



Welcome to
All Saints
Kings Heath
Your Parish Church
in the Diocese of Birmingham

Baptism of Christ

Morning Prayer

Sunday 10th January 2021

This week, Bishop Mark Santer celebrates the 40th anniversary of his consecration as Bishop. He was to preside and preach but, very sadly, we have had to close Church for public gathering. He is, though, still our preacher at this service of Morning Prayer which we observe each in our home. A gift from All Saints will be delivered to Bishop Mark today.



The Baptism of Christ by Piero della Francesca, mid C15th. (National Gallery)

As an earnest, rather clumsy curate, whom he ordained in 1992, I looked up to Bishop Mark very much. His academic mind and passionate heart sent a signal that we should take our calling very seriously and that, while God has called us, it is not about us. It is about the health and integrity of the Church. It was a time when a certain anti-intellectualism was beginning to take hold in the Church of England. As someone weaned on Monty Python, I've always enjoyed iconoclastic humour, but I had at the time a nagging doubt about the trendy dismissal of academic theology as irrelevant or snobbish. It wasn't something you could say much in that climate, but I always felt rather reassured that my Bishop could read Augustine in Latin. I recoiled at cheap talk of "ivory towers," suspicious it was an excuse for laziness. I am no academic, but I am thoroughly dependent on those who are. I look wistfully over the wall and scrump from their orchard. Bishop Mark's deep knowledge of Patristics (the teaching and formation of the early Church) feeds straight into his liturgical knowledge and practice. His love of scripture is palpable and his love of art and poetry reveals how the traffic flows freely between his rigorous academic mind and his generous heart. That set an example to us as we started out in ministry.

To arrive at All Saints twenty four years later and find Bishop Mark in our fellowship was moving and comical. I of course think of myself as one of his mistakes coming back to haunt him. But now I am deeply grateful for his combination of wisdom and mischievous humour, for his natural authority holding me to account, his sharp eye for injustice and his humility proving that he is still called as Bishop. I asked him in Holy Week a few years ago to talk about what it is like bearing responsibility as a senior religious leader. He spoke with typical candour and seriousness, helping us understand holy week from the point of view of the leaders of Jesus' day. I then stood at the altar and Bishop Mark whispered "would you like some help?" He passed me the elements then I felt a rather tender warmth in my heart as I realised the Bishop who ordained me years before was now washing my hands as I prepared to preside.

From the House of Lords to the bedside of a dying parishioner, from the Judges' Service at the Cathedral to a quiet 8am Communion, politically astute and pastorally caring, Bishop Mark steps up to the role as deacon, priest and bishop without superiority, without entitlement, but in an obedient response to God's call.

Bishop Mark, we love and admire you. Thank you for being part of All Saints.

David

We "gather"

*The service should flow as well with one worshipper as with more. Some words are printed plain and some **bold**. If you are on your own, you can either read all aloud, or read the plain silently and the **bold aloud**. If there are several praying together, you could share out the parts.*

Music: click on the links to hear and join in the music. Click stop at the end of each.

INTROIT [The God of all eternity](#)

1. The God of all eternity,
unbound by space yet always near,
is present where his people meet
to celebrate the coming year.
2. What shall we offer God today –
our dreams of what we cannot see,
or, with eyes fastened to the past,
our dread of what is yet to be?
3. God does not share our doubts and fears,
nor shrinks from the unknown or strange:
the one who fashioned heaven and earth
makes all things new and ushers change.
4. Let faith or fortune rise or fall,
let dreams and dread both have their day;
those whom God loves walk unafraid
with Christ their guide and Christ their way.
5. God grant that we, in this new year,
may show the world the Kingdom's face,
and let our work and worship thrive
as signs of hope and means of grace.

(words: John L Bell & Graham Maule;

music: Somerset folk song collected by Cecil Sharp, arr Richard Lloyd)

HYMN [Songs of thankfulness and praise](#)

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesus, Lord, to thee we raise,
manifested by the star
to the sages from afar;
branch of royal David's stem,
in thy birth at Bethlehem;
anthems be to thee addressed:
God in man made manifest. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Manifest at Jordan's stream,
prophet, priest and King supreme,
and at Cana wedding-guest,
in thy Godhead manifest,
manifest in pow'r divine,
changing water into wine;
anthems be to thee addressed:
God in man made manifest. |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

3. Sun and moon shall darkened be,
stars shall fall, the heav'ns shall flee;
Christ will then like lightning shine,
all will see his glorious sign.
All will then the trumpet hear,
all will see the judge appear;
thou by all wilt be confessed:
God in man made manifest.

4. Grant us grace to see thee, Lord,
mirrored in thy holy word;
may we imitate thee now,
and be pure, as pure art thou;
that we like to thee may be
at thy great Epiphany,
and may praise thee, ever blest,
God in man made manifest.

(words: Christopher Wordsworth; music: Charles Steggall)

We call upon God:

O Lord, open our lips
and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Give us the joy of your saving help
and sustain us with your life-giving Spirit.

Ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name.
Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

(Psalm 29:2)

We say to each other, and imagine hearing from each other all around the parish:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(1 Corinthians 1:3)

We pause, separately in our homes, but united in Christ, to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to hear and receive God's holy Word, to pray for the needs of the world, and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may find new ways to serve God.

Prayers of Penitence

We engage body mind and spirit, quickening our senses, awakening our intellect and opening our heart as we offer our whole self in worship, confessing our sins:

God you created all things and have called us to be stewards of this exquisite Earth,
but we have greedily plundered and abused her.
Lord, have mercy.

(Genesis 1)

God, your Son who baptises with the Holy Spirit first stooped to be baptised with water. You have called us to serve one another. Where we have proudly competed and clung to power,
Christ, have mercy.

(Mark 1)

God, whose servant Paul taught the young Church to know Christ, you have called us to inquisitive faith. Where we have been incurious, unimaginative and reluctant,
Lord, have mercy.

(Acts 19)

May the God of healing and forgiveness draw us to himself, and cleanse us from all our sins that we may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May the LORD give strength to his people!
May the LORD bless his people with peace!

(Psalm 29:11)

The Word of God

OLD TESTAMENT READING [Genesis 1:1-5](#) (click [here](#) for text;
readings from Lindsey Hammond)

NEW TESTAMENT READING [Acts 19:1-7](#) (click [here](#) for text)

HYMN [O thou who camest from above](#)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. O thou who camest from above
the fire celestial to impart,
kindle a flame of sacred love
on the mean altar of my heart. | 3. Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
to work and speak and think for thee;
still let me guard the holy fire
and still stir up the gift in me. |
| 2. There let it for thy glory burn
with inextinguishable blaze,
and trembling to its source return
in humble prayer and fervent praise. | 4. Ready for all thy perfect will,
my acts of faith and love repeat,
till death thy endless mercies seal,
and make the sacrifice complete. |

(words: Charles Wesley, based on Leviticus 6:13; music: Samuel Sebastian Wesley)

GOSPEL READING [Mark 1:4-8](#)

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

We say PSALM 29

Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name;
worship the LORD in holy splendour.

The voice of the LORD is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the LORD, over mighty waters.
The voice of the LORD is powerful;
the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.

The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;
the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.
He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Sirion like a young wild ox.

The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire.
The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of the LORD causes the oaks to whirl,
and strips the forest bare;
and in his temple all say, 'Glory!'

The LORD sits enthroned over the flood;
the LORD sits enthroned as king for ever.
May the LORD give strength to his people!
May the LORD bless his people with peace!

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We stand and turn to look in the direction of Church, aware of our small part in God's long story of being with humankind:

**All: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers

INTERCESSIONS *offered by David*

As we witness the desperate ego of a foolish President clinging to power and so losing all authority, and as we celebrate the continuing ministry of a generous Bishop, gracious in retirement, help us to know when to step forward and when to step back. St John knew. Jesus knew. We pray for all entrusted with leadership and power to find around them the people who can keep their humour lively and perspective true. With humility about our own dysfunction, we pray for the healing of America, not least through the unwittingly godly vocations of her comedians.

Without superiority about politics, aware from history how distorted faith can lead to brutality, we pray for theological education to keep faith wise. We give thanks for the growing diversity of the House of Bishops. As we listen for your Spirit's call, we pray that you will silence our anxiety about reputation and the allure of populism, so we can hear your fresh calls still to academic theologian-, historian- and linguist-bishops to enrich the Church's thinking and teaching. We pray for the teachers of the next generation of ordained ministers. We pray for Tariro Matsevu's final two terms at Theology College to be richly formative before her ordination this summer.

Giving thanks for +Mark's service to and advocacy for healthcare we pray for hospitals and staff under strain; for our Medical Centre and all administering and administering vaccines. We pray for the political courage to make the boundary between health and social care a place of creativity rather than conflict; a place of opportunity to forge community rather than place of anxiety and dispute about funding. Among those who are unwell we pray for all who are isolating after a positive test or tracing; for former All Saints warden Andrew Langley in hospital; for Barbara Osborne and Chiedza Gorodema.

Celebrating the Arts to which Mark often thoughtfully points us, deepening our sympathies and lifting our spirits, we pray for all whose livelihood in creative media, music or art is on hold. We pray for the poets who help us find a way of describing the undescribable; for the musicians who both stir and reflect our feeling; for the fine artists who help us imagine the world from another's point of view. In a time of defensiveness, protectiveness, frustration and calculation, through their vocation and ministry, deepen our wonder and compassion.

God, as we treasure Mark's place in our fellowship, we see afresh how you have an evolving vocation for each of us throughout our life. Show us each how you call our gifts into your service, for the building up of the body of Christ.

Anniversaries count the passing years. We remember all who have shaped Mark's vocation, shared his journey and have now died; all who have inspired and shaped our faith and whom we miss; we remember Eileen Pearson after her funeral this week. Your Son was baptised to affirm our humanity, emphasise our vulnerability and celebrate our mutuality. We imagine Jesus, near-naked, submerged in the river Jordan. We then picture him emerging into the light. We remember our baptism. Let it emphasise our mutuality, and be a foretaste of our death and resurrection, pointing us to heaven, when history's struggle is resolved and theology turns into eternal praise.

We pray THE COLLECT

Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is live and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER *We pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:*

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us
and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever.
Amen.**

ANTHEM [As the deer pants for the water](#)

1. As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after you;
you alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship you.

*You alone are my strength, my shield, to you alone may my spirit yield;
you alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship you.*

2. I want you more than gold or silver, only you can satisfy;
you alone are the real joy-giver and the apple of my eye.
3. You're my friend and you are my brother, even though you are a king;
I love you more than any other, so much more than anything!

(words & music: Martin Nystrom, arr John Barnard)

HYMN [When Jesus came to Jordan](#)

1. When Jesus came to Jordan to be baptised by John,
he did not come for pardon, but as his Father's Son.
He came to share repentance with all who mourn their sins,
to speak the vital sentence with which good news begins.
2. He came to share temptation, our utmost woe and loss,
for us and our salvation to die upon the cross.
So when the Dove descended on him, the Son of Man,
the hidden years had ended, the age of grace began.

3. Come, Holy Spirit, aid us to keep the vows we make,
this very day invade us, and every bondage break.
Come, give our lives direction, the gift we covet most:
to share the resurrection that leads to Pentecost.

(words: Fred Pratt Green; music: Melody adapted from Johann Michael Haydn)

SERMON Bishop Mark Santer

Eighty-four years ago I was baptized. That was in January 1937. Forty years ago in January 1981 I was consecrated as a bishop. I was baptized on a Saturday afternoon in St Paul's Church, Bedminster, an inner city church near the old docks in Bristol where my father was a curate. Not many people were there. Nothing grand about that. Contrast the splendour of the other St Paul's where I was made a bishop, St Paul's Cathedral in London, with the Archbishop of Canterbury, a large congregation, magnificent music, and I don't know how many bishops were there to lay hands on me and my fellow ordinand, who was Timothy Dudley-Smith, the hymn writer.

But which was the more important occasion? No doubt about it – the day of my baptism, the day when (in the words of the old catechism) “I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.” On that day, eighty-four years ago in that modest church in Bristol, I was made “the child of God” – like Jesus himself, the beloved child of his Father. Today we celebrate **his** baptism. We have just heard how, as he was coming out of the water of the river Jordan, he saw the heavens torn open and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

The beloved Son of God – he shared our mortality, he bore the burden of our sins, to make us fit to be called, as he was, God's beloved children. In his baptism he shared our life and our condition. Through our baptism we share in his life. God has made us his beloved sons and daughters. It's as we hear every year in the Christmas Gospel: “To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man but of God.”¹ That is what our baptism is about. We are reborn as members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.

But today I am not only remembering the day of my baptism (though, since I was only a few weeks old at the time, it is a funny kind of remembering). I am also remembering the day, forty years ago, when I was made a bishop. What was that about? To put it crudely, we are baptized for the sake of our own salvation. Some men and women, for the sake of other people's salvation, are called to ordination as priests or bishops.

Ever since New Testament times, the Church has thought of Christ's apostles and their successors as shepherds or pastors. If they are the shepherds, who are the sheep? St John's Gospel helps us to think about this. Right at the beginning of the story John the Baptist hails Jesus not as a shepherd, but as “the Lamb of God.” When I hear that, I am reminded of the mosaics in early Christian churches where Christ is portrayed as the Lamb of God in the middle of a semicircle of twelve other sheep. Which raises the question: are they sheep or also shepherds?

Later on the Gospel speaks of Jesus the Good Shepherd of the sheep. And at the end, when Jesus tells Peter to feed his sheep, he is giving Peter a part in shepherding his sheep.

¹ John 1:12f.

So those whom the Lord calls to be the shepherds and pastors of Christ flock, they are like Peter: they are called to act in his name and with his authority – and that is an awesome thing. But the sheep are not theirs; they are the Lord's. They have authority to do only what can be done in the name of the Lord. And those of us who are called to be shepherds have always to remember, for the sake of their own souls, that the shepherd never ceases to be one of the sheep.

The great Augustine, who was a bishop in what is now Algeria 1600 years ago – we have some of the sermons that he used to preach to his people on the anniversary of his ordination as their bishop. In one of them he produces the wonderful sentence (only six or seven words in Latin): “For you I am the bishop, but along with you, I am a fellow Christian.” Or put it like this: “As far as you are concerned, I am your bishop, and don't you forget it; but as far as I am concerned, I am just another sheep along with the rest of you, and I am not to forget it.”²

Woe to the shepherd who forgets that he is always one of the sheep, and that the Son of God made himself a lamb, one of his Father's flock along with the rest of us. As Jesus said to his disciples at the Last Supper, “A servant is not greater than his master; nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.”³ I've never forgotten a conversation I had with a priest who was driving me to some diocesan event in Ely. He was grumbling about his lot as a village priest: “I wasn't ordained to clean gutters and downpipes.” Perhaps I should have said in reply: “And you think that that is what your churchwardens were baptized for?”

In the early sixteenth century there was a pope, Leo X, who is described in *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes* as “easy-going and pleasure-loving” and as “recklessly extravagant.” One of his expensive projects was the rebuilding of St Peter's in Rome. To help pay for it he had to raise huge sums of money. To do this he had the thoroughly bad idea of selling indulgencies (so to speak, free passes to heaven) for money. Which was what provoked Martin Luther's protest and so led to the split of the whole Church of the West into Protestants and Catholics. So Pope Leo X was not an unmixed blessing.

He is also remembered for something he said to his brother when he was elected: “Since God has given us the papacy, let us enjoy it.” Those words had a depth and truth that he did not realise. The scriptures teach us that when God finished the work of creation, he saw that it was very good. They tell us that God rejoices in his works.⁴ If God enjoys what he has made, we should do the same. We should enjoy the world and we should enjoy one another. If God has given me this ministry, let me enjoy it. There are few things more wretched than a miserable clergyman or woman.

Of course some things about being a bishop are less enjoyable than others. There is the burden of administration (and it's getting worse). But it mustn't be neglected; good administration is necessary for the good of other people. Synods and suchlike talking shops are meat and drink to some, but not to me. And then there is the burden of other people's expectations and fantasies, as well as the unpleasant things that sometimes appear in the press.

But none of those things outweighs the enjoyment. I really enjoyed my time as a bishop, both my time in London as Bishop of Kensington and my years here in Birmingham. And I have enjoyed my retirement, not least because of you here at All Saints. After the tip-and-run ministry of a serving bishop it has been good to be part of a settled and familiar congregation.

² “Vobis enim sum episcopus, vobiscum sum Christianus” (*Sermon 140*)

³ John 13:16

⁴ See Genesis 1:31; Psalm 104:31

And there is not only enjoyment; there is laughter. That is something I learned from my mentor Robert Runcie. He was the archbishop who presided over my consecration. But back in the sixties, when I was first ordained, I served for four years as his curate in the village of Cuddesdon. Robert used to say: "Nobody without a sense of humour should be put in charge of anything." Why? Because with a sense of humour there goes a sense of proportion.

Of course we have to own and inhabit the roles we are given. If we are given authority, we owe it to people that we exercise our authority. Otherwise we sow only confusion. But we must never take our position for granted or forget its absurdity. Once we get used to having people carrying our bags or opening car doors for us, we are in spiritual trouble. I am glad that bishops are no longer addressed as "My Lord" except by parliamentary flunkies.

So what have I enjoyed? Above all the people. I have had wonderful colleagues, like John Duncan, John Barton, Marlene Parsons and above all my beloved colleague Bishop John Austin. I was helped by marvellous succession of chaplains, all of them friends as well as colleagues. They helped me through the hard times before and after the death of my wife Henriette. I was and am full of admiration for the parish clergy and the members of their congregations, especially those who keep the flag flying in the stonier parts of the Lord's vineyard.

I used to enjoy my visits to parishes. One that sticks in my mind is a visit to a parish in Fulham, when I was Bishop of Kensington. The parish priest took me to see an old woman who was housebound and could no longer come to church. So the Church came to her. Every week he gave her a list of people to pray for. She was, he said, was the praying heart of his parish. Another visit I remember was a weekend in King's Norton. As part of the visit I was taken to the Hawkesley estate. People were glad to see me. "You must come here more often," they said. "When the Council heard you were coming, they cleared away all the old sofas, shopping trolleys and mattresses that were littering the estate."

Each task I have been given has brought something new. Until I became Bishop of Kensington I had always worked in or around Oxford and Cambridge. Moving to Kensington was my introduction to the extremes of wealth and poverty in London and, in Notting Hill and Hammersmith, to a Church that was black as well as white. I also had to confront the rise of AIDS that was concentrated in my part of the city. I had to care for clergy who were dying of AIDS. Coming to Birmingham brought many new things; in particular, the shift of focus from inter-church ecumenical relations alone to relationships between all the communities of faith.

One of the privileges of being a bishop and, for me, a great enjoyment, is the access it gives to public life, especially in a city like Birmingham. A small example: I still enjoy the memory of the part I played in killing off the City's attempt to replace Christmas with Winterval. More seriously, I really enjoyed my involvement with the National Health Service, both before and after my retirement. In fact, I would say that for me personally two of the most enjoyable periods of my ministry have been when I have been a priest functioning in a secular institution, first when I was a fellow of a Cambridge college, and latterly when I was a member of the board of the University Hospitals here in Birmingham.

To round out the picture I ought also to name the time before I became a bishop when I was teaching theology and helping men (as it was in those days) to prepare for ordination. That too was a time of great fulfilment and enjoyment. I hope that I brought some of the fruits of that experience into my ministry as a bishop.

And one more thing: the years I spent in ecumenical dialogue as Co-Chairman of ARCIC, the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission. Those years deepened my sense that the riches of the heritage we share as Christians far, far outweigh any differences we have inherited. I thank God for all that I learned, for the prayers that we shared, and for the friends that I gained during those years.

For all of these things and much more I thank God, above all if I have been able by God's grace to play my part in the apostolic ministry of helping men and women to come to God through Jesus Christ.

During the last few years I have been gradually laying all of that aside. Last year I consciously presided over what I expect to have been my last confirmation service. Less and less of a shepherd but always one of the sheep. To go back to the words of St Augustine: as far as you are concerned, I was your bishop. As far as I am concerned, I am still one of the flock, and hope to be so for ever – through my baptism all those years ago a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

HYMN [Ye servants of God](#)

1. Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim,
and publish abroad his wonderful name;
the name all victorious of Jesus extol:
his kingdom is glorious, and rules over all.
2. God ruleth on high, almighty to save;
and still he is nigh: his presence we have:
the great congregation his triumph shall sing,
ascribing salvation to Jesus our King.
3. Salvation to God who sits on the throne!
let all cry aloud, and honour the Son.
The praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,
fall down on their faces, and worship the Lamb.
4. Then let us adore, and give him his right:
all glory and pow'r, all wisdom and might,
and honour and blessing, with angels above,
and thanks never-ceasing, and infinite love.

(words: Charles Wesley; music: from the 'Paderborn Gesangbuch' [1765])

A closing prayer

May God, who in Christ gives us a spring of water welling up to eternal life, perfect in us the image of his glory, and the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

VOLUNTARY [Grand Choeur](#) (*H Fisher; played by Benjamin Noakes*)

By appointment to the Lord Bishop of Birmingham...

When Mark retired as Bishop of Birmingham, Bishop John asked me to cook a Thank You dinner for about a hundred guests. We used the splendid kitchen and hall at Holy Trinity Sutton. The main course was Perugian Roast Pork with a herb crust. I can tell you, eight roasting loins of pork smell glorious. (I've shared that recipe with you before.)

*For the first course Mark and Sabine chose **red pepper and tomato soup**. I asked members of various churches to make bread.*

You can roast the pepper and soften the onions first, but for large quantities here is a quicker method. The proportions are: one chopped onion, one tin of tomatoes, one chopped red pepper, one crushed garlic clove, about a tomato can full of white wine, basil, a clove, salt and pepper. Add a pinch of chilli if you like a touch of heat. Put them all in a pot and simmer slowly ideally for at least an hour, topping up with water if need be. (If the wine is too expensive, stock is fine.) When you're happy the smell is sweet and flavours have combined, liquidize with a couple of tablespoons of soft, rindless goats' cheese. Check seasoning. Serve drizzled with olive oil and some shredded basil.

For the vegetarian main course I made an **open mushroom lasagne**. In advance I'd made some pasta sheets and cut them into squares. (Use ready made lasagne sheets if you prefer.) You need three squares per person. Soak a handful of dried porcini mushrooms in a little boiling water. After twenty minutes or so drain but keep the liquid. Soften some onion, finely chopped celery or fennel and garlic in a generous amount of butter, then add the porcini and a pile of quartered button mushrooms and some fresh thyme. Soften and stir, enjoying the smoky fragrance. Pour in a glass of white wine and reduce. Add the mushroom stock and reduce to a syrupy constituency. Add some cream and simmer so there is sauce, but it's not too runny. Season with salt and pepper. Stir in finely chopped parsley or chives. Having earlier cooked the lasagne sheets in plenty of boiling water, then cooled them, when it's time to serve up, warm them through in a frying pan with a little water and melted butter. When glazed, place a sheet on a warm plate, then cover generously with a pile of mushrooms. Top with another sheet, then mushrooms, then another sheet. Spoon a little sauce around as well. If you are fortunate enough to have any, a few drops of truffle oil sprinkled at the last moment give a wonderful aroma.

PS I found a photograph of Bishop Mark at his consecration, but Getty Images (who spell Canon with three 'n's, got the date and name Kensington wrong) wanted £150 for me to include it here.

Instead you can find it at:

<https://www.gettyimages.co.nz/detail/news-photo/the-bishop-suffragan-of-kennington-the-reverend-cannon-mark-news-photo/3279277>

Great hair. Great glasses. That marvellous mischief, never far below the surface.

Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England

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