

New Prospect



The Parish Magazine of St Mary Stoke Newington

September 2009

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Good Cause for August and September

Diocese of Amazonia Brazil and Bishop Saulo de Barros



The Anglican Diocese of the Amazon was installed on 14th October 2006, with Saulo Maurício de Barros as its first bishop. The creation of the Diocese was the result of a maturing of the work of the Anglican Church in the region, which was established in 1912, initially as a chaplaincy for English speakers.

This Diocese covers five states in the region: Acre, Amazonas, Amapá, Pará and Roraima. An immense geographic area of Amazon Forest, covering over 3.5 million km², and with a great ethnical, cultural and biological diversity and a few peculiarities in terms of transport (many areas are only accessible by boat or by plane). Our mission is to proclaim and to live the Gospel bringing people to an intimate relationship with God and with each other through preaching, teaching, caring for the needy, changing unjust structures of society and preserving the creation, in an inclusive manner.

There are six working clergy facing the huge challenge of spreading the work of the Church in a region that covers 3.5 million km². In the region there are many areas which need special attention. In the urban areas poverty, unemployment and violence are high. In the

more rural areas issues of land and ecology are just some of the challenges.

The Diocesan Plan for 2007-2009 has the following guidelines:

- 1) Training and deepening of the spiritual lives of the laity, aspirants for ministry and clergy;
- 2) A greater visibility and involvement of the Church in the socio-political and spiritual life of the Amazon;
- 3) Implant methods of work that facilitate Institutional sustainability.

Projects

As a new Diocese, it is still in construction phase. The Anglican Church in Brazil is very small and does not receive support from the government, and, therefore, depends on fund-raising events and donations. If you would like to support us in any way, please read the following ongoing projects and get in touch with us at ieabamazonia@gmail.com. Please do specify which project you would like to support.

1) Bishop's house. In order to avoid further spending through rent, the Diocese is looking into purchasing a house/apartment for the Bishop. House prices in Belém are high in comparison to the rest of Brazil. Appropriate housing in the Amazon region (3 bedroom apartment, for example) is approximately R\$200,000 (US\$100,000 on date of publication).

2) Social Projects. Brazil is a land of contrasts where the very wealthy live alongside the very poor. This causes far more conflict than in a very poor country where most people are in the same boat. In the Amazon region this difference between the rich and the poor is very dramatic. Many people work in slave-like conditions. The Anglican Church is aware of its role to reach the need and "halve poverty". We can only do this with partnerships and support from other organizations. In Pratinha, a particularly poor area of Belém, the church is setting up an NGO whose main aim is to offer training, structure and support to social

projects in the region involving particularly income-generation, education, professional training programmes and health programmes. This project is just beginning to sprout and there is very little funding, but with support it can become an umbrella for outreach work in the Amazon.

These are some of the projects that are already running:

1) Kai-sara jewellery - a group of youth and women who make jewellery using seeds and other natural materials as an alternative income.

2) Rosa de Saron embroidery Group - Women and youth producing embroidered goods, including towels, tablecloths, stoles, t-shirts, with the local designs.

3) Reading Room - Libraries are few and far between in the slums of Belém. So in Pratinha the church organised a library, or reading room, with books, magazines and videos to help the local children with their studies.

4) Literacy classes - MOVA is a government supported project for teaching adults to read. The level of illiteracy among adults in the Amazon region is one of the highest in the country. As we have churches in many of the poor areas, their halls are being used as classrooms so that this project can reach those who need it.

Ann Flett

Our Parish Giving *Your vote is important*

Did you know – I bet you didn't unless you're on the Church Council – that St Mary's gives away 10% of its income to other charities? We've been doing it for a long time, and we think of it as a really important part of our life as a church. We don't exist for our own benefit, but for the local community, and as part of a global community. So we use some of our money to support other organisations, here in the UK and worldwide, who do things we think are central to our own aims as a Christian community.

Up to now, the candidates for parish giving have been nominated by two of the PCC's working groups. This year, though, we thought it might be better to give the whole

congregation a say in how our money is spent. So here are a few possible candidates – and you're invited to help make the choice as to which ones we support.

But before that, I should mention: each charity will receive an amount of money which depends on the parish's income from giving each year – but it usually comes to between £1000 and £1500. There are two charities which we always support – there's a little bit about them just below – and four others which are chosen each year. We (the ministry team) have selected six possibilities. In order to vote, either fill in the voting slip included with this month's magazine, or email your choices to our teller, Emma Dent at emma_m_dent@yahoo.co.uk. Only one voting slip per person, please!

The two causes we support every year are **USPG – general funds. A bit about USPG from their website:**

USPG: Anglicans in World Mission works in direct partnership with Anglican Churches in over 50 countries, helping to support vital church work, including healthcare, education, leadership training and action for social justice. In Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America, we are enabling Anglican Churches to reach out to poor and marginalised communities in practical and life-changing ways. In practice, this means we are helping local churches to run schools and hospitals, build houses and dig wells, and provide agricultural training for subsistence farmers. We also support church outreach, theological training and youth work programmes.

Mark and Helen van Koevering, USPG Mission Companions in Mozambique. From USPG again:

The Diocese of Niassa is one of the poorest dioceses in the world and the poverty of the people is compounded by their isolation.

In their first three years as USPG Mission Companions, Mark and Helen have made a huge impact on the diocese and on the people of Niassa. Mark van Koevering is the Bishop of Niassa, which covers the vast northern half of Mozambique. Helen, his wife, is a priest in the parish of Lichinga. She is also Mother's Union President, part of the parish council and on the parish training team.

The candidates for this year's giving are (in their own words from their websites) are

War Child

War Child was founded in 1993 by British filmmakers Bill Leeson and David Wilson, when they returned from filming the war in former Yugoslavia. Shocked by what they had seen, they raised enough money to return later that year with a convoy and mobile bakery to help provide for the children affected by the conflict.

The War Child family soon grew as War Child Holland was formed in 1994 and War Child Canada started in 1998 - all under the umbrella of War Child International.

Our vision: We look forward to a world in which the lives of children are no longer torn apart by war

Our mission: War Child's mission is to support and strengthen the protective environment for children who, as a result of conflict, live with a combination of insecurity, poverty and exclusion.

Hackney Migrant Centre (*who meet in the New Church Rooms – volunteers also welcome!*)

Aims

- 1) To provide advice and assistance to migrants on immigration, welfare or health issues
- 2) To offer a welcoming environment to migrants and help reduce social isolation
- 3) To publicise issues relating to migrants' social and economic circumstances

Activities

- 1) weekly drop-in for advice and social activities
- 2) free immigration and welfare advice, medical advice and help in accessing NHS health services
- 3) a nutritious meal

The **Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)**

seeks to support local and international efforts to end the Israeli occupation and bring a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with a just peace, based on international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

The mission of the EAPPI is to accompany Palestinians and Israelis in their non-violent actions and to carry out concerted advocacy efforts to end the occupation. Participants in the programme monitor and report violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, support acts of non-violent resistance

alongside local Christian and Muslim Palestinians and Israeli peace activists, offer protection through non-violent presence, engage in public policy advocacy and, in general, stand in solidarity with the churches and all those struggling against the occupation.

North London Action for the Homeless

We run a drop-in centre for homeless people and for those in needy circumstances.

Twice a week, (*Monday lunch: 12.00pm - 1.30pm, and Wednesday supper: 7.00pm - 8.30pm*), we provide a free cooked three-course vegetarian meal consisting of thick soup, bread and butter, main course, dessert and tea or coffee. Our visitors sit at six-seater tables which are laid with table-cloths, napkins, cutlery and crockery. The meals are served at the tables by our volunteers. We provide take-away food and clothing upon request.

At both meal sessions our Welfare Rights Adviser provides free advice concerning welfare benefits, housing, disability payments, etc. We are visited periodically by a Health Access Worker. We run literacy classes, music sessions and outings to theatre etc. as part of our life skills programme.

The **Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture (MF)**, a registered charity established in 1985, is the only organisation in the UK dedicated solely to the treatment of torture survivors.

Since its inception, almost 50,000 people have been referred for help. In 2008, the MF received 2,025 new requests for help. Clients came from 79 countries, with significant numbers from Sri Lanka, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Iran.

The main treatment centre is in London, with branches in Manchester covering the North West, Newcastle covering the North East, Birmingham covering the West Midlands and Glasgow covering the whole of Scotland. Another centre is planned for Yorkshire & Humberside.

The MF offers medical consultation, examination and forensic documentation of injuries, psychological treatment and support, and practical help. Central to the MF's vision are its efforts to educate the public and decision makers about torture and its consequences, while advocacy work strives to ensure that the UK honours its international

obligations towards survivors of torture, asylum seekers and refugees.

Leukaemia Research is the only charity in the UK dedicated exclusively to researching blood cancers and disorders including leukaemia, Hodgkin's and other lymphomas, and myeloma.

Anyone, at any age can be diagnosed with a blood cancer. 24,500 people in the UK are diagnosed every year. We are committed to giving every one of them the best chance of survival.

Our scientists and doctors work in over fifty top research centres across the UK. They are seeking to improve diagnosis of blood disorders and treatments for patients, and to find a cure for blood cancers.

Jonathan Clark

St Mary's Churchyard Historic Tombs

Final bulletin. What next?



The final touches to the project of repairing the tombs of Anna Barbauld (1743-1825) and James Stephen 1758 - 1832) have recently been completed. As you know, we decided to repair these tombs in order to mark the bi-centenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, as both these people were active in the Abolitionists' campaign. The Barbauld tomb has been given a new stone corner to replace the broken piece, and a new inscription in stone has been added on the east (most visible) side). Both pieces were made from Portland Whitbed stone.

The total cost of the project has been in excess of £6000. However, there has been no direct appeal to the parish, nor has the Borough Council contributed. Again, once all

the grants promised or expected are paid, there should be no expenditure for the PCC. In other words, the project should cost us nothing except time and effort.

A final report with 25 photographs of the project is now available, and a copy may be viewed at the back of the New Church. The Conservator comments that "these two tombs have been stabilized and the major threats to their integrity have been removed." He also recommends that the tombs should be kept under occasional monitoring and brambles, ivy and other such weeds should be cut back if they encroach on the structure of either. However, he also advises that parishioners should not attempt cleaning of the tombs themselves, as it is all too easy for inadvertent damage to be caused by well-meaning cleaning. "An exception to this might be gentle dry brushing with a dustpan brush - to remove loose debris and light moss growth".

Is anyone willing to take on this modest but significant task, say, for the next 3 years until the London Olympics 2012? If so please contact me:

Graeme Watson (020 7249 8701)

About the PCC

Your PCC could perhaps be seen as government of your church at a local level. For this reason we thought it might be useful to look in detail at what went on at the first two meetings of your elected representatives. Eds.

The PCC has met twice since it was elected in April. At the first meeting **elections** for the various statutory officers were made. Andrew Wildridge was elected Vice Chairman; Jean Guest Secretary; Michael Johnson Treasurer. The **Standing Committee**, which is a statutory committee, meets to carry out any necessary tasks as delegated by the PCC. It is also delegated by the PCC to be employer and has the role of the **Finance WP**. The practice at St. Mary's has been that it consists of the Rector, Vice Chairman, Churchwardens, Treasurer, Secretary and one or two members of the PCC. It was agreed we keep the same formula and Dorothy Anderson was added to

the committee as a member of the PCC. The following items were discussed.

Stewardship. There was to be a short campaign during May to try and get more people into the scheme. There will be a major campaign in May 2010.

Giving to Charities and Good Causes. It was suggested that perhaps we muddled people with the Good Cause Box and Stewardship and that a designated amount could be given to chosen Charities each month. There was quite a discussion about this and it was left to the Standing Committee to further debate this and find a satisfactory solution to report back to the PCC. It was agreed that for the time being we would have only six Good Causes, the Good Cause Box for each to be out for 2 months, and we would still tith 4 charities at the end of the year.

The **Mission Action Plan**, after several drafts and discussion, was accepted at this meeting.

The **Old Church Project** was discussed – where do we go from here since we were not awarded Lottery money? There were possibly two options: 1) to give up and make the church redundant and 2) to raise funds to provide better accessibility, better general facilities for concerts, poetry readings etc. and carry out essential historic repairs. The steering committee were inclined to back plan 2, particularly after all the hard work they had put into the scheme. We will have to see what funding we can raise. Events are being organised to help with the funding.

Convenors and PCC representatives for the **Working parties** were chosen. Detail of the Convenors and members of these working parties can be found in a copy of the minutes of the PCC's meeting usually displayed at the back of the Church.

Members of the congregation are encouraged to join a Working Party – think about this and get in touch with the Convenor of your choice.

The second PCC meeting took place on Saturday 27th June in the New Rooms and was an Away Day.

We discussed, in small groups, taking the **Mission Action Plan** forward. We discussed **Inward Mission**, and spent a long time on **Pastoral care in the parish**. We then had an

open discussion followed by a Eucharist. After lunch we had the formal business of the PCC.

The **social committee** reported that they had had to cancel the **Pilgrimage to St. Albans** as not enough people signed up. They had had to postpone the **Christian Aid Evening** in May but had set a new date for 11th July. They had also arranged a **visit to the Wesleyan Chapel**, house and museum in City Road for July 4th. The **monthly Sunday lunches** in the Rectory had been very successful and would continue in the autumn.

Jonathan had been to New York for a Conference and had met with the priest where we may **form a link with St. Johns in Greenwich Village**. The congregation is not as diverse as ours and seems smaller. The priest is coming to London in early August and will visit St. Mary's.

Communion Assistants: The following were put forward and accepted by the PCC: Val Sharman, Judith Simpson, Melissa Martin and Mark Blackett-Ord. Jonathan will apply to the Bishop of Stepney to arrange for them to be licensed.

The Standing Committee reported back that the **Good Cause boxes** would still be put out with clearer notices, a different charity every two months.

We have a problem with the **ceiling tiles** – some of which are not very safe. What can we do? We could have the whole roof both outside and inside renewed, which would cost us a small fortune. We could look at all the tiles and make sure they are all properly nailed, or we could put up a safety net to catch any that may fall. We are waiting for the Quinquennial Report from the architect and will see what he has to say. The Fabric Committee were asked to give this some thought and come back with some suggestions. Whichever solution is decided on it will cost a lot of money.

The new **Icon for the Epiphany Chapel** was ready and will be dedicated on July 12th.

The PCC meets again on September 21st.

Jean Guest

Anglican Communion Issues

What is to become of the Anglican Communion – again? The Episcopal Church of the USA has just had its General Convention, which meets once every three years. At the Convention, two motions were passed concerning some of the main issues which have bedevilled Anglican life for the last few years: the consecration of bishops who are in same-sex relationships, and the provision of liturgies for the blessing of same-sex unions.

The two resolutions were greeted thus by two different groups in the Church of England: “Inclusive Church welcomes the clarity of the new resolutions passed at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church of the USA (TEC) in Anaheim. They accurately and honestly describe the current situation, affirming that homosexual orientation should not be a bar to ordination as priest or bishop, and recognising that same sex blessings are being performed in some parishes and dioceses.”

The evangelical group Fulcrum, on the other hand, said: “The decision to pass the resolution concerning the eligibility of people to ordination regardless of their sexuality represents a further determined walking apart by the American Church and must have significant consequences for the relationship of TEC to the Church of England and the Anglican Communion.”

They go on to say that the Americans had “ignored the repeated requests by all the Instruments of Communion, most recently the Anglican Consultative Council, to uphold the Windsor moratoria”. What are they exactly? Well, a few years ago the Windsor Report, which tried to provide a framework for resolving issues that divide the churches, asked churches to refrain from three things. Firstly, to refrain from consecrating any more bishops who were in same-sex relationships; secondly, to refrain from developing liturgies for blessing same-sex unions; thirdly, to refrain from setting up new churches in opposition to others already present. Translated out of the general language, the first two were directed at the Americans and the Canadians, and the third at the other churches, mostly at that time from parts of Africa, who had been busy planting

new churches in North America in response to the perceived transgression of the North Americans.

Over the last few years the Americans and Canadians have observed the moratoria aimed at them – though it’s also true to say that while there may not be officially approved liturgies in the church in the USA, there are plenty of liturgies celebrated in most dioceses on a regular basis to bless same-sex unions. But undoubtedly the third moratorium has been most completely and flagrantly ignored – leading to the foundation a few weeks ago of ‘The Anglican Church in North America’, an alliance of some of the various groups which have broken off from the Episcopal Church, and which is now bidding to take over from the Episcopal Church as the official representative of Anglicanism.

So what? Why bother even talking about it at Evensong in St Mary’s Stoke Newington? Well, it’s our church too: we’re not just part of a congregation, we’re also connected up with the worldwide church. Many of us also are connected personally, through family and friends, with people in different parts of the church – including parts which have declared themselves out of communion with each other. But more profoundly, when the body of Christ is ruptured, it has an effect on the whole body, not just those who are intimately and personally involved. We are all less able to show the gospel of Christ to the world, because our energy and the world’s attention is focused on our conflicts and divisions rather than on the good news of salvation.

So it is important, even for those of us who have no connection with the church more widely in our personal experience. And in theory, everyone recognises that fact – but in practice, the church has been torn apart by splits from its very beginning. Right now, in the Anglican Communion, the issue ostensibly is sexuality, and particularly, of course, same-sex relationships. But underlying that – not very far underlying, really – is a whole set of other issues. That of course is one of the main things that makes churches split – when the real issues are not acknowledged, but something more theological is found which sounds like a much more respectable reason to hate each other. The Anglican Communion is partly suffering from being a playground for the

American culture wars, with their competing and irreconcilable visions of the good life for individuals and societies. It is partly a victim of the information age, in which people can become instantly aware of how different, and how shocking, people's behaviour is in other parts of the world. But again I think there is something going on which is deeper than that, and which reflects on the deepest nature of the Church. It was that which the Windsor report tried to get the church to focus on, though in fact all we've done is look at the three moratoria. They were meant to stop the game long enough to do the real work, that was all.

The real thing that we need – the thing that maybe God is challenging us about in all of this, if we dare to bring God into church politics – is what it means to live with difference. There are two answers commonly in play, and it is our failure to get beyond them, which has crippled us so far. The first is to say that difference is basically always good, and we need to have as much as possible, and celebrate diversity as a good thing in itself. As you may guess, that's the answer I'm more tempted by. The second is to regard difference as always a misfortune and usually an error; the church should always aim to be of one voice on as many things as possible, accurately reflecting the mind of God. The problem is that God doesn't proclaim from the sky very often which of the many possible truths is in fact the one real truth.

Neither of these models is particularly helpful or constructive in seeking reconciliation, because however little they may otherwise have in common, each believes that the other is fundamentally wrong. Whatever else each may be able to include – and the first answer definitely seeks to include as many possibilities as possible – they cannot include one another. We need some other ground – a place to start which is foreign to both of those perspectives, and which is therefore neutral in the war of ideas. It's difficult to find such a place, not least because proponents from each side will continually be looking for evidence that any supposed neutrality is in fact a cunningly disguised cover for their enemy – an intellectual ambush.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, in a much ignored letter to the leaders of the various Anglican churches, attempted to set out the

distinctive Anglican calling as one which quite deliberately allows the validity of different perspectives, and tries to find a way of living together which respects them – and grows from their interaction. He said

“The different components in our heritage can, up to a point, flourish in isolation from each other. But any one of them pursued on its own would lead in a direction ultimately outside historic Anglicanism. The reformed concern may lead towards a looser form of ministerial order and a stronger emphasis on the sole, unmediated authority of the Bible. The catholic concern may lead to a high doctrine of visible and structural unification of the ordained ministry around a focal point. The cultural and intellectual concern may lead to a style of Christian life aimed at giving spiritual depth to the general shape of the culture around and de-emphasising revelation and history. Pursued far enough in isolation, each of these would lead to a different place - to strict evangelical Protestantism, to Roman Catholicism, to religious liberalism. To accept that each of these has a place in the church's life and that they need each other means that the enthusiasts for each aspect have to be prepared to live with certain tensions or even sacrifices - with a tradition of being positive about a responsible critical approach to Scripture, with the anomalies of a historic ministry not universally recognised in the Catholic world, with limits on the degree of adjustment to the culture and its habits that is thought possible or acceptable.

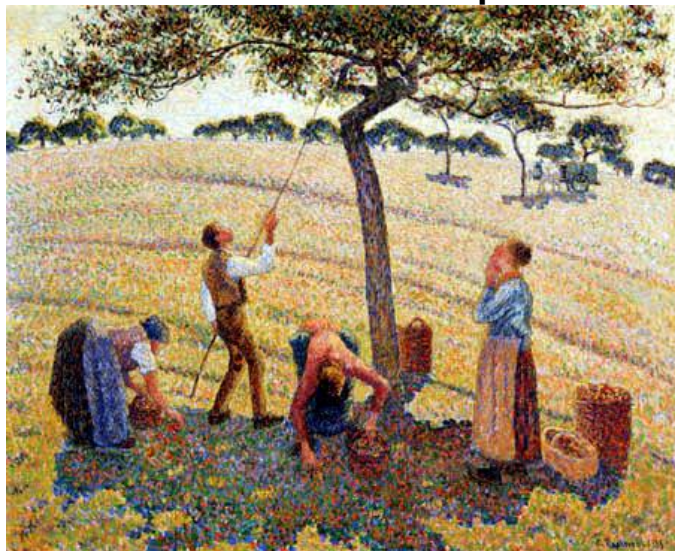
“The only reason for being an Anglican is that this balance seems to you to be healthy for the Church Catholic overall, and that it helps people grow in discernment and holiness. Being an Anglican in the way I have sketched involves certain concessions and unclarity but provides at least for ways of sharing responsibility and making decisions that will hold and that will be mutually intelligible.

“Our tragedy at the moment, I think, is not at all about sexuality, but about a widespread inability to accept that there might be completely different ways of thinking about the problem, whatever it is, and that they might have something right about them. That inability is shared across the spectrum; I expect it is shared even by me, when I try to diagnose it. If we are to learn anything, and rescue anything,

from the current travails of the church, I think it will have to be about the nature of repentance – calling ourselves, not our opponents, of humility, and of love”.

(Evensong sermon preached by Jonathan Clark on 26th July and reproduced here by popular request)

Feasts and Fasts for September



Apple Harvest in Eragny. Camille Pissaro (1830 – 1903)

John Keats famously described autumn as the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness...waxing lyrical about maturing sun, swelling gourds and ‘cottage-trees bended with apples’.

He wasn't alone in loving this time of year. Like the poet, many of us look forward to its crisp mornings, the changing colours of nature and a fresh start after the summer holiday. Of course, in the Northern Hemisphere, it's time to give thanks for the harvest. In Britain that means collecting food together: tins of fruit and meat, packets of biscuits, and usually, a giant marrow. For Christians like us there are prayers in church and, even if we live in the city, a harvest supper.



For Jews, however, September really does represent new beginnings – it's their New Year, or Rosh Hashanah, celebrated this year on September 19 and 20.

While we Gentiles sit down to blackberry

crumbles and pumpkin pies, they prepare a feast of sweet foods...apples dipped in honey, pomegranates, quinces and honeycakes, eaten prayerfully to usher in a sweet and pleasant year.

Scarily perhaps, the meal is traditionally accompanied by the head of a sheep or ox. This symbolises leadership. Jews, with their tragic history, are averse to being followers and believe in leading through righteous acts. Of course, traditionally doesn't mean that most contemporary Jewish families observe this ritual. Some serve a stuffed fish with its head still intact, and if you consult Nigella Lawson's Rosh Hashanah menu in her cookery book, *Feast*, you'll find recipes for stewed lamb shanks and gefilte fish – small fried fish balls, the forerunners of fish and chips, first cooked by Portuguese Jews in London's East End.

What's not on the Rosh Hashanah table is sour food like pickles. Even chocolate is banned from some celebrations. Bitter tastes send out the wrong messages to the Divine and no-one wants their New Year to be unpleasant.



Not every faith is pigging out. Amid the plenty, Muslims are starving themselves. Ramadan is an annual fast, which moves from month to month each year. This year it started on August 22 and will finish on September 20 with the festival of Eid. The fast itself is designed to test Muslims' patience, modesty and spirituality – there's no eating, drinking or smoking between dawn and dusk. What's more it's traditional for them to pray more often and to read the Koran. The point of Ramadan is to slow down and retreat from worldly affairs. It's also a time to reach out to others in less fortunate circumstances.

Of course, when the fast ends, people mark the occasion in style. They put on their best (usually new) clothes and head off to the mosque. Afterwards there's a big celebration and plenty of... you guessed it...luscious party food!

Pippa Crawford

Angels and Archangels



Epstein's sculpture on the façade of Coventry Cathedral

September 29th is the feast of St Michael and All Angels, so I thought it would be a good idea to revisit an article I did a couple of years ago about angels.

Angels had a long history in Judaism. Judaism is a monotheistic religion. That is, it believes that there is only one God. This seems completely natural to us now – it is what we, inheriting the Jewish tradition, also believe. But it was exceedingly unusual in the ancient world. Most religions in the regions surrounding Judaea had whole armies of gods, often divided up into different hierarchies depending on their importance. Pagan heavens were crowded, busy places.

But God did not sit in solitary splendour in the Jewish heaven. He might be the only divine being there, but – the Jews believed – there was a whole heavenly bureaucracy to help him administer the world. They are referred to by various names. For example, in the book of Job, there is a reference to 'the sons of God' coming to present themselves before the Lord – the regular team meeting. In Isaiah, there is a reference to the seraphim, one of which flew with a coal from the heavenly fire to touch Isaiah's mouth so that he could hear God speaking. The Psalms talk of the angels; in one which Jesus meditated on in the wilderness, it says 'he will give his angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. On their

hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone'.

There are other references to angels scattered throughout the Old and New Testaments. For example, at the very beginning of the story, the cherubim, one of the orders of angels, are placed to guard the way back into Eden after the expulsion of Adam and Eve. An angel appears to Hagar, Ishmael's mother, when she is in despair in the desert after having been sent away by Abraham. One of the most famous appearances is at Jacob's ladder, where he sees a ladder set up between heaven and earth and 'the angels of God were ascending and descending on it'. God sent 'an angel' to close the lions' mouths when Daniel was thrown into their den.

Angels also appear at key points in the Jesus's life, as well as in the very familiar birth narratives. After the temptations in the wilderness, they appear and 'minister' to him. They appear at Gethsemane, strengthening him during the agony in the garden. And most significantly, they are there to announce the resurrection.

The word 'angel' means a messenger. It comes from the same Greek root as the word 'evangel' or news.

Although some of the heavenly creatures were decidedly odd looking, angels were usually depicted as human in appearance. So much so, indeed, that they could be mistaken for men. The three men who came to see Abraham and prophesy to him about the conception and birth of Isaac, for example, could well have been angels. We think of angels as having wings because that is the easiest way for them to get here from heaven – and messengers of the gods often traditionally had wings of some sort. (Angels, as normally depicted, could never fly – the wings are too small {although they say that about bumble bees too ...}.)

Angels, like men, could make moral choices, and sometimes they made the wrong choices. That is why Satan, or Lucifer, is referred to as the 'fallen angel' – he had chosen the way of disobedience, rather than obedience.

There was considerable discussion in the early and mediaeval church about whether or not angels occupied any space at all. Were they made of matter? Or were the visions of

them holograms of some sort? Did they have souls? Often they appeared in dreams, which solved the problem to some extent. But not always. Fascination with this question led to the debate which Luther was supposed to have used to pour scorn on the theologians of his day – how many angels can dance on the head of a pin?

By the fifth century, the Church had constructed an elaborate scheme for the organisation of heaven. There were 9 'choirs' of heavenly creatures, divided into three hierarchies. Archangels and angels, rather disappointingly, come bottom – eight and ninth respectively. They, together with 'principalities' constituted the third hierarchy, whose function was to intervene in the affairs of mankind. The first hierarchy, of cherubim, seraphim and thrones, were there to worship God. The middle hierarchy, of dominions, virtues and powers, are there to transmit knowledge from the first to the third, but have nothing to do with mortals.

Angels, and archangels, may have been at the bottom of the heavenly hierarchy. But some at least of them had an advantage over most of the others – they had names. They were clearly identified individuals. Of these, Gabriel and Michael are the most important and well-known. The other archangels named in our scriptures (in the Apocrypha) are Raphael, who appears in the book of Tobit and Uriel, who appears in the book of Esdras. Traditionally, there were seven archangels. The complete list appears in the non-canonical book of Enoch.

It is perhaps surprising to us that the feast day we celebrate this month is that of Michael and All Angels, rather than Gabriel and All Angels, since Gabriel is the angel with whom we are most familiar, thanks to his place in the nativity story. Michael appears only four times by name in the whole canonical Bible (there is considerably more about him in the book of Enoch); twice in the book of Daniel, once in the book of Jude and once Revelation. It is this last appearance, in which 'Michael and his angels fought against the dragon (Lucifer) and his angels' that probably gives Michael his starring role. In the middle ages, he became the patron saint of chivalry, and soldiers and police officers still regard him as their patron saint.

Jewish tradition had made Michael into the champion of the Jewish people. At first, in the

Christian tradition, Michael was first venerated as a healer, not as a warrior. In Asia Minor, a number of hot and reputedly miraculous springs are dedicated to St Michael. Gregory the Great invoked St Michael in a prayer that plague in Rome should cease and was apparently rewarded by a manifestation of the angel at the place we now call Castel San'Angelo.

Michael is particularly associated with rocky outcrops and high places. There is Mont-St. Michel in Normandy, where he is said to have appeared in 708. There is also St Michael's Mount in Cornwall, and the island of Skellig Michael off the coast of Kerry in western Ireland, while one of the chapels perched on volcanic plugs in the town of Le Puy in central France is also dedicated to St Michael. He is also the patron saint of Germany.

In the Roman Catholic tradition, Michael had four functions. He is the Christian angel of death, carrying souls to heaven and weighing them in his scales, which he is often depicted carrying. He intervenes at death to give each soul a chance to redeem itself. He is a special guardian of the Church, and he is the supreme enemy of Satan. Not a bad haul for a creature who appears so little in the Bible.

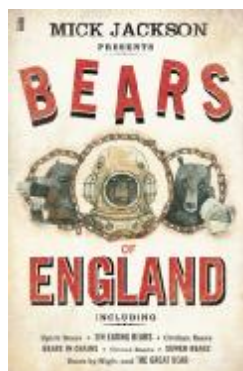
The feast day which was traditionally known as Michaelmas, on 29 September, is one of the 'quarter days' on which accounts were settled and rents fell due. The other three were Lady Day (25 March), St John's Day (24 June) and Christmas Day. St Michael's Day therefore fell neatly in the right place (although St Matthew's day, on 21 September, could have done equally well. Perhaps the association with tax collection was felt to be unfortunate!). Like the other three quarter days, it was a significant feast day. The traditional feast was the Michaelmas goose, which was regarded as being at its prime about this time, having fattened itself up on the stubble left over from the harvest.

Judith Simpson

Book Review

Bears of England by Mick Jackson

Published by Faber & Faber. Hardback £12.99



As a nation we are fond of transferring our own emotions, views and opinions onto allegorical situations involving animals, and we seem particularly fond of using bears for this purpose; Winnie the Pooh and Paddington, for instance, creating a sort of grown-up version of the child's "Teddy says he doesn't want to go to bed" syndrome.

Bears of England is a delightfully whimsical series of short stories centred around bears in particular historical, legendary, mythical and folklore settings. The first story, "Spirit Bears", has a somewhat Monty Pythonesque flavour reminiscent of the Knights who say "ni" in the film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, and one begins to wonder whether the historical satire is deliberate or unintended. But do persist, even if Monty Python has never been to your taste: to satirise history at all requires a scholarly and detailed knowledge of the subject.

The stories range over a wide geographic area of England, from the sewers of Victorian London to the Derbyshire Dales and the churches of the Midlands, to the Clifton Suspension Bridge under construction in the South West, to the Somerset Levels and the flooded crypt of Winchester Cathedral, and over several centuries from Mediaeval to Victorian times to the 20th century. The last story in the book tells of how the bears finally left our shores (and our somewhat grudging tolerance of them) and sailed off into the night.....but you must read it for yourselves.

The bears are portrayed in different forms of work, their qualities utilised as we humans have always enlisted the support and co-operation of animals; the sin-eating bears of Mediaeval times believed to take on the sins of deceased humans in return for bread and beer (the bears definitely had the last laugh there); the work of sewer bears, circus bears and a deep sea diver called Henry Huxley being rather more self-explanatory.

The stories are beautifully written in the third person after the manner of fairy tales, with a gentle humour, a special empathy and sensitivity for the protagonists and with the true story-teller's sense that they are totally believable. There is a large measure of respect for the bears' intelligence and resourcefulness, enhanced by David Roberts' beautiful illustrations in which the humans are depicted as whimsical characters, but the bears are true to life. So take up "Bears of England" as your late holiday reading. It is lightweight enough to be undemanding and enjoyable, but as intellectual fare it is rather more good quality ice cream than candyfloss.

Pat Keniston

Win This Super Prize!



Guardian or Tutelary Angels have a long heritage in the panoply of heaven. Traditionally there are nine ranks of angels, from the big boys, the cherubim and seraphim, at the top all the way down to regular archangels and angels at the bottom.

Neither Pseudo-Dionysius, in his *Celestial Hierarchy*, nor Thomas Aquinas actually mention a Radar Jamming, Heaven Scented, Guardian Angel to hang in your car, but we can only assume that a part of the text is missing.

This month's prize is, no joke or lie, a real angel that you can hang off your rear view mirror. It must be, otherwise it wouldn't say that it was. It seems odd that celestial beings can be bought and sold, especially for \$3.50 (not inc. P&P), but you are not being asked to buy it, simply to win it. Enter this month's caption competition and you could win an angel for your car. In the meantime next time we sing *Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones* please insert "in your car" where it used to read "raise the glad strain".

Stephen Bovey

Saints v Sinners Football Match

From our own sports correspondent, Andrew Hudson



The match was somewhat marred by Sorcerer's time wasting tactics.

Following their narrow victory in the annual cricket match against the Sinners, the Saints felt confident as the new football season got under way at St Mary's Stadium (author's note: it's in Southampton). The Sinners, however, were thirsting for revenge, and ready to use every trick in the book.

The line-ups were the same. The Saints' manager stuck to his tried and trusted team, with Peter captaining the side.

"You are the rock on which I build our defence", the manager said, in response to Peter's annual plea to be allowed to play up front.

"But I could get my head on some crosses, and really get amongst them, boss" said Peter.

"You just keep things tight at the back, all right?" was the answer.

Disappointed but not surprised, Peter led the team out to a rousing chorus of "Bread of Heaven" from the Saints' fans behind the goal. Matthew trotted off to get between the posts. The two Jameses were the full backs: James the Great, at right back, deserved his nickname after playing several seasons for Compostela in the high quality Spanish League, but some of the fans muttered that James the Less would be better left back in the dressing room. Andrew joined Peter at the back – he was still a useful player, but the years in Scottish football had blunted his skills somewhat. Simon was at the heart of midfield, and Thomas and Philip formed the strike force.

Judas led out the opposition - he had of course transferred from the Saints to the Sinners after a row with the management. Their star player was Seducer in midfield, though the pundits agreed that Brutus and Cassius would be a powerful combination in attack if they didn't spend so much time falling out between themselves.

The Sinners were up to their tricks from the start. After an innocuous challenge in midfield, Falsifier went down clutching his head, with lots of blood apparently issuing from his forehead. The referee, Socrates, reached for his pocket. "I never touched him, honest, ref," said Simon, to no avail as the yellow card was produced. Peter had a closer look at the "blood": "Don't fall for that, ref - I had that stuff on my hot dog yesterday." "That's quite enough from you, captain," said Socrates.

Worse was to follow, as the Sinners mounted an attack down the right, and crossed for Brutus to head powerfully goalwards. Matthew could only parry it, and Cassius was first to the ball to knock it in. The Sinners' fans waved their banners saying "Jesus Saves ... but Satan knocks in the rebound". "Pity they couldn't come up with something more original than that" said Andrew, but the damage was done. The Saints' fans were understandably a bit quiet, prompting taunts from the Sinners of "In church, it's just like being in church" to the tune of "Blue Moon" [author's note: a genuine football chant].

The Saints fought back. Simon fed James the Great, who sped down the right and crossed from the by-line for Philip to fire it towards the far corner. Sorcerer, in goal for the Sinners looked beaten, but shouted something rather weird. At the last second, the ball swerved dramatically away, hit the post, and bounced back into play, where Pluto scrambled it away. The Saints surrounded the referee: "That's not fair, ref – it's not natural!", said Thomas. "You should be used to that" said Socrates unsympathetically – he had a reputation for enjoying argument, but not today.

The more aged limbs began to tire, and the youngest Saints player, John, began to make inroads down the left wing. Hypocrite, playing right back for the Sinners, had just done a photo shoot for the Fair Play campaign, but this didn't seem to stop him hacking John down

every time he threatened. "Oi, ref, that's his third foul in a row," screamed Peter to no avail. Finally, after the fourth foul, this time in front of the linesman, Aristotle, Hypocrite was booked and the Saints had a free kick in a dangerous position.

John got up and delivered a fine cross. Peter, up from the back, got his head to it, and the ball sped towards the net. Again, Sorcerer gave his weird shout, and the ball began to wobble, but in diving after it – probably to show off for the cameras – his hand shot out a huge distance and knocked the ball into the net.

"What the hell did you do that for?" yelled Judas at the crestfallen goalkeeper. "Don't know what happened, skip – felt like my hand was out of control."

Having celebrated his goal, and with the Saints' fans now chanting "You're not singing any more" instead of "Feed me till I want no more", Peter sidled over to the manager's dug-out. "Did you have anything to do with that, boss?"

"Let's just say it was a hand of God goal, shall we?"

Socrates blew his whistle. A draw, but an entertaining one.

Teams:

Saints: Matthew; James the Great, Peter (capt), Andrew, James the Less; Thaddeus, Simon, Bartholomew, John; Philip, Thomas.

Sinners: Sorcerer; Hypocrite, Judas (capt), Pluto, Fraudster; Thief, Seducer, Falsifier, Flatterer; Brutus, Cassius.

Referee: Socrates

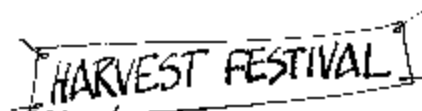
Linesmen: Aristotle, Plato.

Spot the Ball Contest

Entries to the NP team by 20 September – we might decide to award a prize!



"But why do we have to plough the fields and scatter when we get everything from Tesco?"



...I take it our local supermarket has a rather good offer on tinned peas at the moment!



Mothers' Union members heard that the subscription had gone up, yet again.

The Things People Say

I don't know about anyone else, but as I get older I find myself worryingly turning into my parents. Their prejudices are alive and well with me, *and* I make comments about the comparative sizes of eyes and stomachs when plates are not scraped clean. Anyway, I was thinking about the odd things that families say and it occurred to me that the congregation of St Mary's would be a rich source of wise (and obscure) sayings. So here are some of them.

I remember my Dad using an expression about the weather, "It's a bit black over Bill's mother's." A BBC presenter actually used it the other day from the Test Match at Edgbaston, Birmingham - the city I come from. According to Wikipedia, it is Black Country (not Birmingham) dialect. When I was a small child, it foxed me, because I had an uncle named Bill, but had been told - correctly - that his mother had died many years ago, in London!

Andrew Hudson

A friend of mine at college always used to come up with silly weather based ones like: 'Rain from the east, 24 hours at least'.
Stephen Bovey

If we didn't know what something was, my mum used to say it was a wigwam for a goose's bridle.

There was 'it runs in the family - like wooden legs and noses' (then, in answer to a quizzical look - 'they both run!')

In response to a question about her age, my mother (and my grandmother) would say, "As old as my tongue and a little older than my teeth." and if, in answer to another question, someone said, "God knows!" the response would be, "...and He's not telling."

"Sitting up like Jackie" - sitting nicely at the table.

Susanna Ferrar

My earliest identifiable memory is of my mother cleaning my fingernails and saying: "that'll pass in a crowd with a good shove" (meaning "that will have to do"). The view from the window and a strange piece of furniture (an

"unsociable") identify this as taking place in a house that we left before I was two and a half (at Campbelltown in 1944 if you are interested.)

My grandmother answered an enquiry about her age which she clearly regarded as impertinent with the one already quoted by Susanna about tongue and teeth.

Tamsin

My grandfather from deepest Somerset used to say to my mother, his daughter, when she was in her younger days, "You re looking very slack today, Peg"! By which he meant, I think, that she was looking relaxed and happily informal in her dress sense!

Mark Perrett

Wet cranes fly by night. J D Salinger?

John Fletcher

The only suitable saying of my mother's....."We'll go to bed early to save the coal". Obviously in pre central heating days!

Joan Potter

(Joan told me that some of her mother's sayings were a bit "rude" and not suitable for reproduction in a parish magazine. She refused to be drawn further!)

I must have been a very grubby child because my mother used to remark that she could "grow potatoes round my neck" – and my father (observing my fingernails) used to politely enquire whether I was in mourning.

Great Aunt Edith didn't go to the loo - she "spent a penny". (Public lavatories had a brass lock on the door that you opened with an old penny in the slot).

I don't remember ever hearing my father swear, but when he wanted to use an expletive he'd say "hells bells and buckets of blood". I don't use that one myself because it takes too long – but I often think it.

We'd love to hear from you if you have any wise and wonderful family sayings that you'd like to add to our collection. In a way they are a little bit like folk songs and should be treasured as part of our cultural heritage!

Jane Pryce

Summer Caption Competition

Here's the picture just to remind you. Our adjudicator chose no. 1 as the winner, but it was a close thing.



All right! I solemnly swear never again to say 'hopefully' or 'at the end of the day'. Now let me down and give me my clothes back."

I say that St Mary's is only this high

Pride goeth before a fall. Whoops!

Hugh had an idea how to get the loose tile down from the church ceiling - but don't tell health and safety!

Trevor waved nonchalantly to disguise his rising panic after realising someone had spread superglue on the diving board.

Before diving in, Norman waved to Deidre, thinking how kind it had been of her to knit him new swimwear.

Roger, Roger! I'm over here, and I've saved a seat for you.

Quentin rather fancied himself as a future springboard diving champion but had not yet quite got the hang of how to position himself for take off!

Damian just kept beaming even when those rusty nails were digging in at his nether regions!

The young curate at St Wilfred's had some exciting new ideas about taking the Gospel to the community.

A cause for great rejoicing at the total immersion baptism at St Justin-by-the-Lido.

Hey guys – can you get me a Mister Whippy with a flake? I'm over here - can you hear me? Guys?

Father Clive's sermon on "the water of life" was made all the more interesting by his decision to preach from an outdoor pulpit

Jeremy knew he looked good in his tight white denim cut-offs – he just had to make sure that the girls noticed him up there.

Nigel was totally unaware of the mutterings of the impatient queue behind him - and he was shortly to find out that it doesn't do to show off on the high board.

September Caption Competition



Your caption goes here.

Get competitive and win our fabulous new Star Prize as shown on page 11. Entries can be emailed or given to any one of the magazine team. Have a go, it's easy and fun – and that prize could be Really Useful! The closing date is 20th September, so you've got loads of time.

Our calling is to share the loving hospitality of God, seeing Christ in the face of the stranger

Ministry Team for St Mary's & St John's

Rector, The Revd Jonathan Clark, The Rectory, Stoke Newington Church Street, London N16 9ES
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mj_hawkes@yahoo.co.uk)

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Organist and Director of Music, David Stratkauskas, (020 7254 6072)

PCC Secretary, Jean Guest (020 8802 4921).

PCC Treasurer, Michael Johnson

Recorder of Stewardship, Rosaline Nwagboso

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Website, Graham Robson robsong21@yahoo.co.uk

Parish Information for St John's

Church Wardens, Joyce George & Irene Fergus

Parish Office, 020 8809 6111

Services

Sunday

Holy Communion 8 am Matins 9.00 am (Old Church) Sung Eucharist (St Mary's) 10.30 am

Parish Eucharist (St John's) 11 am Evensong 6.30 pm (Old Church)

Weekdays (All at St Mary's except Thursdays)

	Morning Prayer	Mass	Evening Prayer
Monday	8:30 am,		5 pm
Tuesday	8:30 am	8:45 am	5 pm
Wednesday	8:30 am	7.30 pm	5 pm
Thursday	8:30 am		5 pm
Friday	8:30 am		5 pm

The Editorial Team (*"Nemo primus inter pares"*)

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Brownies. Fridays 6.30 pm. Enquire at Church Office

Booking enquiries for the Community Centre: see Parish Administrator

Arrangements for baptisms, weddings etc: ring the Parish Administrator for an appointment.

St Mary's has a Church School: St Mary's School, Lordship Rd, London, N16. 020 8800 2645