

## Vicar's Notes

The approach of Lent often fills us with misgiving. We ought to do something about it—but what? While we are considering this, Lent has gone by, and we feel guilty, because we have really done little or nothing—and Easter loses half of its joy for us.

What then should we do? I would suggest that we might well examine our use of time. We all feel that we are so short of it. The reasons are not always clear—perhaps they are complex. Anyhow, again and again we seem to have no time for this—no time for that. For instance, people on all sides say in effect: "I want to pray. I think it is indeed important. But I seem never able to find the time."

### NO TIME FOR PRAYER

Why not make it our main Lenten duty and discipline to deal with this situation—and really to find time? But how much time is needed? A wise spiritual counsellor who has helped many to pray and live to the full writes: "Many Christians give two hours each day to prayer; I do not think that you can follow as a disciple with less than one." ('To Jerusalem,' P.9, by the author of 'The Way.') This at first sight may seem staggering to us: at least one hour a day! But the reason for the shock may be that in this great matter low standards have come to be accepted is normal. When we think of reading the newspaper, watching television, or practising on the piano, we may think in terms of hours; but with regard to prayer, we have tended to believe that minutes would suffice, if we could fit them in. And even if we could secure the amount of time that is here said to be necessary, some of us perhaps feel that we wouldn't know how to use it. But let us make sure of the time first!

### HOW CAN WE GET THE TIME?

Circumstances differ greatly, though the feeling of having too much to do is common to nearly all. Some people have a long journey to work each day by train or bus. If you are not in the company of those you know, and conversation is therefore, according to the English custom, neither expected nor required, why not take advantage of this? Some people

people find it possible to gain a whole hour each day in this way. I myself often make use of such opportunities when I have to travel to London for meetings. A housewife might get a break she can use for prayer after her elevenses. Others find the late evening possible, if they are not too tired; others have always risen early to keep the 'morning watch' before the chores of the day begin. Some may live such busy lives that they honestly find it impossible every day of the week to secure much time for quiet and prayer. They should be ready to take advantage of any unexpected gap occurring in a crowded time-table, and make special efforts to keep a lengthy period weekly when a daily period proves impossible. As soon as we start to plan, so many snags appear that we are tempted to regard the whole venture as an ideal beyond us. But there are many living people, some of them working far harder than we do, who show us that with determination and planning, **it can be done.** One of the most inspiring examples I know is that of the 'Little Brothers of Jesus' in France and Africa, who take on some of the most difficult and poorly paid jobs there are, and yet manage a very full life of prayer, including an hour of adoration each evening.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF REST

To support a life of prayer and action such as this we must guard our times of rest. To do this we may sometimes have to say a polite but firm 'No' to extra claims made upon us. Many of us do not get enough sleep, and to restore the balance some people "lie in" to a late hour on Sunday, and therefore get used to missing the Church's supreme act of worship, which again has a bad effect on their life of prayer. The fourth commandment cannot be ignored with impunity; we normally need one day-off a week—and many of us are now getting two!—when our rule of prayer can be modified: increased in some cases, lessened in others. And, despite the striking examples of exceptional people like Dr. Barbara Moore, most of us normally need an average of 7½ hours in bed each night—not easy to get unless we are very stern with ourselves (and sometimes with others!)

## KEEP A RECORD!

To avoid deceiving ourselves, once we have made a rule about these things—rest and prayer—in terms of time, it is important to keep a daily note in our diaries so that we can easily see over a period how our actual practice squares with our rule.

So Lent could be a most profitably used in framing an adequate rule of rest and prayer, and testing it out in practice. "Prayer" it has recently been said, "is God's gift to us before it becomes our gift to God." But it is no use being offered a gift if we will not take the time to receive it and use it. The first thing, therefore, to be given to God is our time." In stressing this question of time, I have said nothing of **why** it is important to use a solid portion of it in prayer, or **how** this portion should be used. These are both big questions, but to help us we have again the teaching and experience of many generations of Christians to draw on, including our own, which contains more men and women than we think living a deep life of prayer under the same conditions as—or harder than—ourselves. We can learn a great deal from what they have to tell us. There is no space to go into this now, but I hope to return to it at some future time.

## THE LIGHTER SIDE

The Christian life is a balanced affair. It includes not only prayer and work, but recreation, laughter and fun as well. Our Christmas Party was an occasion which brought out our capacity for enjoyment, and it was good to see so many young people there, though some of their ways of having fun are rather puzzling to us older ones. And many of them look so serious as they rock'n'roll or jive or whatever they call it now! We are grateful to the team who planned and managed it all so ably—Mrs. Allport, Mrs. Pyne, Miss Tarrant, Mr. Wigginton and Mr. Geoffrey Eaton—and we are glad that the same group is going to be in charge of the Easter Social. A larger team, including some of the above, with Mr. Rockliffe as chairman and Mrs. Orton as organising secretary, is now hard at work making plans for our Summer Garden Party and Fete at Laurel Dene on Saturday, July 2nd.

## CONGRATULATIONS

We are very glad to know that our Reader, Mr. Rodney Bishop, has now successfully passed his final medical examinations. Henceforth, as a fully qualified physician and surgeon, he will be known amongst us as Dr. Bishop. We congratulate him heartily and pray for God's blessing on him as he enters on a wider sphere of service.

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# AROUND THE SPIRE

being notes and news about  
people, activities & organisations

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## THE MOTHERS' UNION

The Christmas Party was a most enjoyable affair! A grand tea, a mixed bag of usual and unusual games, and light-hearted songs at the piano.

At the February meeting we were pleased to welcome Mrs. Hopkinson who is our Diocesan representative on the Watch and Social Problems Committee. Mrs. Hopkinson opened her remarks by calling this the "outward looking" committee of the Mothers' Union. In this work, she said, the M.U. was looking at present day society as the environment of the Christian family life for which we stood. The scope of the work was so wide that she was only

able to touch on a few aspects. She told us of the concern for those families who in spite of the providence of the Welfare State nevertheless had, through ill fortune, fallen through the net and were in trouble with no one to help. We must all have been moved by her account of how one branch had helped to "rehabilitate" such a family.

She mentioned the help the M.U. had been able to give by collecting evidence from its members, to those who had worked to encourage hospital managements to allow frequent visits by parents to sick children.

Members of branches in the London area were helping with other groups e.g. the Roman Catholic Church to supply a rota of women

to meet trains at Victoria, Paddington and Liverpool Street stations where foreign girls so often arrived and had no one to help them find their way across London or to their destination. Training in the work is given to the women and more volunteers who could spare an afternoon or a morning are wanted.

Although so much of the work is done centrally, Mrs. Hopkinson emphasised the point that it is to the individual members in the branches that they look for facts of the social problems that need attention and for carrying out the recommendations arrived at. Many branches in large towns visit hospital patients who are a long way from relatives, or the old and lonely.

### THE YOUNG WIVES' GROUP

We had a very enjoyable meeting on January 27th, when Mrs. Bond of Yardleys, came to give us a talk and demonstration in the art of using cosmetics. We were very pleased to see friends from the Mothers' Union amongst us.

At our February meeting we shall be welcoming Mrs. Fox, who will be speaking about 'Character Training.'

In March we hope to hold a Jumble Sale; so please save all you can for us. Details of collection will be given at a later date.

During the school holidays we managed to fit in two afternoons for Scottish dancing for the children. This was enjoyed by about twelve children who were grateful to Miss Ford for teaching them and who hope to repeat the experiment next holiday.

We are hoping to arrange an afternoon sometime soon for the members themselves to continue this enjoyable activity.

On Saturday, January 30th, some of our members and their children were very fortunate in being able to join a party visiting the Houses of Parliament. We were conducted by our local M.P. Mr. Gresham Cooke who gave us interesting information about the various chambers through which we passed.

### THE YOUTH CLUB

The large room at Wayside was filled with parents and intending members when the inaugural meeting was held on January 21st. A steering committee was set up, and

this has been hard at work drawing up a provisional constitution and making plans to put it into effect. Friday evening meetings begin in the School Hall, Windmill Road, on February 19, and will be held weekly (except on February 26) from 7.30—10.0 p.m. Every member is also expected to attend the Sunday evening meetings, which are held in Wayside immediately after Evensong. These have been taking place since the formation of the club, and a number of good discussions of important topics have been held.

### THE SCOUT GROUP

On January 20th the Cub Pack held their annual party. Twenty-six Cubs sat down to tea, catering arrangements were in the very safe hands of Mrs. Buck, Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Cox and Mrs. Longhurst. On behalf of the Officers and the Cubs may I say a very big thank you for all the hard work that these ladies put in.

The Cubs wish to say thank you to the Vicar who kindly joined them at tea.

During the evening the Cubs entertained their parents with games and a sketch entitled The Operation with Sixer S. Buck in the leading role.

The Shield for the best all-round Cub was presented to Sixer S. Buck who will hold it for the next three months.

I would like all Scout and Cub parents to make a note of the following dates.

In July we are hoping to be privileged to use the lovely grounds of Laurel Dene for our annual Fete. Also again this year we are planning to promote another Grand Draw, this brought in a very useful sum last year and I am sure we can improve on it this year.

The Hampton and District L.A. Committee are proposing to hold a get-together in the form of a Dance at the Winning Post on October 15th. It is hoped that as many parents as possible will come along to meet parents from other Groups. Further details will be furnished as they come to hand. The A.G.M. of The Hampton and District L.A. will be held at the 3rd Hampton Scout Group's H.Q., Priory Road, Hampton. All parents are most welcome to this meeting. After the business

of the meeting there will be an Any Questions programme. The date is 11th of May. (This is subject to confirmation).

A very successful Jumble Sale was held at St. James' Hall on Feb. 6th, resulting in a very useful sum being added to the building fund, this fund is steadily growing but I am sorry to say that it is still a long way off its target. May I say to all who kindly gave things to sell on the stalls a very sincere thank you. To all the Ladies who kindly helped on the stalls on behalf of the committee, may I say Thank You.

Our Bingo Drives are now being held every fortnight, why not make this an excuse for having an evening out. Tickets are 2/6 O.A.P. 2/- this includes a cup of tea.

A. R. COOK.

### ADDITION TO ADVERTISEMENT

E. & B. Horne, 143, Uxbridge Rd., are now on the 'phone—Molesey 2744.

### SOME DATES TO NOTE

Mar. 2—Ash Wednesday. Holy Communion at 7.15 and 10.30 a.m. Mothers' Union Service at 3 p.m. (Preacher: The Rev. D. S. Richardson). Short Evening Service, Reading and Discussion in Vestry at 8.0 p.m.

Mar. 4—Women's World Day of Prayer. United Service in Methodist Church, Percy Road, at 8.0 p.m.

Mar. 7—8.0 p.m. Refugees' Evening at Public Hall, Hampton. Two films will be shown.

Mar. 10—8.0 p.m. Church Council (Vestry).

Mar. 24—8.0 p.m. Annual Parochial Church Meeting (W).

Mar. 25—The Annunciation. Holy Communion at 7.15 and 10.0 a.m. (not 10.30 a.m.). Mothers Union Deanery Service at All Saints', Hanworth at 3.0 p.m.

Mar. 30—8.0 p.m. Young Wives' Group. Speaker: Mrs. Hatchett—"Father's Place in the Home." (W).

Every Wednesday at 8.0 p.m. there will be a short service, reading and discussion in the Vestry.

Confirmation Classes will begin as soon as times and days suitable to the candidates can be fixed. The Vicar would like to have any more name of intended candidates by the end of February.

Any matter for the March issue of the magazine should be sent to the Vicarage not later than Tuesday, March 8. It is hoped to have the magazines available on March 18.

### BAPTISMS

- Jan. 24.—Philip Anthony Randall Emery, 24 Longford Close.  
,, 24.—Julie Longhurst, 57 Windmill Road.  
,, 24.—Christopher Duncan Morrison, 39 Winifred Road.  
,, 24.—Jenny Anne Wainwright, 2, Cranmer Road.

### BURIAL AND CREMATION

- Jan. 29.—Annie Pretoria Flood, 60, Uxbridge Road, aged 59 years.  
Feb. 17.—Emily Lang, 21, Longford Close, aged 78 years.