

# The Liberal Catholic Church

IN THE BRITISH ISLES



## NEWSLETTER No. 7



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### CHURCH REGISTER

9 August 2006 — Cremation	Neil Anthony Diplock
13 August 2006 — Admission of Server	Hilary Howell
15 August 2006 — Cremation	Michael William Page



Our Lady of Peace, Shanti, Belgium



### EDITORIAL

**IT HAS BEEN** a busy time since our last Newsletter. The Rev. John McGlashan from Ealing has joined us. With his church qualifications going back many years, being an innovative Priest-in-Charge at St. Francis, Tekels Park, Camberley and one of the organisers of the Annual St. Francis Children's Church Camp from its beginning, he has much to contribute to our work. We welcome him.

Rev. Chris has also been busy, training and Admitting a Server, Blessing and taking a Service at Colin Stebbing's Centre, in addition to his regular duties at Our Lady of the Starlight. We should also remember the Rev. Charles, who, with his connection with the Ipswich Crematorium, has the opportunity of introducing many for the first time to our special uplifting Funeral Service. Nor should we forget the steady work done by the Harbours down in Gillingham.

Postal restrictions mean that we have had to print our October Weekend Programme on the final sheet of the Newsletter, so that it can be torn out.

## Our Contents

Apart from our continuing extracts from Bishop Pigott's *Parting of the Ways*, and Rev. Chris's excellent thesis on *The Early Years of Christianity*, we have included two very short contemporary Articles; *A Talking Point* and *Just a Thought* which will hopefully spark off ideas and discussion.

In addition, for the discerning, it should be mentioned that the brief extract on page 4, from the U.S.A *Clergy Notes of September 1952* was written when Bishop Pitkin was the Vicar General and he is therefore shown as 'The Very Rev.' and not 'Rt. Rev.'.

Finally we are pleased to be able to include Rev. Elizabeth Parker's thoughtful Sermon on The Assumption of Our Lady.

+Allan. Editor

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## AN OLD JOKE

What is missing here

CH....CH

Gussed it?

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See the article on page 6



OUR LADY, SEAT OF WISDOM



## ORATORIES

Under the Episcopal Vicar General  
The Rt. Rev. Allan Barns

### ORATORY OF SAINT RAPHAEL

Paradise Now, Mow Hill, Winesham, Ipswich,  
Suffolk. IP6 9EH

**Holy Eucharist:** 1st Sunday in month at 11:00 am

**Other Services:** Please call.

**Clergy:** The Rev. Charles Mugleston,  
Priest-in-charge

**Telephone:** 01473 785672

### ORATORY OF SAINT RAPHAEL

37 Tufton Rd, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 7LF

**Holy Eucharist:** Usually on third Sundays -  
Please call

**Other Services:** Please call.

**Clergy:** The Rev. Robert Harbour,  
Priest-in-charge

Deacon The Rev. Carol Harbour

**Telephone:** 01634 232673

### ORATORY OF OUR LADY OF THE STARLIGHT

Jasmine Cottage, Apperley, Glos. GL19 4DE

**Holy Eucharist:** Please telephone for details.

**Complin: Healing/Benediction:** As arranged.

**Clergy:** The Rev. Christopher Parker,  
Priest-in Charge

Deacon The Rev. Elizabeth Parker

**Telephone:** 01452 780277

### ORATORY OF OUR LADY OF COMPASSION

6 Tudor Court, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5QH

**Services as arranged**

**Clergy:** The Rt. Rev. Allan Barns,  
Priest-in-Charge

**Telephone:-** 01892 689420

### CENTRE OF OUR LADY, SEAT OF WISDOM

4, Patten St., Birkenhead, Merseyside CH41 8DN

**Complin:** 1st Monday in the month

**Other Services: as arranged.**

**Telephone:** 0151 201 9179 (Colin Stebbing)

## VISIT OUR MAIN CHURCH WEB SITE

<http://kingsgarden.org/English/organizations/LCC.GB/LCC.html>

where you can download useful leaflets and literature. Click on Further Magazines, Albanus or Liberal Catholic Institute of Studies (LCIS)

Or our Clergy can supply leaflets, if preferred.

## THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

by

The Rt. Rev. F.W. Pigott, MA

Part Five

of a précis by  
Colin Stebbing

### 5. The Doctrine of Man

The teaching concerning the divinity of mankind is perhaps the doctrine for which the Liberal Catholic Church most especially stands.

It is a teaching previously confined to the East.

If accepted, the teaching will help people to realize their brotherhood with all mankind.

Its implications are as follows.

- God and man are one.
  - Of not only Christ, but of the true inner self of all mankind can it be said that there never was a time when it was not.
  - Of not only Christ, but of every one, can it be said that he or she is a Son or Daughter of God from all eternity.
  - Not only Christ, but all mankind is of one substance with the Father.
  - Not only Christ, but all mankind is true man.
- Not only Christ, but all mankind is of two natures, one higher or divine, the other lower or human.

So now we must ask what difference lies between Christ on the one hand, and mankind in general on the other?

There is no difference in the divinity of each. There is only one God.

The difference lies in the manhood.

Christ has made perfect his manhood, lifting it into the Godhead, and he has done this through the efforts and experiences of many incarnations.

His mission in his incarnation two thousand years ago, was to help us to reach the same heights, and so save us from the sins which hinder our progress.

But how can we prove this?—only by allowing it eventually to prove itself.

We must ask:—

- Does the teaching ring true?
- Does it cast light on the difficulties of life?

Is it thus in itself inherently probable?

We may further ask why Christianity does not make a greater appeal to the minds of enquiring people. It must surely be because it remains tainted with the idea of a God who is separate and aloof, requiring sacrifice to appease his wrath.

It is impossible to imagine how mankind can be one with such a God.

It is to be hoped, then, that in its teaching of this doctrine, the Liberal Catholic Church will be able to help mankind.

## A TALKING POINT

Rt. Rev. Allan B. Barns

The Liberal Catholic Church has completely neglected the valuable spiritual insights available through Christian Mysticism.

A sweeping statement made by a friend, and one that no doubt could be easily rebutted in a superficial way. However, the result of this lack of interest has produced a somewhat one-sided presentation of Christian teaching and ethic. In certain respects our Church lacks that roundness, that caring, understanding, other-worldly approach that is found in the true mystic. We have concentrated on being pseudo-scientific, down to earth in our teaching. One has to use the word pseudo-scientific since clairvoyance, on which much of our instruction is based, useful though it is, is in no way scientific, proven by repeated reproduction. There is more to the services of the church than pipes, and colours and tubes, although very helpful and different those ideas are. They should in no way be belittled. They are very important. However, the truth of the matter is that they only give us half the story. The softer more other worldly side of Christ's teaching is missing!

We have always had Mystics in the Christian Church, well known ones such as John of the Cross, Meister Eckhart and Julian of Norwich as well as many not so well known ones, but what is so interesting is the fact that the divine revelation of the Gnostic Gospels in Egypt at Nag Hammadi in 1945 and, in particular Elaine Pagel's promotion of them<sup>1</sup>, has brought us back to a better understanding of the child-like clarity and lack of harsh management of the early church before it was institutionalised. Back to the real teaching of Jesus.

The result of all this has been a reawakening of the true leaven of the mystic approach and the coming forth of a number of modern mystics. There is no better exponent of this mystic renaissance than Andrew Harvey and his latest book *Son of Man*<sup>2</sup> which well sums up the ideas now 'floating about on the higher planes'!

The truly interesting thing about this modern mystic approach, as with the famous mystics of the past and particularly the Gnostic Gospels — surely mystic literature, is the stress placed on the 'Sacred Feminine' as a counter-weight to the harsh masculinity of normal High Church Christian teaching with its almost frantic efforts to fill the genuine void thus created by, so often, a sentimental over stressing of the cult of the Blessed Virgin, the docile earthly Mother.

The mystics encourage us to look at the life of Christ in Jesus and see his care for mankind, and, dare we say it, for the women around him shining out of the New Testament stories. This is quite apart from the strong stress laid on this side of his nature in the Gnostic Gospels. With their idea of direct communication with the beyond they play down the male dominance of the time that the Church so quickly took over as its own, and high-lighted the importance of the equality of women disciples. To take just one Bible example. The one that we all remember. The woman taken in adultery whom Jesus forgave. This despite the fact that she must have been very naughty in-

deed when we think of the salacious comment 'in the very act' which has always guaranteed the special interest of every schoolboy (and schoolgirl?) ever since! But what about the man, her partner?

Jesus also emphasized the softer side of the Father by often referring to Him as 'Abba' — 'Dad', the loving parent rather than the stern father, thus giving us a further clue to his real nature.

Andrew Harvey brings out the importance of the modern Christian mystic movement by once again showing forth the importance of the Divine Mother the sacred feminine, God the Mother, in fact, in the shining forth of the Cosmic Christ, the coming again of the Lord of Love in tomorrow's world. This idea of God the Father/Mother radiates clearly through the Gnostic Gospels. The *Gospel of Philip* refers to the Spirit as Mother (ruah). That of the *Hebrews* likewise. The *Apocryphon of John* refers to God as a Trinity of Father, Mother, Son. Or again, read the scenes with Adam and Eve in *The Tragedy of Man* by Madach.<sup>3</sup> Regretfully there is not space to quote from this here.

In the twilight land of here and beyond, the land of Tir na n'oiige, lies a secret pool, surrounded by the dark of the forest. It is quite quiet except for the slow ripple of the white paths of reflected light glittering from the moon and stars. The sun has yet to rise. Near the shore can be seen a long canoe. It is full of men. The one in front has a weak lantern. They discuss where they should be going; the best design needed for the prow to cut through the water; and how to use their individual paddles. They are very serious. They are the Church that we know and love.

Unnoticed in the water is a woman floating, quiet, enjoying the satin-cool smoothness of the water. She seems not to be going anywhere, just looking up at the stars, relaxed and enjoying the creation around her. She is Sophia, the teacher of Wisdom.. The Divine Feminine.

What a difference it would make if these two aspects could work together. Ready to greet the sun of the new age as it rises over the trees. Maybe then we might at least catch a short glimpse behind the veiling curtain of matter at the true reality. Maybe we might sense beyond God the Father. Maybe beyond God the Father/God the Mother, to the Mystery at the back of all things. The God of Unity, of All in All. The God of the solemn beauty of the funeral bell. The God of the fun of the child skipping into the future just for the joy of being alive.

If we as Liberal Catholics can only make the effort, make a small start to bring these two aspects of the Godhead together in our work, what a clearness it could make. Gone would be all the worries about distinctions of men and women working together and all the fuss of today. In would come, the more feminine aspects of a Christ of love and tolerance and care. Yes, there would still be the blood of suffering in the chalice of matter, but it would also be the Holy Grail of service for all humanity. Here we have ready the Light of Wisdom that forms the link and meeting point between angels and men.

Surely we should grasp it now.

Notes

1. *The Gnostic Gospels*. Elaine Pagels. Weidenfeld & Nicholson. London. 1980
2. *Son of Man*. Andrew Harvey. Penguin/Putman. New York. 1998
- 3- *The Tragedy of Man* Madach. a definitive translation from the Hungarian by Rev. Iain MacLeod. Canongate. Edinburgh. 1993



## PARISH WEEKEND ALTAR AT HORNE FARM 2003

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### THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF HOLY ORDERS

This is a FREE Church. We - especially the Clergy - give our love, our time, our toil, our money, all that we have and are, to the service of God by serving our fellow man through the Church of Christ. This we do of our own free will and accord, for no one urges it upon us - or at least no one ought so to do.

Having offered ourselves freely, we are given tremendous privileges, grave responsibilities, and mighty powers, by no less a Personage than Christ Himself. It is He to whom we offer ourselves, it is He who accepts and who ordains. Having solicited and accepted His commission, we are still free, bound only by our honor, by our sense of duty. None can compel us to do our duty in this Church. It is our responsibility to seek out where our duty lies, through prayer and meditation, and having seen it, to be about it wholeheartedly and cheerfully. If we neglect our duty and go running off to "greener pastures", either some other must shoulder more than his share of the burden, or else that duty will go undone, the work of Christ for humanity be neglected. If we fail to exercise the powers of our Holy Orders, to keep open the channels which have been made through us from Christ to His people, we shall betray His trust and in consequence shall lose the vision of the Light which once was ours and fall back into the ways of the world of darkness.  
**It is ever thus.**

The Very Rev. Wm. H. Pitkin  
September 1952

# THE EARLY YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY

## Part 2b

**The Rev. Chris Parker**

**NOW** we will look at what happened to the Jerusalem church in the decade immediately following the deportation of Paul to Rome (circa 60 CE). The Jerusalem Church was strongly opposed to Paul and his Gentile mission. Therefore Paul's arrest and his extradition to Rome should have marked the ultimate victory for James, and his congregation. However events were to take place rapidly that would turn this victory into a pyrrhic one. There were a couple of events which happened during that decade that was to profoundly change the movement that eventually became known as Christianity.

The first important incident was the death of James in 62 CE. The loss of James probably weakened the control the church had over the other churches outside of Palestine.

The second crucial event was the Jewish Revolutionary War of 66-70 CE. Being devout Jews, the simmering tensions between the Jewish people and Rome must surely have affected the Jerusalem church as well. It is highly likely that the majority of the congregation perished in that Jewish War against the mighty Roman Empire.

During the last days of his life Jesus had assembled his disciples together on the Mt. of Olives overlooking the Temple. The disciples were uncertain and anxious about the future especially in light of Jesus' cleansing of the Temple and stopping the sacrifices, and his astonishing statements delivered in holy anger denouncing the Pharisees. The disciples opened the conversation by talking about the beauty of the temple and its courts. Jesus responded by predicting the soon-coming destruction of that magnificent building:

Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. But he answered them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down." As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" (Matthew 24:1-3)

Both the Temple and the City of Jerusalem were indeed about to be destroyed. With four Legions, Titus the Roman General, later to become Caesar, began the siege of Jerusalem in April, A.D. 70. He posted his 10th legion on the Mount of Olives, directly east of and overlooking the Temple Mount. The 12th and 15th legions were stationed on Mount Scopus, further to the east and commanding all ways to Jerusalem from east to north. The 5th Legion was held in reserve.

On the 10th of August, in the year A.D. 70 -- the 9th of Av -- in Jewish reckoning, the very day when the King of Babylon burned the Temple in 586 B.C., the Temple was burned again. Titus took the city and put it to the torch, burning the Temple.

The famous historian Josephus speaks of the house to house fighting that occurred:

"These Romans put the Jews to flight, and proceeded as far as the holy house itself. At which time one of the soldiers, without staying for any orders, and without any concern or dread upon him at so great an undertaking, and being hurried on by a certain divine fury, snatched some what out of the materials that were on fire, and being lifted up by another soldier, he set fire to a golden window, through which there was a passage to the rooms that were round about the holy house, on the north side of it. As the flames went upward, the Jews made a great clamour, such as so mighty an affliction required, and ran together to prevent it; and now they spared not their lives any longer, nor suffered anything to restrain their force, since that holy house was perishing . . . thus it was the holy house burnt down . . . Nor can one imagine any thing greater or more terrible than this noise; for there was at once a shout of the Roman Legions, who were marching all together, and a sad clamour of the seditious, who were now surrounded with fire and sword . . . the people under a great consternation, made sad moans at the calamity they were under . . . Yet was the misery itself more terrible than this disorder; for one would have thought that the hill itself, on which the Temple stood, was seething hot, as full of fire on every part of it." (Josephus, *Antiquities* xi. 1.2) And Josephus lists the horrendous outcome

"To give a detailed account of their outrageous conduct is impossible, but we may sum it up by saying that no other city has ever endured such horrors, and no generation in history has fathered such wickedness. In the end they brought the whole Hebrew race into contempt in order to make their own impiety seem less outrageous in foreign eyes, and confessed the painful truth that they were slaves, the dregs of humanity, bastards, and outcasts of their nation."

"It is certain that when from the upper city they watched the Temple burning they did not turn a hair, though many Romans were moved to tears." (Josephus, *The Jewish War*, p. 292)

The prediction of Jesus with regard to the city and the Temple were now fulfilled for Jerusalem was totally destroyed and as Jesus had predicted - not one stone was left upon another. When the Temple was set on fire the Roman soldiers tore apart the stone to get the melted gold. The Menorah and vessels were carried to Rome and the treasury was robbed.

When the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 some 37 years after the death of Jesus the period of the second exile began. The Jewish people were soon to be scattered throughout the earth.

## JUST A THOUGHT

**I recently had** an interview with the woman Chaplin from our local Hospice. She was looking for ideas about Remembrance.

She asked me if the Liberal Catholic Church attracted young people. Ah! What could I say? We certainly used to in my youth during the war and the Annual Church Camp at Tekels Park Camberley is still very well supported by parents and their youngsters. However, we do not see many teenagers at the regular services in this country. Why? Our Church has a useful leaflet, 'The Children in the Liberal Catholic Church', but is it widely circulated? It is full of pertinent questions, but it is up to us to supply the answers.

However, all this is, to a certain extent, beside the point. Surely we should also be thinking of the teenagers and young adults who are only too well aware of the state of modern society and while deep down they yearn for spiritual answers they are often bored and put off by the mainly old, fussy and, to them, dreary and uninvolved rituals in orthodox empty churches clinging to the past. Yes. Some Roman Catholic Churches have tried to be up-to-date while still retaining their authoritarian attitudes and some of the 'Gospel' churches, are presumably quite fun, but do they really address today's issues?

In the spirit of our forward looking Founders, the Liberal Catholic Church is in an ideal position to continue to be 'ahead of the game' and met this challenge. Nevertheless, we need to remember that the world of today is very different to the world of 1918. Young people, dissatisfied with the way civilisation is going, are searching more and more on the Internet for the answers and leadership, rather than looking for the help that today's Churches are failing to provide. Many churches are now nearly empty or redundant.

We have a really first-class well stocked internet Web Site, something near to our Presiding Bishop's heart. Is it reaching the current generation in the way that the Alpha Course is doing over here for example? Are we just preaching to the converted? Think about it, only those who know already are in 'Liberal Catholic Church'. Of course our church is important. The architect and Site Manager's Office are important but nothing much will get done without the hard work of the young labourers on Site working out the plans of Christ, the great architect, for his world.

We are given a building, not made with hands. The Church is more than just a church or oratory. It contains the meaning of life itself with all its rewards and seeming failures. We have traditional services designed to act as channels of Christ's love and power. Recall again our **Act of Faith**. Take it out into the world. It contains spiritual truths beyond 'churchiness'. Truths that will appeal to the young at heart, to today's teenagers, if we can but put the truths over; by word; by example and even by having the right key words for Internet Search Engines to pick up. We believe that we are getting there.

**JUST A THOUGHT.**

**The future is NOW. It is up to YOU.**

**+Allan**

We have seen that the Jerusalem Church, consisting as it was of Jesus' relatives and his apostles, was the legitimate heir to the mission and message of Jesus. Yet the Jewish War of 70 CE resulted in the scattering of the remnants away from Jerusalem and other parts of Judea and Galilee. In order to identify the probable theological descendants of this church, it is important to note, the five main differentiating characteristics of the Jerusalem Church:

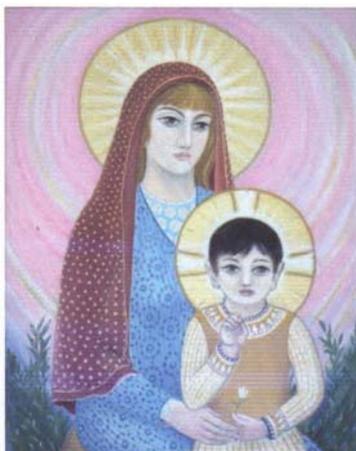
- They were all, without exception, devout and practicing Jews and demanded at least some adherence to the Mosaic law by Gentile converts.
- James held the prominent position in the church. He remained unchallenged as the leader for three decades until his death in 62.
- They were opposed to Paul and his law-free mission
- The Jewish war had a devastating effect on the Jewish Christians but some of them survived by escaping to the Transjordan.
- They were never called Christians. They were called Nazarenes, Ebionites and followers of The Way.

So to summarise then: Paul opposed Jewish tradition and preached a new covenant from God that included women and Gentiles (non-Jews). This was an important move, allowing many new converts and followers. He gained a new life of which he could be proud. However many of his attempts to preach his new way in the synagogues were rebuked and he spent more than one stretch in prison. Paul combined the Hellenic 'Christ' theme with the Messiah theme of Judaism, and the result was the sacrificial nature of Christ that the non-Protestant Churches share to this day, thus leading to the accusation that Christianity is a 'Paulist Doctrine;' far removed from the original teachings of Rabbi Yeshua (Jesus). Some have called Paul the real 'Father' of Christianity.

*In part 3 we will look at the lives of some of the other Apostles.*

**Rev. Chris Parker**

**A Lovely Painting  
by  
Tina Carlile  
from her  
Exhibition  
at Burgh House  
Gallery  
Hampstead  
Summer 2006**



## Festival Day: Assumption of Our Lady

### Being a Sermon

by

Rev. Elizabeth Parker

The Holy Mother Mary is known as Queen of the Angels and Star of the sea, looking after the sea and mariners. Besides a wonderful mother she is also associated with the moon and stars, hence the Oratory Our Lady of the Starlight. Many LCC priests honour Our Lady by naming their Oratories after her. She often wears a diadem of stars on her head. All of this points to her cosmic and universal being.

We are familiar with Mary in the Annunciation and Mary as blessed mother as we will hear in the Gradual and the Gospel for the Assumption. Also seen as the fount of Wisdom the Epistle is about wisdom and so Mary is associated with wise counsel.

However there is no mention of Mary being assumed, that is, physically taken up by the angels before she died, so why do we go to the trouble of celebrating a seemingly impossible act? Perhaps an impossible question!

It is a vast subject with many points of view from different cultures, and I am going to explore some of the myths and legends and the accepted 'truths' about Our lady, from an LCC viewpoint, particularly in relation to Islam and Catholicism. The Protestant wing of the Church of England ignores such a festival.

We often forget Mary, mother of Jesus, was Jewish. Both her parents were Jewish. She was born in Palestine. The meaning of her first name ("Mariam" meaning "sovereign" and "God's beloved") points to the fact she was no ordinary lady. The line of the mother is of particular importance to the Jews.

Historically she would have led the traditional life of all the Jewish families of her time in Nazareth. According to the local customs and religious rites of her people, as part of a devout family, she would go to the Temple in Jerusalem every year with her relatives, until she was of the age of marrying. In 1st century Palestine people awaited the Messiah, the Saviour of the Jews. Mary would have longed for the coming of the Messiah!

The Bible points us to the greatest story ever written; of a mother and her son. Having given birth to Jesus she had the normal worries and cares of most mothers today. He was an inquisitive child who wandered off to the Temple became engrossed in spiritual debate and set about his own ministry. Here we may surmise that she was proud. Imagine what it must have been like for her, as a woman and a mother to have seen her son become such a strong leader and then to watch him die on a cross. Any mother who has lost a child will find it hard to bear in the secret chambers of the heart. Yet she was graced to see her son in his resurrection.

The Greek Orthodox have built a church in Jerusalem where they claim Mary is buried. Yet the legend is that Mary lived and worked after Jesus' death with John as her protector, in Ephesus supplanting the pagan God-

dess Artemis, where John was buried and, according to the Roman Catholicism, Mary did not physically die but was assumed, literally taken physically into heaven by the angels. There are no Biblical references for this. Although the LCC celebrates the Assumption it is not dogmatic in its approach, but more cultivating a mystical and imaginative reality, not necessarily fact.

Two centuries ago the German mystic and stigmatist, Sr Catherine Anne Emmerich, (1818-1824), saw images of Mary's house on a hill near Ephesus. On Mt Nightingale very near ancient Ephesus, a stone house was found fitting the shape and all other details of St Catherine's vision. That house is now restored and venerated as the house where Mary came to spend the last years of her life, receiving one and a half million visitors a year.

The first church ever dedicated to Our Lady was built in Ephesus in the second century. The early Christians had a principle that they only built a church in someone's honour if that person lived and died or was martyred there. In 431 AD a council of the Church was held in Ephesus declared Mary to be the Mother of God. They believed Mary had been there. Even recent Popes have given these thoughts their blessing: In (26 July) 1967 Pope Paul VI visited the house, and in (30 November) 1979 Pope John Paul II celebrated Mass beside the house and in 1991 he called it "the material home of Mary." There is a strong feeling at Ephesus as Chris and I discovered a few years ago when we visited it. The place is imbued with healing. Interestingly the house on the hill is also a centre for Muslim pilgrimage... It is one of the few places in the world where Muslims and Christians pray together peacefully.

Muslims also have a strong devotion to Our Lady. With about 34 references in the Koran, the Virgin Mary occupies an important position and gives her name to Sura XIX. She is its central figure as the mother of the prophet Jesus. Mohamed affirms that: "Every child is touched by the devil as soon as he is born and this contact makes him cry. Excepted are Mary and her Son," verses 35-37 of Sura III. Moslem commentators have deduced and affirmed the principle of Mary's original purity, (III, 45). To confirm the extraordinary value of the person of Mary, the fact that to her, alone among creatures, and to her Son, is attributed a nature exempt from all sin, is sufficient. We know that the Islamic religion ignores the concept of original sin; it attributes to man, however, a natural defectibility which makes him impure and imperfect. This is closer to the LCC idea

In the Koran Mary's childhood is entirely a miracle. She grows under direct divine protection, she is nourished daily by angels (III, 32) and has visions of God every day. Everything contributes to making her and her Son a *signum* for mankind as intended by Mohamed and the whole Islamic tradition. The Koran gives a more detailed preparation for the advent of Jesus than the Gospels.

Like the Bible The Koran asserts that God sent his Spirit under the semblance of a handsome young man who was the Archangel Gabriel, often identified in ancient time with the Spirit of truth or divine Spirit. It should be

pointed out that in the Koran version Mary does not utter her responsible acceptance of the divine will, as she does in the Bible. Here she merely asks: "How can I give birth to a son if no man has touched me?" receiving the answer; "Just so! God creates what he wants: when he decides something, it is enough that he should say: let it be! and it is."

The Moslem tradition does not unanimously recognize Bethlehem as the place of the Messiah's birth, nor does it attach much importance to it. On the contrary, it lingers on the episode of Mary who, tired and sad, invokes death. The Spirit of truth answers her once more, bringing to her both spiritual and material comfort with the delightful miraculous story of the Virgin who quenches her thirst with the water of a stream that suddenly gushes out under her feet, and who feeds on the dates of a palm tree.

The Koran gives no details about the birth of Jesus. It at once presents Mary who, returning among her people and showing them the Child, becomes the object of terrible slanders. The episode, brief but dramatic, is suddenly solved when the Infant, speaking unexpectedly from the cradle, takes his Mother's defence and exonerates her from all blame. This miracle, to which the Koran refers more than once however has importance for Islamic theology. The Child speaking from the cradle is a violation of natural laws and therefore bears witness to the greatness of the Spirit that is in him.

It would appear that there are some points of contact between Muslims and Christians, but they have also gone their own ways. For Roman Catholics praying the Rosary to Mary is a most beautiful gift to give to her every day. The name 'Rosary' means a garland of roses and it was given this name after a legend which spread all over Europe which stating that Our Lady was seen taking a rose from the lips of a young monk each time he prayed to her. It also said that during an exorcism performed for the diocese of Rome in 2002 that the demon in the afflicted person said to the priest, "every Hail Mary is another blow on my head. If Christians knew the power of the Rosary my power would be finished." Indeed the power ascribed to Mary is one which many Christians have often been slow to accept.

So when was Mary's supernatural nature noted? Epiphanius (315-403) wrote: "If the Holy Virgin had died and was buried, her falling asleep would have been surrounded with honour, death would have found her pure, and her crown would have been a virginal one...Had she been martyred according to what is written: "Thine own soul a sword shall pierce", then she would shine gloriously among the martyrs, and her holy body would have been declared blessed; for by her, in truth, did light come to the world."

By 600 the Byzantine Emperor Mauritius officially established throughout the empire that Mary fell asleep and did not die. St. Hippolytus associated the Ark of the Covenant of Revelations, chapter 11 with Mary's incorruptible flesh from which Christ's flesh was taken: "Now the Lord was without sin, being in His human nature from incorruptible wood, that is, from the Virgin..."

Here the cosmic element is once more invoked, the 'incorruptible' Virgin.

On 8<sup>th</sup> December 1854, Pope Pius IX, the first infallible Pope defined the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary in *Ineffabilis Deus*. The Assumption is here viewed in the light of the mystery of Christ in that it demonstrates the power of His resurrection in raising Mary to the glory of Heaven. The Assumption should also be understood in light of the mystery of the Church. Vatican II's "Lumen Gentium" has this to say: the most Blessed Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle... And so believers turn their eyes to Mary who shines forth to the whole community of the elect as the model of virtue.

Late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century H.P. Blavatsky noted the origins of Virgin Births in Hindu and Egyptian traditions:

Bishop CWL also examined the role of the Divine feminine throughout the world. The point being made is that the story of the Immaculate and Divine femininity is there in all traditions with its own variations. No one in the LCC is expected to believe any of these stories but what we may wish to consider is the effect they have on us and monitor that, for we can search our own understandings and stretch our minds.

Whilst we contemplate the words of our service today we may wish to underpin our thoughts and feelings with these thoughts:

Our lady is essentially Mary the Mother, who typifies: love, devotion and surrender. She is an icon of pity, Consolatrix Afflictorum, the consoler and comforter, helper of all who are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness or any other adversary.

She is a channel through which love and devotion pass to Christ her son and King, but she is in turn a channel for the outpouring of His love in response. May the sight of these lilies (the flower of wisdom) and roses (divine love) here today remind you of the high thoughts which uplift and stir the imagination and feelings to greater heights of love and peace towards all peoples of the earth. If meditation upon Mary, the mother of Jesus, can do this for us, our earthly hearts and minds can be assumed into the higher life that awaits us, here and now. All else is conjecture.

**A reading from St. John Damascene  
(7-8 Cent.) which illustrates the above.**

*But how could death swallow this truly blessed soul, who humbly gave ear to the word of God, and was filled with the power of the Holy Ghost, and at the message of an archangel, accepted the will of the father, and without passion and without man conceived in her womb the Word of God Who fills all things, and who, as was fitting, brought Him forth without pain and who was wholly united to God, how could death devour her? How could hell receive her? How could corruption dare touch the body that had contained Life? Such thoughts are abhorrent and wholly repugnant in regard to the body and soul of the Mother of God. Looking upon her, death trembled...Not for her the dark descent to hell. For her a smooth and gentle path to heaven had been prepared...*



# The Liberal Catholic Church

IN THE BRITISH ISLES

## CHURCH WEEKEND

Well Chapel Winesham

Courtesy of Rev. Charles Mugleston

**Friday 27 October to Sunday 29 October 2006**

### PROGRAMME

#### Friday 27<sup>th</sup>

- 6.00 pm Arrivals and welcome to the Chapel  
7 00 pm Special commemoration of St. Raphael, the Archangel  
Healing Service followed by Solemn Benediction  
Refreshments  
9 00 pm Complin

#### Saturday 28<sup>th</sup>

- 10.00 am Arrivals & Tea/Coffee  
10.30 am High Mass & Minor Orders  
Buffet Lunch  
2.30 pm Talk by Aidan Hart on Icons & Blessing of Christ at the Well Icon  
Followed by practice for Vespers  
4.00 pm Tea/Coffee  
4.30 pm Discussion 'Working Together' and Clergy Synod  
6 00 pm Solemn Vespers and Solemn Benediction  
7.00 pm Supper (Restaurant)

#### Sunday 29<sup>th</sup>

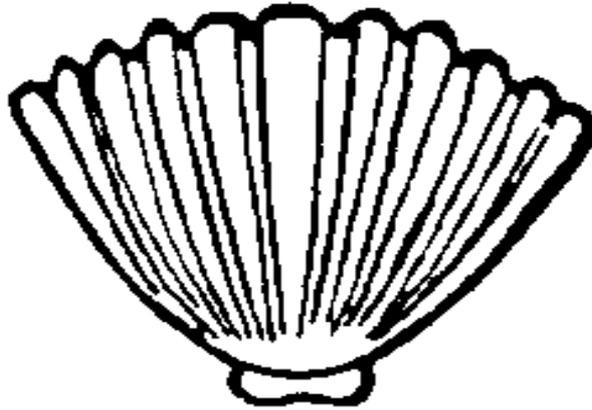
#### **TRINITY XX (Serenity)**

- 10.00 am Tea/Coffee  
11.00 am Con-celebration of the HOLY EUCHARIST  
1.00 pm Buffet Lunch  
2.30 pm Closing of the Weekend

Contact Rev Charles Mugleston, for Booking information and details of how to get there

Tel: 01473 785672 or email: [thewell.chapel@virgin.net](mailto:thewell.chapel@virgin.net)





## **INTERNATIONAL LIBERAL CATHOLIC PILGRIMAGE TO WALSINGHAM, SPRING 2007**

The LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE BRITISH ISLES is currently planning an International Pilgrimage to Walsingham "England's Nazareth" - "A place of Visions and Angels" revealing 'The Mysteries of Mary' to the Hearts of The Faithful since 1061.

We have intentionally used the word 'International' because our Pilgrimage is open to all Liberal Catholics, their friends and those interested in our work, not only in this country but particularly from abroad. We aim all to be united in a common pilgrimage.

If you would like to receive details of this forthcoming event in The Mother Province of The Liberal Catholic Church when they become available, please contact:

**Rev. Charles Mogleston,  
Paradise Now,  
Mow Hill,  
Witnesham,  
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IP6 9EH  
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**Tel: 01473 785 672**

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Meanwhile, do visit [www.walsingham.org.uk](http://www.walsingham.org.uk) for further general information.