

Diary dates for December, 2015

19th December 17.00 Carol Service
24th December 17.00 Crib Service
25th December 11.00 Christmas Day



Prayer of the month

Almighty God,
from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed:
kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all, the true love of peace
and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom
those who take counsel for the nations of the earth
that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward,
till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.

Collect for the Peace of the World



Prayer focus

The Word made flesh.



Verse of the Month

To all who received him, who believed in his name,
he gave power to become children of God,

John 1 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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December, 2015

Dear Friends,

The Spirit of Christmas ?

Did you see the 2014 Sainsbury's Christmas ad ? If you did, what did you think ?

Christmas Eve. Dark, cold, bleak the British trench. A young soldier, a dry biscuit to hand, opens a package from his girl – a photo of his Rose and a bar of chocolate.

From the German trenches wafts the sound of the carol, 'Stille Nacht'. The British take up the tune to English words. The carol unites the soldiers.

Dawn. A robin on the barbed wire. The English lad stands up and slowly goes over the top, his hands in the air.

From the other side, a young German does the same. They meet in the middle of no man's land, each followed by the men from their own trench.

"My name is Jim," says the one. "Mein Name ist Otto," says the other.

A game of football ensues. At the end of the game, back in the German trench, Otto discovers the bar of chocolate unbeknown Jim has given him.

The message – 'Christmas is for sharing'. I wanted to cry.

Father Gareth



Notices

- **November Church Spring Clean:** a big thank you to Corrie and her team whose hard work on 5th November brought a sparkle and shine to St Bart's.
- **Remembrance Sunday Flowers:** a big thank you to Victor for a stunning display to mark the day not least the arrangement in the entrance on a cross made especially for us by our Church Warden, Bill.
- **Deadline** for submission of material for the January edition of the St Bart's Monthly is *midday on Thursday 31st December*
- **Church Finances for October**
Income: 2,951€ Expenditure: 3,482€

Readings in church

December 6th

2nd Sunday of Advent

Malachi 3 v1 - 4

Benedictus

Philippians 1 v3 – 11

Luke 3 v1 - 6

December 13th

3rd Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61 v1 - 4, 8 - end

Psalms 146 v4 - end

Philippians 4 v4 - 7

Luke 3 v7 - 18

December 20th

4th Sunday of Advent

Micah 5 v2 - 5a

Magnificat

Hebrews 10 v5 - 10

Luke 1 v39 - 45

December 25th

Christmas Day

Isaiah 9 v2 - 7

Psalms 96

Titus 2 v11 - 14

Luke 2 v1 - 14

December 27th

St John

Exodus 33 v7 - 11a,

Psalms 117

1 John 1

John 21 v19b - end

Quotations of the month

I believe in God even when he is silent.



Advent puns

*The following were sent to me by my nephew Tony –
truly a Rolls-Royce standard of humour*

Did you hear about the guy that stole an Advent calendar?
He got 24 days.

I have heard that Advent calendars are not so popular now -
their days are numbered !



An apt comparison ?

In Boulevard Féart
and Rue Yves Verney,
the Christmas lights
sparkle like lettuces,
'Little Gems' of light.



Christmas crackers

*This little gem was found in Brian Hewitt's cracker last Christmas:
How do snails keep their shells shiny ?
Snail varnish.*

Notes from the Council November 26th

The meeting opened and closed in prayer. Winter is here; the road outside the church is up; Father Peter celebrated communion for the last time on a Thursday before going off to do a four month chaplaincy in Oporto.

The usual areas were addressed: finance; fabric; events.

The organ needs to be signed off and there is work to be done before we mark its inauguration after renovation not with a concert but with a choral evensong probably in March.

In March, we'll also explore the first of our more child-friendly services on Mothering Sunday. Another could be an afternoon Pet Service at the start of October.

The Spirit of Christmas Fayre was very much in our minds which will be over by the time you read this.

Our increasing profile among the French was highlighted by our hosting the service to mark the 110th anniversary of the shipwreck of the SS Hilda off St Malo and then my invitation to join the signatories of the Archbishop of Rennes declaration for peace in the light of the Paris attacks which you can read in full in the pages following.

The server that distributes our St Bart's church magazine is now out-of-commission so I will be inviting those who want to receive our Mag by email to let me know and I'll send it them though both forms of the Magazine will be available on the website from January.

Father Gareth

Sois le changement que tu veux pour le monde

On Saturday 21st November, Pastor Gilbert Baume was kind enough to give me a lift to Rennes where, on the invitation of the Archbishop of Rennes in the Maison des Associations, on behalf our Church I put my name to the following declaration written in response to the events in Paris on Friday 13th

1. Face au drame du vendredi 13 novembre, le cœur bouleversé et rempli de compassion, chacun selon sa tradition religieuse, nous avons prié avec nos communautés, et nous continuons à prier. Nous exprimons ensemble notre douleur qui nous tourne en premier lieu vers les familles et les proches des victimes. Que la paix du cœur et l'espérance leur soient données ! Nous confions à Dieu, le miséricordieux, et à la bénédiction divine les victimes de Paris et de Saint-Denis, ainsi que celles de tant d'autres lieux où se sont perpétrés de façon semblable des meurtres d'innocents. Que leur mémoire bénie soit gardée vivante !

2. Face aux risques de propagation de la folie meurtrière, nous nous joignons à tous les français et à tous ceux qui, avant toute autre considération partisane, veulent la paix qui est fille de la justice. La paix authentique, écho de l'harmonie divine, est un bien si précieux ! C'est pourquoi, nous nous tournons vers la prière et nous appelons les croyants à être des hommes et des femmes de prière, selon ce que nous avons déclaré le 27 octobre 2011 : « Vouloir la paix, c'est se souvenir qu'elle est un don de Dieu ; c'est pourquoi, chacun selon sa foi, nous prions pour que grandisse la paix entre les hommes. » (Déclaration « Aujourd'hui, la paix est urgente ! ») Nous prions pour nos gouvernants qui ont reçu la mission de la justice, ainsi que pour les policiers, les gendarmes et les militaires qui font face avec courage pour notre sécurité.

Dictionary Definitions 4/5

These gems were sent to us by Trish and Tony

RAISIN:

A grape with a sunburn.

SECRET:

Something you tell to one person at a time.

SKELETON:

A bunch of bones with the person scraped off.



School humour 4/7

What do you get if you sit on a grape ?

A little whine.

Pauline Eyre



News Quiz on Radio 4

Geoff Hook sent us this gem !

From a church Newsletter ...

This morning's sermon is 'Jesus walks on water'.

This evening's is 'Searching for Jesus'.



Questions

Are you happy ?

It's July. The sparrows have been busy on the balcony, pecking up the bread I've left out for them, happily converting my bought-bread into their bird-droppings. I busy myself wiping down the railings, sweeping up the floor, then washing it. And it occurs to me how happy I am doing this simple job which leads me to the following thought:

The secret of happiness: -
to make a virtue of necessity;
to enjoy that which one has to do !

What do you think ?

Gareth Randall



Billboards 2 - 5/6

The following is from our Church Warden, Bill:

Printed on a sandwich wrapper

Corned beef with vegetarian cheese.



Kids in Church 4/7

Peter Campbell forwarded these little gems to us !

A Sunday school teacher asked her children as they were on the way to church service, 'And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?'
One bright little girl replied, 'Because people are sleeping.'

3. Face aux crimes insensés de la barbarie, nous crions notre colère et notre tristesse parce que le saint nom de Dieu a été bafoué et méprisé par des actions criminelles absolument incompatibles avec l'invocation du divin. D'un seul cœur, nous répétons avec force le mot de Jean-Paul II, l'initiateur de la rencontre d'Assise, il y aura bientôt 30 ans : « Toute utilisation de la religion visant à promouvoir la violence est un abus de la religion. La religion n'est pas et ne doit pas devenir un prétexte pour les conflits [...]. La religion et la paix vont de pair : faire la guerre au nom de la religion est une contradiction flagrante. » Nous faisons totalement nôtre ce propos du Pape. C'est pourquoi, nous prenons ensemble l'engagement d'emprunter les chemins de la paix proposés par le « Décalogue d'Assise pour la Paix », signé le 24 janvier 2002 par 200 représentants de différentes confessions religieuses à travers le monde réunis à Assise.

4. Face à l'insensé absurde que nous venons de vivre, représentants en Ile-et-Vilaine de confessions chrétiennes, du Judaïsme, de l'Islam et du Bouddhisme, nous nous engageons particulièrement sur quatre points : combattre l'ignorance, apprendre le respect, promouvoir le dialogue, développer la spiritualité du cœur.

Combattre l'ignorance.

5. Dans chacun de nos lieux de culte, nous refusons absolument toute prédication et toute instruction qui entraîneraient la violence, l'antisémitisme, l'islamophobie, le racisme, l'extrémisme ainsi que toute sorte d'amalgames. Nous encourageons la formation pour que l'enseignement dispensé s'appuie sur une connaissance réelle des religions qui sont les nôtres.

6. Devant le non-sens de certains discours pseudo-religieux, nous affirmons avec force que le véritable sens de nos textes « sacrés » ne vient pas de leur seule lettre mais de l'esprit que cette lettre lue littéralement garde parfois caché. Pour lutter contre l'ignorance, nous nous engageons résolument à adopter l'interprétation des passages

évoquant à première vue la violence dans nos différents textes, sous quelque forme que ce soit, à la lumière d'une conviction de foi commune et d'une sagesse héritée de nos Sages : tous les êtres humains sont frères et sœurs, appelés à s'aimer les uns les autres et à reconnaître qu'ils sont habités par l'étincelle divine.

7. Le philosophe Paul Ricœur, lié à la ville de Rennes, nous a encouragés à ce travail d'interprétation, grâce à laquelle la prédication ou l'instruction religieuses suscitent une juste connaissance de Dieu et des vérités divines, une humilité bienveillante, un amour effectif pour tout être humain, une tolérance sincère envers les convictions d'autrui, et un amour du prochain vécu en actes.

Apprendre le respect.

8. Sensibles à la recherche de sens qui habite beaucoup de nos contemporains, en particulier des jeunes, nous voulons mettre en œuvre des pédagogies religieuses qui apprennent le respect de l'autre, en faisant découvrir les richesses et la beauté spirituelle de chaque personne humaine, depuis le début de sa vie jusqu'à sa mort.

9. Nous sommes fermement attachés au respect du caractère sacré de la vie humaine. Nul être humain ne peut s'arroger le droit de tuer son semblable. Nos religions l'affirment : « Tu ne tueras pas » (La Bible hébraïque et chrétienne, *Exode XX,13*). « Ne pas détruire la vie des êtres sensibles » (Un des cinq préceptes bouddhistes). « Ne tuez pas la personne humaine car je l'ai déclarée sacrée » (Coran, *Sourate VI,151*). Chaque être humain est en vérité infiniment précieux.

10. Nous sommes décidés à favoriser le respect de chaque culture et des œuvres d'art qui en sont l'âme. Pour cela, nous encourageons la connaissance de ces cultures ainsi que l'apprentissage du discernement sur les sagesse qu'elles véhiculent.

Odd Words 'Loathing'

Washing up, I was listening to 'The Daily Service' on Radio 4 and the choir singing 'Come down, O Love divine'. The end of the third verse caught my attention: *'and oe'r its on shortcomings weeps with loathing.'*

Strong stuff ! To loathe is to dislike in the strongest of terms. To loathe is to hate, to be repelled by. To loathe means utterly, completely to disapprove.

The first weeks of December is Advent, which like Lent is a time of spiritual discipline, of penitence, a chance to allow us to prepare for a great Christian festival - Christmas or Easter. It's a time for reflection, an opportunity to take a critical look at ourselves, to see where we're failing short and try, as best we can, to address what we perceive to be wrong.

My problem lies in the verb – loathe, loathing. Okay, we can all sin, we can all fall short of the ideal. We can all screw up big time but we shouldn't hate the sinner but the sin. My concern is that in loathing the fault, we may transfer that loathing to the one that commits the fault.

It is true that Jesus, filled with righteous indignation, drove the money changers and sellers of animals to be sacrificed from the Temple in Jerusalem but he also showed compassion to and embraced sinners.

Let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Gareth Randall

Outrageous...

True story. Promise you that, because the guilty party is me.

One day, about seven or eight years ago, a certain hack journalist who should have been old enough to know better, had a story to write for an English-language newspaper selling throughout France. Business news, basically: a Brittany-based specialist hen-rearing company (*pondeuse*, for the sort bred to lay the most eggs) was being taken over by a larger, Dutch company specialising in rearing the same sort of poultry.

One peculiarity of this English-language newspaper – it's defunct now, so you don't need to know its name – was that the news desk liked its reporters to write their own headline. So back goes our hack to the keyboard, and up springs the headline: **Merger most fowl**.

Next time: the most outrageous headline I got into the *Financial Times*...

David Boggis



Lest we forget

This year, we were able to send £310 to Headley Court as a result of your generosity at the church service here on Remembrance Sunday.

Our annual Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal poppy appeal organised by Helen and David Morgan raised £475 (670€)



11. Nous sommes convaincus que le respect n'est vrai que si nous respectons la liberté de conscience et la liberté religieuse. C'est pourquoi nous reconnaissons qu'il est normal que cette liberté soit un droit dans tous les pays.

Promouvoir le dialogue

12. Chaque religion ouvre un chemin de justice et de pardon. C'est pourquoi la diversité de nos religions est une richesse grâce à laquelle nous pouvons chercher et trouver ensemble les voies de la justice et du pardon sans lesquels la paix demeure un rêve.

13. Nous sommes déterminés à promouvoir une culture du dialogue et de la rencontre. Nous nous engageons à organiser des rencontres régulières entre croyants de diverses confessions et avec les non-croyants afin que grandissent la connaissance et le respect mutuels. Nous pouvons ainsi partager des valeurs qui ne sont pas seulement humanistes ou humanitaires, mais qui sont des vérités communes essentielles et vitales sur l'existence humaine et sur notre destin commun à tous.

14. Nous voulons promouvoir un regard lucide sur l'histoire ancienne et récente lorsqu'elle a été source de conflits, de mépris, et de discriminations entre les personnes. Ce regard invite à la vigilance pour ne pas recommencer les erreurs du passé. Il peut aussi contribuer à trouver les justes clefs de l'interprétation de nos textes « sacrés ».

15. Le dialogue est aussi l'occasion de reconnaître les bienfaits de l'histoire ancienne, en particulier en y discernant les apports des religions dans notre pays, qui ont contribué à en faire une terre de justice et de liberté, d'accueil des réfugiés et d'amour envers les plus fragilisés.

Développer une spiritualité intérieure

16. Face aux germes de violences qui peuvent habiter nos cœurs, nous nous rappelons l'importance de la prière et de l'intériorité qui sont sources de paix et de douceur les uns envers les autres.

17. Nous invitons tout homme et toute femme responsable et de bonne volonté à progresser dans la spiritualité et dans la prière qui sont vitales au cœur de notre société happée par la consommation à outrance et par le stress.

18. Nous sommes convaincus que l'intériorité et la connaissance des religions font grandir la miséricorde et la compassion qui permettent d'accepter les différences et de tisser des relations fraternelles. Elles donnent aussi la force pour répondre aux actions mauvaises par le bien.

19. En nous inspirant de la parole de Gandhi : « Soyez le changement que vous voulez dans le monde », nous nous engageons à changer tout ce qui nuit en nous et dans nos actions à une authentique fraternité. Nous désirons apporter notre contribution à un meilleur vivre ensemble en faisant nôtre cette prière de la plus ancienne religion monothéiste : « Envoie ta lumière et ta vérité, elles me guideront. » (La Bible, *Psaume* 43,3) Nous décidons de nous réunir tous les ans à l'automne afin de partager sur nos textes « sacrés », échanger sur nos engagements pris dans cette Déclaration, et réfléchir sur nos actions pour promouvoir, selon nos missions religieuses, une fraternité paisible et heureuse à Rennes, dans la Métropole rennaise et en Ille-et-Vilaine.

Rennes, le samedi 21 novembre 2015

Monseigneur Pierre D'ORNELLAS
Archevêque de Rennes, Dol et Saint-Malo

Père Jean ROBERTI
Archevêque de l'Église Orthodoxe de Rennes

Time was, when this was the sort of thing which happened in many West Yorkshire villages, not always the same timing, as in some it was a tradition to make sure the visit included the local 'pubs'. It was also the case that many villages would have certain carols which were their special ones, very local to the extent that even the neighbouring village would not have the same ones. In some cases, it could just be that it was a universally known carol, but sung to a very locally known tune.

In my early teens, I was fortunate enough to become a choir member, and so for a number of years this carol singing became an important part of my Christmas celebrations, and yes, I was the little boy who thought he had heard the angels, never thinking I was going to be one of them or not !

John B. Marshall

Addendum re 'local carols' I have managed to obtain the words and music for some of these, but if anyone is able to let me have copies of any others I would be extremely grateful as I enjoy finding out what happens in other areas of the country, not just Yorkshire.



Personal Column

I'm sad to say I had an email from the States from Lorrie Labranche about her husband, the Revd John Schaeffer, a former chaplain here at St Bartholomew's, who is now suffering from Alzheimers.

We wish both Laurie and John well as they cope with his illness.



Angels in a Yorkshire village !

Christmas morning, many years ago, a little boy sitting at the breakfast table announced that during the night he woke up, and although he never heard Santa come in, he did hear the angels singing somewhere outside.

It was a long established tradition in the village, that as midnight approached on Christmas Eve, the chapel choir, (chapel being the only place of worship in the village) would gather at a farm, which marked one extremity of the village. The choirmaster kept a close eye on the time, and on the stroke of midnight the first of two carols began. Years of experience had determined the location of the stopping places, which were such that every house in the village would be able to hear the singing. At each stop, two carols were sung and at certain places at least one carol was the same every year, as it was a requested favourite of a resident nearby. The village was not very large, not quite a mile from end to end, and mostly just the one road, but two or three times there needed to be a stroll down a lane towards the wood, for another farm or row of cottages which couldn't be ignored. About halfway through and on one such diversion, the singing was inside, as yet another tradition was that this family provided a little supper and warm drinks, after which, they had their singing and maybe requests. Fortunately, one member of this family was the local butcher, (no need to add more). So outwards and onwards until the last stop at the last house, which was not strictly within the village bounds, but it was the home of the village bus service owner whose family wished to be included. Eventually, somewhere between 4.30am and 5.00am it was time for bed.

No lie-in was to follow, as there was the follow-on duty where members again toured the village, this time in pairs, door knocking and hopefully collecting a reasonable cash donation for charity.

Père Gareth RANDALL
Révérend de l'Église Anglicane

Pasteur David BUICK
Christ Pour Tous Aumônier protestant régional des prisons

Pasteur Olivier PUTZ
Pour le Conseil Presbytéral de l'Église Protestante Unie

Pasteur Jacky LEPRAT
de l'Église Évangélique du Thabor à Rennes

Madame Ann NUSIMOVICI
Présidente de la Communauté Juive de Rennes

M. ZAÏDOUNI Mohamed Iqbal
Prédicateur et Président du CRCM de Bretagne

M. Ahmed EL GHAZI
Imam au CCI Avicenne – Rennes

M. Moulay Said ESSEKRI
Imam au CCI E aqwa au Blosne – Rennes

M. Brahim ESSOUYRI
Imam au CCI Ennour – Rennes

M. Mohamed DICKO
Imam au lieu de culte E.spoir-Amal – Rennes

M. BIRINCI TEMEL
Imam au CCI Turquie – Noyal/Châtillon-sur-Seiche

Madame Virginie SIMARD
Présidente du Centre Culturel Bouddhique de Rennes

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Dear Friends,

In June 2016, the 'Help for Heroes' iconic Big Battlefield Bike Ride will once again provide a moving and emotive journey through history – cycling in Northern France to tell the story of the Western Front a century ago.

The route starts in Ypres and will make its way towards Verdun. The events of 100 years ago will be revisited and commemorated that have shaped the surrounding countryside and the lives of those men and women who experienced it.

Winston Churchill arrived in France in November 1916 demonstrating his leadership skills and at the same time in far-off Mexico General Patton was learning the advantages of mobile artillery using for the first time in American Military history motor vehicles.

As well as remembering the incredible sacrifices made by all those who fought along the Western Front, I will have the opportunity to celebrate the Heroes we collectively now support – riding alongside a Band of Brothers and hearing their inspiring stories first-hand.

For those who are not aware, 'Help for Heroes' (HFH), in their own words: *“provides direct, practical support to wounded, injured and sick Service personnel, veterans and their families. This is provided through grants to*

Film Review of the month
‘The Hundred-foot Journey’ - Lasse Hallström 2014
‘To cook you must kill. To cook you must make ghosts’

The delight of a borrowed DVD – serendipity – discovering by chance something delightful but not too demanding.

Any film starring Helen Mirren ought to be good. In ‘The Hundred-foot Journey’, she plays Madame Mallory, the demanding owner of a starred Michelin restaurant in the south of France, the widow of a man whose memory she cherishes in seeking a second star for their restaurant opposite which has now opened an Indian restaurant owned by the Kadam family in exile from the Indian sub-continent.

The film’s appeal works on several levels. Love and food are irresistible combinations. Love of food; young love; mature love; success in the face of adversity, racial prejudice; snobbery, life in France. What more could one want ?

Well, the characters are interesting, engaging in themselves: An unlikely affection is born of the professional enmity of the two restaurant owners – Madame Mallory and Papa Kadam (Om Puri). The relationship between Hassan Kadam (Manish Dayal), an Indian boy chef with a truly discriminating sense of taste and Marguerite (Charlotte Le Bon), a French girl sous-chef who wants to make the grade in a male-dominated kitchen.

Well, not quite a fairy story or a fairy cake, but fairly fun if you are into something quintessentially English set in France with at least half the characters who could curry your favour.

I loved ‘The Hundred-foot Journey’. Why not check it out to see if it’s to your taste too ?

SS Hilda

In our Book of Remembrance in the month of November (18th/19th) is an entry commemorating the sinking of the SS Hilda on the rocks of la Pierre de Portes as it was trying to come in dock in St Malo in bad weather. Of the passengers and crew, 127 were drowned and only 6 rescued clinging to the main mast of the broken ship. One of those who went down with the ship was an uncle of the late Henry Spenceley, a member of our congregation here at St Bart's.

It seems entirely appropriate, therefore, that we were able to host a service marking the 110th anniversary of the sinking on Friday 20th November. There were around 140 folk in the congregation. I preached in French and there was a minutes silence as we remembered the dead. Lunch at the Lycée Hotelier was followed by a boat trip (courtesy of the Corsaire de Saint Malo) out into the bay to lay a wreath in the sea around where the Hilda came to grief. I said the following prayer in French which I reproduce here for you:

La Prière du Marin

Au nom du Père qui a séparé les eaux d'avec le ciel et la terre
et du Fils qui foule et apaise la tempête
et de L'Esprit Saint qui plane au-dessus des océans
Vierge Marie, Reine des flots,
à qui les marins, même mécréants, ont toujours été dévots,
vois à tes pieds tes fils qui voudraient se hausser jusqu'à toi.
Obtiens leur âme pure comme brise de mer,
un cœur fort comme les flots qui les portent,
une volonté tendue comme voile sous le vent
une attention qui veille sans mollir comme gabier dans la hune
un corps bien armé pour les luttes contre les tempêtes de la vie.
Mais surtout, O Notre Dame,
ne les laisse pas seul à la barre,
fais leur relever les écueils où ils échoueraient
avant d'ancrer près de toi, au port de l'éternité - Amen

individuals and other Service charities, capital build projects and support for life at four Recovery Centres across the UK".

I will be part of a three-man team (The Three Musketeers) an ex TA and a French/Canadian. I will have turned 70-years-old and between us we will have accumulated 200 years but what we lack in youth and speed we will be more than making up in enthusiasm !

HFH is already a high profile charity, but needs continuing financial support to sustain its ambitious projects in support of our service personnel. This is a charity that really makes a difference, and it should be emphasised that funds are also disbursed to help the other principal service charities so that the high profile enjoyed by H4H is shared.

One of the principal methods by which money is raised for H4H is through sponsored events so our team, along with 200+ other participants, have entered the 2016 Big Battlefield Bike Ride from Ypres to Verdun from 5th to 11th June, during which we will cycle 350 miles (over 565kms) in 5 days tracking the Western Front of 2016, commemorating the battlefields and memorials along the way.

A key feature of the cycle ride is that it is done alongside personnel who have been wounded on duty, and these extraordinarily brave and gutsy people use all manner of contraptions to do exactly the same ride as the able-bodied, a truly remarkable achievement for most of them. Their presence is a constant reminder of why people want to help.

I have a personal target of raising at least £2,600 almost half of which needs to be achieved by 1st March to show I am serious ! So, if you do feel inclined to support me at my tender age of 70 and help me to raise money for the H4H charities, it would be much appreciated.

If you can help, please decide how much you can contribute, then you can either, send a cheque payable to 'Help for Heroes' in sterling or euros to the address above, or, alternatively place the cursor over the following website address and press down your Ctrl key and click on the justgiving web site at: <http://www.justgiving.com/Ronald-Kirk> and follow the instructions on the donation section.

In anticipation, thank you for taking interest in my sponsorship appeal and thanks to anyone who can help however modest the amount might be.

I shall be writing my own personal daily reflections of the ride, and intend circulating this to all my sponsors, to give them a greater insight into the event.

Ron Kirk
Saint Malo



Yorkshire Humour

A class of younger children was given the task of learning Psalm 23 by heart. Poor Jimmy, not the brightest by far, found this extremely hard. Sometime later, the vicar visited his class, the teacher proudly said what the children had been learning and Jimmy was asked to repeat the Psalm. He stood up, thought a moment or two then hesitantly began, "The Lord is my shepherd er, er, and that's all I need to know" then sat down.

John Marshall



Paschal Candle-stand

On Advent Sunday, we dedicated and blessed a new Paschal Candle-stand the gift of Pam and Peter Campbell, long-time members of our church who returned to the UK in 2007.

Our original was also made by Peter, a creative use of wood that he brought back from India but sadly wear and tear has meant it needed to be replaced. The replacement is itself a chef d'oeuvre, a beautiful piece made up of three light woods (the base chestnut; the stem ash; and the top cedar) crowned with a brass candle holder.

It will for many years, I trust, adorn our church and bring light to our worship.



Banque Alimentaire

A special thank you to everyone for your loyal support to the Dinard Banque Alimentaire. Since April 2005 including December 2015, 608 boxes of groceries will have been delivered. This includes Christmas treats for the children.


Helen Morgan



Help to relocate ?

I'm looking for a flat/cottage to rent long-term – ideally in the Lymington, New Forest, Poole area, but would consider other locations too. Ideally I could start in December or any time in 2016.

If you can help please contact me on:

 06 32 30 38 39 or vanafr2@gmail.com

Vana Brown

Almighty and everlasting God,
who gave your apostle Bartholomew grace
truly to believe and to preach your word:
grant that your Church
may love that word he believed
and may faithfully preach and receive the same
through Jesus Christ your Son our lord,
who is alive and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit
one God, now and for ever.



100 years ago this year over 1.5 million Armenians were killed in what has been described as the first genocide of the 20th century. A special service was held in Westminster Abbey on 28th October to commemorate this tragedy, and to celebrate the lives of the newly-sainted martyrs of 1915. The service was led by His Holiness Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians.



Pointe du Moulinet

On the headland,
the sky blue-grey,
the sea grey-green,
the incoming waves,
boiling, spumescent,
foaming on the rocks
like liquid icing sugar
strongly sweet !

The Bartholomew Gospel Epilogue

*No one has a greater love than this,
to lay down your life for your friends'*
John 15 v13

I've really enjoyed writing 'The Bartholomew Gospel', enjoyed imagining the text through Nathaniel's eyes and with Bartholomew's voice. It's been good to share the draft with my friends and I'm grateful for their comments enabling me to polish what I've written. It's been a two-year labour of love.

Especially, let me thank two very different proof readers: my patient, long-suffering friend, Neo Notley, whose eagle eye again guarantees something like 'absolve from' is not supplanted by 'absolve of'; and the Revd Donald Pankhurst, a former chaplain here in Dinard, ill at ease with some more modern turns of phrase used by our apostle. Not least, let me thank Pauline Eyre, a dear friend, for her encouragement and for generously sharing the treasure of a lifetime's reflection and understanding. With the tact of a good teacher, her positive suggestions re content and form adds extra depth to the text.

Most Sundays, I speak to my brother, Les, by telephone. Having read the chapter on Bartholomew's martyrdom, he asked the perennial question, 'Why?' Why did God allow Bartholomew to be martyred in so degrading a way? Why does a loving, all-powerful God allow bad things to happen to good people?

'Why?' is a great question and there is no easy answer. The first 'why?' is specific to Bartholomew; the second 'why?' could apply to us all.

The first 'why?' invites us to reflect on the particular vocation to which Bartholomew was called – to be an apostle, someone sent to witness to

the belief that Jesus is the Son of God. For Bartholomew, to be an apostle also meant that he would be a martyr. Now I don't know when Bartholomew knew that he was personally being called to die for his faith in Christ. We know he knew who Jesus was almost as soon as he met him. We know Jesus spoke of his own martyrdom; that to follow him was for each of us to take up our individual cross. We know Bartholomew would have known that some of the followers of Christ had been killed for witnessing to the truth. I guess, at some point, Bartholomew must have known and accepted the fact that he could be killed for what he represented. Martyrdom is the gift of a life to achieve a greater good. John the Baptist, Jesus the Christ, Stephen the deacon, James the brother of John, Peter and Paul, Philip and Bartholomew, all died a martyr's death, the cost of their witness to their belief in the truth of God.

The second 'why ?' invites us to question the paradox at the heart of our Christian belief about the nature of the God whom we worship: that he is a loving God so he is well-disposed to us, his children; that he is an omnipotent God so he has the capacity to do all that can be done. So if God could and if God would, then why doesn't he?

There are well rehearsed arguments – theodicies – to argue God's case for him. If we can choose, if we have real free will, then God is necessarily limiting his freedom to intervene by giving us the space freely to decide, the space freely to love. That the gift of feeling means that we can feel both pleasure and pain. That our experience of pain may teach us useful and necessary lessons. That the gift of life means that we are also gifted with death. Beginnings have ends.

Now whether any such argument convinces you will depend on how you make sense of the world in which we live. No one will convince anyone of the truth of what we believe simply by rational debate. All we can do as people of faith is to share our experience of what is

authentic; share what we find to be real for us; share what we know has the ring of truth to us. That is why it is well worth every generation hearing afresh the stories of the heroes of our faith like Bartholomew and his friend, Philip.

For me, I'd like to think that our vocation as people is to serve other people. It's how we live that matters for by loving our neighbour, we are demonstrating the truth of a loving God who loves us as a father loves his son, as a mother her daughter, as a parent their child. And, as you know, love costs.

To me, the world in which we live is both dynamic and real, a place where our God is not toying with us and treating us like pets wrapped in cotton wool. Instead, he allows us to grow through experience, pleasant and harsh, and to make our own choices with sufficient space to come to him in love. And, as you know, freedom has a price.

Bartholomew, in his life and through his death, did just that - not only for himself, not only for the people of Armenia, but also for all those who have been touched by the truth of the gospel of which he is but part. His skin, therein his identity, was taken from him and with it his life. Like his life, his death is his gift to us which mirrors his commitment to God embodied in his resolve to follow Jesus. For him, there is real pain but in the context of what Bartholomew believes to be true, that pain has meaning.

Life is worth dying for;
Love is worth the giving.

There are no easy answers but I hope 'The Bartholomew Gospel' will encourage you to take another look at a familiar story and to reflect on what it might mean to you.

