

Diary dates for March and April, 2015

28 th March	10.30 Council Meeting
2 nd April	10.30 Maundy Thursday
3 rd April	11.00 Good Friday
5 th April	11.00 Easter Day
12 th April	12.00 Church AGM
15 th April -	Archdeaconry Synod at
18 th April	St Jacut de la Mer



Prayer of the month

Loving God,
Welcome into your arms the victims of violence and terrorism.
Comfort their families and all who grieve for them.
Help us in our fear and uncertainty,
And bless us with the knowledge that we are secure in your love.
Strengthen all those who work for peace,
And may the peace the world cannot give reign in our hearts.



Prayer focus

Who I am and who and what I love to be.



Verse of the Month

Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.'

John 8 v12



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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March, 2015

Dear Friends,

'I am'

Our Lent Bible Study 2015 actually started last October ! In nine studies, we're looking at the 'I am' statements of Jesus. But the first one in October was rooted in the passage in Exodus that recounts Moses' encounter with God in the burning bush.

It is a wonderful moment in the faith history of the Jewish nation when God calls Moses to go back to Egypt to tell Pharaoh to let His people go. Moses asks God His name and He replies not with an actual name but with a description of who He is: 'I am who I am' (Exodus 3 v15).

No righteous Jew would speak aloud the actual sacred name of God, preferring a euphemism like 'Elohim' or 'Adonai'. But for us as Christians, the Tetragrammaton, YHVH – which we pronounce Yahweh – is a name for God the Father, which though we would not use lightly or carelessly, we would not have any scruples in voicing respectfully.

But, at the start of January, I started to read a book by Richard Rohr 'The Naked Now' in which he states in his opening chapter that YHVH is in fact more than a name. It is a factual description about the nature of God – i.e. He is the breath of life. YHVH, pronounced 'yod he, vav he', is literally any of us inhaling and exhaling air. Literally, by breathing, we could all be reminded of the presence of God with us any time, any place, wherever, whatever !

Now that is a challenging thought on which to reflect this Lent !

Father Gareth



Notices

- **Poppy Appeal** – 18,352.37€ were raised last year in Brittany by the Royal British Legion
- **St Valentine's Lunch** – the lovely soup and sandwich lunch at Diana's raised 340€ for our organ restoration
- **Deadline** for submission of material for the April edition of the St Bart's Monthly is ***midday on Thursday 26th March***
- **Church Finances for January**
Income: 4,492€ Expenditure: 10,390€



Readings in church

March 1st

Genesis 17 v1 – 7, 15, 16
Romans 4 v13 – end

2nd Sunday of Lent

Psalm 22 v23 - end
Mark 8 v31 – 38

March 8th

Exodus 20 v1 – 17
1 Corinthians 1 v18 – 25

3rd Sunday of Lent

Psalm 19 v7 - end
John 2 v13 - 22

March 15th

Exodus 2 v1 – 10
Colossians 3 v12 - 17

Mothering Sunday

Psalm 127 v1 - 4
John 19 v25b – 27

March 22nd

Jeremiah 31 v31 – 34
Hebrews 5 v5 – 10

Passion Sunday

Psalm 51 v1 - 13
John 12 v20 – 33

March 29th

Isaiah 50 v4 – 9a
Philippians 2 v5 - 11

Palm Sunday

Psalm 31 v9 - 16
Mark 15 v1 - 39

Café Poèmes & Thé Anglais

15h – Wednesday 25th March

Poems in English.
Poems in French,
written and read by our own distinguished local poet,
Renée Solange Dayres,
Sociétaire des Gens de Lettres de Paris.

... Your own favourite poems ... and poems you have written ...

An hour or so of words and thoughts.

Come along ... listen ... contribute ... bring your own favourite poems

... and afterwards stay for a cu of tea

5 euros

Questions 8/8

This mini-series was forwarded to me by Ian Phillips

Statistics on sanity say that one out of every four persons
is suffering from some sort of mental illness.

Think of your three best friends.

If they're okay, then could it could be you ?



Visitors to the Holy Land (7) The Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Mount of Olives.

No visit to Jerusalem is complete without a visit to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum. Guides in Israel are licensed by the government and pressure is applied to them to make sure that all tours include a visit there. It is a very sad place with people from many different nations shocked into silence as they file past the exhibits and evidence of the atrocities that were committed against the Jews. It is beyond understanding how Man can inflict such torture, suffering and indignity on their fellow human beings. After our hour and a half visit, our party, like everyone else, left utterly devastated by what had been seen.

From here, we drove in silence to the Shrine of the Book where the Dead Sea Scrolls are displayed in a unique way. They have been arranged as if they are a memorial to Jewish history in what is more like a stadium than a museum. It did feel quite sad that they could not be left in the caves that we saw earlier in the holiday but realised that these were inaccessible in that remote area and that the scrolls need to be available for study and, in these conditions, to be properly preserved. Copies of all the texts have been made to make them available for scholars and we were told that they are referred to regularly. Our party gathered together near the exit in a vestibule where we had coffee and biscuits and could buy mementoes. This was a large shaded area with benches which were mostly occupied except for one bench in a quiet area where just one young man sat. I followed with the coffee as Val made her way to this seat and was shocked to see her picking her way gingerly through a pile of about a dozen automatic weapons on the ground. The young man, an Israeli soldier who was guarding these guns while his colleagues had their coffee, was equally bemused !

This day was the Thursday 29th May, Ascension Day. In the late afternoon, the coach made its way to the Garden of Gethsemane and then on to the Mount of Olives, just beyond Bethesda. The meaning of the word Gethsemane is the place of the olives but for tourists it has been transformed into a beautiful garden with lots of flowers surrounding an International Church to promote peace. The scent of bougainvillea, camellia and many other flowers filled the air as we walked around the garden, enjoying the panoramic view from the upper slopes in an atmosphere of complete peace and tranquillity. After another short ride, we found ourselves high up near the top of the Mount of Olives with Jerusalem and the surrounding countryside spread out around us. From here, our guide was able to point out most of the special sites and important buildings for miles around. In the heat of the afternoon, the olive trees provided some very welcome shade and, as the gentle breeze passed through their branches, a beautiful, refreshing smell. As we sat down beneath the trees, it was easy to understand why Jesus and his disciples chose this place to seek rest, away from the noise and bustle of the city. As we all sat in a circle, we read together how Jesus blessed his disciples in this area 2000 years ago and was carried away heavenward as he did so. We returned to the hotel feeling that we had shared that blessing and the confidence that was given with it openly to profess our faith because he is always with us.

The next day we packed our cases ready to leave, knowing that this had been a pilgrimage as well as a holiday, reflecting on how much about the history of Israel that we had learned, seeing so many interesting, ancient buildings and areas of importance. Most of all though, we were pleased to have traced the steps of Jesus and the disciples from the place of his birth, seeing the area where he grew up, where he recruited his followers, performed some of his miracles, healed the sick and preached the Sermon on the Mount. Sailing on the Sea of Galilee was very special to everyone in the party as was the visit to Capernaum.

Modern Miracles

Do I believe in miracles? Of course I do! They happen all the time. Thinking back, I would say I experienced my first modern miracle from my father. He was a baker. He always told me that when washing your hands you should go as far as your elbows. He really did believe in cleanliness which is a practice that has saved many lives. Then there is the miracle of something like an aspirin. And, nowadays, doctors protect us against infection with a flu injection.

I also believe in the power of thought which combined with prayer to God is, I'm sure, what prevented me from being permanently deaf – together with a little help from the specialists of course!! I'm sure we could all tell of some modern-day miracle we've experienced. I came across this verse by Jean Warburton in a UK store magazine:

Special Poem for Older Folk

A row of bottles on my shelf
 Caused me to analyse myself.
 One yellow pill I have to pop
 Goes to my heart so it won't stop.
 The purple pill goes to my brain
 And tells me that I have no pain.
 The capsules tell me not to wheeze
 Or cough or choke or even sneeze.
 The red ones, smallest of them all,
 Go to my blood so I won't fall.
 The orange ones, so big and bright,
 Prevent my leg cramps in the night.
 Such an array of brilliant pills,
 Helping to cure all kind of ills.
 But what I'd really like to know
 Is what tells each one where to go.

And that truly is a modern miracle -

Ailsa Albino

Olive Browne sent me the following poem

My forgetter – Ann

My forgetter's getting better,
but my rememberer is broke.
To you that may seem funny
but, to me, that is no joke.

For when I'm 'here' I'm wondering
if I really should be 'there'
and when I try to think it through
I haven't got a prayer !

Oft times, I walk into a room
and say 'What am I here for ?'
I wrack my brain, but all in vain !
A zero is my score.

At times I put something away
where it is safe but Gee !
The person it is safest from
is generally me. !

When shopping I may see someone
Say "Hi," and have a chat
Then when the person walks away
I ask myself, "Who was that ?"

Yes my forgetter's getting better
while my rememberer is broke.
and it's driving me plumb crazy
and that is not a joke !

Also we had walked the road Jesus used to enter into Jerusalem in triumph and the roads and hills over which he had to carry his cross.

We felt for his suffering at Golgotha and shared in his victory over death and his ascension into heaven. This is a time that we will always remember.

Geoff Carter



Personal Column

Our congratulations to:

Keith and Heather Mears who were married on February 14th at St. Mary's, Wheatley, Doncaster;
the Right Reverend Paul Williams on his appointment as Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham. Bishop Paul was David Bargioni's vicar at Gerrard's Cross.

Our sympathy to:

Agnes and Claude François on the death of her mother, Vera Bonte, in Paris on 5th February;
Chantal Marcadet on the death of her husband, Michel-Hubert, and whose funeral was here at St Bart's on 25th February (our thanks for the 457€ which was donated to the organ fund in his memory by the congregation present.



Cushions

Pew cushions have begun to appear in the church with covers sewn by Victor. Donations received for the work to date amount to 1,050€ but at approximately 30€ per pew the total cost is expected to reach €1,500€. Would you be kind enough to contribute to softer seating ?

Some Notes on Alfred Oldknow c.1849-1912

It can be largely blamed on the Internet that the myth has arisen that Alfred Oldknow was an organ-builder from Jersey/Guernsey. This is not true: he appears to have used an address in the Channel Islands (Oxford Rd, St. Helier, Jersey) as he is listed in a directory (*Trade Directories: Kelly Channel Islands 1907/11*) but this is not where he started his organ building career. Oldknow was involved in bankruptcy proceedings of Aug. 30 1887 in the High Court of Justice in Bankruptcy, London, where he was up before the beak alongside his colleagues Edward Bostock Maley and Robert Young, who were organ builders trading at the time as Maley, Young and Oldknow (*The London Gazette, August 16, 1887*). The Oldknow organ in St Bart's clearly states London as Oldknow's business address in the year 1894.

Maley, Young and Oldknow all worked for the London firm of Bevington (est.1794) who produced some fine organs. I can find no evidence that they were trained by Bevington but Maley worked as a soundboard maker (NPOR), and Oldknow worked as a voicer (NPOR). In those days of apprenticeship and in the absence of any other employment records for these three men, one can perhaps surmise they served their time with Bevington before going on to work for themselves.

Alfred was the youngest of the three (born c.1849). If we allow for him starting an apprenticeship aged 14 (1863) for 7 years (completing in 1870) this allows him a further 7 years with Bevington before the earliest record I can find of his name in conjunction with the others in the London trade directories listing Maley, Young & Oldknow, organ-builders, at Kings Road from 1877 to 1887. The earliest organ I can find their names on is on St Mark's Church, Walworth 1879 where they restored a Renatus Harris organ.

Wars of the Roses

In response to Bill Hughes believing that the wise men came from Lancashire and not Yorkshire, all I need to do is point out that Matthew is the source of the information. In Chapter 2, verse 1 and again in verse 16, he states that the wise men came from the east. Now when Bill was in Lancashire in the east was Yorkshire. Wise men (Yorkshire men) know that so maybe Lancastrians are not so wise after all !

What is the best thing coming from Lancashire ?
The roads to Yorkshire of course !

For anyone not sure why we have this 'banter', I can do no better than quote what is printed on many of the souvenirs from these counties.

If you are a Yorkshire man, Lancastrians are the enemy.
If you are a Lancastrian, Yorkshire men are the enemy.
If you are neither, then it has nothing to do with you !

John Marshall



Strictly for the birds ?

Did you that the word in French for a bird

L'oiseau

is one of the few if only French words that uses all five vowels ?



Film Review of the month
'Boyhood' – Richard Linklater 2014

Missed it in Dinard last Autumn – caught it in January on DVD – 'Boyhood', the film about 'growing-up', nominated for the most Oscars in this year's round of awards.

'Boyhood' is the extraordinary in the ordinary. 'Boyhood' focuses on four characters over the 12 years it was shot. Central to the film are the boy on the sleeve of the DVD, Mason (Ellar Coltraine.); his sister, Sam/Samantha (Lorelei Linklater – the director's daughter); their mum, Olivia (Patricia Arquette) and their separated, divorced dad, Mason Snr (Ethan Hawke).

One of the privileges of being a teacher is to see over time your pupils grow up – in English secondary school from 11 to 18. This film captures the characters changing over 12 years and the one who matures most is the boy.

OK – it is American, so the lives in Texas are not the same as East London, where I grew up: the Obama election; the Gulf War; the difference in social mores between the 1950s and the first decade+ of the 21st century. But there are common themes differently expressed: relationships; friendships; alcohol abuse; domestic violence; drugs and so on.

Life is not easy but there is love as well as violence; kindness as well as bullying. It is a window onto another world and there was no need for subtitles ! But what I loved the most was the mum's kindness to a young Mexican builder, encouraging him to go and get an education – he does and later thanks her. And I think you'll be thankful too to have seen 'Boyhood'.

Gareth Randall

London trade directories show Maley working on his own from 1864 to 1879 from an address in Somers Town. Young also appears in the trade directories as "Young, Robert - see Maley, Young & Oldknow". Perhaps the three men met through mutual contacts at Bevington or perhaps because Oldknow was an organist. He was, for example, appointed organist at Lock Hospital Chapel, London, in 1871, when he was 22.

In 1879, Oldknow was 30, Maley was 45 and Young was 47. They were by then seasoned organ builders and Maley and Young must have had some confidence in the younger Oldknow as a voicer (and probably a tuner) to go into partnership with him. They had a good skill set between them and covered all the constituent parts of the organ from pipe making to carpentry and joinery.

A new 3 manual organ built in 1880 in the church of St. James, Kingston, on the Isle of Purbeck is recorded as having some older Cavaille Coll pipework. As the voicer, this would have been Oldknow's decision. It is amusing to think that at the start of his independent organ building career he was incorporating French pipework into a new organ and that the remains of his legacy include two very English, very Victorian organs in France, a sort of cultural exchange.

Why did Oldknow go to Jersey ? He had recorded some success in England, especially around London. Did he have contacts in the Channel Islands and in Northern France ? Was it a fresh start after the failure and bankruptcy of Maley, Young & Oldknow ? He produced a good-sized instrument for the church of St Malo in Dinan in 1889, presumably because both the organist and the choirmaster at the time were English (organist Frederic Arcscott (1847-1938) and choir master John Lecoq (1856-1911)). He also produced two other instruments in Brittany that I know of.

John Davey

Disorganised

A sermon at St Bart's for 15th February

Our text - verses from Psalm 150:

‘Praise the Lord

Praise him with strings and pipe

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.’

And so the great work on our Alfred Oldknow Organ – 1894 – has started. I had mixed feelings as Andrew, Julie, Nigel and Kyle worked hard over four days to deconstruct our organ in the penultimate week of January. It was exciting and I felt the thrill that the idea of a major renovation, that was first floated some three years ago, was now actually beginning to take place. But I was sad too at the great hole that has been opened up in this holy place, not unwholesome but wholly necessary if we are to have our organ restored to its former glory.

Why have music as part of our church service? Simply, to lend something that lifts our hearts and minds and voices in praise God? Why do we come to church? To meet God? Yes, I know, I appreciate, we do meet other people, that we chat and have a coffee and a biscuit, we laugh, smile, share our troubles but, at the heart of church-going, is a God-encounter and to help us encounter God, we have our service in which music plays its part – an important part, I hope you’ll agree.

St Bart’s is essentially an Anglican church and, at this time in our history, the singing of hymns and the playing of music is an important, integral part of our communion service. Yes, there are prayers, Bible readings, a sermon and the taking of communion. But there is a chance to sing hymns and to experience the presence of God through the sound of music.

They Worked for St. Bart’s (2)

Ida Beau

One of the few (actually six) who were in church on the February Sunday when we were in St. Bartholomew's for the first time. We sat across the aisle from her and Ida read a lesson, using her own Bible. A soon as I saw it, I knew I needed to speak to her, as it was olive wood backed, just like one I own. At that time, I had only seen this version in the shop where mine was bought for me by my mother, as I was about to join the army for National Service. After the service the central heating was turned on, or rather produced from Ida's bag, and welcoming warm coffee poured from the flask. I asked Ida if her Bible had been bought at Austick's in Leeds. Hers was from Israel, bought by her late husband, but she was from Yorkshire. Need I say more, the bond was made. At that time, she was one of the very few holding the church together through the non-holiday seasons.

She and Sybil asked if we would join them again, and so two weeks later we endured the cold temperature but enjoyed the warm friendship. Ida presented me with the plate to take the collection and after the service, together with Sybil, entertained us to lunch at a local restaurant. In our early days, the Patronal Festival was celebrated on the Saturday nearest to August 24, with a service at which all the local clergy of all denominations attended. Afterwards there would be the verre and refreshments on the lawn where Ida was always a provider and helper.

John Marshall

Quotations of the month

Buddha was asked what he had gained from meditation.

He replied nothing but had lost among other things
anger, anxiety and the fear of old age and death

R I P

*This beautiful and moving poem was seen on a tombstone
in the village of Holmfirth, Yorkshire*

James of James
died July 21st 1837
aged 5 years and 5 months

The eye is closed that once shone bright
His buoyant spirit fled
The object of my heart's fond hopes
Lies numbered with the dead.

How clay cold now those once warm lips
Which mine so oft have pressed
And silenc'd is that prattling tongue
In everlasting rest.



As a mum of a boy (now grown up) I relate so much to the mother and father who lost this obviously much loved son. I particularly loved the 'prattling tongue' and 'buoyant spirit'.

On a happier note, during the same visit, my friend and I went into the famous café from the TV series 'Last of the Summer Wine' and enjoyed a cup of tea and a bun.

Jean Mansell



Language is one of the distinguishing marks of being human. We all use words to communicate effectively and the ability to express ourselves means that we are able to live together co-operatively. It is not by chance that one of the Christological titles for Jesus is 'the Word' - Logos. But music can also communicate directly to us. A sense of mood, feeling, atmosphere, can be conveyed by melody, harmony, rhythm, the mixture of sound different instruments or the human voice can convey.

To this end, singing and playing music in church has led to another dimension in our worship. Yes, from my time in England, I do remember and value the quiet dignity of the early Sunday morning service of Holy Communion or the silence during the service of Compline last thing at night. But there is also something wonderful about singing your heart out to a great Welsh hymn or hearing a prelude and fugue by Bach played on our organ.

So we are lucky to have so good an organ as the one Alfred Oldknow made for us at the end of the nineteenth century. It is our privilege at present to be the stewards of the church Oldknow enhanced by installing our organ. And is it not great that we can feel sufficiently confident to restore the organ to its former glory and gift congregations to come at St Bart's with a fully working instrument to enhance the worship?

And my prayer: one of thanks for the money already raised – over half the sum needed - and one of trust that the rest of the money required to repay the church's capital may be raised to finance this work of grace.

Restoration of Organ

The estimated total cost of the work is	79,500 €
Money raised so far	44,725 €
Money to be raised	34,275 €

Without a smile

Hate as I do the perils of quibbling with the wise words of Father Gareth, I'm afraid I have to add a rider to his message, on February's letter from the editor, quoting certain of the faults checklist announced on 22nd December by the Pontiff.

I must alas take issue with 'the sickness of the mournful face'. Because it's not necessarily one that the individual believer might choose to adopt. Clinical depression is a curse. I know because I've struggled with it all my life and it hasn't done wonders for my Christian witness. You're supposed to look *joyful* when you know you belong to Christ and you're saved.

Depression can be reactive – you lose a loved one, you lose a job. Some forms of what is currently termed 'biological depression' have been found to resolve themselves, naturally, over a period of about two years. That's sickness and it's not something you choose for yourself.

But sometimes the sickness goes deeper still. It's a brain malfunction at the nano scale and it takes medication – permanent medication – to keep it roped and back in its cage. Even with the meds, it gets loose now and again. And that is the time when it's no good *anyone* telling you to cheer up and count your blessings. You've got a thick hood over your head like a prisoner in Abu Ghraib and you *cannot* see outside it. You *can't* see your blessings. Even the knowledge of salvation becomes a theoretical concept instead of something you *live*, as you would do when the depression isn't on you.

You can try – if that much energy remains to you – to actually make the facial muscular actions that form a smile. (You don't always have that much energy.) But science shows us that even going through the motions of forcing a smile starts to release a few of the brain chemicals that can, in the end, lead to a happier feeling. At least it's a start.

David Boggis

10

Odd Words Internet trolls

It's June 2014. The 70th anniversary to mark D-Day has passed. By the time you read this, the current issue of independence for Scotland will be history.

As ever, I'm ironing, listening to BBC News on BBC 1, when I hear that J K Rowling has been attacked by 'internet trolls' for donating £1 million to the 'No Campaign'. Now, I love 'Harry Potter' and do admire her skill and inspiration at creating her seven 'novel' sequence around this boy wizard. I loved the films and the mention of any sort of troll conjures in my mind the picture of the snotty-nosed giant in the girls' toilets that Harry deftly kills in the first book/film.

So what kind of troll is an internet troll? The kind I have nothing to do with because I don't do social media where comments acerbic are at the cutting edge of criticism where folk feel free to be as unkind, impolite, as rude or as crude as they care to be! Not good; not nice - then trolls are not noted for their elf-like grace.

What sort of world do we live in where virtual reality has replaced virtue?

Gareth Randall



Quick quips 6/8

These little beauties were sent to us by Bill Hughes

A man went into the bank to check his balance so the assistant pushed him.

15

As such, can God ever forgive him?

Throwing the money back at the High Priest and throwing away his life, suggest Judas was really sorry for what he'd done.

But it's not for me to say. As followers of Jesus, however, we do believe in the possibility of forgiveness and of universal redemption.

But I guess the real question is not whether God can forgive Judas but can Judas ever forgive himself for what he did?



Easter Day

Before dawn:
has Mary slept,
knowing, at first light,
what she wants to do
but not knowing
what awaits her -
one last touch
of him she loves
beyond the grave ?



Billboard 4/8

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

You are not too bad to come in
You are not too good to stay out

The Bartholomew Gospel

22 Suicide

I've got his blood on my hands! Matthew 27 v4

One man whose heart is on fire - but for a very different reason - is Judas Iscariot.

Judas was one of us but, in the end, not at one with us. Like me, he was one of the Twelve, men Jesus chose to be his disciples. But though he was my companion, he wasn't my friend. I'm sure I never really liked him and I'm not sure he ever really liked me. 'Why?' you might ask - and I'd be hard pressed to give you a logical answer except that, with the benefit of hindsight, we now know that Judas betrayed Jesus to the Jewish authorities for thirty pieces of silver. And that's not kind nor the act of a friend.

My dislike of him was intuitive, beyond reason. To be honest, I think our mutual dislike was rooted in the simple fact we were two very different character types. By nature, I'm cheerful, an optimist with a ready smile and a quick wit. Judas was dour, a pessimist, calculating, serious-minded. My family background, education, our connections, didn't go down well with a Jewish nationalist, keen to advance the cause of an independent Israel.

So there we have it: Judas Iscariot and Simon the Zealot were both passionate partisans who wanted nothing less than independence from Rome. On Jesus, they were pinning their hopes for such freedom. Like Matthew, Judas was good with money. Jesus trusted him to manage the common purse. It was his responsibility to use the money we were given wisely. I guess he did. There were no complaints.

Judas was clearly one of us. Nor was there any reason why he shouldn't be still, till the night Mary used expensive perfume to anoint

Jesus. And there we have it – to him, money was more important than Jesus. Love of money was key to the door which let the evil in.

In retrospect, earlier still, when Jesus told us what really lay ahead for him, it wasn't only Peter who was upset. The idea that the Messiah would be the suffering servant, envisaged by the prophet Isaiah, didn't match how Judas saw his Messiah. Peter was told off for contradicting Jesus. Judas kept his mouth shut and his thoughts to himself. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, in Judas's eyes, it was not a suitable mount for his Messiah. A horse would have been more in keeping with his image of him. Disappointed hope was the door through which the evil passed into him.



With Judas disillusioned, we come to his betrayal. What I write is what we later heard.

The High Priest was looking for a way to get to Jesus, to arrest him in private, away from the crowds. They could have arrested him when he was in the Temple, teaching, but they were afraid of the people. They couldn't be sure how the people would react to Jesus' arrest. He was, as we know, popular. So they needed a man on the inside to tell them where and when he could be taken on the quiet, without any fuss. Judas was their man. For 30 silver coins, he was prepared to do the job – a man's life for a month's salary. I wonder if Judas felt he'd struck a good bargain.

You know what happens next – Judas leads them to the Garden of Gethsemane where he gives his friend away with a kiss!

But conscience is a terrible thing. No sooner done than Judas regrets what he has done. He tries to undo the harm he's done. But the priests are not interested in the man they'd hired; they're only

interested in what he could do for them. They are not prepared to listen to his qualms or his moral reservations. They have no duty of care for him. They tell Judas to go away and sort himself out himself.

And he does; he goes away and hangs himself from a convenient tree. End of story – for him at least.



Now suicide is wrong. The sixth commandment forbids the unlawful taking of a life. Suicide rejects the principles that underpin the whole of the Law – love of God, love of neighbour, love of self. Our love of God reflects our respect for the gift of life. Our love of our neighbour is informed by our love of ourselves – both respect the value of life. Suicide flies in the face of this trinity of love.

Suicide can be viewed as an act of aggression or transferred guilt. What happened to Judas would be nothing to the priests. To us, he got what he deserved. But perhaps Jesus was Judas's target - for failing to be the man of his dreams.

I can't believe that I'm writing this but I want to admit I do feel sorry for Judas as a man, a man who finds his life no longer worth living; a man who's messed up big time; no going back; no going on; no way of staying still; only one way out to take – his own life. Poor, troubled soul.

By turning Jesus over to the authorities, was Judas trying to force Jesus' hand, to make him reveal his true identity and his real authority as God's Messiah? By betraying him, was Judas trying to make him the warrior Messiah he thought him - a legion of angels called down to snatch Jesus from the jaws of death and to restore the Kingdom to Israel? Poor, deluded soul.

