



THE NEWSLETTER



ALL SAINTS CHURCH Upper Norwood

**** September 2020 ****

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Although mainly online, this newsletter will be available in church in limited numbers. Keep well and keep positive.



The Vicar's Monthly Letter

Dear friends,

One of the features of the current pandemic is that we have had to learn something of a new vocabulary - words and phrases like the new normal, lockdown, social distancing, coronavirus, and so forth.

What does this mean for the Church? A great deal.

We are the Church of the Incarnation, and that doctrine steers us very obviously away from making a virtue of distance. Christ comes close: we are invited into nothing less than communion with the Father through Him. We are so intimately close to God, and to one another, that we can only express that truth by receiving the body of Christ and becoming his body in the world. The physicality of our communion is something Christians have long emphasised. You can't be a Christian and stay away from other people!

It has often been stressed, by Christians who understand the Incarnation, how important it is to be close to the poor, and to have a deeply spiritual sense of God's being in touch with us. But it's not as though the Gospels are just a wonderful proclamation of our closeness to God and to one another.

The Incarnation requires preparation and even more efforts at understanding! Getting close to others is hard. The Gospels show us what it takes for individuals to move out of their isolation and alienation and to become close.

Entering lockdown may have seemed easy; coming out of it is tricky. Maybe that's why modern people like the relative simplicity of keeping their distance, so to speak. Christians have a way of understanding how to build communion, centred on Jesus, the path of mercy, the mystery of the Incarnation. Maybe this is a way we need to talk about the Gospels in the coming years.

Let us consider the collapse of the sources of modern hope...

People need some kind of hope to propel them forward in their lives. But where they place it is decisive. There have been three sources of hope which have guided human societies for at least two hundred years.

All have acquired a near-mythological status. There is the idea of progress, that things are always getting better; that science will always save us; that freedom is the ultimate value.

Progress: We obviously no longer believe, as many did until comparatively recently, that ‘every day, in every way, things get better and better.’ In fact, many young people now see tomorrow as a time of ecological apocalypse. The implications of the death of belief in progress still have to be reckoned with.

Science: We depend on science to an extraordinary extent, but its limits have become clear for all to see in the last few months. That phrase beloved of certain politicians, ‘we are only following the science’ suggests that scientists have the answers to all the questions. Well they don’t, of course, and they never did. Honest scientists have always stressed that too.

Scientific experts have a tremendous contribution to make to public policy, but they are not the only voices that count. Science alone cannot save us from the challenges we are currently facing. We also need other bodies of knowledge and expertise, among which, let’s not forget, are ethics and faith, voices our society has not been keen to listen to for some time.

Freedom: That value for which millions died in the last century. It’s wrong to say that it’s not as uniquely important as we thought. Yet, safety and security, self-restraint and self-sacrifice have also turned out to be of huge value to us, and when we see behaviour that vaunts personal liberty but is oblivious to these values, we know something is wrong. Many sense that western liberal societies have an impoverished understanding of freedom and I think that truth has never been plainer than it is now. Freedom, for instance, means being free to commit ourselves to each other, to community and to the world.

If these three pillars of modern hope are weakening, perhaps even crumbling, where are people to turn? It’s a very practical question. What sort of hope is there if it is not about tomorrow being better, healthier, freer, and more prosperous?

Jesus was not just fighting for freedom. Jesus, who himself died on the Cross, brought something more: an encounter with the Lord of all lords, an encounter that reveals the living God and thus an encounter with a hope stronger than the sufferings of the world, a hope which therefore transformed life and the world from within, as well as challenging the unjust structures of this world.

This is the hope that comes with faith: the encounter with God that leads to a transformation of life and the world from within. The fruit of this encounter is entry into the life of Jesus Christ, which is a life lived for and with others, as well as a life anticipated in here and now, albeit imperfectly. And that’s hope: an anticipation of the completeness we will only know, in its fullness, in the new world he brings.

We need to impart a strong personal spirituality, the foundation of which is that experience of mercy. I have never thought that prayer and spirituality somehow were disconnected to a concern with social justice. I read recently that the novelist Graham Greene strongly believed that the search for faith and the search for justice were inextricably linked.

The worship of the church requires real community expression of some sort. It’s not just “me and Jesus.” It is striking to me that those who have already a deep, personal encounter with God’s mercy often want this to be expressed not just in our individual lives, but in the life we live together in community.

And finally, in looking forward to what God wants for us, the communion of His love, we anticipate it practically here and now. This happens in our celebration of the Eucharist, and also in how we live our lives, and act in the world.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Leonard



CLERGY

Vicar

Father Leonard Marsh
49 Chevening Road
London SE19 3TD 020 8653 2820
email: leonard.marsh@yahoo.co.uk



CONTACT DETAILS

Church Wardens

Mike Hedges: 07958 782558
Arabella Coleridge 020 8768 2961

Organist and Choir Director

Lee Walton: 07855 400160
Email mlwmusic@ntlworld.com

Parish Safeguarding Officers

Ella Crisp 07782 165041
 ellacrisp@yahoo.co.uk
Digby Hunt 07971 692893
 digbyshunt@hotmail.com

Newsletter Editor

John Davis 020 8670 1564
Email jdavis9584@aol.com
Address 46 Roxburgh Road
 London SE27 0LD

The Church's Website –

www.allsaintsuppernorwood.co.uk

The Church's Facebook page:
All Saints, Upper Norwood

Saints of the Month: September.

- 3rd St Gregory the Great, (6th century) pope who initiated the conversion of the English.
- 8th Birthday of Mary – once the principal Feast of Mary in the Church of England; since Common Worship, August 15th has been regarded as such, in line with our sister churches.
- 21st St Matthew, apostle and evangelist, also known as Levi in Mark and Luke.
- 26th Ss Cosmas & Damian, patron saints of doctors and pharmacists.
- 29th “Michaelmas” - The Archangels Michael, Raphael and Gabriel.

Prayer for the Month:

Adapted from the Book of Common Prayer collect for the Feast of St Michael.

O Everlasting God, who has ordained and constituted the services of Angels and humankind in a wonderful order, mercifully grant that, as your holy angels always do you service in heaven, so by your appointment they may succour and defend us here on earth.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Forthcoming event:

We shall be having our usual Harvest Festival on the **11th October**; would you please bring non-perishable goods for the Manna Society, a day centre in Southwark providing care and community support for homeless people.



Michaelmas

The festival of St Michael the Archangel on 29th September originated before the 7th century in the annual commemoration of the dedication of a church in his honour near Rome. Michael was also venerated in Judaism, and in the Eastern Orthodox communities veneration of the archangels is strong, and a common theme of many ikons. Michael is honoured as ‘captain of the heavenly host’ (see Rev 12; 7-9), protector of Christians and special guardian of the sick. There is also an old tradition of Michael as receiver of the souls of the dead; there was a church dedicated to him just outside Constantinople dating from the time of the Emperor Constantine in the first half of the 4th century. Visions of him appear to have given rise to the legends of Mont-Saint Michel in France, St Michael’s Mount in England and many other places across Europe. Until the twentieth century no other archangel was commemorated in a feast day. Now the same day also commemorates, with Michael, Gabriel, the angel of the Annunciation, and Raphael, who figures in the book of Tobit and is thought to be the angel who disturbed the water of the pool of Bethesda (John 5; 2-4): “Now in Jerusalem next to the Sheep Pool there is a pool called Bethesda in Hebrew, which has five porticos, and under these were crowds of sick people, blind, lame, paralysed *waiting for the waters to move; for at intervals the angel of the Lord came down into the pool, and the water was disturbed, and the first person to enter the water after this disturbance was cured of any ailment from which he was suffering.*”

The Archangel Michael is regarded as the greatest of all the Archangels and is honoured for defeating Lucifer in the war in heaven. He is one of the principal angelic warriors, seen as a protector against the dark of night, and the administrator of cosmic intelligence. Michaelmas has also delineated time and seasons for secular purposes as well, particularly in Britain and Ireland, as one of the quarter days.

In medieval England, Michaelmas marked the ending and beginning of the husbandman's year - at that time harvest was over, and the bailiff or reeve of the manor would be making out the accounts for the year.

Eastern Orthodox Tradition mentions "thousands of archangels"; however, only seven archangels are venerated by name, Uriel is included with the three above, and the other three are most often named Selaphiel, Jegudiel, and Barachiel. Every Monday throughout the year is dedicated to the Angels, with special mention being made in the church hymns of Michael and Gabriel. In Orthodox iconography, each angel has a symbolic representation



The Angelic Council, Orthodox icon of the seven archangels, left to right: Jegudiel, Gabriel, Selaphiel, Michael, Uriel, Raphael, and Barachiel. Beneath Christ-Immanuel are representations of Cherubim (blue) and Seraphim (red).