

# St. Augustine and St. Aidan Tonge Moor and Hall i'th' Wood

## PARISH PAPER – JULY 2021



Dear friends

Could this be the month when the final restrictions are lifted? The UK has not been along in imposing various restrictions during the Coronavirus pandemic to limit the rate of transmission, and reduce the numbers both being admitted to hospital and dying. The final restrictions was due to be lifted last month, but the increasing prevalence of the Delta Variant caused that date to be pushed back by four weeks.

As I write, our new Health Secretary has stated his confidence that the final restrictions will go ahead on Monday July 21st. In part, this is an acknowledgement that the human race will have to learn to live with the Coronavirus, much as it does with annual 'flu, and partly that the economy needs to recover, not least so that our essential and lifesaving services can be funded.

But overwhelmingly, the proposed lifting of restrictions is due to the success of the Coronavirus vaccination programme. The UK can be justly proud of the speed with which the first vaccines were both developed and approved, both without cutting corners and without compromising safety, and we give grateful thanks to those involved in the development, testing and rolling-out of the vaccines. We also give grateful thanks to God, for the skills and 'can-do' spirit with which they have been endowed.

So far as this parish is concerned, with the exception of a dip in the new year, numbers attending both churches have been

encouraging: with socially-distanced seating, we have occasionally had to accommodate worshippers in the Lady Chapel 'overflow'. When restrictions are finally eased, seating in church will become much easier, although consideration will be given to those who may not yet be ready to give up their social distancing.

With the exception of our youngest members, everyone has now been given the opportunity to receive both doses of the vaccine. Evidence shows that these two doses reduce the risk of catching and being ill with the coronavirus by up to an amazing 95%. Churches - already among the safest places to have been during the pandemic - will be even more so.

An article elsewhere in this lockdown edition of the *Parish Paper* speaks about our duty *and joy* in giving God his due - his worth-ship - and we look forward very much to sharing that joy with our brothers and sisters who have been shielding and self-isolating over these past long months. We have missed you, and we very much look forward to welcoming you back to join with us around the Lord's Table, to share in the Sacraments of the new Covenant, as we receive the nourishment of Christ himself, strengthening and empowering us to live and work to His praise and glory.

With my love and prayers

Fr Tony

### 'VERY MEET, RIGHT AND OUR BOUNDEN DUTY'

*Richard Norman considered the effects of the third national lockdown*

To the surprise of many, including many churchmen, public worship in England has been able to continue during the third lockdown, subject to COVID-security measures. Public worship has thus been numbered among the 'reasonable excuses' and essential activities exempted from the basic stay-at-home restrictions. But what justifies this decision? The likely answer from the perspective of the Government is that - having been challenged to provide it - nevertheless there is as yet no evidence of increased transmission within places of worship, no doubt due to



the conscientiousness with which many clergy and lay people have approached their responsibilities in this regard. But this unexpected exemption also provides an opportunity to articulate what Christian Tradition has to say about the essential character of public worship.

In response to the exemption, the Church of England - in the person of the Bishop of London - acknowledged that *'the Church is here to offer comfort and spiritual support to everyone,'* but within a message which focussed more on the severity of the pandemic, and the need scrupulously to follow social distancing requirements. The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster was clearer in the warmth of the welcome with which he greeted the Government's announcement, and explained that the *'regular practice of our faith in God is a well-established source of both personal resilience and dedicated service to those in need'*; he further characterised public worship as an *'essential source of energy for the common good.'* In so doing, he was repeating the teaching of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which notes (1072) that while public worship *'does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church,'* yet it is from the liturgy that the fruits of faith - in service and fraternity - derive. The Bishop of London's words (admittedly couched in an idiom more readily comprehensible in Whitehall) evince only a therapeutic understanding of public worship - it is what I do to feel better. The Archbishop of Westminster's words go further, identifying public worship as the basis for the life of the community. But it was in a statement by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland (a jurisdiction in which public worship has again been suspended during the new lockdown) that the *essential* nature of public worship was most clearly articulated. They wrote not only of *'the spiritual, social and psychological benefits provided by continuing public worship,'* but also - and crucially - of worship as *'a duty humanity owes to God.'* Such is of course the teaching of the Prayer Book, that *'it is very meet, right and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord.'* The thanksgiving to which these words make reference is the celebration of the Eucharist to which we are invited in the opening dialogue of the Eucharistic Prayer, *'Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.'* In the modern *Common Worship* rite, the Eucharist is described as *'our duty and our joy'*: certainly our experience of participation in the liturgy should console and enthuse us, but even without this therapeutic benefit, a definite and primary obligation remains.



In the most recent translation of the Roman Catholic liturgy, the Latin phrase (*dignum et iustum est*) which the Prayer Book renders, *'It is meet and right'* is

### The 1549 Prayer Book Sursum Corda

	The Lord be with you.
Answer	And with thy spirit.
Priest	Lift up your hearts.
Answer	We lift them up unto the Lord.
Priest	Let us give thanks to our Lord God.
Answer	It is meet and right so to do.

translated, *'It is right and just'* - that is, the act of worship is an act of *justice*, in which we give God what is His due. Worship constitutes a moral obligation, and obligations arise out of the virtue of justice. To be just is to render to others what is owed to them, e.g. paying debts or punishing wrongdoers. (Importantly, from the outset, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations

included an exemption for participation in, or fulfilment of, legal obligations.) Human beings owe eucharistic worship to God, because only in the Eucharist can we offer to God that which is an acceptable gift in gratitude for our redemption, namely the gift of Christ himself. The wider liturgical life of the Church derives from this eucharistic heart: as the Book of Homilies puts it, *'There is nothing in all man's life... so needful to be spoken of, and daily to be called upon, as hearty, zealous, and devout prayer.'*

Specifically *public* worship is a fulfilment of the Fourth Commandment, to keep holy the Sabbath day. Someone unable to leave their home, for example, on account of shielding, would not be breaking this commandment if they did not come to Mass; however, someone else who was *able* to attend public worship, but chose instead to avail themselves of the therapeutic benefit of shopping, for instance, *would* be in breach of God's law. To be just is to render to others what is owed to them - and, from this, not to give to a third-party what belongs to someone else. Adultery within a marriage, for example, is sinful because one is giving to a third party what one has promised to one's spouse: shopping on a Sunday morning - while Mass is being celebrated - is cheating on God by denying to Him what belongs to Him, and giving this time and attention to someone or something else. Whereas prayer can of course take place in all circumstances, yet the example of Christ and his apostles, and the patriarchs before them, is that *'so oft as they could conveniently, they resorted to the material temples, there with the rest of the congregation to join in prayer, and true worship.'*

In his homily for the Epiphany, Pope Francis recognised that *'if we do not worship God, we will worship idols.'* The inclination to worship is instinctive in human beings: but, in common with so much in the human person, it has been corrupted and needs to be purified and reoriented, away - for instance - from the worship of money, of power, of popularity. Public worship does just this, reforming the

inclination to worship by directing it to its proper object. Perhaps the greatest risk of misdirection lies in what is in effect the worship of the self: worship cannot, as per a purely or even primarily therapeutic understanding, be about attention to my own needs; if it could, there would be no basis upon which to deem worship essential, so long as other means to self-gratification remained available. By reforming the inclination to worship, and redirecting it towards God, one's entire personal programme of acting *justly* is enhanced and supported, such that one will better be able to practice justice in other areas of life too. As Fr Kevin O'Reilly OP has explained, '*Since the ultimate object of the will is union with God, it follows that the virtue that specifically promotes the attainment of this end - the virtue of religion - has particular import because it aims at rectifying the will... In brief, this virtue promotes the optimal intellectual and moral flourishing of individuals as well as the realisation of justice in society.*' The Anglican divine Richard Hooker emphasised the profound connection between the discharge of religious duties, and the overall justice of society: '*So natural is the union of Religion with Justice,*' he wrote, '*that we may boldly deem there is neither, where both are not*' (Laws, V, i2).

Perhaps unwittingly, a secular Government has given the Church this unique opportunity to expound the essential character of public worship. Having been reminded that what we provide is an *essential service*, there is thus a strong rationale - and, in the Church of England, ordinarily a canon legal requirement - to continue the provision of this service, for those desirous of accessing it, and safely able to do so.

*Fr Richard Norman SSC is the Vicar of St George's, Bickley. This article first appeared in the March 2021 edition of New Directions, and is reproduced by permission of the author.*

## **100 CLUB NEWS**

The third monthly draw was via a Zoom meeting at 12.00pm on

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

Pam and Fr Tony were in charge of the drum containing the numbers at the vicarage.

numbers verified by Ken Fisher.

**First Prize Number 32 – Ruth Taylor - wins £25**

**Second Prize Number 108 – Rainer Carr - wins £15**

**Third Prize Number 22 – Joyce Harwood - wins £10**

The fourth draw for this term will be on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2021, again via Zoom, Join the Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82349787107?pwd=S1B2Q1BzTGxHQWdXckkv eXdIS1lzZz09>

Meeting ID: 823 4978 7107

Passcode: 158738

**If you are not a member contact David or Ruth Taylor to be allocated a number just £12 a year. Also to renew and/or take on a new number**

## Churches Together in Tonge Moor

We are having a break from meetings over the Summer as it is thought that Churches will be busy arranging opening for St Andrews and Church at the Centre and Summer Fair at St Augustine's.

Over the last 12 months we have planned 5 events/services.

Virtual Prayer Walk - August 2020

Season of Creation - October 2020

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - January 2021

Holy Week Worship - March 2021

Pentecost - May 2021

These were recorded via Zoom and are still available on the Churches Together in Tonge Moor You Tube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gilYld9GWAQ>

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021 7.30pm at the Church at the Centre to plan the Harvest Service that is to be on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

Ruth Taylor



**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> July 1pm -3pm**

**St Augustine's Church Parish Hall**

Admission 20p (There will be a door prize)

Attractions include Raffle, Lucky Gift Bags, Chocolate Tombola, Teddy Tombola, Guess my Name?, Lucky Jars and Lucky £1. There will be Refreshments, Cakes, Craft, Bric a Brac and Book Stalls.

If you could provide anything for these stalls please do let David, Ruth or Elsie know, but a box will be at the back of Church for your donations.

Also if you can help to organise or run a stall do let us know.

**Please support this major fundraising event.**

**We look forward to seeing you there.**



## Our Youth Groups

Youth Groups especially church based have been allowed to meet but the problem has mainly been leaders. As the lockdown restrictions are beginning to ease so are the starting back of groups.

**Brownies** - The Brownies have now started back with their face to face meetings, it is still hoped that some activities can take place outside.

**Sunday School** - We will resume our Sunday School on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2021. Hopefully in the same format, meeting in church, leaving when the Liturgy of the Words begins, and return for the Eucharistic Prayer.

**Messy Church** - As this takes quite a bit of planning, it will not be possible to start straightaway. Also we had decided not to meet in August, so this will hopefully start 18<sup>th</sup> September 2021. We will need volunteers to help with this and a planning meeting needs to be organised.

## CHURCH CLEANING

We have now been able to resume our church cleaning and Lilian would be very pleased to have more volunteers to assist.

The next session will be on Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> July at 10a.m.

Keep Tonge Moor tidy!  
Join us on the first Saturday of  
each month



We will meet after the 10am Mass  
approx 10.30am in St Augustine's  
Parish Hall.

Grabbers, bags

High viz jackets provided.

Do as much as you feel able!

Meet back at The Parish Hall for Brew  
& Bikkies approx 11.30am

*The following Litter Pick will be on Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> August*



We are intending to restart our MU meetings from this month, if social distancing allows.

The date is 21<sup>st</sup> July, starting with Mass at 7.30pm. The meeting will be in the form of a bakeoff / taste and try. Bring home baked goodies to share (if you wish) and a prize will be given for the favourite. We will just be able to sit and chat together, enjoying each others' company. Transport can be arranged.

If all goes well we will then continue to hold our regular monthly meetings

*Elsie Hollinrake*

From Ruth:

I have come across a book of poems entitled **Explorations by Jocelyn Darbyshire**.

*Vera JOCELYN DARBYSHIRE was born in March 1928 and died May 2000. She was a lovely, quietly spoken woman, who had joined our congregation after retiring as a Head Teacher. She took on an active role at church serving on the PCC, member of gardening group where she put her artistic skills to use designing the present layout of our memorial garden; she also demonstrated an unusual skill when she brought in her spinning wheel to spin cotton. She was also our gift aid secretary for many years.*

We will print some of her written work over the next few months.

**Reverie** (*Written in a railway waiting room.*)

A Train went thundering by,

And the sky

Seemed heavy, cloudy, overcast.

At last

The fire stirred and I fell

Into a reverie

And remembered

Mary,

Of the grey, calm eyes

And wise.

Beautiful, Madonna-like.

The grey, green and the blue

Swirling,

Hurling into the dim mist

Of memory.

The dark hair fell,

Parted and waved like

Some mysterious sea;

The moonlight

Came in silently.



## Walsingham News

The long-awaited date for the Shrine to welcome residential pilgrims finally arrived on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June. Well prepared and thorough Covid guidelines had been sent out to us and there was great anticipation of hearing the rolling wheels of luggage and the hum of conversation in the gardens once again. The maximum number of residents is sixty and during that first week was around forty; the planning and preparation paid off to get things going. For those familiar with the routine at the Shrine, both liturgically and socially, it was quite different - but then currently where isn't? Daily masses are said both early and late morning as well as Evening Prayer and Shrine Prayers (continuing to be live-streamed) at 6pm - except on Saturdays when it has reverted back to 5pm. Because of the viable number of residents that first week and weekend, we had chance for worship together in the Shrine Church for combinations of Benediction, Compline and homilies from both Fr Kevin and Fr Ben.



In the refectory, the long tables had been divided for up to six. Places were set for us and our food and drink were brought to the tables. As always, the lovely staff couldn't do enough for us and it all felt very safe and efficient.

Norton's re-opened the same day and the staff in there coped well with visitors and pilgrims, most of whom sat at the increased number of outside tables, to take advantage of the stunning weather.

The gardens looked absolutely beautiful with a purple and mauve colour scheme, with alliums, poppies and iris in abundance. The brilliant sunshine and warm temperature brought the lavender just

to the point it was ready to bloom. When we go at the end of August, its season has passed and it has all been cut back. The sprinkler was on the roses one morning - unlike in the Shrine where, of course, Sprinkling is still off limits!

The chapel at the Priory of Our Lady is now open during the day, although anyone wanting to share in the Daily Offices has to book - and follow the one-way system to get in and out. I have never noticed another door 'round the back' of the cloister corridor. You live and learn! After all these months, Srs Angela and Carol are really enjoying having others in chapel with them.

Despite not being able to travel down to Walsingham for the National Pilgrimage at the end of May, our congregations had an open invitation to spend the day in the Vicarage garden and share in the National@Home. A dozen of us took up the kind offer and thoroughly enjoyed our picnics, the live-streaming from the Shrine garden and our own Procession. Thanks to Fr Tony and Pam for their hard work in organizing the technology which made such a difference to the day.

Unsurprisingly, we are still waiting to hear about our Parish Pilgrimage at the end of August. The Shrine hospitality team is currently dealing with the implications of the continuing Government restrictions for groups going in the next few weeks.



Parish Pilgrimages are going ahead and the coach company which takes us is functioning with trips and school runs. Some parish groups will have reduced numbers because their pilgrims are not as well or mobile as they were and others may still be hesitant and cautious about being where there are more people than they've been used to. Other parishes have a waiting list as they have more people wanting to go than they have booked places for. Who knows where we'll be up to in 9 or 10 weeks time? The Shrine will always put the health and safety of their staff and pilgrims first but it is also necessary to be functioning at a viable rate. The Shrine isn't going anywhere and will look forward to welcoming pilgrims whenever they decide the time is right for them.

*Linda Parkington*

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*A big thank you to everyone who contributed to St. Augustine's and St. Aidan's Lenten Appeal for the Additional Curates Society.*

*We were able to send £436.07 to the Society thanks to your greatly appreciated generosity*

*Ken Fisher*

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## High Days and Holy Days for July

1<sup>st</sup> July

Henry Venn of the CMS

Most Christians in the UK have heard of the Church Mission Society or CMS. Far fewer have heard of the Revd Henry Venn (1796-1873), whose father, the rector of Clapham, founded CMS in 1799, and who himself became the greatest missionary strategist of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Not that Henry Venn ever became a missionary himself; after Cambridge he served his curacy at St Dunstan's in Fleet Street, and then an incumbency at Drypool in Hull, before becoming vicar of St Johns, Holloway in 1834. But Henry Venn's parish-based ministry did not obscure his passionate interest in overseas evangelism, and in 1841 he accepted an invitation to become the honorary secretary of the Church Mission Society. That decision was to shape the history of overseas missions, and to make CMS into the most effective force in Britain for delivering effective overseas mission.

For Henry was an outstanding administrator, and his wisdom and management of the missionaries enabled CMS to grow and flourish. When Henry first began work on CMS, it employed 107 European clergy and nine local indigenous people. When he died in 1873, there were 230 European clergy and 148 local people in service.

After his resignation from St Johns Holloway in 1846, Henry devoted himself almost exclusively to the work of CMS. He was directly responsible for sending out 498 clergymen, all of them chosen by him, and with most of whom he continued in regular correspondence. He also established eight or nine bishoprics for the supervision of CMS missionary clergy and was usually involved in the appointments made.

Henry and a missions colleague in America were the first to use the term 'indigenous church', and they were way ahead of their time in

seeing the necessity for creating churches on the mission fields that in time would become not only self-supporting, but also self-governing and self-propagating. In fact, Venn wrote with enthusiasm on this "euthanasia of missions," meaning that missionaries were only ever meant to be temporary, and not permanent.

All in all, Henry Venn's exposition on the basic principles of indigenous Christian missions was so powerful that much of it was later adopted by the Lausanne Congress of 1974.

But alongside Venn's passion for evangelism was his concern for social justice, and he frequently lobbied the British Parliament, especially the closure of the Atlantic slave trade.

In 1873, when he was 76, Venn died at his home in Mortlake, Surrey. He is buried in the churchyard.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> July      St Thomas the Apostle, confused and doubting**

Thomas, one of Jesus' 12 apostles, was an impulsive, confused, honest sceptic. Jesus could understand and work with such a man. Thomas' impulsiveness was evident when Jesus prepared to visit Lazarus in Bethany. It was a dangerous trip to make, because of the Jews, but Thomas urged his fellow disciples: "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." (John 11:16) Instead, Jesus brought Lazarus back to life.

Thomas' confusion is shown in later talks with Jesus. He was not really sure where Jesus was going long-term (John 14:5). But Jesus accepted this confused commitment, and began to untangle it, patiently explaining: "I am going to my Father", and "No one comes unto the Father but by me."

Finally, Thomas' honest scepticism is revealed after the Resurrection, which he flatly refused to believe - unless he could

touch the wounds of the risen Jesus. Sure enough, Jesus appears - but instead of scolding him, shows him the wounds. Thomas responds: "My Lord and my God" (John 20:26ff).

Thus, Doubting Thomas' honest doubts, turned to honest faith, have become a reassurance for thousands of men and women across the centuries who also want to follow Jesus, but who require some proof of this amazing event - the Resurrection. In Doubting Thomas' complete affirmation of faith, after meeting the risen, crucified Christ, they can find support for their own faith.

Ancient legends tell how Thomas went on to India as a missionary. There are rumours that Thomas even built a palace for a king's daughter in India, and thus he is the patron saint of architects. It is believed that he was martyred by a spear on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 72AD in Mylapore, near Madras. 46 ancient churches in England were dedicated to him.

### **6<sup>th</sup> July                      Thomas More, Reformation martyr**

These days, lawyers and politicians are held in the lowest esteem by the public, along with tabloid journalists and estate agents. St Thomas More was both a lawyer and politician, who is today much admired for holding steadfastly to his faith-based principles. He lived in dangerous times, when anyone, even queens, who displeased King Henry VIII could find themselves in a condemned cell in The Tower of London.

Sir Thomas More held the office of Lord High Chancellor and at one time was the king's most trusted adviser. But when King Henry took personal control of the Church in England in order to divorce his first wife, Thomas More courageously opposed him.

Thomas More was a social philosopher and the author of 'Utopia'. This book described an imaginary republic governed by an educated

elite who employed reason rather than self-interest for the general good of everyone. He was himself one of the pre-eminent scholars of his age.

As a Christian theologian he supported orthodox doctrine, vigorously opposed heresy and argued strongly against the new Protestant ideas taking hold in Europe. Although holding the highest political and legal office he was far from being a pragmatic politician and opportunist lawyer. In every matter he was a man who held firmly to what he believed was right in God's eyes.

When Thomas More fell from favour with the king, as a result of his unflinching views, he was falsely accused of taking bribes. When this charge failed, his enemies accused him of supporting a celebrated seer of the times who was strongly critical of the king. This too failed. He was then required to swear to the Oath of Supremacy, acknowledging Henry's position as head of the Church of England. This he could not do in conscience.

He was put on trial and condemned to be hung, drawn and quartered for his treason, a punishment later changed to beheading. He died in 1535 and on the scaffold his final words were: "I die the King's good servant, but God's first." He has been officially declared a martyr saint by the Roman Catholic Church.

### **11<sup>th</sup> July     St Benedict, author of the famous Rule**

St Benedict (c.480 - c.550) was an abbot and author of the famous Rule that bears his name. Because of his Rule, Benedict is also the Patriarch of Western Monasticism, and Patron Saint of Europe.

Surprisingly little is known about his life. Born at Nursia, Benedict studied at Rome, which he then left before completing his studies to become a hermit at Subiaco. After a time, disciples joined him, whom he organised into twelve deaneries of ten. After an attempt

on his life, Benedict moved on to Monte Cassino, near Naples, where he wrote the final version of his Rule.

Benedict's Rule is justly famous and respected: not only did it incorporate much traditional monastic teaching from revered monks like Basil, but Benedict went on to modify this in a way characterised by prudence and moderation within a framework of authority, obedience, stability and community life.

Benedict's great achievement was to produce a monastic way of life that was complete, orderly, and *workable*. The monks' primary occupation was liturgical prayer, which was complemented by sacred reading and manual work of various kinds.

Benedict's own personality shines through this Rule: wise, discreet, flexible, learned in the law of God, but also a spiritual father to his community. Benedict's Rule came to be recognised as the fundamental monastic code of Western Europe in the early Middle Ages. Because of his Rule, monasteries became centres of learning, agriculture, hospitality, and medicine. Thus, Benedict came to influence the lives of millions of people.

### **15<sup>th</sup> July     St Swithun (or Swithin), saint for a rainy day**

St Swithun is apparently the saint you can blame for rainy summers. It is said that if it rains on his special day, 15<sup>th</sup> July, it will then rain for 40 days after that. It all began when Swithun was made Bishop of Winchester in 852 by King Ethelwulf of Wessex. It was an important posting: Winchester was the capital of Wessex, and during the 10 years Swithun was there, Wessex became the most important kingdom of England.

During his life, instead of washing out people's summer holidays, and damping down their spirits, Swithun seems to have done a lot of good. He was famous for his charitable gifts and for his energy in

getting churches built. When he was dying in 862, he asked that he be buried in the cemetery of the Old Minster, just outside the west door.

If he had been left there in peace, who knows how many rainy summers the English may have been spared over the last 1000 years. But, no, it was decided to move Swithun. By now, the 960s, Winchester had become the first monastic cathedral chapter in England, and the newly installed monks wanted Swithun in the cathedral with them. So finally, on 15 July 971, his bones were dug up and Swithun was translated into the cathedral.

That same day many people claimed to have had miraculous cures. Certainly everyone got wet, for the heavens opened. The unusually heavy rain that day, and on the days following, was attributed to the power of St Swithun. Swithun was moved again in 1093, into the new Winchester cathedral. His shrine was a popular place of pilgrimage throughout the middle ages. The shrine was destroyed during the Reformation and restored in 1962. There are 58 ancient dedications to Swithun in England.

## **22<sup>nd</sup> July    The ‘Other’ Mary**

As the traditional Easter story is remembered again this month, you may notice that there is one name that frequently occurs. It is that of the ‘other’ Mary - not the mother of Jesus but Mary of Magdala, who stood by her at the cross and became the first human being, male or female, actually to meet the risen Christ. That’s quite a record for a woman who, the Gospels tell us, had been delivered by Jesus from ‘seven devils’. As a result, her devotion to Him was total and her grief at His death overwhelming.

In church history Mary Magdalene became the ‘fallen woman’, a harlot who was rescued and forgiven by Jesus. And while there is no

evidence to prove she was a ‘fallen woman’, the contrast is sublime: Mary the virgin mother, the symbol of purity and Mary Magdalene, the scarlet woman who was saved and forgiven, the symbol of redemption. Surely, we all fall somewhere between those two extremes.

What we do know is that the two Marys stood together at the cross, the Blessed Virgin and the woman rescued from who knows what darkness and despair.

The second great moment for her was as unexpected as it was momentous. She had gone with other women to the tomb of Jesus and found it empty. An angelic figure told them that Jesus was not there, He had risen - and the others drifted off. But Mary stayed, reluctant to leave it like that. She became aware of a man nearby, whom she took to be the gardener. She explained to Him that the body of ‘her Lord’ had been taken away and she didn’t know where to find Him.

The man simply said her name ‘Mary’ and she instantly realised it was Jesus. She made to hug Him, but He told her not to touch Him because His resurrection was not yet complete. She was, however, to go to the male disciples and tell them she had met Him. She did - and they couldn’t believe her.

But Mary’s words - ‘I have seen the Lord’ - echo down the centuries, the very beating heart of the Christian gospel.

## **22<sup>nd</sup> July    St Mary Magdalene, the woman with a past**

Later this month Christians all over the world will commemorate probably the most unlikely saint in the Bible, Mary Magdalene. There was something in her background that has always fascinated people. All we are told about her ‘past’ is that Jesus had cast ‘seven devils’

out of her, but on that slender if intriguing evidence she has become the patron saint of 'fallen women'.

Some see her as the woman 'who was a sinner' who washed Christ's feet with her tears at a respectable dinner party. Of that person Jesus remarked that 'she had been forgiven much' and consequently 'loved much'. Whether she was that woman or not, the description perfectly fits her. No one who has heard or read it could surely fail to be moved by her tearful encounter with the risen Jesus in the garden on Easter morning, the man she had taken to be the gardener revealing Himself in one word, Mary, as her beloved Teacher.

The problem with a good story - and hers is as good as it gets - is that people can't leave it alone. Down the centuries she has been John the Apostle's fiancée until he left her to follow Christ. She has gone with Jesus' mother and the same John to live in Ephesus and died there. In art and in literature she has become an alluring, sexual figure, disapproved of by the mother of Jesus. There is no historical evidence whatsoever for any of this. In fact, the Gospels suggest the two Marys were close in their shared devotion to Jesus.

Her popularity is shown in the fact that 187 ancient churches in Britain are dedicated to her, and a college at both Oxford and Cambridge. Whatever the details of her story, we cherish it because it shows that having a 'past' is no reason not to have a future.

It is easy to understand the popularity of Mary Magdalene over the centuries: she is the patron saint both of repentant sinners and of the contemplative life.

Jesus drove seven demons from Mary, who came from near Tiberius in Galilee. She became His follower to the bitter end. She followed Him to Jerusalem and was present during the crucifixion, standing heart-broken at the foot of the cross. Her love for Jesus did not end there, for she went to the tomb to anoint His body on the Sunday morning.

Such faithful, humble devotion was richly repaid; it gave her a unique privilege among all mankind: she was the first person to whom the Risen Lord appeared on Easter Sunday morning. She thought He was the gardener at first.

Mary Magdalene has sometimes been identified with the woman who anointed Christ's feet in the house of Simon (Luke 7:37). Over the centuries many artists have painted this scene. Mary Magdalene's feast has been kept in the West since the 8th century. England has 187 ancient churches dedicated to her, as well as a College in both Oxford and Cambridge.

### **25<sup>th</sup> July      St James the Apostle, apostle to Spain**

James and his brother John were sons of Zebedee and fishermen from Galilee - the 'sons of thunder', as the gospel writers describe their impetuous characters and fiery tempers.

James stands out on three accounts: he was one of the three disciples who witnessed the Transfiguration of Christ. Jesus took him, along with Peter and John, to 'watch' with Him in the garden of Gethsemane. Finally, he went on to be the first apostle to die for the Christian faith, when in AD 44 King Herod Agrippa put him to the sword in Jerusalem at Passover time.

In the centuries following his death, James became associated with the evangelising of Spain, and as a powerful defender of Christianity against the Moors. The heyday of the cult of Santiago de Compostela was from the 12th to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and the pilgrimage to Compostela became one of the most important of medieval Christendom. This in time transformed the iconography of James, and his emblems became the pilgrim's hat and the scallop-shell of Compostela. Over 400 English churches have been dedicated to James.

## **25<sup>th</sup> July St James the Great, following Him**

Jesus, fresh from His baptism and fired with His new calling, bursts into Galilee. Coming upon four fishermen working on the shore of the lake, He says to them, 'Follow Me'.

Without further ado or even a second thought, they abandon what they're doing (and in the case of two of them, James and John, leave their poor old father alone in the boat with the hired crew), and set off with Jesus, they know not where. That is how Mark's Gospel records the recruitment of four of the apostles of Jesus. Talk about a sudden change of life!

All our understanding of human behaviour tells us that this is not how people normally respond to such a peremptory invitation: no questions, no explanation. Take it or leave it. Just 'Follow me'.

That however is on a superficial reading of the text. In fact, because we have four Gospels rather than just three, we know from John that one pair of brothers, James and John, and the other two called on the same day, had been disciples of John the Baptist, who had pointed Jesus out to them as the 'Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world'.

Subsequently two of them had sought Him out and spent some time with Him in the Jordan area. This was not quite the instant 'conversion' described by Matthew and Mark, though undoubtedly it evoked an instant response.

For many of us on the journey of faith the experience of James and John - and the other two, Peter and Andrew - mirrors our own experience. First, we know about Jesus, perhaps as children at Sunday school, or later as adults. Then we begin to ask questions and look for answers. Finally, there may come a time when we hear His voice, as it were, calling us to accompany Him on a life of love, service and commitment.

For James (whose feast day falls this month) this moment was to turn his whole life upside down. He became a leader of the church in Jerusalem after the resurrection and was the first apostle to be martyred, being put to the sword by Herod Agrippa in 44AD. His brother John, in contrast, lived on as a senior figure in the life of the emerging Church.

For all four who were called by the lake that day, nothing would ever be quite the same again. But then all those who set out to follow Jesus wherever He leads them are usually in for a few surprises.

## **25<sup>th</sup> July St Christopher, patron saint of motorists**

The legend goes that St Christopher was a Canaanite who lived in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. He was a giant of a man, of fearsome appearance. At first, he decided to serve the devil, but when he discovered that the devil was afraid of Christ and His Cross, Christopher decided to serve Christ instead. A nearby hermit instructed Christopher in the Christian faith and assigned to him a place near a river: Christopher's job was to help travellers cross it safely.

All went well, and Christopher helped lots of people on their way until one day a child came along and asked to be carried across. Christopher put him on his back and set off, but was soon staggering under the astonishing weight of this child. The child then told him that He was in fact Jesus Christ, and that He carried the weight of the whole world. The Christ-child then told Christopher to plant his staff in the ground: the next day it bore flowers and dates - confirmation that the child was indeed who He claimed to be.

After some time more of helping travellers cross the river, Christopher went to the city of Lycia, where he preached the gospel with such success that the Roman emperor (Decius?) had him arrested and imprisoned - especially when Christopher refused to

sacrifice to the gods. Two women sent into his cell to seduce him came out converted Christians instead. So, Christopher was beaten, shot with arrows and finally beheaded.

Christopher has been well-loved of the English down the centuries. Many wall-paintings of him have been placed on the north wall of churches, opposite the porch, so that he would be seen by all who entered. There was good reason for this: as patron saint of travellers, it was believed that anyone who saw an image of St Christopher would not die that day. As the ancient saying goes: 'Behold St Christopher and go thy way in safety'.

A kind of daily insurance policy against death - this was so good that in due course St Christopher became the patron saint of motorists. There is even a church in the Javel area of Paris where Citroen cars are made, that is dedicated to St Christopher. In modern times, with the increase in air and motorway travel, Christopher has remained popular.

When in 1969 the Holy See reduced his feast day, there was a sharp protest in several countries, led in Italy by a number of popular film stars. If you ever travel in a taxi on the Continent, look out for a little St Christopher hanging from the rear-view mirror beside the driver. Now you know why it is there!

## **27<sup>th</sup> July     The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus**

### **proving that a nap is good for you**

Do you tend to avoid conflict? When you feel stressed, do you crave sleep? Then the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus would be good patron saints for you. But - you may find it hard to copy their successful method of avoiding trouble!

Legend has it that The Seven Sleepers were third century Christians who lived in Ephesus during the persecutions of the Roman Emperor Decius. When things got very bad, the Seven Sleepers decided to 'go to ground'. Literally. They found a cave on the outskirts of the city and walled themselves in. The story goes that then God simply put them to sleep.

200 years later they woke up and peeped out of the cave again. Things had changed: Ephesus had converted to Christianity. Unfortunately, the Seven Sleepers did not get much time to enjoy the new freedoms, because within a short time they all died - of extreme old age.

The story was popularised in the 6<sup>th</sup> century by Gregory of Tours and Jacob of Sarugh, who venerated the Seven Sleepers as saints. But it was challenged by Baronius and many scholars since. It is sometimes called a Christianised pagan or Jewish legend akin to Rip Van Winkle.

A possible moral for anyone today is that when you find yourself in a storm of conflict, you don't have to fight all the battles yourself. You can indeed seek refuge in God. He may not put you to sleep for 200 years, but He will be a safe hiding place for your soul.

## **31<sup>st</sup> July     St Joseph of Arimathea, the man who buried Jesus**

Have you ever suffered from gossip? Ever discovered that people are saying some really wild things about you? If so, Joseph of Arimathea would understand - and sympathise with you. This decent, godly man of the gospels seems to have fired the imaginations of all sorts of odd people down the centuries.

Joseph was a rich, prominent member of the ruling Jewish council - the Sanhedrin. Mark's gospel describes him as having been 'waiting for the kingdom of God' for years, and even being a secret disciple of Jesus. He played no part in the trial or crucifixion.

When Jesus was pronounced dead, Joseph had the seniority needed to approach Pilate for the body - and get it. Near to where Jesus had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, cut deep in the rock. Joseph himself already owned it - and it was still new and empty. So, Joseph laid Jesus there, and wrapped him in a linen cloth, according to Jewish burial custom. Joseph did not bury Jesus alone - Nicodemus helped him, while some women who had followed Jesus trailed miserably behind.

Matthew tells us that the last thing Joseph did for Jesus was to sadly roll a big stone across the entrance to the tomb, and then go away. With that, Joseph passes out of history - and into legend. For in the centuries that followed, Joseph was swept up into the Legend of the Holy Grail, the Legend of Glastonbury, and even bits of the Arthurian legends. It was said that the Holy Thorn, which flowers at Christmas, had sprung from his staff.

The mind boggles at what Joseph would have made of it all. One suspects he would have preferred to stick to the simple, but far better, true story: as having had the immense, unique privilege of laying the body of Jesus Christ in the tomb. Even if Jesus didn't stay very long!

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### Olympic Gold

This month should see the start of the Tokyo Olympics, having been postponed from last year due to the Coronavirus pandemic. A number of New Testament letters refer to Olympic sport including Hebrews: 'Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith' (Hebrews 12:1-2).

The Christian life is compared to a long-distance race, but despite the struggles and obstacles, there is a great crowd of witnesses cheering us on. We have a heavenly Father who loves us and a Saviour who has run the race before us. If we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, He will enable us to finish the race.

During the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, the British athlete Derek Redmond was running in the semi-finals of the 400 metres. About 250 metres from the finish his hamstring tore. He fell to the ground in pain and stretcher bearers came over to him. However, Redmond was determined to finish the race and so he started hopping toward the finishing line. Suddenly Jim Redmond, Derek's father, ran out of the stands towards him. "You don't have to do this," he told his son. "Yes, I do," said Derek, to which his father said, "We're going to finish this together." They completed the lap with Derek leaning on his father's shoulder. As they crossed the finish line, the spectators rose to give Derek a standing ovation. Although he didn't win an Olympic medal, Derek Redmond finished the race with his father at his side. Let's not forget the encouragement we have to finish the race!

### HYMN: The story behind 'Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken'

Glorious things of thee are spoken,  
Zion, city of our God;  
He whose word cannot be broken  
Formed thee for His own abode.  
On the rock of ages founded,  
What can shake thy sure repose?  
With salvation's walls surrounded,  
Thou may'st smile at all thy foes.

See, the streams of living waters,  
Springing from eternal love,

Well supply thy sons and daughters,  
And all fear of want remove.  
Who can faint while such a river  
Ever flows their thirst to assuage:  
Grace, which like the Lord the giver,  
Never fails from age to age?...

The year was 1800, and Vienna was under bombardment by Napoleon's troops. The great Austrian composer, Haydn, then old and frail, asked to be carried to his piano. There he made his own defiance of Napoleon, by solemnly play through his composition 'Emperor's Hymn'. Haydn had composed it for the Austrian Emperor, Franz II's birthday on 12 February 1797. Haydn never touched his piano again, and died a few days later, aged 77.

That is where the tune for this well-loved hymn came from. It quickly became the tune of the Austrian national anthem. It was later even adopted by the Germans, as the tune for August Heinrich Hoffman von Fallersleben's (1798 - 1874) anthem Deutschlandslied, which began with the famous words: 'Deutschland uber alles' (Germany before everything). In the ensuing political upheavals, the tune survived in the German national anthem, but was abandoned by the Austrians in 1946.

In the meantime, the tune had also reached England, as early as 1805. It was then that the words of a hymn by John Newton were first paired up with it. This meant that when the Austrian Emperor Franz visited his grandmother Queen Victoria, at Windsor Castle, he most likely would have sung his own national anthem tune to English words written by a converted slave trader turned country vicar!

John Newton's inspiration for this hymn comes from Psalm 87: 'Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God' (vs3) and also a

text from Isaiah 33:20-21: 'Look on Zion... there the Lord in majesty will be for us a place of broad rivers and streams...'

John Newton's hymn celebrates the joy of knowing that the Church is the new Jerusalem (Zion) where God abides. He rejoices that God protects His people and promises to supply their needs. He leads them into the Promised Land, just as long ago He led the Israelites through the wilderness to their Promised Land. Back then, He led them with a fiery and cloudy pillar; now we have His very Spirit within us, to guide us each step of the way home.

### **Reflected Faith series: the spaces between**

Most of us have been in situations where we are not in control, and we don't know how to feel or how to react to our situation. We need help.

The most valuable gift you can have at those times - is time itself. Time to be 'listened to'. Really listened to. But it is not easy to find someone who will 'actively listen' to you.

Think of the last time you were in the reverse position with a friend or a colleague, and they were talking to you. How easily do you recall what they actually said? Most of us are so busy getting our replies ready for when the person has finished speaking, that we don't clearly hear their punch line.

With God it is different. We can take everything to Him; all our worries and cares and failures and faults. And He listens.

He doesn't necessarily jump in with an instant, easy solution, but rather He promises to always guide us, if we ask Him, through life's

challenges, and He promises to never leave us. He often speaks to us through his written word, the Bible.

This last year, when many of us have been communicating with others by phone or Zoom, we get nervous if it all goes quiet. We feel the need to 'nudge' the other person, to make sure they are still there. Silence is not a natural state for many of us - and yet it is in the quiet we can hear ourselves and God most clearly.

So, when we talk with God, our conversation should not be rushed and one-sided. We need to give space to our silence before Him, to wait and listen for Him to speak to us.

This month:

Next time you worship in church, listen to the silences: the spaces between the words, the music and the actions. Listen to all the prayers that are spoken.

Look at your surroundings and reflect that they have absorbed thousands of prayers - and holy silence - down the centuries of their existence.

Look out the window and see the vastness of the sky above you - and let your prayers join with those that have gone before you. May the knowledge that you are not alone encourage and strengthen you.

### **What's your next step?**

Does this month spell the end of school, college, or even a job, for you? Then congratulations are in order: you have completed a significant step!

Now it's time to decide your next step. The dictionary defines 'step' as a physical movement that advances you in a desired direction. You 'step' forward in order to get somewhere specific. Each 'step', however small, will make a difference to your life.

The Bible reflects this. It is filled with the metaphors of stepping, walking, running and goals, pilgrimages, journeys, all to describe the years of our lives.

So, choosing your next step in life this year is important. The good news is that you need not do it on your own. In God, you have a divine 'life coach'. He knows you perfectly - and He has a plan for your life. Most of all, His plan is to have a close personal relationship with you.

We've all seen toddlers staggering towards danger, ignoring their parents' cries of warning. We've all seen adults making a mess of their lives. They are ignoring their personal divine Shepherd, Guide, Teacher and Helper.

A baby learns to walk safely by listening to its parents. We learn what God's will is for us through daily reading of His word, in the Bible, and in obeying what we read.

For when God guides us, He does not hand down a divine map of our lives for us to follow on our own. His guidance is more like that of a torch - a little advance light, day by day, for our immediate daily path.

Remember, the Lord wants you to succeed in the earthly goals that He has for you! So, trust Him to be your guide and helper as you step into your future.

## Don't stop too soon

The story is told of a college graduation where there were a large number of graduates waiting to receive their degrees. Speed was of the essence, and so as the Chancellor presented their diplomas, he simply smiled each time and whispered: "Congratulations, keep moving."

It's actually good advice for all of life, and for your Christian life as well. Discovering the reality of God's love for yourself is life-changing, but - keep moving!

There is so much more that God has in store for you! Paul in 2 Timothy says "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day...."

So, wherever you have reached in your own faith pilgrimage, congratulations, but keep moving!

## The Rectory

### St James the Least of All



My dear Nephew Darren

Thank you for the kind offer of your old computer, but I do not want it. I know you find it a fundamental basic of daily life, but I do not, and I intend to keep things that way.

This is despite the fact that our diocesan office now takes it for granted that all of us clergy have a computer. Indeed, the diocesan secretary and I have had several awkward phone calls upon this very subject. He can't believe that I really don't have one, and suspects that I am simply hiding my email address from him so that he cannot send me the daily diocesan briefings, weekly questionnaires, and constant notification of all sorts of meetings and training days. But I remain firm: I have survived in ministry for nearly 50 years without a computer, and I don't intend to change now. When he gets tetchy with me, I take the high moral ground and remind him that St Paul did not have a computer.

Besides, it would not end with just a computer. Next, I would be obliged to get a printer and then ink cartridges and then maybe some sort of virus would attack me. As I have no idea about any of this, I might have to allow someone into the vicarage to sort it out, and even worse, I might even have to *pay* them. My money can be far more usefully spent on good claret.

Being without a computer also saves me much aggravation. From that I can gather, most computer owners spend significant parts of their lives either trying to get their machine to do something that it refuses to do, or else getting help from someone in a remote part of the world who speaks a jargon only distantly related to English, who assures you that whatever you did, it would have been better if you hadn't.

So I have decided that should I ever REALLY need to use a computer for something, I will visit our local primary school and get a six year-old to do the job for me, which they do with effortless efficiency, speed and accuracy.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

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From Ken

**Come and See!**

**Jesus invites you to a winsome walk alongside him.**

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

Jesus is down by the Jordan River where his cousin John is baptizing in what has become a national revival of sorts. People have flocked to this spot from all over Israel. There at the Jordan, Jesus himself comes one day to be baptized. There John sees a dove flutter from above and rest upon him as the anointing of the Holy Spirit settles upon him. And there, along the muddy, slow-moving Jordan River, John points his followers to Jesus and says, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

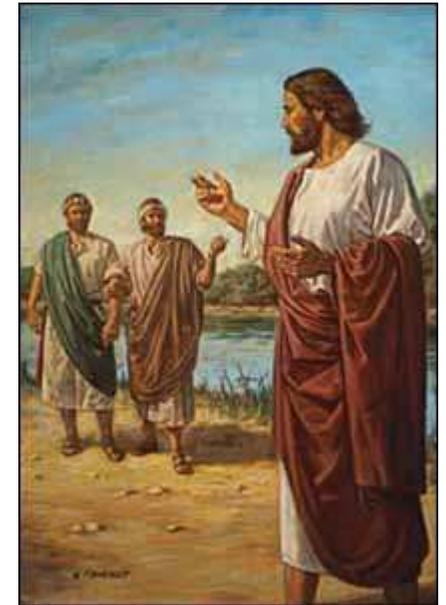
John's followers look closely at this man -- a Nazarene, a Galilean like many of them. And when on the next day John points again to the man and says, "Behold, the Lamb of God," they become curious. John the Baptist knows him. The prophet has endorsed him. Who is this man?

Andrew, a fisherman from Galilee, goes over to him with a friend and they begin to follow him, quietly, a few feet behind him on the path. Jesus, sensing their presence, finally turns around and says, "Who are you looking for?" I don't think Jesus was upset. Rather, I think there was the hint of a smile in his eyes. The men don't know what to say. "Who are you looking for?" Jesus asks again.

Andrew fumbles with his words, then blurts out, "Teacher, where are you staying?" None of crowds who had come to the wilds of Jordan in those days of revival were locals. They were all from somewhere else -- Jerusalem, Judea, Perea, Galilee. Many camped out among the willows. Some stayed with friends in nearby Jericho. "Where are you staying?" Andrew inquired.

Jesus could have told them a location, a house, but he doesn't. Rather, he says with a cryptic smile and a toss of his head in the direction of the road ahead, "Come and see. Come along."

He knows what they want, what they seek. He knows their deep spiritual hunger. And he knows that it cannot be satisfied by answering a question or two. Their hunger can only be quieted by walking with the Son of God -- trudging along in the dusty path at his side. Talking. Asking. They've now joined him in the path and are finding in this journey a joy, a contagious joy.



"Jesus beckoning."  
Illustrator unknown.

## A Contagious Joy

Andrew finds his older brother Simon. Seldom does Andrew get a chance to lead Simon. Usually it's the other way around.

"Simon, Simon," he says, running up to him. "We've found him! We've found the Messiah." Simon follows his brother and meets the man. Jesus looks deep into Simon's eyes and then says to him in all seriousness. "You -- Simon son of John -- I'm going to call you Peter, 'Rock.'" Simon Peter doesn't know what to say, but he begins to follow the Teacher as well.

Jesus seeks out another man -- Philip -- a man Peter and Andrew hang out with, since they come from the same fishing village up north in Galilee. And Philip finds his friend Nathanael. Nathanael isn't so impressed. He huffs, "When have you ever known anyone from Nazareth to be worth anything!" A bit of pride, superiority, prejudice, skepticism. Philip doesn't argue. He doesn't try to convince Nathanael. Instead, he repeats the same invitation that Jesus had given Andrew in the beginning: "Come and see!"<sup>1</sup>

## Mind and Heart

There is an important place for apologetics in winning people to Christ. In synagogues across the Mediterranean, Paul used Scripture, logical analysis, and the give-and-take of disputation to clear away obstacles and point people to Jesus. But deeper than the inquiring mind is the hungry heart. And the hungry heart can be satisfied only with a true relationship -- begun in hope and nurtured with love.

*Deeper than the  
inquiring mind is  
the hungry heart.*

Some years ago a man began attending church with his Christian wife. He was attracted to Christianity, but considered himself an agnostic. Should I invite him to the small discipleship group I was leading at a local restaurant on Tuesday evenings? I was trying to lead these men deeper. Wouldn't a skeptic stall the momentum I was trying to build?

I ended up inviting him to join us and he came week by week. Rather than explain everything to him, I just included him in what we were doing. He began to join in the discussions we were having around God's Word. As he walked with us Jesus-followers, his faith grew to a point where he began to pray. And one night, months later and a thousand miles from our town, God miraculously answered an earnest prayer he had offered in hope. He met our Jesus and now began to follow him deliberately along the way.

## Come Closer

Come closer. Oh, I'm not there yet, you say. I'm not ready to make a commitment. I'm not asking for a commitment now, says the Master, just walk with me for a while. Let's hang out together. And then, perhaps, you'll begin to get the picture. Then, maybe, you'll begin to understand. Come and see.

Abiding, continuing, hanging out. That's the path to faith, the path to growth, the path to freedom. Jesus once told some countrymen who believed him, "If you *abide* in my word, if you *continue* in what I am saying, then you are truly my disciples, and you *will* know the truth, and this truth will set you free."<sup>2</sup> Faith, you see, comes through hearing and processing and pondering. This faith comes through exposing yourself to the message of Christ and the Presence of Christ. Gradually you acknowledge his words to be true. You acknowledge *Him* to be true.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps you're wondering if this Jesus is really the One you're seeking. The One who will satisfy your deep sense of longing. Who will heal and fill your incompleteness with himself. Come and see. Try walking with him, and you'll come to know him.

## Walking at His Pace

Maybe in your own way you've been walking with the Lord for many years, but you sense you're in a rut. You're stuck. Maybe you're even a leader or a pastor. You're moving in his direction, but not at his pace. You've lagged behind. The joy is missing. I know about that. I was pretty light on prayer myself for way too long.

I see him on the road up ahead beckoning to you. "Come on up here, talk with me for a while. Come and see." Touched at his kindness, you run up to where he is, and now begin to keep pace with him so you can hear him as he shares and questions, teaches and challenges. Now you're listening. Now you're talking to him. Now you're engaged. Now you're alive. Now you're free.

Whoever you are, wherever you are on this Way, Jesus invites you to walk closer to him. To catch up, to actually walk alongside him, and so find yourself, your sweet-spot, your Life, your Lord. Come and see!

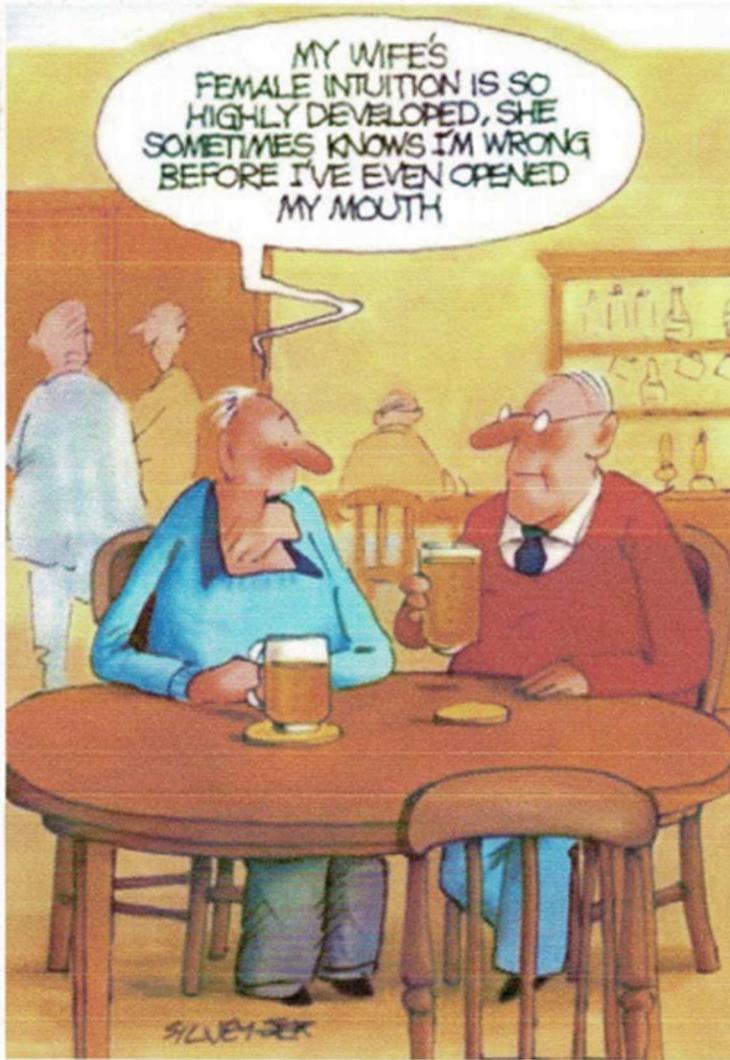
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[1] This story is based on the account of Jesus at the Jordan encountering his first disciples in John 1:29-51.

[2] John 8:31.

[3] Romans 10:17.





## PARISH DATES

SUN	4th	Interment of Ashes (Hilda Heath) 12.00pm 100 Club Draw (Zoom)
Tue	6th	Home Communion in the area
Wed	7th	7.00pm Bolton Deanery Synod
Thur	8th	Home Communion in the area
SUN	11th	6.30pm: Evening Prayer & Benediction
SUN	18th	10.30am: Mass with Holy Baptism 12.15pm: Holy Baptism
Tue	20th	PCC Meeting (Zoom)
Wed	21st	7.30pm: Mothers' Union, beginning with mass
Sat	24th	Summer Fair, 1-3pm
SUN	25th	3.00pm: Baptism Preparation Class 4.00pm: Marriage Preparation Class

## FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

### HOLY BAPTISM

May 30th     Freddie Stuart  
                    Finley Dugdale

## Calendar and Intentions for July 2021

Thu	1	feria: Our local tradespeople
Fri	2	feria: The Unity of Christ's church
Sat	3	<b>S THOMAS:</b> The Church in India
<b>SUN</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: The Parish and the People of God</b>
Mon	5	feria: The Bishop of Manchester and his staff
Tue	6	feria: Those receiving the Blessed Sacrament in their homes this month
Wed	7	feria: The new Bolton Deanery, its churches and congregations
Thu	8	feria: The mentally ill and those who care for them
Fri	9	feria: Religious communities and vocations to the religious life
Sat	10	feria: Our local Councillors and Borough officials
<b>SUN</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: The Parish and the People of God</b>
Mon	12	feria: The fire, police and ambulance services
Tue	13	feria: The Churches Together in Tonge Moor
Wed	14	John Keble: All Parishes under the patronage of Keble College, Oxford
Thu	15	S Bonaventure: Religious Communities
Fri	16	feria: The Society, and the work of Forward in Faith
Sat	17	feria: The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham and its Priests Associate
<b>SUN</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: The Parish and the People of God</b>
Mon	19	feria: The work of local hospitals and hospices
Tue	20	feria: Our PCC and Church officers
Wed	21	feria: The work of ACS and Vocations to the Sacred Priesthood
Thu	22	<b>S MARY MAGDALEN:</b> Those preparing for Baptism
Fri	23	<b>S BRIDGET OF SWEDEN:</b>
Sat	24	feria: The social life of our Parish
<b>SUN</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: The Parish and the People of God</b>
Mon	26	S Joachim and S Anne, parents of BVM:
Tue	27	feria: The homeless, the unemployed and the lonely
Wed	28	feria: All those involved in the continuing roll-out of the Coronavirus vaccine
Thu	29	S Martha: The work and mission of the Mother's Union
Fri	30	feria: The work of Social Services
Sat	31	S Ignatius Loyola: All teachers of the Faith

## CHURCH WARDENS

David & Ruth Taylor: 31 Wisbeck Road. Tel: 01204 396409

## OFFICERS AND ORGANISERS

*email addresses can be completed by adding "staugustinestm.org.uk"*

PCC Secretary: Katherine Taylor Tel. 01204 531053 - email: pccsec@

Treasurer: Sue Loftus Tel 01204 302051 - email: treasurer@

Walsingham Cell: Elsie Hollinrake Tel: 07486 982586

Church Flowers: please contact the wardens for the time being

Child Protection: Margaret Mullen Tel: 01204 695964 - email: safeguarding@

Brownies: Nichola Smith Tel: 07748 188215 - email: brownies@

Sunday School: Ruth Taylor Tel: 01204 396409

Mothers' Union: Elsie Hollinrake Tel: 07486 982586 - email: mu@

Organist: (St Augustine's) Mike Cheetham Tel: 01204 391963

Organist: (St. Aidan's) Peter Pemrick Tel: 01204 527699

Parish Hall Bookings: Sandra Anderson Tel: 01204 383158 - email: hallbookings@

Wednesday Morning Coffee Shop: John Harrison Tel: 01204 792691

Caretaker - St Aidan's Hall: Andrew Settle Tel: 01204 450321

Parish Paper: Mike Cheetham - email: magazine@