

Easter is the great festival of the church, the jewel in the crown. Pentecost follows a close second and yet it remains hidden like a poor Cinderella. Indeed, there are probably a good number of people who don't really know the significance of the festival at all.

Yet, it is Pentecost that is the goal of Jesus' mission, his death and resurrection for it was at that festival that the disciples received the gift of the Holy Spirit. That gift - the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives - is the most wonderful thing that can happen to us. For present in the Holy Spirit is not one of the many good or evil spirits lurking about, rather it is God Himself: the God who creates and gives life.

The Holy Spirit was present, of course, at the very beginning of creation: the same Spirit to whom Jesus was referring the night before he died when he said to his disciples "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever". Far from abandoning his disciples, he was reassuring them that he would send them the Holy Spirit, who brings hope, peace and reassurance.

Whatever happened on that Pentecost was clearly amazing and enabled the disciples to preach and teach, to reach out to those around them in such a way that huge numbers became Christians and were baptized. And there is no reason why the Holy Spirit cannot continue to effect change in the same way today. What is required is an openness to receive. We have lived in a culture of reason for too long where analytical minds have to explain everything and because of that, we have forgotten our humility, the immensity of God and the mystery of faith. If we can learn to be open again, to be vulnerable to where the Holy Spirit calls our own spirit to follow, there is where a new, invigorating life of freedom is.

There are some experiences in life that are beyond the words of human language when we wait in silence upon God and feel the Holy Spirit stirring the depths of our being, moving us to a response, love to love.

Irenaeus, one of the most important fathers of the church in the second century, said that where the church is, there also is the Spirit of God and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church. Are our churches today responding to where the Spirit is calling us to be and enabling a full outpouring of its fruits which are love, joy, peace, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self control? As St. Paul said to the churches in Galatia: "If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit" so that the Spirit is demonstrated among us as we worship, empowering and enthusing us to acknowledge our Christian faith, reminding us of Christ's teaching and inspiring us to go out into the world to do his work, to be his people.

So let us remember that the story of God continues; we are part of that story. The Holy Spirit of initial creation is the Holy Spirit of today and tomorrow; be brave and vulnerable to open yourself to the Spirit for God delights in you, jealously looks upon you, and encourages with gentle joy every movement of the Spirit in you.

with acknowledgement to Jurgen Moltmann and Edwina Gateley

Freda Evans

ST. JAMES'S CHURCH HALL

FLAMES OF FIRE AND GUSTS OF WIND

PENTECOST WORKSHOP

SATURDAY 2ND JUNE

10.30a.m. - 1p.m.

Come and prepare for the Church's birthday through

Crafts Drama Food!

Activities for two age groups

4 - 7 years and 7 - 11 years

Please contact Freda on 0208 941 4424 to book a place

Young Church News

Report on the Spring Term Activities

On the first Sunday of each month the members of the Young Church have enjoyed playing or singing with the Travellers Band.



Young Church Discussions

The January discussion was about 'Eating - Is Thin In?' A number of issues were covered centred around eating, food and famine and we realised how fortunate we are to have choice in this matter. Some collages were produced to round off this session.



'Water, Water Use, Water Abuse?'

In February the discussion was on 'Water, Water Use, Water Abuse?' Again this raised awareness of our good fortune and perhaps has made us think more carefully each time we leave a tap running unnecessarily!

'Are All Human Beings Equal and Free?'

Two welcome new members joined us in March for our discussion on 'Racism. Are All Human Beings Equal and Free?' We found that this matter had been covered in school by some members so they were able to add a good deal to the discussion. The session ended with the young people designing some interesting posters.

As Easter Day was on the third Sunday in April, our usual discussion Sunday, we thought we should be in church on that occasion.

ALMA

Angola, London & Mozambique Association

Monday 9th July 2001 at 7.30pm

at

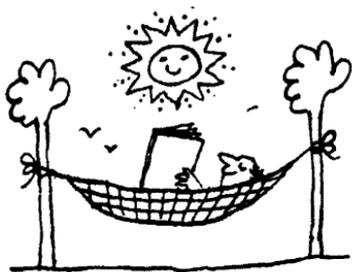
St James' Church Hall, Hampton Hill

Captain Andrew Payne will be giving a talk with some slides and video footage, about his travels in the diocese of Lebombo in May last year.

July 12th will be the third anniversary of the signing of the covenant in St Paul's Cathedral establishing the links between the dioceses of Lebombo (Angola and Southern Mozambique), Niassa (Northern Mozambique) and London.

Come and join in our celebration and find out more about our link countries. Call me on 020 8977 9434 with any queries.

**Elizabeth Wilmot, ALMA representative,
St James' Hampton Hill**



**BOOKS FOR
A BRIGHTER
SUMMER**

***Chocolat* by Joanne Harris - published by Black Swan £6.99
(available from Richmond Libraries)**

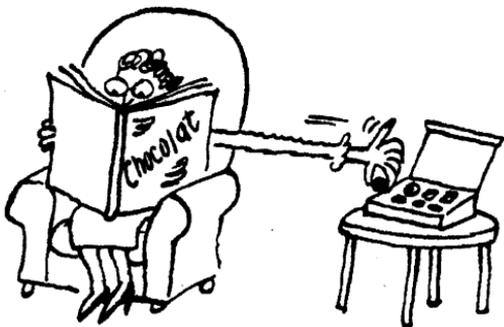
If you want to learn about redemption and enjoy a great read at the same time, then this may well be the novel for you. Joanne Harris has produced a book based on a real passion for all things chocolate, but more, has challenged our preconceived ideas about where God may be at work - even in chocolate during Lent!

The novel opens with an exotic stranger, Vianne Rocher, an unmarried mother arriving in an obscure French village where tradition and power are shared between church and a close knit social elite. Vianne dares to open a chocolaterie in Lent, right opposite the parish church in which Father Reynard, the parish priest, is busily condemning her as a moral danger. The priest denounces Vianne not only for her fabulous chocolate creations as "the ultimate sin", but also as an affront to all believing people.

Slowly but surely, through her skills and energy, her willingness to listen and act compassionately, Vianne's chocolaterie becomes a safe place for the abused and damaged to begin the long path towards reconciliation and acceptance. Vianne's own past is brought into play when another drifter turns up with an itinerant boating troop and he too is brought to face the reality that living a generous compassionate life can indeed be costly. Vianne Rocher is indeed a danger, but only to those who seek to control and judge others.

Chocolat is a great read but you may well need to have a few of your favourite varieties to hand as the taste buds are teased.

Brian Leathard



ROME: THE CITY THAT NEVER CLOSED DOWN

Margaret and I spent four days in Rome recently, staying in a convent in a wing converted for visitors, from which there was a wonderful view of the dome of St. Peters. We arrived in the afternoon and were able to spend some time inside the Basilica. Whatever your view of the Baroque, the interior is stupendous with innumerable statues (and the Michelangelo Pieta is memorable) and so many different colours of marble on the walls and columns. There is no lack of trying to make a worthy house for God! A Mass was just starting, for which we stayed, complete with choir, line of boy servers, one or two cardinals (we think) and the backdrop of a group of figures just behind the high altar which was just about to jump down!

Moving to the less rarified scene outside, we enjoyed the spectacle of the floodlit piazza with its giant colonnade and mysterious central obelisk. In the neighbouring Piazza Navona the Baroque is seen in a different guise with its three fountains showing off their statuary in brilliant light against the dark sky; one of these has Bernini's famous Four Rivers Group.

The churches in Rome are famous and a feature of several of these is the ancient mosaics, cherished over the centuries in buildings which have been rebuilt and enlarged around them; their most noticeable motif is the crescent of sheep (you and I) with the Lamb of God in the centre complete with his halo. We noticed these especially at St. Prassede and St. Clements - and don't forget your 500 and 1000 lire coins to put on the viewing lights.

The latter of these churches, quite near to the Colosseum, illustrates something of the long history of Rome. It consists of three buildings on top of each other, the lowest being a 1st century Mithraic temple, above that the 4th century church, both of which were revealed in the 19th century, and ending with the existing 12th century church which was built after the Norman sacking a few years earlier. The difference in level is around 40 feet, brought about by the process of using demolished buildings as the foundations for the new ones. There are fine mosaics and frescos to see, going back to the 9th century, with a sequence of beautiful quattrocento frescos by Masolino of the life and martyrdom of St. Catherine. One of the earlier frescos is celebrated as it contains the earliest known example of writing in transition from Latin to vernacular Italian.

The transformation of Imperial Rome to medieval and modern Rome is vividly illustrated in an excellent new museum called the Crypto Balbi, which is quite near to the white, temple-like Victor Emmanuel II monument celebrating the reunification of Italy. Excavation, again down 40 feet, has revealed the level of a 1st century Roman theatre and parts of neighbouring buildings. During the work, one or two dumps were found which have provided evidence of everyday objects dating from the late Roman /early medieval period (6th - 9th centuries). These finds and others from different sites have shown how Rome never closed down; the well-off maintained a good lifestyle from the 4th to the 14th century and beyond. Imports from the East Mediterranean and North Africa ceased in about the 7th century but were replaced by food, wine and manufactured objects produced locally or from north of the Alps.

The evidence of Imperial Rome is overwhelming in the area round the forum and our last lunch was taken sitting under the umbrella pines in the warmth of the sunshine overlooking the Colosseum and close to some of the massive ruined walls and domes of Rome's greatness.

David Taylor



3RD HAMPTON HILL GUIDES
28TH - 29TH APRIL 2001

SHOOTING STAR SLEEP OVER

Feeling as if we had enough equipment for at least a weekend camp we arrived at the church hall at 6p.m. Our theme for the sleep over was stars and the Guides soon gave their groups suitably intergalactic names. The first task was to cook dinner. We managed to dodge the downpours and cooked outside on qaz stoves. Each group made a separate part of the meal which we all shared. Pudding was smoothies, which involved lots of ice cream, yoghurt, fruit and mess; lovely!!!

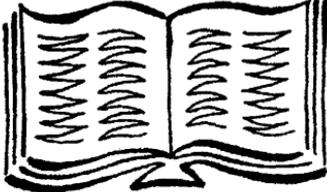
The remainder of the evening was given over to challenges for each group to complete. These included a treasure hunt in the churchyard, by torch light, making starry window covers, and perhaps rather optimistically, dream catchers. The evening ended with a star show; each group performing a routine/song for the others.

At bedtime we discovered a fatal flaw in our planning, the church clock chimes very loudly every quarter of an hour! Eventually everyone went to sleep, only to be awakened by a massive hailstorm at 6.30a.m. Thank heavens we weren't camping!!! After breakfast we counted up the stars each group had been awarded and gave out the prizes, milky way and star burst. By 9.15a.m. everyone had left and it was into church for the 9.30a.m. service.

Comments following the sleep over included: "tiring but fun," "a wonderful evening," and "I loved in the churchyard in the dark." Besides the fun element of this event it was a good preparation for camp for the newer Guides and we have raised a substantial sum for the Shooting Star Hospice. Can't wait for the next one.

Sue Blay

BOOKS of



the BIBLE

★ ESTHER ★

Before I encountered Esther at Sunday School, I was introduced to her by a Jewish school-friend who was describing the festival of Purim. Every year the *Book of Esther* is read in the synagogue, pantomime fashion, with the villain roundly hissed, and presents exchanged. It all sounded rather more fun than church. . . . When I read the story for myself, I loved it. How much is fact and how much fiction is highly debatable and I prefer to think of it as a historical novel, one which deserves the full Hollywood Epic treatment.

Set during the reign of Persian King Ahasuerus or Xerxes (486 - 465 BC), it begins, not with Esther, but with Queen Vashti and her refusal to star at the royal banquet. Horrified at what will happen to society if other women imitate her disobedience, the

King's counsellors urge him to replace her. From all the beauties of his empire, Xerxes picks Esther, an amenable Jewish orphan who has the wit to make herself agreeable to the chief eunuch and follow his advice.

But her guardian Mordecai offends the Grand Vizier Haman who, overreacting somewhat, persuades the King that all Jews are disloyal and must be destroyed. Mordecai appeals to Esther, "Help your people. God will save them anyway, but perhaps it was for just such a time as this that the Lord placed you where you are."

Esther fasts for three days and then dresses in her best and, breaking all the rules of court etiquette, approaches the King uninvited. But instead of rushing in with her request, she invites him to dinner. . . . and again. . . . and only then does she ask for his help. He can't revoke the decree so he passes another one - the Jews can defend themselves and even have a couple of extra days to pursue and finish off their enemies. Which is what they do. Haman gets his comeuppance - hanged on the very gallows he planned for Mordecai. And the festival of Purim is instituted in remembrance of the deliverance.

It's dramatic stuff by an expert storyteller. But it is also thought-provoking. Feminists don't know whether to claim Esther or not. And Christians - measuring Esther against the all-embracing, all-forgiving love of Christ - are uneasy with her vindictiveness. I may admire Jesus (Father forgive. . . .) but would I react like Esther (Hang the lot!)? Is there a place for Esther's combination of diplomacy and ruthlessness? Is Christ-like love a realistic response to the Hamans (or Hitlers) of the world? Or is it a response which works at the individual level but not at a national level?

Several decades after *Esther* first raised these questions for me, I haven't come to a conclusion. But despite my ambivalence about her, I can accept Esther as a heroine because of her moral courage. Regardless of the cost or the outcome she does what she believes to be right. *I go to the King, and if I die, I die. . .*

MOVING ON

On 30th June at 5p.m. at St. Paul's Cathedral, the Bishop of London will ordain me Deacon. For the past three years I have been training at South East Institute of Theological Education. This training has been largely theoretical, and the time has passed by rapidly. As I think about moving to West London with my family, I feel rather like Joshua as he entered into the Promised Land. This is particularly true if one remembers, with that wonderful gift of hindsight that the difficulties of the Ancient Israelites were by no means over. So what can I expect as I begin to serve as curate for the parish of St. James, Norlands and St. Clement, Notting Dale?

It is going to be a great change, not just for me, but for the whole family as we make our home right next door to St. Clement's Church. Our house is a large old-fashioned vicarage, which has been partially converted to create offices for the busy community centre. It will be strange living so close to work - just a matter of metres away!

These community offices are very central to the work of the parish. The church aims to meet the needs of the community in a positive and constructive way. There are classes for people who do not have English as their first language, a homework and study skills club for children who have no where to study at home and a thrift shop which sells food and second hand goods at very low prices to people in need. (These are all run by a staff of lay people who work extremely hard to raise funds and keep the schemes going.) It will be a great learning opportunity to see how projects of this nature work and I am looking forward to sharing in some of the work.

Joining in the community work will only be part of my new job. There is much to learn about leading worship, taking part in the liturgy and running the church and I must learn to put theory into practice. The role of a curate is to work alongside the incumbent and observe how the church and parish work. I know that over the next three years there will be plenty of opportunities to develop skills I have acquired during my training and build on my knowledge. I feel as if my time at college has been the beginning of an exciting and wonderful journey and I look forward to serving God in such an exciting parish.

Alison Hampton

The Council of Christians and Jews (Staines and District Branch)
All members and friends are invited to a talk on

THE SALVATION ARMY SOUP RUN

by EVE ATTWILL

on **Thursday 14th June 2001 at 8p.m.**
at Our Lady of the Rosary Church, 59 Gresham Road, Staines

Donation £1 including refreshments



Natalia Alexander, Stephanie Bailey, Claire Cason, Hannah Doyle and Victoria Harber have been learning to ring the bells for the past six months. They have learned the patterns of bellringing we use here at St. James's and also about the history of our bells. They have been to visit the bell-tower at All Hallows, Twickenham and tried ringing their bells. For the past two months they have been helping with the ringing on Sunday mornings. We are delighted to have them as part of the

team and feel that they fully deserve their Bellringer Stage 1 badges, which Brian presented at the May Church Parade.

Sheila Bligh has retired from Hampton Hill library after 18 years. Linda Brignall, also well-known to library users, will be returning. Congratulations to Rodney Taylor on his appointment as Director of Medicine at Ealing Hospital.

We were sorry to hear of the death of Harry Horner at the end of April, and send our love and sympathy to Margaret and her family. Gudrun Lilford, assistant manager of Laurel Dene, has also died. She will be sadly missed by her family, staff and residents.

Jean Jennings' grandson, Matthew Peter, and William Nettleton, son of Susannah and Charles, have both been baptised recently. We welcome them into the St. James's family. We are very pleased that Marjorie McDonnell is making good progress after a knee operation and that Doris Clark has settled happily at Abbeyfield, New Malden.

Finally, there have been some special birthdays. Peg Boarder was 90 on 30th April. She and Sylvia were delighted to receive so many calls and cards and thank all their friends at St. James's. Sarah Clay, Francesca Croney and Anusha Leathard have all celebrated their 18th birthdays recently. Congratulations and best wishes to them all.

FROM THE APRIL REGISTERS

Baptisms

- 8 Jessica Jane Whiting, 13 Octavia Road, Isleworth
22 Matthew Peter Mundy, 10 Cranmer Road
Zoe Eleanor Rossall, 69 Winchendon Road, Teddington

Wedding

- 14 Andrew Pye and Janet White

Funerals

- 17 Jack Ryall, Laurel Dene 99
19 Baby George Hunt, 4 Woodville Rise, Chineham, Hampshire
23 Barbara Wiggins, 38 Myrtle Road 67
27 Gudrun Lilford, Laurel Dene

RICHMOND ARTHOUSE OPEN STUDIO

This event, where many artists in the borough open their studios to the public, is taking place in June this year. Prill Hinckley invites you all to her exhibition at

115 Burtons Road, Hampton Hill,
on any of the following dates:

2 nd June	1 - 6 p.m.
6 th June	6.30 - 8.30 p.m.
10 th June	1 - 6 p.m.
13 th June	6.30 - 8.30 p.m.
16 th June	1 - 6 p.m.



DATES TO NOTE IN JUNE

2	10.30am - 1pm	Children's Workshops 'Flames of Fire'
3		PENTECOST
9		Columba, Abbot of Iona, Missionary, 597
10		TRINITY SUNDAY
	7pm	Music for Ascension, Pentecost and Trinity, at St. James Apocalypse Singers
11		BARNABAS, the Apostle
14		Day of Thanksgiving for Holy Communion (Corpus Christi) PCC
20		NO Women's Forum Meeting in Hall
22		Alban, first Martyr of Britain, 250
23		Etheldreda, Abbess of Ely, c678
24		The Birth of John the Baptist
29		PETER and PAUL, Apostles
30	5pm	Ordination of Deacons at St. Paul's Cathedral (Including Alison Hampton)
July 1	11am	ST. JAMES'S DAY - Parish Communion

SHOOTING STAR CHILDREN'S HOSPICE APPEAL MONTE CARLO EVENING

Saturday 23rd June 2001 7.30 - 10.30p.m.
Greenwood Centre, School Road, Hampton Hill
Tickets £10 to include buffet
Ring Cheryl: 8941 1640 or Gaynor: 8979 5600

COPY DATE FOR JULY 2001 MAGAZINE: 10TH JUNE