

Anglican tradition still has its place

by Canon Paul Miller

This was the title of an excellent article in the Sunday Telegraph on 30 December 2007. It was written by Canon David Meara the Rector of St. Bride's, Fleet Street in London.

Having preached at a Carol Service for lawyers at St. Clement Dane's Church in the Strand, London and having witnessed packed churches here in Shortlands over the Christmas period, what Canon Meara sets out is a very helpful assessment of what I, too, feel the Church of England has to offer at this particular time in our nation's history. The article follows:

"During December at St Bride's in Fleet Street we have held about 25 carol services, and on each occasion the church has been full.

On Christmas Eve and Christmas morning we again had capacity

congregations and I have no doubt that Anglican churches across the land can tell a similar story.

Not that there is a massive religious revival under way; it's just that reports of the imminent demise of the Church of England have been greatly exaggerated.

People come to church because they want a story to connect with, a guiding narrative that helps them make sense of human existence, and because they have found that unthinking multiculturalism and rampant secularism don't satisfy and don't work.

But if these spiritual needs are to be properly nurtured, then Anglicanism needs to rediscover its quiet, understated confidence in the balance between Scripture, reason and tradition, and to assert this in the face of an increasingly intolerant

fundamentalism. One feature that drew me into the Church of England was its generous tolerance of diverse opinions held together by the beauty of Cranmer's liturgy.

"Thou hast set my feet, O Lord, in a large room," says the psalmist, and I give thanks for the large room that is the Church of England, in which those who seek meaning and purpose can be welcomed, whatever stage of belief or unbelief they have reached.

My own church has endeavoured to embody this. As the journalists' church, our doors are open to all of the Fourth Estate, and we have hosted debates on such subjects as Islamophobia, capital punishment, the City, religion and the media. We attempt to look outwards, raising issues for debate rather than peddling dogmatic certainties.

We rejoice in the Anglican *via*



media, a church which is both catholic and reformed, with a robust outlook that puts dialogue before dogma and practical involvement in the community before theological posturing."



A Service of Confirmation conducted by the Bishop of Tonbridge was held at the beginning of January at St. Mary's Shortlands. Pictured here with the Bishop are (from left to right) Sophia Pearson, Anna Fiddeman, Canon Paul Miller, Jennifer Sewell, Rachel Tillotson, Grace Newman, Reverend Alison Newman, Maria Adam, Naasson Swan, Ciborney Swan and Betty Rider.

Oberammergau 2010

by Canon Paul Miller

Towards the end of the Thirty Years' War in Central Europe there was an outbreak of the plague in Bavaria. The elders of the village of Oberammergau, in an effort to protect their village, decided to seal it off from outside contact. But an itinerant worker returned, bringing the plague with him, and it swept through the village.

Whereupon the people solemnly vowed that, if God would show his compassion and lift the scourge, every ten years they would enact the Passion of our Lord.

The plague left the village in 1633 and, as a perpetual thanksgiving and re-affirmation of faith, the villagers of Oberammergau have performed the Passion Play at regular intervals ever since.

The Play is now performed every 10 years. For the first time, the Play in 2010 will be performed during the afternoon and evening. The duration of the performance is five hours with a three hour break for dinner in the middle: 2.30pm - 5.00pm; interval; 8.00pm - 10.30pm.

The theatre seats 4,800 people and has no pillars so all seats have an

excellent view. Nearer the front, you are closer to the action but further back you enjoy the full dramatic panorama. Seats are under cover and there is under-floor heating but the stage is open to the elements with the mountains as a natural backdrop.

I will be organising a visit to the Passion Play from Shortlands and combining it with a stay in the Austrian mountain resort of Maria Alm. We shall depart on 11 August 2010 and stay 5 nights at the 4 star Alpenland Hotel in Maria Alm. This is a wonderful walking area but there will also be optional excursions to Salzburg, the Krimml National Park and a Mozart dinner concert. On Monday 16 August we shall transfer to Oberammergau for a 2 night stay. We shall see the Play on Tuesday 17 August and then return home on Wednesday 18 August.

Flights will be with BA or Lufthansa scheduled flights from Heathrow to Munich.

The cost will be £1,095 on a half board basis. Single room supplement £70 in Maria Alm. In Oberammergau single rooms are unlikely to be available but if they are they will be allocated without charge. The

arrangements will be made through McCabe Pilgrimages.

Because the Passion Play only takes place every 10 years seats for the Play are booked very quickly. I have reserved places for 45 and brochures will be released during March. To reserve your place you will need to place an initial deposit of £200. A second deposit will be required in July 2009. When the second deposit is paid, the McCabe booking conditions will apply and anyone cancelling would apply for a

refund through their insurance company.

I have led groups to Oberammergau in 1984 (the 350th anniversary), 1990 and 2000. It is a unique experience and I very much hope we can get a good party from Shortlands to travel.

Watch out for the brochures which will be in the Church porch or available from the Parish Office. Details are also available at www.mccabe-travel.co.uk



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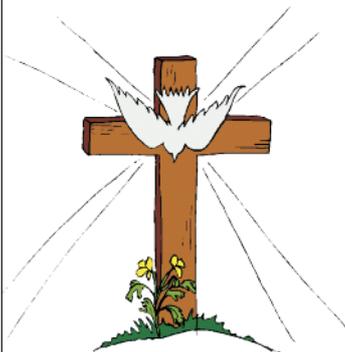
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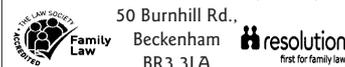
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The Parish Daily Prayer Cycle is available from the Church porch and focuses on aspects of the church and community life in Shortlands.



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Remembering

At Rest

We extend our sympathy to those who loved:

14 Jan John Gainsborough

John was born in Charlton. He was an only child. He married Gertrude (known as Pom) in April 1938.

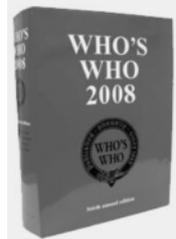
John was a successful insurance agent. Prior to that he had served in the army and before that he was a butcher.

Life was never the same for him after Pom died in 2002 although he did enjoy learning to cook and caring for the wildlife in his garden.

A Service of Thanksgiving, conducted by Canon Paul Miller and attended by his niece Jill as well as friends and neighbours, took place at Beckenham Crematorium prior to cremation.

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What does Canon Paul Miller have in common with Kate Moss, the super model, Jacqueline Gold, the founder of Ann Summers, Jonny Wilkinson, the England rugby player, Darren Clarke, the golfer and German Chancellor Angela Merkel?

They join the 1000 new entries in the 160th annual edition of more than 33,000 personal pictures of those 'whose achievements the publisher deems notable to today's society'. Canon Paul's personal profile is now included as he is a Chaplain to the Queen.

The first edition of Who's Who - a compact, 250 page volume, one tenth of the size of the 2008 edition - was published in 1849.

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Lent 2008



There are a number of ways we are helping you to get the most out of Lent

1. Join a Homegroup

There will be a series of Homegroups meeting in Lent starting 11 February. These will be held at various homes in the locality, and anyone is welcome to come. The Homegroups will be following the York Course and studying the Lord's Prayer, the world's most famous prayer. The Prayer raises vital questions for today's world in which 'daily bread' is uncertain for 2 billion people and a refusal to 'forgive those who trespass against us' escalates violence.

Monday - 2.30pm at 55 Kenwood Drive

Monday - 8.00pm at 75 Scotts Lane

Tuesday - 8.00pm at 7 Scotts Avenue

Wednesday - 10.00am at 92 Cumberland Road

(This group welcomes any who would like to come along with young children)

Wednesday - 8.00pm at 102 Elwill Way

Wednesday - 8.00pm at 31 Elwill Way

Thursday - 8.00pm at 8 Springpark Drive

If you would like further information please contact Reverend Alison Newman, telephone 8658 7784

2. Lent Lunches

A simple lunch for up to 10 people to provide an opportunity for hospitality and to support a charity.

Thursday, 14 Feb - Cliff & Shirley Broughton, 1 St. Mary's Avenue - supporting Demelza House

Tuesday, 26 Feb - David & Jane Green, 84 Barnfield Wood Road - supporting Sight Savers International

Tuesday, 4 Mar - Gloria Carpenter, 86 Manor Way - supporting Mother's Union Literacy Project

Saturday, 8 Mar - Paul & Lynne Miller, 37 Kingswood Road - supporting SOS Village Bethlehem

If you would like further information please contact Canon Paul Miller, telephone 8460 4989

For both the Homegroups and Lent Lunches there are sign up sheets at the back of the Church.

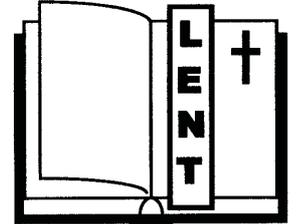
3. Attend the main Sunday morning service every Sunday to hear a series of sermons entitled 'Favourite Hymns'.

Feb 10	'God in the silence'	Dear Lord and Father of mankind	Canon Paul Miller
Feb 17	'A symphony of praise'	Praise, my soul, the King of heaven	Reverend Alison Newman
Feb 24	'Thanksgiving'	Now thank we all our God	Archdeacon of Bromley and Bexley
Mar 2	'Mothering Sunday'	For the beauty of the earth	Reverend Alison Newman
Mar 9	'The Pilgrim's song'	Who would true valour see	Canon Paul Miller

4. Endeavour to participate in the experience of Holy Week

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which this year is Wednesday 6 February which is also the anniversary of the Queen's Accession in 1952. There will be two services at 10.00am and 8.00pm.

Palm Sunday	10.30am 6.30pm	Procession of Palms and Eucharist for Palm Sunday A Passiontide Service of Readings, Anthems and Hymns for Holy Week
Maundy Thursday	8.00pm	Washing of Feet, Eucharist of the Last Supper and the Watch
Good Friday	10.30am 2.00pm	Family Service led by Reverend Alison Newman An Hour at the Cross led by Canon Paul Miller
Easter Day	8.00am 10.30am	Sunrise Eucharist Eucharist of the Resurrection including the renewal of Baptismal Vows and the Easter Egg Treasure Hunt



Easter Lilies

If you would like to remember a departed loved one at the Great Festival of Easter, we invite you to make a donation to the Flower Fund as a memorial to that person.

A list of the names of all those to be remembered will be placed on the altar on Easter Day, to affirm our hope in the Resurrection to eternal life and the Christian's eternal security in Christ.

Please contact Molly Tout on 8464 9593.

Bible Reading Fellowship Lent Book

The BRF Lent Book this year is 'Journey to Jerusalem' by the Reverend David Winter. It brings together the four Gospels retracing Jesus' Journey to Jerusalem with the disciples alongside him and culminates in the events of Good Friday and Easter. It costs £7.99.

If you would like a copy, or if you would like more information, please contact Judy Rambridge on 8650 0947.

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St Mary's Shortlands Holiday Club 2008

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Henry is making a real effort for Lent - he's giving up the remote control and walking to the TV

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- 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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