

Do you know your place? New Year's Message from Douai

by Reverend Alison Newman

This was a question recently posed to some clergy by Louise Lawrence, a New Testament lecturer. She says 'our day to day lives all happen somewhere, some place'.

We live in an increasingly mobile world. Often we might live in one place, work in another, spend our leisure time in another and have friends who live far and wide.

Louise invited us to think about our relationships to particular places, one of them being where we live. Then she encouraged us to read some biblical texts from this perspective. This is called Contextual Bible Study. It means relating a bible passage to where we are now.

The New Year is always a time when traditionally we look back at the past year, celebrating the joys and acknowledging the failures. We all have individual hopes and aspirations for the year ahead but together we can also share our vision for our community here. So what kind of hopes and dreams do we have for our neighbourhood of Shortlands and how might using 'Contextual Bible Study' move us forward in our thinking?

One biblical passage which might help us is the story of Jesus exorcising demons from a man called Legion. The bible says the demons had taken over the man and for his safety he was kept bound and chained. Our challenge is to think beyond the literal story. The man Legion was in a sense 'occupied' and 'threatened' by outside forces, he has been seen to represent a land occupied by a foreign/colonial power. If we were applying this to the time of Jesus, Rome was occupying Israel and the Jewish nation were feeling their



land or place was under threat from outside forces. If we bring this up to date - what threatens 'our place', in our case Shortlands? What are the issues in our community which really concern us? What are the forces around that worry us?

Two concerns which spring to my mind from conversations I've had - are property development and personal safety. So let me ask you 'what do you see as a threat to our community here in Shortlands'? What do you think are the burning issues in this area? Here at St. Mary's we would be really interested to hear what your concerns are and whether they are shared by others. By identifying the issues we might be able to begin to consider how they can be addressed.

Canon Paul and I wish you a Happy New Year. We also pray that 2008 may be a year where we can all work together to further God's kingdom of justice and mercy here on earth, and specifically in the Shortlands' community.

(If you would like to share any issues you feel are important for the community, we would be delighted to hear from you - please write to the editor, Church House, 39 Kingswood Road, Shortlands, BR2 0PU.)

As I write to send you my personal wishes for a Happy New Year in the grace of Christ our Saviour, I am encouraged by the deep friendship I have experienced on the four occasions we have met during the past year in the context of our twinning. Your friends here in Douai have asked me to send you their greetings too. And the Catholic community of Saint Francis of Assisi join me in sending you our warmest wishes. We are well aware of the importance of the words of the daily prayer we offer to Christ Jesus at Mass, asking that his peace may make us more united. With you, we pray ever more fervently and also with greater confidence. We imagine that you too may have your difficulties, but we can face these together with mutual respect. This is a sign of our unity in the grace of Christian baptism. We thank you for your forthcoming hospitality and the chance for us grow together in the love of Christ, so the world may believe in the Good News for our time and for 2008.

Michel Rimaux, Priest of the Parish of Saint Francis of Assisi, Douai, France our link Parish.

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Award for Polar Bear

St. Mary's has enjoyed long and strong Scouting links. Our 7th Bromley Group started in 1911 which is a mere four years after the first ever Scout Camp on Brownsea Island in 1907.

In 1990 John Westropp formed the Beaver Colony. It was set up to provide "FUN AND FRIENDS" for boys aged 6 to 8 years old. The boys chose John's scouting name: Polar Bear. In recognition of Polar Bear's long and exemplary service, he was awarded the Medal of Merit by District Commissioner, Giles Barnett, at the Toy Service in December. The congregation not only included many members of the current Beaver Colony, but also numerous older boys and young men who have been inspired by Polar Bear's humour, care and remarkable leadership.



Bishop to visit Shortlands

We look forward to welcoming
the Bishop of Tonbridge
to Shortlands on Sunday, 13 January, at 10.30am
when he will officiate at a
Service of Confirmation.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS!



From the Registers

Holy Baptism

We welcome into God's family:

25 Nov Isabella Aldous
Emilia Hoad

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

29 Nov Constance Filmer, aged 94
Robin Spon-Smith, aged 65
10 Dec Kenneth Purslove, aged 89

Interment of Ashes

25 Nov Daphne Levett



Remembering

Constance Filmer

Connie was born in Deptford, the third of six children. She was educated in Bellingham prior to becoming a shop assistant at the age of just 14. She married Len in 1937 and they shared 66 years of marriage. They had three children Annette, John and Andrew.

Her interests included embroidery, crocheting, knitting, reading and reciting poetry. She was a member of the Womens' Institute and participated in amateur dramatics and in latter years made many new friends at Newnham Court Bromley.

A Service of Thanksgiving conducted by Canon Paul Miller took place at St. Mary's Shortlands prior to a committal at Beckenham Crematorium.

Robin Spon-Smith

Robin was born in Brenchley in Kent. He was one of three. He grew up in Chislehurst and was educated at Eltham College. He became a solicitor

in Bromley, was later called to the Bar and practised as a barrister for over 30 years. He also sat as a Recorder for the Crown Court.

He married Jenny at St. Mary's Shortlands in 1966. They had two sons, Jolyon and Phillip. His interests included beekeeping and visiting law courts on holiday.

A Service of Thanksgiving conducted by Canon Paul Miller took place at Beckenham Crematorium.

Kenneth Purslove

Ken was born in Lewisham on 20 August 1918. During the war he enlisted in the army. After the war Ken came to work in his father's café at Bromley North. Ken married Edna at St Mary's, College Road on 10 June 1946. Eventually Ken took over his father's business and their daughter Janet was born in 1947.

On their retirement Edna and Ken took up golf - they joined the club at Shirley Park. Ken also enjoyed cycling. An enjoyment of travel was something the Pursloves shared as a family, visiting various parts of the world including America, Jerusalem, and Barbados. Sadly in later years, due to their health, Ken and Edna were unable to be very active. However the whole family took up the hobby of cross stitch. Janet is very much part of the church community of St Mary's, Shortlands.

Ken will be greatly missed by his wife Edna and daughter Janet. The funeral was held at St Mary's Shortlands, conducted by Canon Paul Miller and Reverend Alison Newman, attended by his family, friends and members of St. Mary's.

SPAN THANKS

We record our thanks for donations during the month of December of £5.00

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Merlin Court visited by Mowgli Cubs

The annual visit to Merlin Court by Mowgli Cub pack took place just before Christmas.

The boys entertain the residents with carols, magic tricks, jokes and solo musical performances. The evening is rounded off with fancy cakes and teas being served by the boys, who chat happily away with their audience.

This year, a little book of poetry was presented to each resident. The poems were all written by the Cubs on the theme of Nature and the Environment - which has featured in several Pack nights this term.

Finally, the residents donated a generous collection which will go to a charity chosen by Mowgli. A big bag of sweets was also given to the boys as a hearty 'Thank you' for a delightful evening of entertainment!

One of the poems follows:

**A walk in the woods keeps you calm for the day,
you see everything about nature,
well... in a way.**

**A bird will scurry over your head,
while the squirrels run away instead.**

**A walk in the woods is always peaceful,
it will never spoil your day.**

Tim

Get a better life in 2008 - get a dog!

Owning a dog is very good for you. Dog owners tend to have lower cholesterol and blood pressure, fewer minor physical ailments, and are less likely to develop serious medical problems.

So says Dr Deborah Wells, a senior lecturer at the Canine Behaviour Centre of Queens' University, Belfast. "It is possible that dogs can directly promote our wellbeing by buffering us from stress, one of the major risk factors associated with ill health."

She surveyed people who adopt cats and dogs from animal rescue shelters. They said that within a month of adopting their pet, they noticed a decrease in minor ailments, such as headaches, colds and dizziness. But only dog owners maintained the improvements 10 months later - cat owners did not.

"The ownership of a dog can also lead to increases in physical activity and facilitate the development of social contact, which may enhance both physiological and psychological human health in a more indirect manner."



Leprosy, an age old disease closely associated with biblical times, has not gone away. In 2005, about 500,000 new cases were diagnosed and people in South America, Asia and Africa are still living with this debilitating illness, even though a cure, which is available for free, was found more than 20 years ago. The Leprosy Mission is renowned for its medical care and owns 20 hospitals in Asia and Africa, and is committed to helping implement health education preventing disability and training patients to look after themselves. St. Mary's Church has a long record of supporting this charity which is our Mission for the month of January. Further information is available from the display which is featured at the back of the Church throughout January.

St. Mary's Pre-school raise £300 for Children in Need

St. Mary's Pre-school took part in the annual BBC Children in Need appeal in November. They held a raffle throughout the week and on the Friday the children each paid £1 so that they could wear pyjamas to Pre-school and then they decorated cakes which were sold to their parents. All the staff wore matching pink pyjamas and the parents had to donate enough money for Pat Chase (the pre-school leader) to wear her pink pyjamas. During the morning many of the children had their faces painted and games were played.

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All the fun at the Christmas Fayre



Many parishioners and local residents joined in the fun at the St. Mary's Annual Christmas Fayre. During a very busy afternoon over £2,000 was raised to support the Church and Bromley Welcare.

Charity Concert

in support of the SOS Children's Village, Bethlehem,
by the children and young people of Shortlands

Sunday, 3 February 2008 at 3.00pm

ALL WELCOME Enquiries to 020 8290 0955



Local Business Support St. Mary's

Seven local businesses supported the St. Mary's Advent Dinner and Dance held at The Bromley Court Hotel.

Over 100 guests enjoyed a perfect evening of dining and dancing and the raffle, which raised over £400, was donated to the SOS Children's Village in Bethlehem in memory of Sally Harwood, a member of St. Mary's Shortlands who sadly died in October.

Prizes were generously donated by Wellingtons, Aqua Dry Cleaning, Bottoms Up and Orchids of Bromley all from Westmoreland Road as well as Bloxhams Florists of Shortlands, The Bromley Court Hotel and Andy Speller.

Get ready for Lent - already!

There will be a series of **Homegroups meeting in Lent** starting 11 February. These will be held at various homes in the locality, anyone is welcome to come.

Monday - 2.30pm and 8.00pm

Tuesday - 8.00pm

Wednesday - 10.00am (This group welcome any who would like to come along with young children)

Wednesday - 8.00pm.

All the groups will be following the York Course which this year reflects upon the world's most famous prayer 'The Lord's Prayer'. During the meetings the groups will discuss 'praying it, meaning it, living it'.

If you would like any further information please contact Reverend Alison Newman
Tel - 020 8658 7784



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- 08.00 Holy Communion
- 10.30 Family Communion, except the first Sunday in the month in term time. During term time there are separate groups in the Church Hall for children aged 4-14.
- 10.30 All Age Eucharist or Parade Service (1st Sunday in the month, term time).
- 18.30 Evening Service

Every Monday

- 17.00 Evening Prayers

Every Wednesday

- 10.00 Holy Communion

Further information about all services can be obtained from the Parish Office.

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