

New Prospect



The Parish Magazine of St Mary Stoke Newington

October 2006

50p please

The Beat Goes On



The beat goes on, drumming up support for the Trade Justice campaign. St Mary's obviously had to be represented! Beryl and I met, as agreed, at 10.30 a.m. on Thursday, 14th September, outside the west door of St Mary's. We went by bus and tube to the large green area of Harmsworth Park, which flanks the Imperial War Museum. We were armed with two whistles and a yoghurt pot to swell the beat! Whom did we spot immediately but Archbishop Rowan, himself? There were the familiar faces and voices from the Christian Aid leadership, such as its chairman, Daleep Mukarji, whom we plan to invite to St Mary's next year. Our own Sarah Robson from the Christian Aid H.Q. was in the middle of the throng. Beryl and I gravitated towards the ALMA ensign where we encountered the Bishop of Angola and his wife and others from southern and eastern Africa. There were plenty of ordinary people like us, keen to demonstrate in favour of exploited and unprivileged farmers and growers whose livelihood is still threatened by the policies of Europe and America, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The struggle to support and defend the rights of small growers and farmers in developing countries from unfair conditions of trade continues. Examples of this form of

exploitation of the labour of the poor by the rich are currently displayed on the notice-boards of both New St Mary's and Old St Mary's.

One of the *Christian Aid* posters exhibited portrays the plight of dairy farmer, Paul Albert of Haiti, who says: *"The IMF stops me from selling my milk to support my family."* In return for loans from the IMF, the Haitian government had to drastically lower import tariffs on milk and other agricultural goods. As a result, powdered and condensed milk is now the second-most imported product after rice in this Caribbean country, which used to produce enough fresh milk for its people. Paul says: *"It keeps going down the drain. We have to sell at lower prices [to compete], but the cost of living has gone up. Now we don't have a market for our products."*

Then we have the picture of Màxima Cari and her family. *"The World Bank took away my right to clean water,"* she states. When the World Bank insisted that the Bolivian government privatised the water service in 1997, Màxima Cari could not afford the US\$445 connection fee charged by the foreign firm that won the contract, which is hardly surprising since the fee is around half the average annual income in Bolivia. Now she draws dirty water from a well eight feet deep and her children have become sick.

The third poster is of Samba Diop Kane of Senegal, who complains that he can no longer sell his home-grown rice as its price is undercut by subsidised American rice. Moreover, the IMF has imposed conditions on the government of Senegal which has compelled them to withdraw the provision of affordable fertiliser to their farmers. A similar situation obtains in Ghana, where, for example, Ayine Akugbilla can no longer make a living from her rice, since the IMF forced the Ghanaian government to withdraw support from local farmers like Ayine. She is pictured on the fourth poster.

That's what the March was about: the terms of trade. We were marshalled by Danny and Keith among others and by a formidable array of drums. The police were friendly and helpful. The message on fair trade was duly delivered to Number Eleven, Downing Street and the marchers dispersed to various venues such as Emmanuel Church, Tufton Street (near Westminster Abbey) or St John's, Waterloo, where we received both physical and spiritual sustenance, coming home eventually with the throb of the drums in our ears and a song in our hearts.

Richard Munnings

JPIC – The Environmental Audit

Hopefully you will be aware that the Justice and Peace group has designated September and October as months with a particular focus on the Environment. No sooner had this been decided than I began to spot environmental events and news stories leaping out at me. There were the Bishop of London's comments about the moral dilemma of flying off on your holiday. An extract from this interview on the Today Programme on July 24th gives a flavour of the debate:

Interviewer: Sorry to be a bit crude about it, but I'm not quite clear as to whether I understand from that that you are or aren't saying that buying a big un-environmentally friendly car or taking a plane to somewhere nice in the sun is a sin?

Bishop: What I'm saying is that as you begin to audit your own use of energy, decisions about which car you use and the way in which you use air travel clearly are very vital – I don't want to issue fatwas, because some people need large cars, they have large families or live in the countryside – so it is a question of individual decision and people have got to be helped to make those decisions responsibly for themselves.

The word *audit* leapt out at me, because that's one of the things that we at St Mary's have embarked upon. So far there is much to be encouraged about as far as steps already taken prior to the audit, but there are ongoing things to be explored such as having another look at the energy-saving light bulbs in both Old and New Churches, and the proposal to cut our weekday heating of the New Church by creating a small heated zone in the side chapel for daily prayer and eucharists. More news on these will follow.

But if the Bishop's words or our own audit at St Mary's have encouraged you to have a look at your own 'environmental footprint' why not conduct your own environmental audit? A couple of weblinks might be useful:

<http://www.earthday.net/footprint/index.asp>

<http://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.html>

And finally, keep an eye out for Environmental events happening at St Mary's and beyond:

- **Sundays in October** at St Paul's Cathedral, 6p.m – worship with an environmental theme.
- **11th October** at St Mary's – Discussion with Mischa Borris, Green Councillor for Hackney, followed by Eucharist with a focus on environmental concerns.
- **15th October** – Harvest Festival and One World Week.
- **4th November** – Day of action for the Environment – Trafalgar Square

Martyn Hawkes



How do you shape up? Test yourself with Beryl's quiz on page 15. Eds

Irene Powell



Irene was one of the first people I met when I came to St Mary's. She was always asking me when I was going to expel her from the church for some misdemeanour - to which my reply was that the spire would fall before I would contemplate such a thing. Irene was definitely part of the furniture of St Mary's.

Irene had been a member of St Mary's for more than thirty years, and had led the Brownies for all that time. She was completely dedicated to the girls under her care, as the generations of now-grown up Brownies can testify. Her contribution to the Guiding movement more generally was immense, and she was much in demand as a trainer within the movement. She was even included on a delegation to make contacts and develop relationships with Guiding in India.

Irene never let her short stature prevent her from doing what she wanted; she never regarded herself as a disabled person (to the extent of regularly playing badminton at one time!). She owed that self-belief to her mother, who from her early childhood encouraged her, and fought battles on her behalf against the system which would have put her into a ghetto. Her mother's death was a great loss for Irene, which she got through but never completely got over.

Irene always liked to be on the inside track of what was going on, and despite living in Hertford still managed to know more about what was going on in Stoke Newington than most of the residents do. She took great

interest in people, and was always thoughtful in responding to those in need. She was also a highly efficient parish clerk, keeping our registers up to date and beautifully written. She was fiercely loyal to her friends - even when people moved away she would make sure the relationship did not wither. She really enjoyed getting away on holiday, especially the chance to live it up (and dress up) on cruise liners.

Irene's faith was childlike but not childish, rooted in her early experiences of Sunday School. She loved St Mary's deeply, and continued coming back to us because she couldn't find anywhere that meant the same to her as St Mary's. Christian faith was not an added extra, but part of her whole self. It wasn't easy for her to let go and allow God to hold her; she liked to be in charge of what was going on. But in the end she was able to rest, and we rejoice with her that she is now in the presence of the Lord she loved throughout her life.

Jonathan Clark

Being Oneself.

As a long-standing agnostic, I don't come to church very often, but I do try to take the opportunity to reflect on the way I live my life. I listen to the sermons with this in mind, and Father Jonathan's sermon at Susie's first mass struck a real chord with me, partly because it chimed in with a book I have been reading called "Why should anyone be led by YOU?" by Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones of the London Business School.

It's hard to summarise briefly the 11 June sermon, but the point which particularly caught my attention was the statement that "each priest brings something unique to priestly ministry, which is more than just their particular set of skills and abilities." Jonathan went on to develop that to say that the priestly ministry is about the encounter between the human life and the divine life. "It's not about being purely oneself: it's about being really oneself, at a deeper level of reality." St Mary's should make the most of Susie's distinctive skills.

Goffee and Jones lay great stress, in their book, on authenticity as a key characteristic of

successful leaders in any walk of life. "Followers want to be led by a person, not a role holder or a position filler or a bureaucrat." They argue that good leaders need to know who they are, and where they have come from, and to show enough of themselves, weaknesses as well as strengths, which involves taking personal risks. And why do they take such risks? Because "Great leaders *really* care - about an idea, values, a dream, or vision." Goffee and Jones see that as part of the answer to a problem which they pose at the start of their book: that modern societies face "a profound moral vacuum. We are not sure what we believe in."

I think I know enough of the Christian faith to appreciate that it is a religion of salvation and not primarily a set of moral values, and that, as Jonathan's sermon brought out, the priestly ministry has a whole different dimension on top of the leadership role in business or government - however similar the routine of plans and committee meetings might seem! But all of us - whether leaders or followers (and most of us are both at one time or another), and whether priests, believers, or agnostics - should keep in mind that doing our bit to make the world a better place depends on having a clear sense of our values, an understanding of why they matter to us, and a readiness to be our authentic selves, warts and all, with a due mixture of pride in what we have to offer, humility over our shortcomings, and a determination to do better in the authentic way of getting closer to the values we believe in.

Andrew Hudson

(The price of the book is £15.99, and the publisher is Harvard Business School Press)

Book Review



The No 1 Ladies Detective Agency by Alexander McCall Smith published by Abacus and Random House price £6.99

McCall Smith is a modern Renaissance man of sorts. A professor of medical law, he is a renowned bioethicist, writes academic tomes, short story collections and children's books, and plays the bassoon. But unless you are an aficionado of medical law you probably know him best as the author of The No1 Ladies Detective Agency novels series of which there are seven so far.

Although critically well received these books are also delightfully easy to read and leave you with a warm feeling. But although they are warm, funny and affectionate, they also deal with darker aspects of life, albeit with a straightforward, practical sense of what is possible and predictable in the fast changing African world in which they are set.

The Agency in question is run by Mma (Mrs) Precious Ramotswe, who has set it up in the town of Gaborone in Botswana with money left to her by her beloved father.

Described by some critics as the 'Miss Marple of Africa' she does not find herself dealing with villages scattered with bodies but wayward teenagers and con artists. But darkness is glimpsed when Mma Ramotswe is asked to find out what happened to a missing boy, who she fears has fallen prey to witchdoctors.

Like Miss Marple's no nonsense approach I particularly enjoyed Mma Ramotswe's approach to life. Be it reflecting on a disastrous marriage, cheating husbands, impolite teenagers or giving lifts to hitchhikers, she has an unshakeable belief in what is right and wrong and an uncanny ability to see to the heart of situations. There is also an enjoyable cast of characters such as her secretary Mma

Makutsi and her friend, Botswana's top mechanic, Mr JLB Matekoni.

Mma Ramotswe has a good heart and a deep rooted love of Africa, but especially Botswana. I have always wanted to go to Africa and the descriptions of Botswana's landscapes, skies, people, attitudes to life and customs (I now know how to politely shake hands and enter a stranger's house in Botswana, thanks to this book) are affectionately evocative but also sagacious about the difficulties of living in such a country, where the Kalahari is only a few hours drive from a major city.

I have also read the second book in the series and have to admit that they do get a bit samey; you know that certain themes will emerge, that Ms Ramotswe will reminisce on the past, philosophise in her individual, matter of fact, way, solve mysteries and bring about bitter sweet conclusions. But so long as I do not expect any surprises I will read more.

Emma Dent

Mary – Part II



This is the second of three planned articles about our patron saint, Mary. This month, I want to look at aspects of Mary as a mother. First, what do we know about her as Jesus's mother, from the Gospels? Then, some of the theology which was developed about her as the Mother of God and the mother of the

church. And finally, some of the legends and stories that grew up around her motherhood in popular devotion.

Although Mary is one of the most important characters in the story of Christianity, there is surprisingly little about her in the Bible. Outside the 'infancy narratives', she appears only three or four times altogether. And in many of those cases, there is something slightly equivocal about her role. Jesus often seems dismissive or careless of her feelings, and the Church has gone to some lengths to explain these events in a positive light.

Following the story of the nativity and the flight into Egypt, we hear no more about Mary (or Jesus) until the strange episode of Jesus getting lost in the Temple. As told by Luke, the whole family had gone up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, which could only properly be celebrated in the Temple. They would have gone in a large group with others from their village. The rest of the family leave, assuming that Jesus is with one of the other parties in the group, and have travelled for a whole day before they realise that Jesus has not come with them. So they return to Jerusalem to look for him, and find him in the Temple, arguing with the learned men and teachers. Mary, entirely naturally, asks what he thinks he is playing at, causing them so much distress. Jesus's response is strange. There is no apology, but rather a rebuke "How is it that you sought me. Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?". Not surprisingly, Mary and Joseph are rather nonplussed by this, although apparently no more is said. Nor does Jesus, apparently, do anything similar again. Instead, Luke says, he went back with them to Nazareth and 'was obedient to them'. Mary, says Luke, 'kept all these things in her heart'. No doubt it was the first reminder, since their return from Egypt, of the strangeness of the coming of this particular child.

The other episode outside the passion narrative that appears in the synoptic gospels is equally unflattering. Mary and Jesus's brothers appear outside a house where he is teaching. They send inside, asking for him. Jesus, far from acknowledging the relationship, seems to repudiate it. He says that rather than his biological family, "whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother". The same attitude appears in another story told by

Luke alone. A woman, impressed by his teaching, calls out a blessing on the woman who bore and suckled him. He responds again by saying "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it". Now Mary, of course, was not excluded by this, since in her agreement to the incarnation she had most certainly done the will of God. But neither was she awarded any special status. In this, Jesus himself seems to take a rather different line from that followed by the Church.

The longest single appearance of Mary in the Gospel stories of Jesus's ministry is in that of the wedding at Cana, told by St John. Here, Mary appears almost as the primary invitee, with Jesus having come as part of her party rather than the other way round. She is clearly close to those holding the wedding. During the course of the festivities, she becomes aware that they are running out of wine. This would have been a terrible social disgrace for the family. In her concern to save them from this (was it perhaps a wedding in her own family?), it occurs to her that Jesus may be able to help. Once again, she is apparently brushed aside. "Woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come" is his response. But she, with another twenty years' experience of her son, has got a better measure of him by now. Instead of feeling rebuffed, she simply tells the servants at the feast to do whatever he tells them. And sure enough, the desired miracle is duly performed – indeed, overperformed, given both the quantity and quality of the wine that is produced. Mary has played a pivotal role in the first of Jesus's miracles. And, moreover, Jesus then accompanies his mother back to Capernaum for a few days.

The ARCIC¹ statement on Mary suggests that John, in highlighting Mary's concern that there is not enough wine, is really drawing attention to the 'longing for salvation of the whole covenant people, who have water for purification but not 'the joyful wine of the messianic kingdom'. It also suggests that his form of address to her, as in his comments recorded in the Synoptic gospels, is intended to show a changed relationship. The earthly one of mother and son has been superseded

by that of the leader and the disciple. But even if the statement is right about John's, and Jesus's motivations, it is highly unlikely that Mary ever felt the biological relationship had been superseded in this way.

The final appearance of Mary in the Gospels is at the crucifixion. She does not appear, or at least is not mentioned, at the Last Supper (but then no women were, and someone certainly cooked the meal). Only John records her presence. As Jesus is hanging on the cross, he looks down and sees both his mother and the 'beloved disciple' standing near him. He commits them into each other's care. Traditionally, this has been understood as an instruction to the whole Church to regard Mary as its mother, an instruction which the Church has embraced with enthusiasm. Mary is presented for the last time at the very beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, as one of those who is waiting for the Holy Spirit.

It was not long before the Church began to build on this slender body of information about the mother of Jesus. We looked last time at some of the doctrines they developed around her perpetual virginity and sinlessness. The most relevant to Mary's role of mother is the doctrine of her as the *theotokos*, or Mother of God. This was of central importance to the church, because it was from Mary alone that Jesus received his full humanity. It was a doctrine that developed out of the disputes of the early centuries about whether Jesus was fully God incarnate, or whether he had somehow been inspired with the Holy Spirit at some point in his life or, alternatively, whether he was only in some way masquerading as a human being. The church as a whole concluded that Jesus was fully God and fully man, and that therefore Mary, as his mother, could properly be called the Mother of God. The title was formally invoked to safeguard the orthodox doctrine of the unity of Christ's person as God and man. The title was formally conferred at the Council of Chalcedon in 451.

What of Mary as mother of the Church? This too operates on several levels. First, and most obviously, there was her position among the body of the disciples. They would surely have regarded her as a mother figure, to be looked after in her old age and in turn to nurture them. This need not have any

¹ *Mary- Grace and Hope in Christ*, edited by Donald Bolen and Gregory Cameron, London 2006

particular spiritual dimension. But the ARCIC statement suggests that Jesus's commitment of Mary to the beloved disciple was intended to encourage the community of disciples to embrace her as a spiritual mother. She can be regarded, it suggests, as the mother of all those who receive new life from Christ in a spiritual sense, just as Eve was the mother of all humanity in a physical sense. The church has always laid considerable stress on the example of Mary's obedience and humility as the proper way forward for Christians in responding to God's call. For example, the Papal encyclical (or letter from the Pope sent to all Roman Catholic churches) called *Marialis Cultus* ('Of the Cult of Mary') issued in 1974 calls Mary "a model of the spiritual attitudes with which the Church celebrates and lives the divine mysteries", a model for the whole Church and a "teacher of the spiritual life for individual Christians".

Individual Christians, meanwhile, had found other reasons to focus their devotions on Mary. Women, in particular, but not exclusively, had found inspiration and comfort in her story. She had suffered poverty, the stigma of an apparently illegitimate baby, having to flee for her life as a refugee, the presumed death of her husband and finally, and most shockingly of all, the death of her son as a common criminal. There was little by way of life experience which could not find a parallel in Mary's life and she had the added advantage, from the point of view of the faithful, that she was indubitably fully and only human. However she had coped, she had had to do it the same way as every other human had to. We'll look next month at where devotion to Mary took the church at some points in its history.

And finally, what about the stories that grew up around the earthly Mary? As with all saints, there are large collections of legends about her divine intervention in people's lives. But there are two sets of stories in particular which spring from her motherhood. One is the cult of healing effects of her milk. As we noted last time, Mary was increasingly not allowed to have experienced any of the physical attributes of childbirth. But the one she was never denied was the ability to suckle her child. There are numerous pictures of her feeding the infant Jesus. Sometimes she appears as a regal queen. At other times, she appears much more

naturally as a peasant woman. One of the earliest known paintings of Mary, from the second century, pictures her suckling her son. Milk, which is essential to life among all mammals, had always been a potent symbol of plenty in near Eastern tradition. Think of the Jews' description of the Promised Land as a land 'flowing with milk and honey'. Mary's milk became a symbol for the grace of God flowing to the church. Like the wood of the true cross, or blood from the crucifixion, small bottles of it appeared all over Europe during the high Middle Ages. Calvin was predictably scornful about the quantity. Several saints experienced visions of being given drops of the Virgin's milk, and the earliest collection of miracles of the Virgin contains a story of her curing a monk dying of a disease of the mouth by allowing him to suck her breast.

The other attribute of Mary as mother which gripped the imagination of the church was, of course, the *mater dolorosa*, the grieving woman at the foot of the cross. Nowhere in the Gospels does it say that when Jesus was taken down from the cross, he was laid in his mother's arms. But our description of the relevant 'Station of the Cross' always states that this is what happened. The *Pieta*, or Christ in the arms of his mother, is one of the most frequently repeated Christian works of art outside nativity scenes. And one interesting aspect of these – how many of them in fact show an elderly woman cradling a middle-aged man? Mary, at nearly 50 years old, would have been elderly in those days. But most *Pietas* show Mary as the same age as, or even younger, than Jesus – as though the Virgin of the nativity had been frozen in time. There was a sense in which the church, and artists, even as they celebrated Mary's motherhood, could not allow her actually to be a mother.

To be concluded

Judith Simpson

The New Church, Its Organs, Music and Services (10)

The Parish Church of St. Mary STOKE NEWINGTON

Rector: The Rev. HARRY BAILEY, T.D., M.A., R.D.

Lady Worker: Miss A. DORNAN.



The Service of Re-Hallowing & Re-Dedication BY

The Right Reverend and Right Honorable
THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON
and

The Venerable The Archdeacon of Hackney

On Thursday, 2nd May, 1957
at 8 p.m.

"The church was packed, 800 attending, with many standing". Some might raise an eyebrow at this figure - 800? But the actual attendance has been well documented more than once - and also remember that the large church was designed to hold 1300 in 1858, and was reliably reported as attracting as many for the dedication service that same year.

The re-dedication service in 1957 took the form of Evensong, with the 27 boys and 14 men of St. Mary's choir in attendance. The hymns were all taken from Hymns Ancient and Modern - Blessed City, Heavenly Salem, Praise my soul the King of Heaven, Christ is our cornerstone and The God of Abraham praise. Of interest to us now, though, are the psalms (84 and 150) printed in the service sheet, and sung by everyone present. The words of these were 'unpointed' i.e. - unmarked for singing. So how did the immense congregation cope?

The answer lies in the fact that the principal services at St. Mary's at that time were Matins and Evensong, of which psalms are an

important constituent (the service of Holy Communion, taken from the Book of Common Prayer, did not contain psalms). St. Mary's used a Psalter known as The New Cathedral Psalter, introduced not long after its publication in 1910, where the words are marked out in static divisions which then matched the chant. Take two examples from psalm 121:

I will lift up mine **eyes** / unto the / hills: **from** /
whence / cometh my help (verse one)
Behold he that / keepeth / Israel: **shall** / neither
/ slumber nor / sleep (verse four)

With this form of singing the words in heavy type were heavily stressed, and what followed was sung slowly and deliberately. To modern ears, this system would seem a rigid way of singing. However, congregations knew this pointing by heart, and only needed the Prayer Book text as a guide - normally pointed Psalters were not supplied to congregations. Some Parish Churches with choirs used the Prayer Book order, which covered the whole month. So, if the Sunday date was October 15, the psalms set for the fifteenth day were used - **Day 15 - Morning (Matins)**
Psalms 75, 76, 77
Day 15 - Evening (Evensong)
Psalm 78 only

However, most churches, such as the Old Church, tended to use a selection of popular psalms throughout the year - such as Ps. 23, 46, 67, 121, 122 etc. (of the 150 psalms in the Psalter a large number of churches used no more than around 35 per year). All of these had their own particular chants which never varied and were much loved by congregations - and this was the situation all over the entire Anglican Communion. With this system it was possible for hundreds of people to crowd into a cathedral for a huge diocesan service, and sing a well-known psalm *without the assistance of a choir*.

But, in the 1930's came rumblings of disapproval from many church musicians. Psalters began to appear which used a much more flexible form of pointing, and which concentrated on a much more even flow of words. While these were to take many decades to gain ground, nevertheless it eventually proved to be a new beginning. Much later, the arrival of the Parish Eucharist as the principal

service of the day (remember, no provision for psalms) and the eventual demise of Matins (first) and then Evensong (later, in many churches) all helped to freeze out congregational singing of psalms, and people began to forget the old style of singing them. Nowadays, diocesan services do not include psalms and the tradition of singing them en masse has practically died out (and this applies to choirs as well: at St. Paul's Cathedral recently, the newly formed London Diocesan Choir was given a psalm to sing. Out of 120 choristers drawn from London churches, only 8 knew how to sing it). The Alternative Services Book (ASB) made provision for sections of specially-selected psalms to be sung at the Sunday Eucharist, a practice now continued by Common Worship. But these are normally sung by a cantor, not by the congregation.

Looked at objectively, there is no doubt that the chanting of psalms - when sung intelligently today, with due attention to the words - has now benefited enormously from the changes first set out over seventy years ago. But there is also no doubt that the loss to congregational singing has been enormous.

But, to get back to 1957, these changes were yet to come.

During the Dedication Service, all joined in the General Prayer of Thanksgiving. This was followed by the Dedication Prayer, said by the Bishop:

'Almighty and merciful God, Who didst move our fathers to build this House for the honour of Thy Name, and the assembling of Thy people; accept we pray Thee the work of Restoration which has been accomplished by the Skill of craftsmen and the devotion of Thy faithful people. Grant that this building may stand as a witness of Thy truth and as a spiritual home to all who may use it; that they may be joined together in unity of spirit and be made an holy temple acceptable to Thee'

At the end, the long procession of choir, visiting and officiating clergy, the Archdeacon and finally the Bishop, moved along the North Aisle to the West end of the church, then along the South Aisle to the vestry during the last hymn. Later would come a reception in the Town Hall.

But what a great outpouring of praise, prayer and thanksgiving it must have been, on

that memorable Thursday in May, forty-nine years ago.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

David Bell

“Paris in the the Spring”

or

“Can I feed the cat without losing my Muse?”

Typos huh? Jane's asked for a little article on typos. I can only think of two, so head for Wikipedia – the present-day equivalent of looking it up in the dictionary, which always used to be the first step of essay-writing – well, I looked it up in Wikipedia and that was quite interesting, and yesterday, and then there was a meeting which I was going to write this After, but actually, the spirit may be willing, but at a certain point these days the body falls asleep.....but I woke up this morning with so many nice little ideas buzzing about my head! There's the one about the ancient copyist who left out an 'r' and our two recent hymn-sheet slips and the time the celebrant left out the first syllable...

so I'm waking up with the head full, but of course, when I get up there's the cat, who will not be ignored, so I pick up her bowl, which is full of the chunky bits out of last night's tea – her tea, not mine – she loves those sachets, purrs like mad, but still only licks all the gravy off and leaves the chunky bits – so I scrape those derelict bits into the bin, remember it's Thursday, collection day, tie the bag up to take outside, put in a new bag, turn the water on for the cat bowl to soak – can I get the bag to the wheelie-bin before the water overflows – or even runs too much? There is a drought on after all, and the front door is double-locked, so it'll take a bit longer – Yes? OK, trot up to the front door, unlock it (2 locks, 2 keys) down to the bin, up to the front door, down to the kitchen. Turn off the tap.....

Meantime I've turned on the computer, but I have to keep an eye on it. You can't just turn it on and leave it. Oh no! It turns itself off again if you do that – power-saving or something and you have to start all over again. Anyway, it's only 6.30am. Lodger Dave wanted to check

his emails this morning, because the machine was playing up last night. It's been slightly slow recently and we're all a bit cross about it. Poor computer. It's not its fault! Anyway, I've managed to get it switched on, there's the log-on screen, click on my name – wait a bit longer – click off all those extra bits and pieces. I should've just left pen and paper by my bed (though yesterday I couldn't find a pen that worked either) Typos? My life is one long typo from beginning to end! Now Dave's woken up, come down to the kitchen and put the radio on (poetic licence – this was a short time ago, but it made it quite hard to think about what I was writing. He's actually gone again now, but I know he wants to check his emails, so I'm trying to get this all down before it runs away) and I think the answer is 'No. You can't feed the cat without losing your Muse', because I've forgotten what I was going to say. I distinctly remember a whole theology presenting itself while I was picking up the cat's bowl. Something along the lines of about how we (or at any rate I) love to laugh. I love those helpless giggles that go on and on. When we were about 6, my friend Nicky had to go to the hospital because she'd stuck a carrot up her nose. This reduced (or enlarged?) us both to absolute hysterics over many years, for about half an hour each time. Even now, if I were to refer to this, she and I would gratefully dive into the eye-watering beautiful feeling of that helplessness, even if we didn't actually become unspeakable for half an hour.

Poor Dave, I must let him check his emails. How did that theology go? God's in charge? There are no accidents? Omens/superstitions/little pointers that encourage us on our way?

What was I trying to remind myself of when I wrote that lot? Dave's gone to work, but now it's 9.30am. I've checked my email and sealed up a letter to a friend in New Zealand. I've tried a few things to make the computer run faster and I've remembered this piece. Where was I? "There's a robin in the garden" says my young Australian cousin (who's staying here for a little while, with her clothes in the cellar, poor dear, and her mattress on the floor in a room full of someone else's boxes) – and now here's a message from Deborah: "It's good to talk," she says via instant messaging!

Where was I? I know I hadn't quite got there yet.... God's in Charge. There are no

accidents. But didn't you LOVE the "Yearning string"? (with which the soul will long, shall far outpass the power of human telling....) and wasn't it fun to be enjoined last Sunday to "sin", though we all were, already, dare I say lustily? doing what the hymn was trying to encourage us to, at the tops of our lungs!

What was the other one? Oh yes, those poor old celibate monks, eventually deciding to go back through centuries of illuminated copies of manuscripts, back through the vaults and the locked up cases of treasures to the original, the source, to discover a missing 'r' and an 'i' for an 'e': "Celebrate! It says 'celebrate'!!!" which brings me back to our celebrant. It was some time ago, round about Easter, when the 'great and glorious resurrection' was shining all around, that one particular celebrant left out a vital syllable. My face was twitching for the rest of the service! There's a shininess to laughter too, specially this repressed sort, when you know you mustn't catch anyone's eye, but you can also sense the twinkly-ness rippling around. It's going to be really dull when we all get it right all the time, isn't it?

Sue Ferrar

Hymnwriter

Jan Struther 1901-1953



Jan Struther was the pen name of Joyce Anstruther, later Joyce Maxtone Graham/Joyce Placzek.

She was born on June 6th, 1901, youngest child of Henry Torrens Anstruther M.P. and Eva Anstruther. Her most renowned work is the novel, Mrs. Miniver, which chronicles the life of a British middle class family during World War II.

She also wrote poems and articles for many magazines, most notably for Punch magazine (where the Mrs. Miniver series first started leading to the later novel). She was also a talented hymn writer. Many of her hymns have become much-loved favourites, such as...*We Thank You, Lord of Heaven, Lord Of All Hopefulness, Lord Of All Joy, Sing, All Ye Christian People!* and *High O'er The Lonely Hills*. Her hymns for children, *Daisies Are Our Silver* and *When A Knight Won His Spurs*, can conjure a fuzzy memory moment in even the most hardened of adults.

It's strange to discover just what a remarkable woman the writer of those hymns really was - to start with, she was a lifelong agnostic.

As a long-time exile from the UK, she once described feeling "an almost physical ache to hear ... a peal of bells from an English church tower (so long as she wouldn't have to go to the service!)".

Unlike the characters in her book Mrs. Miniver, she was definitely out of the top drawer of English society. Her maternal grandfather was a baron, her mother a society hostess and her father a one-time MP whose career failed to fulfil its early promise. She didn't attend school as a child, but went to Classes with a private teacher. One of the other girls attending the same Classes was Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, later the wife of King George VI, and later still the Queen Mother.

At 16 Joyce Anstruther, as she then was, "came out" as a debutante into the society marriage market. She was always rebellious, and one of the forms this took was marrying in haste, and for love, Anthony Maxtone Graham. He shared her unconventional love of rude words and dirty jokes. They were married, without the approval of all the family, and for several years had a happy and successful family life. She was both a highly traditional upper middle-class woman, in that she left most of the care of her three children to the nanny, and a very "modern" woman in her pursuit of her own career as a writer. She wrote poems, short pieces for many newspapers and journals, and of course, the hymns, which were commissioned by Percy Dearmer for his new collection of modern hymns, Songs of Praise.

By the late 1930s, she and her husband

were growing apart: he had become the heir to a Scottish lairdship, on the death of his uncle, and wanted more of the country life. She was becoming more left wing in her political sympathies, and wanting to pursue an artistic, almost bohemian lifestyle. In 1939 she met Dolf Placzek, and they embarked on a passionate affair.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, she was invited to travel to the United States for the launch of an American edition of Mrs. Miniver, and although torn by guilt about leaving the country when she should stay and "do her bit", she took advantage of the opportunity to take her two youngest children to safety, and to be reunited with Dolf, who had by then obtained an American entry visa. Winston Churchill reckoned that Mrs. Miniver - the book, and the Hollywood film that was based on it - were of incalculable value in gaining US support even before Pearl Harbor.



The film starring Walter Pidgeon and Greer Garson won 6 Hollywood Oscars in 1942, including the award for Best Picture.

All this time, the affair with Dolf had to be kept a closely guarded secret. It was impossible to persuade people that Mrs. Miniver was a fictional character, and not an

autobiographical representation of Jan herself. It would have been fatal to the appeal of Mrs. Miniver if it had been revealed that the perfect, happily married, wife and mother was in reality an adulteress.

Meanwhile her husband Tony was a POW first of the Italians, then the Germans. When he was released at the end of the War, she returned to Britain with her children. It was clear that the marriage could not be revived and so they divorced: she was then able to return to New York and marry her lover Dolf.

Since the early 1940s she had been suffering with bouts of depression, accompanied by an inability to write. This depression was to dog her for the remaining years of her life, and she died of breast cancer, in 1953, aged 52.

Andrew Yoshiro

Win This Super Prize!

How many times have we heard it said, "Oh Lord, give me sign!" Alas, too often the reply is vague and ambiguous: the phone rings at an opportune time, a feather falls from out of the blue, a water stain appears that resembles a religious image etc.

We all know that God exists but wouldn't it be great if there was a more reliable method to let us know he is here?

Well now there is...



Now you can take the guesswork out of any random encounters with God using the Yo God keychain detector.

This snappy little keychain will indicate whether or not any encounter was actually God or just your imagination (it's also quite a good place to keep your keys).

Its small size, 1-1/4 inches in diameter, makes it easy to carry anywhere you might need to detect the presence of the Almighty. The back of the detector lists a web site and

unique serial number so that you can report any movement of the indicator dial.

Yo God! Detectors are hand-made by the artist and available for the bargain price of just \$7.00 +P&P from those lovely people at evolvefish.com.

Alternatively you could win one of these highly useful items in our caption competition so get your thinking caps on.

Andrew Yoshiro

The Story of Disobedient David

Jan Struther, from *The Modern Struwwelpeter*

Young David was forbidden quite
To play with the electric light,
But when he asked the reason why,
He got this very strange reply:
"Two hundred volts," his father said,
"Are quite enough to kill you dead."
"But what *are* volts?" the boy enquired.
"Don't worry, child! Your father's tired."

Now David, who was rash and bold
And seldom did what he was told,
At once determined to find out
What all this fuss could be about.
His pocket-knife he quickly drew
And cut the electric wire in two.

Imprudent boy! A monstrous spark
Flew out at him—then all was dark.
Poor David shrieked in wild alarm,
For through his hand and up his arm
Two hundred raging demons leapt,
And pinched and pricked him till he wept.
Blindly he stumbled from the room
He could not dodge this dreadful doom.

All over him the demons clung
And mercilessly stabbed and stung;
With horrid glee and fiendish grins
They plied their little red-hot pins.
They drove him, howling, down the stairs
And out into the streets and squares,
And people wondered, as he passed,
How any boy could run so fast.

His parents searched for him in vain:
David was never seen again.
So now they sit (unhappy sight!)
And mourn their loss-by candle-light.

Last Month's Caption Competition

Here's the picture just to remind you. Our adjudicator chose no. 1 as the winner. You have won the "Moses Action Figure". The other (excellent) entries are in not in any particular order.



Hello, my name is Gordon, and I'll be your guardian angel for your vacation here. Have a good week, and I'll be right back to tell you about the specials we are offering during your stay!

His face set in a grin of terror as the branch swung forwards

The gospel story re-enactment was going very well until Brian realised that, unlike Zacchaeus, he couldn't get down.

Terry had found the ultimate hiding place for when his name came up on the Intercessions Rota.

It was a little draughty, but at last he had got a foot on the property ladder.

I can see my house from here!

Property prices in London were just getting ridiculous. Fabio staked his claim in Abney Park Cemetery for his new tree house.

'Come down Little Zaccheus', said Jesus

As protest against the glass box due to be erected on the back of the Old Church, Zaccheus went to desperate measures to prevent it!

Tarzan – before he met Trinny and Susannah

Has the archdeacon gone yet?

David feared the 'Taking Services Into The Countryside' initiative had gone a bit too far.

The Reverend would do anything for a decent TV reception.

Bernard wasn't really that interested in the anti by-pass protest, but he just couldn't resist a photo opportunity.

October Competition



Your caption goes here. Get competitive and win our super new Star Prize as featured on page 12. Entries can be given to any one of the magazine team. The closing date is 20th October

Recipe

Onion, Bacon and Potato Hotpot

Serves 4



This is *real* comfort food. I can't remember where I originally found the recipe, but it's become such an old favourite that I've long committed it to memory - and now sort of make it up as I go along. It's inexpensive and the ingredients are the sort of things that are usually to hand, so I tend save fuel by making it for re-heating tomorrow when I have the oven on for something else. All quantities are approximate, and vegetarians can omit the bacon and substitute with sliced mushrooms, or make the sauce cheesier.

4 large potatoes
3 or 4 large onions
¼ - ½ lb bacon rashers
1 pint milk
2 oz flour
2 oz butter
Approx 2 oz cheese (optional)
Freshly ground black pepper
Pinch of salt
Pinch of grated nutmeg (optional)

You will need a large casserole dish with a lid.

Peel and thinly slice the potatoes, peel and roughly chop the onions, and cut the bacon into strips.

Make a white sauce by melting the butter, working in the flour, and gradually adding the cold milk. Heat gently to thicken the sauce while stirring constantly. Add the cheese and season to taste. (Be careful with the salt if you are using bacon.)

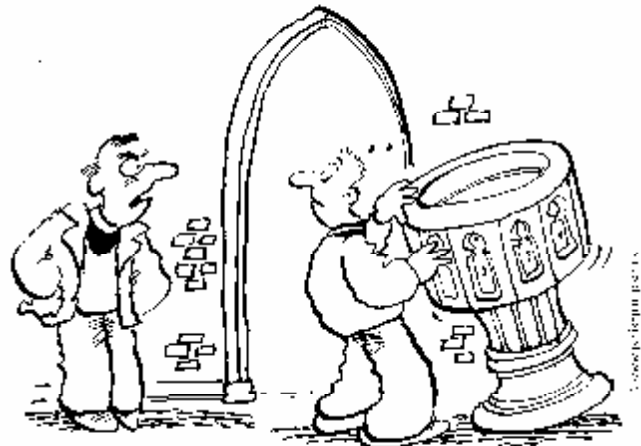
Butter the casserole and lid, and fill it with layers of onion, bacon and potato, ending with potato and then the sauce. Give it all a bit of a

shake to distribute the sauce. Cook in a fairly hot oven for about an hour, then uncover and cook at a lower heat at the bottom of the oven for about another hour or until the vegetables are tender. It should be creamy inside and golden and crunchy on top.

This is a robust dish and goes well with strong tasting greens such as Savoy cabbage or Brussels sprouts.

Jane Pryce

And Just For Fun....



*I don't care how much it's worth on ebay.
You're still not going to auction it for church funds!!*

We are friends! You and me are friends! You smile, I smile. You hurt, I hurt. You cry, I cry. You jump off a bridge. I'm going to miss your e-mails!

A lifeboat was called out to rescue a yacht in trouble. The coastguard, trying to get the yacht's location, called it on the radio. "What is your position? Repeat, what is your position?" And the reply came back, "My position? Well I'm marketing director of a medium sized computer software company in the East Midlands."

The preacher was wired for sound with a lapel mike, and as he preached, he moved briskly about the platform, jerking the mike cord as he went. Then he moved to one side, getting wound up in the cord and nearly tripping before jerking it again. After several circles and jerks, a little girl in the third pew leaned toward her mother and whispered, "If he gets loose, will he hurt us?"

HOW GREEN ARE YOU?

Questions to ask yourself when auditing your use of energy.

1. How often do you switch off lights and heating in a room when it is unused? (a) Always (b) Often (c) If I remember
2. Do you cook with lids on? (a) I do not have lids (b) Often (c) Always
3. Do you leave your DVD/Video on standby? (a) Always (b) Often (c) No, I turn it off and save between 10% and 60% energy
4. If you turn down your thermostat by 1C how much can you reduce your bill by? (a) Nothing (b) 10% (c) 1%
5. How often do you use Green Bins? (a) Always (b) Often (c) What are they?
6. Do you shop locally? (a) Always (b) Often (c) I go to the big shopping city outside of town
7. Do you use a tumble drier? (a) Always (b) Only in the winter (c) Hardly ever, I prefer a clothes horse/line
8. If you boil just the water you need for hot drinks how much energy could you save? (a) Enough to light the house for a day (b) Enough to light the house for an hour (c) Enough to light a room for an hour
9. When do you use your car? (a) Always (b) I do not have a car (c) Only for necessary journeys
10. Do you use a green power supplier? (a) Yes (b) No (c) No, but I am thinking about it

How did you do? Award yourself points as below. If you score **0 -15** you need to seriously consider putting yourself in the naughty corner, you are not at all environmentally aware. **15-35** You are trying but could do a lot better. **35 – 45** Very, very good but is there more you could do? **45 – 50** You are a hero! Spread the green word!

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	5	0	0	0	5	5	0	5	0	5
B	2	2	2	5	2	2	2	2	5	0
C	0	5	5	2	0	0	5	5	2	2

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Parish Office, 020 8809 6111

Services

Sunday

Holy Communion 8 am Matins 9.30 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, followed by	8:45 am	5 pm
Tuesday	8:30 am, followed by	8:45 am	5 pm
Wednesday	8:30 am	7.30 pm	5 pm
Thursday	8:30 am, followed by	8:45 am	5 pm
Friday	8:30 am, followed by	8:45 am	5 pm

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