

Diary dates for February and March, 2015

18th February 10.00 Ash Wednesday
26th February 11.00 Start of Lent Bible Study
28th March 10.30 Council Meeting



Prayer of the month

Lord God, when thou givest to thy servants to endeavour any great matter, grant us also to know that it is not the beginning but the continuing of the same, until it be throughly finished, that yieldeth the true glory; through him who, for the finishing of thy work, laid down his life for us, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Amen

Attributed to Sir Francis Drake (1540 – 96)



Prayer focus

A Lenten spiritual health check-up



Verse of the Month

So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

John 8 v36



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:

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February, 2015

Notices

Dear Friends,

But what about us ?

It's Monday 22nd December. Rome. The Vatican. The Clementine Hall. Pope Francis is giving his annual address to Curial cardinals and superiors. He cites 15 broad spiritual ailments in the hope that his words might stimulate a 'true examination of conscience to prepare our hearts for holy Christmas.'

Not many faces whose ears heard what was being said of them raised a smile but the one phrase I heard on Radio 4 – 'spiritual Alzheimers' – grabbed my attention and made me grin in wonder at what it might mean.

The list of faults cited includes: Martha-ism (working excessively); petrification (being heart-hearted / stiff-necked); functionalism (acting as if you're an accountant or businessman); spiritual Alzheimers (losing sight of the transforming love of God); existential schizophrenia (losing touch with people and their needs); the cancer of closed circles; the sickness of the mournful face.

I've only cited seven and there was so much more the Pope had to say about cardinal failings. Of course, it's easy to smile at other people's discomfort. But Lent starts on 18th of this month with Ash Wednesday so why don't we turn a friendly eye inward and ask ourselves whether we're losing the plot: forgetting the joy of serving our fellow Christians; failing to love God by loving others as we ought to love ourselves ?

Will we be able to smile at Easter because we do try to be better ? Are you willing to give that a try ?

Father Gareth

- **Advent Appeal** raised 320€ for the Ebola Appeal by Médecins sans Frontière
- **Deadline** for submission of material for the March edition of St Bart's is ***midday on Thursday 26th February***
- **Church Finances for December**
Income: 4, 688€ Expenditure: 4,861€



Readings in church

February 1st

Malachi 3 v1 –5
Hebrews 2 v14 – end

February 8th

Proverbs 8 v1, 22- 31
Colossians 1 v15 – 20

February 15th

2 Kings 2 v1 – 12
2 Corinthians 4 v3 – 6

February 22nd

Genesis 9 v8 – 17
1 Peter 3 v18 – end

Candlemas

Psalm 24 v7 – end
Luke 2 v22 – 40

2nd Sunday before Lent

Psalm 104 v26 – 31
John 1 v1 – 14

Sunday next before Lent

Psalm 50 v1 – 6
Mark 9 v14 – 29

1st Sunday of Lent

Psalm 25 v1 – 9
Mark 1 v9 – 15



Film Review of the month
'The Angels' Share' Ken Loach – 2012

I'd missed this one. Sure, last year I'd seen the trailer in Dinard but somehow never went to see the film itself. A pastoral visit to Krishna's last April, a wee dram and a DVD of the film his parting gift!

Let me say I'd watched 'Kes' back in 1969 and I was impressed with the social realism, the humour and seriousness of a boy finding self-worth in training a bird of prey. Here, more of the same but now over the border in Glasgow where various delinquents are brought together, sentenced to do community service. Our anti-hero is one Robbie Emerson (Paul Brannigan) whose history of violent assault is uncomfortable and unpleasant the violence of the world he inhabits. But the young man is redeemed (the word I use is an accurate description of the transformation that he undergoes) by the fact his girl-friend gives birth to his boy; and Harry (John Henshaw), who oversees Robbie's community service, goes the extra mile, giving him the opportunity of really tasting and savouring the whisky and discovering he has sensitive, discriminating taste buds!

'The Angels' Share' is a delightful idea – that the degree of evaporation that takes place as the whisky matures is that which the angels imbibe! The film's plot revolves around the improbable siphoning off of some rare whisky to sell on, netting Robbie's team of four good-hearted criminals 25K each. With his share, Robbie, wife and son drive off into a metaphorical sunset in a Volkswagen Campervan to start a new life in which Robbie will work as a whisky taster at a distillery.

It's ultimately a fairy-tale, comedy heist, a cheeky, feel good film and I did. But is a Scottish film with a social conscience to your taste?

Gareth Randall

Notes from the Council - January 29th

As usual, our meeting opened and closed in prayer, giving thanks for the privilege and responsibility of currently being stewards of St Bart's.

Our organ was a major focus for discussion. It has been dismantled and largely transferred to the Isle of Wight for restoration. In the meantime, John and Chris will be undertaking a redecoration of the empty chamber and, on completion, the pipes left in church will be stored in the space to give us the maximum number of seats for the Easter services. It was agreed that both the Lent and Advent Appeal 2015 should be dedicated to the Organ Fund.

Financially, we are in good heart and David was thanked for his work as our Treasurer. Fund raising and social events were discussed. In particular, the VE Day Picnic at Les Essarts was considered as well as possible concerts in church and a car boot sale in Diana's field. A Soup Lunch will be held at Diana's after church on Sunday 15th Feb.

The Revd Dr John Marvell was congratulated on his sermon in French for the Ecumenical service here during Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and I shall be taking part in a Table Ronde in St Malo on 10th February with the Adventist Pastor on the subject of death.

Carolyn Hewitt has agreed to take on the role of Communications Officer and Helen Coughlin was thanked for her work publicising St Bart's.

Bill and David have put up new shelving in the Elizabeth Hannay room and Victor is currently producing a sample of the new cushions for the church pews.

Father Gareth

A Sermon by the Bishop of London

*The following was forwarded to us by Bert Scott
and John Davey thought it would interesting to read
in the light of our restoration of our organ at St Bart's
and our appeal for funds to do so*

Let all the world in every corner sing, My God and King. In a few moments, the choir of the Chapel Royal will be singing this anthem with words by the priest/poet George Herbert in a setting by Vaughan Williams.

Music has given wings to our worship since Biblical times. Music and singing can enlarge the spiritual heart and take us directly to a zone of joy. At the same time singing together, with the attentiveness to one another that is involved, can build the unity of the worshipping community.

The Venerable Bede in his History of the English Church recognises the significance of chanting the psalms in embedding Christian culture in our island. Since then, renewal in the life of the church and its worship has often been accompanied by new styles of music and singing. Methodism spread to the accompaniment of the hymns of Charles Wesley and the musical element in contemporary charismatic worship is very significant.

There have been times when music was considered a distraction. During our Civil War in the 17th century organs were smashed and choirs were disbanded. It was the longest hiatus we have suffered to date in English Church Music. At the Restoration in 1660 there was not a chorister in the whole country equipped to lead a treble section.

[In the Chapel Royal at St James's, the composer Matthew Locke wrote that for "above a year after the opening of His Majestie's Chapel the

Gale force ?

Outside
tonight
the wind
pushes
blows hard
against
shutters
and walls
trying
to come in
But I
lay down
in bed
to sleep



Moral Philosopher

While I was sitting in my dentist's chair, Dr Ardouin shared this piece of wisdom with me:

I drink to get tired.
'Tired, I go to bed.
In bed, I sleep.
In sleep, I sin not.
Therefore, I drink in order to be good.

What do you think ?



Winter Fuel

The Government is proposing to remove the Winter Fuel Payment from *all* eligible Pensioners resident in France. This is despite an assurance, which was originally given, that the change would only apply to those who 'lived in warmer climates'.

I have been fortunate enough to spend most of my life in Cornwall where winters seemed warmer than here in Brittany! When we lived in Penzance where at Christmas:

*The Church window sills
Adorned with golden daffodils*

(The Lay Rector grew fields of them for export to England!) Later, we lived in Falmouth where:

*Palm trees in the garden grew
Winter snows we never knew.*

The Government's justification for the removal of the Winter Fuel Payment, for people who live in Northern France, is that the decision is based on the 'aggregate winter temperature' for the whole of France. My letter and E-mail to the Minister of State for Pensions asking, if this includes Corsica, have gone unanswered! If you like me will be affected by the removal of the W.F.P. and feel the *real* winter temperatures here in Northern France are on a par with those in the U.K. you could write, or E-mail:

The Rt. Hon. Steve Webb MP
Minister of State for Pensions
House of Commons London SW1A 0AA
E-mail: ministers@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

If you have retained voting rights in the U.K. you may wish to send a copy to your M.P. Who knows, with a General Election coming up you may get a reply!

Roger Gilbert.

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orderers of the music there were necessitated to supply the superior parts of their music with comets and men's feigned voices, there being not one lad for all that time capable of singing his part readily." Some of the best known anthems of the period like Purcell's Rejoice in the Lord, reflect this situation. But, as the Scriptures show, human beings have always praised God with the sound of music. Shakespeare suspected those who are not moved by music: "The man that hath not music in himself, nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils."

[Archbishop William Temple certainly was a music lover and he particularly enjoyed hearing those who sang at their work just for the joy of it. He was coming down to breakfast one day and was impressed by the cook's rendition of Nearer My God to Thee. The cook thanked him for his appreciation but felt obliged to explain, "That's the hymn I always boil the eggs to, my lord. Three verses for soft, five for hard."]

In his Ode in honour of St Cecilia, the Patron Saint of Music, the poet Dryden asserted:-

From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

Dryden wrote this poem in 1687 during the heyday of the restoration of church music. But it was a time when there were people, as there are now, who despised music and sought to confine it to the margins of life, to the leisure sector, as a mere divertissement from serious business.

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Today however we live at a time when there is a more holistic view of the world and our part in it. There is increasing recognition of the inadequacy of the kind of knowledge which is based solely on measuring, weighing and mapping; on numbers divorced from harmonic sequences.

Reducing the science of nature to pure quantity may yield some successes in dominating the globe but the consequences of the denial of an intimate harmonic relationship between human beings and the creation of which they are a part is becoming daily more and more visible.

St Cecilia sang while she was being martyred. She stands for the truth that we were created not for any merely utilitarian end but to sing and celebrate the divine glory. We are created to participate in every fibre of our being in the divine harmony. Singing and making music together is a community builder and a soul builder. As we become more aware of other participants in the music, so we experience more profoundly the music of God.

Music and the quality of singing provide an index of the culture and spiritual temperature of an age. Our thanks this morning goes to the music makers to whom the poet Robert Browning paid this tribute in his poem 'Abt Vogler':-

Sorrow is hard to bear and doubt is slow to clear
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and woe
But God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear
The rest may reason and welcome; 'tis we musicians know.

And be less quick to anger
and show appreciation more
and love the people in our lives
like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect
and more often wear a smile,
remembering that this special dash
might only last a little while

So, when your eulogy's being read,
with your life's actions to rehash . . .
Would you be proud of the things they say
about how you spent YOUR dash ?

Linda Ellis



Quotations of the month

Regret-able

The willingness, the ability, to take time to say sorry,
to be sorry for what we've done amiss.



Quick quips 5/8

These little beauties were sent to us by Bill Hughes

"Are you a pole-vaulter ?
"Extraordinary ! I am a Pole but how did you know my name's
Walter?"

The Dash

The following poem was given to me by my friends, Pearl and Brian Shepherd, and formed part of their friend, Christine's funeral service

I read of a man who stood to speak
at the funeral of a friend.
He referred to the dates on the tombstone
from the beginning . . . to the end.

He noted that first came the date of birth
and spoke the following date with tears,
but he said what mattered most of all
was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time
that they spent alive on earth.
And now only those who loved them
know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own,
the cars . . the house . . the cash.
What matters is how we live and love
and how we spend our dash.

So, think about this long and hard.
Are there things you'd like to change ?
For you never know how much time is left
that can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough
to consider what's true and real
and always try to understand
the way other people feel.

Our Lent Appeal 2015 – The Organ

Work has now begun on the renovation of our church organ and the appeal to cover the cost of the work is now in earnest. With this in mind, the Council thought it would be good idea to make our organ the beneficiary of this year's Lent Appeal.

Anything, therefore you feel able to give to this central project to enhance the worship and life of our church will be gratefully received and faithfully applied.

**Visitors to the Holy Land (6) Jerusalem**

Our first sighting of Jerusalem was from Gethsemane, outside the City wall. As we stood in a group looking directly at the Golden Gate, our guide explained some of the history of this remarkable place. The Golden Gate is no longer in use and has not been for many years but looking over it there is a good view of the Golden Dome of the Rock and the nearby Al Aqsa Mosque with its black dome. When Jesus entered the city in triumph he could have used the Golden Gate which would have led him directly to the Temple as the Jews expected. Instead he used the next gate along the wall. A smaller entrance now called St. Stephen's Gate or sometimes Lion's Gate. This gate is believed to be what Jesus was referring to when he said that it is easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. This gate is so small that a camel would have to shed all of its load before using it. Jesus entered Jerusalem using this gate and riding a young colt, not yet broken in, and the ordinary people spread their garments and palm branches on the road before him.

We then drove around the wall and went into the city on foot via the Dung Gate on a guided walk past the Western Wall and onto the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Built on what is believed to be the site of the crucifixion, this church also houses the sites of the laying out of Christ's body and the burial and resurrection and it attracts thousands of visitors each day. It is about the size of a typical cathedral and with so many people it was impossible to appreciate what we were being shown. For all of these events to have been grouped together in an area smaller than a football pitch just for the convenience of tourists 2000 years later seemed unbelievable. There was no green hill outside the wall as described in the hymn that we all know and there was so much polished marble and gold that the sites had no authenticity whatsoever.

We left the church and walked down the Via Dolorosa passing by eight of the twelve Stations of the Cross as we went. The station number six seemed to me to most interesting as a trough had been placed there for pilgrims to wash in which recently has been identified as an sarcophagus from an ancient Egyptian tomb. Just beyond the last station is the Antonia where in the Middle Ages it was believed was the place where Jesus was tried by Pilate, but this has since been disproved. A little further on are the pools of Bethesda, a place where Jesus often preached and where he healed the crippled man who had waited 38 years trying to get into the waters to be healed. Tired, hot and dusty, we made our way through the maze of bazaars and steep streets to the Jaffa Gate, where a welcoming cup of tea awaited us prior to boarding the bus for the hotel.

The next day, we returned to the Old City in our free time using the very modern light railway system and went first to Mount Zion. Here we visited the Church of the Dormition at the place where Mary Magdalene lived and then on to the house of Caiaphas. This was fascinating as it was built as one of several dwellings around a court

They Worked for St. Bart's (1) Virginia D'Albert-Lake

Virginia was an American married to a Frenchman before WWII and when America entered the conflict, she chose to remain in France. In 1943, both she and her husband Philippe, became involved in the resistance movement, being part of an escape line, and in this role helped more than 60 airmen return to the U.K. Virginia was eventually captured and spent over a year in concentration camps. After the war, she was awarded honours by a number of nations. Eventually, an article recalling her wartime was published in Readers Digest (I believe only the French version) and this became the basis of a book, also in French.

When we found St. Bartholomew's, she was one of the few local resident members of the church, a very good friend of Ida Beau, the source of most of what we learned of Virginia. At that time, one of Virginia's contributions to the church was to ensure that the gardens were kept in good order, this she did by having her gardener come on a regular basis to do whatever was required and of course, at her expense.

It was Ida who obtained a copy of the aforementioned book for us, I believe from Philippe, who at that time had one or two of the remaining copies.

By the time we met Virginia, her health was deteriorating and so she was unable to get to church as often as she would like. Ida gave us our copy of the book one Sunday morning just a short while before Virginia arrived. We were very pleased that she took the book from us and signed it, adding to my good friends. As far as we are aware, this was the last time she was able to get to church.

John Marshall

Valley comments: "In part, it is because our intelligentsia are locked into old ways of thinking about Christianity as the dominant force in Western historic hegemony." He offers reasons. His conclusion: "The reality of being a Christian in most of the world today is very different. It only adds to their tragedy that the West fails to understand that – or to heed the plea of men such as the Catholic Patriarch of Jerusalem [of all places – DB] Fouad Twal when he asks: 'Does anybody hear our cry? How many atrocities must we endure before somebody, somewhere, comes to our aid?'"

Here in Western Europe we don't know how well off we are. It is worth more than a passing thought to prompt prayer for fellow Christians who face genuine – not self-imposed – martyrdom.

David Boggis



Billboard 3/8

From a church notice-board sent to us by Bill Hughes

The best vitamin for a Christian -
B 1



Questions 7/8

This mini-series was forwarded to me by Ian Phillips

Is it true that you never really learn to swear
until you learn to drive ?



yard and it was easy to imagine Peter warming himself at a communal fire there before he denied Christ three times. Our visit there was only a few days after the Pope's visit so we decided to see if we could find the last supper upper room where the Pope presided over a Mass. It was difficult to find in a maze of narrow passages and when we did find it we were astonished. We expected a small family room so could not relate to the palatial room and fan vaulted ceilings of the very fine building we were in. It was only later that we discovered that in 75AD the original building was knocked down and replaced with a synagogue for the first ever Judeo-Christian community. Ecumenism goes back a long way !

After a very welcome cup of coffee, we set off to find the tomb of King David, which proved fairly easy as there were lots of people heading in the same direction. This was a blaze of light with hundreds

of candles burning around it. Watching the other visitors, we noticed that they each added a candle to the already enormous quantity burning there. As we left this area we came upon the Holocaust Memorial to the Jewish Children and were surprised to learn that more than two million children had died. Entering the city by the Zion Gate, we then walked through the Armenian Quarter back to the Western Wall hoping to be allowed to go through to see the Temple of the Rock and the place not only where Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son, Isaac, but also from almost the same spot where Mohammed left for Heaven on his golden horse. The queue was long and we were told that it would be at least six hours before we got to the front. We would have little time to see anything if we had waited so rather than miss our dinner we moved on. Consulting the city map, we planned a walk back through the city towards the light railway stop and fortunately we were able to climb to a high area where we could get a view of the

Temple of the Rock. On then into the Jewish Quarter through some fascinating excavations that are being used as shops, café areas and market areas as well as displaying all the finds of the diggings.

Our research had led us to visit the Anglican Cathedral of St. George and there we learned of the alternative Garden Tomb just outside the city wall on a cross-road near the Jaffa Gate. The next day, we visited this garden which was quite near our hotel and is exactly the sort of place that the Romans would have chosen for executions. The site was a disused quarry that had tombs hollowed out of the perimeter rock faces. There were huge stone discs to seal the tomb entrances and gutters were cut in which the discs could be rolled into place. It was a tranquil place and we were able to enter a typical tomb which had two chambers, one for preparation of the body and a second for laying to rest. It was explained to us that in the climate there, it is customary to leave the body for about twelve weeks to decompose in the tomb and then collect up the remains for burial in a family tomb. No claims were made that this was the place where Jesus was crucified or buried but it did seem a much closer possibility than the traditional site and we left feeling that we had learnt something of the truth of the death and resurrection of Christ.

We felt that over the last two days when we had explored Jerusalem based on our own research, getting away from the “official tour,” we found out much more about the area. We had achieved an insight into the true Jerusalem and we knew in our hearts that we had actually walked on the same ground that had been trodden by Jesus and his disciples.

Geoff Carter
January 2015

death if they stayed. The last to leave was a disabled woman who could not travel. The fanatics arrived at her home and told her they would cut off her head with a sword.”

Two. “The most violent anti-Christian pogrom of the early 21st century saw as many as 500 Christians hacked to death by machete-wielding Hindu radicals in Orissa, India, with thousands more injured and 50,000 made homeless. In Burma, Chin and Karen Christians are routinely subjected to imprisonment, torture, forced labour and murder.”

So my point here is not just that Christians are under threat solely from Muslims. Also responsible for the persecutions are Hindus, and – again quoting Valley – totalitarian China and North Korea. Valley himself quotes Jonathan Sacks, former UK chief rabbi, addressing the House of Lords and comparing the suffering of Middle East Christians to Jewish pogroms in years past in Europe.

Again writing for *The Independent*, Robert Fisk – who is noted for his bias against Israel but whom (as a former colleague on *The Times*) I trust in many other respects – wrote only last November of the Islamist Jabhat al-Nusra: “In the most savage act of vandalism against Syria’s Christians, Islamists have blown up the great Armenian church in Deir el-Zour, built in dedication to the one and a half million Armenians slaughtered by the Turks during the 1915 genocide. All of the church archives, dating back to 1841 and containing thousands of documents on the Armenian holocaust, were burned to ashes, while the bones of hundreds of genocide victims, packed into the church’s crypt in memory of the mass killings 99 years ago, were thrown into the street beside the ruins.”

Additional savagery has been reported from countries as far apart as Tibet, Kenya, Pakistan, Nigeria and widely Western-supported Gaza.

The world's most persecuted

Shaking in fear, the neighbours kept their mouths tight shut as the 15 armed, masked men kicked open the doors just down the corridor and took away the people who lived there. They have not been seen since. The neighbours were Muslim. The people who vanished were Christians.

That was just last month, January 2015, in Sirte, Libya. It was not the first time Christian believers had been kidnapped, never to be seen again, either in Libya or in neighbouring Egypt. No one knows for sure, but local lore has it that the armed, masked men were Islamic militants.

Paul Valley is a veteran columnist for the UK national daily *The Independent* and is visiting professor of public ethics at Chester University. Last July the paper printed a closely argued column of his under the heading: *Christians: The world's most persecuted people*. Surprised? I was. I'd have bet Jews first, Muslims second.

Wrong. Valley quotes figures. Citing the Centre for the Study of Global Christianity in the US, he reports: "100,000 Christians now die every year, targeted because of their faith". That makes eleven *every hour*. He continues: "Christians are languishing in jail for blasphemy in Pakistan and churches are burned and worshippers regularly slaughtered in Nigeria and Egypt."

Two more verbatim quotes from Valley's *Independent* article:

One. Three thousand "Christians of Mosul were driven from their homes in northern Iraq last week by Islamist fanatics who broadcast a fatwa from the loudspeakers of the city's mosques ordering them to convert to Islam, submit to its rule and pay a religious levy, or be put to

The Bartholomew Gospel

21 That Sunday night

Jesus came and stood in the middle of them.' John 20 v19

Fear and excitement gripped us.

Fear. We were afraid of the Jewish authorities. Jesus had been arrested in the middle of the night and killed in the middle of the day. We were afraid of what might happen next. No wonder the doors to the house where we were were securely fastened.

Fear. We knew what Jesus had taught us about his death and resurrection. We knew that Peter and John had found the tomb empty. We knew what Mary Magdalene had said she'd seen. But we were afraid it might not be true and frightened that it might. If untrue, then all we had believed these past three years was little more than wishful-thinking, a story for children. If true, then Jesus was without doubt the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God, which was, more or less, what we had thought just four days ago. And if he were, what would he think of us and do to us who had run away from him into the dark when most he had need of us?

Excitement. That our teacher and our friend, our master, who loved us and whom we loved, was not in fact dead and taken from us but mysteriously had been restored to life.

Excitement. That we too, like Mary, would meet him in the flesh and that all would be well again.

Excitement. That there was a future for us after all and that we, his disciples, still had our part to play in God's plan of salvation for all.

The evening of the day that the tomb was found to be empty, we met together in the Upper Room.



There are only ten of us. Judas has left us never to return. Thomas has somewhere else to be, something else to do, someone else to be with. Ten Jewish men in a room, talking, praying, till Jesus appears, standing in the middle of us.

Jesus is the first to speak: 'Peace be with you,' - an appropriate greeting given the shock of him coming in without warning. How did he manage to enter a secure room without knocking?

Then he shows us his hands and his side, the marks of the nails and the gash from the spear. Not a pretty sight, but signs of what he'd suffered. Perhaps, on reflection, we should be upset at this evidence of his pain, but we aren't. The opposite in fact: we're overjoyed at seeing him in the flesh again even though that flesh is wounded. To us, the marks of the cross are evidence that this is the Jesus we know and we love. He is alive and standing at the centre of our lives again.

Again, he says, 'Peace be with you.' He commissions us and breathes his spirit on us. We have work to do and the power to do it. One gift more: the power to forgive sins.



Later, when we tell Thomas, he doesn't believe us. Why am I being reminded of me? My reaction when Philip first told me he'd met Jesus! And here is Thomas saying he won't believe us till he's seen Jesus for himself. And his test – that he can put his finger into the nail marks and his hand into Jesus' side.

So we have a re-run a week later. Now Thomas is with us when Jesus appears and he has the chance to do what he asked to do. He touches

Jesus and in doing so is reconnected with the faith that informs us all. And falling to his knees at Jesus' feet, Thomas says to him, 'My Lord and my God!'



There are other times when Jesus appears which I do not mention here. But each time people encounter the risen Lord Jesus, they cannot fail but be moved by his presence with them, by his words to them. Their hearts seem on fire from such close encounters with him.



Podologue

Some of you will have enjoyed the expert services of Anthony Guillard. I'm sorry to say that he is moving back to his home town and his practice will be taken over by Bastien D'Ersu. I wish them both well in their new ventures. If you've never enjoyed the services of a podologue (chiroprapist) before, why not give yourself a treat – a very different 'cure of soles'!

Bastien D'Ersu

13 Rue du Paradou 35800 Dinard

 02 99 46 45 20



How wise ?

Last month, John Marshall suggested in the magazine that the wise men came from the East Riding. Very strange ? The only wise men I know come from Lancashire.

Bill Hughes