



THE NEWSLETTER



ALL SAINTS CHURCH Upper Norwood

Issue No. 94 November 2011

Price 10p

The Vicar's Monthly Letter – Reflections on All Saints Day

Our Church is dedicated to All Saints, and at this time we celebrate the feast of All Saints---known and unknown, famous and obscure, great and small. We may think of saints belonging to the past, to the heroic ages of the early centuries when the Church faced persecution in the Roman Empire. But there were Christian martyrs in the many persecutions of the last century. Saints and martyrs belong to our age as well as the distant past. Last month many of us visited Canterbury and saw the newly restored place where St. Thomas Becket was martyred for among other things standing up to the state for the Church's spiritual independence. There were churches dedicated to St. Thomas Becket, and when they were built there would have been many people who knew him, so for them saints were not people of the remote past but of the present. This recalls what the word Saint originally meant in the New Testament---how each one of us is called to be a saint.

The essential mark of the saints is that they are all, in one way or another, holy---or set apart. They may be bishops or nuns, soldiers or hermits, scholars or mystics, or ordinary men and women, but they all are in their different ways marked by holiness.

If you think about the portrayal of the saints in a medieval manuscript, or painting, or in stained glass, they often surround the throne of God in the same way that an earthly king of the time was surrounded by his court. The saints were seen as being close to God and therefore able to ask favours on behalf of those who prayed to them--- this very much reflects the social and political ideas of the time. This may not be a very helpful image for us today in the circumstances of our own day. We now see the saints rather as having a solidarity with us---yet somehow bridging the gap which separates us from God because by their holiness they are also close to him.

Some of you may have seen the statues of new saints which are now in the main porch of Westminster Abbey---all saints of the 20th Century. One of them is Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was executed by the Nazis in the last days of the Second World War. Perhaps it is easier for us to identify with these figures of recent times and the political crises they faced. When the churches of Germany came to an accommodation with National Socialism, Bonhoeffer formed the uncompromising Confessing Church. To found it, and to join it, required great courage since many of its members were put to death. It was a school for holiness in which the love for God and for his people came before everything else.

Today the road to holiness is likely to require engagement with the world of action---the pursuit of justice and peace. This is important to remember less we think that holiness can only be found by withdrawing from the world in contemplation and prayer. Many saints were people of prayer and contemplation but others were deeply involved in the world of action.

We may sometimes feel we are so busy with work or family and other responsibilities that we have no time to seek the way to holiness. In that case, let's seek holiness through our work, through our family, and through our responsibilities, and find in these things a sense of solidarity with the saints, and so with God.

There have been times when holiness called men and women to martyrdom, to the work of mission, to the life of prayer and solitude, or to theological study. What do you think our time requires? Whatever you think about that---God calls us to holy and sacrificial living, for ourselves and others. Because holiness is not just for some Christians but for all of us.

Fr. Leonard

CLERGY

Vicar

Father Leonard Marsh
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Reader

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SERVICES

All Sunday 8am Holy Communion
10:00am Sung Eucharist
6:30pm Evening Service
Tuesdays 11am Eucharist

Other Services as announced

*A Forthcoming
Fundraising event:*

*17th December 2010,
7pm for 7.30pm*

*Christmas Celebration
Dinner*

Tickets £12 Adults,

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

All Souls Day
Mass---November 2, 8:00pm

Advent Carol Service---
Nov 27, 6:30pm

Christmas Carol Service---
Dec 18, 6:30pm

CONTACT DETAILS

Church Wardens

Kerin (Tom) Knight: 07985 490543
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Fr Leonard Marsh

The Weekly Service Sheet

For alterations or additions to our weekly sheet and bulletin, please contact Christine Williams,
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The Church's Website –

www.allsaintsuppernorwood.co.uk

Prayer for the Month:

Father all powerful, Christ Lord and Saviour, Spirit of love. You reveal yourself in the depths of our being, drawing us to share in your life and your love.

One God, three Persons, be near to the people formed in your image, close to the world your love brings to life.

Our USPG Project

St. James' Hospital, Lesotho

Many developments have been taking place at St. James' Hospital

Hospital administrator John Mahooana reports: "Developments have been the norm. Recently, the expansion of the hospital has brought along with it remarkable changes, refocusing attitudes and improving service delivery to the community at large.

"The expansion of the outpatients' department incorporated as an extension of the pharmacy department and gave us larger waiting areas as well as more ventilation to help in the prevention of infection.

"The medical superintendent's house was recently renovated because it has been a while since any form of maintenance was done on the house. The front part of the house needed a complete make-over, with a new flower bed, painting and new water drainage system."

Another challenge for St. James' was to create accommodation for the hospital's drivers who are on call through the night, but had nowhere to sleep or rest. Now that a house has been built, the drivers can wait on site, ready to respond when an emergency arises.

Candle-making

The hospital has embarked on a candle-making project as an income-generation project for local villagers, most living below the poverty line. A small factory has been constructed using discarded and old material from the hospital. St. James' electrical technical officer wired the factory so that it would have electric power. The factory is walking distance from the hospital yard, and is part of the hospital's community improvement project. The aim is for the hospital to be more involved in the lives of local communities - not just focused on the "medical" aspects of health, but on well-being in a holistic sense.

Coffin workshops

The hospital has repaired an old building and has rented it out to a private coffin-maker. There is a mortuary at the hospital, so there is a need for coffins. In providing this service, the hospital is making it easier for families to organise funerals.

Life in Lesotho

The people of Lesotho - known as Basotho - are facing many challenges. In a recent edition of the USPG Prayer Diary, the Revd. Lebohang Kheekhe said: "The global economic recession is having a damaging impact on the state of the nation, in particular on initiatives to tackle poverty". Mr. Kheekhe quoted the Lesotho government's finance minister as saying: "Lesotho's economic growth has shrunk. Unemployment, especially among the youth, has increased. Our exports have contracted; and Basotho mine workers in South Africa have been retrenched. Government revenues...have declined."

But, in terms of HIV in particular, there is hope. The Revd. Fr. Lethale Abiel Pheko is a HIV/AIDS volunteer field worker. He said: "Lesotho as a country is facing several life challenges, hence the Anglican Church is determined to assist challenges facing people in Mantsonyane areas include high rate of unemployment, absolute poverty, and TB and HIV/AIDS pandemics. The fact that Lesotho is rated the third country with HIV/AIDS prevalence, puts the hospital and people at the vulnerable position."

He added: "St. James Mission Hospital plays a vital role in providing primary healthcare services, such as prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. St. James is providing full hospital facilities and supervises six health centred and two clinics. The hospital also plays a major role by providing awareness and prevention measures through public training sessions at village and grassroots levels."

Mr. Pheko said St. James' also had a focus on poverty reduction, providing, food packages to support orphans and vulnerable children.

Travelling around the rural district surrounding St. James' can be extremely challenging. But it is also essential for hospital staff to carry out follow-up visits for patients being treated for TB and HIV, as well as for staff to supervise health centres and home-based care projects. The hospital recently acquired a second-hand all terrain vehicle to help.

Future plans

St. James' is committed to extending and improving its services. Future plans at the hospitals include making improvements to the TB ward, installing a reliable internet connection; providing ongoing health and life skills training in local communities, and obtaining another all terrain vehicle.

And - following the success of the candle-making project - there are plans to introduce other income-generation schemes to benefit both the hospital and local villagers.

Mr. Pheko told USPG's supporters: "Thank you for your financial support."

