

# The Liberal Catholic Church

IN THE BRITISH ISLES



## NEWSLETTER No. 8



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### CHURCH REGISTER

11 September 2006 — Cremation	Edna May Webster
14 September 2006 — Cremation	Joseph McLaren Muir
18 October 2006 — Cremation	Dorothy Pauline Turner
25 October 2006 — Cremation	Beatrice Dorothy Clifford
28 October 2006 — Confirmation	Hilary Howell
28 October 2006—Minor Orders, Reader	Colin Stebbing
1 November 2006—Cremation	Thomas William Flynn



### EDITORIAL

**FIRSTLY, and most importantly,  
we wish you all a peaceful and rewarding**

## Christmas

It is a time when we need not only to enjoy the happiness and joy of the Festival Season but also, at the same time, to live and meditate on the mystery of Christ continually born in the darkness of the world to help and guide us out into the Light of the future. Not always that easy, unless you are able to start the Festival with that extra special magic of Midnight Mass.

As you will see from the articles on our Church Weekend at Well Chapel and the visit to Belgium for the European Episcopal Synod we have all been very busy, quite apart from the usual services. We have a number of plans on hand for next year. The Ordination of Rev. Elizabeth Parker being the most important. You will all be advised as soon as the date and venue is fixed.

Then we have the Walsingham Pilgrimage, and later next year a special Church Weekend to be organised by the Revs Harbour and based on their Oratory of St.Raphael.

I am very pleased to report that Synod approved the appointment of Rev. Chris Parker as my Provincial Vicar General. As I am now getting on in years this seems important to ensure continuity and relieve me of some of the day to day routine business.

Articles for the Spring edition of our Newsletter are already being collated. One being a Sermon by CAURUS (or Corus) —a title to please the classical minded.

The text, taken from Ecclesiastes 3, being: "To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven, a time to keep silence, and a time to speak."

## 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*, Part 3a, we are most fortunate in being allowed to include a serious study by Rev. John McGlashan on Celtic Christianity entitled *Listening to the Heartbeat of God*. This is a subject of which he has made a special study. If anyone would like a reprint as a separate leaflet, let me know.

Also we include a short sermon neatly tying in the Intent of Serenity and the new Well Chapel Icon, illustrating the important message of Christ talking to the Samaritan girl at the well.

On page 5 we have quoted a short article by Rev. Charles about the Weekend at his Well Chapel and, for those historically minded, an extract from the Old Catholic Synod Minutes about Bishop Wedgwood's Consecration.

And now for something different! We conclude this number with a Christmas whimsy. Yes, it has been printed before, but it seemed appropriate for the Season. It contains a hidden message.

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**Bishops Eric, James & Ralph  
Crozier:  
Pigott's. Celtic & Wedgwood's**



## 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 Muggleston,  
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)

### EALING: Services as arranged

Rev. John McGlashan,  
21 Hollingbourne Gdns. Ealing. W13 8GN  
**Telephone:-** 0208 9988724

**VISIT OUR MAIN CHURCH WEB SITE**  
[http://kingsgarden.org/English/organizations/  
LCC.GB/LCC.html](http://kingsgarden.org/English/organizations/LCC.GB/LCC.html), for useful leaflets

**Or our Clergy can supply leaflets, if preferred.**

## THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

by

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

Part Six

of a précis by  
Colin Stebbing

### 6. The Doctrine of Atonement.

#### The traditionalist view.

Although various theories have been put forward over the centuries, a simplified version of the traditional view of the doctrine of the atonement is that

- All mankind since Adam and Eve are morally diseased (described as being born in “original sin”).
- Christ, by His life and death somehow paid a debt owed by mankind (presumably to God.)
- Mankind can only be saved by union with Christ.
- Original sin is defeated by Baptism and Subsequent sin is cured by the Sacraments of Absolution and Communion.

The whole idea is based upon, and necessitated by the legacy of the Old Testament idea of a God of vengeance who seeks and requires blood-sacrifice and atonement, rather than a God who is a loving Father.

A major objection to the appeal of such a teaching is that it abandons to their fate all those who died before Christ, and also all those who are not Christians.

The Liberal Catholic teaching involves a very different theory as we will subsequently discover.



+EVERT'S PRESENTATION CAKE

## CHURCH WEEKEND

at

WELL CHAPEL

27-29 October 2006

**What** a marvellous venue for a Church Weekend.!

The Habours kindly drove me there and we arrived on time, despite hold-ups.

We had a rather busy weekend with Minor Orders, a Confirmation as well as a Concelebration and the Blessing of Rev. Charles's new Icon of Christ at the Well. In addition we were honoured to have Bishop Evert from Central Europe with his Chaplain with us.

The afternoon talk by Aidan Hart, at the local beautiful old Church (which we took over to accommodate everyone) was well attended and most rewarding.

Thank you Charles for all your hard work arranging everything and allowing us to share your lovely home and Chapel.

This is what the Rev. Robert had to say:

Fr Charles is to be congratulated on the success of our Church weekend at Paradise Now, in Suffolk. He made us all very welcome, kept us well fed and busy with a full and comprehensive itinerary.

His new Oratory, St. Raphael was lovely and it was a pleasure to assist at the various services held there. The atmosphere was truly uplifting and beautiful and the location perfect. We were pleased to meet +Evert and his friend from Sweden, Fr. Alistair of the LCCI from Edinburgh and also Keith. We were treated to a talk by Aidan Hart on religious Icons at the lovely church in Witnesham, on Saturday afternoon. It was fascinating.

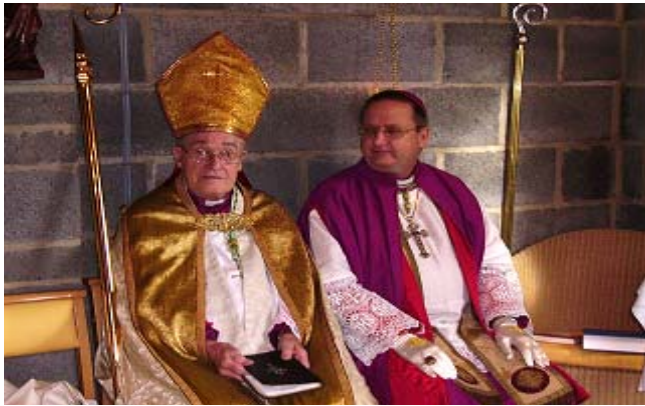
On Sunday +Allan led his merry men, (three Priests), in a Concelebration of the Eucharist assisted by the two deacons. A most interesting experience.

We are very fortunate that Colin plays the organ so well and his contribution throughout the weekend was greatly appreciated. A sung Mass accompanied by the organ is indeed a beautiful service.

Our congratulations to Colin for his ordi-

nation to Reader, and also to Hilary on her Confirmation into the Church.

A final thank you to +Allan for all his support and understanding, and of course to Fr. Charles for his warm hospitality. We look forward to visiting again in the future.



### **BISHOP ALLAN & BISHOP EVERT**

The Revs. Chris and Liz Parker have written in with their pertinent comments.

The road to Paradise is often strewn with obstacles that hold you up and in our case it was roadworks! However the warm welcome more than made up for it and it was good to be with like minded people who want to worship God and do His Service. Aidan's talk on icons was a suitable reminder of the hidden life in all things.

The soft chairs in the living room were rather under utilized as we were on the go most of the time. Perhaps we need to build in space on these weekends so we can also relax together. We would like to thank you Charles for making your lovely home available to us. It was good to be at the blessing of the beautiful icon on the altar.



**GROUP AFTER MASS AT WELL CHAPEL**

## **THE EUROPEAN EPISCOPAL SYNOD AT NATOYE, BELGIUM 13-15 October 2006-**

**This was a unique,** happy and useful meeting, especially as it gave me the opportunity of meeting six of my brother bishops for the first time. Exchanging emails is not quite the same!

We held seven Synod sessions. After outlining the procedure for Intercommunion with other LCC Groups; the admission of Clergy and individuals and the conditions imposed by Canon Law, we discussed the Lectionary and care needed if minor alternations to services were to be proposed for consideration by the full Episcopal Synod.

Reports on the advance of the various Provinces and Jurisdictions were very heartening and you will be pleased to learn that our growth in the British Isles received a special commendation from Bishop Maurice for the way we had organised our work.

A truly inspiring meeting and the obvious enthusiasm of all spoke well for the future of our Church.

Our many other activities and services in all the different languages, are outlined by the Rev. Parkers ( well, Chris and Liz) to whom I am constantly in their debt for providing transport over to Belgium and keeping a much needed close eye on me. **+Allan**

This is what they have written:

Taking + Allan to the Episcopal Synod in Belgium was a wonderful opportunity to renew some old ties and make new ones with our European brethren. Whilst the bishops conferred we were able to get to know Vivek better as we explored the locality with him, visiting some very atmospheric churches and a quaint old-fashioned bakery with the warm sweet aroma of hot bread.

It also gave us a chance to visit our very good friend Marc in his new home in the middle of the countryside and meet his wife and children, about an hour away from 'Shanti'.

It was a busy weekend as +Evert asked Liz to assist him with Benediction and Chris became Crosier bearer for +Frank. Sunday morning England produced a High Mass with +Allan celebrating and Chris and Liz Deacon and Sub Deacon respectively. Tired but happy we drove home through the Belgium countryside in a quiet reflective mood satisfied that all was well.



**THE CHAPEL AT SHANTI**

## **BROTHER ICON & SISTER PRAYER**

### **Rev Charles Mugleston's Personal Report on our Church Weekend**

IT WAS A JOY to welcome Bishops, Clergy and friends, old and new to the L.C.C. Weekend at the Well Chapel in Suffolk, 27-29 Oct.

Such kindness shown – especially by those who travelled long distances such as +Evert Sundien and Vovek from Stockholm, Sweden, and Rev. Alistair Bate of the LCCI from Edinburgh, Scotland, were very heart warming – once again a big thank you to all who gave their time, expertise, support, in all various ways, not least in providing us with a lovely range of food.

The moment/movement of outreach on the Saturday afternoon was likewise very touching.

Roman Catholics, Quakers, Orthodox Anglicans, Methodists, Pagans and Liberal Catholics joined together and thoroughly enjoyed a deep and delightfully wide ranging talk on icons by one of the U.K.'s foremost painters/authorities on them – Aidan H art from Shropshire, whose icons are well known and admired around the world.

People from Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex joined us for this memorable occasion – made even more so by the presence of Sister Wendy Beckett from the Carmelite Monastery at Quidenham Norfolk. A 'star' of many books and T.V. series on art and spirituality.-- her latest book being *Sister Wendy on Prayer*. Published by Continuum £12.99. Her smiling presence lit up our time together, complementing Aidan's service perfectly.

It was as though providence was saying to us "the goodness, truth and beauty of Brother Icon can only be fully appreciated /fulfilled in mystic oneness through the grace of sister prayer."

**DeoGratias**

**Rev. Charles Mugleston**

## **ARCHIVE HISTORY**

**For those of you** who were interested in the photograph of Bishop Wedgwood's Consecration that we published in our 2006 New Year edition, the following quotes from Bishop James's edited extracts from the archive Minutes of the Liberal Catholic Church (Old Catholic) might also be of interest.

Epiphany February 13th 1916 at a Chapel specially provided for the purpose at 15, Broomfield Road, London, W. Bishop Willoughby was assisted by Bishops King and Gauntlett as co-consecrators. The Provost, Dr. J.B. Seaton, Canons Carter and Farrer, and the Rev. Theodore Bell were in attendance. Canon Carter officiated as Master of Ceremonies. The Provost read the Protocol of Election. The three bishops imposed hands with the words, "Receive the Holy Ghost", the Anointings, the delivery of the Instruments and other details of the Ceremony, were performed with scrupulous care and exactitude according to the rite of the Roman Pontifical. Canon Wedgwood was consecrated (to serve) as Regionary Catholic Bishop for Great Britain and Ireland and the British Empire, and was elected in the style of Presiding Bishop of the Old Catholic Church for the said jurisdiction. The instrument of consecration was duly signed, sealed, and witnessed, Fr. Seaton acting as secretary ad hoc.

There was a (large) congregation of about 100, among whom the following in addition to the clergy signed the instrument of consecration:

Principal G.S. Arundale, M.A., Ll.B. Cantab., Arthur Paddocks, B.Sc., Birmingham, M.I.C.E., Kingsley Bayly, Solicitor, Esther Bright, Mabel Besant Scott; Montagu R. St. John; Theodora St. John; Albert B. Dexter; G.L. Becton; Silene Oppenheimer.

Notice of the election was intelligibly and distinctly read in the Vulgar Tongue at the regular mass in the presence of the congregation on the Sunday previous to the Consecration at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Red Lion Square, London, W.C. as well as immediately prior to the Ceremony of Consecration.

The following are the documents testifying to the Election of Canon Wedgwood to the Office of Bishop.

We, the undersigned clergy and laity of the Old Roman(1) Catholic Church at a meeting held for the purpose at No. 1 Upper Woburn Place, London, W.C. on December 10th, 1915 do hereby elect the Very Rev. James Ingall Wedgwood to the honour and dignity of the Episcopate and in view of this election we who append our names hereto do pray that the said Priest may receive visible Episcopal Consecration to the greater glory of God and the honour and welfare of the Church.....

(1) Note 'Roman' inserted ad majorem cautelam' by +Mathew

# THE EARLY YEARS OF CHRISTIANITY

## Part 3a

**In this Article** we look at what the Bible tells us about the apostles. Each of the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-4, Luke 6:12-16) record the years spent with Jesus the countries they preached in, and the circumstances of their death. So who were those chosen by Jesus near the beginning of his ministry? There is much confusion around some of them because of the differing names by which they were known. Those named as Apostles, are generally accepted to be:

- **Simon:** called Peter (Meaning - rock) by Jesus, also known as Simon bar Jonah and Simon bar Jochanan (Aram.) and earlier (Pauline Epistles were written first) Cephas (Aram.) by Paul of Tarsus and Simon Peter, a fisherman from Bethsaida "of Galilee" (John 1:44; cf. 12:21)
- **Andrew:** brother of Peter, a Bethsaida fisherman and disciple of John the Baptist, and also the first Apostle Called
- **James:** ("the Great") and John: sons of Zebedee, called by Jesus "Boanerges" (an Aramaic name explained in Mk 3:17 as "Sons of Thunder")
- **Philip:** from Bethsaida "of Galilee" (John 1:44, 12:21)
- **Bartholomew:** in Aramaic "bar-Talemai?", "son of Talemai" or from Ptolemais, some identify with Nathanael
- **Thomas:** also known as Judas Thomas Didymus - Aramaic T'oma' = twin, and Greek Didymous = twin
- **James:** ("the Less"), son of Alphaeus, some identify with James the Just
- **Matthew:** the tax collector, some identify with Levi son of Alphaeus
- **Simon** ("the Canaanite"): called in Luke and Acts "Simon the Zealot", some identify with Simeon of Jerusalem
- **Judas Iscariot:** the name Iscariot may refer to the Judaeen towns of Keriath or to the sicarii (Jewish nationalist insurrectionists), or to **Issachar**; he was replaced as an apostle in Acts by **Matthias** The identity of the other apostle of the twelve varies between the Synoptic Gospels and also varies between ancient manuscripts of each gospel:
- Mark names him as **Thaddaeus** or **Thaddeus** in some manuscripts of Matthew. Also identified as **Lebbaeus** or **Judas** ("the Zealot") in some manuscripts of Matthew. Luke names him as Judas, son of James or in the KJV: "Judas the brother of James" Luke 6:16

After His baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus chose His disciples to be His apostles and the Bible clearly lists only 12. However, It should also be remembered from part 2 where I pointed out how St. Paul considered himself to be an Apostle, having being called on the road to Damascus by the resurrected Christ himself (Romans 1:1, 11:13 and Galatians 2:8). Also the two women in the Life of Jesus namely his mother Mary and Mary Magdalene although not generally accepted as such, I would argue should almost certainly be considered as Apostles, they were with John the only disciples percent at the death of Jesus on the cross and were the first to find Him risen.

The word *apostle* comes from the Greek word *apostolos*, which means *sent forth*, *ambassador*, and originates from the verb *apostello*, *to send forth*. The apostles were Jesus' ambassadors to the world. He gave them special instructions and power to cast out unclean spirits, raise the dead and heal the sick. He then sent them forth by twos to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:6), with the following mission "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give." (Matt. 10:7-8)

In the four Gospels the term "disciples" refers to the twelve apostles. Most of the apostles were young men coming from the "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Matt. 4:15), part of northern Palestine, whose simple inhabitants were despised by the Jews.

Three of the apostles, Peter, James and John, were especially close to Jesus. They were the only ones let into the house of Jairus by Jesus, when He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead (Luke 8:41-56). They were the only ones taken up on a high mountain by Jesus where they witnessed His transfiguration: "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Matt. 17:2), and where Moses and Elijah appeared to them. They were the only ones taken by Jesus to be close to Him in Gethsemane, while He was praying on the night of His arrest.

As mentioned in part 2b of this series, it was only to apostles that Jesus foretold the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. This prediction was fulfilled in AD 70, when Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans. He revealed to them the events leading to the end of the world — the Tribulation, His Second Coming and the Last Judgment — on the Mount of Olives.



TEMPLE MOUNT FROM MOUNT OF OLIVES

They were told the duties and the fate of Christians, the Lord's servants, in three parables (Matthew, chapters 24–25). Jesus told them three times about His impending death and resurrection: first, 6 days before His transfiguration, the second time probably the day after His transfiguration, and the third time on their way to Jerusalem before His Passover:

“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem: and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.” (Matt. 20:18– 19)

Jesus spent the Passover with His twelve apostles. Peter and John prepared the meal. We can not be sure but it is quite possible that Mary Magdalene was also present. On that evening He predicted Judas' betrayal three times: once during the supper and twice after washing the disciples' feet. He also revealed the true meaning of the Passover meal to them:



### **JESUS & HIS 12 APOSTLES AT THE LAST SUPPER**

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.” (Matt. 26:26–29)

After the supper Jesus laid His garments aside, girded Himself with a towel, washed the disciples' feet and wiped them with the towel. This represents spiritual cleansing and it is a lesson of humility for His followers. After this, they sang a hymn and went unto the Mount of Olives. There, Jesus predicted that the twelve will be offended in Him that night, that they will be scattered abroad, and that He will lead them into Galilee after His resurrection. Peter declared that he will never be offended because of Him, but Jesus' response was that Peter would deny Him three times that night before the “cock crow”.

Jesus went with His disciples to a place called Gethsemane later that night. He made them sit down and wait, while taking three of them, Peter, John and James, a little farther. After telling them to watch and pray, Jesus went to pray as well. Later on, He came back three times, and found them asleep each time.

Soon after this, Jesus was betrayed by Judas and arrested by the men of the chief priests and the elders. John and Peter followed Jesus to the palace of the high priest, but the other disciples forsook Him and fled. Peter even denied Him three times “before the cock crow” (Luke 22:61) as Jesus foretold him. The following morning Judas hanged himself for what he did.

The disciples were the first to hear from Mary Magdalene and “the other Mary” that Jesus had risen and appeared to the women. Jesus appeared to the disciples the same evening and breathed the Holy Ghost on them. He appeared to them again eight days later, and convinced Thomas, who was not present the first time and could not believe that Jesus had risen. The third time, He appeared to seven of the disciples at the Sea of Galilee (now known as Lake Tiberias) where they went fishing. Jesus spent forty days on the earth before going up to heaven. During this time, He talked to His disciples about the kingdom of God. He gave them the Great Commission, that the Gospel should be preached to the Gentiles as well:

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Matt. 28:18– 20)

Jesus promised the apostles to send the Holy Spirit upon them, so that they would be baptized not with water, but with the Holy Spirit, after which they would receive power and “...ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8). They were eyewitnesses to the ascension of Jesus to heaven, watching Him as He was caught up into the clouds.

Following the ascension of Jesus Christ to heaven, the eleven disciples returned to Jerusalem and assembled with Mary, the mother of Jesus, His brethren and other disciples, about 120 people in all. They filled Judas Iscariot's place with Matthias by casting lots. Matthias had accompanied them since John baptized Jesus.

As they were assembled on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came and filled all believers who were present in the room. As a result, they began to speak in many tongues, so each man from the multitude heard them speak in his own language. Then they started preaching, healing the sick and performing many “wonders and signs”. Peter's first powerful sermon led to the saving of 3000 souls, and his second to the saving of another 5000.

The chief priests and the elders threatened Peter and John very early in their ministry. The 12 apostles prayed to God for courage, signs and wonders, and as a result they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and “spoke the word of God with boldness”. They continued their work unabated: they cast out unclean spirits, healed the sick and raised the dead. As the number of believers grew, the high priest and the Sadducees put the apostles in prison, but the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors at night, freed them and sent them to teach in the temple.

King Herod launched a persecution campaign against Christians. James was killed with a sword. Peter was imprisoned, this time chained to two soldiers. At night, while the soldiers were sleeping, the angel of the Lord freed Peter and lead him out through an iron gate, which opened by itself.

The apostles were simple men, yet they were transformed by Jesus Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit to become the brave leaders of the new Christian faith.

In 3b we will look at the lives of the Apostles and where their ministry took them. **C.P**

## **TRINITY XX. Serenity**

### **Being a Sermon intended for our Church Weekend at Well Chapel, Winesham**

by

**The Rt. Rev. Allan B. Barns**

**This weekend** our Liturgy suggests that we think of Serenity as our Special Intent and the Collect for Sunday draws attention to the fact that the Godhead reigns at peace serene above the waterfloods. As a teenager said the other day, when talking about the state of our world, 'He should be so lucky!'

Outwardly, peace and serenity seem to be the last things that surround us at the moment. We are in the middle of the waterfloods of manmade death and destruction and natures catastrophes and calamities. Is this part of God's Plan or is it the final death throws, the last fling, of evil in the world? Are we living at the crossroads?

Recently, we have been forced by current world circumstances to look to the future of Christianity in general and particularly to the future of our own Liberal Catholic Church. We seem to be dividing up into many smaller branches from what a friend referred to as the 'old stump' founded by Bishop Wedgwood.

For older 'Libcats', to use a horrible Australian phrase, we miss the comfortable security and large services of the past. We can easily become depressed. The last thing that we see around us is 'that holy peace' of our collect. But is the situation depressing? Challenging, yes.

We are on the cusp of an exciting future. Old forms are being broken down to take advantage of humanities advancing knowledge so that we can start to reshape the truths that they contain and bring forward God's plan for the world.

Remember the saying of Jesus that is quoted in Matthew, Mark and Luke. 'You do not put wine into cracked bottles. The wine is there. The waters of esoteric knowledge that the New Age Water carrier Aquarius is bringing forward, as always, is there; the design of the bottles is there; it is up to us to allow the wine of God's message to have a firm container. While each church has its own designed container, God's message is, as always the same. In our case it is enshrined in our liturgy and ideals.

But you may say this is still in the future. It is here that we need to remember that the future is not something in the distance over the horizon. We are its custodians

now. To us falls the task of translating our heritage from the past into a shining vessel for future work.

The whole point is, that we should not thinking of the future. Our work is here and now. To borrow the title of McNeal's latest book, it is *The Present Future*. This is certainly not straightforward. We have no easy task to make the age old truths appeal to today's world and help the young around us. Our attitude and work is two pronged.. Certainly, as Liberal Catholics, we should be preserving and promoting the form, the services, that we have inherited. At the same time, as stated in our 'Statement of Principles' we have the duty to do Christ's work, to feed his flock.

This is not something that requires us to sit in a corner guarding our Liturgy for the few, very few, who sit with us. It requires us to be working out in the market place; to support and encourage and work with all who have the future of humanity, secure and at heart. To encourage and love humanists, for example. To Support all, church goers or no, who wish to help the world. That is to work for the Christ.

This is the only way to heal the division that are so abundant in the church today. We think that formal ceremonies help as a connecting link in the Kingdom. There are others who do not find such formal church worship helpful. We must not let that be a barrier between us. 'In my house are many mansions'.

It is interesting that these ideas are concisely summed up by the story of Jacob's Well with its strong connection with Well Chapel and its special Well Icon. If you can find a moment, do read the story in St John's Gospel, Chapter 4. where Jesus talked to the outcaste Samarian women at the well of life. His final words are that we should worship God in Spirit and in Truth. Beyond the form of things.

That is the message of the Well Icon. That is the message of our Intent for today, Serenity. Serenity in our true abode with Christ – serene above the waterfloods of this world. But that is only half of the message, for it is from that background of serenity and surety that we are pledged to go out into the floodplains of these troubled times to do the work of our Master Christ. To feed his flock as we are reminded in the opening sentence of our Statement of Principles. Our Liturgy and teaching are the tools are in our hands. Now it is up to us.. The future is secure in Christ. The future is now.

*Time did not permit including this sermon at the Weekend so it is printed here.*

©Allan B Barns

## **HELP WANTED**

We all know that our Benediction hymn was written by the LCC priest, The Rev. C. W. Scott-Moncrieff, but our Archives do not state who is the Rev. Pace referred to in the second verse. Can anyone help? He was obviously a regular attendant. 😊



## LISTENING TO THE HEARTBEAT OF GOD

### An Introduction to Celtic Christianity

By  
Rev. John McGlashan

**The interest in Celtic Christianity** to day is huge. Whether it is expressed in the music, saleable handicrafts, or the seemingly countless books about it, or in the growth of modern Celtic communities and retreats, this ancient way of describes how to be Christian, and how to relate to God, creation, or our neighbour, is attracting attention. This remarkable rediscovery of the ancient Celtic world and its belief system, has been an extraordinary revelation to many Christians in recent years, and to many of us who may be of Celtic origin or extraction the very phrase "Celtic Christianity" excites an aching hunger in the soul and a deep yearning in the heart.

Perhaps the essence of Celtic Christianity is best expressed in its belief that at the heart of all things is the Light of God. This is fundamental to the Celtic spiritual tradition, its liturgy, its art, its unique way of looking at life, and why it has an attraction for us in this modern age. Unlike most of the Western churches, the Celtic Church followed the tradition of St. John, that beloved disciple who leaned against the breast of Jesus at the Last Supper, "listening for the heartbeat of God". This way of seeing and understanding that at the deep down core of all things was the Divine, that God was to be discovered, heard and experienced everywhere and in all things, and that a true worship of God can neither be wholly contained within the four walls of a sacred building nor restricted to the boundaries of accepted religious tradition, was accepted as the most natural thing in the world. For the Celt every blade of grass, every sigh of the breeze, every splash of rain, every wave of the sea, every movement of the earth, every flutter of a bird's wing, every twinkle of a star, every ray of sunlight... and every breath of man contains the very life of God.

This ancient verse attributed to St. Patrick seems to sum up this Celtic understanding of the sacredness of all life.

Our God is the God of all,  
The God of heaven and earth,  
Of the sea and the rivers;  
The God of the sun and of the moon and of all the stars;  
The God of the lofty mountains  
And of the lowly valleys.  
He has his dwelling around heaven and earth,  
And the seas, and all that in them is.  
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.  
Of the lofty mountain and the lowly valley,  
The God above heaven,  
And in heaven,  
And under heaven.

Perhaps by now Liberal Catholics reading this will be beginning to empathise with this ancient Celtic way of looking at things because contemporary Liberal Catholic theology echoes much of the Celtic style and spirit. Perhaps we might regard these ancient Christian brothers and sisters of ours as the first Liberal Catholics!

But how did it all begin? Christianity first came to the British Isles in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century during the Roman occupation, probably through Christians in the army. But it was not until late in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century that the distinctive characteristics of what we can now call Celtic Christianity began to emerge. Following the Roman withdrawal from Britain at the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century there was nearly 200 years of separation between the Celtic and Roman churches, during which the Celts developed there own theological method and style. This distinctiveness was not so much about belief and the complexities of theology, which remained fairly common to the churches of East and West, but more about the Celtic church's emerging unique spirituality.

The Celts, living on the very edge of the known Western world, Brittany, Cornwall, Ireland and its outer islands, the Isle of Man, Scotland and the Outer Islands (Iona) and Northumbria and the tiny island of Lindisfarne, clinging to it by their finger tips, came to experience nature in all its unpredictable moods, and all creation as part of the fabric of a divine cosmic continuum. God was in all

Things, and all things were in God. Their tiny communities, often marked by high crosses, beehive-like stone huts, and oratories, looking like upturned stone boats, became centres of a powerful and lively spirituality, intimately bound to the wild landscapes in which they found themselves. They developed too, a unique style of art and decoration which expressed this binding relationship with the Divine and with all creation. The great stone crosses, many of which still grace the landscape, were laced with intricate and complex interwoven, and endless (without beginning and without end) patterns incised in the lofty shafts which stretched heavenwards, and the crosses which surmounted these shafts, enclosed in their Cosmic Circle, radiated energy horizontally to the local community and to the world. No one who has been in the presence of one of these beautiful crosses can doubt their power.

Perhaps it was to be expected that this unique form of Christianity would nurture its own saints, for after all its generous spirituality provided a fertile place for this to be possible. The names of these ancient saints, Patrick, David, Hilda, Columba, Aidan, Cuthbert, and many others have a magic quality about them, beckoning us from across the centuries to embrace the spirituality which nurtured them.

The monastery on the isolated western island of Iona was a school of saints, including Columba and Aidan. Columba remained on Iona while Aidan went to Lindisfarne, that equally isolated and tidebound and very barren island off the coast of Northumbria to establish his own monastic community. This became his base while he preached the Gospel to the inhabitants of the east coast, and from where his gentle, yet persuasive approach won many devoted converts. The influence of these gentle holy men and women still exerts a pull on us today. Their theology was largely that of the greater Church but subtly influenced by the monastic tradition of the Eastern Church, especially the Desert Fathers, and hence a Johannine emphasis was prevalent. That is they followed the tradition and writings of St. John, the Letters, the Gospel, and Revelation, all of which gave attention to the Word made Flesh, Christ incarnate in the world. Just as John leaned upon Jesus' breast at the Last Supper so the Celtic Christians

themselves listened for the heartbeat of God in their own mystical experience of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God was to be discerned in all things and all things were to be discerned in God.

The increasing influence of Rome began to have a detrimental effect on the Celtic Church and the Synod of Whitby (664 AD) at which Roman bishops met with reluctant Celtic bishops to thrash out some of the idiosyncratic elements of Celtic Christianity (as the Romans saw it!) was really the watershed for the Celtic Church, that unruly and independent minded community on the far outreaches of the known Western world. One of the things the Romans wanted to get straight was the dating of Easter. The Celts had one way of doing it (and it was a soundly Biblical based way) and the Romans had another, involving a complex astronomical calculation. Naturally the Romans won the case and from that time onwards the Celtic Church gradually fell into a sad decline. But it didn't entirely vanish. Its authentic spirituality retreated to the wilder and more remote parts of the West, in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland, and particularly to the Outer Isles where it was preserved in prayer, poetry, music, and later in liturgy. And there it remained until its re-discovery in recent years.

So what of today? The modern Iona Community, based at the ancient abbey in that lovely Western isle, and under the auspices of the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) maintains a programme of retreats, prayer, publishing and daily worship, very much in the spirit of the old community, while Lindisfarne, that still rather barren and tidebound island off the Northumbrian coast is home to the Community of Aidan and Hilda. This family of people, under the guidance of their guardian, Rev. Ray Simpson, an Anglican priest, promotes seasons of study, retreat, and liturgical worship in the Celtic pattern. There are other groups and communities too, in many parts of the English-speaking world undertaking similar works, all in the continuing spirit of the ancient saints and their communities. So Celtic Christianity and Celtic Spirituality are alive and well. *Deo gratias!*

The "Liberal Catholics" of those formative centuries gifted us with a rich and lasting heritage, a spirituality which links us with the natural

themselves listened for world, with the God within all things, and with a strong sense of community and respect for life in all its myriad forms. God is in all things and all things are in God.

### Ancient Irish.

Our God is the God of all things,  
the God of heaven and earth,  
the God of the sea and the streams,  
the God of the sun, moon, and stars,  
the God of the high mountains and the deep glens,  
the God above heaven, in heaven and under heaven.  
And he has a household - heaven and earth,  
And the seas and all that they contain.

Rev. John McGlashan

## A CHRISTMAS STORY

**Sarah and Nick** had finished making the paper-chains and been packed off reluctantly to bed — hopefully tired enough to drop off to sleep despite the anticipation of the mysteries of lumpy Christmas Stockings, presents around the tree, crackers and the special kitchen smells of Christmas dinner.

Traditionally, the grown-ups, Margaret and John, stayed up late to arrange the presents and decorate the Christmas Tree ready for morning.

Eventually, it was finished. The star twinkled on the very top branch catching the last glow from the embers of the log fire. All was ready for the magic of Christ's Birthday.

But something had been forgotten. She had been hiding in a corner, watching with intelligent interest the comings and goings, the discussions, and the arguments, hearing the crackle of tinsel paper, the tinkle of bells as each trinket was carefully unwrapped and hung in place. The pile of presents, bigger each year, were spread out under the boughs.

The door was shut and all was quiet. But something had been forgotten. She was still there.

Freedom. Oh! The pine needles were tested but prickly painful.

The lowest baubles tapped and nosed. At last one was careless enough to fall on the carpet and soon chased, scurrying with fright under the sofa where it could not be reached.

She decided that she must be really important. She had been trusted as The Guardian of the Tree. Whiskers were moved forward and then back; paws tucked under. The Guardian was on duty. Silence. Only the occasional creak from the dying fire. Watchfulness was easier with the eyes closed. All was peace.

Quietly, the hall clock muffled out the chimes of midnight.

Immediately the Star grew in brilliance and from within the heart of the tree could be seen the sharp clean steel of polished armor. The Knight took gradual shape. In his right hand partly hidden by the branches rested a long

silver trumpet; as long as a man's arm. In his left a white scroll. 'I am Gabriel, the Herald of all good things. The Master comes'

The vision faded and a quiet voice filled the silence of the room.

I am here. The wood lice in the skirting know my presence. The wind in the long grass is my breath and the sleepy fawn hidden in its depth is my dream. I laugh in the tumble of the mountain stream, my fun is the play of the terrors of the avalanche above for I am the eye of the eagle and I am the frightened vole that is its prey. I can be found in the fresh blood on the hungry tiger's claw and my voice is the peace of the mother's lullaby. I rest in the quiet of the country church, I live in the backwaters of time. Yet I am all motion, I shout for joy and travel in the heart of the hurricane, for I am the Destroyer of Forms.

'Even the sewer rat obeys my commands. Only foolish man is the heartache of my dreams.

'My teachers have told of the vastness of my kingdom, for the universe is but a hinge on the door-post of my true abode. They recount that I am the Ground of all being, the World Breath, The cloud of the Unknowing. Surely I am the dust of eternity, that underlies the worlds, the future of the scientists dream that knits all things together as one. The rocks and caves know that I am Love and Power and Truth and LIFE. Only man repeats the words and goes his way, and does not stop to listen to my voice.

'You must teach him once again.'

She opened one eye and twitched a whisker, for she knew the destiny of her kingdom.

The Tree returned to shadow and the faint glitter of its baubles awaited the dawn. The Master stood at the open door of our world and God's silence filled the room. It was Nick, the youngest, who came down first.

'Wow. Look at the Tree in the sunlight. Hallo, what are you doing in here?'

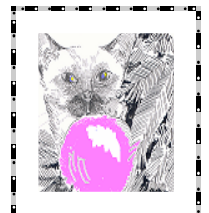
She was picked up and clutched much too tightly upside down in a very unladylike position.

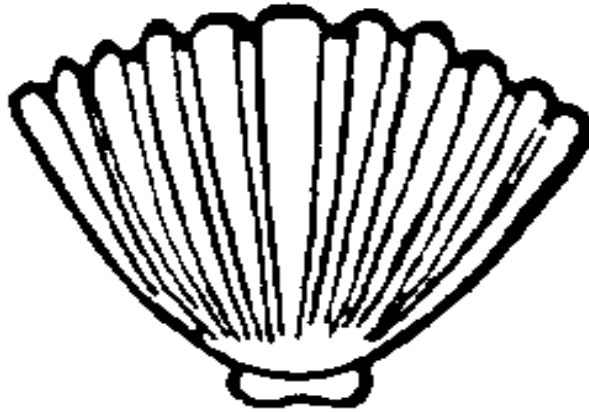
'Oh. I do love you!'

The Star shone forth.

'A very Merry Christmas', said her purr, but the smile on her lips showed that she knew that the teacher and the taught were one. There was still hope for the foolish ways of man.

A.B.B.





## **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:

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