

Diary dates for April and May, 2015

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
18 th April	St Jacut de la Mer
7 th May	10.30 Council Meeting
8 th May	13.00 VE Day Event at St Bart's
14 th May	10.00 Ascension Day
24 th May	11.00 Pentecost



Prayer of the month

Lord,
Nothing could keep you dead in the grave for you're stronger than death itself. Help us remember there's nothing to fear with you by our side.



Prayer focus

What it might mean to accept we are loved by God



Verse of the Month

On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink.'

John 7 v37



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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April, 2015

Notices

Dear Friends,

**Why ?
Why does God love us ?**

Long Wave has the virtue of picking up the Daily Service at 10.45 French time so if I'm running late, I might still be in the kitchen when it's on. So when I heard the priest taking the service ask the question 'Why is it that God loves us ?' he had my attention.

His answer was simple and concise: God made us and God has paid the price for us. In the first place, God has created not only the universe in which we live but has individually given us our life. Then, through his incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ, he redeems us. So God loves us because he is our patient, loving father and we his stroppy children.

Whether you find the reason convincing or not is very much down to you but it is persuasive to me because it chimes with my understanding, my mind-set, my world view. It is good to be loved by a loving God in spite of the many ways we have got and get it wrong.

I guess the single word 'grace' sums it all up for me. Grace - the free and undeserved gift of God to us. We haven't earned it but it is ours for the taking.

Sadly, some folk prefer to leave what God is offering on the side of their plates - untouched. What about you ?

Father Gareth



- **Church Publicity** If you have an event in church to be publicised, contact Carolyn Hewitt at stbartsnews@gmail.com
- **Deadline** for submission of material for the May edition of St Bart's is *midday on Thursday 30th April*
- **Church Finances for February**
Income: 2,908€ Expenditure 3,945 €



Readings in church

April 5th

Acts 10 v34 – 43
1 Corinthians 15 v1 – 11

Easter Day

Psalm 118 v14 – 24
Mark 16 v1 – 8

April 12th

Acts 4 v32 – 35
1 John 1 v1 – 2 v2

Low Sunday

Psalm 133
John 20 v19 – end

April 19th

Acts 3 v12 – 19
1 John 3 v1 – 7

3rd Sunday of Easter

Psalm 4
Luke 24 v36b – 48

April 26th

Acts 4 v5 – 12
1 John 3 v16 – 24

4th Sunday of Easter

Psalm 23
John 10 v11 – 18



Quotations of the month

The following was spotted by Peter Campbell in Peterborough City Hospital: 'More men die WITH prostate cancer than OF prostate cancer'.



An Easter Bunny ?

A family decided to go for a picnic out in the countryside as it was so warm and sunny. They had almost finished and were drinking their cups of tea; when they realised how late it was and quickly had to pack up. They didn't have time to drink their cups of tea and tipped the remains away. They had in fact tipped the tea down a rabbit hole, and before they left they came face to face with a very 'hot cross bunny' !

Andrea Banyard



The worm

A poem for children

A worm will move with a squiggle and a squirm.
You can't tell if I'm a boy or a girl,
Which is my head and which is my bot,
To tell the truth, I don't give a jot.
If you want a conversation
Even if you're no relation
All you do is simply wait
Until I'm in a restful state
Then just tickle me in the middle
To see which end of me will giggle.

Ailsa Albino

Notes from the Council - March 28th

The last meeting of the current Council before our AGM on Low Sunday opened and closed in prayer.

Many of the usual issues featured: the fund-raising to defray the cost of renovating the organ; finance with the accounts for last year audited by Ron Kirk and the caveat that we need to look for fresh ideas re fund-raising events; the garden; the library; the church flat; things ecumenical.

Carolyn Hewitt was welcomed as a co-opted member of the Council with responsibility for Communications. If you have a church event to publicise, contact her at stbartsnews@gmail.com. Sadly, there has been minimal uptake re the planned VE Day picnic at Les Essarts. Instead, it was agreed to relocate to St Bart's with an afternoon event starting at 13.00 along similar lines. David Norris was thanked for organising the successful poetry afternoon in church.

There was an update on Bishop Robert who has moved his office to Brussels. The Diocesan Safeguarding Policy was endorsed and reaffirmed and the need for those with positions of responsibility in the church to undertake an on-line safeguarding course was flagged up. Val Carter, our Safe-guarding officer, was in addition appointed our Safeguarding Champion, i.e. co-ordinating the process.

The meeting ended with David Norris explaining the procedure for the AGM on 12th April after the Sunday service.

On Palm Sunday, I will have celebrated a 20 year association with St Bart's.

Father Gareth

Pitman in letter

The question of Sir Isaac Pitman might seem a somewhat unusual subject to appear in the Monthly Church Magazine – and you would be right. However it has been an important part of my life since, I believe, 1962.

I well remember a year out of mainstream education and quickly, when afforded the availability of a one-year placement in a commercial college grabbed hold of the opportunity. In indecent haste, I suppose, for I was the only male in a class of twenty-eight young ladies in the ‘care’ of Miss McElstrem. It was let us say an interesting interlude in my life and one that I remember with fondness. Indeed it has helped my professional life.

Care is I suppose an incorrect usage of the word, for Miss McElstrem was never a Ms, of that you can be assured, and this male prisoner was to be exposed sometimes to ridicule for simply being a male in the company of more proficient and knowledgeable students and who of course were female. Miss McElstrem was exceedingly hard on me but I persevered and both of us became more enlightened and mutual respect between us was the norm in that I demonstrated that I could easily outstrip (that word has just come into my head as I type this note and I think it should stay!) the majority of the girls.

What did I demonstrate – the ability to write Pitman’s shorthand at 110wpm and equally the acquisition of the Royal Society for Arts advanced Typewriting Diploma and both of which remain with me today.

Here an illustration of the Lord’s Prayer but in Pitman Shorthand. The outlines and images are different but of course the core meaning

Restoration of Organ

The estimated total cost of the work is	79,000€
Money raised so far	45,780€
Money to be raised	33,220€



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 ?



Quick quips 7/8

These little beauties were sent to us by Bill Hughes

The middle of the night, pitch black, in their bedroom, a frightened woman’s voice could be heard to whisper: ‘David, I think I can hear someone moving about downstairs. Are you awake ?’
“No.”



Billboard 5/8

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

Can’t sleep ?
Try counting your blessings

Odd Words Humble

Are you ? Are you humble ? Would you want to claim to be ‘ever so humble’ like the character from Dickens – Uriah Heep – who was anything but ! But what do you think of this particularly Christian virtue – humility ?

Given the age we live in, I’m not sure humility would be on many folk’s wish list. Essentially, it means the opposite of being proud and boastful, the antithesis of the brash, loud, self-assertive world we can see around us. To be humble is to be modest, self-effacing, deferential, conscious of one’s limitations.

This particularly distinctive Christian virtue is rooted (*the word is actually derived from the Latin word ‘humus’ meaning ground !*) in a notion of being called to serve, of putting others before self, of being prepared to do dirty jobs for others. My mum just got on with those jobs that were essential in our home: cooking and cleaning; washing and ironing; not being afraid to get her hands dirty to keep us clean.

Oddly enough, the paradox is that though we are but dust and enjoy life for so brief a time, God still loves us and loves us enough to die for us which is the message of Easter.

So in one sense we do have worth but perhaps we may best express that worth by how we view and serve others. What do you think ?

Gareth Randall



remains constant and in whatever language or format that one would wish to utilise! It matters not.

Isaac Pitman, as he was then known, was born in Trowbridge, Wiltshire, on the 4th of January 1813. The basis of his approach was to base shorthand upon the sounds of words. He paired words which were similar but had long or short or soft or hard sounds.

Isaac Pitman was a typical Victorian. He was keen to see education through the medium of free schools and libraries and somewhat in alignment with the miners of South Wales who utilised Miners Institutes as part of their learning regime. Indeed, these institutes were recognised as the Universities of the Working Classes.

It is argued that Pitman’s shorthand became the means for many people to improve themselves, most especially women, who suddenly found financial independence when they became shorthand typists and then secretaries. I am still uncertain as to the demarcation between shorthand typists and secretaries but am grateful and remain so.

Sir Isaac Pitman was knighted in 1894 and left this life on the 22nd January 1897. His funeral service was held in the New Church in Bath, the city in which he spent most of his life, and then the body was taken to Woking in Surrey, the first crematorium in England, for cremation.

His memorial table in Bath Abbey reads:

‘His aims were steadfast his mind original, his work prodigious
the achievement word-wide. His life was ordered
in service to God and duty to man.’

Now in my 70th year I am eternally grateful for an association albeit at hand and fingers length with Sir Isaac Pitman. He was somewhat instrumental in the development of my business and professional life.

Ken Ivin Monmouthshire March 2014.

History of Protestantism in Normandy

This is a short article I wrote for the Christchurch magazine. Because of my ancestry I am very interested in the history of the Protestants in France. And following a conversation with Pastor Yvon Thomas in which I had said that ‘I didn’t realise that there were many Protestants in France’. To which, knowing my ancestry, he replied, ‘We didn’t all run away, you know.’ This inspired me to do some research, starting with Normandy where we live.

The history of Protestantism in the region is a sad one, full of war and persecution. Normandy was one of the strongest Protestant areas in France, where it took hold very early on in the reformation. Alençon was the first town to receive the teachings of Luther, under the influence of Marguerite d’Angoulême, sister of François 1st and Wife of the Duke of Alençon. The Palace at Rouen was the first place to hold a public meeting preaching the ideas of Luther. And in 1533 Caen University displayed Luther’s theses.

Protestantism spread very quickly throughout Normandy and the first Church or Temple, was built in Rouen, Quevilly where by 1546, 15 to 20% of the population had become Protestant, there were four pastors and a congregation of 10,000. By 1559 a quarter of the population is protestant. In Caen between 1560 and 1568 the majority of the population has become Protestants.

By 1557 Dieppe has a Church with up to 14,000 members. At Condé-sur-Noireau all the Population has converted. There are strong groups in Le Havre, Lisieux, Pont-Audemer and Pont-l’Evêque. These included clergy, judges, land owners who converted their peasants. There were many tradesmen, book sellers, cloth makers and seafarers who took their faith to the New World.

Questions Biblically illiterate ?

How well do you know the Bible ? Why do you know it as well as you do ?

When I was a boy in the 50s, my primary school had a daily assembly when stories from the Bible were read. We had lessons in class about the Bible. There was a Nativity Play at Christmas. At grammar school in the 60s, there was a daily assembly with Bible readings, we sang hymns and once a week in the first three years, we had a Bible-based religious knowledge lesson. When I started going to church, I was already familiar with a lot of our Bible heritage. How else could I have taken a degree in English if I did not already know the context which inspired much of the literature I studied ?

So it came as something of a surprise to discover at the start of this year that a sizeable minority – about 40% of youngsters questioned – had no idea that the Christmas story was to be found in the Bible. Why such ignorance of the culture that has shaped past generations in Great Britain ?

It seems as if British society is becoming increasingly secular and that ignorance of the stories of our youth is increasingly common among youngsters today.

What, then, will be lost if this is true ?

Gareth Randall



Film Review of the month
‘Calvary’ – John Michael McDonagh 2014

Greg and Jackie Webb recommended the film last summer and John Johnstone bought it for me for Christmas.

If you like sharply observed black comedy, then the film may well appeal to you but beware it is not necessarily an easy or a comfortable view. It’s no accident the film is entitled ‘Calvary’, as it wrestles with the question faith in the face of unpleasant reality.

Set on the west coast of Ireland, contemporary, it centres around a good Catholic priest (Brendan Gleeson) and his community: his curate, bar owner, barman, butcher, doctor, financier, car mechanic, an adulterous wife, prostitute, police inspector, serial killer, ageing American author – just an everyday story of Irish country folk !

The film opens with a scene in the confessional: so I won’t repeat here the fairly shocking opening statement we see the priest hear. Later, I love the scene with his bishop !

Essentially, shot over a week, there is the threat the priest will be shot the following Sunday by the unseen, unnamed parishioner who wishes to kill a ‘good’ priest in revenge for, as retribution for what has been done to him in the past.

That said, the real interest in ‘Calvary’ is in the variety of characters and their interactions. It made me smile and I was genuinely shocked.

So have you the stamina to see the film ? It’s rated a 15.

Gareth Randall

A temple was built in Pontorson by Le Comte Gabriel Montgomery Ducey & Pontorson, who was the governor of Pontorson and leader of the local Protestants. His temple is still to be seen in Pontorson and is now the oldest left in France. It only survived because the Protestants who were driven from the town were offered a new site to build a temple outside the town boundaries, so by the time of the destruction of the temples it was not used.

The Wars of Religion in 1562 between the Roman Catholics and Protestants affected Normandy badly. The Protestants held Dieppe, Rouen, Le Havre, Caen, Falaise, Bayeux, Vire and Coutances. The Comte de Montgomery of Ducey and Pontorson led the local Protestant forces against the Royal Army.

The Edict of St Germain (1570) limited the practice of the Protestant faith to the Seigneurs and their subjects. This placed the faithful under the protection of a few powerful families. The Montgomeries, the Sainte-Maries of d’Agneaux and Saint-Lô, and the Richiers of Cerisy.

In Rouen, after the St Bartholomew’s Day Massacre of in 1572, 400 people were killed. In Pontorson a fanatical anti-Protestant priest preached a sermon against the ‘heresy’ and mobs rushed from the church looking for Protestants to attack. As a result many fled at first to other regions of France then to other Countries, and it is from these emigrants that many of us are descended.

In 1574 the war started again, resulting in the beheading of Montgomery in Paris. The treaty of Monsieur 1576 restored the peace. Henry of Navarre the first Bourbon King and a Protestant inherited the throne in 1589 following his conversion to Catholicism saying “Paris is worth a Mass”. Many of the Norman Seigneurs followed his example and became Catholics. In spite of this the Wars continued on

for another four years against the Catholic League, whose aim was to drive the Protestants out of France. Peace came at last with the Edict of Nantes (1598).

By the end of the 16th Century there were 100,000 Protestants in Normandy and the life of the Church seemed unaffected and the 'Synodal Province' of Normandy had 58 churches or temples.

Sadly, 'Places of Safety' were abolished in France in 1629 by the Treaty of Alès and the last Provincial Synod was held in Rouen in 1682. After the revocation of the Treaty of Nantes, restrictions were imposed on the education of Protestants and many Protestants had to resort to an underground system but by 1669 all Protestant schools, colleges and academies were closed.

In 1685 the Parliament of Rouen ordered the destruction of all the temples in Normandy. And during this period there were many child abductions and forced conversions which lasted until the reign of Louis XVI.

The massive exodus of Protestants businessmen from the region affected the economy badly. In the 17th century, the Protestants had to practice their religion in secret. If they were discovered they were condemned to the galleys and/or tortured.

During the reign of Louis XV, restrictions were relaxed and after the Edict of Toleration in 1787, the Protestants reorganised themselves, especially in Le Havre, Bolbec, Luneray and Rouen. In Caen the Protestant bourgeoisie took back the principal businesses and once again became involved in local affairs. Protestantism was restored but it was not until 1795 that they could started to have regular worship and a resident pastor.

Moles – over the hill

We all love moles don't we ? Overnight, they can change a well tended lawn into what looks like a ploughed field. Wouldn't most us prefer to see a range of molehills where once there was a neatly cut lawn ?

I've not removed the molehills from my lawn for some time and now have over 40 ! Goodness knows how many there'll be by the next time I need to cut the grass.

Various methods can be used to remove my moles and here are some I tried without success:

- ***Petrol in their runs*** in the hope the smell will drive them next door.
- ***Central heating fuel oil*** in the hope it will be too sticky for them.
- ***A hosepipe*** but I guess they've learnt to swim !
- ***An electronic sonic device*** in the hope the sound will disturb them.
- ***Plastic pipes*** each 20cms long in their runs – a question of wind/air flow – but the moles simply push them out just as soon as I've pushed them in.

Tony, my sister-in-law' Ailsa's husband, has tried putting traps in the runs. All he caught was the soil ! Likewise bombs and weed killer failed to work. A fork plunged into a tuft of grass as it was being pushed up or next door's cat patiently waiting by a molehill both failed to do the job. And who has the patience to spend sufficient time lurking by a molehill with a friendly sledgehammer or a shotgun ?

So what would you suggest ?

Bill Hughes

5 DON'T speak loudly. Should a member of your family or household be deaf, use gestures and written messages rather than raise your voice.

6 DON'T use exclamations or dramatic language likely to over-excite or alarm your listeners. (For example “*Strike a light!*” or “*Well I never!*”)

7 DON'T use lined stationery. Practise writing in straight lines (horizontally) or else purchase a proprietary correctional elbow-clamp (from W H Smith).

8 DON'T wear earrings so weighty that your lobe is gradually drawn down to touch or overlap your shoulder. This could attract comment, especially when occurring with one ear only.

9 DON'T sit cross-legged, except on the floor.

10 DON'T sit on the floor.

David Norris



The sting's in the tail 1/4

These gems are sent to us by Trisha and Tony

1. Where there's a will, I want to be in it.
2. The last thing I want to do is hurt you, but it's still on my list.
3. Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
4. If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.
5. War does not determine who is right - only who is left.
6. Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

After the Concordat of 1801 the temple at Saint Eloi at Rouen was built to replace the Quevilly, one which had been destroyed. In the 19th century Protestantism grew in Normandy, and there were about 10,000 Protestants in the Seine Maritime, in the Orne and Calvados there were more than 5,000. Unfortunately, in the 19th Century, tensions began to develop between the Liberal and Orthodox Protestantism. Gradually the Orthodox view got the upper hand.

Today Protestantism is very much alive in Normandy, in Rouen, Le Havre and to a lesser extent Caen and many other areas of Normandy. Praise the Lord, the relationship between the different denominations is now improving. Our Church has attended ecumenical services in Granville, St Lô and, most movingly, at Pontorson, at which both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches have been present, coming together at last in Christian brotherhood.

Pippa Hales

*(Information taken from several websites
but in particular the Museeprotestant.org web site)*



Personal Column

Our sympathy to Pip Piper and his family on the death of his wife Kay on 3rd March and whose funeral was in church on 8th March. A retiring collection raised over 200€ for the organ fund.



They Worked for St. Bart's (3) Sybil Fagg

St. Bartholomew's was really only functioning as a holiday-period church as the war had meant that the British and American residents, who in the pre-war years, had formed the congregation, were no longer resident in Dinard, with just a few exceptions.

Of course, there was no resident chaplain, but the church had a valuable asset. At some point, some of the land had been sold to a builder to put up some flats, and one of these belonged to the church. This meant that visiting priests, could be provided with accommodation. The priest-in-charge was Donald Pankhurst, and he and Heather came over in the summer and the church served the visitors, and I believe there to have been a regular company of these. I believe it was put to Sybil, that she could become a Reader, though when we first knew her, it was as a lay pastoral assistant that she served. In this capacity, she felt that the resident members, though very few, could benefit if there were services of some kind, in the hitherto 'closed season', and so she introduced twice-monthly (second and fourth Sundays) morning worship. The day we first found the church was during a week before a second Sunday. This system ran for a while and Sybil was also preparing to become a Reader. It was soon after our arrival, that Julian Thompson seemed able to attract a steady flow of holidaying chaplains willing to take services etc. while taking advantage of the flat. It seems to us that when in Dinard, Sybil was the one who worked with them on the worship side of things, organising someone to play the organ and any other aspect required. Usually it was she who arranged for lesson readers and more often than not, she would select the appropriate hymns, bearing in mind that the singers could be quite few.

DON'T

Ours is an age when standards are doubtful. We are no longer sure when we are going or doing wrong. *Should one hicough in a public place ? On a bus ? Upstairs only ? ... Is it done to cut one's nails in church ? During the sermon ? Or the collection ? In Lent ? What about one's toes ? ...* Yes, we crave certainties but we are all too ready to question *everything*, aren't we ?

It was reassuring therefore to come across *the answers*: a quick guide to correct behaviour, in clear, no-nonsense terms. Entitled *A Manual of Mistakes*, this little volume, first published one hundred-and-fifty years ago, remains just as useful today.

So here and in forthcoming editions of the Newsletter, I offer an abbreviated and only lightly edited version of this authoritative textbook, in the form of **TEN DON'Ts** - one for each of the principal arenas in the battle of life: ***At Home ... In Company ... Out and About.***

DON'T - AT HOME

- 1 DON'T** sleep with your mouth open. (Periodic checks are advised.)
- 2 DON'T** wear evening dress at breakfast. Your children, having only recently risen, might become confused and return to bed.
- 3 DON'T** speak sloppily or ungrammatically. Be ready to correct your spouse, children, staff and tradesmen for any lapse.
- 4 DON'T** reprimand your children in front of the servants – or *vice versa*. Take them to a quiet 'scolding room' (a little-used privy might prove suitable).

right place. By what he has just done, he is showing Peter the truth of what he knows. By what Jesus has just done, he is, in another sense of the word, 're-membering' Peter.

And one detail, in case you missed it – the charcoal fire. Its smell is quite unmistakable – a distinctive smell of wood-smoke. On the shore, early one morning, Jesus had just cooked the fish over a charcoal fire. In a courtyard, late one Thursday night, Peter had once warmed himself near such a fire.

Don't you think that distinctive smell might have reminded Peter of a night he'd rather forget?



And, in case you're wondering, what is the difference between Judas and Peter?

Judas betrayed Jesus for profit because he no longer believed in him. Peter betrayed Jesus because he was scared of what they might do to him.

Judas despaired and took his own life. Peter regretted what he did and gave his life afresh to Jesus. Jesus promises Peter a life of service and a martyr's death.

It was a vocation I was to share with him.



Not many, if any, of the locum chaplains from the early days until we had our permanent chaplain, failed to be entertained to lunch at Sybil's lovely little cottage. Not only chaplains, but often new arrivals would be invited to lunch and as we often found, older established people, such as we were by this time, would be included at the same time, to be introduced in a socialising manner to the newcomers. It was more than just the vestry and at the altar, where Sybil served St. Bartholomew's.

John Marshall



No laughing matter

It is a truth universally acknowledged that, for a person of German heritage, humour is no laughing matter. Having lived among German people for six years, I can demonstrate that for the horse feathers that it is.

Take this example, from *Der Spiegel*, the weekly news magazine that, in my opinion, has no rival in Europe. (Well, maybe *Krokodil*, but my Russian language skills aren't quite up to that.) Dateline: 3rd March 2015. Subject matter: a serious, considered article about the Berlin angle on the national debt of Athens. Quote, from a serious, considered German journalist (my own translation):

'During the past week, the European Central Bank has expressed its willingness to supply funding to Greece in homeopathic doses.'

And that wasn't even on the funnies page on the page opposite the inside back cover !

David Boggis

The Bartholomew Gospel

23 Peter forgiven

Do you love me? John 21 v16

Peter had unfinished business. In spite of swearing he'd never leave him, the night they arrested Jesus, three times he said he didn't know him.

We had unfinished business. We were going to shift the centre of our work from Galilee to Jerusalem, the City of David, where Jesus, the Son of David, had been crucified and where, on the third day, he had risen from the dead. We were going back to pick up what we thought we'd left behind.

So it was we found ourselves on the shore of the Sea of Galilee where the memory of fishing, an urge to go fishing, was so strong that Peter suggested we spend the night on a borrowed boat. Seven of us went with him: his brother Andrew, James and John, me and Philip, and Thomas the twin.

It's odd how much I enjoyed the trip. My love of water, as you know, dates from the time I first met Philip. And that night on a boat again with him, with friends, brought memories of a less troubled, less complicated time, flooding back. Okay, so we didn't catch anything. The satisfaction came from doing and being more than from the number of fish that we caught – naught to be precise!



It's dawn on a balmy morning when a stranger on the shore shouts across to us, asking if we'd caught anything. When we reply we haven't, he tells us to cast our net to starboard and we will. We do - and we do. The net is so heavy with fish we can't land it on the boat.

It's John who first twigs who's standing on the shore. So he tells Peter, who'd stripped for work, 'It's the Master!' So without waiting for us to pull to shore, Peter grabs his clothes, jumps straight in and swims to shore like a joyful dog who's just spotted his lost master.

There is Jesus by a charcoal fire. He tells us to bring some of the fish we've just caught and he cooks us one of the best breakfasts I've ever tasted: fresh fish, freshly cooked in the open-air by a friend, eaten with fresh bread in the company of your friends – my idea of heaven!

Then Jesus speaks to Peter:

'Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?'

'Yes Master. You know I'm your friend.'

'Well then, feed my lambs.'

'Simon, son of John, do you love me?'

'Yes Master. You know I'm your friend.'

'Well then, look after my sheep.'

'Simon, son of John, are you my friend?'

Upset, perplexed, being asked three times what he felt for him, Simon Peter says,

'Master you know everything! You know I'm your friend!'

'Well then, feed my sheep.'



What is going on? What's going on only makes sense if you remember what has already gone on. Three times, in the night, in the cold unfriendliness outside the High Priest's house, Peter denied he knows Christ. Three times, in the morning, in the warmth of having eaten together by the Sea of Galilee, Peter confirms how much he loves Christ. He is his friend. And here and now Christ is showing Peter that he is forgiven. Without pronouncing words of absolution, he has absolved Peter from his guilt. Jesus knows that Peter's heart is in the