

St. Augustine and St. Aidan Tonge Moor and Hall i'th' Wood

PARISH PAPER – JUNE 2021



Dear All,

“They’ve all gone quiet over there, they’ve all gone quite over there!!” “Swing low, sweet chariot!” “You’ll never walk alone!” Now that crowds, albeit limited, are allowed back into sports stadia, the sound of thousands of fans chanting is once again filling the surrounding streets on match days. No doubt a bit of singing is also taking place in pubs up and down the land. But not in the country’s churches.

Congregation singing in church is still not permitted by law, and only up to six amateur singers may rehearse together, although professional singers are not subject to this restriction. Although government ministers claim to be following scientific advice, the end result, on the face of it, seems arbitrary.

An online petition asking the government to allow amateur choirs of any size to rehearse indoors has - at the time of writing - reached nearly 45,000 signatures: we await the Government’s response. From the earliest days, singing has always been an important element of Christian worship. Not only does it lift the spirits (as many pieces of research have shown), but the mixture of words and music help give expression to thoughts and emotions in ways words alone cannot.

Singing as part of a community helps bind that community together - whether on the football terraces, in a pub or in a church - and the

singing of hymns helps us easily absorb the theology those hymns express: hymns help teach us the Christian faith.

The current, third, lockdown was brought in on the Feast of the Epiphany, and recently those restrictions have been gradually lifted. From the 21st of this month we are hoping that most - if not all - the remaining restriction will be lifted, subject to the effective management of the Indian Variant of the virus.

It is my hope and prayer that we will be able to resume congregational singing at that point, if not sooner. Voices may be croaky, we will again be able to join together in singing God’s praises and proclaim our Christian faith in word and song.

It’s sometimes said: You don’t know what you have until it’s gone. That has certainly been true of our congregational singing. When it returns, let’s not take it for granted; let’s not mouth the words in a quiet whisper. Let’s join together to make a joyful noise, uniting in worship, praise and thankfulness.

And don’t worry if you don’t think you can sing - God gave you your voice: let him suffer!

With my love and prayers,

Fr Tony

ARCHDEACON’S VISITATION

Each year the Archdeacons hold a series of Visitations, at which Churchwardens (elected at the recent Annual Parochial Meetings in each parish) and Sidespeople (appointed by the recently-elected PCCs) are admitted to their legal Offices by the Diocesan Registrar. Usually, members of PCCs are invited to attend, to support those being admitted to their respective Office.

This year, with the current restrictions in place, only Churchwardens and their clergy are being invited. The Visitation is being held at St Peter's (Bolton Parish Church) on Thursday 3rd June. Please pray for David and Ruth as they are admitted to the Office of Churchwarden. Pray also for our Sidespeople and members of the Parochial Church Council.

Fr Tony

LITTER PICKING' GOOD

With the relaxing of restrictions, it is appropriate that we get out and about again, clearing litter from the streets of the parish. Our love for God, and his love for us, means that we need to love the world he created, and our neighbours, who are also His sons and daughters. Helping make our parish a more pleasant place is part of our response to God's love.

Our intention is to cover every street in the parish over time - and then start all over again! In this way, every resident can see the Church caring for *their* street, even those hidden away, not just the main or popular roads, a reflection of God's love for every individual person, even those lacking self-esteem, and not just the popular or those who think themselves "worthy".

We will at 10.30am meet in the Parish Hall after mass on Saturday 5th June: you are very welcome to come to mass, too! We will decide which streets to cover and either walk or drive there. We have all the equipment you need - just come along and join in.

Fr Tony

The following Litter Pick will be Saturday 3rd July 2021 and hopefully we will be able to offer tea/coffee, biscuits on return as restrictions should have been lifted.

REFRESHMENTS

With the implementation of Step 3 of the Government's "Roadmap out of Lockdown" it is now permitted to have refreshments after mass in the Parish Hall. The regulations governing this state that tables must be socially-distanced, and have either a maximum of 6 persons, or any number from no more than 2 different households or bubbles. Food and drink must be consumed whilst seated, and masks must be worn if not seated and eating or drinking.

However, we acknowledge that not everyone would be happy to do this. The PCC Standing Committee are considering this as at the time of publication, and the matter will be brought to the PCC at its next meeting. If it is decided to go ahead with reinstating refreshments, we will probably do so only on Sundays as a trial run before considering whether to reopen the Wednesday Morning Coffee Shop.

So keep an eye on the Mass Sheet for any announcements.

Fr Tony

100 CLUB DRAW

Following on from the Notice about refreshments, until such time as refreshments in the Parish Hall after mass are reinstated, the 100 Club Draw will continue to be held remotely. If you would like to join us on Zoom, and ensure that everything is fair and above board, you are very welcome to join us on Zoom on Sunday 6th June at 12.00pm: the link has previously been sent out in an email: search for "100 Club Draw for 2021" in your in-box. Alternatively, let me know and I'll send the link to you.

Fr Tony

HOME COMMUNIONS

The relaxation of the Coronavirus regulations means that the Blessed Sacrament can once again be taken to the sick and housebound in their homes. Many people are understandably still wary, though, and I am in conversation with our regular home communicants to make sure they are comfortable with my visiting before turning up.

If you, or someone you know, are unable to come to church and would like me to bring the Blessed Sacrament, please let me know and together we will make the appropriate arrangements.

Fr Tony

DEANERIES

At midnight on Monday 31st May the current 22 deaneries in the Diocese of Manchester, including our own Walmsley Deanery, will cease to exist and the 7 new, larger deaneries will come into existence. We will then be part of the new Bolton Deanery, covering the area previously served by the Bolton, Walmsley and Dean deaneries. In a quirk that surely only the Church of England is capable of, the new Area Deans will be licensed on the 6th June, leaving the new Deaneries without Area Deans for 6 days.

Those elected as parish representatives to the old Deaneries will continue in that role with the new Deaneries until their terms of office expire in 2 years' time. Any variation to parishes' representation at that point will be notified nearer the time.

Please pray for the new Area Deans, as they prepare to take up their posts, particularly Simon Cook, who is to be the Area Dean of Bolton. And pray also for Julian Hartley, as he prepares to relinquish the role of Area Dean of Walmsley, having guided us through the difficulties of this last 15 months.

Fr Tony

100 CLUB NEWS

The second monthly draw was via a Zoom meeting at 12.00pm on Sunday 2nd May 2021.

Pam and Fr Tony were in charge of the drum containing the numbers at the vicarage.

numbers verified by Ken Fisher.

First Prize Number 69 – David Taylor - wins £25

Second Prize Number 94 – Veronica Brown - wins £15

Third Prize Number 16 – Elsie Hollinrake - wins £10

The third draw for this term will be on Sunday 6th June 2021, again via Zoom, Join the Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82349787107?pwd=S1B2Q1BzTGxHQWdXckkv eXdIS1lzZz09>

Meeting ID: 823 4978 7107

Passcode: 158738

If you are not a member contact David or Ruth Taylor to be allocated a number just £12 a year. Also to renew and/or take on a new number

Churches Together in Tonge Moor

The last meeting was on 27th April 2021, at 7.30pm via Zoom. It was to plan the Pentecost Service that was held in St Augustine's Church at 6.00pm on 23rd May 2021. The service was recorded on Zoom and uploaded to YouTube and is available to view, as are the previous Services.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gilYld9GWAQ>

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 7th September 2021 7.30pm at the Church at the Centre to plan the Harvest Service that is to be on Sunday 26th September 2021.

Ruth Taylor

Armenian Genocide

Between 1893 and 1923, 90% of the Armenian population - Christians - were exterminated in the Ottoman Empire. Please sign the petition at the back of the church if you would like to encourage the UK Government to recognise this mass murder as genocide.

Keep Tonge Moor tidy!
Join us on the first Saturday of each
month



We will meet after the 10am Mass
approx 10.30am
in The Parish Hall.
Grabbers, hoops, bags
High viz jackets provided.

Do as much as you feel able!

Family friendly/child sized grabbers
available



Saturday 10th July 1pm -3pm

St Augustine's Church Parish Hall

Admission 20p (There will be a door prize)

Attractions include Raffle, Lucky Gift Bags, Chocolate Tombola, Guess my Name? and Lucky £1. There will be Refreshments, Cakes, Craft, Bric-a-Brac and Book Stalls.

If you could provide anything for these stalls, please do let David, Ruth or Elsie know, but a box will be at the back of Church for your donations.

Also, if you can help to organise or run a stall do let us know.

Please support this major fundraising event.

We look forward to seeing you there.



Our Youth Groups

Youth Groups especially church based have been allowed to meet but the problem has mainly been shortage of leaders. As the lockdown restrictions are beginning to ease so are the starting back of groups.

Brownies - Some units have already returned to face-to-face meetings. Our Brownie Pack intends to start back after the half term on 8th June 2021. It is hoped that it will have 6-7 weeks before they break up for the summer holidays.

Sunday School - As all restrictions are hoped to be lifted on 21st June, we will resume our Sunday School on Sunday 4th July 2021. Hopefully in the same format, meeting in church, leaving when the Liturgy of the Word begins, and return for the Eucharistic Prayer.

Messy Church - As this takes quite a bit of planning, it will not be possible to start straightaway. Also, we had decided not to meet in August, so this will hopefully start 18th September 2021. We will need volunteers to help with this and a planning meeting needs to be organised.



Walsingham News

All those who work at the Shrine are looking forward to welcoming resident pilgrims again from Monday 7th June. Although initially only up to sixty people can be accommodated, it's a step forward. Some new members of staff are being recruited in both housekeeping and hospitality and there will be a very welcome opening of Norton's - after being closed for over 6 months. Visitors and pilgrims are invited to daily Evening Prayer, Mass and Shrine Prayers as well as just spending private time in the Shrine church and grounds. The Shrine Shop has also re-opened on four days but still with limited hours.

During May the Holy House was closed for a fortnight while some much-needed restoration work on the furnishings was carried out, funded by a generous donation from a long-standing pilgrim.



To mark the Centenary of the Induction of Fr Hope Pattern as Vicar, the Walsingham parish has covered the cost of the restoration of the altar frontal panel.

It was good to see Walsingham getting some excellent publicity on Michael Portillo's 'Great British Railway Journeys' which was filmed late last summer. The explanations of the importance and influence of pilgrimage in medieval times and in the 21st Century were really well done in the programme's limited time and the short interview with Fr Kevin in the Holy House gave a real flavour of what England's Nazareth has to offer.

Regularly over the last few months, within hours of submitting an article to our esteemed editor Mike Cheetham, there's been a news announcement or up-date from the Shrine. However, this month before I started to put this together, Sister Carol at the Priory of Our Lady posted that their Chapel is now open for pre-booked worshippers to join them for Morning Prayer and Mass from Tuesday to Saturday. Because the chapel is quite small, numbers are very limited but it is a very welcome opening for both her and Sister Angela along with locals as well as any pilgrims who are 'in-the-know'.

Again, thank you to all those on our Parish Pilgrimage list who are still patiently waiting to hear about our planned visit at the end of August. The Shrine Hospitality team can't tell us what they don't know! The decisions which have to be made will depend on the Government's social distancing restrictions which may, or may not, still be required. We have been promised news as soon as they know. Be assured as soon as Elsie hears, she will be telling us how much money we owe and when it needs to be paid by and if there is space for anyone else to join us. Frustrating for everyone - more especially for parishes hoping to visit in late June or July. We're a little further down the Pilgrim Way...



Those of us who are fortunate to visit Walsingham for the National Pilgrimage at the end of May have missed it again this year. However, it was lovely to be able to share in reciting the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary last month within a Wednesday evening Mass and it will

be a very positive step to resume some kind of meetings for our Cell members in, hopefully, the not-too-distant future. Then I shall be thrilled to have something to write about first hand, instead of cribbing things off the Shrine and Priory's web-sites and Facebook pages!

Linda Parkington

11th June Barnabas, Paul's first missionary companion

Would you have liked to go to Cyprus on holiday this year? If so, spare a thought for the Cypriot who played such a key role in the New Testament.

He was Joseph, a Jewish Cypriot and a Levite, who is first mentioned in Acts 4:36, when the Early Church was sharing a communal lifestyle. Joseph sold a field and gave the money to the apostles. His support so touched them that they gave him the nickname of Barnabas, 'Son of Encouragement'.

Barnabas has two great claims to fame. Firstly, it was Barnabas who made the journey to go and fetch the converted Paul out of Tarsus, and persuade him to go with him to Antioch, where there were many new believers with no one to help them. For a year the two men ministered there, establishing a church. It was here that the believers were first called Christians.

It was also in Antioch (Acts 13) that the Holy Spirit led the church to 'set aside' Barnabas and Paul, and to send them out on the church's first ever 'missionary journey'. The Bible tells us that they went to

Cyprus, and then travelled throughout the island. It was at Lystra that the locals mistook Barnabas for Zeus and Paul for Hermes, much to their dismay.

Much later, back in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul decided to part company. While Paul travelled on to Syria, Barnabas did what he could do best: return to Cyprus and continue to evangelise it. So, if you go to Cyprus and see churches, remember that Christianity on that beautiful island goes right back to Acts 13, when Barnabas and Paul first arrived.

In England there are 13 ancient church dedications and not a few modern ones. Barnabas the generous, the encourager, the apostle who loved his own people - no wonder he should be remembered with love.

20th June Summer Solstice - longest day of the year

June, of course is the month of the summer solstice, the month of the Sun. *Sol* + *stice* come from two Latin words meaning 'sun' and 'to stand still'. As the days lengthen, the sun rises higher and higher until it seems to stand still in the sky. The Summer Solstice results in the longest day and the shortest night of the year. The Northern Hemisphere celebrates in June, and the Southern Hemisphere celebrates in December.

While the Druids worship at Stonehenge and elsewhere, here are some Christian alternatives that honour the Creator rather than the created.

A Canticle for Brother Sun

Praised be You, My Lord, in all Your creatures,
Especially Sir Brother Sun,
Who makes the day and enlightens us through You.
He is lovely and radiant and grand;
And he heralds You, his Most High Lord.

St Francis of Assisi

God in All

He inspires all,
He gives life to all,
He dominates all,
He supports all.
He lights the light of the sun.
He furnishes the light of the night.
He has made springs in dry land.
He is the God of heaven and earth,
of sea and rivers,
of sun, moon and stars,
of the lofty mountain and the lowly valley,
the God above heaven,

and in heaven,
and under heaven.

A prayer of St Patrick

Fathers' Day, a time to celebrate male role models

In the UK, USA and Canada, the third Sunday in June is Father's Day. It's usually a good time for sons and daughters to take their father to his favourite restaurant, or to watch a favoured sport, or whatever else he enjoys doing.

How will you celebrate it this year? If your own father cannot be with you, how about a Zoom meeting?

How do these special days ever get started, anyway? Well, Father's Day began because way back in 1909 there was a woman in Spokane, Washington, named Sonora Louise Smart Dodd. That year she heard a church sermon about the merits of setting aside a day to honour one's mother. Mother's Day was just beginning to gather widespread attention in the United States at this time. But Sonora Louise Smart Dodd knew that it was her father who had selflessly raised herself and her five siblings by himself after their mother had died in childbirth. So, the sermon on mothers gave Sonora Louise the idea to petition for a day to honour fathers, and in particular, her own father, William Jackson Smart.

Sonora Louise soon set about planning the first Father's Day celebration in Spokane in 1910. With support from the Spokane Ministerial Association and the YMCA, her efforts paid off, and a

'Father's Day' was appointed. Sonora Louise had wanted Father's Day to be on the first Sunday in June (since that was her father's birthday), but the city council didn't have time to approve it until later in the month. And so, on June 19th, 1910, the first Father's Day was celebrated in Spokane.

Gradually, other people in other cities caught on and started celebrating their fathers, too. The rose was selected as the official Father's Day flower. Some people began to wear a white rose to honour a father who was dead, and a red one to honour a father who was living. Finally, in 1972, President Richard Nixon signed a presidential proclamation declaring the third Sunday of June as Father's Day - a permanent, national holiday.

24th June John the Baptist, preparing the way for the Messiah

John the Baptist is famous for baptising Jesus, and for losing his head to a woman. He was born to Zechariah, a Temple priest, and Elizabeth, who was a cousin of Mary, the mother of Jesus. John was born when his mother was advanced in years, and after the foretelling of his birth and the choice of his name by an angel, we hear nothing more of him until he began his mission of preaching and baptising in the river Jordan c27.

John was a lot like an Old Testament prophet: he lived simply on locusts and honey in the wilderness, and his message was one of repentance and preparation for the coming of the Messiah and His

Kingdom. He went on to baptise Jesus, at Jesus' firm request. When John went on to denounce the incestuous union of Herod Antipas with his niece and brother's wife, Herodias, he was imprisoned and eventually beheaded at the demand of Salome, Herodias' daughter.

John is the only saint to be remembered three times in the Christian calendar, in commemoration of his conception, his birth (June 24), and his martyrdom. When John saw Jesus he said that Jesus was the "Lamb of God", and he is the only person to use this expression of Jesus. In art John is often depicted carrying a lamb, or with a lamb near him.

29th June Feast of SS Peter & Paul, the two most famous apostles

29th June St Peter, 'the Rock'

The two most famous apostles are remembered this month, for they share a feast day.

St Peter (d. c. 64AD), originally called Simon, was a married fisherman from Bethsaida, near the Sea of Galilee. He met Jesus through his brother, Andrew. Jesus gave him the name of Cephas (Peter) which means rock. Peter is always named first in the list of apostles. He was one of the three apostles who were privileged to witness the Transfiguration, the raising of the daughter of Jairus, and the Agony in the Garden.

When Peter made his famous confession of faith, that Jesus was the Christ, Jesus recognised it as being the result of a revelation from the Father. He in turn told Peter that he would be the rock on which His Church would be built, that the 'gates of hell' would never prevail against it. Peter and the apostles would have the power of 'binding and loosing', but Peter would be personally given 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven'. Jesus also forewarned Peter of his betrayal and subsequent strengthening of the other apostles. After His Resurrection, Jesus appeared to Peter before the other apostles, and later entrusted him with the mission to feed both the lambs and the sheep of Christ's flock.

Peter played a big part in the early Church, and he is mentioned many times in the Book of Acts, where in the early chapters he organised the choice of Judas' successor, preached with stirring authority at Pentecost; and was the very first apostle to work a miracle. Peter went on to defend the apostles' right to teach at the Sanhedrin, and to condemn Ananias and Sapphira. It was Peter who first realised that Christianity was also for the Gentiles, after his meeting with Cornelius. Later he took a prominent part in the council at Jerusalem and went on to clash with St Paul at Antioch for hesitating about eating with Gentiles.

Early tradition links Peter with an apostolate and martyrdom at Rome. The New Testament does not tell us either way, but Peter being in Rome would make sense, especially as Peter's first epistle refers to 'Babylon', which was usually identified with Rome. Peter's presence in Rome is mentioned by early church fathers such as Clement of Rome and Irenaeus. Tradition also tells us that Peter suffered under Nero and was crucified head-downwards. There is no conclusive proof either way that St Peter's relics are at the Vatican,

but it is significant that Rome is the only city that ever claimed to be Peter's place of death.

St Peter was a major influence on Mark when writing his gospel, and the First Epistle of Peter was very probably his. (Many scholars believe that the Second Epistle was written at a later date.)

From very early times Peter was invoked by Christians as a universal saint. He was the heavenly door-keeper, the patron of the Church and the papacy, a saint both powerful and accessible.

In England there were important dedications to Peter from early times: monasteries such as Canterbury, Glastonbury, Malmesbury, Peterborough, Lindisfarne, Whitby, Wearmouth, and especially Westminster. Cathedrals were named after him, too: York, Lichfield, Worcester and Selsey. In all, it has been calculated that 1,129 pre-Reformation churches were dedicated to St Peter, and another 283 to SS Peter and Paul together.

Images of Peter are innumerable, but his portraiture remains curiously the same: a man with a square face, a bald or tonsured head, and a short square, curly beard. Not surprisingly, his chief emblem is a set of keys, sometimes along with a ship or fish.

29th June St Paul, apostle to the Gentiles

Like Peter, Paul (d. c. 65) also started life with another name: Saul. This great apostle to the Gentiles was a Jew born in Tarsus and brought up by Gamaliel as a Pharisee. So keen was he to defend the god of his fathers that he became a persecutor of Christianity, and even took part in the stoning of Stephen. He hunted Christians

down and imprisoned them, and it was while on his way to persecute more Christians in Damascus that he was suddenly given his vision of Christ.

It was the decisive moment of Paul's life - Paul suddenly realised that Jesus was truly the Messiah, and the Son of God, and that He was calling Paul to bring the Christian faith to the Gentiles. Paul was then healed of his temporary blindness, baptised, and retired to Arabia for about three years of prayer and solitude, before returning to Damascus.

From then on Paul seems to have lived a life full of hazard and hardship. He made many Jewish enemies, who stoned him, and wanted to kill him. Nevertheless, Paul made three great missionary journeys, first to Cyprus, then to Asia Minor and eastern Greece, and lastly to Ephesus, where he wrote 1 Corinthians, then to Macedonia and Achaia, where he wrote Romans, before returning to Jerusalem.

After stonings, beatings and imprisonment in Jerusalem he was sent to Rome for trial as a Roman citizen. On the way he was shipwrecked at Malta; when he finally reached Rome he was put under house-arrest for two years, during which time he wrote the four 'captivity' epistles. Later Paul may have revisited Ephesus and even have reached Spain. Tradition tells he was eventually martyred at Rome during the persecution of Nero, being beheaded (as a Roman citizen) at Tre Fontane and buried where the basilica of St Paul 'outside the walls' now stands.

The belief that Peter and Paul died on the same day was caused by their sharing the same feast day.

Paul was not only a tireless missionary, but a great thinker. His epistles played a major part in the later development of Christian theology. Paul's key ideas include that Redemption is only through faith in Christ, who abrogated the old Law and began the era of the Spirit; that Christ is not just the Messiah, but the eternal, pre-existent Son of God, exalted after the Resurrection to God's right-hand; that the Church is the (mystical) body of Christ; that the believers live in Christ and will eventually be transformed by the final resurrection.

It is difficult to overemphasise the influence of Paul on Christian thought and history: he had a major effect on Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Calvin and others. In art, Paul is depicted as small in stature, bald and bandy-legged, with a long face, long nose and eyebrows meeting over deep-set eyes. His usual emblems are a sword and a book. In England he was never as popular as St Peter, and ancient English churches dedicated to him alone number only 43.

The history of the relics of Peter and Paul is not very clear. Tradition says that Peter was buried at the Vatican and Paul on the Ostian Way under his basilica. Certainly, both apostles were venerated from very early times both in the Liturgy and in private prayers, as testified by Greek and Latin graffiti in the catacombs of the early 3rd century.

The Revd Dr Jo White continues her Reflected Faith series with what it can really mean to 'be still.'

Reflected Faith: Sit and be Still

How do you 'sit' in church? I'm a wriggler and change my position on the seat often. I cross one leg over the other, then swap them over, stretch them out, then cross them at the ankles. I do the same with my arms. I lean one way and then the other.

In other words, 'I'm a fidget.' But having been absent from a church building for so long, I wanted to think this month about simply *sitting and being still* before the Lord.

I'm well aware we've done little else this last 18 months - but if you manage to get into a church building, for whatever reason I'd like to encourage us all to just sit still and breathe in the place. To relish being 'back'!

To sit 'heavily' in that spot. To feel the solidity of the surface you are sitting on. Lean into it. Feel how it supports you. Feel each part of your body where it is touching the chair or pew.

Look around you at all the distinctive seating set aside for the different participants of the church: the choir, the worship leader, a deacon or curate, the priest and so on.

In an Anglican church there will be a chair especially dedicated for the use of the Bishop.

However plain or fancy each piece of furniture is within your building, they all have the same purpose. To hold the person and keep them safe.

This month:

As you sit in the church building - or at home if you are not able to do so - think of all those people in the Bible stories who sat with Jesus. The number of times He taught in the Temple or in a synagogue, or to crowds gathered on a hill. Recall the Last Supper and His friends gathered sitting with Him to eat and share the Passover meal, and then recall the meal with the men from the Emmaus Road. So many meal times with the bold and the weak, the saints and the sinners. With you and me.

What does your lawn say about you?

A perfectly mown lawn may look beautiful, but it is also a sign of male control.

So says Monty Don, the *Gardeners' World* presenter. He is wary of what he calls the 'male obsession' to achieve a closely cut lawn which is of pure and perfect grass, without any other plants in it at all. Monty Don calls such an attitude to gardening "controlling rather than embracing," and reckons it is based on a desire to get just one more "aspect of life under control".

Instead, Don urges that at least part of our lawns should be encouraged to become wildflower meadows, which are much better

for the environment. He explains: “Cutting grass burns fossil fuel, makes a filthy noise and is about the most injurious thing you can do to wildlife. Whereas, simply letting grass grow ... is probably the single most effective thing you can do in any garden of any size, to encourage, particularly, insect life, but also small mammals, invertebrates and reptiles.”

The Ven John Barton considers Prince Philip's questions on religion.

A prince's legacy on matters of faith

Just when we thought the last word had been written about the late Duke of Edinburgh, it emerged that he had a genuine interest in theology. That dashing young naval officer, who became the Queen's dutiful consort and accompanied her to thousands of church services, was someone who listened intently to sermons, thought through what was being said, and then asked questions.

Every Sunday when the royal couple were at Sandringham, a diocesan bishop was invited to preach in the parish church. Afterwards, they were grilled by the Duke who, we are told by one of them, showed that he “wanted to be intellectually and spiritually engaged”. That's a polite way of saying he wasn't prepared to swallow what came out of the pulpit if he wasn't convinced by it.

Some Christians are suspicious of people who probe the faith. Should it not be taken on trust? Who are we to question the Almighty? For

others, doubt hovers uninvited. Honest doubt won't settle for unbelief but will continue to persevere with its enquiries. The Russian writer and philosopher Fyodor Dostoyevsky wrote: “It is not as a child that I believe and confess Jesus Christ. My hosanna is born of a furnace of doubt.” Dostoyevsky had lived a turbulent life, both personally and publicly, and wrestled mentally with himself and God. Some people are like that.

Prince Philip had been baptised into the Greek Orthodox Church and was received into the Church of England just before his marriage. He organised much of his own funeral, and if you followed it, you will remember how traditional it was. Many of the prayers were from the 17th Century Book of Common Prayer, the hymns were more ancient than modern, and the Bible readings confidently proclaimed the magnificence of God's Creation and Jesus' teaching about the resurrection. These are basic to Christianity and it was from such a foundation that he was able to explore.

So, if you wake up one morning questioning everything you have believed, take it is a spur to dig deeper and ask questions. Be encouraged by Philip, who shunned a second-hand faith because he wanted to know the truth for himself.

The next time you hear a sermon which you can't understand or disagree with, don't let the preacher get away with it. And if, in your private conversations with God, you find yourself praying, ‘Lord, I believe; help my unbelief,’ you won't be the first. See Mark 9, verse 24.

St James the Least of All

On getting to church at a social distance

The Rectory
St James the Least of All



My dear Nephew Darren

Since your parishioners mostly live in an area of half a square mile, where their only concern in getting to church is whether to take the underpass, or to risk a dash across the ring road, you may have little understanding of the problems our folk have in travelling our long country lanes to church, especially as we are keeping our social distance from each other.

Several parishioners have decided that they can't possibly share cars even with their own spouses, as in their 15-room homes they have successfully (and in some cases, happily) avoided each other for months. So the lane outside the church has filled up each week with Mercedes nudging Audis, and Land Rovers easing in between Bentleys.

Others arrive on horseback. But they are careless about leaving their horses to graze in the churchyard, and I have had to remind

them twice that flowers in memorial vases are not fodder. The horses do help to keep the grass down, but unfortunately our verger now objects to standing outside during Mattins, holding the reins of half a dozen horses. He says it is not part of his job description, which only confirms my view that there is entirely too much fuss these days about having job descriptions at all.

Major Crompton's devotion to his new sit-on lawnmower has inspired him to travel to church on it. Since he is unable to uncouple the mowing apparatus, the tarmac on his two-mile drive is acquiring interesting patterns. His drive at two miles per hour along narrow lanes means he arrives leading a procession of cars with drivers given the opportunity to exercise the Christian virtue of patience.

Mrs Pendleton, on the other hand, leads a small but select group from the Mothers' Union who are all keen cyclists. They all arrive on a whoosh of fresh air, their hair in total disarray, but with pink cheeks glowing with health. Nobody in church minds sitting near them, as anyone who can manage to peddle an old three-gear bicycle up the hill to our church is most unlikely to be sickening for anything.

Finally, of course, the majority arrive on foot, having negotiated fields, stiles and assorted cattle on the way. The countryside may well praise God, but one does wish they wouldn't bring quite so much of it into church.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Thank God for church ladies with word processors. These sentences (with all the BLOOPERS) actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced in church services.

The Fasting & Prayer Conference will include meals.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community. Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say 'Hell' to someone who doesn't care much about you.

Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

Potluck supper Sunday at 5:00 PM. Prayer and medication to follow.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon

This evening at 7 PM there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 PM. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

Neighbourhood Watch

In one small rural village the local vet also led the local Neighbourhood Watch group. Late one night the phone rang, and his wife answered. An agitated voice inquired, "Is your husband there?"

"He is, but tell me, do you need him as the vet or the Neighbourhood Watch?" the wife asked.

"Both!" was the reply. "We can't get our dog's mouth open, and there's a burglar in it!"

**

Friend?

Arriving at church to attend a wedding, a formidable looking lady in a large hat was greeted by the usher. "Are you a friend of the groom?" he ventured.

"Certainly not," she said indignantly. "I'm the bride's mother."

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Curate

As the enthusiastic curate was preparing to move on to his first church as a vicar, a parishioner asked him what he thought had been his main contribution to the life of the church. He replied: "People here didn't know what sin was until I came."

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Belief

Our elderly vicar was very devout, but sometimes lost his place during the service. One Sunday as we reached the Creed there was a long silence, so the curate went across to him and gently touched his arm. "I believe in God," she whispered.

The vicar smiled back happily. "Oh, so do I, so do I!"

**

Out to graze

A group of elderly British tourists were touring Holland by bus. They stopped at a cheese farm where a young guide led them through the process of making cheese from goat's milk. She showed the group a lovely hillside where many goats were grazing.

"These," she explained, "are the older goats put out to pasture when they no longer produce." She then asked, "What do you do in Britain with your old goats?"

A spry old gentleman answered: "They send us on bus tours!"

**

Egyptian this and that

A group of tourists was watching the re-enactment of an ancient Egyptian religious ritual. One pointed to the statue that was being praised, and asked a nearby local for the name of the god. "Why do you ask?" the local man replied.

The tourist shrugged. "Oh, just idol curiosity!"

**

Great religious truths

During these serious and troubled times, people of all faiths should remember these four great religious truths:

1. Muslims do not recognise Jews as God's Chosen People.
2. Jews do not recognise Jesus as the Messiah.
3. Protestants do not recognise the Pope as the leader of the Christian world.
4. Methodists do not recognise each other in the pub.

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Calendar and Intentions for June 2021

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

No Occasional Offices this month

PARISH DATES

Thur	3rd	4.00pm: Archdeacon's Visitation (Bolton Parish Church)
Sat	5th	Litter Picking after mass
SUN	6th	12.00pm: 100 Club draw
Tue	8th	Home Communion in the area
Thur	10th	Home Communion in the area
Sat	12th	Diocesan Synod
SUN	13th	6.30pm: Evening Prayer & Benediction
Tue	29th	Ss Peter & Paul: Mass 7.30pm

Tue	1	S Justin: Those persecuted for their faith
Wed	2	feria: The new Deanery of Bolton
Thu	3	feria: Our PCC, Churchwardens and Officers
Fri	4	feria: The new Area Deans, being admitted tomorrow
Sat	5	S Boniface: The Church in Germany

SUN	6	CORPUS CHRISTI: The Parish and the People of God
Mon	7	feria: The homeless, the unemployed and the lonely
Tue	8	feria: Those receiving the Blessed Sacrament in their homes this month
Wed	9	feria: The Churches Together in Tonge Moor
Thu	10	feria: The Bishop of Manchester and his staff
Fri	11	THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS: The Parish and the People of God
Sat	12	The Immaculate Heart of Mary: The Parish and the People of God
SUN	13	11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: The Parish and the People of God
Mon	14	feria: The mentally ill and those who care for them
Tue	15	feria: The Bishops of Beverley, Ebbsfleet and Richborough
Wed	16	feria: Our local Councillors and Borough officials
Thu	17	feria: The Society, and the work of Forward in Faith
Fri	18	feria: The work of ACS and Vocations to the Sacred Priesthood
Sat	19	feria: Our local tradespeople
SUN	20	12TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: The Parish and the People of God
Mon	21	S Aloysius Gonzaga: Those ministering to Covid patients
Tue	22	SS JOHN FISHER AND THOMAS MORE: Right relations between Church and State
Wed	23	feria: The work and mission of the Mother's Union
Thu	24	BIRTH OF S JOHN THE BAPTIST: The Parish and the People of God
Fri	25	feria: Fr Nick Johnson and the people of St John's, Tuebrook
Sat	26	feria: The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham and its Priests Associate
SUN	27	13TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: The Parish and the People of God
Mon	28	S Irenaeus: All who suffer for their faith in Christ
Tue	29	SS PETER AND PAUL: The Parish and the People of God
Wed	30	feria: Religious communities and vocations to the religious life

CHURCH WARDENS

David & Ruth Taylor: 31 Wisbeck Road. Tel: 01204 396409

OFFICERS AND ORGANISERS

email addresses can be completed by adding "staugustinestm.org.uk"

PCC Secretary: Katherine Taylor Tel. 01204 531053 - email: pccsec@

Treasurer: Sue Loftus Tel 01204 302051 - email: treasurer@

Walsingham Cell: Elsie Hollinrake Tel: 07486 982586

Church Flowers: please contact the wardens for the time being

Child Protection: Margaret Mullen Tel: 01204 695964 - email: safeguarding@

Brownies: Nichola Smith Tel: 07748 188215 - email: brownies@

Sunday School: Ruth Taylor Tel: 01204 396409

Mothers' Union: Elsie Hollinrake Tel: 07486 982586 - email: mu@

Organist: (St Augustine's) Mike Cheetham Tel: 01204 391963

Organist: (St. Aidan's) Peter Pemrick Tel: 01204 527699

Parish Hall Bookings: Sandra Anderson Tel: 01204 383158 - email: hallbookings@

Wednesday Morning Coffee Shop: John Harrison Tel: 01204 792691

Caretaker - St Aidan's Hall: Andrew Settle Tel: 01204 450321

Parish Paper: Mike Cheetham - email: magazine@