

The Newsletter

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FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

Many of you will be familiar with the name of that quintessential French playwright, Molière (Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, 1622-73). Some of you may also be familiar with his opus, which still today has audiences in France, and (in translation) across the world, appreciating the wit and understanding of the human character displayed by his genius.

Significantly, the essential thing to remember is that the playwright claimed that his intention wasn't merely to entertain: along with *plaire* went *instruire* – a desire to allow people to learn from the antics of the characters which they witnessed on stage. However much we may suspect the latter intention to appear subservient to the first – perhaps a handy way of getting some of his racier work past the censors – there is little doubt that audiences derived – and still derive – salutary lessons from the presentation on stage of miserliness, hypocrisy, religiosity, and so on.

Now, comparisons may well be odious, but I can't help thinking that the edition of the Newsletter which you have before you does aim to fulfil both those intentions – without, of course, claiming the genius of the renowned playwright: I trust you will be pleased and instructed in equal measure. If not, it will be no fault of our contributors, who, as in previous editions, have come up with much that will make you think, as well as entertaining you.

Don't hesitate to join their ranks in the next edition: I'm always glad to read articles, brief or otherwise, sent to me at john_crothers@hotmail.com.

Meanwhile, my grateful thanks to all our contributors to this edition, as well as to Fr Mark, who assiduously formats the final work, so that everything looks 'as it should' when in your hands.

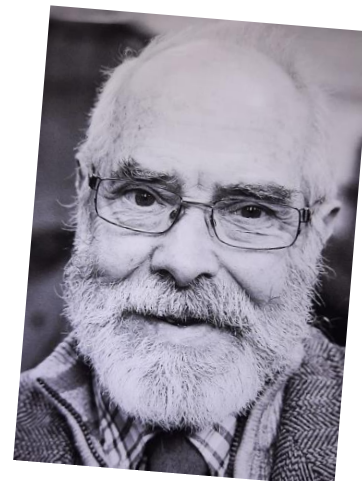
John C

PS It has been suggested to me that we might feature a series in which various members of the Chaplaincy quote passages that have meant a lot to them, taken from their favourite spiritual writers. St Thomas Aquinas, Julian of Norwich and C.S. Lewis, for example, spring to mind. Look out for the next edition, which features the first of these quotations - from Thomas Merton.

FROM THE CHAPLAIN'S DESK

To misquote Lady Bracknell, 'To be late with one Newsletter, Father, may be regarded as a misfortune; to be consistently late looks like carelessness.' So, may I begin my musings with a sincere apology to our Editor, John Crothers, who has once again given us a fascinating and diverse account of life at St George's.

Life at St George's has continued to pick up momentum and excitement after Covid. You can read about some of the exciting group activities since Christmas in this edition. But for me it's been a season dominated by the deaths of those I love, especially the peaceful and expected death of my father.



At a crematorium in the UK, I might begin by reminding the attendees that the experience of death is the only thing all those in the chapel have in common but that doesn't mean that our experience of bereavement will be the same. The God who made the whorls of lines on our fingers unique to each finger is alongside us in the particularities of our grief. It has been salutary to experience for myself the range of emotions, the lethargy, and tricks of memory that my own father's death brought in its wake. Unmanageability and dependence are healthy experiences for us all.

I'm pretty sure that I haven't excavated new, significant depths, of meaning out my experience; I was too busy with travelling, telephoning, registering, service papers and 'meeting the Vicar' (which in a house full of clergy was surprisingly restful and reassuring – thank you Fr Anthony!). We had the immense consolation of a life well-lived with the opportunity for goodbyes and these memories are immensely consoling.

There are two things which stick out, perhaps like icebergs, concealing their depths: firstly, that the rhythm of prayer – even if I felt emotionally distant – was unifying and consoling. The *Prayers for the Dying* aren't magic formulae to be muttered against the coming chaos but reminders to us, the living, of the promises of God in Christ and of God being God in the face of the frailty of human life. The second memory that I cherish took place after the funeral was over; I was invited at the end of the Messe Malgache to sit to receive the *Condoléances*, alongside another bereaved family. St George's is for so many people a-family-away-from-family, friends, for however short or long our stay,

who become bearers of our joys, our sorrows, our pain. It is this very human side of our church, alongside our commitment to the beauty of worship in Spirit and truth, that helps me understand how powerful an experience St George's is in the lives of countless people, across decades and continents.

Thank you all for your prayers and your understanding. Like Jacob I say :

'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' (Gen. 28.17)

Fr Mark

OBITUARIES

Grace Valéry, a gentle and beloved figure around church, left us early this year. Her son Rouben, who gave a moving eulogy for his mother at the funeral, here reminds us of what made Grace the person she was...

Quand maman a lu l'hommage que j'ai rendu papa dans la dernière publication de la Newsletter, elle avait trouvé cela fidèle à la personnalité de mon père et espérait que je trouverais également les mots justes quand son tour viendrait. « Le plus tard possible » se disait-on.

On ignorait alors que cela se produirait seulement quelques mois plus tard. Brutalement, même si elle se remettait difficilement du décès de Cyril l'été dernier, après quarante-huit ans de mariage. Elle subit une agonie de trois jours à la suite d'une infection pulmonaire, trois jours durant lesquels l'église Saint-George, à travers la présence du père Jeffrey et des prières des pères Mark et Nicolas, a continué à être présente jusqu'au bout. Car Dieu occupait la première place dans sa vie et Saint-George ses pensées. Et même bien avant mon père et moi, comme elle nous le répétait. Une philosophie et une dévotion logiques quand on connaît son histoire.

Grace est née à Port Louis, à l'île Maurice le 29 janvier 1940. Depuis toute petite, ses parents et particulièrement son père l'élève dans l'amour de Dieu. Quand elle est enfant, la famille reçoit régulièrement la visite du prêtre de leur paroisse à Vacoas. Ces visites sont un grand moment de joie pour elle car cela lui permet de montrer ce qu'elle a

retenu de la leçon du catéchisme. Durant cette période, elle est marquée par une illustration accrochée sur le mur de leur salon et qui s'intitule « The broad and the narrow way ». Son père lui explique quel est le chemin à suivre pour accéder au paradis et se trouver ainsi au plus près de Dieu. Cette illustration disparaîtra au moment de l'incendie de leur maison, durant son adolescence.

Après la mort de son père et pour subvenir aux besoins de sa famille, Grace devient employée en pharmacie où les gens l'apprécient pour sa gentillesse et ses conseils avisés. C'est avec peine qu'ils la voient partir en France en septembre 1971. Un nouveau chapitre commence alors pour elle. Elle travaille comme dame de compagnie pour des familles aisées durant de nombreuses années avant d'être employée au service immobilier de la Banque de France.

A peine pose-t-elle ses valises à Paris qu'elle recherche une église anglicane. Sa patronne de l'époque lui trouve une paroisse au 7 rue Auguste-Vacquerie. Dès lors commence son histoire avec Saint-George qu'elle fera connaître à sa sœur Murielle et son frère Clency, une histoire de cinquante-deux ans. Le père Roger Greenacre, responsable de l'église à ce moment-là, la prend très rapidement sous

son aile. C'est d'ailleurs lui qui mariera mes parents le 27 avril 1974 dans l'ancienne église.

A la demande de Margot Mayne, mon père intègre l'équipe des sidesmen pour accueillir les visiteurs certains dimanches. Ma mère l'assiste dans sa tâche. Par la suite, elle participera pendant de longues années à la Sunday School, s'occupant notamment des cartes et des fleurs à distribuer aux enfants lors du « Mothering Sunday », de l'organisation de la Nativity Play à l'approche de Noël (par exemple en réajustant les costumes des jeunes comédiens), et du goûter de fête qui suit avec sa distribution de cadeaux.

Cuisinant divinement bien, elle propose aux paroissiens les plats mauriciens lors du déjeuner dominical et

notamment son fameux « poulet tandoori ». Elle reverse l'intégralité de l'argent récolté à l'église sans chercher à se rembourser. Ce savoir-faire, elle le met aussi au service du « Christmas Bazaar » en s'occupant du « cake store ». Plusieurs semaines à l'avance, elle prépare des gâteaux qu'elle vend à des personnes ne pouvant se déplacer à cette occasion pour garnir la cagnotte de l'église, et elle



encourage les paroissiens à remplir au maximum son stand de leurs gâteaux afin de mieux attirer les acheteurs !

Son dévouement à Saint Georges s'étend également à l'entretien du tapis de l'autel et des aubes ainsi que sa participation au PCC durant quelques années. Récemment, lorsque j'ai annoncé le décès de ma mère à une caissière du supermarché où elle avait ses habitudes, celle-ci m'a raconté que ma mère voulait toujours avoir des pièces de 1 ou 2 euros afin de pouvoir aider les vagabonds qu'elle croisait dans la rue ou d'en faire des offrandes pour les bougies à l'église. Sans oublier qu'elle lui portait toujours des paroles réconfortantes quand cette caissière racontait ses difficultés du quotidien. « Croyez toujours en Dieu » disait-elle, « il n'abandonne jamais ». Cette parole, maman y a été fidèle jusqu'à son départ. « Ma plus belle récompense, c'est d'être avec Dieu » répétait-elle, toujours dans le souvenir du « broad and the narrow way ».

A l'occasion de son quatre-vingtième anniversaire, j'avais réussi à retrouver une copie de cette illustration et à la lui offrir. Elle m'a alors dit : « Voici le choix qui nous est offert : être fidèle à l'enseignement du Seigneur ou s'en détourner. J'espère faire ce qu'il faut. Mais quand le jour de mon départ arrivera, il ne faudra pas être malheureux. Parce que c'est là que notre Foi prend tout son sens. Par Jésus, nous continuons à vivre et je continuerai à vivre. Nos chemins se croiseront de nouveau un jour, pour l'éternité ».

When Mum read the tribute I paid Dad in the last publication of the Newsletter, she found it true to my father's personality and hoped that I would also find the right words when her time came. "As late as possible," we thought.

Little did we then know that this would happen only a few months later – unexpectedly, even if she was recovering with difficulty from Cyril's death last summer, after forty-eight years of marriage. She suffered for three days following a lung infection, three days during which St. George's Church, through the presence of Father Jeffrey and the prayers of Fathers Mark and Nicolas, continued to be present until the end.

For God occupied the first place in her life and Saint George her thoughts. And even well before my father and me, as she kept telling us. Both philosophy and devotion were logical when you know her history.

Grace was born in Port Louis, Mauritius, on January 29, 1940. Right from childhood, her parents and especially her father brought her up to love God. When she was a child, the family was regularly visited by the priest of their parish in Vacoas. These visits were a really joyful time for her because it allowed her to show what she had learned from her lessons in the catechism.

During this period, she was fascinated by an illustration hanging on the wall of the living room entitled "The broad and the narrow way". Her father explained to her the path to follow to reach Paradise and thus be closer to God. This illustration disappeared when their house caught fire during her adolescence.

After her father's death and in order to support her family Grace worked in a chemist's shop, where people appreciated her for her kindness and wise advice. It was

with sadness that they saw her leave for France in September 1971.

A new chapter then began for her. She worked as a lady-in-waiting for wealthy families for many years before being employed in the real estate department of the Bank of France. No sooner did she settle in Paris than she looked for an Anglican church. Her patroness at the time found her a parish at 7 rue Auguste Vacquerie.

From then on, her story with Saint George began, a church to which she would introduce her sister Murielle and her brother Clency, a story that would last fifty-two years. Father Roger Greenacre, in charge of the church at the time, quickly took her under his wing. It was he who married my parents on April 27, 1974 in the old church. At the request of Margot Mayne, my father joined the sidemen's team to welcome visitors on certain Sundays. My mother assisted him in this role.

Subsequently, she helped for many years with the Sunday School, taking care of cards and flowers to distribute to children during "Mothering Sunday", organising the Nativity Play in the run-up to Christmas (for example by adjusting the costumes of the young actors), and the festive snack that followed, with its distribution of gifts.

A wonderful cook, she provided Mauritian dishes for Sunday lunch, including her famous "tandoori chicken". She donated all the money raised to the church without trying to repay herself.

She also put her know-how at the service of the "Christmas Bazaar" by taking care of the "cake store". Several weeks in advance, she would prepare cakes that she sold to people unable to travel on the day to raise funds for the church. And she encouraged parishioners to fill her stand as much as possible with their cakes in order to make it attract buyers. Her dedication to St George's also extended to the maintenance of the altar and the albs as well as her participation on the PCC for a few years.

Recently, when I announced my mother's death to a cashier at the supermarket where she used to shop, she told me that my mother always wanted to have coins of 1 or 2 euros, so that she could help the homeless people she passed on the street or make offerings for candles at church. She also mentioned that she always gave this cashier comforting words when she told her of her daily difficulties. "Always believe in God," she said. "He never lets you go."

This was a saying to which Mother remained faithful, right to the end. "My greatest reward is to be with God," she repeated, still remembering the "broad and narrow way." For her eightieth birthday, I managed to find a copy of this illustration and gave it to her. She said, "This is the choice: either be faithful to the Lord's teaching or turn away from it. I hope to do the right thing. But when the day of my departure arrives, don't be unhappy. Because this is where our faith comes into its own. Through Jesus, we continue to live and I will continue to live. Our paths will cross again one day, for eternity."

Angela Harrisson

11 April 1945-31 December 2022

Sermon by Fr Mark Osborne at the funeral of Angela Harrisson on 19th January 2023. The scriptures read at the Funeral Service within a celebration of Holy Communion were 1 Corinthians 15.44-42, 53-end and John 11.17-27.

Today's first reading is the same first reading as we had here at St George's for Mark's funeral. But I chose the gospel reading for a very particular purpose. I would like you in your mind to strip this scene of all its pious accretions, to put aside the picture of Martha as plaster saint living a life of quiet piety, who in sweet and dulcet tones asks of the Lord, respectfully and with an enquiring tone, the question: "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died." I want you to put all of that to one side and I want you instead to ask Martha's question in Angela's voice, and I don't mean the warm voice that was so full of acutely observed funny stories, or there at the end of the telephone if you needed help, the voice that volunteered, the voice that taught, the voice that supported and encouraged. No, not that voice; the other voice, the brusque voice, the voice that made you want to go "Ooerr, Angela's on the warpath again": that voice! Imagine Martha asking the Lord, or saying to the Lord: "Well, if you'd been here my brother wouldn't have died!" Can you hear it? I can. I can, because I think that's far and away the more honest voice for Martha to have. Martha wasn't messing about. Martha was full of commitment and care. Martha was passionate about the Life of God in Jesus.

Angela was passionate for a better life. What else would uproot a young woman from her own country and take her into the unknown without the mobile phones, internet and Google Translate of today's adventurers. She was passionate for her husband, Mark, and for her children, Guy and Ursula. She was passionate about her friends. She was passionate about her church. She was passionate about being right too, but you're all here as much because of as despite that passion!

She was passionate about Mark, who courted her across Europe. I had the best lunch with Angela as she recounted the tale of how she and Mark became an item. It was the stuff of movies. She was in Paris; he was in London. She was in Switzerland; he was in Paris. It was long train journeys, it was lots of letters, it was backwards and forwards. Clearly,

he had his eye on the prize, and I think if you look at the picture on the back [of the service sheet] you can see something of the prize that Mark had his eye on. A young woman full of life and love and passion. She was passionate about children, her own children, but also about the children she taught. She could express that in typical fashion but nonetheless she worked hard for those children. She was passionate about nourishing beauty and talent; she was passionate about her church and its community, her faith, and her neighbours.

In all this I think our sister Angela is best reflected again in the figure of Martha, who ran a large household, who was able to entertain Jesus and endless hangers-on at the drop of a hat, who was able to pull it all together because she was competent and passionate and convicted.



Today's Gospel today doesn't go round Martha's question and doesn't answer Martha's question; it just bulldozes its way through the question! Jesus responds to Martha with a statement which she bats to one side because he's basically ignoring her painful reality. And so today I don't want to ignore the reality, which is that our sister is now with her Creator, her Redeemer, and her Sanctifier. It's a painful and sudden reality despite Angela's increasing frailty. I am deeply glad that her going from us was as unlike that of her beloved Mark's as was possible; there was no long stay in hospital, despite shorter periods last year enlivened only by opportunities to complain at great length and deep bitterness about French cooking! She died at the end of a holiday spent with her son, and she died suddenly, both of which are blessings for which, in years to come, we will be increasingly grateful.

Angela was a passionate woman, passionate about the love that she had for her family,

about the communities of which she was a member. And she could be brusque, but underlying that, we knew, was her commitment. And in today's Gospel we might say: well, perhaps Jesus is being a bit brusque. There's no handholding, no soft words, no emollient "It'll all be alright in the end". No, Jesus gets on with it and raises Lazarus from the dead despite everybody else standing around worrying about what he's going to smell like. He gets on with it: brusque, direct, loving, and passionate. That's our Saviour, and so today we pray that our sister may enter into her rest, welcomed in the same brusque, direct, loving and passionate way. Amen.

Canon Anna Matthews, late Vicar of St Ben'et's, Cambridge, made history by celebrating the Eucharist in St George's in February of this year, and was greatly appreciated by our people. Tragically, she died in March. Fr Jeffrey, who had been her Dean when she worked at St Albans Abbey, was asked to give the oration at Anna's funeral, which took place on 26th April. It is printed in full below...

Anna was one of the closest friends I have had, and of all the priests I have known, the one with whom I most often and most deeply discussed the business of being a priest. I thought I knew her. Which is why for me and for so many of us here what has happened is such a shock, and is so hard – for me still impossible – to come to terms with. I will need to come back to that.

Andrew Davison called Anna a consummate priest, and she was. At the most obvious professional level I suppose what struck us all was her terrifying and brisk efficiency. When she arrived as Precentor of St Albans she immediately set about organising and digitising every possible service of the year – something for which all her successors have been profoundly grateful. It was a mammoth task, and done brilliantly, so that everyone from the diocesan bishop to the boat boy knew precisely what they should be doing and when and where - and woe betide us if we did not do it. For one so young her presence was extraordinary. Her unique combination of authoritative bossiness and youthful charm enabled her to subdue roomfuls of ecclesiastical dignitaries or the massed gentry of Hertfordshire with no more than a raised eyebrow.

She was a brilliant liturgist. She understood the importance of entering into the liturgy, how it becomes personally powerful for clergy and people alike. She knew how to make worship accessible and yet still transcendent and timeless, so that we feel the Communion of Saints as a reality and know that heaven is present for us now. She also had a highly sensitive 'naff-ometer', so anything cringe-worthy or clunky was immediately banished.

Anna decided early on that as Dean I was far too soft a touch. She bought me a mug with the words 'I AM THE DEAN' printed on it, to encourage me to be more forceful. However I don't think she felt that applied to her. On the rare occasions I questioned her judgment I would get the eyebrow treatment and the response, 'I think, Father, you will find ...', and, annoyingly, she would usually be right!



She could be sharp. On one occasion Kevin, the Canon Chancellor and I were rather haplessly attempting to prepare the nave altar for something. Anna intervened with the words 'Oh look, you've no idea how to dress yourselves, you'll never manage an altar'. She was, of course, unfailingly elegant herself. Once I tried to win the moral high ground by pointing out that her haircuts cost ten times more than mine. 'Yes, and doesn't it show?' she said...

Anna challenged us. She was more disciplined and had higher standards than most of us, and she pushed us to do things which we might not otherwise have done. One of the most effective was to set up a scheme of spiritual direction during Lent, in which all the Abbey clergy and lay ministers made themselves available to anyone in the congregation who wanted to talk about their prayer life. It caught on in a big way, which meant we all had many hours of extra work throughout Lent. And although we grumbled, we knew it was more important than most of what we did. In fact, it changed the spiritual temperature of the Abbey; it became deeper, more serious about praying. That was down to Anna.

She was profoundly serious about prayer. She loved St Beuno's, the Ignatian retreat house in Wales, and went there as often as she could. She knew that prayer was the way to be the best priest that she could be, and that without that relationship at the centre of everything she had nothing to offer. Over the years she became a huge support for hundreds of people – parishioners, students, ordinands, other clergy, me – who saw in her something one doesn't always see so easily in others. She was the Real Thing. Somehow she inhabited her priesthood in a way

that most of the rest of us never quite manage.

Yes, she was professional, efficient, organised, well-turned out, knowledgeable, a communicator, a good theologian, all the other stuff one properly wants a priest to be. But she had something else: she made prayer and the presence of God a reality, and that made her special, and drew others in – and not to her, but to God.

That's where the authority came from. You could see it shining out of her. When Anna first came to St Albans a number of the older altar servers were conscientiously unable to accept the priesthood of women. Anna went along with this and accepted that sometimes some of the servers at High Mass would not receive from her. But very soon, without anything being said, it became obvious to these servers, who were deeply devoted Catholic Christians, that they could not possibly say that this woman was any less a priest than her male colleagues, and they

probably felt she was rather more so. So one day, to her shock, they simply lined up and received Communion from her; and she, and they and most of us, were in tears of joy. In fact, precisely because she was as she was, only six weeks ago we invited Anna to Paris to do something similar for St George's. She was our first woman celebrant at Mass. In many ways she was old fashioned. Like many of us she didn't quite feel at home in the current CofE, and worried terribly about the criteria ordinands are now selected by and the understanding of ministry they are taught. She also rescued and shielded a large number of young people, not least gay people, from the confusions and cruelties of the Church, and helped them to believe in Christ's love and vocation for them.

Anna told me how grateful she was to her training incumbent, Brian Andrews, for teaching her to do the basics of priesthood – living within the framework of the office and mass, visiting homes, taking care over occasional offices, listening to people, remembering them - all the good old ways to build up a Christian community. And she was so good at it. In St Albans I shamelessly used her as my 'memory' – she knew and recalled people and their lives far better than I ever could.

All of this came to fruition in St Ben'et's where she had ten wonderful years of ministry as parish priest. By anyone's criteria, it is a church as a church should be, and although a church is always the people first, not the priest, I think they would agree she was a big part of making it what it is. Anna wrote in her last note: 'It has been the joy of my life to serve them as their Vicar'. I love them'. She did, and they loved her.

If it is hard for them and for all of us to lose Anna, it hardly compares with what her death means for Stephen. I have long thought that losing your life's partner is one of life's worst griefs, and a far greater terror than one's own death. That is the nightmare which Stephen is having to live through, and I think all of us would want to surround and shield him with all the love and prayer we can summon up. His love was a constant in Anna's life, underpinning everything: a gentle, unassuming and unshakeable love that allowed her to be who she was, and has never failed her. I can't express love and appreciation for Anna without saying the same for Stephen. Over the past couple of weeks, Grant and I have supposedly been helping to support him through this. It would be truer to say that he supported us. Forgive me that I can't say much about the rest of Anna's family, though I was aware how much she loved and thought about her mum and her sisters. Yesterday evening at the reception of Anna's body into St Ben'et's, Anna's mother spoke very movingly about Anna's love and care for her family. Anna herself never liked having a title. Rather to my disappointment, she refused to be 'Mother Anna', and she was equally reluctant to be called Canon, a dignity which she did her best to hide. But she absolutely adored being called 'Aunty Anna' by Flora and Wilfred and Lottie, her nieces and nephew, and despite being usually camera-shy, she had a large collection of photos of her and them which she was very proud of showing off. Encouraged by this, I once tried calling her 'Aunty Anna' myself. Icicles formed....

She was a wonderful friend to very many of us. And yes, she was the consummate priest and confidante, but she was

also a really good laugh – quite a belly-laugh actually – a fantastic host, a seriously good cook, and a lethal mixer of cocktails! She introduced fizz to St Ben'et's for feasts and birthdays. She could do joy, and she could do mindless fun as well. Who would have thought that the consummate priest was also an addict of junk TV like *Made in Chelsea* and *Holiday Home Makeovers*?

But the unavoidable truth – and now I have to come back to where I do not want to go – is that what made her such a powerful priest was her own acquaintance with grief, and the way in which she could deploy her own experience of the darkness to help others in theirs. Anna was an extraordinary mixture of enormous self-confidence and terrifying vulnerability. The professional competence covered up a radical and disastrous inability to love and accept herself.

It was always almost impossible to pay Anna a compliment. Compliments fell like fire on her skin because she was so convinced she didn't deserve them. She had an extreme lack of ambition. She was put in the so-called 'talent pool' for up-and-coming clergy – she called it the 'talent puddle' – but when she said she didn't want a senior job, Anna was one of the very few clergy who really meant it. She never believed she qualified.

I knew some of what lay in her past to make her as she was. We often talked, as I said, about the strange chemistry of priesthood by which God uses our weaknesses to help others. And we talked too about the dangers of that, of knowing where to draw the line, of how you must limit your empathy, guard your boundaries, not allow yourself to be drawn too deep into someone else's pain, or too far back into your own. Anna seemed always so wise in these things that I stupidly never imagined she was in danger from herself.

Of course, we don't know or understand what was in her mind in those last hours. She seems seriously to have believed that removing herself from the world would cause less pain to other people. Nothing could be less true. It has caused infinitely more pain to more people, everyone who knew her. We don't know what caused the wild loss of perspective which led her into the abyss of despair. I can only take refuge in the thought that she did it 'while the balance of her mind was disturbed' as the old verdict put it. Because otherwise the sin of self-destruction is very grave, and I can hear Anna herself telling me that I must say so. In every sense this was all wrong.

That is why she also asked that we pray God to have mercy on her soul. Which we do, knowing that he will, because he loves her, and his compassion and love have no limits. I am going to leave you with part of a meditation which Anna wrote last year for Good Friday, on Jesus' words from the Cross: 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' It is important, because it tells us that Anna knew that in Christ God too once found himself where she found herself in the end. She wrote this:

'When we look on the cross and hear these words, 'My God, why have you forsaken me?', remember that we are looking at and hearing God himself. At the very point of our forsakenness, we see Jesus. He is God's refusal to leave us forsaken, or let sin hold us captive. He has gone to the place of abandonment so that we may know that the love

of God will reach us in all the height and depth and length and breadth of our existence.

Abandonment is a hard place to dwell. But this is where the journey of Holy Week brings us: to the far country into which the prodigal children of God have wandered. But even here, if we will tarry, we will be found by the Son of God, who has come into the far country to look for us. And he will bring us home.'

BAHRAIN: THE NEXT DEAN!

News about our former Assistant Chaplain in St George's...

At the end of 2022, Archbishop Michael* announced the appointment of the Reverend Dr Richard Fermer as the next Dean of St Christopher's Cathedral, Manama, (known as The Cathedral of The Gulf) in the Kingdom of Bahrain.



For ten years Fr Richard had been priest in charge of the Grosvenor Chapel, a parish church in Mayfair, London, serving a mixed congregation from many backgrounds. A qualified teacher, he was formed for the priesthood at the College of the Resurrection in Mirfield, Yorkshire and began ordained ministry in Palmers Green. His subsequent international experience included

time with USPG in Brazil and a period of service as Assistant Chaplain at St George's in Paris, between 2009 and 2012. He and his wife Giseli moved to Bahrain towards the end of January this year, and his installation as Dean took place in March. Please pray for Richard, Giseli, and the people of St Christopher's Cathedral as well as the congregation at Awali.

*Archbishop Michael Lewis, retiring in June 2023 as Archbishop of the Anglican Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East and Bishop of the Diocese of Cyprus and The Gulf.

Ed. Latest news direct from Archbishop Michael: [Fr Richard's] "installation went well, and both he and Giseli seem to be enjoying the place and the people."

CHOIR CORNER

Perhaps the longest-standing (and longest-singing) member of St George's Choir, Paul Willenbrock, reflects on what it means to 'stand in the corner'...

As I have been singing at St George's for 42 years, I have accepted the challenge of contributing a few unashamedly personal reflections on singing at St George's, even though my participation in the choir was until recently sporadic, as

I always had to prioritise paid work, whether on tour or singing at Notre-Dame or the American Cathedral. With advancing years and declining health (various close encounters with the Grim Reaper having undeniably taken their toll), I definitively retired from the music scene earlier this year. Consequently, as I can't recall any moment in my life when I haven't sung (except perhaps during a week-long coma after cardiac arrest), I'm glad now to be able to sing regularly with Dr Hicks' happy band of singers, which gives me the impression that I am not yet completely ready for the scrap-heap and can perhaps still be of some use or service.

I particularly appreciate their good-humoured tolerance of my attempts (if not always successful) to insist on singing Renaissance music at the pitch presumably intended by the composer – not so much to satisfy the pedant in me, but simply because, at my age, the lower the music the more comfortable I feel... and over the years I have increasingly come to the not altogether disinterested conclusion that, if the bass is happy, then all is well with the world!

As from my youngest years I have always had an insatiable desire to discover composers and music that I have never sung or heard before - or even heard of - I am glad that choir members on the whole share my curiosity and are willing to try out at least some of the music I find in the many hours I spend hunting obscure treasures on the internet. Ever since Covid hit us, the choir has often been quite small-scale, not to say intimate (which personally I quite like), and we also had to sing masked for a good (or rather, bad) year. Sometimes we don't actually have a full standard quartet, which has found us trying out small-scale, sometimes simpler music, including some refreshingly "cheap and cheerful" masses and motets from little-known but none the less charming Bohemian, Bavarian (etc.) composers, which fortunately seem to have gone down fairly well with clergy and congregation alike. In my arrogant youth I admit that I would have dismissed such works as worthless, but now in my twilight years I relish their honest, practical, devotional simplicity.

I cannot emphasize enough how very fortunate we are to have the clergy very much on our side, with Fr Mark showing a degree of interest and enthusiasm in our musical offering, such as I have never experienced before from any priest anywhere, and poles apart from what I experienced when singing at Notre-Dame, where the Archbishop, Cardinal Vingt-Trois (his actual name, not his number!) was reputed to have said to the wonderful music director, Lionel Sow, "Si vous saviez à quel point je m'en fous de votre musique!" Mark's enthusiasm is a constant encouragement, stimulating us in turn to be as attentive as possible to the specific needs of each service, whether festive or meditative, happy or sad, sophisticated or simple, long or short.

I find it healthy that members of the congregation feel free to express their opinions on our efforts; their spontaneous, frankly expressed reactions - even if at times (politely) negative - help me feel that getting up at the crack of dawn on Sundays in order to get body and soul (?) sufficiently into shape to get me to church (more or less) on time for rehearsal is not altogether in vain. With the eclectic range of repertoire we like to offer (perhaps the most eclectic of

any church in the whole of Christendom!), inevitably we can't please everybody all the time, but such is life! It is so nice that the congregation appreciates that the organ voluntary is part of the worship, listening in silence right to the very end... such a difference from the American Cathedral where only a tiny handful of eccentrics bother to listen to their wonderful organist, Andrew Dewar, apparently regarding his impressive performances as mere background music to their very loud conversations - even though the titles of his pre- and post-service voluntaries are actually printed in the (40-page!) "Bulletin", as they call it there.

A final thought, on service sheets: I know St George's doesn't have the luxury of being able to provide 40-page "Bulletins", but it would be wonderful if the text and/or translation of the communion motet could somehow always be squeezed into them. Much thought usually goes into choosing these motets and it's a pity if nobody can understand what we're singing. Does anyone agree? I do know that, ideally, some people would also appreciate the inclusion of the names and dates of the authors of the hymns*, though it must be said that they could always find them in the hymnbooks. It is so difficult making everybody happy, isn't it!

* And the name of the tunes! – Ed.



And a picture from the recent Choir Tour to Noto, Sicily – after Evensong with the parroco, Don Francesco Ingenieri

VISITE A MADAGASCAR

Des visites et une remise de livres pour affermir des liens Père Nicolas Razafindratsima nous présente sa visite récente, qui avait pour but d'affermir les liens entre les Anglicans de l'île de Madagascar et ceux de la communauté malgache de l'église Saint-Georges...

Ma famille et moi sommes allés à Madagascar l'été 2022. Il s'agit de notre première visite depuis la pandémie. Nous étions heureux de retrouver nos familles. Malheureusement, depuis notre dernier passage en 2017, plusieurs personnes sont décédées, emportées par la Covid ou d'autres maladies.

Quelques jours après notre arrivée, j'ai rendu visite à Monseigneur Samoela Jaona Ranarivelo, l'évêque anglican d'Antananarivo. Au nom de Saint-Georges, je lui ai remis une vingtaine de livres : des dictionnaires anglais et français, des dictionnaires bilingues et des livres de théologie. Mgr



Ranarivelo nous a vivement remerciés pour ces dons, qui viendront étoffer la bibliothèque de l'Institut anglican de Théologie. Cet Institut accueille des étudiants laïcs qui se préparent à l'ordination, et les forme à la théologie et la mission. A cet égard, l'accès à la documentation et aux livres est primordial, d'où l'importance des dons effectués par Saint-Georges.

Lors de ce séjour, j'ai également eu l'occasion de prêcher dans plusieurs églises : à la cathédrale Saint-Laurent, où j'ai



grandi, à la paroisse d'Ambanidia et enfin à la paroisse d'Ambohimanambola, en banlieue d'Antananarivo. Le calendrier liturgique et le lectionnaire utilisés à Madagascar sont les mêmes que ceux que nous utilisons à Paris. La liturgie se base sur le « Boky Fivavahana », c'est-à-dire le Livre des Prières, qui a été traduit en langue malgache dès l'arrivée des premiers missionnaires anglicans à Madagascar en 1864. Il existe aussi une « liturgie rénovée », proche de celle que nous utilisons à St-Georges.

En septembre, c'était au tour de Mgr Ranarivelo de venir en France. Après avoir assisté à une réunion du Conseil œcuménique des églises, à Karlsruhe (Allemagne), il a rendu visite aux Anglicans malgaches de Strasbourg et de Paris. Il a eu aussi l'occasion de rencontrer les Pères Mark et Jeffrey. L'idée est de poursuivre la collaboration entre l'Eglise

anglicane de Madagascar et St-Georges, qui compte une importante communauté malgache.

PRAYING (EVEN FURTHER) AWAY...

Edmund Linton, leader of our YA Group, gives an insight into the activities enjoyed over the past two years...

Two years since its inception, the group of young adults at Saint George's has really been growing, enthusiastically filling its ranks with motivated members from all walks of life in and around Paris. Continuing to offer a relaxed space for sharing, far away from the clutter and chaos of everyday Parisian life, the group, (which is still working on a 'catchier' name, with the use of algorithms and good old-fashioned imagination!), has 45 people on its roll.

Over the course of the past couple of years, the members, in addition to their regular Friday after-work dinners, have embarked on a number of trips as pilgrims across France – to Lisieux, Taizé, the Sacré-Cœur Basilica in Paris, Lourdes and Chartres.

Each of these pilgrimages to these important sites in the history and life of the Church has provided a spiritual foundation, where as individual pilgrims we could involve ourselves in personal and collective moments of prayer, fellowship and reflection. Being in Taizé during the Ascension long weekend was a great opportunity to share in the life of this special ecumenical, Christian, monastic fraternity founded by Frère Roger, where we had the privilege of meeting some four thousand pilgrims from across Europe and the rest of the world. We shared in daily chores, talks and three services per day, where the simple and multi-lingual singing of all those within the walls of the church truly seemed to reach the heavens. While our spirits and passion were high, the same could not be said for our knees, but that was only secondary when compared to the comradeship developed with the other pilgrims.



Most recently, we travelled to Chartres to spend the day with members of the *Communauté du Chemin Neuf*, a vibrant

ecumenical religious community, where our own Ben Lewis is an active member. In addition to some planned group activities and a splendid lunch prepared by the Community, we were treated to a private tour of Chartres Cathedral, then finally a special Eucharist in French, with the Community but celebrated by Fr Mark.

Being part of this group offers a place to anyone in need of somewhere to feel safe and secure, where they can talk about anything and everything on their minds without encountering any judgementalism or risking embarrassment. There is no prerequisite for having a certain level of spirituality. The only thing you should come with is the person you are, in whatever form that may be - you will find a genuine welcome! We offer an open invitation to anyone feeling both young and adult(!) from 18 years of age up: don't hesitate to get in touch!

For any additional information, feel free to visit the church's website, or contact Edmund Linton (edmund.linton@gmail.com)

SUNDAY LUNCH ATTRACTS THE CROWDS...

Our resurrected St George's Sunday Lunch is again becoming a feature of our weekly meeting together. Not so long ago, a correspondent for the Church Times described it as "the best value Sunday lunch in Paris". Here, Bart Konechni explains why...

Lunch at Saint George's has gone from strength to strength in the last year. Members of the congregation have put on a variety of lunches and it has been lovely to see a host of new faces don the apron. Here are a few examples, to tempt your taste buds if you haven't yet savoured their delights: Rachel (an exchange student from the UK studying at Pathéon Sorbonne) treated us to two wonderful lunches earlier this year, serving up French classics on both occasions: beef bourguignon and ratatouille. Stewart (a perennial member of the congregation) organised a fantastic Lebanese lunch for us all. Peter Hicks (our long-time Director of Music) also introduced us to a series of delightful Italian-themed meals. Andrew Knowles gave us a classic British Sunday Roast with his expertly executed roast beef and Yorkshire Pudding. Last, but not least, Mike and Helen Orrin proved to be a dynamic duo offering up authentic chilli. Meanwhile, Janet (our much beloved Churchwarden) has been a faithful stalwart of the kitchen. Special thanks goes to Jill Whitman who organised a lunch for Ukrainian refugees alongside student volunteers from *Sciences Po Paris*. Also worthy of mention are all those who made lunches during Lent: Mary Jane, Catherine and Adrian. Of course, lunch would not be possible without the very hard work of Father Mark and Ryan Spooner who have often been left toiling in the kitchen when no one else was available. The highlight of Mark and Ryan's many lunches was the Easter Sunday roast lamb, which brought us all together in a joyous celebration.

If you think that you would like to make lunch, please do not hesitate to get in touch with myself or Ryan Spooner. We are always here to help peel potatoes and carry the shopping! We look forward to another successful year of Saint George's lunches and hope to see lots of new people entering the kitchen. Do try it – it can be great fun!



READERS' RIDDLES & QUIZ !

'A Parishioner' has sent in these riddles and quiz questions. Enjoy testing your wits against him/her! (One or two have appeared before in the Newsletter, but try to solve them without looking back! Answers are to be found on the back page.)

1. Two objects perform the same task. One has many thousands of moving parts while the other has no moving parts. What are they?
2. Why did a person buy an object they didn't want for £1 and throw it away a few minutes later?
3. In a locked cabin high up on the side of a mountain, five dead bodies are found. How had they all died?
4. Why might a person possibly have been found standing at a bus stop with an ordinary kitchen chair in their arms?
5. How did George Bernard Shaw justify the place of elections in democracy, and for whom?
6. Who asserted what is required to make life bearable, and under what circumstances?
7. Why, and according to whom, is censorship like an appendix?
8. How did Harold Macmillan justify advising the late Queen to appoint Michael Ramsay to succeed Geoffrey Fisher as Archbishop of Canterbury?
9. Which Archbishop of Canterbury was wrong to defend himself on charges of being a womaniser?
10. What, and according to whom, are the advantages of a classical education?

CHURCH HYMNS AND OTHER ART FORMS

Where do our tastes come from? A question addressed in this fascinating piece. Our thanks go to Chaplaincy member Mary Jane Wilkie, who has allowed us to carry her article, originally published on an online blog. Perhaps it may stimulate debate among our readers...

Even if you don't go to church, you undoubtedly respond positively, negatively, or indifferently to the various forms

of music, art, poetry, and prose. Hymns just happen to loom large in my life, because if you grew up in a working-class neighborhood in Texas in the 1950s, Sunday church was an inescapable experience.

Varieties

I sang the hymns preferred by the Methodist church of my youth, then later hymn choices of a large New York City mainstream church, then an urban rescue mission, small-town churches, and more recently English cathedrals filled with 'bells and smells'. Each setting has preferences. My youth was for the hymns of Charles Wesley, Isaac Watts, and other poets schooled in rhetoric, who knew their anapests from their iambs and turned them into poetry easily set to music. These hymns communicated theology through song, using symbols that are universal, not the property of the Christian church. Coupled with the right music, the poetry was uplifting, and particularly welcome when the preacher's sermon was boring! But we also sang evangelical hymns about personal relationships with Jesus, walking in a garden to hear Jesus' voice. Today some Christians find this "love song" imagery annoyingly sentimental, embarrassing.

But not so the bedraggled men who would come to the Bowery Mission in New York's lower east side, for pre-dinner worship with our group from the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. These evangelical hymns spoke to the heart, but no one in my uptown church would have sung them. I played piano as we sang "Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?" and "Leaning on the everlasting arms [of Jesus]." These hungry men were unschooled, often homeless, and probably hopeless. I like to think the singing helped them.

Uptown at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, we preferred Wesley and Watts, and we sang hymns of Ralph Vaughan Williams, whose other music makes him a "classical" composer. I also experienced the musical wealth of the Welsh, as my church-music horizons expanded. When I became an Episcopalian (now Anglican in Paris), I sang "High Church" hymns and Anglican chant.

Taste Evolves

How do we develop our preferences in any art form? I think it starts with childhood surroundings, like 'mother's meatloaf', which sets standards. Children's stories tell you how things are supposed to be. Whenever I've read a good story to young children, my own pleasure matches theirs. C.S. Lewis confirmed my instinct saying, "A children's story that isn't interesting to adults is not a good story." We can say the same for the art and music they experience. When I was a music teacher (of students 3-14 years old), rather than categorize via conventional labels (classical, jazz, folk or popular), I drew from a cornucopia of "traditions." They ranged from Bluegrass to Renaissance madrigals, to Dixieland, to Big Band, to Gilbert & Sullivan, shape-note singing, folk tunes, and music from other cultures (e.g., Japanese taiko drumming and Indonesian gamelan). Children – especially young ones – know nothing of categories, and I learned a lot from watching them simply respond to sounds and stories.

Other spheres

Drawing a parallel with "great" music, literature, and art, I'll avoid the word "sophistication," which suggests superiority of one form over another. While there is Bach, Beethoven,

and Mozart, there is also Hoagy Carmichael, whose “Skylark” can put anyone in a trance. And then the greats of the jazz world. And anyone who’s ever been in love surely responds to Roberta Flack’s “Strummin’ my pain with his fingers.”

Have you ever felt irritated when opening an account, and system-security questions include “Who is your favorite author?”? No system lets you answer, “It depends.” Sometimes I need Edith Wharton, sometimes Joan Didion, sometimes Haruki Murakami, sometimes Gabriel García Márquez. Isn’t everyone that way?

Our literary tastes may include all of these, and books I enjoyed when younger may no longer captivate me. But they weren’t bad literature; it’s simply that I have changed. And poetry? There are poems accessible to those who find poetry intimidating, and poetry that requires a different mindset. Great works of art hang in museums, while local artists produce worthy pieces. If we all enjoyed our tastes in silence, categories wouldn’t exist. But we communicate, perhaps to convince others of our views, which promotes the notion that there are standards.

But even the ‘Great’s’ disagree

You may know that Mark Twain detested Jane Austen, writing in a letter to a friend, “Every time I read *Pride and Prejudice*, I want to dig her up and beat her over the skull with her own shin-bone!” I wonder why he read it multiple times...

And documentation abounds about the presumed Hemingway/Faulkner feud. The latter said that the former’s writing required no one to use a dictionary. Hemingway retorted, “Does he think that big emotions come from big words?” I suspect they were simply sparring, but persons more learned than I may have a different opinion. Why bother defining what’s great and what isn’t? Duke Ellington said, “If it sounds good, it is good!” And we haven’t even mentioned cultural differences. I read about an aboriginal Australian who was taken to hear a symphony in New York City. After the performance, his host asked what he liked best, and he referred to the first part, when they were getting seated and the orchestra was warming up!

Storing up treasures

Good stories and songs offer some kernel of truth, a nugget of wisdom, something for the heart, the soul. You get the message when your spirit is ready. I recall hymns I have sung for decades, but one day a particular phrase gives me insight into something that had eluded my understanding.

I suspect we’ve all had “visitations” from songs or book passages encountered long ago. They creep into your head unsolicited, teaching you something, sparking an epiphany to take you beyond your experience, changing you. As Mort Sahl said, “My life needs editing.”

POETRY CORNER I

Un poème de Kevin Burt, de l’association chrétienne Vivre La Parole. D’après le Psaume 119, verset 105...

Si nous devons perdre contact
Avec la réalité d’une humanité
Enracinée dans la terre qui l’a vu naître

La Parole est là
Lumière
Pour ne pas perdre pied

Si nous devons perdre confiance
Dans notre capacité de marche
Engluée dans le cœur de nos choix

La Parole est là
Lumière
Pour assurer un pas sage

Si nous devons perdre la mesure
De la vérité d’une histoire
Modelée dans l’argile du temps

La Parole est là
Lumière
Pour révéler l’empreinte

Pied après pied
Pas après pas
Empreinte après empreinte

La Parole est là
Chemin faisant
Éclairant le sillon de notre existence
Qui se forme entre ombre et lumière

HYMNS THAT TALK TO US

Leading on from the previous article, one of the features of our 2024 Bi-centenary at St George’s will be the Hymn Competition – our search for a new set of appropriate words and a tune to carry them. In preparation for that, a discussion on a familiar hymn text is planned for this and future editions. W.A. (‘Billy’) Adair lived to the age of 102 in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and wrote a number of commentaries on hymns that we hope to share with you in this and future editions.

Upon his retirement, Billy accepted the opportunity to write and deliver a regular series of lectures in the Adult Education department of Queen’s University, Belfast on various aspects of classical music, including church music. These lectures attracted a large, appreciative and often distinguished audience. Having taken up his first post as a church organist and choirmaster at the age of sixteen, Billy Adair only retired from playing regularly when approaching the age of ninety. Even more amazingly, he began to contribute articles on hymns for the magazine of our namesake church in Belfast, St George’s, during 2020, appropriately, the year leading up to his own centenary! Before he left us in January 2023 he kindly agreed that we could publish some of them in our own Newsletter. In the circumstances, his comments printed below have acquired added poignancy...

‘Abide with me’ – life’s little day

Does the name Henry Francis Lyte mean anything to you?
Let me explain.

Lyte was born in Scotland in 1793, of English parents, spent his early life in Ireland and graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, where for three successive years he won the prize for an English poem. He was ordained into the Church of England and subsequently moved back across the Irish Sea to England. There, when attending the deathbed of a clerical friend, he experienced a deep evangelical conversion which changed his ministry and preaching. In

1823, he was appointed to the parish of Lower Brixham in Devon, where he remained for the rest of his life. His health was never robust, and he was obliged to take long periods of rest abroad to recuperate his strength. It was from one of these that he returned to Brixham in the spring of 1847, a dying man, and he knew it.

On Sunday 4th September, although far from well and despite the protests of his family, he celebrated Holy Communion and preached at the morning service in his church. He rested much

of the rest of the day and in the evening re-joined the family and handed his sister-in-law a manuscript headed 'Abide with me', together with a tune he had composed for it. One of the finest hymns ever written, and one of the worst tunes one could imagine! Had Dr W.H.

Monk not written the tune EVENTIDE for it, it is quite possible the hymn would never have been sung! Lyte's original hymn had eight verses, but the three omitted do not in any sense impoverish what we sing now.

The eight-verse hymn produced on that evening was not instantaneous; it had been drafted a few weeks earlier, and this was the revised and final form. Within a few days he left home again to return to the South of France, where he died on 20th November and was buried at the English (Anglican) Church in Nice, aged only 54.

Lyte got his inspiration from St Luke, who in Chapter 24: 28-31, of his Gospel tells the lovely Easter story of the two disciples walking to Emmaus, accompanied by the Risen Lord whom they hadn't recognised (some suggest the sun was shining in their eyes). But they wanted this 'stranger' to stay on, "Abide with us" they said, "for it is toward evening and the day is far spent." He did just that, and in the breaking of the bread their eyes were opened, and they recognised their Risen Lord.

As I already said, on 4th September 1847, Lyte knew only too well he was a dying man; for him the fading light, the gathering darkness, symbolised the eventide of life – it was his own life he was thinking of when he wrote the hymn. Death would not be long, but how was he to meet it? In pointing to the living, risen, victorious Christ, he had the answer, and in altering "Abide with us" to "Abide with me," he created a personal, deep and meaningful prayer, reminding us of the brevity of life and the certainty of death. When you think of this hymn in this way and not as an evening hymn, doesn't it put an entirely different interpretation on it?

Now a few points worth noticing:

Verse 1: When we reach the eventide of life and the darkness deepens, the one prayer the Christian can offer is "Lord, with me abide". The third line, "when other helpers fail, and comforts flee", refers to an incident when some of his choir and Sunday School teachers left the parish and joined the Plymouth Brethren. His friends had let him down, but he turned to the "Help of the helpless", the

Friend who never changed and who would abide with him to the end.

Verse 2: As "life's little day ebbs to its close", we have to admit that old age can be inconvenient and "earth's joys grow dim". In the present world situation, the next line - "change and decay in all around I see" - is surely prophetic, but the last word lies with Christ, "the same yesterday and today and forever": "O thou who changest not, abide with me".

Verse 3: What a verse this is – what a prayer, that every Christian needs to pray – "I need thy presence every passing hour". Life is seldom a smooth journey, but is full of problems, trials, and temptations (the devil sees to that!), so we need the grace, the guidance, the support of the abiding Christ, whatever the circumstances – "cloud or sunshine."

Verse 4: We are now reaching the climax – each verse ends with "abide with me", and that is the key thought throughout the hymn. As Christians, we are not exempt from trouble or adversity: we will meet opposition, tears will be shed, and death and the grave are before us. St Paul in I Corinthians 15: 55-57 asks, "O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory?" and finds the answer in "God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ". Lyte echoes those words when he affirms, "I triumph still, if thou abide with me".

Verse 5: In the triumphant hope of that last verse Lyte prays, "Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes" - a vision of the crucified Saviour whose blood had atoned for his sins. As Isaac Watts wrote in his well-loved "When I survey the wondrous Cross":

His dying crimson, as a robe,
Spreads o'er his body on the tree;
Then am I dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.

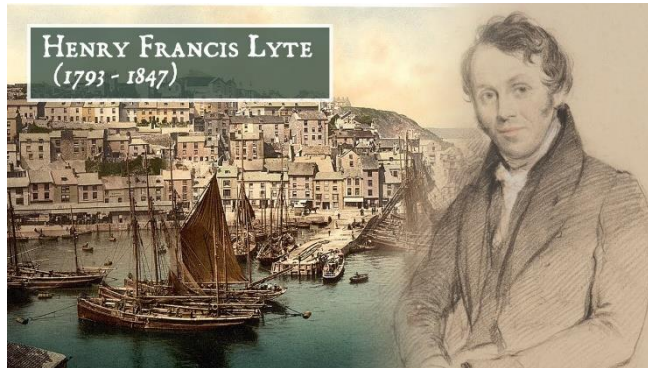
But Lyte was asking for even more. Most hymnals begin this verse "Shine through the gloom", whereas Lyte actually wrote: "Speak through the gloom". He prayed that not only might he see his loving Lord, but actually hear his voice whispering words of comfort: "Welcome home"! "Heaven's morning breaks", and Henry Francis Lyte is with the abiding Christ for all eternity.

In "Abide with me" Henry Francis Lyte has surely left a legacy which has enriched the Church of God for well over a century and, I believe, will continue to do so for generations to come.

For further reflection, see the chapter on this hymn in *Hymns that Live* by Bishop Frank Colquhoun. (ISBN 0877844739)

POETRY CORNER II

Disturb us, Lord,
when we are too well pleased with ourselves,
When our dreams have come true
because we have dreamed too little,
When we arrived safely
because we sailed too close to the shore.



Disturb us, Lord, when with the abundance of things we possess we have lost our thirst for the waters of life; Having fallen in love with life, we have ceased to dream of eternity And in our efforts to build a new earth, we have allowed our vision of the new Heaven to dim. Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly, To venture on wider seas where storms will show your mastery; Where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars. We ask you to push back the horizons of our hopes; And to push into the future in strength, courage, hope, and love.

Attributed to Sir Francis Drake, 1577

The prayer was probably written, not in the 16th century but in the 20th (it appears in The Minister's Manual, Volume 37, from 1967, attributed there to the Revd Dr M. K. W. Heicher)

LANGUAGE MATTERS

'A Chaplaincy Member' of St George's looks at the difference a small word can make...

I would posit that in divesting ourselves of ancient language ("thee," "thou," etc.), we have lost a useful distinction. Once, when I was in a job search, my finances were low. Rejection was usual, and I had trouble maintaining a positive spirit. One day, however, walking across a parking lot, I ran into a former colleague, who was then a professor at a major university. We shared our updates and a few weeks later, he called to advise me of an adjunct position there. The compensation was much more than I had imagined, enough for me to pay my bills and even save some money. "Seek and ye shall find" (St Matthew 7:7)

This passage reminds me that my part of the bargain is to seek and that God will provide, that God's imagination is greater than mine, that God might have something better in store for me. This was the case with the adjunct position, and it came from an unexpected place, not at all where I was looking.

Most modern Bibles render the passage as "Seek and you will find," which, to my mind, means that we have cast aside the distinction between shall and will. "Will" refers to what we can accomplish through our own actions; "shall" refers to results beyond our control, i.e., what comes from God. Perhaps we have stopped making this distinction because we think we are in control, that we can get what we want without God's help. For example, we talk about the "self-made man," as though he could have achieved success without society's structures undergirding his efforts. But we are *not* in control, so I keep seeking, firm in the knowledge that God *will* help me and I *shall* receive help from God. Words matter.

A WORD IN YOUR EAR...

As Maxine Arnault points out, the expression 'to curry favour' actually has a French twist to it...

It seems an odd phrase — why should curry have anything to do with winning the favour of somebody or ingratiating oneself with them?

Its origin lies in a mediaeval French allegorical poem called the "Roman de Fauvel", written by Gervais de Bus and



Chaillou de Pesstain in the early 1300s. Fauvel was a horse, a conniving stallion, and the poem is a satire on the corruption of social life. He decided he didn't like his stable and moved into his master's house, becoming the master and being visited by church leaders and politicians who sought his favour.

There are several layers of meaning in his name: fauve is French for a colour variously translated as chestnut, reddish-yellow, tawny or fawn. A close English equivalent is the rather rare fallow, as in fallow deer, an animal with a brownish coat (it may be that uncultivated ground is also said to be fallow because it looks that colour). Fauve is also a collective name,



originally "les bêtes fauves", for a class of wild animals whose coats are tawny, such as lions and tigers, and hence ferocious wild animals (the fauverie in a French zoo houses the big cats). In the poem, the name Fauvel can however, refer to "fau-vel", a veiled lie, but it is actually a partial acronym of the initial letters of the French words for six sins: flatterie, avarice, vilénie, variété, envie, and lâcheté (flattery, avarice, depravity, fickleness, envy and cowardice). His colour also evokes the old medieval proverbial belief that a fallow horse was a symbol of dishonesty.

The poem was well known among educated people in Britain, who began to refer to Fauvel, variously spelled, as a symbol of cunning and depravity. That soon became curry Favel. This curry has nothing to do with Indian food (a word that came into English only at the end of the sixteenth century via Portuguese from Tamil kari, a sauce or relish), but is another ancient word from a French source, still common in English, which means to rub down or comb a horse. The idea behind currying Favel is that the subject (since horses generally love being curried) was highly susceptible to flattery, a sort of mental caressing. For people who didn't know the poem - then, as now, that was almost everybody - 'Fauvel' or 'Favel' had no meaning. The word 'favour' however, was very like it, and crept in to replace it. By the early part of the sixteenth century,

popular etymology had changed the expression, and 'to curry favour' has remained in the language ever since.

With thanks to the monthly Newsletter of the Royal British Legion, Paris Branch (www.rblfrance.org)

BEWARE OF SCAMS!

Writing in the Church Times, Paul Wilkinson issues a salutary warning...

Scammers have for a second time impersonated the Archbishop of York and other clergy to ask priests and church staff to buy them Amazon vouchers and online gift cards.

The crooks use texts or emails to tell their victims: "I have a request I need you to handle discreetly" and adding: "I am currently busy in a prayer session, no calls, so just reply to my email." They then ask for financial help, usually vouchers or gift cards, and for the recipient's payment details to be forwarded.

The ruse was exposed when staff at the Archbishop's residence, Bishopthorpe Palace, York, received messages signed "Rev Stephen Cottrell". He would correctly be addressed as the Most Revd Stephen Cottrell, but uses a different email sign-off.

The scammers are believed to have trawled church websites for contact details of clergy and parish officials. A spokesman for the diocese of York said: "The sender has taken some trouble both with identifying their chosen pseudo-sender and the intended victim. In many cases the sender has used an untraceable Gmail address, or texted from an equally untraceable pay-as-you-go or 'burner' mobile phone."

At least one person is believed to have lost £1000 in the con and another only narrowly avoided losing a similar sum when they became suspicious after being asked to supply the voucher codes.

The diocesan spokesman continued: "It seems this is a national trend with similar reports from other Church of England dioceses. We have reported one specimen case to North Yorkshire police who have passed it over to Action Fraud, a national police scheme. Incumbents may like to consider advising their church officers and PCC members that: 'I will never ask you by email to spend your own money for the church.'"

A joint unit of Northumbria, Cleveland, and Durham police has issued an alert over similar issues in the northeast, saying: "Clergy will never ask you to give them money, vouchers, or personal banking details directly, even to help someone in need . . . Even if they're saying you'll be refunded, it is a scam."

The con first appeared in 2020 when a trickster impersonating the Archbishop of York asked parish officials to buy vouchers for him to give as 'Thank you' presents to colleagues. At that time, no-one was taken in.

READERS' RIDDLES & QUIZ !

Solutions to the questions on page 10.

1. One object is an hourglass; the other is a sundial. They both measure time. (The moving parts of an hourglass are grains of sand.)

2. They were shopping in a shop where if you spent £50 you got a reduction of £10. The bill came to £49, so they bought a useless object for £1.
3. The 'cabin' is the cabin of a jet plane which had crashed into the mountain, killing the five people.
4. The person would of course be a DIY enthusiast, who had been making a chair. They had been using superglue and now the chair is stuck to their hands. They are waiting for a bus to take them to hospital!
5. In his Maxims for Revolutionists, Shaw wrote: "For appointment by the corrupt few, democracy substitutes election by the incompetent many!"
6. "Life would be bearable if there were no pleasures" was said to Talleyrand after he had attended Rossini's *Il Viaggio a Rheims*, performed in celebration of the coronation of Charles X in 1825.
7. Maurice Edelman, (1911-75), Labour MP and author, said: "I dislike censorship. Like an appendix, it is useless when inert and dangerous when active!"
8. Harold Macmillan said: "We have had enough of Martha, and it is time for some Mary!"
9. Archbishop Robert Runcie was dismayed to receive a letter accusing him of being a womaniser. He telephoned the writer to protest, only to find that he had misread the handwriting. The letter had accused him of being a Romaniser!
10. "The advantages of a classical education are twofold: it enables us to look down with contempt on those who have not shared its advantages, and also fits us for places of emolument, not only in this world, but in that which is to come"... (Taken from a Good Friday sermon preached in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, by Revd Thomas Gaisford (1759-1855), Regius Professor of Greek.)

PRODUCTIONS CHEZ NOUS

Mary Ann Warwick is keen to draw your attention to the following cultural events, which Productions Chez Nous are once again organising...

Dans le cadre des Kiosques en Fêtes de la Ville de Paris, l'association Productions Chez Nous organise douze concerts-promenade en plein air dans la capitale pendant la belle saison. Notre formule consiste toujours en un programme de musique légère de qualité d'une durée d'une heure environ - en plein air, gratuit, ouvert à tous. Voici la liste complète de notre programmation 2023 :

- ◆ 30 avril - Kiosque du Square Edouard-Vaillant – Paris 20 à 16h (Champagne ! Polyphonie vocale, Pierre-Michel Sivadier et Cie.)
- ◆ 07 mai - Kiosque du Square des Epinettes – Paris 17 à 16h (L'Ensemble Reflections : musique baroque)
- ◆ 14 mai - Kiosque du Square Franck-Bauer – Paris 15 à 15h (Le Schiller-Power Duo : violon et harpe)
- ◆ 04 juin - Kiosque du jardin des Champs-Élysées – Paris 8 à 16h (« Le Musequartet » : quatuor à cordes)
- ◆ 18 juin - Kiosque du Square Serge-Reggiani – Paris 19 à 16h (Dhyani & Sergio : violon et guitare)
- ◆ 2 juillet - Kiosque du Square Maurice-Gardette – Paris 11 à 16h (Soleil Jazz Quartette)
- ◆ 30 juillet - Kiosque du Jardin du Ranelagh – Paris 16 à 11h (Lucienne Deschamps : chant ; Anne Sylvestre, Jean-Philippe Winter à la guitare)

- ◆ 13 août - Kiosque du Parc Montsouris – Paris
14 à 16h (Jérôme Cormier et l'Ensemble Dhruvad,
Musique du monde : Inde du nord)
- ◆ 27 août - Kiosque du jardin des Champs-Élysées – Paris
8 à 16h (Erick Boreleva et « Drum Madness » : concert
de percussion)
- ◆ 10 septembre - Kiosque du Jardin du Ranelagh – Paris
16 à 11h (Quatuor poétique : mots & musiques
improvisées)
- ◆ 24 septembre - Kiosque du Jardin Villemin – Paris
10 à 16h (L'Heure bleue : ensemble vocale femmes)
- ◆ 01 octobre - Kiosque du Jardin Villemin – Paris
10 à 16h (« Tour du monde en tangos » : L'Armonville)



Notre objectif est de participer à une meilleure diffusion des savoirs, avec un accès pour tous à la musique, et de favoriser les relations inter-quartiers. Productions Chez Nous travaille depuis plus de vingt ans à promouvoir la culture de proximité en organisant des concerts à domicile animés par de jeunes artistes et des artistes confirmés pour un public varié.

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FROM THE CHAPLAINCY REGISTERS

Holy Baptism

28th February 2023

Adult who must remain anonymous.

9th April 2023

James Luc Laurent CORNO

9th April 2023

Noah Liantsoa

TAMBOALIMANANA

23rd April 2023

Charlotte PETIT

14th April 2023

Thomas Scott Victor

PARTRIDGE

14th April 2023

Martha Seulgi UDEN

28th June 2023

Annabelle Laura

ORRIN-QUEVEDO

Funerals

18th January 2023

Sally Armitage

Pere Lachaise Cemetery

19th January 2023

Angela Harrison

13th May 2023

Grace Valery

3rd May 2023

Christopher Hedley

Cremation at Pere Lachaise

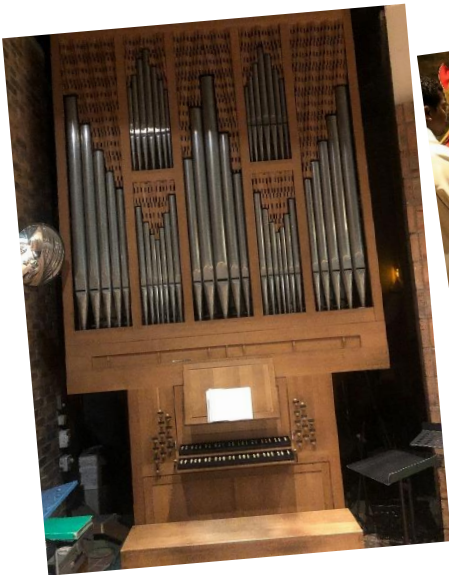
24th May 2023

Lavender Kiefe

Clamart Crematorium

24th May 2023

Anne Boit



GIVING TO ST GEORGE'S PARIS

St George's is entirely self-funding. Can you help maintain our work and worship here in the heart of Paris?

In 2022 St George's Church Council adopted the following as our Vision Statement

St George's exists to glorify God, inspired by our Anglican heritage, to proclaim the reconciling love of Jesus.

We do this in lots of different ways: not just in our regular round of worship, through the daily offices and Eucharist offered carefully and with devotion; and teaching, in sermons, regular courses of instruction and preparation for the Sacraments; in pastoral care through visiting, telephone calls and online support but also in enabling all who worship here to grow in their discipleship including not just spiritual direction and vocational discernment but in living out their baptismal vocation in serving those in need.

Alongside all the things that are working well this year we are working hard on welcoming others to Sunday Lunch. The Malagasy Community are worshipping more regularly on Sunday at 16h30 and the new French language Eucharist on Saturday at 18h00 is finding its feet. But whilst we're praying and working to grow we currently need your generosity more than ever.

Can you help by giving, a one-off donation, or regularly to support the life and work of St George's, Paris?

For some, deciding how much to give is as easy as calculating a percentage of one's income. Others may want to take advantage of France's generous income tax reductions* for those giving to churches and other charities.

There are new ways for you to give – making it easier and more straightforward!

- 1) Setting up a *virement permanent* with your bank. You'll find all the details below – this allows your church to budget your giving effectively.
- 2) Giving online via HelloAsso. This method allows you to claim your fiscal deduction from the French tax authorities. You can give regularly or make a one-off donation via this method.
- 3) If you **don't** pay French tax or are visiting St George's you might like to use the new ACTOLL contactless giving baskets in church. You choose the amount you want to give 2€ for a candle or from a range of 5, 10, 20 or 50€. Simply pass your debit card over the reader and you'll receive a simple message indicating your gift has been received.

Relevé d'identité bancaire-BAN

CIC
Crédit Industriel et Commercial

Code réservé au destinataire du relevé

Code Banque	Code Guichet	Numéro de Compte		CAI RIB
30066	10481	00010393701	91	
IBAN International Bank Account number				
FR75	3006	6104	8100	0103 8970 181
TITULAIRE DU COMPTE				
ACQUINANT OWNER				
10481 00010393701 1344621 GUO				
EGLISE ANGLICANNE				
7 RUE AUGUSTE VACQUERIE				
75118 PARIS				
CIC PARIS MARCEAU		Domiciliation		
CIC/FRPP		Bank Identification Code (BIC)		

Code réservé au destinataire du relevé