

Diary dates for June and July, 2014

8th June 11.00 Pentecost
10th July 10.30 Council Meeting
13th July 12.00 Friends AGM



Prayer of the month

Lord God,
give me, thy handmaid, a teachable heart,
so that I may know what is acceptable in thy sight;
send from heaven the Spirit of thy wisdom
and rule my heart with its guidance.
Amen.

Elizabeth I



Prayer focus

To be open to learn what is needful, what is useful, what is good.



Verse of the Month

Great and wonderful are your deeds, Lord God the Almighty.
Just and true are your ways, O ruler of the nations.

Revelation 15 v3



St Bart's Monthly



June, 2014

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

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June, 2014

Notices

Dear Friends,

'Confirm O Lord . . .'

It was wonderful to welcome Bishop James Johnston back among us. Bishop James and his wife, Joyce, are no strangers here. Former Bishop of St Helena and sometime Chaplain at St Bart's, it is wonderful to see how wide our community may spread.

But he was here with Joyce for a good reason besides having a holiday and staying with his friend, Diana Wilson – he came here to conduct a confirmation.

It was good to see David Boggis, Georgia Hewitt, Cecilia and Lucie Cospain-Davidson confirmed alongside two youngsters from All Saints' Vendée. It is good to be part of a living, growing and changing congregation of the people of God in this place at this time.

But what is confirmation ? Simply it is a public reaffirmation of the our baptismal vows which, if we were baptised as infants which is the standard practice of the Anglican communion, then it is an opportunity to make those promises for ourselves. Essentially, confirmation is another rite of passage, another step on our Christian journey.

Pentecost falls this year on June 8th. It is good to remember that as part of the ceremony, the bishop lays his hands on each candidate and saying, 'Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit.'

The Holy Spirit is with us. In confirmation, we reiterate that fact. What does it feel to have him with you, present in your life ?

Father Gareth



- **Thanks** to all involved at the Teddy Bears' Picnic at Diana's which raised 400€ for the Organ fund – my bear loved it !
- **Deadline** for submission of material for the July edition of the St Bart's Monthly is *midday on Thursday 26th June*
- **Church Finances for April**
Income: 4,061€ Expenditure: 6,471€



Readings in church

June 1st Sunday after Ascension Day

Acts 1 v6 - 14
1 Peter 4 v12 -14; 5 v6 - 11

Psalm 68 v1 - 10
John 17 v1 - 11

June 8th Day of Pentecost (Whit Sunday)

Acts 2 v1- 21
1 Corinthians 12 3b - 13

Psalm 104 v26 - end
John 7 v37 - 39

June 15th Trinity Sunday

Isaiah 40 v12 - 17, 27 - end
2 Corinthians 13 v11 - end

Psalm 8
Matthew 28 v16 - 20

June 22nd First Sunday after Trinity

Genesis 21 v8 - 21
Romans 6 v1b - 11

Psalm 86 v1 - 10
Matthew 10 v24 - 39

June 29th Peter and Paul

Zechariah 4 v1 - 6a, 10b - end
Acts 12 v1 - 11

Psalm 125
Matthew 16 v13 – 19

Quotations of the month

‘Film buffs [are people] who love pregnant pauses, inscrutable looks and 127 screen minutes without a joke.’

Peter Preston – ‘The Guardian’



Odd Words Massive

It’s a Saturday in November. I’m in the car with Radio 4 on in the background. It’s a programme about the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens. I’ve tuned in towards the end as the presenter is interviewing a young woman who’s responsible for running the Vauxhall City Farm, now on part of the former site. She’s enthusiastic and talks about the support the farm receives from local schools – she says, her words, that it’s ‘massively used’!

I mentally pause though the car is still travelling down Edouard VII. ‘Massively’? How big are these kids? Well obese or what? Then, I reflect perhaps she means the farm is ‘well used’. ‘Massively’ of course, sells her farm to the public – it is telling us just how popular a place it is, well crowded. But to me ‘massively’ sounds a little like overegging the pudding. I guess my education instilled in me the virtue of understatement. To me, exaggeration on this scale, hyperbole if prefer the literary term, is somehow not quite British.

Am I simply being a word snob, suffering from sizism, preferring a lighter turn of phrase, or am I simply well past it? A question of degree – and mine’s English.

Gareth Randall

Notes from the Council April 24th

Apologies for my tardiness in these notes appearing in print: the actual meeting coincided with the deadline for producing our monthly magazine!

As ever, our meeting, following our regular 10.00 Thursday morning service of Holy Communion, opened and closed in prayer. Church Finance in David’s capable hands and in Bill’s Church fabric (boilers, downpipe, radiator and floor) were discussed. The Garden, the Library, the chaplain’s flat were all briefly discussed as were our Ecumenical links and the laying up of the Royal British Legion Brittany Branch’s standard here in church. Publicity continues in the capable hands of Helen Cocaign with the addition of a church Blog whose principal purpose is to advertise church events.

The question of our recommendation to the diocese on behalf of St Bart’s for Valerie Trevino to explore her vocation to be a Reader here in the Anglican Communion was discussed at length. The Council expressed its thanks to Valerie for her presentation, her offer and her service to St Bart’s but, at this time, on balance felt there was no pressing need for a Reader.

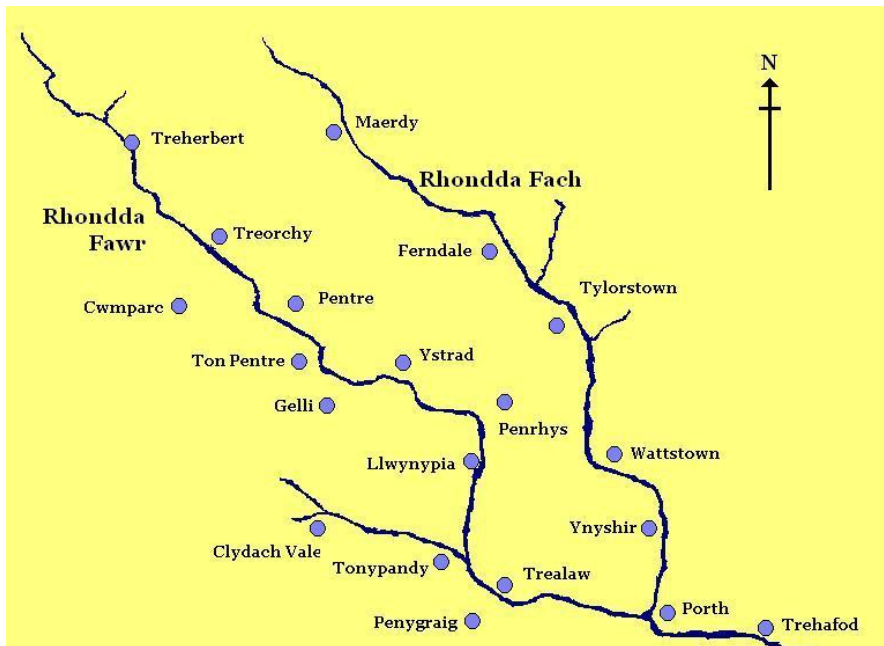
Four quotations for the organ renovation had been sought with the last one still outstanding. As soon as it is available, John will circulate the Council, the issue discussed at the July meeting and a final decision be made in September.

As ever, my thanks to all members of our Council especially as they embark on their new year in office.

Father Gareth

Porth to Treherbert

We leave Pontypridd (known as Ponty) and leaving the station the train branches left - to go right would take you to the Merthyr Valley and on that part of the railway network you pass through Aberfan. Look to your left and see the mountain and the tip that dealt such unimaginable consequences to the community. Who can ever forget the black and white photographs of men digging by hand to try to save their and others children ?



However, we are now approaching Trehafod known as Hafod. I know the area well and it is where my Father worked in the Bertie pit and in a seam of coal 2'9" in width. It is now the Rhondda Heritage Centre and the pithead remains. When asked where he worked it was never the Bertie but the 2'9" - it was his shorthand and everyone knew what he

British humour 4/5

This series plopped into my in-box from Geoff Scott, bless him !

A Yorkshire man takes his cat to the vet.

Yorkshire man: "Ayup, lad, I need to talk to thee about me cat."

Vet: "Is it a tom?"

Yorkshire man: "Nay I've brought it with us."



Celibacy – no joking matter !

The following was sent to me Ken Irin

*Celibacy can be a choice in life,
or a condition imposed by circumstances.*

While attending a 'Harmony for Couples' weekend, Dave and his Partner, Ann, listened to the instructor declare, "It is essential that husbands and wives know the things that are important to each other." He then addressed the men, "Can you name and describe your wife's favourite flower?" Dave leaned over, touched Ann's arm gently, and whispered, "It's Homepride, isn't it?" Thus began Dave's life of celibacy.



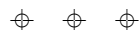
Shop puns (3)

*Bryan Larkin sent me a third newspaper cutting
reporting the best business names which are plays on words !*

- 1 Sellfridges Liverpoolian white goods retailer
- 2 William the Concreter cement delivery firm in Hastings
- 3 Suck cess on the side of cesspit emptying lorry

My favourite dates from the 1930s when window blinds were still fashionable. Seen on the side of a van:

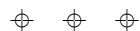
‘A blind man drives this van’



Drinking and driving

This joke was sent to me by Peter Campbell

On the way back from his son’s wedding in Rennes, an Englishman was stopped by the police on the N137 and was asked whether he had been drinking. “Actually, officer, I have. There was an aperitif before the meal, different wines with each of the four courses and small cognac with the coffee.” When then asked to blow into a breathalyser, the man simply smiled and said, “No problem, officer, but you do realise that this in an English car ? The steering wheel is on the other side. My wife is driving.”



meant. It is now the Rhondda Heritage Centre and the pithead remains.

In those days, there were no pithead baths so miners used to walk home or use the top deck of the bus for they were not allowed to travel on the lower deck due to their clothing and black faces!

As part of the ‘deal’, they were given scrubbing brushes, carbolic soap and the roughest towels you have ever come across. Then home to tin baths hanging on the back wall of the house and with my Mother, I did indeed ‘bath’ my Father. In my youth, I still had not quite worked out the engine that made mining communities tick but that was to come later and with experience. The engine was the wives who remained at home whilst their husbands descended into darkness.

The roles between Husband and Wife were clearly defined.

However I did make a mistake and was rebuked for it. One day and being over-zealous and anxious to rid my Father of the coal dust, I used the scrubbing brush with some gusto.

What I had failed to realise was that miners underground cut themselves and the coal dust entered into the skin. Afterwards it was almost impossible to remove and you then could see miners throughout the town with dark blue marks on their skin. Even Vaseline could not remove it.

Is Vaseline still produced ?

The next stop is Porth and in English it means gateway for it is the gateway to the Rhondda Fach (small Rhondda) and Rhondda Fawr (large Rhondda). It was my home and remains my spiritual home although my professional life and my travels have taken me well away at times from the village.

The main street is called Hannah Street and in those days I believe there were some four or five chapels in the street. Tabernacle at the top Salem at the bottom and they were full to the brim on Sundays. 'Jerusalem' and 'There is a Green Hill' were the 'pops' of those days.

Hannah Street was also populated by what we called 'Bracchi's' run by Italians who came over from Bardi in Northern Italy and to provide sustenance for the mining communities. So with Evans Jones Thomas etc. we had Bacchettas, Servinis, Fulgoini's and the like.

Their children went to the same schools as us but on Sundays and like all good Catholics went to the Catholic Church in Ynyshir. Apart from that, we were exactly equals save for the fact that our friends spoke Italian with a Welsh accent!

Whilst Dr Beeching closed the Rhondda Fach link to Maerdy, I still think we should have a brief excursion for the valley does have some interesting stories.

To Ynyshir which means long meadow and my Father's family home. His sister his brother-in-law lived in a rented NCB House with stables and where the pit ponies came for their holidays for the two weeks in summer. I knew when it was Miners' fortnight for there were more white £5 notes in the pay-packets. Does anyone remember the pay-packets of those days, the ones with holes in them?

I used to spend the holidays with the pit ponies and well-remember the house it was full of clocks but pride of place on the table was the family bible.

My Uncle Elvet was an elder of the Chapel and also an Overman in the Standard Pit and literally this means 'over men' and sort of modern day foreman I suppose.

Potatoes

This beautiful love story was sent to me by Peter Campbell:

Well, a Girl Potato and Boy Potato had eyes for each other, and finally they got married, and had a little sweet potato, which they called 'Yam'.

Of course, they wanted the best for Yam. When it was time, they told her about the facts of life. They warned her about going out and getting half-baked, so she wouldn't get accidentally mashed, and get a bad name for herself like 'Hot Potato'.

Yam said not to worry, no Spud would get her into the sack and make a rotten potato out of her! But on the other hand she wouldn't stay home and become a Couch Potato either. She would eat properly so as not to be skinny like her Shoestring Cousins.

When she went off to Europe, Mr. and Mrs. Potato told Yam to watch out for those hard-boiled guys from Ireland and the greasy guys from France called the French Fries, and when she went out West, she must watch out for the Indians so she wouldn't get scalloped. They sent Yam to Idaho P.U. (that's Potato University). So that when she graduated she'd really be "in the Chips".

But in spite of all they did for her, one-day Yam came home and announced she was going to marry Richie Benaud.

They were very upset.

"You can't possibly marry Richie Benaud because he's just a COMMONTATER!"

Congratulations

Our congratulations to the Revd John Gay who has been appointed to the post of Team Vicar to the Brixham Mission Community in South Devon.

This post is part of the Team Ministry of the two town churches of St Mary's and All Saints', Brixham and the two adjoining parishes of Kingswear and Churston Ferrers. The post is a new initiative in which unusually neither the Team Rector nor Team Vicar has responsibility for any particular church. Basically, the day-to-day running of the churches rests with the laity, leaving the clergy to support them, to take the offices and to evangelise etc. The principle is very similar to how a multi-site chaplaincy works in Europe but seems distinctive, possibly unique, in the UK.

John's licensing is set for the 2nd September at St Mary's, Brixham and we wish John, Lucy and their children every blessing as they take up this new sphere of ministry.



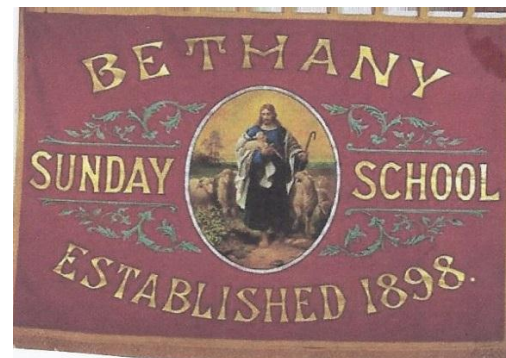
*On 27th April, John XXIII alongside John Paul II was canonised
by Francis I. Below are two examples of his humour
sent to me by Valerie Trevino*

When asked by a journalist how many people worked in the Vatican, he replied, "About half of them."

Visiting a hospital in Rome called the Hospital of the Holy Spirit, run by a group of Catholic sisters, the mother superior, deeply stirred by the papal visit, went up to him to introduce herself.

"Most Holy Father, I am the Superior of the Holy Spirit."

"Well, I must say you're very lucky – I'm only the Vicar of Christ."



We went to the Bethany English Baptist Chapel and whose name I found to be an enigma in that we were in Wales. However, the naming of the Chapel and its establishment was pretty straight forward for in the days when coal was found, the indigenous population only spoke Welsh. Thus for non-Welsh speakers who came to Wales to chase the black gold, they simply had to establish their own chapels for otherwise religion became a bit of a problem.

Bethany, being non-conformist in nature, believed in total emersion for baptism and I still have fond memories of my brother, Roy, being baptised and in front of a 'full house.'

I was luckier in that my Baptism was in the Vendee with the Rev Brian Davies !

A little distance down the road is the Ynyshir Workingmen's Club known as the Baden Powell. No one knows why it is called so but I am reliably informed that the Gentleman never visited Ynyshir.

We continue our journey through (Watt)stown and (Tylor)stown with the brackets indicating that the pits there were sunk by the Watts and Tylor brothers.

Then just one more stopping point before we reach the final part of this journey and this is Ferndale. It was the birthplace of Sir Stanley Baker the son of a miner. However, Sir Stanley was never knighted by Her Majesty the Queen in that he died in Spain of cancer before he was able to make the journey. However, Her Majesty was gracious in allowing his wife to adopt the title of Lady Baker.

Perhaps the most memorable performance of Stanley Baker was in the Battle of Rork's drift in the Zulu war. Whilst theatrics and screen pleasing it is a fact that on that day more VC's were awarded than in any other battle. History suggests that a Battalion of the 23 foot of some 150 officers and men stood fast against some 4000 Zulu. It is argued that the portrayal by Michael Caine as he was then known started his career. Indeed who can fail to be moved by Ivor Emmanuel clearing his throat to sing 'Men of Harlech?'

Nearby is Llanwonno surrounded by fir trees? Local legend suggests that Gyto Nyth Bran ran from Llanwonno to Pontypridd and back some 15 miles whilst the kettle was boiling on the black leaded grate.

Finally to Maerdy known as Little Moscow for its left wing beliefs. Here, of course, and following the 84/85 Miners strike, Maerdy Colliery was the last one to return to work. I have photographs of the older people their sons, daughters and grandchildren accompanied by Brass Bands and proudly raising high their banners, Trade Union and otherwise, and walking back to the Pit. They were and are proud people and whilst losing the battle at the end, they remained dignified and united as a village.

Why wives and children ? Just a basic human gesture support for their men who daily had to take the journey to hell.

Barefoot priest

It's summer again and, once again, I can walk barefoot on the beach and wear sandals without socks around town. Some of you may wonder why I prefer not to wear shoes and socks whenever I can. The following may help you understand:

Why bare feet ?

To be free
to feel
the ground
beneath me,
the touch
of air
around,
not bound
by cotton,
wool
or leather
but better,
my sole
unshod
to God,
open
to Him !



Questions The decent thing ?

I love it ! The notion that there is a right thing and a wrong thing to do. The very word 'decent' is warm with approbation – the idea that one has behaved as one should – you know what I mean – 'proper', 'kind', 'generous' – from the Latin 'decens' = 'suitable' and 'decere' = 'to be fitting'.

But context is everything. This time, it's the news on Radio 4 at 8.00 on St Andrew's Day morning reporting the crash the night before at around 22.25 of a police helicopter, a Eurocopter EC135 T2 with a crew of three, onto the roof of a crowded Glasgow pub, the Clutha Bar on Stockwell Street on the bank of the river Clyde. No explosion. No fire. The helicopter simply fell from the sky onto the pub's roof which collapsed onto the unsuspecting regulars drinking down below, listening to a band. And in the darkness and dust, those on their feet helped each other to the exits and to relative safety outside. According to one eye-witness, it was 'the decent thing' to do.

And for you, for me, for any of us, what is the decent thing to do ? It would be rather decent of you if you were to let me know what you think.

Gareth Randall



Double entendre 6/8

The following was sent to me by Ron Kirk

Statistically, 6 out of 7 dwarves are not happy.

Maerdy is no longer its heart and soul have long since departed. It is a village without hope

Next time we shall explore the Rhondda Fawr but before so doing a poem by Sally J Cooper.

The depths were dark
There was little light
It's as though those men
worked through the night
They heard no birds
They saw no trees
They were down the mines
Where no-one sees
They risked their health
They risked their life
All they wanted
Was to see their wife
The days were long
The work was tough
By the end of the day
They'd had enough
But these men were brave
Their hearts were true
Down deep in the valley
It was mining they knew.

*Ken and Linda Ivin
Monmouthshire
2014.*

Senior Citizens

It was interesting to read Father Gareth's article on 'Memory' in the May edition of the St Bart's Monthly. Father Gareth, merely in his sixties, has plenty of time for his memory to get even worse! Those of us in our eighties remember very little and people think we are thick as two short planks!

Like Father Gareth, when I was lecturing I could think of three things at the same time such as what I was teaching, what did I want during lunchtime shopping and what was on the menu for lunch. Nowadays, if I have two items to buy from the supermarket, I must write them down, otherwise I will have forgotten one (or both). The same applies if I go into the bedroom to collect something. When I get there, I have forgotten what it was and don't remember till I leave the room – frustrating! These memory lapses are as all know referred to as 'senior moments' a very apt and accurate phrase!

Of course memory isn't the only thing associated with 'old age'. Here are a few more. Our eyesight starts to fade. Most of us need glasses to read or watch TV. Without glasses our arms are not long enough to hold the newspaper at the length required to read it.

Hearing is another sense which starts to fail. A lot of 'oldies' need hearing aids otherwise we don't hear properly what is said and often wrongly reply to questions such as "What time is it?" by saying "No I don't think it's going to rain."

Mobility is a third problem. The older we get, the stiffer we get. We find it difficult to bend down to pick up something we drop or even to get up out of a chair. Most of us have 'wonky' knees, backache or similar. Added to 'old-age stiffness', we develop arthritis etc which makes us even more 'doddery' especially as a lot of us are also

- If someone has the courage to sincerely and lovingly confront us about something we do or believe, we would be wise to listen.
- The moment we start to think we're above being disciplined or corrected, we're in serious trouble.

45 Don't be fooled by age *1 Timothy 4 v12*

- We must not judge people based on their age.
- We must not allow people to dismiss us based on age

46 Be ever ready *1 Peter 3 v15*

- Peter simply wanted to be able to explain in convincing terms, the answers to the following questions:
- Why does the Bible's message make sense to us?
- Why have we chosen to follow Jesus?
- What has happened in our lives as a result of our relationship with Jesus special place in your heart

47 Focus on what is good *Genesis 50 v20*

- God can – and will – work good from evil. Count on it.

48 Go ahead and ask *Job 38 v4*

- God isn't offended by our questions and doubts.
- Yet our inability to understand him should never prevent us from trusting him.

49 Risk faithfulness *Matthew 6 v5 - 14*

- Our father in heaven, help us to honour your name. Come and set up your kingdom, so that everyone on earth will obey you as you are obeyed in heaven. Give us our food for today. Forgive us for doing wrong, as we forgive others. Keep us from being tempted and protect us from evil."

50 Ask seek knock *Matthew 7 v7*

- Why have we chosen to follow Jesus?

19
Empathy 5/5

41 Look at the heart

Matthew 12 v34

- In first century Jewish culture, religious leaders were the pillars of the community.
- People's reputations in the community mean little compared to the words and deeds that flow from them.

42 Love unselfishly

1 Corinthians 13v5

- Some people may have found themselves in a one-sided relationship.
- Some people may wonder whether a truly unselfish relationship is even possible.
- Two people committed to unselfish love will create a bond for ages.

43 Choose kindness

Colossians 3 v12 - 13

- Kindness is not the same as niceness.
- To be kind is to give people a sense of their worth.
- To be kind is to interact with them in a way that makes them comfortable.
- To be kind is to divest ourselves of sarcasm, brusqueness and a judgemental attitude.
- To be kind is to make them feel that they have a special place in your heart.
- To be kind is to leave people feeling good about the time you spent together.

44 Be open to correction

Galatians 2 v11 – 14, 17 - 19

- Peter wanted Gentile Christians to follow Old Testament Jewish laws, which was something that Jesus never required.
- Peter learned from Paul's correction and grew in his faith as a result.

18

overweight. Running to catch a bus is out of the question or if it starts to rain, we can't hurry for cover so we get wet !

When we look in the mirror (if we can see that far) we see wrinkles, bags under the eyes, grey hair (what's left of it). We then take off our glasses so we can't see any more defects.

The final humility is when a sixty-year-old asks, "Do you want to cross the road ?"

By now I think we may be ready for the knackers' yard !

Bill Hughes
Church Warden



Garden Party 2nd August

Time is getting short and volunteers are still needed to help as follows:-

Ladies Accessories
Children's Games
Tea Stall
Car Park
Cake Baking

Please contact David on 02 99 73 80 14 or dmorgan16@aol.com if you can help.

During July, boxes will be placed in the transept for gifts for each stall. Please help all you can.



*Film Review of the month**'Les garçons et Guillaume à table' – Guillaume Galliene 2013*

My friend, Phil, is a great film buff. We were sitting in my dining room in England back in October when he asked if I'd seen 'Les garçons et Guillaume à table'. I hadn't but he recommended the film so when it appeared in Dinard, surprisingly on a two week run at the end of November, I made the time to see it and I was well impressed.

Guillaume is a boy whose mother is convinced he's really a girl hence the linguistic clue in the title. Another, in the same vein, is when she calls him *ma chérie*. I confess I don't understand when a boy thinks he's really a girl and vice versa though medically, I was surprised to hear that the ambiguity of births, where physically the gender of the child is uncertain, is more common than I ever dreamt of – 1 in 2,000 apparently according to 'The Today Programme' on Radio 4.

Unsurprisingly, the film is a comedy. It's a flashback with Guillaume, now a young man, on stage giving a performance of how he came to be what and where he is. The household is very French upper class with servants, two older brothers who find him an object of fun and a father who doesn't understand him.

He spends time in Spain, in a German mountain health spa (Thalassa plus !) in gay California but best of all in an English mixed boarding school. My French is only just about good enough without grasping the subtle ambiguities but my Spanish is non-existent and my German limited. But I loved the English – so very much tongue in cheek !

I'm not sure when I twigged that the same actor was playing mother and son – Guillaume Galliene starred in and directed the film ! And you won't guess the end but it made me think. Not the usual film I'd recommend but it does raise some serious questions !

Gareth Randall

Armenian Genocide

*Given our patron saint was the Apostle to the Armenians,
I thought this article from Bishop David's blog
would be of general interest*

The annual commemoration of the Armenian genocide every April 24th brings up deep emotional memories in Armenians throughout the world. This year marks the 99th anniversary of the beginning of the massacres in 1915.

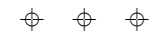
It is a particularly moving event in Armenia itself as the population remembers the many ethnic Armenians, estimated at between 1 and 1.5 million, who lost their lives throughout the Ottoman Empire. Hundreds of thousands gather at the Armenian Genocide Memorial Complex in Yerevan. Yesterday, the Anglican congregation in Yerevan was represented at the national commemorations when Fr John Barker, the priest-in-charge, laid flowers and said a prayer for the repose of the victims. He wrote that "Mount Ararat was looking particularly beautiful and could be clearly seen by the hundreds of thousands of people who visited the memorial and left flowers".

If you use *Common Worship: Daily Prayer*, you may be familiar with the beautiful prayer from the Armenian Church's liturgy:

Keep us in peace, O Christ our God,
under the protection of your holy and venerable cross;
save us from our enemies, visible and invisible,
and count us worthy to glorify you with thanksgiving,
with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever, world without end.

Amen

(CW:DP pg 407)





The point was clear to those in authority. Jesus had thrown down a direct challenge to them. He had come to the centre of their power over the people and had demonstrated by what he did that what they did was wrong. It was not a situation that could be tolerated for long if the priests wished to remain in charge.

The battle-lines were drawn.



Sybil Fagg
Reader
died 13th June, 2011
RIP

She gave herself to this land,
 to this corner of Brittany,
 to Les Ormes, to St Bart's.
 and, in death, is at rest
 in a de La Chesnais grave
 and as part of our story.



St Bart's Tea Towels

Is raising money for our church funds by selling St Bart's tea towels a potential case of money laundering ?



The Bartholomew Gospel
13 Cleaning up the Temple

Jesus . . . threw out all the people who were buying and selling.’ Matthew 21 v12

That afternoon, we went up to the House of the Lord on the Temple mount. And Jesus did not like what he saw. He stood there, looking round him, clearly not a happy man.



The Temple was our third Temple on this site. The first, built by Solomon, David’s son, was finally destroyed when Jerusalem was sacked by the Babylonians and Nebuchadnezzar sent our people into exile in Babylon. On their return, the second was built by Zerubbabel with the encouragement of Haggai and Zechariah, later to be rebuilt and refurbished into what was to become the third temple complex. That was the work of Herod the Great and the building, by our standards at the time, was magnificent. It would later be destroyed by the Romans when they crushed a Jewish revolt against their rule.

Bethel, the house of the Lord. At its heart, the presence of the Lord, Adonai, ever present in the Holy of Holies - the inner sanctuary, the sacred place where once the Ark of the Covenant had rested in the dark. None might enter in except the High Priest, a rope round his waist to pull him out should the need arise. But even he could only go there but once a year in order to burn incense on Yom Kippur, the Black Fast, the Day of Atonement after first having been ritually purified.

Outside in front, the Court of Priests where on the altar, a perfect double cube, priests daily made sacrifice and burnt incense there, their prayers rising up to Him whom we, as Jews, dare not name. Even from the outer courts, the altar was visible albeit in the distance. To

prove they were fit enough still to be of service, priests had to negotiate a low wall which separated the Court of Priests from the Court of Men, where only the circumcised adult male, twelve-years-old or more, true Sons of the Law, might enter; where only the fit and the healthy, whole of body and in mind, might come to worship. Beyond lay the Court of Women, where our women might worship, separate from our men who were forbidden to walk through the centre of the Court but had to pass around the edge. There twelve horns stood ready to receive freewill offerings. To a fine-tuned ear, the tinkle of a widow’s mite had more weight than the cascade from a rich man’s purse. Beyond the Court of Gentiles, where all were free to congregate. It was here now we stood.



If you were standing there, what would you see and hear? People, crowds of people; hustle and bustle; movement; noise as people talk and shout, buy and sell. There are stalls where people sell you birds and animals - pigeons, doves and lambs - all guaranteed in perfect condition, perfect for sacrifice with no chance a priest would ever reject them as not good enough to be offered up. All is for a price. And to pay for them and to pay the annual Temple tax, your everyday coinage, the Roman denarius, has to be changed into shekels, the only valid currency for transactions in the Temple. All is at a price; all costs. And the cost is exorbitant.

The traders all work for Ananias, the former High Priest, whose family enjoy the rights to regulate the trade in the Court of the Gentiles. So there is money for him; money for them; money for the Temple itself. And who pays? You do. Inflated prices and sharp practices all mean you, the pilgrim, you, the devout Jew, are being ripped off big time. Everyone knows it; no one can do anything about it. Capitalism, monopolies and sharp business practice are nothing new.

As Jesus stood there, what did he feel? Disgust? Outrage? Righteous indignation? To him, it felt the place had become like a robbers' cave, a place haunted by those who preyed on pilgrims going up to Jerusalem to pray. Bandits lying in wait there on the Jericho road; bandits standing round here, taking your money. It wasn't right. The Temple was the most sacred place in Judaism, the place where God was present, the place where we should feel the presence of God. It was here we could fulfil the ritual obligations of our faith. It was here we could come to pray, to talk to Him, to hear Him speak to us. Of course, the further in you went, the fewer people qualified for admission. If you were a Gentile, you were restricted to this large area where we were. And it had been turned into a marketplace and shortcut, so busy and noisy, how could you possibly discern the sacred silence in this secular scrum? Absolutely no chance. So Jesus was angry: angry on behalf of his fellow Jews who were being exploited; angry on behalf of the Gentiles who were being deprived here of even the little they had.

I'd seen Jesus angry before. The time he told Peter off. The time he rebuked Judas. The time he had argued with the Pharisees in Synagogue about whether or not it was right to heal on the Sabbath. But this time it was different. He was incandescent, burning with zeal for our Father and for His people, all His people, who were being prevented from finding and meeting Him in this sacred place by the abuse he was witnessing.

So what did he do? He turned his anger on the sellers of animal sacrifice and the money changers, overturning their tables and turning them out of the House of God. The people cheered and the guards surprisingly did nothing. It was as if Jesus' anger had reflected the latent anger of the crowd. It was as if Jesus was protected. We know now that his time had not yet come. But soon it would.