

## THIS AND THAT (367)

King Canute demonstrated that what has to be, has to be. To fulminate against, or resist what is inevitable and necessary is folly. Wisdom makes a virtue out of necessity, goes along with what has to be.

### Do it yourself baptisms

As was the case with two baptisms after last Sunday's Harvest Thanksgiving. The first was at 12 noon, the second half an hour later. Both were moving and happy ceremonies for two lovely, wide-eyed little girls.

The necessity for limited numbers in these difficult times was duly accepted and gone along with. It meant that both baptisms were more than usually personal, intimate and relaxed. What is more, we were challenged and encouraged to be adventurous in the way we performed them.

As a young curate on the staff of Harare Cathedral, I was chaplain to a large maternity home. This meant being called out at any time during the day or night to baptize little mites unlikely to survive. A moving experience. I learned there too that the Church allows any Christian to baptize *in extremis*. So if I was not available for any reason, a Christian nurse would do the honours, inform me, and after a follow up visit to the parents, I would issue a certificate and enter the details in the Cathedral's register.

Our whole country is at present *in extremis*. So your ancient, Covid-vulnerable priest, arranged for the parents of each child to anoint their own little one with the oil of catechumens, pour the water three times in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and then anoint with the oil of chrism. I merely directed proceedings, talked the talk, blessed the water and enjoyed it all enormously. Particularly special for the Mums and Dads, necessity turned into lovely virtue.

### What happens when we die?

When it comes to dying and death we all scratch our heads and wonder. Even vicars.

My own understanding sees all of us when we die as falling into the abyss of non-existence. Those of us blessed with the gift of faith, though, do so trusting that the God of love and Creator *ex nihilo* of all that is, can and will call us back, to recreate, re-gift, re-vision us into a new Creation beyond our wildest imaginings. Crazy fanciful, perhaps, but no more outlandish or absurd than our present, oh so wonderful, inexplicable and utterly unaccountable for present existence. So who knows? It's over to God.

### On pilgrimage

We made a pilgrimage last week to the village of Hursley, between Romsey and Winchester. Hallowed ground, because Hursley is the name of a favourite hymn tune that used to be sung to the evening hymn:

*Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear*

*It is not night if thou be near:*

*O may no earth-born cloud arise*

*To hide thee from thy servant's eye.*

I love the tune and also the words which are by the theologian and poet John Keble. He was appointed Vicar of Hursley in 1835, rebuilt the church in 1848, and remained there until his death in 1866. He was Professor of Poetry at Oxford from 1831 to 1841 and the originator and then one of the leaders of the Oxford Movement. He's buried at All Saints' Church, Hursley.

### A cloth-eared jackass

Keble picked an 18th century German tune for his hymn, and named it Hursley. To my chagrin this tune is not in our hymnbook. There are two others, neither of which I fancy. The first by Sir Herbert Oakley (1830-1903), professor of Music at Edinburgh University. He thought the tune Hursley "inadequate and vulgar... unsuitable to sacred words... too lively, it often drove me out of church". What a cloth-eared jackass! It's odd how so many professional composers appear to disdain a good melody. Or is it my own ear for melody that's defective and sentimental?

If it is I am happy for it to be so. I've just listened to Mozart's Coronation Mass. The Agnus stops the heart and starts the eyes with tears. It floods my being with a love of God and deep certitude that all will be well, all manner of things well.

Andrew's weekly articles are at: <http://www.andrewneum.com/>

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**TODAY: SIXTEENTH SUNDAY after TRINITY 27/9/20**

**St Nicholas' Chapel Pilley:** 8.00am Holy Communion BCP

**St John's Boldre:** 10.30am Morning Prayer

### For Prayer This Week

International trust and cooperation. For those in authority everywhere. For medical researchers and practitioners. For the isolated, lonely and anxious. **Prayer Requests:** Joan Downer, Colin Erne, Michael Farrar, Harold Hendeby, Pat Tanner, Rachel. **Rest in Peace:** Garnet Witt, Roy Davis, Pamela Jubert.

### Forthcoming Weekday Activities

Wed 30 Sep - 10.30am Holy Communion St Nicholas' Chapel

Wed 30 Sep - Bible Study Ph 07786 194282 for venue or zoom

Sun 4 Oct - 10.30am St John's St Francis of Assisi Pet Service

Mon 5 Oct - 10.00am Vicarage - Clergy meeting.

**NEXT WEEK: ST FRANCIS: PET BLESSING 4/10/20**

**St Nicholas' Chapel Pilley:** 8.00am Holy Communion BCP

**St John's Boldre:** 10.30am Morning Prayer

### SERVICES IN CHURCH

The new regulations seem not to affect church services so we carry on as we have been. It is important to wear masks and to carry on strictly observing distancing regulations. Sally Hoole will make you a bespoke mask for a donation to the St John's (01590 683348).

### FEAST OF ST FRANCIS: PET SERVICE

**Next Sunday 4 Oct 10.30am St John's:** Pets in church to be blessed in their pews. Larger animals are blessed outside.

### HOLY COMMUNION

11 October: Holy Communion for the 10.30 service at St John's

### REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY, 10.45am 8 NOV 2020

Entirely outside this year, (assuming this to be legal then) come wind come weather. If a storm is raging it will still go ahead, with sodden wreaths, a defiant Last Post, the Roll of Honour recited fortissimo and the National Anthem roared.

### ALPHA ONLINE

As a Group of churches (Boldre, Brockenhurst & South Baddesley) we plan to run Alpha online in Jan-March 2021. Churches that have done this have reported a significant impact on the guests and leaders who took part. To make it work we need a team to help with planning, advertising, organising, & delivering. If this is something you think you might be interested in helping to organise then do please contact Simon Newham no later than Monday 2nd November, on [vicar@brockenhurstchurch.com](mailto:vicar@brockenhurstchurch.com)

### ST JOHN'S CHRISTMAS CARDS

The best Christmas cards on the market this year are from St John's, depicting the words of the first verse of **O Little Town of Bethlehem**, beautifully illuminated. Packs of 5 cost £3.50, in aid of St John's and the local hospital. Available now at church and from Jen Dixon Clegg (07786 194 282) or the Vicarage.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The belated A. G. M. passed off harmoniously and expeditiously. Many thanks to the quietly efficient Christine Nash, who has resigned from the PCC but remains in charge of the Mission Group. Welcome to James Brushwood and Richard Pickance who've joined the PCC.

### HARVEST AND BASICS BANK

Thanks for all the harvest gifts and for a splendidly decorated church. The gifts have been delivered to the Basics Bank, to which do please continue to donate directly at the supermarkets. If you prefer to bring them to church, do. We will deliver them.

### BOTTLE TOPS & USED STAMPS

We are collecting ONLY WASHED milk bottle tops. They help raise funds for Air Ambulance. We also collect used stamps. They help raise funds for "Canine Partners". Two worthwhile causes!

### EVENING PRIMROSE SEEDS

The Vicarage has reaped a good crop if anyone would like some.