it a place of peace and beauty, joy and prayer. Help us to see you in your loving kindness, working for us and with us. Then some day, may we walk with you, and with our dear Mother Mary, down the paths of another Garden, far better, far more beautiful than even the Garden of Eden. Amen.

Bruschetta (serves 2 as a snack or light lunch)

Jeanne James writes:

Ingredients:

2 or 3 medium tomatoes roughly chopped
4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 clove of garlic sliced in half
4 slices of ciabatta
Roughly chopped fresh basil leaves for garnish
Salt to season

Method:

Mix the tomatoes with 2 tbsp of olive oil in a bowl and set aside for 10 mins. Toast the bread either under the grill or in a toaster. Gently rub the toast with the cut side of the garlic. Top each slice with the tomatoes and season with salt. Add the basil leaves and finish with a drizzle of the remaining oil. Serve at once. - *Un po' di sapore d'Italia...*



Safeguarding Sunday: 10th October 2021

Sharon Waight writes:



On Sunday 10th October, hundreds of churches across the country will be joining together to shine the spotlight on Safeguarding. Protecting vulnerable people is at the heart of Christian values & message. This is an opportunity for churches to show commitment and how we as a church community take our Safeguarding responsibilities seriously. Therefore, on the 10th October, we will at St Pauls make Safeguarding our theme for prayers, preaching and Sunday school. In this way we will help us all to play our part in creating safe environments and remind us all, of our responsibilities in keeping vulnerable adults and children safe in our church. Please take some time to read our Safeguarding notice board, news, safeguarding pledge and look out for the work our Sunday school children produce on Safeguarding Sunday.

A safeguarding prayer

Grant us, Lord God,

- a vision of your world as your love would have it;
- A world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor;
- A world where the riches of creation are shared, and everyone can enjoy them;
- A world where different races and cultures live in harmony and mutual respect;
- A world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.
- Give us the inspiration and courage to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Voices of Morebath (1)

Gill Cox writes:

Following Father Gregory's excellent article in the August magazine I thought it might be interesting to explore the book further. ¹

It is based primarily on the meticulous record keeping of the parish priest, Sir Christopher Trychay (pronounced Trickey). Despite his title, he was not a knight, indeed he was of humble origin, but in those days non-graduate priests were given a courtesy title. But despite his origins he was educated, and had a good knowledge of Latin. He had been ordained priest in 1515 and moved to Morebath five years later, where he was to remain as vicar of St. George's church for another fifty-four years.



Morebath is situated in mid-Devon, roughly ten miles north of Tiverton. In the 16th Century it consisted of a number of small farms and cottages, but one thing is apparent, and that is the importance of the church in the lives of the parishioners when Sir Christopher first arrived.

¹ The article was sent for the September Parish Magazine. It did not appear in it for technical issues. The Editorial Team apologises for this. References in the article are from Eamon Duffy: *The Voices of Morebath*.

It was a tight-knit parochial life based around the rural lives of the parishioners and their church. “At Morebath, no rigid distinction was drawn between the community at prayer and a community as it went about its business.” Everyone worked in some capacity to maintain the life of the church. The Churchwardens served only one year at a time and every householder in the village was expected to take a turn. Those who refused were fined.

In an area where sheep farming was the main source of income, all those parishioners with land were obliged to look after one or more of the church flock of sheep. Much of the income for the maintaining of lights in front of statues came from the sale of wool from this flock. Accounts were carefully kept and show that the income from the church sheep was about 30 – 40 shillings per year. In 1531, 24 parishioners were involved in keeping the church sheep.

One family looked after the church bees which provided not only honey for Sir Christopher, but also the wax for the church candles.

The young men of the parish and the ‘maidens’ (girls in their early teens) joined others in providing and maintaining the lights in front of one or other of the numerous images and statues, - Our Lady and St. George by the high altar with a statue of Jesus by the side altar. Around the body of the church and reflecting the rural lives of the parishioners, were,

“the Sunday Christ, ‘a man of sorrows’ representation of Jesus pierced by tools and implements of work, St. Loy or St. Eligius, patron of smiths and carters and a West Country favourite, usually portrayed holding a horseshoe, a hammer or a horse’s leg, St. Antony, healer of men and of farm animals, usually accompanied by one or more pigs, and St. Anne, often portrayed teaching the young Virgin Mary to read”.

Soon after his arrival, Sir Christopher introduced a statue of St. Sidwell, the patron saint of Exeter, and she quickly became popular with the parishioners, and something of a cult, adorned with rosaries, and on one occasion, a silver shoe made from a ring bequeathed by a devotee.

When a burglar broke into the church and stole several items of value, the young people took it upon themselves to raise the money to replace the chalice. Such was their dedication to the church. Even the poorest would give something, if only one penny.

After the church itself, the main building of the village was the ‘church house’ also known as the church ale house. This seems to have been akin to our parish hall – a place of entertainment, somewhere where visiting

tradesmen could set up a stall, and, "Above all, the fund-raising banquets known as church ales, organised by the churchwardens and by the Young Men of the parish brought in much needed income."

Then, as now, there was a constant struggle to keep the church building in good repair. The roof, mainly made of lead, in particular needed attention. One year a plumber was called to repair the lead which had been "rypped with the wynd." Workmen coming from elsewhere had to be lodged in the village until the work was finished, so presumably were obliged to finish the job as quickly as possible! Often, they were paid in kind, for example, the plumber on one occasion was paid in old pewter plates, another tradesman was paid in fleece.

Sir Christopher instigated a programme of major works and renovations, including new pews, a new carving of St. George, and a new screen, together with numerous small items all of which had to be paid for, although when the chancel roof was being repaired, various people including the vicar, donated oak trees, not money. One ongoing item which turns up again and again in the accounts, was the Vicar's desire to obtain a set of black vestments, for which he saved money from his tithe, and encouraged others to add to the fund.

The parish clerk was the only person who was paid. He helped the vicar as sacristan and served at services. He held the keys to the church and chivvied the parishioners who lingered too long after services. No-one knows if they were praying or just hanging around gossiping!

Parish life went on as it had for hundreds of years, births, deaths, minor disagreements, personal tragedies notwithstanding. But all this was about to change, for the king in his middle age wanted a male heir, and he had recently met a young woman name Anne Boleyn. Life in Morebath, as in the rest of the country would never be quite the same.

To be continued...



You are what you are

Fr Tony Ball writes:

Two zebras are walking in the Garden of Eden, and their conversation centres on their appearance. The first says he is white with black stripes. The other disagrees saying is black with white stripes. The conversation continues as they walk with neither of them prepared to accept the other's view. They do agree that they will ask the Lord God as He walks in the garden in the cool of the evening. They meet God soon afterwards and ask which of them is correct. He doesn't choose either way. His answer is both simple and profound, "You are what you are."

Some years ago Shirley Bassey recorded a song "I am what I am" and in a way I sense both the answer given by God to the zebras, and the content of the song are making the same point. We are individuals and each one of us is unique. But- are we content with who and what we are?

I wonder... Does greed, envy, selfishness, lack of mutual respect, manifest itself in a desire to change others?

There is, and always has been, a desire to make us conform, to diminish our individuality. This comes in differing guises, political, economic, religious, and social. Those not conforming are often marginalised at best or even persecuted at worst. We each have a choice to be what we wish to be, to live as we wish to live, respecting those who don't necessarily follow the same path as we do. We call it "free will", a God given gift to each of us which has to be exercised responsibly, mindful of others.

In my younger years we had people who were affectionally known as "characters". There was something about them which made them stand out from others. They added a bit of joy, a bit of colour into the lives of those around them. They were happy and content to be as the zebras were told "you are what you are" or as the song said "I am what I am."

Every blessing: Fr.T

Flying High

Kathy and Fr Bruce Dixon write:

We were talking to our daughter Polly by Whatsapp one afternoon recently and after a bit she asked us if we would like to watch some of the Jersey Air Day. The big display was by the famous Red Arrows and was to be on shortly. Polly lives near the coast and has a balcony overlooking the bay in which the displays were happening. When we started the video link we saw

the formation of Red Arrows fly past and loop and interweave. Single Tornados came through doing barrel rolls and actually flew right over her house. It was spectacular and it was nearly as good as being there.



It was not the first time that Kathy and I had seen the Red Arrows. On one family holiday over twenty years ago we watched them I think at Lyme Regis. When they display in a coastal bay it is as if they are on a stage and the extent and beauty of the manoeuvres can be clearly seen. One year at one of our village Open Days in Wimborne St Giles raising funds to repair the dry

rot in our lovely church the organiser somehow arranged for a single Red Arrow to fly over the village just before five in the afternoon on its way back to base after a display somewhere.

There was a documentary on the television some time back about the Red Arrows team and how competitive it is to be part of it. It also illustrated the long and intense training needed to put on their displays and achieve the perfection that is apparent. The flying has to be so accurate with just a few feet between the wingtips of the aircraft. An error would be catastrophic.



The Tornado Aircraft themselves are wonderful machines developed over many years by a huge number of people. They are complicated and expensive. But flying is both exhilarating but risky because accidents do happen, fortunately rarely. I experienced some flying in the Cadet Force at school including flying a little two seater Chipmunk for a few minutes. I also had many flights in other aircraft including helicopters.

There is so much around us that should cause us to wonder and admire. There are people and things to amaze including things like aircraft which are relatively recent inventions. It makes us realise how talented the human race is both collectively and individually. Fortunately we are not all the same and our talents differ. But we all have them and we can all do wonderful things.

With love and prayers from Kathy and Father Bruce

Feast of the month: Holy Guardian Angels

2nd October

Roger Dinsey has sent in a short story about Guardian Angels - a story from the book of "Angels: God's secret agents" by Billy Graham. Here is the story:

"In the early days of World War II, Britain's Air Force saved it from invasion and defeat. In her book, *Tell No Man*, Adela Rogers St. John describes a strange aspect of that weeks-long air war. Her information comes from a celebration held some months after the war, honouring Air Chief Marshall Lord Hugh Dowding. The King, the Prime Minister and scores of dignitaries were there. In his remarks, the Air Chief Marshall recounted the story of his legendary conflict where his pitifully small complement of men rarely slept, and their planes never stopped flying. He told about airmen on a mission who, having been hit, were either incapacitated or dead. Yet their planes kept flying and fighting; in fact, on occasions pilots in other planes would see a figure still operating the controls. What was the explanation? The Air Chief Marshall said he believed Angels had actually flown some of the planes whose pilots sat dead in the cockpits.

The Angels piloted planes for dead men in the battle for Britain we cannot finally prove. But we have already seen from Scripture some of the things angels have certainly done, can do, and are yet going to do as history approaches its climax. The important question for each of us is how angels can assist us in our lives here and now: how do they help us attain victory over the forces of evil? What is our continuing relationship to them?"

These are exactly the questions the Church is asking us to consider during the months of October which traditionally begins with the Feast of the Holy Guardian Angels. It is the clear teaching of the Bible and the Church that there are invisible, spiritual, intelligent creatures we call Angels. They were created by God and their main purpose is the same as ours: to love, to know, to worship, and to serve God and to find perfect and eternal joy in this love, knowledges, worship, and service.

The language of the Scripture was certainly influenced by customs of Eastern Imperial courts of antiquity - the Angels draw God's chariot, support his throne, protect the entrance of his kingdom, etc. However, only because the Scripture uses human language and images to describe a truth, it does not mean that this truth is less true.

The Holy Angels - traditionally divided in nine choirs by St. Paul: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Powers, Virtues, Principalities,

Archangels, and Angels (in descending order) - are personal beings. They have an intellect as we do (they learn, know, and understand things - though they are way more clever and intelligent than we); they have a free will (some of them indeed rebelled against God); and they have a power superior to us.

They were all created good, like Adam and Eve, and they were put to a test too, just as our proto-parents. We do not know what the test consisted in but most probably God revealed to them the fact that He would create us, human beings; that we would rebel and sin against Him; and yet He would send his Son to redeem us. God probably revealed to them that God would become man to save us - and some of these Angels rebelled against it as a scandalous, weak, silly plan unworthy of God's majesty and power. They refused to serve a God who becomes man in Christ Jesus. As pride was the cause of the fall of Adam and Eve, so was it of the Angels too. They were condemned to eternal damnation together with their leader - Lucifer, the "Bearer of Light". The "ordinary" way evil spirits try to cause our damnation is through temptation: when they try to present sinful desires to our hearts, sinful thoughts and images to our minds, sinful intentions to our wills. As St. Peter writes, they hate us, and like roaring lions, they want to destroy us. The more rare, yet very real, extraordinary way is through vexation and possession (we can find plenty of examples in the Gospels). It is because of the dangerous influence evil spirits can exercise over us through these means that the Bible and the Church clearly warns us against and prohibits such practices as: magic, clairvoyants, spiritism, horoscope, palm-reading, tarot cards, amulets, etc. Strictly speaking, superstitious practices are part of these dangerous and prohibited practices as well - when we attribute positive or negative power and influence to inanimate objects, gestures, behaviours.

As the fallen angels tempt us to cause our eternal damnation, so the holy Angels assist us with their prayers, inspiration, protection, and guidance so that we can reach salvation more easily.

The book of Job (chapt. 38) shows the choirs of angels breaking forth in cries of great joy at the sight of God creating the world. With an even greater joy they greet the foundation of the Church, the new creation, and the formation of the new man who is created in her.

According to Origen there are two bishops in each church, one visible, the other invisible, both busied with the same task: governing and sanctifying the church. And when St. Gregory of Nazianzus must leave his diocese, he prays the angels of the diocese to keep away "every obstacle that would obstruct the path of his people toward the heavenly Jerusalem."

Continued on Page 31

Calendar for October 2021

FRI	1 st	<i>First Friday:</i> Sacred Heart of Jesus	6pm
SAT	2 nd	HOLY GUARDIAN ANGELS	9.30am
SUN	3 rd	QUEEN OF THE HOLY ROSARY	10am, 5pm
MON	4 th	St. Francis of Assisi	9am
TUE	5 th	St. Thomas, Bishop of Hereford	6pm
WED	6 th	St. Bruno	10am
THU	7 th	<i>Feria</i>	6pm
FRI	8 th	St. Bridget, Widow	—
SAT	9 th	St. John Leonard	—
SUN	10 th	DEDICATION SUNDAY	10am, 5pm
MON	11 th	MATERNITY OF OUR LADY	9am
TUE	12 th	<i>Feria</i>	—
WED	13 th	ST. EDWARD KING	10am
THU	14 th	St. Callistus Pope, Martyr	—
FRI	15 th	St. Theresa of Avila, Virgin	—
SAT	16 th	Monthly Requiem Mass	9.30am
SUN	17 th	20TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY	10am, 5pm
MON	18 th	ST. LUKE EVANGELIST	9am
TUE	19 th	St. Peter of Alcantara	2pm, 6pm
WED	20 th	St. John Cantius	10am
THU	21 st	Bl. Charles of Austria and Hungary	2pm, 6pm
FRI	22 nd	<i>Feria</i>	6pm
SAT	23 rd	<i>Of Our Lady</i>	9.30am
SUN	24 th	MISSION SUNDAY	10am, 5pm
MON	25 th	<i>Sts. Chrysantus & Daria, Martyrs</i>	9am
TUE	26 th	<i>St. Evaristus Pope, Martyr</i>	6pm
WED	27 th	Monthly anointing Mass	10am
THU	28 th	STS. SIMON & JUDE, APOSTLES	6pm
FRI	29 th	St. Bede the Venerable	6pm
SAT	30 th	<i>Vigil of All Saints (anticipated)</i>	9.30am
SUN	31 st	CHRIST THE KING	10am, 4pm

Daily Intentions



Anniversaries of death

We pray for...

- 1st Dying – *Pauline Taylor, Topsy Carter*
2nd Shrine of Walsingham
- 3rd Our Parish – *Mary Turner*
4th Religious vocations
5th Beechcroft & Conifers – *Bernard Kemp pr.*
6th Inner peace – *Andrew Pask, Alan Jones*
7th Priests, vocations – *Les Harris, Peter Dann*
8th Widows & Widowers – *Irene Turner*
9th Cell of O.L.W. – *Doris Skoyles*
- 10th Our Parish – *Winifred Bibby, Donald Butler, Beryl Honebon*
11th Persons with mental health problems – *Sylvia Dave, Donald Underhill*
12th Children & young people – *Dorothy Cook, Pamela Howell-Jones*
13th Conversion of England
14th Those in prison – *Olive Harvey*
15th Those who hunger – *Lindsay Bridgens*
16th Departed – *Graham Perry*
- 17th Our Parish – *Lily Adlam, Frances Johnstone, Wally Moore*
18th Chapter of St. Aldhelm (Servers) – *Minnie Satterthwaite, Arthur Keat*
19th Deprived & job seekers – *May Harris*
20th Elderly – *Mary Goodsir*
21st Politicians
22nd Homeless - *Tom Grierson*
23rd New Bishop of Ebbsfleet – *Cissy Burden*
- 24th Our Parish
25th Missions & Missionaries – *Jean Peters, Richard Evans*
26th Peace and justice
27th Sick – *Joan Whitney*
28th Spread of the Gospel
29th New Bishop of Salisbury – *Hilda Gentle*
30th Victims of abuse or violence – *Clare Pask, Stephen Queben, Sylvia Fields, Myra Powell*
- 31st Our Parish

If there are names missing from the list or you want to add names, please, talk to the Vicar.

Open, O Lord, my mouth to bless thy holy Name; cleanse also my heart from all vain, evil, and wandering thoughts; enlighten my understanding and kindle my affections; that I may worthily, attentively, and devoutly recite this Morning Prayer, and so be meet to be heard before the presence of thy divine Majesty. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER

V. The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary.

R. And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

V. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

R. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it unto me according to thy word.

V. Hail Mary... R. Holy Mary...

V. And the Word was made flesh.

R. And dwelt amongst us.

V. Hail Mary... R. Holy Mary...

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

V. Let us pray. We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts, that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his Cross and Passion we may be brought unto the glory of his Resurrection; through the same Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

V. O Lord, open my lips.

R. And my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

V. O God, make speed to save me.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia!

V. Let us rejoice in the Lord; let us joyfully sing to God our Saviour! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to him!

R. Come and worship Christ, the King of Kings!

V. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hands are the depths of the earth; and the heights of the mountains are his.

R. Come and worship Christ, the King of Kings!

V. The sea is his, for who but he made it; and his hands fashioned the dry land. O come, let us worship and fall down, and weep before the Lord who made us! For he is the Lord our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

R. Come and worship Christ, the King of Kings!

V. Today if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts: As in the provocation, on the day of temptation in the wilderness, where your fathers tempted me, and put me to the test, and they saw my works.

R. Come and worship Christ, the King of Kings!

V. For forty years I loathed that generation, and I said: They always err in heart, they have not known my ways, so I swore in my wrath: they shall not enter my rest.

R. Come and worship Christ, the King of Kings!

V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

R. Come and worship Christ, the King of Kings!

HYMN

O thou eternal Image bright
Of God most high, thou Light of Light,
To thee, Redeemer, glory be,
And might and kingly majesty.

Sole hope of all created things,
Thou art the Lord and King of kings,
Whom God, long ere creation's morn,
Had crowned to rule earth yet unborn.

Fair flower from the Virgin's breast,
Our race's Head for ever blest,
The stone that Daniel saw on high,
Which falling, o'er the world doth lie.

The race of men, condemned to lie
Beneath the direful tyrant's yoke,
By thee at length the shackles broke
And claimed the fatherland on high.

Priest, Teacher, Giver of the law,
Thy Name the rapt Apostle saw
Writ on thy vesture and thy thigh:
The King Of Kings, The Lord Most High.

Fain would we own thy blessed sway,
Whose rule all creatures must obey;
For happy is that state and throne
Whose subjects seek thy will alone.

All praise, King Jesu, be to thee,
The Lord of all in majesty;
Whom with the Father we adore,
And Holy Ghost, for evermore. Amen.

Or: on Our Lady's Feasts & Saturdays:

The Lord whom earth and sea and sky
Adore and praise and magnify,
Who o'er their threefold fabric reigns,
The Virgin's spotless womb contains.

And he whose will is ever done
By moon and seas, by stars and sun,
Is borne upon a maiden's breast,
Whom God's foreseeing grace possessed.

How blest that Mother, in whose shrine
The very Word of God divine,
The maker of the earth and sky,
Was pleased in fleshly form to lie.

Blest in the message Gabriel brought,
Blest in the work the Spirit wrought,
Blest evermore, who brought to birth
The long-Desired of all the earth.

O Jesu, Virgin-born, to thee
Eternal praise and glory be,
Whom with the Father we adore
And Holy Spirit, evermore. Amen.

Or: on a Saint's day:

O Jesu, Saviour of mankind,
In whom the saints their glory find,
On this commemoration day
Hear thou thy people as they pray.

Contending for thy holy Name,
Thy servants won their saintly fame,
Which Christian hearts with praise recall,
And bless the Lord and God of all.

Earth's fleeting pleasures counting nought,
For higher, truer joys they sought,
And now, with angles round thy throne,
Unfading glories are their own.

O grant that we, most gracious God,
May follow in the steps they trod,
And freed from every bond of sin,
As they have won, may also win.

To thee, O Christ, most loving King,
All glory, praise and thanks we bring,
Whom with the Father we adore,
And Holy Spirit, evermore. Amen.

1	Psalm 55	1 Maccabees 2,29-48 Mark 14,53-65	7	90, 92	1 Maccabees 4,1-25 Mark 15,42-end
2	91	Exodus 23,20-23 Revelation 12,7-12	8	88	1 Maccabees 4,26-35 Mark 16,1-8
3	18	Ecclesiasticus 24,11-16 Matthew 12,46-50	9	96, 97	1 Maccabees 4,36-end Mark 16,9-end
4	80, 82	1 Maccabees 3,1-26 Mark 15,1-15	10	48, 150	Haggai 2,6-9 Hebrews 10,19-25
5	87, 89 v. 1-18	1 Maccabees 3,27-41 Mark 15,16-32	11	18	Ecclesiasticus 24,17-22 Luke 1,39-45
6	119 v. 105-128	1 Maccabees 3,42-end Mark 15,33-41	12	106	1 Maccabees 6,18-47 John 13,12-20

13	111, 112	1 Maccabees 7,1-20 John 13, 21-30	23	147	Tobit 2 John 16,23-end
14	115	1 Maccabees 7,21-end John 13,31-end	24	119 v. 89-104	Isaiah 59,9-20 Luke 15,1-14
15	139	1 Maccabees 9,1-22 John 14,1-14	25	1, 2, 3	Tobit 3 John 17,1-5
16	120, 121	1 Maccabees 14,4-15 John 14,15-end	26	5, 6	Tobit 4 John 17,6-19
17	133, 134	Isaiah 54,1-14 Luke 13,31-end	27	119 v. 1-32	Tobit 5 John 17,20-end
18	145	Isaiah 55 Luke 1,1-4	28	116, 117	Wisdom 5,1-16 Luke 6,12-16
19	133	2 Maccabees 6,12-end John 15,12-17	29	17, 19	Tobit 6 John 18,1-27
20	119 v. 153-end	2 Maccabees 7,1-19 John 15,18-end	30	20, 21, 23	Tobit 7 John 18,28-end
21	143, 146	2 Maccabees 7,20-41 John 16,1-15	31	29, 110	Isaiah 32,1-8 Revelation 3,7-end
22	142, 144	Tobit 1 John 16,16-22			

Each reading ends with these words:

V. This is the word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTUS – *One of the following antiphons is used:*

Sundays (or any other day): Sing praise to our King, sing praise; for he is the great King over all earth.

On the Feast of Our Lady: Holy Mary, show your aid to those in need, strengthen the weak, comfort the sorrowful, pray for the Christian people that all may experience your help who celebrate your admirable Motherhood.

On a Saint's day: How glorious is the kingdom where all the Saints rejoice with Christ; clothed in white robes, they follow the Lamb!

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, *
 who has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, *
 born of the house of his servant David.
Through his holy prophets God promised of old *
 to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us,
To show mercy to our ancestors, *
 and to remember his holy covenant.
This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham: *
 to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
Free to worship him without fear, *
 holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.
And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, *
 for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
To give his people knowledge of salvation *
 by the forgiveness of all their sins.
In the tender compassion of our God *
 the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, *
 and to guide our feet into the way of peace.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, *
 and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, *
 world without end. Amen.

Sundays (or any other day): Sing praise to our King, sing praise; for he is the great King over all earth.

On the Feast of Our Lady: Holy Mary, show your aid to those in need, strengthen the weak, comfort the sorrowful, pray for the Christian people that all may experience your help who celebrate your admirable Motherhood.

On a Saint's day: How glorious is the kingdom where all the Saints rejoice with Christ; clothed in white robes, they follow the Lamb!

V. Let us pray. – ***Intercessions** are offered for the Church, for the Sovereign (the world), for those in need, and for the dead. Then follows one of the Collects:*

On any day: Almighty and everlasting God, in your beloved Son, the King of the whole world, you have willed to restore all things: mercifully grant that all the families of nations, now kept apart by the wound of sin, may be brought under the sweet yoke of his rule. Through the same Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen.

On Our Lady's Feast day: O God, you willed that, at the announcement of an Angel, your Word should take flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary; grant us, we beseech you, that we who believe her to be truly the Mother of God may be helped by her intercession with you. Through the same Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen.

On a Saint's day: O God, year by year, you gladden us by the feast-day of Saint **N.** Mercifully grant us, who keep *his (her/their)* feast, grace to follow after the pattern of his (*her/their*) godly conversation. Through Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen.

V. Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

V. The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil, and keep us in eternal life.
R. Amen.

V. Let us bless the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

V. And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.

Morning Prayer ends with the final Antiphon of Our Lady:

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy; our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

V. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

V. Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, who by the cooperation of the Holy Spirit, didst prepare the body and soul of Mary, glorious Virgin and Mother, to become a worthy dwelling for Thy Son; grant that we who rejoice in her commemoration may, by her gracious intercession, be delivered from present evils and from everlasting death. Through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER

V. The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary.

R. And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

V. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

R. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it unto me according to thy word.

V. Hail Mary... R. Holy Mary...

V. And the Word was made flesh.

R. And dwelt amongst us.

V. Hail Mary... R. Holy Mary...

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

V. Let us pray. We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts, that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his Cross and Passion we may be brought unto the glory of his Resurrection; through the same Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

V. O Lord, open my lips. R. And my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

V. O God, make speed to save me. R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia!

HYMN

Thee, Lord of every age, we sing:
Thee, Christ, we hail the nations' King;
O Framers of the mind and heart,
Our one true Judge we say thou art.

The hate-swayed mob cries, pride-enticed,
They will not have thy kingdom, Christ;
Rejoice we at thy glorious name,
Thou Highest King we do proclaim.

O Christ, our Prince, that bringest peace,
Let every rebel impulse cease:
And sheep astray thy love would fain
Bring back to thy one fold again.

For this thine arms wide-stretched in plea
Hung bleeding on the atoning Tree;
For this the spear's revealing dart
Laid bare thy love-enflamèd Heart.

For this thou dost thy glory hide,
 Outpouring from thy piercèd side
 The riches of thy love divine
 Beneath the veils of Bread and Wine.

May realms and they that rule them vie
 With solemn rites to raise thee high;
 May laws and arts your servants be.
 All life be sanctified in thee.

Or: on the Feast of Our Lady:

Hail, O Star that pointest
 Towards the port of heaven,
 Thou to whom as maiden
 God for Son was given.

Jesu's tender Mother,
 Make thy supplication
 Unto him who chose thee
 At his Incarnation;

That, O matchless Maiden,
 Passing meek and lowly,
 Thy dear Son may make us
 Blameless, chaste and holy.

So, as now we journey,
 Aid our weak endeavour.
 Till we gaze on Jesus,
 And rejoice for ever.

Father, Son and Spirit,
 Three in One confessing,
 Give we equal glory,
 Equal praise and blessing. Amen.

Their kingly gear and royal state
 Kings to their King shall consecrate;
 To thy sceptre, so sweet yet strong,
 Our nation, homes and hearts belong.

Jesu, to thee, beneath whose sway
 All part shall bow, all praise we pay;
 With Father and with Spirit be
 All glory thine eternally. Amen.

Or: on a Saint's day:

Ye thousand thousand angel hosts!
 Assist us in our need;
 Ye patriarchs! with the prophet choir!
 For our forgiveness plead.

Forerunner blest! and thou who still
 Dost heaven's dread keys retain!
 Ye glorious Apostles all!
 Unloose our guilty chain.

Army of martyrs! holy priests
 In beautiful array!
 Ye happy troops of virgins chaste!
 Wash all our stains away.

All ye who high above the stars
 In heavenly glory reign!
 May we through your prevailing prayers
 Unto your joys attain.

Praise, honour, to the Father be,
 Praise to his only Son;
 Praise, Holy Paraclete, to thee,
 While endless ages run. Amen.

1	69	2 Kings 2,1-18 Acts 24,24 - 25,12	3	113	Ecclesiasticus 24,24-31 1 Thessalonians 5,12-end
2	8	Zechariah 1,7-11 & 2,1-5 Matthew 18,1-10	4	85, 86	2 Kings 5 Acts 26,1-23

5	89 v. 19-end	2 Kings 6,1-23 Acts 26,24-end	19	134, 135	2 Kings 22 1 Timothy 1
6	91, 93	2 Kings 9,1-16 Acts 27,1-26	20	136	2 Kings 23,4-25 1 Timothy 2
7	94	2 Kings 9,17-end Acts 27,27-end	21	138, 140, 141	2 Kings 23,36 - 24,17 1 Timothy 3
8	102	2 Kings 12,1-19 Acts 28,1-16	22	145	2 Kings 24,18 - 25,12 1 Timothy 4
9	24	2 Chronicles 7,11-16 John 4,19-29	23	148, 149	2 Kings 25,22-end 1 Timothy 5
10	132	Jeremiah 7,1-11 Luke 19,1-10	24	119 v. 121-136	Ecclesiastes chapt. 11 & 12 2 Timothy 2,1-7
11	122	Genesis 3,14-15 Luke 1,26-38	25	4, 7	Judith 4 1 Timothy 6,1-10
12	107	2 Kings 18,1-12 Philippians 1	26	9, 10	Judith 5,1 - 6,4 1 Timothy 6,11-end
13	119 v. 129-152	2 Kings 18,13-end Philippians 2,1-13	27	124, 125, 126	Deuteronomy 32,1-4 John 14,15-26
14	114, 116, 117	2 Kings 19,1-19 Philippians 2,14-end	28	119 v. 1-16	Jeremiah 3,11-18 Jude 1
15	130, 131, 137	2 Kings 19,20-36 Philippians 3	29	22	Judith 8,9-end 2 Timothy 2,14-end
16	118	2 Kings 20 Philippians 4	30	99, 100	Isaiah 10,33 - 11,9 1 Timothy 6,11-16
17	141	Joshua 14,6-14 Matthew 12,1-21	31	72	Daniel 5 John 6,1-15
18	103	Ecclesiasticus 38,1-14 Colossians 4,7-end			

Each reading ends with these words:

V. This is the word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

MAGNIFICAT

Sundays (or any other day): On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, 'King of kings and Lord of lords'. To him be glory and empire for ever and ever.

On the Feast of Our Lady: Blessed Mother and inviolate Maiden! Glorious Queen of the world! Plead for us with the Lord!

On a Saint's day: All your Saints and Elect with one voice acknowledge you: O Blessed Trinity, One God!

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,+
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,*
 he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed;+
the Almighty has done great things for me*
 and holy is his name.

He has mercy on those who fear him,*
 from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm*
 and has scattered the proud in their conceit,
Casting down the mighty from their thrones*
 and lifting up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things*
 and sent the rich away empty.
He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,*
 to remember his promise of mercy,
The promise made to our ancestors,*
 to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, *
 and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
 world without end. Amen.

Sundays (or any other day): On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, 'King of kings and Lord of lords'. To him be glory and empire for ever and ever.

On the Feast of Our Lady: Blessed Mother and inviolate Maiden! Glorious Queen of the world! Plead for us with the Lord!

On a Saint's day: All your Saints and Elect with one voice acknowledge you: O Blessed Trinity, One God!

V. Let us pray. – *Intercessions* are offered for the Church, for the Sovereign (world), for those in need, our Benefactors, and for the dead. Then one of the following Collects is said:

On any day: Almighty and everlasting God, in your beloved Son, the King of the whole world, you have willed to restore all things: mercifully grant that all the families of nations, now kept apart by the wound of sin, may be brought under the sweet yoke of his rule. Through the same Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

On Our Lady's Feast day: O God, you willed that, at the announcement of an Angel, your Word should take flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary; grant us, we beseech you, that we who believe her to be truly the Mother of God may be helped by her intercession with you. Through the same Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

On a Saint's day: O God, year by year, you gladden us by the feast-day of Saint N. Mercifully grant us, who keep *his (her/their)* feast, grace to follow after the pattern of his (*her/their*) godly conversation. Through Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

V. Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

All: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

V. Let us bless the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

V. And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.

Optional private prayer to be said after Evening Prayer: To the Most Holy and undivided Trinity, to our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified, to the fruitful Virginity of the most blessed and most glorious Mary, always a Virgin, and to the holiness of all the Saints be ascribed everlasting praise, honour, and glory, by all creatures, and to us be granted the forgiveness of all our sins, world without end. Amen.

From the Book of Common Prayer

20th Sunday after Trinity: *O Almighty and most merciful God, of thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech thee, from all things that may hurt us; that we, being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that thou wouldest have done; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

We address God the Father as both omnipotent, everlastingly and infinitely powerful, and as most merciful, abounding in mercy towards sinners such as we are. But that is not the end, for we also address him as possessing within himself towards his creatures “bountiful goodness”, an overflowing, inexhaustible reservoir of goodness from which it is his desire and determination to secure our true and everlasting good.

Of such a Lord God we not merely ask but we beseech that he will so watch over us in his superlative power, mercy and goodness that we shall be kept from all things - spiritual and physical, material and immaterial - that may hurt us as whole beings (as persons with body and soul). We desire to be preserved by the grace of God as whole creatures from any harm intended against us by the world, the flesh and the devil. There is a divine, unifying connection between body and soul and harm to one affects the other.

The desire to be free from harm is not for self-satisfaction or for a sense of self-worth; rather it is so that we are alert and ready in mind, heart and will to do what God commands and calls us to do as his servants in his world for his glory. We are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world - being and doing that which we are taught by the Holy Ghost to be the will of God for us today. And, further, we are to do what the Lord commands and requires of us cheerfully, rejoicing! As the appointed Epistle declares: “Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart.”

And all our prayer is offered to the Father through the Incarnate Son, the only Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ who is the Lord. It is to his Messianic Banquet that sinners are called, as the appointed Gospel declares.

The Revd Dr Peter Toon (+2009)

Morning Offering - O JESUS, I offer You my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings, all that this day may bring, be they good or bad: for the love of God, for the conversion of sinners, for the salvation of souls, for the reunion of all Christians, and in reparation for all the sins committed by me and others against your infinite love and mercy.

A Visit to the Blessed Sacrament

“Jesus has remained in the Sacred Host for us so as to stay by our side, to sustain us, to guide us. And love can be repaid with love only. How could we not turn to the Blessed Sacrament each day, even if it is only for a few minutes, to bring him our greetings and our love as children and as brothers?” (St. Josemaría Escrivá)

Trying to understand that a piece (almost insignificant) of bread is the very body of Christ - God himself! - isn't an easy leap and, at the same time, is something which leaves us astonished. To go and adore the Blessed Sacrament, especially before we have made it a habit, might not be that simple. We don't understand, *we get bored, we don't know what to say, we go in briefly, we make a quick sign of the Cross and we go back out.*

If we only knew the enormous grace of Eucharistic Adoration, we would spend entire days before the altar. Thus, this article wants to provide you a brief guide to visiting and adoring the Blessed Sacrament. It is recommended you bring a Bible with you, or get a prayer book.

We all know that one can pray to God anywhere: after all, he is everywhere. And wherever we are, he is present to us. Nevertheless, it is an understandable and a holy instinct to wish to pray in a church. Humans have always been inclined to set apart special places for prayer and worship and contemplation. Our own places of worship are consecrated for these purposes; they are fitted and decorated, hopefully made beautiful so as to be conducive to those ends. But what surely most draws us to a church, is the presence of the Lord himself in the Blessed Sacrament.

A Christian can pray anywhere; but there is something special about sitting before the tabernacle. The holy Curé d'Ars used to see every day sitting at the back of his church an old man, a peasant, sometimes for hours on end. One day, he asked him what he did while he was there – what kept him in his place? The old man simply replied, ‘I look at him, and he looks at me’.

For many of us, such a spirit of restful contemplation doesn't come so easily. One good way to make the most of the time we spend in front of the Blessed Sacrament might be to take up the traditional formula of a ‘visit’ to the Blessed Sacrament: a little pattern of prayer which focuses us in a special way on the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. So, what to do? How to pray?

1. Enter in silence - others may already be praying and silence will help you to focus better. Greet the Sacrament with a sign of affectionate devotion (genuflection, deep bow, sign of the cross) and remember: God himself dwells amongst us.

2. Find a good place - After settling down, make sure you are comfortable. Kneeling on a hard floor, sitting in uncomfortable pews, being cold, etc. will not help you to focus on prayer. Try to sit somewhere where other people (leaving or arriving) will not disturb you.

3. Make a small prayer of preparation - Praying is not easy so ask Jesus to help you to pray better. Your own words are perfectly fine, or you can say a prayer like this: “*Lord Jesus, hidden in the Blessed Sacrament, I acknowledge your presence. Enlighten my heart and mind, give me your grace, teach me to pray. Talk to me and teach me to listen. Keep away from me all vain, evil, and wandering thoughts; kindle my affections; that I may spend this time with you attentively and fruitfully.*” Or still, you can simply say: “*Lord Jesus - I am here. No idea what to do or what to say... help me to pray!*”

4. Read something from the Bible. The Gospels, the Prophets, and the Psalm are always a good choice. But remember: you are there to pray and not to read. Read a short passage and pause in silence. Try to understand what God is trying to tell you in that passage. Or try to imagine yourself being part of the story you are reading. How would you react? What would you say? What would you ask?

5. You can use some written prayers. You can use anything that helps you: the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross, the Jesus Prayer, the Psalms, hymns.

6. Pray. Make sure you don't do or read or recite something all the time. True prayer comes from the heart, so simply tell Jesus what is on your heart. What are you thankful for. Your fears and worries. Who are you worried about? What difficulties are you experiencing? What are your needs and the needs of your loved ones? Don't try to tell God what or how he should do. Simply tell him what's on your heart and entrust all your needs, problems, and worries to him.

7. Say your goodbyes. When it is time for you to leave, just thank Jesus for the time the two of you have just spent together. It is traditional to end the visit to the Blessed Sacrament with the *Divine Praises*. Say it slowly, with devotion: ***Blessed be God. Blessed be His Holy Name. Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man. Blessed be the Name of Jesus. Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart. Blessed be His Most Precious Blood. Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete. Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most Holy. Blessed be her Holy and Immaculate Conception. Blessed be her Glorious Assumption. Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother. Blessed be St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse. Blessed be God in His Angels and in His Saints. Amen.***

Continued from page 14

It is indeed clearly and explicitly taught by the Bible that some of these Angels have been assigned a particular role: to guard states and nations, communities, Israel, the Church, and individual human beings. We call them Holy Guardian Angels. God assigns to all of us, when we are conceived in our mother's womb, a Guardian Angel who will stay by our side until our death. It is a Christian tradition, approved by the Scripture (cf. the Book of Tobit), to pray to our Guardian Angel and to honour him (not with the supreme honour reserved to God only, but with the honour we offer to God's saints). As I said, communities also have Guardian Angels - such as a Parish.

The role of Guardian Angels is to avert external danger or to help us to escape from it (remember how St. Peter was freed from his chains and prison in Acts). They can bring us physical and mental healing from God (in John angels stir up the water of the pool of Bethesda for healing). I have heard more than once stories similar to the opening story of this article - how, for example, speeding drivers were warned and consequently slowed down by a later unexplainable noise coming from the car. Our Guardian Angels also help us in secular, every-day tasks if those bring us closer to God and to our salvation (again, just read the book of Tobia where St. Raphael helps Tobia to find a good, devoted, godly wife). They also shield us, to some extent, from the harm and temptation caused by evil spirits. They suggest us holy and godly thoughts. They inspire us to prayer and acts of mercy and charity. When ordered by God, they even inflict temporary punishment on us to bring us back to God (there are very clear examples of this both in the Old and New Testament). Finally, they stand by us in our agony, in the moment of our death - to inspire us to believe and to trust in God, to pray to him, to repent of our sins. After our death, when our immortal soul is separated from our frail body until the day of Last Judgement, they accompany our soul into God's presence.

The Christian "answer" to Angels is reverence (for their presence), devotion (for their benevolence), and trust (for their help).

There is a deep unity between Angels and us, human beings, and between Angels and the Holy Church. This unity becomes even more obvious during the Liturgy. Origen writes that "the angels are drawn by the reading of the Scripture which they delight in hearing." And he warns the preachers: they should not forget that the angels are listening to the sermon and are judging it.

But, of course, the angels are present especially at the Eucharist. The Mass is, as you know, a sacramental, mystical participation in the liturgy of heaven. St. John Chrysostom writes: "The angels surround the priest. The

whole sanctuary and the space before the altar is filled with the heavenly Powers who come to honour Him who is present upon the altar. (...) Think now of what kind of choir you are going to enter. Although vested with a body, you have been judged worthy to join the Powers of heaven in singing the praises of Him who is Lord of all. (...) Behold the royal table. The angels serve at it. The Lord Himself is present.”

We are reminded of this unity of the two liturgies, heavenly and earthly, at every Mass during the preface: “Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee and *saying*: Holy, Holy, Holy.” The whole Church is invited to unite with the Thrones and the Dominations, the Cherubim and the Seraphim, to sing the angelic hymn of praise. Again, St. John Chrysostom writes: “Reflect upon whom it is that you are near and with whom you are about to invoke God - the Cherubim. Think of the choirs you are about to enter. Let no one have any thought of earth (“lift up your hearts”), but let him lose himself of every earthly thing and transport himself whole and entire into heaven. Let him abide there beside the very throne of glory, hovering with the Seraphim, and singing the most holy song of the God of glory and majesty.”

Worshipping together with the Angels is for our benefit. Their hymn we are called to join in, the “Holy, holy, holy” expresses holy fear. It describes the awe felt by even them, the highest and purest creatures, in the presence of the infinite divine excellence. And this enables us to understand better the holiness of the Eucharist, which leads us, with all the nine choirs of Angels into the presence of the all-holy God, hidden only by the fragile veil of bread and wine.



Let us rejoice then over their company, help, love and care. They are for us like elder brothers; helping, guiding us back to our heavenly home, and waiting for us so that one day we can join them in the perfect, never-ending Liturgy, worshipping with them their and our Lord, rejoicing all in His blessed and sweet presence.

Let us pray to them, daily, and let us teach our children and grandchildren, godchildren and nieces and nephews to love and to listen and pray to them.

The Psalms

Psalm 13: “How long wilt thou forget me?”

(Commentaries from various sources edited together.)

Psalm 13 raises some serious questions. How does it feel to lose? Do you like that feeling? Of losing a game or a match or a contest? And what about when you're losing – not to a *friend* or someone you love and care for – but when you're losing to an *enemy*. Someone who hates you. Someone who you know will actually rejoice when you fail – when he finally beats you. The Lord Jesus tells us to love our enemies. We ought to do good to them. We must pray for them. And yet, how do you deal with the emotions involved in appearing to lose to an enemy? How should you deal with your inner man regarding the troubling thoughts that come when your enemy is winning?

This is where Psalm 13 can be instructive and helpful for us. In Psalm 13, David is wrestling with this very issue of his enemy winning. “*How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?*” He begs God to help him so that these things don't happen to him: that his “*enemy [might] say, I have prevailed against him*” or this other concerning possibility that “*those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.*”

So, David here in Psalm 13 is giving us an inspired example of how to deal with the situation **When Your Enemy is Winning**.

Verses 1 & 2: Invocation and Lament - Notice the recurring phrase, “how long?” As in, “when will this be over?” or “when will you relieve me of my grief and agony?” When you're having a great time, you never ask when it can be done. Right? This Psalm is a desperate miserable plea for the Lord to intervene, and we, Christians, can cry out to the Lord in a similar fashion.

Are your situations troubling? Are they un-enjoyable? Are they causing you grief and pain and anguish? Then you have nothing to lose by calling out to the Lord and asking him – “how long?” It's not a sin for you to express your deep grief about situations in your life that are frightening or grievous or unpleasant.

David feels abandoned. Obviously, the Lord never forgets anything – in the sense that he knows everything. Nothing escapes his notice or somehow slips out of his memory – like it can with us. But the fact that David's enemy is winning at his expense, makes David feel as if God has just abandoned him.

Surely, we can feel like this, can't we? Like God has abandoned us. We have his promise to never leave nor forsake us. And we need to cling to that

promise by faith – because sometimes it’s the only thing we have. But even then, it can still *feel* like God has abandoned us. And this is what David is experiencing – this kind of emotion of being abandoned.

David asks the question: How long will you abandon me? Are you going to do it forever? Like a wound that just won’t heal and that is hurting more and more and becoming more and more of a concern – that’s how David feels about God’s apparent abandoning of him.

And that’s how it can feel when we’re experiencing situations where your enemy (or evil in general: mass murders, natural diseases, pandemics, etc.) is winning at your (innocent peoples’) expense. God seems silent. He seems like he’s abandoned you. How long will he do this? Forever?

And it is not evil nations, idolators, murderers, etc. but innocent, good, peace-seeking people like David who feel abandoned. It always seem that the innocent suffer more, the just are always persecuted, the righteous lose, the kind are pushed aside, and good being repaid by evil. Where is God??

The reality – as only God knows it – is that he doesn’t leave or forsake his own. He’s always present. Always near. Even if you don’t feel like that’s the case. It is. And yet, what we see David doing here is wrestling through the physical reality of things. He’s on his way to being comforted by the Lord and expressing confidence in him. But he – just like we so often do – he needed to start where he was. He was being *real* with the Lord and expressing how he sensed things were.

We all understand that we need to be anxious for nothing. We know that worrying won’t get us anywhere. We know that we have to cast our cares upon the Lord. And yet, you need to get there. And it can be a journey marked with uncertainties and failures and struggle. You and I need to get to the place where we have confidence in the Lord. And yet, I’m sure you and I can all say from experience that it can take a little time or effort or whatever else to get there. And that’s what we see David experiencing here.

Verses 3 & 4: Petition - David here gives a request and then reasons as to why the Lord should answer his request. David starts by giving the Lord two imperatives. And these two words *are* imperatives. He says “consider” and “hear me”. Or you could say “look and answer me”. He wants God to – as it were – look at and be mindful of him. But he won’t settle for just a look. He wants God to answer his request.

And let me just say – I think it’s significant that God allows David to make what almost seems to be demands of him. Now, let me be clear. We as creatures have no right at all to demand that the Creator do our bidding. He’s

not our Genie. He has no obligation to serve us. We should serve him. Even David follows up his bold requests with “O Lord my God.” David recognises that he’s addressing the Lord, the God of all. So, he’s not pretending to be God himself. He’s recognising his place of subservience to the Lord.



But with those considerations established, don’t overlook the fact that God allows his people to pray to him like this. Come boldly before his throne of grace, we’re told. Don’t be timid.

So what is David wanting to have answered? He asks God to brighten his eyes. In Ezra 9,8, the prophet speaks of God enlightening the eyes of those who returned to Israel from captivity. Ezra speaks of it as giving the remnant “a little reviving”. A little encouragement. A little stirring and lifting of their souls.

Have you ever thought to ask the Lord to encourage you? How often we just sulk and stew in our misery and despair and anger. Why not ask God to “lighten your eyes”? To encourage you?

Verse 5: Confidence - David trusts in God’s mercy. This kind of trust in Isaiah 12,2 is the kind that removes all fear. “Mercy” in Hebrew refers to loyalty, faithfulness, or obligation. God obliges himself to weak, frail, and trusting human beings. That’s why David can pray with such boldness. He’s comforted that God will be faithful and loyal to him – because that’s just God’s character!

Verse 6: Promised praise - And so David promises to praise God in the last verse of Psalm 13. When David says that he will sing, he’s not simply stating a fact. This is more an exhortation, an encouragement: “Let’s sing to the Lord! We’re going to do this!” Nothing is lost, nothing *can* be lost as God is merciful: loyal, faithful, and loving.

So... does it seem that your enemy is winning at your expense? Is evil being triumphant? Is God seemingly hiding in silence? Take the message of Psalm 13 with you and pray it to the Lord. Ask for his encouragement. Express your confidence in him. Boldly give him “reasons” to answer you. Remind him of his mercy: his loyalty, his faithfulness, his love. And believe that he will do it. That he will answer. That he will show his face. And he will because he cannot not to - he *is* God, he *is* the Lord: kind and merciful, loving and faithful.

The Church Closers' Charter

Fr Marcus Walker writes:

Emma Thompson has a hugely important article in the *Spectator* today (see below), about a piece of draft legislation heading to General Synod. There is a proposal for draft legislation heading to the General Synod. Its name is 'GS2222', but we call it the **Church Closers' Charter**. It is designed to make closing and selling churches easier for the dioceses.

If it is passed, it will make closing churches easier and remove or reduce PCCs' and local people's rights of consultation, representation and appeal. There is a small window to object now - which closes on October 31 (this has recently been extended from September 30).

We have prepared a short "How to object" document, which you might want to read before making any objection and which might help steer some of your answers.

If you feel strongly that this is a mistake, please act. All you need do is to send an email to mpm2011review@churchofengland.org by 31st October, stating that, with regard to diocesan church closure plans, you object to any reduction in the rights of PCC and local people to be consulted and to appeal. If you have time to do more, you can fill out the whole consultation document; please use the documents above to object in greater detail.

Please do object strongly - and please forward this on!

The Church Closers' Charter must be torn up

Emma Thompson, The Spectator, 23 September 2021:

Over the past few months, the Archbishops of York and Canterbury have repeatedly assured us that they love parishes and parish churches. 'I am passionate that the parish is essential,' the Archbishop of Canterbury told the *Church Times* recently. The Archbishop of York went so far as to describe the parish as 'the beating heart of community life in England'. So why are they supporting a change to church law to make it easier to close parish churches?

The paper which proposes the change is at stage one of a three-stage approval process. It has the unsexy name GS 2222, so I call it the 'Church Closers' Charter'. Its introduction is written by someone whose job title is Head of Pastoral and Closed Churches, and she writes that the purpose of the legal change is to simplify existing legislation so as 'to manage the disposal of churches no longer needed for regular public worship', for which there needs to be 'faster processes which would allow for an increase in closures

over time'. The need for simplification, she says, was identified 'after discussion with dioceses'.

The Church of England's comms teams have mastered the art of shrouding significant changes in bureaucratic language so dull that few bother to read on to discover what is actually happening — hence GS 2222. The proposal made its first General Synod appearance in July. It is now at the stage of public consultation (which ends on 30 September) before it goes back to General Synod in February. A close reading of the document shows that it very much does not just propose to simplify existing legislation. It is an un-transparent, anti-democratic piece of proposed legislation which will, if implemented, shift power from the local (parishes) to the centre (dioceses). It is a stealthy power grab.

The C of E is missing a chance for real reform. What it should do is to reduce bishops and central bureaucracy

The document reveals that the Church's dioceses are, collectively, considering tripling the rate at which churches are closing. It confidently earmarks up to 356 (unspecified) churches for closure, and implies that dioceses may have their eyes on many more. It also envisages more clergy dispossessions (dismissals) and considers 'possible limitations of rights of representation or appeal'. The dioceses, in other words, would be made less accountable, just at the moment when many wanted to hold them to account.

Parishes own vicarages, but the dioceses take the proceeds if vicarages are sold. Currently, parishes have the power to push back, but if the proposals of the Church Closers' Charter are enacted, it will be much easier for dioceses to sack vicars and sell their vicarages, as well as to close churches and sell parish-owned buildings. Parishioners would have little right to object.

I can see why bureaucrats want GS 2222 to pass. If you were in charge of closing churches in a diocese, you too might want to speed up and simplify the system. The idea of endless devoted locals holding up what you see as an inevitable process would be exhausting. Perhaps you'd convince yourself that elderly, church-going congregants are anyway dying out, being replaced by net natives who don't care about buildings.

The tragedy is that the pandemic proved this assumption is false. A University of York survey found that, during Covid, even 75 per cent of the non-churchgoing public wanted churches open as places of solace and reflection. The reality is that millions of non-churchgoers value their local church even if they don't visit much, and they count on its continuing availability for the joyful and solemn human milestones of births, marriages and deaths. And if there must be church closures, there needs to be a proper

national plan and a proper discussion, rather than this self-serving attempt to license dioceses to flog our heritage piecemeal.

The C of E is missing a chance for real reform. What it should do, instead of eliminating parishes, is reduce bishops and central bureaucracy. It should give power and agency to the parishes from the dioceses, not vice versa. It should enforce accountability and listen to the voices of parishioners, who know what their parishes need.

Are there any churchgoers who want to see their donations fund more communications officers? How much more logical it would be, spiritually and financially, if the Church leaders embraced people's love for what's local: the vicars who live among us, the buildings which are part of our heritage.

The demise of the parish system is not inevitable. If the Archbishops are truly 'passionate' about the parish, they should tear up the Church Closers' Charter. As it is, it's as if they are denying that the revolution is coming, even as they build the guillotine.

**SAVE THE PARISH (STP)
SOME GUIDANCE TO YOUR RESPONSES TO
'A MISSION IN REVISION' PAPER GS2222
PLEASE OBJECT BY 30TH SEPTEMBER 2021**

This short note has been compiled to highlight what STP has so far identified as the most concerning elements of the green paper GS2222. If you are here as a supporter or member of STP, it is likely that you will have already read of the concerns expressed by others and will be motivated to help. We hope that this document will assist you in making an individual response to the paper. It is essential that those of us who want to prevent some of the most worrying changes to the law and practice of the Church in relation to parish matters make our concerns plain and fully understood. Every response counts.

In responding to the paper, we recommend that you concentrate on the following issues. A much fuller explanation of them is set out in a paper already written and submitted by one objector, which is also available on the STP website. However, the consultation period is short - and time is of the essence - so we have tried to assist your response by pointing out the main problems. (These documents are intended as a guide to the issues, not as legal opinion or advice. Please use your own words, and refer to your own situation, if you can. Your objection will be more powerful if you personalise it.)

As with all consultations, the more responses that those behind these changes receive, the more powerful will be our voice. Even if all you can do before 30th September is to send a line or two in relation to each of the matters set out below, that will help. The main thing is to write it and send it.

Issue 1 – Consultation on This Paper

(i) In this paper, para 27, bullet point 2 shows that dioceses are already planning up to 356 planned closures in the next 2-5 years. This would treble the previous closure rate of 20-25 per annum (bullet point 4 on p14). Although the church authorities say that this is now the time for consultation, the simple fact is that they have published document GS2222 which is already the blueprint for profound and worrying change, and have done so having consulted only a tiny fraction of those who have an interest in the matter. Consultation took place only with “diocesan secretaries, archdeacons, pastoral secretaries and closed church and property officers” (para 26). Those are the people who will gain most powers by the measures proposed, and it is not surprising that they may support them.

(ii) Therefore, the first point to make is that before the sort of changes that this paper proposes are even thought of, there should have been much wider consultation with all of those who may be affected by them. A failure of consultation can make a big difference in legal terms, so this point should be made strongly. Tell the church that you want to have been consulted ***before*** they propose such sweeping and potentially damaging changes, not after!!

Issue 2 – Strategic Context

(i) The paper says that it is written in a ‘Strategic Context’ (page 15). That is a piece of management-speak which in fact gives a clear clue as to why the changes are proposed. The ‘Emerging Church’ programme is given as the reason why the centralisation of legal and financial powers are necessary.

(ii) However the Emerging Church programme has not yet made any proposals at all. There are no clear results from any of the 3 strands of review set out in para 19 of the document. That means that these huge changes are being proposed before it is even known why and to what extent they will be needed. They propose a mechanism for destruction of parish rights before even knowing why those powers are required.

(iii) The concern of STP is that there is already a movement to do away with what those who already seek to weaken traditional parishes

describe as ‘key limiting factors’. By that they mean church buildings and trained clergy. The proposal of thousands of ‘house churches’ is already part of this effort and is supported by a number of those consulted before this paper was published.

(iv) We suggest you tell the church that it should work out where it is going before deciding what it needs to get there. Making changes without understanding all relevant considerations is also very important in legal terms, and this point should also be made strongly.

Issue 3 - Parish governance, reorganisation and closure

(i) The procedures for changes to parish governance, reorganisation and church closures are a major part of the document. The legal procedures for merging parishes, reorganising them into any form of group ministry or for closing particular churches are long established and, yes, can be complicated.

(ii) However, they are complicated because the governance and reorganisation of parishes affects many people. The Church of England is a national church. Every citizen lives in a parish and has a right to its basic forms of ministry. STP believes that this means that before any serious reorganisation of ministry the whole community has a right to be heard. The green paper GS2222 proposes that much of that consultation should be dispensed with and confined only to those who regularly use the church. However, others such as parish councillors and other community leaders may have a real interest in what happens.

(iii) In addition, GS2222 proposes that appeals as to what happens to parish property and the parish church if a closure occurs should go only to the diocese that proposes to close or dispose of that property. They therefore become the judge, even though they stand to reap a financial benefit from closure. At present the appeal route includes the more independent Church Commissioners and if necessary the Courts by way of the professional judges of the Privy Council.

(iv) STP of course realises that there are times when parishes have to reorganise and sadly that some churches close down. However, we ask that you make these important points:

(a) Before any merger or closure of a parish, the need to consult the whole community must remain as it is now. Only then can those in charge be sure that all voices are heard.

(b) If a parish is reorganised so that its minister is to be removed from office, there must be a clear and fair legal procedure, so that he/she has full rights to re- deployment or fair compensation for loss of income, home

and mission which takes into account age, length of service and so on. This must go beyond just a diocesan committee and must include an independent process (as in an Industrial Tribunal).

(c) Parish property that is not already under the control of the diocese (usually the parsonage house and the church building, but possibly also other trusts and donations) should remain in the control of the parish, and any financial gain on disposal should be used for parish purposes before any consideration is given to centralising it under diocesan control.

(d) The procedures for reorganisation and change of parishes should not be changed without primary legislation and should allow full consultation as at present.

(e) There must be no change to the appeal process. To prevent appeals going beyond diocesan level means that those who have an interest in the outcome end up being the ‘judge in their own cause’. That is legally unacceptable. There is no need to change the appeal process.

(f) Given the scale of planned reorganisations (350+ closures), simplifying processes should not be conflated with speed. Speeding up the process would contradict a national trend for more care, more consultation and increasing powers and use of judicial review (the Home Secretary's arrangements for housing refugees and the A303 at Stonehenge being recent, high-profile examples). Appeal processes by their nature take time.

If you wish to do further reading, you may like to see this article by Fr Christopher Johnson: <https://allthingslawfulandhonest.wordpress.com/2021/07/14/power-grab-or-pastoral-measure/>

The official consultation questionnaire is tedious, with questions which seem rather loaded. If you have time please answer it as well, using the long example of a previous submission to help you with the questions. <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/parish-reorganisation-and-church-property/review-mission-and-pastoral-measure-2011>

In all cases, we suggest objecting by email, as the final page of GS2222 shows is permissible, to mppm2011review@churchofengland.org.

It urgently needs as many objections as possible. The deadline is 31st October.

Power Grab or Pastoral Measure?

Fr Christopher Johnson writes on the blog “All Things Lawful and Honest”:

We have had over a year now of the Church of England making quite a considerable effort to close churches. My latest encounter with this came

last week in the form of a discussion with the Church Commissioners in the context of a Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee meeting. The meeting itself was excellent: there was a positive contribution about church buildings from the Church Buildings Council, and a great introduction to the legal processes by the home team, amongst other things. But then there was a presentation of a document proposing changes to the Mission and Pastoral Measure, GS 2222 (as it now is).

GS 2222 starts off surprisingly well. In the first chapter we read that ‘Virtually everybody living in England is a parishioner, and as such they are entitled to the ministrations of the Church, and the priest with the cure of souls has a corresponding duty to minister to the people’.

It substantiates this by reference to *The Archbishop’s Committee on Church and State* (1916), noting that ‘The incumbent has from early times been under obligation to baptise infants, to admit parishioners... to Holy Communion, to solemnize their marriages, to visit their sick, and to bury the dead dying within the district in the churchyard or other parochial cemetery. Parishioners have a legal right to demand from their parson these and all other ministrations belonging to the cure of souls’. What a beautifully balanced statement of rights and responsibilities this is: people and parsons, being the Church of England, worshipping God, serving the nation.

But as we move away from statements about our historic context, another actor comes into the scene: ‘the Diocese’. There are 98 references to ‘the diocese’ or ‘dioceses’ in the document, and it is interesting to see what this hitherto historically minor character has to say.

To begin with, we learn that it was discussion with ‘dioceses’ which prompted this review of the Mission and Pastoral Measure. Then we learn that, having prompted the review, it is ‘dioceses’ which have so far been consulted about it, especially through ‘Diocesan Secretaries, Archdeacons, Pastoral Secretaries and their Closed Church and property officers’, who believe they should have more autonomy.

This desire of ‘dioceses’ manifests itself in the proposals. Hence we are asked periodically whether ‘Dioceses need more powers’ and ‘responsibilities could be moved to dioceses’. ‘Dioceses’ would also make decisions about the need to consult people like the wider deanery, the PCC, the parishioners, the public, and parish patrons. In the longer-term changes proposed – notice this shift in power is gradual – the question is asked whether the ‘diocese’ should decide ‘who has the rights to be involved in the consultation and where there would be no rights of representations’ at all.

These proposals would enable dioceses far more easily to take an axe to the present parish system. Indeed, we are told ‘many dioceses’ are

‘completing reviews’ of pastoral organisation, 26 are planning church closures within the next 2-5 years, 5 of those are planning up to 40 church closures each, and 4, we are informed, ‘were thinking about shutting 152 churches over the medium term (5 years), which would represent a significant increase on recent trends.’ The authors add, ‘It was also likely that dioceses would want to close many more churches if the funding arrangements and processes were different.’

And what in place of the parish? Well, some dioceses are moving towards a ‘super-benefice or super-parish type model, whilst others are moving towards a deanery structure with paid Deanery administrators’ – that is despite evidence in the report itself which highlights that this model has not worked well in Wales. Or then there are these 10,000 new house churches – but others are addressing the assault on the national Church posed by those.

The authors of this report consider it their job to propose changes to the Mission and Pastoral Measure so that dioceses can make the arrangements they need. They want to ‘help dioceses’. But I ask: who is ‘the Diocese’? Is it the bishop? Is it the diocesan bureaucracy? Is it the diocesan synod?

And what about the people and parsons of England? Or the parish patrons? – our speaker at the diocesan meeting I mentioned earlier was surprised to hear that I felt she should consult them. Or even churchwardens and area deans, sequestrators and others?

There is, surely, a legitimate question to ask, about how the church reduces its expenditure on buildings and people to make itself sustainable, but the Church of England is not a supermarket chain, where managers look at the profitability of an individual branch, and decide it can close, or even replace the business model itself.

Nor can it be right for dioceses to accrue powers in this way, which will then enable them to set the framework of discussions about changes to parishes, hold discussions as they see fit, and then produce the outcomes they desire. What if ‘the diocese’ was so minded that a parish church did not serve the Diocesan vision? What if it didn’t suit the bishop’s tradition? What if it doesn’t pay its share out of genuine poverty? The churches do not belong to ‘the Diocese’, they belong to the people of God, led by their parish priest, who is established in office through the possession of his or her benefice received from the parish’s patron in order to exercise the bishop’s cure.

In this disastrous document, every other stakeholder in the parochial system could potentially have his rights to representation in pastoral reordering denied, for the sake of expediency for ‘the Diocese’. My opinion is that the model proposed by GS 2222 is disastrous, and we parishioners, priests and patrons should not give up our rights so easily.

Vicar

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The Vicarage, 58 Abbotsbury Road, Weymouth, DT4 0BJ

The Vicar's day-off is Monday. In case of pastoral emergency, please, try to contact the Assistant Priests, or the Parish Office first.

With enquires about Baptisms, Weddings, Banns, or Funerals, please, contact the Vicar.

Assistant Priests

Fr Tony Ball - tonyball2008@hotmail.co.uk - 07899 027710
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Churchwardens

Anne Mullis - annemullis566@btinternet.com - 07821 199823
Jeanne James - jeannejames@uwclub.net - 07854 275895

Parish Office

You can contact the Parish Office by email (stpweymouth@gmail.com) or on 771217 (leave a message with your name and number). Since nobody works in the Parish Office currently, messages are not checked daily. If your enquiry is urgent, please contact the Vicar or the Churchwardens directly.

Treasurer

Katherine Harrison - 01305 771217

S.P.O.T.

Pat Perry - 01305 771217

*With enquires about **hiring the Parish Hall, joining the Munch Club or the Choir**, please, contact the Parish Office.*

A priest is always available for Confession, spiritual direction, or for a simple chat half an hour before every Service, or at any other time by appointment!