



THE NEWSLETTER



ALL SAINTS CHURCH Upper Norwood

****May 2020 Online Version****

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This is the second exclusively online version of the newsletter. We again hope there is something of interest for you here; since a pilgrimage to Walsingham is not possible at present we are featuring an extended article on the Anglican Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham.

If you know anyone without internet access who would like to see a copy of this newsletter, please feel free to copy and print it out yourself. If you want to do this but find you cannot print it straight from the website, I shall be happy to email you a personal copy if you contact me. Keep well, keep positive and look forward to better times.



The Vicar's Monthly Letter

Dear friends,

The poet Gerard Manley Hopkins called May, Mary's month. Here are some reflections regarding Mary, and her song of hope. Hope is what we need at this time.

In the history of the church, there have been different views regarding the place of Mary in Christian faith and devotion. At times, Christians have felt uncomfortable about the Mother of Jesus. In Christian art or in music or the worship of Church, Mary's relationship with Jesus may have become obscured, and to some it has seemed that something is not quite right.

But a negative reaction to this would be wrong---to be cold or unkind about Mary, and to neglect her role in the story of faith. Some would downplay her relationship with Jesus in his earthly life, as his mother, the person closest to him, but now seen in a new relationship, as the first of all of God's saints.

We need to take the words of scripture seriously, such as when Mary, inspired by the Spirit, says "from now on, all generations will call me blessed."

In our creed, apart from Jesus, only two other people are mentioned---Pontius Pilate and Mary. One is the person who sent Jesus to his death; the other is the woman who brought him to life, so to speak. Mary was necessary for our salvation. She is not the cause or agent of salvation, to be sure, but she was necessary, and therefore an important part of God's plan; an instrument of God's purpose and will---as she says in her song, which we call the Magnificat, she is "the handmaid of the Lord."

It is an interesting feature of our times that icons have become popular even in their origins in the Eastern churches. Former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams wrote a book about icons of Mary called "Ponder these things"---I warmly recommend it. Williams says of a particular kind of icon about Mary---

“Mary is who she is by pointing away from herself; her identity is caught up in leading us to Jesus...she looks at us, urging us by her gesture not to keep her eyes in her face, but to follow the hand that points to Jesus.”

With that in mind, we should see Mary as a figure of evangelisation. She is one that points us to the Son--urging us into a deeper relationship with Jesus. But she is also a figure of evangelisation to the world. Mary's Magnificat, in particular, is one of the most compelling and challenging pieces of scripture. That is why it is part of evening prayer---or of Evensong as it is called in the Church of England every day.

We have got used to it, and do not see it for what it is.

The Magnificat is about nothing less than the transformation of all values. Up to this point in history---wealth, power, privilege and position had been the things that were valued above all by most people. If humility, compassion, equality, love and gentleness seem to us profoundly important things---the Christian faith has been pivotal in bringing this about. It was certainly not self-evident in Greek and Roman religion, though certain philosophical traditions did honour these things.

In the Magnificat, Mary provides a glimpse of the social teaching that Jesus would spell out in the sermon on the mount and live out in his ministry.

Mary's Magnificat is needed as much today as ever it was. The world does need to transform its understanding of religion, its values, and what it means to be human---how to turn the world upside down. We need this guidance more than ever as the world faces a tremendous challenge in how to deal with the difficulties humanity is faced with.

The words of the Magnificat are for us in the 21st century.

To ask ourselves are we living them out her words, for if Mary is describing the nature of God's Kingdom and the heart of God, then there is a sense in which we will be judged by these words.

So let us not take Mary or her Magnificat for granted. It is possible to emphasise Mary too much---but it is more likely that we do not honour and listen to her enough--- pointing as she does, in her word and deed, to Jesus, God's word made flesh. My prayer for you all is be strong and courageous, to look out for one another, and not to lose heart. God bless you all.

Fr. Leonard



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All Saints, Upper Norwood

Saints of the Month: May.

- 1st St Phillip. The apostle from Galilee
- 3rd St James the Less. Apostle, "son of Alphaeus" but sometimes said to be the same as "the brother of the Lord".
- 14th St Matthias. The apostle chosen after the death of Judas.
- 19th St Dustan, 909-988. Reforming Archbishop of Canterbury; patron saint of goldsmiths and jewellers.
- 27th St Augustine of Canterbury, d. 605, Archbishop of Canterbury and apostle of the English
- 30th St Joan of Arc (1412-31). Patroness of France, burnt by the English at Rouen during the Hundred Years' War.

Prayers for the Month:

May is traditionally celebrated as Mary's month, when we think of the obedience to God of Our Lord's mother, and of her love and obedience as an example to all Christians, who regard her as our spiritual mother and mother of the church.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

Pour forth, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may be brought, by his passion and cross, to the glory of his resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham

Located in the small North Norfolk village of Little Walsingham, halfway between Fakenham and the coast, the shrine of Walsingham was known throughout the Middle Ages as *England's Nazareth*. It has been a place of pilgrimage since 1061, when a wealthy widow, Richeldis de Faverches, had a visionary dream, telling her to build a replica of the Virgin Mary's house on the site. The town became a major place of pilgrimage, and it is said that thirteen Kings of England visited the shrine, as well as countless more humble pilgrims. An Augustinian abbey was built on the site, and the fame of the pilgrimage spread throughout Europe, earning England the title of *Our Lady's Dowry*. The shrine was destroyed by Protestant rioters during the dissolution of the monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII, although Henry himself had previously been a great patron of the shrine and is said to have called on Our Lady of Walsingham on his death bed.

The shrine then fell into disrepair until it was revived as a focus for pilgrimage under the influence of the Oxford Movement at the start of the last century. Then, in 1921, Fr Alfred Hope Patten was appointed vicar of Walsingham. He was determined to re-establish Walsingham as a shrine to Our Lady and set up a statue of her in the parish church of St Mary. By the early 1930s, Fr Patten had built a new shrine containing a modern Holy House, just outside the Priory walls.

This present-day Anglican Shrine occupies a site close to the ruins of the original medieval Priory; the Shrine was gradually created from derelict farm buildings and cottages, with a new Shrine Church in the south-east corner of the site. It is now once again a major place of pilgrimage for both Anglicans, and for Catholics, who have their own shrine in the town, built around the old slipper chapel, where earlier pilgrims are believed to have washed their feet after their long journey.

Aerial view of the shrine



In summer, Walsingham can be very crowded, but in early winter, with the town dressed for Christmas, the smell of wood smoke on the damp air, it is totally delightful. At any season the streets and shrines of Walsingham are hallowed by the hopes and prayers of pilgrims, who have been coming to the town for nearly a thousand years. With its many shops selling religious artefacts (some admittedly rather 'tacky'), as well as a good many pubs and cafes, the whole place gave a strong sense of that rich mix of the sacred and profane that has been a part of the atmosphere of pilgrimage from Chaucer's time onward.

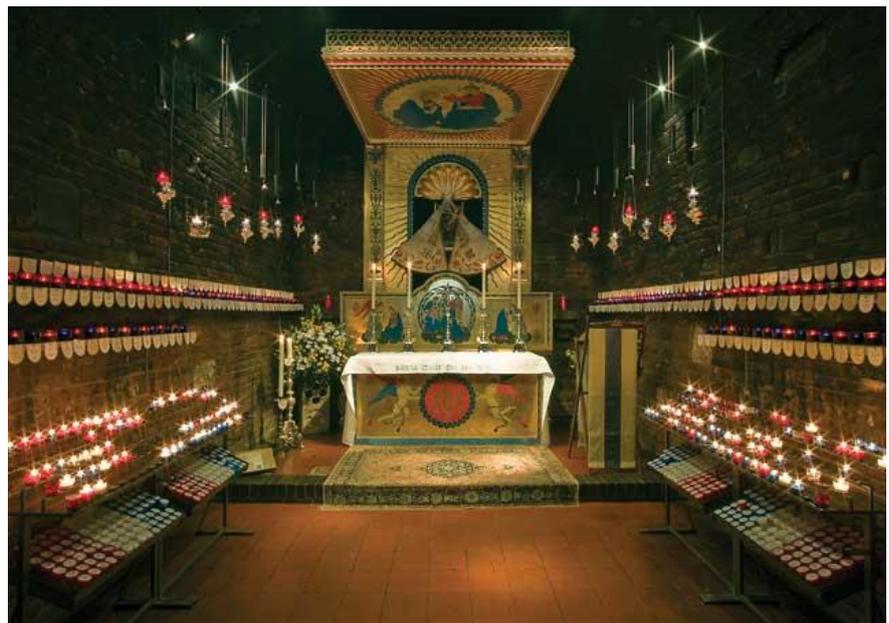
The shrine has guest accommodation, a visitor centre which was completed in 2009 and a relatively modern refectory where guests and day pilgrims can be refreshed, all set among lovely grounds: originally laid out in the 1930s, by the turn of the century much of the original planting and planning had been lost. Vistas had become obscured and the design haphazard. Today's much-loved scheme was designed in 2004 by Tessa Hobbs and completed the following year.



The Chapel Gardens

The chapel itself is very beautiful. It is decorated in a rather extravagant Arts and Crafts style and is built around a replica of the holy house, which is covered with candles and votive lights, representing the prayers of the faithful. The lingering smell of incense increases ones sense of the sacred, as does the quiet meditative atmosphere, undisturbed even when quite crowded.

The Holy House



At the centre of pilgrimage to Walsingham is the daily rhythm of worship and prayer. The daily service of Sprinkling at the Well (Easter to October, weekends only during winter) is attended by thousands throughout the year. Water from the ancient well within the Shrine Church is used to sign a cross on the forehead, given as a drink and poured over outstretched hands as a sign of God's healing. Shrine Prayers – a short service during which pilgrims intercession requests are read out – has taken place in the church without interruption since 1931. Today Walsingham is one of the most significant spiritual places in the country, visited each year by around 350,000 pilgrims of all ages and backgrounds.



The Main Entrance to the Anglican Shrine



Saints of the Month: St James and St Dunstan

**reprinted from earlier editions of the newsletter*

St James the Less

James, the “son of Alphaeus”, is listed among Jesus’ 12 disciples in the Gospels, but James the Less is usually associated with James “the brother of the Lord”, referred to several times in the New Testament and traditionally known as James the Just (or Righteous), with whom Paul had doctrinal arguments mentioned in Acts. In Galatians (1:19) Paul writes that “I stayed fifteen days with him [i.e. Peter] but did not set eyes on any of the rest of the apostles, only *James the Lord’s brother*”. James became the first Bishop of Jerusalem and presided over the Jerusalem church. The Jewish historian Josephus records that in AD 62 James was stoned to death on the orders of the High Priest Annanus for refusing to dissuade the Jewish Christians from belief in Christ. This illegal act was perpetrated between the death of the Roman procurator Festus (mentioned in Acts) and the arrival in Palestine of his successor. It is recorded that some of the Sanhedrin, angry at Annanus’ actions, went out to meet the new procurator, who was coming overland from Alexandria, to complain to him of this; the procurator subsequently dismissed Annanus for his insubordination. As to being “the Lord’s brother”, several explanations of this phrase have been put forward, including Jerome’s that in the gospel context the meaning is that of cousin or close relative (an argument that most scholars feel lacks credibility); that of several apocryphal writings that Joseph, being a widow of advancing years when betrothed to Mary, had children by his first marriage including James, and thirdly that Joseph and Mary had a normal married life after the birth of Jesus and that James was his true brother along with “Joset, Jude and Simon” and several (un-named) sisters. (See Mark 6:3).

James the Just is commonly attributed as the author of the Letter of James, but there has always been much doubt about this for various reasons, the letter remaining among the disputed books until the latest stages of the New Testament canon. However, the letter is clearly directed to Christian *Jews*, and the evidence points to it coming from a very early period in the life of the church, written by somebody

speaking with authority and grounded in the Old Testament. The gentiles are completely ignored, there is no reference to either the atonement or the resurrection, and indeed the writer never refers to the life and ministry of Jesus, who is only mentioned twice in the whole letter.

Acts certainly seems to suggest a good deal of friction between James and Paul on many matters concerning the relations of the church with gentiles and Jewish observances, which would tend to support James' authorship.

St Dunstan

Dunstan (909 – 19 May 988 AD) was renowned for his work in restoring monastic life in England and reforming the English Church. Dunstan served as an important minister of state to several English kings, and was the most popular saint in England for nearly two centuries, until his fame was overshadowed by that of Thomas Becket.

Dunstan was born in Somerset, the son of a noble of Wessex. While still young he received minor orders and served in the ancient church of St Mary Glastonbury, where he worked as a silversmith; he became famous as a musician, illuminator, and metalworker. Having inherited a considerable fortune, he used this money later in life to foster and encourage a monastic revival in England. He became a person of great influence, and in 940, the new King, Edmund, summoned him to his court and made him a minister. Dunstan, now Abbot of Glastonbury, went to work on the task of church reform. He also remained active in English politics, which occasionally led him into opposition with the policies of some kings.

In 957 he was consecrated a bishop and, at the end of the year appointed Bishop of Worcester. The following year he also became Bishop of London, holding this see simultaneously with Worcester. In October 959, when Edgar became king of Wessex, the king conferred on Dunstan the Archbishopric of Canterbury. Dunstan went to Rome in 960 to meet the Pope, and on his return, at once regained his position as virtual prime minister of the kingdom. With the aid of the new bishops of Worcester, London and Winchester and with the ready support of King Edgar, Dunstan pushed forward his reforms in the English Church. The state saw reforms as well: good order and respect for the law were maintained throughout the realm. Trained bands policed the north, and a navy guarded the shores from Viking raids; there was a level of peace in the kingdom unknown in living memory. He died in 988, and in 1074 his relics were translated to a tomb on the south side of the high altar in the rebuilt Canterbury Cathedral. He was canonised as a saint in 1029.