

## Diary dates for November and December 2012

1 <sup>st</sup> November	10.30 All Saints/All Souls service 11.00 Bible Study: Christian Basics - Satan 12.00 Bring and Share Lunch
11 <sup>th</sup> November	<b>10.45 Remembrance Sunday</b>
22 <sup>nd</sup> November	10.30 Council Meeting
6 <sup>th</sup> December	10.30 Holy Communion 11.00 Bible Study: Christian Basics – Fate v FW 12.00 Bring and Share Lunch
22 <sup>nd</sup> December	17.00 Carol Service
24 <sup>th</sup> December	17.00 Crib Service
25 <sup>th</sup> December	11.00 Christmas Day

### Prayer of the month

Eternal Father  
whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven  
that he might rule over all things as Lord and King  
keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit  
and in the bond of peace,  
and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet;  
who is alive and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever.

*Collect for Christ the King*

### Prayer focus

November is a good time to remember: to make sense of the past, to recall those who are no longer with us, to cherish their memory.

## St Barts Monthly



November, 2012

### Services

**Sunday 11.00** Holy Communion (with hymns)

**Thursday 10.00** Holy Communion (said)

A warm welcome to all who worship with us.  
During the service there is a Sunday School.  
After the service coffee is served.

**Priest-in-charge: The Revd Gareth Randall**

For further information concerning baptisms,  
marriages or funerals:

☎ 02 99 46 77 00

e-mail : [gareth.randall@nordnet.fr](mailto:gareth.randall@nordnet.fr)

Website : [www.stbarts-dinard.org.uk](http://www.stbarts-dinard.org.uk)



November, 2012

Notices

Dear Friends,

*By consent*

When Sir Robert Peel established the police force in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the underlying principle was *policing by consent*. The present disaffection of communities and individuals in the UK calls into question this notion, not least the incident in which two women police constables were killed in Greater Manchester this September.

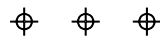
The phrase *by consent* might equally apply to a church congregation and their priest. All Anglican clergy are ordained by a bishop having followed a suitable course of training and formation. Their priesthood is a fact recognised by the Church as a whole, symbolised by the laying on of hands and the anointing with holy oil.

But when a priest is licensed to a particular church, as part of the induction ceremony, the congregation pledges its collective and individual support of their priest, to aid him or her in his or her ministry to them. To my mind, I can't see how a priest can function without the recognition of his priesthood by the folk that he serves and their willingness to support him in their prayers and words and actions.

Perhaps what we have here is a model for an effective *modus operandi* of any organisation. To work properly, people have to buy into the values, share those same values and share the organisation's overall aim: in our case to make the love of God known to those who come through our doors to worship or simply to be at peace.

To me, it's not just policing by consent, it is also *priesting by consent* – and may that be true for us here at St Bartholomew's.

*Father Gareth*



- **Stew Lunch** at Diana Wilson's *10<sup>th</sup> November* – venue will be indoors therefore numbers are strictly limited to those signing up in advance - entry 10€.
- **Tournebride Monthly Lunch** 3<sup>rd</sup> November at the Relais de Tournebride - a good opportunity for British and French folk to meet. 15€ includes an aperitif, a four course meal, wine and coffee. *Mike Baber* 02 99 73 56 06/[annebabar5050@aol.com](mailto:annebabar5050@aol.com)
- **Deadline** for submission of material for the December edition of the St Bart's Monthly is *midday on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> November*
- **Church Finances for September**  
Income: 6,063€ Expenditure 4,120€



You'll be pleased to know that Victor achieved his aim to walk to and fro across the Barrage de la Rance on 17<sup>th</sup> October! Sponsored by many of you, the walk aimed to raise money to defray the cost of an electric wheelchair for me. I'd like to thank all of you who contributed and Olive for managing the collection with tact and efficiency.

Our thanks are also due to David and Helen Morgan and to Gerard and Corrie Stein. David pushed me in my 'steam' wheelchair over the Rance and back and Gerard and Corrie did the walk with us and provided us with delicious coffee and buns when we had finished. Helen's blanket and gloves were also very welcome.

My love and thanks to you all.

*Barry.*

## Readings in church

<b>November 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday before Advent</b>
Deuteronomy 6 v1 - 9	Psalm 119 v1 - 8
Hebrews 9 v11 - 14	Mark 12 v28 - 34
<b>November 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Remembrance Sunday</b>
Jonah 3 v1 - 5, 10	Psalm 62 v5 - end
Hebrews 9 v24 -end	Mark 1 v14 - 20
<b>November 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday before Advent</b>
Daniel 12 v1 - 3	Psalm 16
Hebrews 10 v11 - 25	Mark 13 v1 - 8
<b>November 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Christ the King</b>
Daniel 7 v9 – 10, 13 - 14	Psalm 93
Revelation 1 v4b - 8	John 18 v33 - 37



### How true ?

*Teacher* "What is cleanliness next to?"  
*Small Boy* "Impossible."

*John Marshall*



### God's Post-It Notes 8/18

*The following was sent to me by Ron Kirk:*

Peace starts with a smile.

## The wind of change

It was September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2012, my birthday, when I heard that the life support system of my 37 year old nephew in South Wales was to be switched off. I will always remember the voice of my brother, the anguish, the hurt and the despair that he felt. What could I do from afar save for words of comfort, support and the unwritten scripts that exist between brothers?

Essentially, I had to be there and ahead of the funeral I took the Brittany Ferries from St Malo as normal then pretty normal until the Second Severn Crossing and when the princely sum of £6 was extracted from me for daring to cross into the country of my birth. At its birth in 1966, the Severn Bridge was £0.50 both ways but then it was Government owned.

Things changed under Baroness Thatcher and the bridge was sold to a French company who promptly and overnight changed direction and made redundant the staff on the Welsh side and concentrated on the English side. Things change.

I am not too sure if the French would cede to us the Tour Eifel or say the bridge that links La Rochelle to the Ile de Re? We did and gladly so and for payment in silver. A more modern approach is to witness EDF in the UK but limited UK presence in France. A case of protecting and supporting one's own perhaps? Things in France do not change.

Then to the day before the funeral when my brother and I said things long overdue and when he simply asked for my help to get him through the deep chasm that was opening up in front of him when the reality of losing one's son instead of the son his parent was rapidly becoming something that he had to face. I was lost and my words

were indeed lost upon him for he had sometime before lost his faith and the events had indeed crystallized his thoughts process. He was not for turning and things were not for changing.

Then to Ynyshir and the Bethany English Baptist Chapel and the funeral service. In the 1860's the indigenous population were Welsh-speaking before the coal was found and the influx of those non-Welsh could only be accommodated religion-wise by building a chapel for those English speakers. Times change.

I am Welsh through and through and born in the Valleys but my forefathers were English so I have bridged a sort of a gap with Linda my wife and who is English!

Then the service. Here the chapel was the chapel of my forefathers and where I went to Sunday school and walked with everyone to the services. It was a warm and comfortable place if felt right and I was at home. You looked around and you were amongst your own.

Things have changed and now the influence is from afar and from the Southern States of America and where the so-called 'Bible belt' has weaved a sort of magic upon the chapel and it is now a place that I no longer recognise. Again things change.

I met a young Pastor before the service and we exchanged pleasantries and I was informed that I was 'first up' to recite a poem that was sent to me by a friend in Spain. Quite obviously the Pastor had a fervent belief in our Lord and I very obviously joined him in that stance. However it was different and I was uncomfortable but did it matter the whole issue was about belief? Did it matter than the Chapel had changed it was modern it was different? Yes to me it did and afterwards I spoke to the elders of my family and we were in agreement. It was not the chapel of the 50's and 60's.

## Advertising St Bart's

Helen Cocaign has recently taken over from Lynette Jarvis as coordinator for advertising church events in the English-speaking press.

If you have a church event that you would like to be advertised please contact Helen at least 4 weeks before the event at the following email: [advertising.stbarts@orange.fr](mailto:advertising.stbarts@orange.fr)

Thank you to Lynette Jarvis who has worked hard over the last 4 years promoting the church by writing articles and publishing articles, and her help in organising adverts for church events.

Best wishes

*Helen Cocaign*



## Quotations of the month

*To live above with Saints we love, that is glory,*

*To live below with Saints we know, well that's another story!*

Taken from a sermon by her vicar entitled 'A Christian has joy' and sent to me by Andrea Banyard, Val and Geoff's daughter

*'The most dangerous thing on the battlefield is an officer with a map'*  
Old army joke

*Boldness however great is a mask for fear*  
John Dryden

**Rules for Reverends 9/11 – Canon Jeremy Fletcher**

*The following were forwarded to me by my friend Father Peter Bevan*

81. There is probably a very good reason for Deanery Synods.
82. There will be one key which unlocks the drawer which has all the other keys to the building and safes in it. This key will be in plain sight somewhere.
83. There is nothing clergy like better than following other clergy in a procession. That the one at the front knows where they are going is taken a matter of faith by those behind, and is a proof of the existence of God.
84. Most people's worst nightmare is a Vicar with a guitar. This situation is helpfully relieved by saying 'I know. I am your worst nightmare. A Vicar with a guitar'. When tuning up, give them a bit of *All right now* (Free) or *Thunderstruck* (AC/DC). It works for me.
85. There is nothing so very wrong with wedding photographers. When there is, do give them some feedback.
86. Take great care over finances, and learn to read a balance sheet. The level of giving as a barometer of the spiritual life of the congregation.
87. The law of buffets is that the optimum arrangement of food and plates has not yet been discovered, and that all the other ones are achingly slow.
88. Loud shoes in stone floored churches are much to be encouraged.
89. The contents of the flower cupboard are a mystery, one not to be explored without prayer and fasting.

Here's another point. I was brought up to show absolute respect and that came thick and fast at funerals and you would never see mixed colours at a funeral. It was black and white much like the religious beliefs. At our funeral, it was mixed colours and I stood out but did it matter when the theme or belief was to show respect to both the departed and the family? Things change but for the better?

Then my mind moved quickly to the village of Percy in Normandy and where I once lived and where a neighbour had died. I went to the funeral. It was July. I was in black and white; his family and friends in a garland of colours. Did it or does it matter that T shirts and shorts were on display or is the value in the respect?

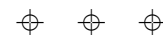
We are asked to embrace change be it in the form of Microsoft upgrades or the newest 4gig mobile phone and where one can access just about anything and on the move. What was wrong with the BT phone box and A and B buttons? Simply nothing it was of the time and times change.

As one gets older - and I certainly am - I resist change I argue against change for I am comfortable with the way I go about my life. Change is upon us and we must embrace it or stay quietly in our own place. However certain values are not for change and I will not change simply for the sake of it.

**Mark Stephen Ivin**

**RIP**

*Ken Ivin*



**Be careful how welcoming you are  
And with whom you share the peace  
It could have consequences !**

In 1997, in St Thomas à Becket's Church in Hamburg, Peter and I were attending the usual Sunday Morning Service. Sometimes we were on the welcoming rota, sometime I was a reader, but this particular Sunday we were 'normal' members of the congregation. Revd John Newsome, the Chaplain, always an inspirational and spiritual leader, guided us through the communion service until it came to the sharing of the Peace.

Peter and I had had many discussions about the way this should be done. Peter would have preferred to have it at the start of the service. He didn't like movement around during his contemplation, breaking his train of thought. I had no particular feelings on the subject but did feel that it was an essential part of the Christian philosophy of sharing with other people. This particular morning however was different. Instead of our pew being crowded with dear friends we seemed to be the two of us alone. At the instruction to share The Peace we faced one another and briefly kissed. On turning to my right I found I had no near neighbours so turned to the pew behind me. Not expecting to see a Chinese gentleman there I put out my hand to shake his but having observed Peter and me kissing he lunged forward and kissed me soundly on the cheek. Having lived for some years in the Far East I knew that this was alien to his culture but when in pigeon English he said "I no understand" I whispered "I will explain after the service" and so the rite continued.

After the service finished Huang Hai Bin explained that he was a student at the university and that before he had left China he had met some American Teacher/Missionaries who had told him if ever he was in Europe, he should find an English Church where he would be welcomed and looked after. And so here he was!

***Recipe of the Month  
Christmas Chutney***

*Lots of jars of chutney made to this recipe were snapped up  
at last year's Christmas Market in St Malo*

Ingredients for 3 x 1 lb(450 gm) Jars  
3lbs (1.5 kg) tomatoes, skinned and chopped  
8oz (225 gm) eating apples, peeled, cored and chopped  
8oz (225 gm) onions, peeled and chopped  
4oz (100 gm) raisins or sultanas  
1 tablespoon salt  
1 teaspoon black pepper  
1lb (450 gm) soft brown sugar  
1 teaspoon ground allspice  
1.5 pints (900 ml) cider vinegar

Put the tomatoes, apples and onions into a preserving pan or a broad saucepan with a thick bottom.

Add the raisins or sultanas and scatter the salt, pepper brown sugar and allspice over them.

Pour on the vinegar.

Put over a gentle heat and bring slowly to the boil.

Simmer gently uncovered until the mixture is thick and jammy (approximately 1½ hours).

It must be watched carefully, stirring every now and then, and skimming off any scum from the surface.

Preparation time 1 hour

Cooking time 1.5 hours

Store for at least 2 weeks in cool dark cupboard before using

*Helen Morgan*

*Film Review of the month*  
*'War Horse', Stephen Spielberg - 2011*

Though I saw the film in French as 'Cheval de Guerre' in Dinard as long ago as 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2012, I thought the November edition of the St Bart's Monthly would be the appropriate place to print the review. Based on the successful novel then play by Michael Morpurgo, now as a film by Stephen Spielberg with the sound track by John Williams, 'War Horse' has much to recommend it. As it came to a climax in the orange glow of the setting sun with silhouettes of the boy on his horse returning home to their West Country farm where mum and dad were 'waiting for them' with a final prodigal embrace, I did (unsurprisingly) find a tear rolling down my cheek.

But though the story is a classic tale of the love of a boy for his horse, the love of that same horse by so many, with breath-taking images and imagery, I found myself in two minds. Yes, it was good. Yes, it touched all the right buttons. Yes, I was sad in all the right places and warmed by the nice gestures. But to me the film was just not real.

'Real,' you may well ask, 'but isn't it meant to be fiction?' But for me the best fiction is rooted in reality and I'm afraid dramatic effect took priority over what is real. As I get older, I dislike fantasy that is not rooted in what's believable. I don't want to decry a film that has much to recommend it but though I was sad and felt good at the end, I also felt cheated because what I had watched was essentially unbelievable.

Our faith is attacked by militant, evangelising atheists who would have us believe that the world in which we live is a random emptiness. But not to me. Yet here I am, a man who believes in a loving God, having the cheek to affirm that this film does not work for me because it's not real. For me, Christianity is real but sadly this film fails the credibility test. But then what do you think – of either?

*Gareth Randall*

Over the next few weeks we found out more about Hai Bin and also he found out more about the Church and Christianity. Revd Newsome obtained a Bible for him written in Chinese and although it was only a few weeks before I was taking up residence in our house in France, I managed to introduce him to other members of the congregation and he took part in An Auction of Promises which we were staging to raise funds. On the last Sunday that I was there in May he asked if he could go up to the altar rail when we went to take Communion. John Newsome had explained to him that he could receive a Blessing but not the bread and wine. Clutching my hand very tightly Hai Bin knelt at the rail for a blessing. As we went back to our seats he said "I feel different. Can I go back again?" As best I could I explained he could at the next service but that he would continue to grow in God's blessings. Later that morning, I said my farewells to him and Peter took pictures outside the church and I was very sad to be saying "Goodbye".

Every birthday and Christmas from then on I sent him a card to remind him of our friendship. Then one Christmas afternoon the telephone in the house in France kept ringing with apparently no one there until at last a very distant voice said "Happy Christmas, Pamela. This is Hai Bin" and then the line went dead. This was the last contact I had with him but on his birthday some years later I had the urge to telephone him and I did.

When I said that I wished to speak to Hai Bin, the lady who answered the telephone burst into tears and just kept saying, "He's gone. He's gone." Then another person took over and explained that Hai had died of liver cancer and that his wife had nursed him through this illness so the mention of his name on the telephone by a stranger had really upset her. Apologising profusely, I gave them my email address asking them to get in touch and said goodbye.

In 2007 we moved back from France first to Potters Bar then to Peterborough where we now live but with email as with mobile phones it really doesn't matter where you are.

Since then over the years I have heard from Hai Bin's wife and daughter. Emily Huang went to university in Auckland New Zealand and is still living there. Her mother, Susie Huang is an English teacher in Nanking and in May this year sent an email saying she was coming to England to Chichester University for a month's course so would we be able to meet?

Of course Peter and I decided that we must try to meet her but time was tight as we were committed to going to Windermere to stay with friends. Besides the weather in England in June and early July was dreadful with torrential rain almost making one want to hibernate rather than go out and make new friends!

At last we managed to find a suitable day and drove down to Bognor Regis where Susie was studying having booked into a guest house for the night we arrived as the heavens opened and the main street became a river. But at least we were there.

The following morning we waited anxiously for Susie to appear. On the telephone she had sounded a confident young woman who would find her own way to the guest house. When the doorbell rang I was slightly apprehensive as to how we would get on and whether or not we would be able to communicate but once I had opened the door I knew it would be all right. There stood a lovely smiling person who threw her arms around me and whom I enfolded in my arms and we stood there holding one another.

Susie wanted to go to Brighton so braving the rain off we went. The rain stopped and the sun came out. Susie had so many questions and so did I. We never stopped talking for the whole time we were together

## **Don't struggle, let Rachel help !**

Since 2004, Rachel Gallard, a French national, has been assisting her clients with their relocation to Brittany and the challenges of every day life in France. She provides a high quality service to individuals and companies, by paying close attention to their needs. Over the years, Rachel has developed a network of trusted local professionals with whom she works and liaises with here in Brittany. Even if your problem is utterly unique, you have their combined experience to draw on for a fast and effective solution.

Examples of assistance: interpretation and translation services, planning forms and paperwork, liaising with third parties, the connection of utilities - house, health and car insurance, registering with the French NHS, doctors, dentists and much more!

Client's views on her services:

*Whilst it's nice to try and do things for yourself, it can get quite frustrating and take a long time. Using Rachel made sorting things out a lot simpler and less frustrating. We found her to be very reliable, quick and efficient. Rachel's fees are very fair and in comparison to the amount of time it's saved us, paying Rachel is definitely the best option. Knowing Rachel is there to help, gives you the peace of mind that you do not have to struggle on your own. Our advice is Don't struggle, let Rachel help!"* Mark and Sue T Evran.

Rachel also offers informal language tuition to ease your transition into a life in France. Each client's level of French is assessed to meet his/her needs: conversation and fluency, grammar, vocabulary (general and/or specialised), pronunciation, or any combination of these. Only an e-mail or a phone call away, let her handle the administration while you enjoy your new life in France!

02 96 27 43 16 or 06 26 10 99 08 or [gallardrachel@hotmail.com](mailto:gallardrachel@hotmail.com)  
<http://www.anglofrenchcommunication.com>



**The Revd Dr Alan Charters writes:**

Thank you so much for all the hard work and planning you did to make our visit to St Bartholomew's such a happy and moving occasion. I felt quite overwhelmed when I was celebrating the eucharist and everyone was so welcoming. I am busy copying out my sermon for a few people who kindly asked for copies (available too on the website). Looking forward to our next visit! All good wishes,

*Alan & Frances*



**Women and Bishops**

Recent correspondence regarding woman bishops brings to mind the story of Jenny Geddes in St Giles, the principal Church in the Church of Scotland.

Women have been ordained for many years now and indeed one became Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the council which runs the church. The only bishops appointed however were appointed in 1637 by King Charles 1 who was then ruling Scotland from London. The appointments were made against the wishes of the people of Scotland, and included provision of a Book of Common Prayer. While he was preaching in St Giles Church in Edinburgh, a stool was hurled at the Bishop by a member of the congregation, Jenny Geddes, reputedly uttering the words “daur ye say Mass in my lug”. Rioting followed which led to the signing of the National Covenant in 1638 and ultimately to the removal of both Prayer Book and Bishops on the basis that neither had been approved by the General Assembly. A plaque can still be seen in St Giles Church marking the event.

*David Morgan*

mainly about the time that we had known her husband as she had not been told about us!

We went on the Brighton Eye six times! We had fish and chips on the beach, took her round and showed her as much as we could and then it was time to leave. Sadly we made our farewells safe in the knowledge that she was a true believer in Our Lord Jesus Christ. When she asked if we would be her English mum and dad, how could we refuse?

Since then we have had many photographs of the rest of her time in England and we were also able to put her in touch with long-timer friends who live close to Bognor at Middle by the sea who kindly entertained Susie and her friend, Jane, and took them into Chichester sight-seeing and shopping.

We are hoping to visit Nanking later this year after we go to visit our granddaughter in Singapore (where we used to live in 1964) but that will be another journey of Faith for two almost octogenarians.

*Pamela A Campbell – 27<sup>th</sup> July*

**Playing with words 1/4**

*The following were sent to me by Geoff Scott:*

I changed my iPod name to Titanic, it's syncing now.

I tried to catch some fog, I mist.

When chemists die, they barium.

A soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.

I know a guy who's addicted to brake fluid. He says he can stop any time.

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went. Then it dawned on me.

How does Moses make his tea? Hebrews it.

### Conversation between the Vicar and a stranger

*The following appears in the St Barnabas Old Heath Magazine for October 2012*

'I wonder if you could do me a favour Vicar?' 'I will, if I can' (and I did). Then the conversation moved to the inevitable – 'I don't go to church Vicar but I do believe in God. I just can't find a church that suits me'. 'Which types of churches have you attended?' Silence - 'Well none lately actually.' 'Then you are unlikely to find one are you?' 'You may be right Vicar, you've got me there but if Jesus was here speaking on Sunday, I'd be there like a flash'.

Well,' I said,' It so happens that I am his representative here in Old Heath and he has told me to see to it that you come along Sunday to hear what I have to say on his behalf. VERY LONG SILENCE!  
(This was a genuine conversation)

It is interesting being a Vicar. When I meet a nurse I don't apologise or dream up reasons for not going to Hospital. If I meet a Fireman, I don't apologise for not having started a fire. When I meet a Policeman, I don't apologise for not having committed a crime – yet people who don't go to church almost inevitably apologise for not going to church or make up all sorts 'justifiable' reasons for their lack of attendance.

The reasons usually follow the same pattern:-

1. It is boring (well how do you know if you haven't been. My experience is that most who come, enjoy the experience.)
2. I don't need to go to church to be close to God. (Well, maybe not, but do you really ever do anything or say anything to tell the God you believe in that you are grateful? That is why we go to church.)
3. I had a bad experience with the Vicar. (Which Vicar? The one who was here thirty years ago? Sometimes we have bad teachers at school but we don't say the whole Education system is worthless to me because of it.)

### Reading is not believing

Though he read Von Daniken's book, 'God is an Astronaut', in the early 70s, Father Richard remains unconvinced he is/was.



### Soft and tender

*The following quotation sent to me by John Marshall  
was to be found in the Spurriergate Centre in York,  
a disused church converted to a Christian run coffee shop, cafe cum gift shop*

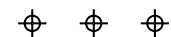
'May your words be soft and tender  
for tomorrow you may have to eat them'.



### God talk

*My brother, Les, shared this piece of wisdom with me*

We talk to God in our prayers;  
God talks to us in our dreams.



## The care of others

Last Christmas, my most original and challenging present was a month's membership of the Health and Fitness Club at the Thalassa, St Enogat. Gym, Jacuzzi, Haman and Swimming Pool, the real gift and challenge lay in the five swimming lessons my membership included.

As an Aquaphobe, swimming was inextricably bound up with a fear of the water learnt when I nearly drowned trying to learn to swim as a primary schoolboy being 'taught' at the local public baths next to East Ham Town Hall. Fifty years on, my fear of water was deep-rooted.

I do not think I would have coped without the help and care of others. Several friends urged me to learn to swim given I lived less than a minute from the sea and the public swimming pool. I tried without success back in 2007.

But the Thalassa proved more friendly and gradually I began to be more at ease in the water, learning to put my head in the water, to float, to do a type of breast-stroke. But the original fear was always there albeit shifting as I got better.

The first time I did a length close to the wall was a real milestone. The first time I did a length by the 'filet' was another. Learning to tread water still another. But the ultimate breakthrough came when the lady lifeguard challenged me to swim in the centre of the pool and with a friend close by, I managed 3 lengths to prove I could. And now I can.

Nothing would have been possible without the care of others. To succeed, you need time and a willingness to commit to something but sometimes, alone, things may be insurmountable without other people being there to encourage us. And for that care, I am truly grateful!

*Father Gareth*

4. I'd like to go but I'm so busy. (Well, if your mate said 'Let's go swimming and you wanted to go, you'd re-arrange your morning. Is one hour a week such a demand on your time? One hour out of 168?)

5. I am quite a sinner. The people at church are all goodies. (Nonsense, all of us at church know we get it wrong quite often, we come to church to put it right.)

6. The church is too 'high' or too 'low'. (What on earth does that mean? The church is a place where we come to share with each other, a common belief and we express that through hymns and prayers, hearing the scriptures and receiving teaching from the priest.)

Now don't get upset if you are not a church goer, I am not telling you off. The church is here, I am here for YOU when you need it (me) and I never judge or condemn people who either don't see a need or just don't feel like coming to church. However, if people feel a need to share these 'excuses' with me it is quite possible that somewhere in the heart and mind there is a need, a desire to cross that threshold from time to time. I want to assure you that there is ALWAYS a welcome.

Perhaps you are experiencing difficulties in life. Feel free to come and sit quietly in the church or join the congregation on Sunday. Perhaps there is something you wish to celebrate, (a wedding anniversary, the birth of a child, success in exams, a new job) well come and tell me about it and let's have a service of celebration. Perhaps you want to be a Christian but don't know how. Well come and ask me and I will teach you. Perhaps someone you love is dying or has died. Let the church comfort you and help you.

Most people, in my experience, have a faith somewhere in their heart but don't know how to express it. If you do want to come – just come. It is your Church – or rather it is God's Church and he welcomes you.

*Father Richard Tillbrook*

## Five Pillars of Islam - 4

*In the last of four articles, Claude Francois reflects on Islam and of how we in the West make sense of one of the three religions of the Book*

The problem is that one tends to judge a whole religion by what we hear about it, by what is broadcast on TV and published in the press, and naturally these messages allocate a totally disproportionate place to violent actions of fanatics because that is precisely what listeners and viewers appreciate the most. Actually, there is quite a similar misuse of religion between established power structures in the Western world in the name of both power and greed combined in the same hands, with what can be found with the governments in place in most Muslim countries, and this gives rise to a terrorist counterforce, the latter tending to define itself more negatively, leaving power and Islamist order as the main driving force.

The Christian values of humility, giving and sharing which are so little applied throughout the western world are more prevalent - at the individual level at least - in the Muslim world as these values have been strongly and explicitly reinforced throughout the Qur'an. One can however just wonder about the lack of compassion, help and support that the leaders and governments of extremely wealthy Arab countries like the Emirates or Saudi Arabia provide to extremely miserable Muslim countries like Palestine, Bangladesh or Somalia.

This violence in the Muslim world today may not reflect the values of the silent majority, which is in fact itself the prime victim of such violence. On the contrary, such fanatic minority thus benefits not only from what it gets through physical violence but also from the power of the media including international western news media which actually puts itself at their very service. It is natural that the desperate Palestinian or Iraqi who has never had much hope for a decent life on earth be admiring demonstrations of violence by his peers, especially as

Day massacre of French Protestants by French Catholics in Paris on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1572 is a sobering example of how our faith can be used for evil as well as for good.

Now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the persecution of Christians tends to be from secular sources. We have the phenomenon of political correctness where doctors and nurses face disciplinary measures, even risk being sacked for offering to pray for their patients. Personally, I'd prefer someone who looks after my health to pray for me rather than someone who is supposed to look after my money to prey on me. We also have the phenomenon of militant atheists in the mould of Professor Richard Dawkins who are zealous in their pursuit to root out a spiritual dimension to life. Deaf to the word of God, blind to the presence of God, they seek to muffle the truth of our experience.

Personally, we are unlikely to suffer martyrdom on account of what we believe but we can well be smiled at, mocked and scorned, regarded as somehow sad folk who are sadly deluded. But whatever the expression of the attack on us takes, one thing is certain that what we have to offer may not be well received. The hand that tries to feed them risks being bitten.

It is fitting that in November when on 25<sup>th</sup> we celebrate Christ the King to note that Jesus was first enthroned on earth on the cross and the two folk who were privileged to be placed on his right and left hand were not James and John who mistakenly but two thieves who suffered the agonies of being crucified alongside him.

If that is how they treated the master whom we follow, why should we his servants expect to be treated any better ?

*Father Gareth*

## Blessed are

*In the last of a series of articles looking at the Beatitudes found in St Matthew chapter 5, we consider the eighth and ninth*

**‘Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.  
Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you on my account’**

Let me state the obvious: these last two make uncomfortable reading. They state what may await Christians who stand up for and stand out for what is right: for the standards set out for right behaviour, right relationships, right living.

In one sense, we are all apostles, messengers sent out into the world to tell the world what it might not want to hear: where people are wrong and what folk should be doing. We all have an obligation to share our faith with others. If the news is unwelcome, then it is easier to shoot the messenger than to listen to and act on what he has to say.

There is a well documented history of how Christians have been persecuted. Our own St Bartholomew was martyred for daring to bring the gospel to the Armenians. His death was not pleasant and our stained glass window, dedicated to his memory by the Pierpoint family, graphically reminds us of the horror he suffered for the truth. Our recent icon of our patron saint symbolically conveys that same fate in the knife that Bartholomew is holding up in his left hand, and in the top right-hand corner, an angel tenders his skin to us.

Sadly, persecution of Christians has also been actively pursued by other Christians. One sad consequence of the Reformation was to give Christians greater scope to fight other Christians who did not interpret the truth of our Scriptures as they did. Again, the St Bartholomew’s

an apparently successful show of force against the greedy, selfish, depraved, Western oppressors of poor, hopeless and humiliated Muslims. One view of the West is of greedy ruthless predators who are only interested in securing the oil supplies needed for their comfort and that seek to impose their culture and domination to the Middle East while invoking values of respect, sharing and peace that they do not apply themselves.

Christians with some knowledge of the Moslem world tend to recognize however that the Moslems that they have a chance to meet personally often tend to be extremely kind people who appreciate signs of respect and friendship. The violence and apparent inconsistencies that Christians find in the Muslim world are not due to Islam itself, they are due to the fact that this religion does not foster critical thinking: people are told to submit their soul and their life to God, thus following what they believe God has asked them to do. As the dialogue is not direct, and as two of Islam’s sacred books, the Old Testament and the Qur’an contain gruesome stories and rules that were written when times were tougher, when life was much more dangerous and the challenges different from what they are today, Muslim believers are sometimes confused between a strict interpretation of the scriptures (killing renegades and infidels, stoning adulterous women, cutting the hands of the thieves) and a more modern one in which the spirit of the teaching predominates over the actual specific directive or punishment.

Christians naturally look forward to promoting conversion to Christianity, which, following from a moral standpoint much of the same values as Islam (the Ten Commandments), yet condemning violence and ill-treatment of women. Their success is however limited for two reasons: first because the Qur’an punishes renegades extremely hard (*if they turn renegades, seize them and slay them wherever ye find them ; Surah 4.89-90.*) but also because the Western world has not always shown a very good example; the term “war on terror” provides

Islamist fanatics with ammunition to defend the position that the West has embarked on a new “crusade”.

Actually, when seen from a pure and sincere Muslim standpoint, which other means would they have than terrorism to stop what they perceive as an aggression of the West, backed by otherwise invincible financial, economical, cultural and military means?

The problem is not Islam or the religion itself, but, just like with so many religions that have been “recuperated” by individuals who thought they were “inspired by God” - to change the world, to reverse its trend of becoming flooded by the power of the speech of such individual imposters, as they turn power-crazy and tyrannical. This is the case with Islamist fundamentalists who, aware that they have no chance competing with the American and Western level of development, choose to compete on a different ground, the one of defending the pride and the sovereignty of the Arab world. The Islamist holy scriptures provide them with what they believe or make believe is a sacred basis for this; the danger they represent is compounded by the fact that they receive an overwhelming echo throughout the Muslim world where so many people live below poverty levels with extremely little chance to compete effectively.

It is therefore much easier for them to reject and to challenge the Western establishment on a different ground, that of terrorism: they are effective in doing so because our world is vulnerable in view of its mere technical development, of its globalization, of our dependence on energy, financial and electronic means of communication.

The solution is not to fight a “war on terror”, a concept which ignores and humiliates Muslim fighters who must believe in what they are doing as otherwise they would not be so ready to die for it, the solution is to give hope to the Muslim world, to give them hope for a better

world, one in which they can feel respected, which also means one in which their set of values is free from the ugliest aspects of historical shariah law : inferior treatment of women, lapidation, chopping off hands, killing the infidels, etc.

What is needed is the development of Islam with a human face. The Qur’an in fact promotes Ijtihad as much as it promotes Jihad, especially among “modernist Muslims”. *Ijtihad* (Arabic: اجتهاد, *ijtihād*) is the making of a decision in Islamic law (*sharia*) by personal effort (*jihad*), independently of any school (*madhhab*) of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) as opposed to *taqlid*, copying or obeying without question. To be valid and accepted it has to be rooted in the Qur'an and the *hadith* and it is required that no established doctrine rules the case. A *mujtahid* is an Islamic scholar who is competent to interpret *sharia* by *ijtihad*. Ijtihad, in its “modernist” inception promotes introspection, respect and adaptation to our world (M. A. Muqtedar Khan): “when modernist Muslims claim that the door of *ijtihad* has been closed, they are lamenting the loss of the spirit of inquiry that was so spectacularly demonstrated by classical Islamic civilization at its peak. They are, in a sense, nostalgic for Ibn Sina' (Avicenna) and Ibn Rusbd (Averroes), for al-Farabi, al-Biruni and al-Haytham -- scientists, philosophers and jurists of Islam's "Golden Age". Thus, modernist Muslims see *ijtihad* as the spirit of inquiry and desire for all forms of knowledge, not just religious and juristic that needs to be revived to revitalize and restore Islamic civilization.”

At the same time, maybe it is time we develop Christianity with a human face too, one that respects basic human and Judeo-Christian-Moslem values of humility, tolerance and generosity. It is natural for the West to defend itself against terrorism, yet the West should at the same time acknowledge that the Qur’an reinforces the beautiful teachings of the Gospel that Christians have largely forgotten. That implies that both religions give each other – and with sincerity – at least one thing: respect.