

September Letter

Dear Friends,

It's always a bit risky to mention something in the news in a letter like this as events may move on before you can read it. I think I'm on safe ground here as the floods in Pakistan are going to be around for a while. It's the sort of tragedy, like the earthquake in Haiti in January, that has people digging in their pockets to do what they can to help. The scale of the problem means that huge sums are needed, amounts only available from international organisations and governments agencies.

So what good is my £5 donation? A drop in the ocean. But oceans are made up of drops, countless millions of them, and together may produce a significant contribution. We could pass by on the other side, but then we could (or should) take our cue from the good Samaritan. It may not be convenient, or may involve some small sacrifice, but, I hope, we do what we can. That sacrifice is put into perspective when we think of the total losses suffered by some in Haiti and Pakistan.

That said, we can and do get fed up with endless tugs at our heartstrings by charity appeals. I sometimes think that charities keep the Royal Mail in business if my postbag is anything to go by. We can't answer every call on our generosity but neither should EVERY begging letter go in the recycling bin. We have to be realistic without being hardhearted. And while we are assessing what we are able to give, it may be worth remembering that we are to have a Stewardship campaign soon when we can review our giving to our church.

'Where charity and love are, God is there.' Taizé refrain in translation

Patrick

SEPTEMBER PARISH DIARY

Wednesday 1st 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion at St. James's
Thursday 2nd 9.30 a.m. Morning Prayer

SUNDAY 5TH FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

9.30 a.m. Holy Communion
Tuesday 7th 7.30 p.m. Adult tap dancing
11.00 a.m. Holy Communion at Crossley House
7.30 p.m. PCC meeting in Vestry
Wednesday 8th 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion
11.30 a.m. Ings Way Lunch Day
6.15 p.m. Cub Scouts
Thursday 9th 9.30 a.m. Morning prayer
6.00 p.m. Beaver Scouts
7.30 p.m. Scouts

SUNDAY 12TH FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

9.30 a.m. Holy Communion
Tuesday 14th 7.30 p.m. Adult tap dancing
Wednesday 15th 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion at St. James's
6.15 p.m. Cub Scouts
Thursday 16th 9.30 a.m. Morning prayer
6.00 p.m. Beaver Scouts
7.30 p.m. Scouts
Saturday 18th 10.00 a.m. Coffee morning

SUNDAY 19TH SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY/Dedication Festival

9.30 a.m. Parade Service and Holy Communion
Tuesday 21st 7.30 p.m. Adult tap dancing
Wednesday 22nd 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion
6.15 p.m. Cub Scouts
Thursday 23rd 9.30 a.m. Morning prayer
6.00 p.m. beaver Scouts
7.30 p.m. Scouts

SUNDAY 26TH SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

9.30 a.m. Holy Communion & Junior Church

Tuesday 28th	7.30 p.m.	Adult tap dancing
Wednesday 29th	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion at St. James's
	6.15 p.m.	Cub Scouts
Thursday 30th	9.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
	6.00 p.m.	Beaver Scouts
	7.30 p.m.	Scouts

Refreshments

Bacon Butties

Coffee Morning

Saturday 18th September

10.00 a.m. to 12 noon

Cakes

Raffle

Entrance free

Bolton Abbey

What do St Mary, St Cuthbert, St Saviour and St James have in common? Well on a beautiful evening in August they all got together. Well not actually *they*, but the choirs and members of the congregations of St Saviour's and St James who met together in the Priory Church of St Mary and St Cuthbert, Bolton-in-Wharfedale to celebrate Evening Prayer.

It is impossible not to feel the weight of history in the nine hundred year old building, listening to the words of St Luke and St Paul a thousand years older, and of the psalm older still. It's not hard to imagine who has stood in that building before us to speak to God through the words of the Apostles' Creed, the Nunc Dimittis and the Magnificat, and to sing the Lord's praises through the anthems and hymns.

Three times during the service the words

*Glory to the Father and to the Son:
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now:
and shall be for ever. Amen*

were repeated.

In such a place, at such a time it's a reminder of the simple truth of our faith, shared once again by the folks from St Saviours and St James's, and all the other folks who have been there before.

The hot heckler

Tony Benn, who uses a hearing aid, recalls a meeting in a church hall on a terribly hot day. "There was a heckler who kept interrupting. Eventually I tackled him and said: 'If you want a separate meeting of your own, fine, go away and have it. Stop trying to wreck ours.' When he intervened a fourth time, I caught what he was actually saying, which was 'Could somebody please open a window?'"

Baby on way

999 Caller: "Help! My wife has gone into labour and her contractions are 10 minutes apart!"

999 Operator: "Is this her first child?"

999 Caller: "Of course not, you idiot! This is her husband!"

Good husband

Military men should make ideal husbands -- they're in good health, they can cook, sew, and make beds, and they're already accustomed to taking orders.

How to get to heaven

"If sold my house and my car, had a big car boot sale and gave all my money to the church, would I get into Heaven?" the teacher asked her Sunday School class. "No!" the children all answered.

"If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the grass, and kept everything neat and tidy, would I get into Heaven?" Again, the answer was, "No!"

"Well", she continued, "then how can I get into Heaven?" A five-year-old boy shouted out, "You gotta be dead first!"

Holy Cross Day—14th September

On Holy Cross Day the Church celebrates the Cross as a symbol of triumph, as the sign of Christ's victory over death. Holy Cross Day goes right back to 14 September 335, and we have the mother of a Roman Emperor to thank for it. Helena was a devout Christian, and after her son, Constantine, was converted, they agreed that she should travel from Rome to Israel, and seek out the places of special significance to Christians.

Of course, much of Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Romans around 135 AD. But even so, Helena finally located what she believed to be the sites of the Crucifixion and of the Burial (and modern archaeologists think she may well be correct). The sites were so close together that she built one large church over them - the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. That church, built in honour of the Cross, was dedicated on 14 September 335.

The sign of the Cross has been used by Christians since early times. Tertullian, writing his *De Corona* (3:2) around AD 211, noted that Christians seldom did anything significant without making the sign of the cross. What is its significance? Well, people often put their initials or some sort of personal mark on something to show that it belongs to them. The Cross is the personal mark of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we mark it on ourselves as a sign that we belong to him. Even in the book of Revelation, we read that the servants of God are 'sealed' or 'marked' on their foreheads as a sign that they are his.

A preacher once put it this way: if you were explaining to someone how to make a cross, you would say: "Draw an I." That is you standing before the Lord, saying, 'here I am'. Then cancel that vertical stroke with a horizontal stroke – as if to say: "Lord, I abandon my self-will and make you the centre of my life instead. I abandon myself to your love and service."

On Holy Cross Day, we recall Jesus' wonderful promise: "And when I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32)

The missing wife

A man came home from work and found his three children outside, still in their pyjamas, playing in the mud, with empty food boxes and 20 wrappers strewn across the garden.

The door of his wife's car was open, and so the front door to the house, and there was no sign of the dog. Rushing into the living room, he found an even bigger mess. A lamp had been knocked over, and the throw rug was wadded against one wall. The TV was loudly blaring, and the floor was strewn with toys and various items of clothing.

In the kitchen, dishes filled the sink, breakfast food was spilled on the counter, the fridge door was open wide, dog food was spilled on the floor, a broken glass lay under the table, and a small pile of sand was spread by the back door. He quickly ran upstairs, tripping over toys and more piles of clothes, frantically looking for his wife. She must be very ill, something serious must have happened.

He was met with a small trickle of water as it made its way out the bathroom door. As he peered inside he found wet towels, scummy soap and more toys strewn over the floor. Miles of toilet paper lay in a heap and toothpaste had been smeared over the mirror and walls.

As he rushed to the bedroom, he found his wife still curled up in the bed in her pyjamas, reading a novel. She looked up at him, smiled, and asked how his day went. He looked at her bewildered and stammered: “What – what happened here?”

She again smiled and answered, “You know every day when you come home from work and you ask me what I do all day? Well, today I didn't do it.”

The Oberammergau Passion Play

In late July, I was fortunate to be able to go to Bavaria to see the famous Passion Play at Oberammergau. The play's origins go back to the 30 Years War and the Black Death, in times when disease was thought of as divine punishment. With the Plague taking its toll, in 1633 the villagers made a solemn vow to re-enact the Passion, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus every 10 years for ever(!), the Plague left them and the Play goes on.

From a population of 5,000, over 1,700 are directly involved in each production; there are 130 speaking parts (the more demanding ones have two people who take it in turns) and in the crowd scenes there can be over 600 people on stage. In addition there is a chorus of 50, an orchestra of 50 and an army of back stage and front of house staff. Everyone involved has to have been born in the village or lived there for at least 20 years. Those not eligible to take part don't get away with it as they, as well as the cast, get involved with providing food and shelter for the 4,950 visitors who attend each performance, four performances a week from mid May until the end of September. Indeed, a mammoth task.

The play itself is on a grand scale. The stage is wide enough for the chorus of 50 to stand in line abreast with room to spare and there are 11 points of entry for the actors, so a crowd of 600 can assemble or disperse very quickly. Each performance starts after lunch and lasts for about six hours with a long interval to give everyone time to have a meal. As the second half proceeds, dusk falls so the Crucifixion scene comes after dark, heightening the dramatic effect.

Of course, the performance is in German but the audience is able to follow the script in German or English translation, though I found that trying to follow the book distracted from the action on stage. The plot is well known so that once the characters were identified, it was fairly easy to tell what was going on, even if some of the subtleties were lost.

During the action there are several tableaux of scenes from the Old Testament echoing the action from the New; some of these were obvious likening Daniel in the lion den to Jesus before Caiaphas but some were a

little more tenuous like the Israelites looking up at the bronze serpent in the wilderness contrasting with the onlookers gazing up at Jesus on the cross.

The attention to detail even extended to the livestock involved. There was a donkey of course, for the Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem and when Jesus cleared the merchants from the Temple, the goats had had their horns shined and their beards combed while the fleeces of the sheep resembled those of show animals at the Great Yorkshire Show - and quite right as only the best should be offered as sacrifice. Herod made a grand entrance astride a large black horse while Herod's wife rode side-saddle on a fine camel. (We wondered if the camel had been born in the village.)

The whole enterprise, including accommodation, transport and feeding arrangements, ran like clockwork and it was clear to me that all the participants were very aware that they were honouring the vow made so long ago by their forefathers. The play itself had the reverence and sincerity of an act of worship and was received as such, even though there was applause at the end.

Patrick Preston

Why your garden may be dangerous

Planning on tidying the garden this month? Beware! It could be dangerous for you. One in ten Britons has been injured while gardening. Statistically at least, you are safer on the ski slopes or horse riding or even rock climbing! DIY is also dodgy: one in 20 of us have managed to injure ourselves while repairing our homes.

Dr Peter Mace, the assistant medical director of Bupa, points out: "Anyone planning to spend time gardening or decorating should remember that they may be using muscle groups and joints they haven't exercised in a long while..."

Our PILGRIM PLACES: Historic Christian sites in Britain : IONA - part 2

In July we remembered that in 563 a little group of monks from Ireland arrived in Scotland. They were headed by a monk called Columba, and they settled on Iona. Soon the little island was recognised as a centre of Christian spirituality. Columba and his monks established churches and monasteries, ordained priests and appointed monks according to the Celtic faith and customs they had learned in Ireland. Now read on...

Columba was a man of many gifts and talents. He was a preacher, an evangelist, a translator, a scholar and a diplomat. The Pict chieftains respected him and he travelled freely across the country. Traditions about him recount how the tribal chiefs consulted him not only about the faith he preached, but about the education and care of their people.

There are two main accounts of Columba's life and work. About a hundred years after his death one of the Abbots of Iona, Adomnan, wrote *Vita Columbae*, 'Life of Columba,' and Bede, in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, also gave information about him. While both these sources are informative and fascinating, it is often difficult to separate the fact from the fiction. Many miracles are attributed to Columba and it's simply not possible to tell what great works were wrought by Columba in the power of the Spirit and what 'miracles' were invented by sympathetic biographers and historians.

What is not in doubt, however, is that Columba was a man of God and while there are questions about how many physical miracles he performed, there is no question at all that another kind of miracle authenticated Columba's ministry. This was what might be called the ever-present miracle of the gospel of Christ; lives changed from darkness to light and from sin to holiness by the transforming power of the regenerating Holy Spirit.

Columba made a visit back to Ireland late in life and returned to finish his days on his beloved Iona. He died there on June 9, 597, and was buried in the abbey he had founded. It is worth noting that the year in which Columba died on the Scottish island of Iona, 597, was also the year in which Augustine arrived in Kent to bring Roman Christianity to England.

The Book of Common Prayer arrives in the 21st century

Here's good news for anyone who loves the Book of Common Prayer: it is now online. The Archbishops' Council has added the full text of The Book of Common Prayer to the worship pages of its site at <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/liturgy/bcp>.

The 1662 Book of Common Prayer is a permanent feature of the Church of England's worship. It is loved by many for the beauty of its language, and its services are widely used. It is also the foundation of a tradition of common prayer and a key source of the Church of England's doctrine. The first official liturgical text in English appeared in 1544 and the first complete Book of Common Prayer in 1549. The book went through several revisions until 1662, since when the wording of its services has remained largely unchanged. The Book of Common Prayer is in fact one of the three 'historic formularies' of the Church of England, in which its doctrine is to be found (the other two - the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion and the Ordinal - are customarily published in the same volume). It cannot be altered or abandoned without the approval of Parliament.

Old leaf?

A little boy opened the big family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible. He picked up the object and looked at it. What he saw was an old leaf that had been pressed in between the pages.

"Mum, look what I found!" the boy called out, turning the leaf over and over.

"What is it, dear?" asked his mother. With astonishment in his voice, the young boy ventured: "I think it's Adam's underwear."

Nine-eleven 2001 - the ninth anniversary

Nine years on, we are still at war. The United States still leads a loose international coalition that has pledged to destroy the worldwide terrorist networks. It was one such network which produced the 19 young men who on 11 September 2001 killed thousands of civilians and destroyed billions of dollars worth of prime property in the heart of New York City.

As the ninth anniversary approaches, the networks of terrorists are still out there. They are still committed to murder and destruction. Ridding the world of terrorism will be a long job - perhaps an impossible job.

One 20th century Christian veteran of the First World War has some good wisdom to share with us. C S Lewis was an Oxford don whose Christian writings made him world-famous. He urged his readers (as they faced the horrors of the Second World War and its aftermath) to remember that security and happiness in this life are at best fleeting anyway: "Human life has always been lived on the edge of a precipice."

Also, that war, evil as it is, can also serve as a wake-up call to people to face the realities of life, and to search for spiritual answers. During a war, as the diabolic Screwtape writes sadly: "One of our best weapons, contented worldliness, is rendered useless. In wartime not even a human can believe that he is going to live forever."

How then, should we live in the face of uncertain but very present danger? Like the mayor of New York did nine years ago, Lewis urged his readers to simply get on with their daily lives. He wrote (during the Cold War):

'Believe me, dear sir or madam... It is perfectly ridiculous to go about... drawing long faces because (there has been) added one more chance of painful and premature death to a world which already bristled with such chances, and in which death itself was not a chance but a certainty...'

Of course we are scared at the thought of targeted destructions. But Christians are called to live as they have always been called: in a daily walk with God. They should pray for their governments as those in authority grapple with the problem of world terrorism. Having done that, we should get on with our daily God-given tasks, and pray for courage to cope with whatever the future holds.

Saint Michael

September sees St Michael and All Angels' Day. Here are a few lines from an ancient Celtic poem about the archangel...

Saint Michael, angel of the sea,
Lord of the horses he,
Saint Michael, of the angels king,
Of war, of shepherding;
On steed he flies across the skies;
The first-fruits of the harvest corn,
The first-fruits of the flock-lambs born,
Are his, he meets the soul forlorn.

The saints and angels watch o'erhead,
Their wings and prayers o'erspread:
The righteous ones in heaven wait,
St Peter at the gate;
In might arrayed they shield and aid;
Be with us e'er, archangel powers,
Be with us, angels, life's long hours.

Hearing is not believing

A wise schoolteacher sent this note to all parents on the first day of school: "If you promise not to believe everything your child says happens at school, I will promise not to believe everything he or she says happens at home."

Steeton Male Voice Choir

Saturday 2nd October 2010

7.30 p.m. in Church

Tickets £6 in advance, £7 on the night.

Refreshments will be available during the interval, and there will be a raffle.

Contact: James Muff
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Wash your hands of it

Next time you have had to make a tough decision – go wash your hands afterwards. It seems that Lady Macbeth was on to something when she compulsively washed her hands to absolve her guilt – now scientists have discovered that it really does put your mind at rest.

A team of psychologists at the University of Michigan has found that people who wash their hands after making an agonising choice were happier than those who didn't. As one explained: "Washing your hands can symbolically 'wipe away' concerns. Once you wash your hands, you no longer need to do the mental work that makes the chosen alternative look better than the rejected one." Another researcher said: "Washing can cleanse us from traces of immoral behaviour and also from traces of past decisions. This 'clean slate' effect may be relevant to many choices, such as choosing a partner or buying a car."

It certainly sheds light on the practice of baptism in the Bible, and on the story of Pilate washing his hands of Jesus' crucifixion....

When I Say I Am A Christian

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not shouting, "I am saved!"
I'm whispering, "I get lost; that is why I chose this way."
When I say, "I am a Christian," I don't speak of this with pride.
I'm confessing that I stumble and need Someone to be my Guide.
When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not bragging I am strong.
I'm professing that I'm weak, and pray for strength to carry on.
When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not bragging of success.
I'm admitting I have failed and cannot ever pay the debt.
When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not claiming to be perfect.
My flaws are all too visible, but God believes I'm worth it.
When I say, "I am a Christian," I still feel the sting of pain.
I have my share of heartaches, which is why I cry his name.
When I say, "I am a Christian," I do not wish to judge.
I have no authority; I only know I'm loved.

September Roll of Remembrance

6th	Doris Cooper	(1987)
7th	Mabel Holdsworth	(1978)
9th	Laura Dare	(1982)
	Bill Holdsworth	(2004)
10th	Lynton Ward	(1995)
12th	Beatrice Marshall	(1991)
13th	Annie Bell	(1983)
	Margaret Alexandra Watson	(1986)
17th	Walter Jennings	(1974)
	Dorothy Lloyd	(2005)
23rd	Philip John Chater	(1988)
	Albert Bateman	(1992)
24th	Fred Ingham	(1981)
28th	Harry Wilkinson	(1962)

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