

Geoff Nyburg

*Here is the text of Father Leonard's Address given at the funeral of Geoff Nyburg.*

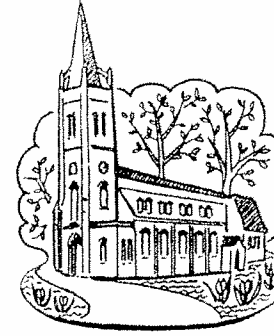
I first met Geoff when the Archdeacon of Croydon invited me to have a look as they say at the parish of All Saints Upper Norwood early in 2001. I came to the church and Geoff was standing in the nave. Various buckets had been placed around the church to catch the rain water that was coming in through the roof. The parish in the end was in an interregnum that lasted two and a half years. Geoff was at that time the only church warden. We discussed the building for a while, and then were joined by Jon Medlen who had come to give Geoff moral support. I went with them to Geoff's flat and over tea discussed the rather complicated situation the parish found itself in. Geoff had diligently carried out the responsibility as church warden of finding clergy to take Sunday services during the interregnum. I'm told only twice during that long period All Saints were without a priest for the Sunday Eucharist. He carried on as warden during my first year and returned for another spell at a later point.

We've already heard about Geoff's earlier life. I never asked Geoff a rather obvious question - why he had returned to the Church in middle life. This happened I think early in Alan Middleton's ministry at All Saints. Although that is by no means an unusual phenomenon, it would have been interesting to know how and why it came about from him. I know he began initially by coming to the 8.00 BCP Holy Communion and became a server at that service. Sometimes he would come to weekday services. I'm told he came over as a rather shy individual, although I can't say he struck me particularly like that. I found him pretty straightforward and someone you could speak to in a direct way and get a straightforward response, with a wry sense of humour. He was passionate about two other things. One was music and yes you've guessed it the other was food, being himself quite a gourmet chef. He was in my experience a really solid and faithful Anglican without being negative about other ways of being a Christian. He was a genuine patriot and loved England and its countryside. But I think it fair to say that he believed our beloved country had seen better days, and sometimes he would express this in rather pungent terms. It was also very clear to me during our conversations the high regard he had for his father.

His weight of course was bound in the end to give him serious health problems, and so it proved. Eventually he became housebound apart from periodic hospital stays. I found visiting Geoff not in any way a burden, taking him the sacrament and also just seeing how he was. In my experience anyway he maintained a pretty positive outlook in the circumstances, even if at times spiced with a dark sense of humour. In recent months it became clear that the situation was deteriorating and that a final crisis was going to happen. He remained positive right up to that final day and bore it all with great fortitude. We are about to enter the season of Passiontide in the church's year, and that last period in Geoff's life was one some anguish, both physical and emotional. I hope and believe his faith sustained him in times that must have been very trying. The God we see revealed in Jesus Christ is one that does not let us down and will never let us go. May Jesus our Redeemer hold him in his love, and may he rest in peace and rise in glory

#### NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Articles etc for inclusion are most welcome and can be left at the back of church or sent to the editor (details above). Items for the next issue should be with us if at all possible by the second weekend of the month. Thanks to all of you who have recently contributed to our newsletter.

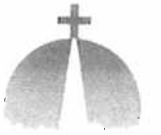


# THE NEWSLETTER

## ALL SAINTS CHURCH Upper Norwood

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### The Vicar's Monthly Letter

Dear Friends

We have just entered into the season of Easter. Holy Week is about God coming to us in his Son, taking upon himself the wrongs of the world, taking responsibility for the costly nature of creation. Something we can forget is that most profound witness to the message of the cross is not to be found in the words of writers and philosophers - or even in the poetry and music with which this message is often conveyed. The truth is conveyed in the example and common life of Christians whose lives and whose faith, even in the midst of suffering and tragedy, bear witness to what God has done for us in Christ. Easter in the Christian calendar is a season full of hope and promise. I was very pleased that despite the upheaval of the building project we had good numbers attending All Saints during Holy Week and Easter, to renew our selves as the body of Christ in this place. As the refurbishment and building works reach their final phase so far the project has gone very well indeed. Many people have commented positively about what is happening in the church building, and the quality of the work that has been undertaken. Change is always a difficult process, but as John Henry Newman wrote "to live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often". Easter is about change, new life, new hope, and new love. It is my hope and prayer for All Saints that it will take this great new opportunity to renew its life and witness as a community of faith, as it equips itself through this time for its mission.

With thanks for our partnership in the Gospel,

Love and prayers,

Fr. Leonard



#### CLERGY

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