

*Strange dissident of meekness
And nurse of tangled souls
And so unlike the holy
To end up full of holes
The world is too much with us
Could we not now just elope?
Strange way to hold us closer
Strange way to give us hope
Strange way...*

from 'Strange Way' by Martyn Joseph
(written by M Joseph & S&C Henderson)

On the shelf in my study sits a broken pot or rather a once-broken pot that has been lovingly glued back together again. The cracks are still visible and there are holes in those places where pieces have been lost but, even so, it is most recognisably a pot. My father gave this pot to me when I was a little boy. It was a special gift. Dad had been to the Holy Land with some people from church and brought me back this pot as a holiday present. I thought it was wonderful then and still do so now.

I was forever breaking things as a child – anything and everything would become a football either to be kicked or headed around the living room – but I did not break this pot. In fact, it was in pieces when I received it and it was I who put it back together, but then I was meant to.

The gift was purchased near the caves at Qumran where, in 1947, a shepherd searching for a stray goat discovered the Dead Sea Scrolls. In the gift box that I received was a sealed bag that contained sand and grit in which pottery

fragments could be “excavated” as well as a tube of glue to help the budding archaeologist re-create this “period” earthenware vessel.

As Easter approaches, I offer you this picture of a much loved, once broken but now lovingly glued back together again pot but I do so only because its cracks are still visible and precisely because it is still riddled with holes.

*With every blessing
Paul*

EASTER LIGHT

Shop shelves glow bright with glistening chocolate hares
Symbols of reparation, joy and zeal
Beauty with absolution presence shares

The radiant paschal candle proudly flares
Lighting the world with glorious mute appeal
Shop shelves glow bright with glistening chocolate hares

Hairshirted Lent pursued by Satan's snares;
Venal Iscariot laments his deal
Beauty with absolution presence shares

On Easter Day we shed our cheerless cares
Our bonds grow loose, our souls begin to heal
Shop shelves glow bright with glistening chocolate hares
Beauty with absolution presence shares

SM

DAFFODILS FOR ST RAPHAEL'S

March 13 was Daffodil Day, a glorious floral celebration created to raise funds for St Raphael's Hospice in North Cheam. The Hospice was founded in 1987 by the Daughters of the Cross of Liege and offers patient-centred specialist palliative care. On average £3million a year is required to run it, mainly by volunteers of varying kinds, plus a vast amount of fundraising campaigns.

Pam Slater works as a nurse at the hospice and in the following interchange with Shirley Moore she outlines the nature of her work, its difficulties and rewards.

SM: Good afternoon Pam. I know you have been associated with St Raphael's for quite some time. How did you come to work there? Was it a conscious decision or did you drift into it gradually?

PS: After spending 5 years as a district nurse at a practice in Wallington I met people working at St Raphael's involved with terminally ill patients. Talking to them made me realize that I would welcome a change from district nursing. Despite my lack of expertise in the field I applied for a position and was accepted. I have now been working there for five and a half years.

SM: I understand that your professional title is 'Community Clinical Specialist Nurse in Palliative Care'. Could you describe what 'palliative' means?

PS: Basically it means caring for patients who are not going to get better – relieving their symptoms holistically from all aspects- physical, social, psychological and spiritual.

SM: When patients are diagnosed their families and friends are also affected. How do you help them to come to terms with the situation and what kind of support do you offer?

PS: We help the families in every possible way. They can ring us at any time day or night for advice and help. I have 45 patients under my care, most of whom are at home. They may come into the hospice for respite care to enable their carers to take a break, or our Hospice at Home Service will go round for two or three hours during the day or at night to relieve the pressure and enable patients to die at home. There are nine nurses working in two teams.

SM: Do you find yourself sustained by your Christian faith?

PS: Quite a few of the nurses are Christians, but there is a wide spectrum of belief among the patients and their families. Some have faith, some none at all. I do not express my own belief to them if it is not appropriate, but I do pray for them privately.

SM: How do the patients affect you emotionally? Do you feel very involved with individuals and their families or do you, as a professional, manage to distance yourself?

PS: Naturally no one can be totally detached, but I do have to put some distance between my feelings and the patients' often distressing situations. I try not to take work home either on paper or emotionally. I am however utterly committed to the work I do and find it very worthwhile.

SM: Is there space for fun and laughter at St Raphael's?

PS: Yes indeed. The Day Centre is a very jolly place with people coming from all quarters to participate in every kind of activity, from craft sessions, exercises, Scrabble and dominoes to singsongs round the piano. Several parties a year are held. A hot lunch is provided and the atmosphere is very cheerful. The patients who live at home are collected and returned by dedicated volunteer drivers.

Elise Harvey wrote in 1997:

'Laughter and joy live hand in hand with the inevitable tears and sadness and a hospice volunteer needs the capacity to cope with the constantly changing role of emotions.'

SM: I imagine you must feel exhausted at the end of the day! What do you do to relax?

PS: Pour myself a cup of coffee, feed the cat and chill out!

SM: Thank you so much Pam for an enlightened insight into the work of St Raphael's.

HICKORY DICKORY DOCK

On 8 February the After 8 Group were treated to a talk on antique clocks and watches by Mr Derrick Fulford, our visiting speaker. Mr Fulford spoke of how time was measured centuries ago, most notably by the sundial, and then how more sophisticated devices had evolved, culminating in the invention in 1656 by the Dutch scientist Christian Huygens of the pendulum clock, based on Galileo's principle of oscillating motion. Mr Fulford showed us a series of slides depicting clocks dating from the mid 17th century – some very ornate, featuring birds and flowers.

To begin with all clocks had dials with Roman numerals, whilst the later ones, mainly Victorian, had Arabic numbering. Each pendulum clock had a wooden casing and was quite large. Not as large perhaps as the first recorded clock, designed by Su Sung in China in 1088. It stood 30 foot high and relied on a water wheel which stopped periodically to empty a bucket once it had filled, thus marking time intervals.

Up to the time of Huygens people relied largely on sundials and sand clocks. These were used by the Royal Navy up until the early 1800s.

Following his interesting exposition Mr Fulford invited us to participate in a mini 'Road Show' whereby we brought various clocks and watches for him to appraise. He explained their provenance and value, often engendering great surprise. A thoroughly enjoyable evening. SM

NOW WE ARE SIX

Yes! It hardly seems possible, but Grapevine has been gracing our shelves for six years. The brainchild of Joan Tabraham, the first issue appeared at Christmas 2003 with a cheerful red cover. The original team has seen a few replacements but continues to produce a quarterly edition. Both Carol Salter and Beth Slater work wonders on the technical side whilst everyone assists on the editorial front. Some might think that the content of the magazine is too secular or even too 'religious'. Have your say – we welcome feedback! Also if you have a piece which you feel would be of interest and which you would like to be included, do please send it in.

Go on – knock us for six!

SM

FAREWELL BISHOP TOM

On 20 February Charlotte, Carol, Richard Charlton and myself attended a special valedictory Eucharist in Southwark Cathedral for Bishop Tom Butler who was leaving to lead a new life in Yorkshire. The main section of the cathedral was very full but we managed to find seats on the right hand side, with the slight disadvantage of being adjacent to the organ which boomed at full throttle during the hymns. Behind the altar hung a beautiful cross, adorned with filigree-style white and red roses, soaring above a candelabrum supporting numerous white candles. In contrast a very small plaster cross crowned with the head of Christ was visible on a nearby wall. I wondered

whether it had been presented by the people of Zimbabwe, with which Southwark is closely linked. Indeed, ladies from the Zimbabwean choir were present, clad in blue and white robes and turbans, some wearing blue and white shawls depicting various symbols of Christianity.

It was a wonderful service, celebrating both the Eucharist and the ministry of Bishop Tom, who came to office eleven years ago. He was clearly very popular and would be much missed. He gave a relaxed and entertaining address on the theme of 'The Diocese of Surprises', illustrating the many unexpected events he had witnessed in Southwark since his induction and ending with a tribute to 'The God of Surprises'.

It appeared that after graduating in Engineering from Leeds University the Bishop had enjoyed an interestingly chequered career, including spending five years in Zambia. He joined the episcopate in Southwark in 1998 and together with his wife Barbara maintained and expanded the work of the diocese, balancing the northern and southern wings of the See. Reflecting this achievement seven children from Anglican schools in the diocese led the intercessions, which I found moving.

After Communion Bishop Tom was presented with various gifts – a painting of the interior of the cathedral and another of Christ balancing two symbols on his outstretched hands displaying the bond between Zimbabwe and Southwark. He was also given two volumes on The British Crime Novel as he was an aficionado of detective stories. The Bishop of Kingston, who would be replacing him in the 'interregnum' said that he had all the

requirements of a first rate sleuth and would send the crime figures in Yorkshire toppling!

In his summing up he quoted the words of St John: 'Little children, love one another' ... There is nothing more to say'. This exhortation would be heartily endorsed by Bishop Tom Butler.

PCC Secretary

THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

Consider the postage stamp: its usefulness consists in the ability to stick to one thing until it gets there!

Great people are ordinary people with extraordinary amounts of determination

Each one must use for the benefit of others the special gifts they have received from God (1 Peter,4:10)

PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

'It is all very well to be able to write books, but can you waggle your ears?'

J. M. Barrie

'Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you get neither.'

C.S. Lewis

'I have a memory like an elephant, in fact, elephants often consult me'.

Noel Coward

'Music is the wine that fills the cup of silence'.

Robert Fripp

'Comedy is simply a funny way of being serious'.

Peter Ustinov

(From 'Wit of the Nation')

EXAM HOWLERS

Q: What is a 'partnership'?

A: A ship that takes two people to drive

Q: Name two animals native to Siberia

A: The lynx and the larynx

Q: What was the main industry in Persia?

A: Cats

Q: Explain the process of 'learning'

A: A process by which information goes into one ear and out of the other

Q: Who was Solomon?

A: He was a very popular man who had 700 wives and 300 porcupines

Q: Name one of the early Romans' greatest achievements

A: Learning to speak Latin

PUZZLING POLITICS

Who will be returning to Westminster after the election?

Or are all the following 'new faces'?

Andre Damovic

Clive Bance

Roger Sobegone

Norman Steepled

Archie Woldham

Mary Hastee

Martha Rhine R.A.

Connie Maddweb

Liam Bidden

Kate C. Bettergram

Max Foil

Hattie Witicarp

Lou Pubstraw

Rudy Bannham

Mike Poblet

ANSWERS TO PUZZLING POLITICS QUIZ:

David Cameron
Vince Cable
George Osborne
Peter Mandelson
Michael Howard
Theresa May
Harriet Harman
Ann Widdecombe
Ed Miliband
Margaret Beckett
Liam Fox
Patricia Hewitt
Paul Burstow
Andy Burnham
Lembit Opek

DAFFODILS CELEBRATED IN BRUSH AND PEN

On March 13 competitions were held for both paintings and poems on the theme of daffodils. The entries for each genre were of a very high standard and thus difficult to judge. The paintings were on display in the Welcome area while the winning poems from the junior and senior categories are reproduced below:

DAFFODILS by Hannah Wicks (aged 10)

They wake up in the morning shadows,
The brightness of the sun,
Each little flower that opens is like a golden sun.
The meadows for our play, we gather every day
The daffodils are a wonderful thing –
They're good in every way.

DAFFODILS, SATNAVS, CHIPS AND COWS

By Steve Carpenter (over 16)

I wondered lonely as a cloud
Did that signpost just state Stroud?
Went out to get some Fish and Chips
Used the Satnav for the trip

Got it just the other day
Though the Chippy's just 2 miles away
Thought I'd put it to the test
Input Chip Shop, let satnav do the rest

Been travelling now for about an hour
Just passed a large brown cow
Satnav showed this as a lane
Very muddy, what a pain.

Down a track and open gate
Stuck in a field, satnavs I hate.
But in the meadow, what a thrill,
A host of Golden Daffodils.

EASTER BIBLE QUIZ

1. Who went to anoint the body of Jesus? W- - - -
2. What did they take with them? S- - - -
3. Who rolled the stone away from the tomb? A- - - -
4. What colour were his clothes? W- - - -
5. Who did Mary Magdalene mistake Jesus for? G- - -
6. Who went for a long walk with a companion on Easter Sunday? C- - - -
7. Where were they going when Jesus joined them?
E- - - -
8. By what action of Jesus did they recognize him?
B- - - - B- - - -
9. What did Jesus show the disciples in Jerusalem when he appeared to them? H- - - -
10. Who refused to believe Jesus had risen until he saw for himself? T- - - -
11. How many disciples went fishing some time later? S- - - -
12. Who jumped into the water when he realized it was Jesus on the shore? P- - - -

13. Which word do we sing at Easter, which means 'Praise the Lord'? A- - - -

ANSWERS TO EASTER BIBLE QUIZ

1. Women
2. Spices
3. Angel
4. White
5. Gardener
6. Cleophas
7. Emmaus
8. Breaking Bread
9. Hands
10. Thomas
11. Seven
12. Peter
13. ALLELUIA

WELCOMING STRANGERS

Some weeks ago my friend and I came for coffee in your welcome area and met Charlotte, Carol and Paul who were very friendly and gave us quite a good impression of your church.

Given that we had both had some disappointing and hurtful experiences of visiting churches in the past, this was something that meant quite a lot to us.

I must confess to not being a believer nowadays, having lost my faith several years ago, for many reasons, one of which was this experience of being practically ignored when visiting a church other than my own. Many doubts were crowding in on me and I began to wonder if God could really exist, since often, evidence of His love seemed sadly absent. I have been to churches where even the vicar didn't speak to me on the way out, and this leaves you wondering what Christianity is about.

I can't honestly say why I am now wanting to drift back towards the church, except that theological and philosophical questions interest me and my admiration for the social teachings of Jesus has never left me. I also find atheism a bit dull. Interestingly, it was reading Richard Dawkins' book "The God Delusion" that rekindled my interest in religious issues, which was clearly not the intention of the author!!

Carol very kindly said I was welcome to come for your after service refreshments, even if I felt unable to attend the services, and I have now been 2 or 3 times and so I

have met several of you. But there was one Sunday, just after Christmas, when I turned up alone, and nobody I had met already seemed to be there and I sat for some time on the sofa in the welcome area and nobody spoke to me. I admit that I was testing you, because I truly wanted to see whether anyone would notice the stranger and come over to me. Given past experience, as related above, I was not surprised that nobody did, but I was a bit disappointed. Eventually Paul came in, and, of course, spoke to me, but by that time I had got up and gone over to someone I recognised from the Christmas Eve service, who had just walked in a few minutes before Paul. This was Wendy, who has since been a very good friend.

I would like to say that, unlike me, many people are too shy to just walk in and talk to someone and really do need to feel that they are welcome and will be put off, and perhaps hurt, and may never try church again, if their experience is that nobody seems to care that they are there and lets them leave, untouched by the hand of friendship. It would have been nice if someone had been on duty as a sort of 'hostess' that day, to look out for any new faces, and come over and smile and say hello.

I went to another church(in Sutton)a couple of weeks later, and the minister there gave a sermon entitled 'Love Has Good Manners', which seemed to have been written for me, since, within it there was this bit about welcoming strangers to the church. Here they have a visitor's book which 'the pulpit' invites any newcomers to sign, and should you decide to do so, you will find someone there 'on duty' who will speak to you. On this day I went to sign the book, and the lady there duly smiled and chatted,

which was nice. I have to admit, however, that, notwithstanding the excellent sermon, nobody else in that congregation bothered to speak to me....

There is much in Christianity nowadays that I cannot believe, but I do believe in love and goodness, and if you call that 'god' then I could say I believe in some sort of god idea, and it seems to me there is a great need for love and goodness in our world. However, should you decide to step into a church, perhaps in search of some of that love and goodness, and everyone apart from the clergy ignores you and cannot even smile your way, it rather puts a dent in your hope that love and goodness can ever increase across the earth.

I am sure that you are all lovely people and did not mean to appear unfriendly that day but that experience was not helpful to me in the state I am in nowadays with regard to faith in anything beyond this physical life. However, I do look forward to meeting more of you on my occasional visits and hope that next time I drop in, somebody I don't yet know will walk across the room to me and smile and say 'welcome'.

Carol Williams.

(Anyone who would like to email me and 'chat' will be most welcome to do so. My address is:

carol020754@gmail.com)

Deanery Synod 22nd February 2010, held at St Alban The Martyr, Elmbrook Road, Cheam.

Synod members were welcomed to St Albans by Revd; Younis Francis, priest in charge of this church + St; Oswalds. This is a 1930s Barn Church constructed largely from timbers (possibly 400 years old) from an ancient barn on the Nonsuch estate. It is much loved by its members.

He gave a very interesting presentation on “Understanding Islam”. Islam is an Arabic word which equates in English to submission and derives from a word meaning peace.

Islam requires a complete submission to God / Allah. There are approximately 1.6 billion Muslims encompassing many races and cultures and it is the second largest religion after Christianity. It has grown by 235% in the last 50 years and there have been 34,000 converts to Islam in the USA since 9/11. Since 1994/95 its annual growth rate has been 6.4% compared with Christianity 1.46%.

Islam teaches that Allah is the sole sovereign ruler and that Mohammed is his final prophet. It recognises the angels and Jesus as a prophet. It also recognises the Bible as a holy book and believes in a Day of Judgement and predestination.

Islam started in 570 AD when Mohammed, (descended from Ishmael, son of Abraham), aged 40 was given the Quran at Mecca by the Angel Gabriel and he proclaimed Islam for the last 23 years of his life.

The Quran as the Holy Book is regarded as the unaltered word of God and is highly revered. Islam is based on 5 pillars:

Prayer, 5 times each day, preferably in Arabic.

Zakat; Alms giving

Fasting, during Ramadan, the 9th month of the Islamic calendar.

The Hajj, making a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime.

Food; only halal food is lawful.

Muslims are taught to be tolerant of other faiths and they recognise Christianity and Judaism above other religions in view of the links to the patriarchs. They consider that Christians are closer to Islam and that sincere Christians are not worthy of hell.

Jihad is considered to be striving in the cause OF God, but suicide is forbidden.

Diocesan finances.

Ian Akehurst who is on the Diocesan Board of Finance spoke about the financial challenges facing the diocese. 75% of diocesan revenues (£15m) come from fairer shares and it is vital that parishes pay their assessed share and if experiencing difficulty they should talk to the diocese at an early date. Last year circa 97% was collected and this was a reduction of 2%. There will be no increase in stipends this year. Clergy numbers are reducing from 330 to 324 and there have been 6 redundancies at Trinity House. The situation is serious but not parlous. Parishes should not be shy about encouraging sacrificial giving.

General Synod.

Barry Barnes (General Synod) spoke to members about the elections for General Synod in the Autumn of 2010 and encouraged members to contribute.

John Ruske
10th March 2010

GARDENS OPEN FOR CHARITY

The following London Gardens will open this spring/summer as part of The National Gardens Scheme (including one in Worcester Park – see last entry) :-

April

Sun 18 (11-5pm) Southside House, 3-4 Woodhayes Rd, Wimbledon Common, SW19 4RJ

May

Sun 2 (11-5pm) Southside House, 3-4 Woodhayes Rd, Wimbledon Common, SW19 4RJ

Sun 2 (2-4.30pm) The Watergardens, Warren Rd, Kingston, KT2 7LF

Mon 3 (11-4pm) Petersham Lodge, River Lane, Richmond, TW10 7AG

Sat 15 (2-5pm) Hampton Hill gardens, Hampton Hill, TW12 1DW

Group opening (combined admission ticket) -

- 18 Cranmer Rd (tickets available here only)

- 76 Park Rd
 - 30 St James's Rd
- Sun 16 (2-5pm) Hampton Hill gardens - group opening as above
- Sat 22 (2-6pm) Tudor Rd gardens, Hampton, TW12 2NG
- Group opening (combined adm)
- 43 Tudor Rd
 - 45 Tudor Rd (tckts available here)
 - 64 Tudor Rd (tckts available here)
- Sun 23 (2-6pm) Tudor Rd gardens – group opening as above
- Sun 23 (11.30-5.30) Little Lodge, Watts Rd, Thames Ditton, KT7 OBX
- June
- Sun 6 (2-6pm) 97 Arthur Rd, Wimbledon, SW19 7DP
- Sun 6 (2-6pm) 11 Lauriston Rd, Wimbledon, SW19 4TJ
- Sun 6 (2-6pm) 101 Pitt Crescent, Wimbledon, SW19 8HR

- Sun 6 (2-6pm) Eatonville Rd gardens
Group opening (combined adm)
- 14 Eatonville Rd
 - 20 Eatonville Rd
- Sun 6 (2-6pm) 239A Hook Rd, Chessington, KT9 1EU
- Sun 6 (11-5pm) 7 St Georges' Rd, St Margarets, Twickenham, TW1 1QS
- Sun 13 (2-6pm) 123 South Park Rd, Wimbledon, SW19 8RX
- Sun 20 (3-6pm) Ormeley Lodge, Ham Gate Ave, Richmond, TW10 5HB
- Sun 20 (2-5pm) 12 Vine Rd, East Molesey, KT8 9LA

July

- Sun 4 (11-4pm) Petersham Hse, Petersham, TW10 7AA
- Sun 4 (2-5pm) (NEW) 65 Farm Way, Worcester Park, KT4 8SB

For further details, directions, etc, see www.ngs.org.uk, telephone 01483 211535, or obtain booklet from good garden centres, bookshops, libraries & tourist information centres.

OPEN GARDEN SQUARES WEEKEND 12-13 June 2010

Discover London's secret gardens and gain privileged access to private spaces. Now in its 13th year. One ticket allows entrance to more than 190 gardens over 2 days

Advance tickets (£7.50) will be available (in person) from Britain and London Visitor Centre, 1 Regent St, SW1Y 4XT, and Capital Gardens garden centres (our nearest is at Morden Hall, Morden, SM4 5JD, tel: 020 8646 3002). Tickets on the weekend (£9) can be bought from most participating gardens and squares, and Britain and London Visitor Centre.
(Free guide book supplied with each ticket. Children under 12 free)

If you don't want to venture as far as London, a few outer London gardens are included, although last year's highlight for me was at Tower Bridge Moorings where gardens have been created on the decks of many of the barges (which can only be reached along a bridge of planks, so definitely not for the faint-hearted!) to form an 'inside-out' floating garden square. Closer to home, we went to Paddock Allotments (off Parkway) in Raynes Park which far exceeded our expectations. In fact Peter was so impressed he became a member of their Horticultural Society and can sometimes be found there on a Sunday morning on the pretence of visiting the trading hut but whilst taking advantage of a full breakfast served in the clubhouse!

For more information: www.opensquares.org (or 020 8347 3230) MH

WHERE FAITH COSTS THE MOST

Open Doors, a charity which serves persecuted Christians worldwide compiles a unique World Watch List of countries where Christians face persecution to varying degrees. Categories vary from Severe Persecution - North Korea and Iran are in this section, down to those with some problems.

North Korea is still the most difficult place to be Christian. All religious activity is seen as a revolt against North Korea's socialist principles and the cult of Kim Jong-il and his father. As a result of strict searches, considerable number of secret Christians have been discovered, arrested, tortured and sometimes killed. Despite this and the lack of freedom to worship, many take the risk of sharing their faith and the church is growing: there are an estimated 400,000 believers.

Iran - at least 85 Christians were arrested during 2009; many reported mistreatment in prison. Most were later released but remain under surveillance and court cases are still pending. As a result there is great fear among Christians. The growth in the number of believers from a Muslim background has led to some churches being closed and many church services are monitored by the secret police.

Other countries where Christians face severe limitations include Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Maldives, Afghanistan

For more information on the World Watch List visit www.opendoorsuk.org/countries