

Diary dates for October and November 2016

3 rd November	10.00 All Souls Service of Remembrance
9 th November	20.00 'Judas Iscariot – Redeemed?'
13 th November	11.00 Remembrance Sunday
24 th November	10.30 Council Meeting
26 th November	14.00 – 18.00 Xmas Fayre



Prayer of the month

Merciful God
you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding:
pour into our hearts such love towards you
that we, loving you in all things and above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all we can desire
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.

Collect for Trinity 6



Prayer focus

The fruits of a Christian life



Verse of the Month

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.

John 10:14



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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October 2016

Dear Friends,

Friend ?

For nearly ten years now, I've begun my monthly pastoral letter in our church magazine with the words 'Dear Friends' and it occurs to me to ask the question what do we mean by calling someone 'friend' ?

My Oxford English Dictionary lists six meanings:

- 1 One joined to another in mutual benevolence and intimacy;
- 2 Applied loosely to mere acquaintances;
- 3 A kinsman or near relation;
- 4 A lover of either sex;
- 5 One who wishes another well;
- 6 One on good terms with another.

And, therein, the rich depth of meaning from an acquaintance to one we love; from wishing well to doing well; a family in harmony.

I guess the word 'friend' embodies the idea of being a Christian – certainly Quakers are known as the Society of Friends which tells us precisely what Spirit informs them – that of Christian love and fellowship.

Underpinning our legal status here in France are the Friends of St Bartholomew's and on the recent memorial plaque for Julian and Audrey Thompson are the words 'True Friends of St Bartholomew's'.

So I believe I may write to you as 'friends' but my question might be: what does that mean to you ?

Father Gareth.



Notices

- **Fund-raising** On 28th Aug our stall in the Braderie raised 426€ and our Silent Film evening raised 240€. On 25th Sep the post Harvest Festival nibbles and drinks raised 300€. Our thanks to all involved.
- **Deadline** for submission of material for the November edition of St Bart's is *midday on Thursday 27th October*
- **Church Finances for August**
Income: 11,701€ Expenditure: 4,546€

Readings in church

October 2nd Habakkuk 1 v1 – 4, 2 v1 – 4 2 Timothy 1 v1 - 14	19th Sunday after Trinity Psalm 37 v1 - 9 Luke 17 v5 - 10
October 9th 2 Kings 5 v1 - 3, 7 - 15c 2 Timothy 2 v8 - 15	20th Sunday after Trinity Psalm 111 Luke 17 v11 - 19
October 16th Genesis 32 v22 - 31 2 Timothy 3 v14 -4 v5	21st Sunday after Trinity Psalm 121 Luke 18 v1 - 8
October 23rd Isaiah 45 v22 - end Romans 15 v1 - 6	Bible Sunday Psalm 119 v129 - 136 Luke 4 v16 – 24
October 30th Daniel 7 v1 - 3, 15 - 18 Ephesians 1 v11 – end	All Saints Psalm 149 Luke 6 v20 - 31

Quotations of the month

If you want to see what children can do,
you must stop giving them things

Norman Douglas



Lancashire Jokes 10/12

In the Lancashire countryside, a farmer was driving a tractor with a large trailer.

A little boy shouted across his garden gate to ask him what was in the trailer.

“Fertiliser to put on my strawberries.”

“Really !” the boy smiled. “You should come and live with us - we put sugar and cream on ours !”

Lorraine Atkinson



Signs of the times 7/9

These play on words were sent to us by Geoff Scott

At the Electric Company:

"We would be delighted if you send in your payment on time.

However, if you don't, YOU will be de-lighted."

In a Restaurant window:

"Don't stand there and be hungry; come on in and get fed up."

Notes from the Council

September 1st

The Feast of St Giles of Provence and the meeting was very much focused on the fabric of our church building and our life together.

The servicing of the organ was again touched on and David Morgan will contact Andrew Cooper to commission the necessary work.

The idea of a flagpole, after due consideration, was dropped.

The ivy on the porch has been removed thanks to the hard work of David Morgan, Eric and Rufus Lambert. The depredation to the stone work is now clearly visible and repair work is to be commissioned as soon as possible and the possibility of work to our garden wall giving onto rue des Cèdres would be considered at the same time.

Work in the garden by members of the congregation is to be encouraged with the possibility of flexible working days and times.

Fund-raising events were discussed, with thanks for the hard work of those involved in our stall at the Braderie; the silent film in church with Pimms on the lawn; the St Bartholomew's Day lunch; a poetry afternoon; and the trio of concerts in July/August. The September Lunch for the Queen would not now proceed but there would be a post-harvest service drink/nibble and the Christmas Fayre is scheduled for the afternoon of Saturday 26th November.

At the heart of our discussion was always how best to be effective stewards of our church and how best to 'market' what we do and have to offer the wider community.

Father Gareth

Personal Reflections 3/6

By Ron Kirk

**Help for Heroes
2016 Big Battlefield Bike Ride
Commemorating the 1916 Great Western Front –
Ypres to Verdun**

*(Dedicated to My Two Mates:
Chris Downton and Andrew Burnett)*



Next stop was the La Bombe Indian Memorial where to my surprise I learnt the Portuguese were also involved in the conflict. Standing with Robert just taking on some water his front tyre suddenly deflated but as luck would have it there was a mechanic's van just 50 metres away to fix it. In the time it took me to take a drink and walk over, the mechanic had repaired the damage. What tremendous boys of Cycle-Tec they turned out to be, helping us all with our mechanical problems even to the point of pointing out to me my saddle was too low and the at the next stop they would adjust it for me and realign the gear selection. Sometimes, in adversity, you can have some luck and support.

Points of interest were appearing thick and fast. I was becoming conscious of a steady drip of emotional encounters challenging your composure as you had recounted to you the sheer magnitude of the events a century ago. The next stop was a slight change in that it related to how sometimes, when there is no alternative, you might have to resort to a bluff to get out of a situation.



Wise Words

Quotations and quips, submitted by the late Donald Soum.

Genius is childhood recaptured at will.

Baudelaire

I wish that dear Karl could have spent more time acquiring capital than writing about it.

Jenny Marx

God help the army that must fight for an idea rather than an objective.

Mark Helprin



Quickies 2 - 1/5

A further series from our Church Warden, Bill:

On a shower cap

Fits one head only.



Does anyone reading this collect stamps ?

If so, I think I've got a beauty – contemporary German *ab geht die Post!* I have a stamp, franked in Regensburg, Bavaria, celebrating – with a lovely picture – one hundred years of the existence of the Moehne Dam, which feeds the Ruhr industrial area.

The pretty stamp carries no mention whatever of a certain short disruption in service in 1943, courtesy of Britain's Royal Air Force.

First come, first served.

David Boggis 02 96 41 18 87

Book of Common Prayer
'Quotation of the month' – 6/20

O Lord our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day: Defend us in the same with thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance to do always that is righteous in thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.. Amen

Third Collect for Grace
Morning Prayer



It happened in St Bart's 4/8

None by name, but memories of some of our locum chaplains.

I wonder how many can remember the time when during a baptismal service, the chaplain had the children and some adults dancing, 'Ring a ring of roses'? This was to illustrate a point.

One of the chaplains decided to hold an afternoon Bible study in the flat, followed by afternoon tea. Quite a number of us went, including three of our senior ladies. The chaplain began and his contribution went on and on. Eventually we noticed that the three senior ladies, together on the settee, had changed allegiance, leaving the True God and joining Hypnos. Fortunately they were in a sort of blind spot as far as the chaplain was concerned. It was sad, that when he finished, no one was prepared to stay any longer to partake of the tea.

John Marshall



Historical Point

Just before the lunch break, we arrived at the village near Givenchy-lès-la-Bassée. The action that took place there is used by military lecturers to their students as an example of bluffing your enemy when there are few other options. In 1915, around 125 British soldiers were marching towards the village to find a contingent of around 450 German troops crossing the village bridge of which 100 had already begun to take up defensive positions in the local church in the centre. With only a few minutes to assess the totality of the situation the commanding officer ordered two platoons to take up positions in a flanking movement either side of the bridge and engage those crossing it. The question is what to do next? The CO ordered a full frontal charge making the enemy believe there were more of them and that the only escape route was back over the bridge from whence they came. A brilliant bluff!



Still there were more points of remembrance and commemoration before our first day was complete. The next site was Vimy Ridge where the whole of the Canadian Corps fought together.

Whilst we were commemorating the pain and suffering of the past, our forces today still bear suffering on our behalf. Help for Heroes is a charity whose sole purpose is to help our military and to work with like-minded international organisations. I am aware of the main support the charity provides but the next speakers provided a glimpse of the breadth of issues military personnel can face.

A couple from the USA related their experience as mine sweepers in Afghanistan. They thought they were operating in a cleared area when one of their colleagues stepped on an IED and was killed. The pair of them standing either side were blown off their feet receiving serious shrapnel wounds, scarring their bodies and requiring extensive surgery.

It was during their rehabilitation they became romantically connected. Unfortunately the nature of their injuries prevented them from having children the natural way requiring IVF treatment to have a family. They drew a blank from their own government to support them in the expense of such treatment. Through the auspices of H4H, pressure was applied and they learnt just a week before the ride they would be granted support. Just another example of how valuable H4H support is so valuable and compassionate. Let's hope they are not on the ride next year for a new arrival. To see them in their Lycra you would not believe the experience they had gone through.

As Robert was the only French-Canadian, he took part in the commemoration ceremony. Riders had come from several countries outside the UK, including the USA, France and Australia to take part, representing their veteran organisations linked to H4H.



Historical Point

The Battle of Vimy Ridge was a military engagement fought primarily as part of the Battle of Arras, in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region of France, during the First World War. The main combatants were the Canadian Corps, of four divisions, against three divisions of the German Sixth Army. The battle, which took place from 9th to 12th April 1917, was part of the opening phase of the British-led Battle of Arras, a diversionary attack for the French Nivelle Offensive.

The objective of the Canadian Corps was to take control of the German-held high ground along an escarpment at the northernmost end of the Arras Offensive. This would ensure that the southern flank could advance without suffering German enfilade fire. Supported by a creeping barrage, the Canadian Corps captured most of the ridge during the first day of the attack. The town, Thélus, fell during the second day of the attack, as did the crest of the ridge once the

Questions 'A wise child?'

Journée Mondiale de la prière, St Bart's, 5th March – a phrase grabs my attention, 'la sagesse des enfants'. Instinctively, I feel uneasy. Can a child be considered wise?

For more than thirty years, I was lucky to have taught 11-18-year-olds, some of whom were so much brighter, sharper, more intelligent than I could ever be. And it is clear to me that children, youngsters, young people, can demonstrate understanding and aptitude and really excel in so many ways. So why, I ask myself, does wise seem the wrong word to associate with youth?

When in doubt, use a dictionary, so I checked out my OED where I read the following:

Wise

- 1 Having or exercising sound judgement or discernment; having the ability to perceive and adopt the best means for accomplishing an end; characterised by good sense and prudence; opposite of foolish.
- 2 Skilled, expert.
- 3 Having knowledge, well informed, learned.

There was more but the above essentially encapsulates what comes over time: the acquisition of knowledge through experience – to be truly informed.

So can a child really be considered 'wise'?

Gareth Randall



Odd Words 'Good'

Good is something that I think I've wanted to be ever since I was a child – to be, in my mother's eyes, a good boy. But what does it mean to be good? Morally good? Fit for purpose? Admirable? Acceptable?

But what I'd like to consider today is what we might be saying by way of greeting or leaving: 'good morning'; 'good afternoon'; 'good evening'; 'good night'; 'good day'; 'good-bye'.

Well, the obvious factor in the phrase we use is the time of day: before noon, after noon, at the end of the day. But whatever the phrase we use, to my mind, our choice of words seems like an implicit act of well wishing. We're starting or ending our conversation, or simply acknowledging the fact of someone's presence, by wishing them well – may their day be good.

But the phrase I particularly love is 'good-bye' because the meaning is not immediately apparent. Yes, of course, it means acknowledging someone's going away but how are we wishing them well in this instance? Simply by saying to them, 'God be with you' - good-bye!

I wonder if the average disbeliever in God, doubter of things spiritual, knows what they're really saying when they say good-bye?

Gareth Randall

All Souls' Service – Thu 3rd Nov

At the above, we will be praying for all who died in 2015 and 2016 named in our Book of Remembrance but if you would like to add the name of a loved one to our list, please let me know beforehand.

Canadian Corps overcame a salient against considerable German resistance. The final objective, a fortified knoll located outside the village of Givenchy-en-Gohelle, fell to the Canadian Corps on 12 April. The German forces then retreated to the Oppy–Méricourt line.

Historians attribute the success of the Canadian Corps in capturing the ridge to a mixture of technical and tactical innovation, meticulous planning, powerful artillery support and extensive training, as well as the failure of the German Sixth Army to properly apply the new German defensive doctrine. The battle was the first occasion when all four divisions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force participated in a battle together and it was made a symbol of Canadian national achievement and sacrifice. A 100-hectare (250-acre) portion of the former battleground serves as a memorial park and site of the Canadian National Vimy Memorial.



Finally having covered 90km on our first day we could at last relax for an evening meal. The only possible serious issue that arose was the behaviour of some riders when cycling in France. Having now lived in the country for some six years I have become to appreciate that the vast majority of French motorists treat cyclists with a great deal of respect and will be patient and hold back when necessary to overtake and will always give you a wide berth. They do expect, however, that cyclists reciprocate by observing the cycle pathways, riding in a single line when traffic appears, and trying to overtake standing traffic on their nearside. They can get quite irate if you do not obey the rules of the road. I observed four riders riding abreast, transcending the wide cycle lane, oblivious of heavy lorries travelling at over 100km/h leaving them inches to spare to overtake. This was communicated over dinner to make eiders aware of the protocols when cycling on the Continent; it is different to the UK where most of the time it is utterly confrontational.

Victor Hugo our neighbour (5) Guernsey 1855-1870

After Victor Hugo and his family had hastily left France, been asked to leave Belgium and then expelled from Jersey, they soon settled in friendly Guernsey. My Great-Great Aunts saw them as well as other exiles turning up by their home at Hauteville Street. Not all well-to-do but often penniless and sometimes financially supported by Victor. One of these was Kesler, who Victor had originally met at the barricades in Dec 1851. He took him in and in 1871 oversaw his burial in one of the St Peter Port cemeteries.

The family soon gathered a number of pets around them. Charles Hugo obtained a dog he called Lux. This dog was the scourge of the neighbours in Hauteville Street and the Great-Great Aunts often saw the vicious Lux in the area. Victor Hugo paid out compensation to a number of people for torn and ripped clothing inflicted by Lux.

Victor himself bought a dog that he called Senat. He was a wanderer, so Victor had a small plaque attached to the dog's collar. On this, he had inscribed a couplet that read: 'I wish that someone would take me home. Profession: Dog. Master: Hugo. Name: Senat.' There were plenty of tourists in Guernsey interested in the great writer. Often Senat would return home with no collar as it had been stolen by someone as a souvenir of this famous international figure.

Madame Hugo spent less and less time in Guernsey. It was only in the first two years, 1855-57 that she was permanently in Guernsey. From 1863 to 1868 she only spent two months at the Hugo home. When she was away Victor and sometimes his sons dined several times a week down the road at Juliette Druet, his secretary and mistress. It is not surprising that when she was in Guernsey, Mme Hugo was a regular visitor to the home of my Great-Great Aunts where she found friendly shoulders to cry on.

Recipes for you to try

Over the next twelve months, Janet and her husband, Geoff, are offering us a series of easy-to-cook recipes.

Mermeester

This is from an old Habitat "Cook's diary". We're talking about the 70s now, but we cannot tell the exact year because the calendar has been cut off! It is full of wonderful recipes and we especially like mermeester, an old Dutch dish, because it is a very easy starter, full of flavour and seems to be very popular. It can be prepared and kept in the fridge for hours before your meal. Just cook it through for 15 minutes before serving.

- Take one hard-boiled egg per person and chop them up (the eggs not the people).
- Mix with about a tablespoonful of your favourite mustard to every four eggs.
- Stir in a pint of shelled cooked prawns, perhaps halved or quartered if they are of the large Dinard variety.
- Add lots of finely chopped parsley and two tablespoonsful of cream.
- Distribute this mixture between ramekins, sprinkle the top with a mixture of grated cheese and breadcrumbs and dot with little pieces of butter. (The recipe says an ounce of butter but that seems too much for four servings.)
- Pop the ramekins in a hot oven for 10-15 minutes or so.

The flavour is never quite the same twice running because you can use crème fraiche, vary the mustard variety, the amount of parsley and the cheese topping!

Janet and Geoff Scott

Film Review of the Month
'Eddie the Eagle' – Dexter Fletcher 2016

With the Rio Olympics this summer still fresh in our minds, at which the UK medal haul was exceptional, this flashback to the Calgary Winter Games of 1988 might just be what we need to cheer us up this autumn.

'Loosely' based on the actual success of a loser, 'Eddie the Eagle' is a 'story' with humour that will surely make you feel good. The central character is seen growing up, growing up with the wish to compete in the Winter Olympic Games. With a mum sympathetic (Jo Hartley) and a dad long-suffering (Keith Allen), Eddie has a dream and that dream he is determined to make a reality.

The main focus of the film is Eddie's attempt to master ski-jumping as a way that will allow him to compete at the Olympics. Through determination, in the face of no little opposition, he does !

This feel-good film is rich in a range of interesting characters: not least a hapless Eddie (Taron Egerton); Eddie's alcoholic, American coach (Hugh Jackman); the BOA official (Tim McInnerny); the commentator at Calgary (Jim Broadbent); fellow competitors like the Flying Finn (Edvin Endre).

Why bother to watch it ? It will make you smile; it will make you laugh; it will encourage you.

And the central message – it's taking part that matters, not winning, though surprisingly enough, this unique loser does set new British Olympic records in a sport that has understandably not been one in which we Brits excel.

Gareth Randall

In the first ten years in Hauteville House, Victor carried out a complete refit of the interior. He and Juliette scoured the local antique shops for panelling, beams, coloured plates, old tiles and fabrics. These all got built into the extraordinary rooms in a bizarre but artistic fashion. The Blue and Red salons were decorated with the embroidered silks stolen by troops from the Summer Palace in Beijing during the Anglo-French attacks. All of these are still in place as a museum and can be visited daily. The Great Great Aunts saw the continual stream of carpenters that arrived at Hauteville House, fitting and carving new pieces for interior decoration.

During this period the neighbours witnessed Adèle, Victor's daughter, loading her trunks for shipping off to join her mother in Europe. She never arrived. Instead she crept off to America to marry her lover, Lieutenant Pinson. He did not love her and she returned to Europe to live in a mental institution. The film Adèle II covers this story.

In 1861, Victor visited Belgium and Holland to gather final details for Les Misérables. Back in Guernsey he was receiving large bundles of proofs, which he altered and shipped back to Belgium for publishing. Victor demanded huge amounts of money for Les Misérables and got it ! Victor made sure that it was well publicised by advertising it throughout Europe, Russia and South America. From his home in Guernsey Victor organised all this publicity that turned out to be highly successful. Les Misérables - the social and historical drama of the nineteenth century, polished, rewritten and completed in little Guernsey, was an international best-seller.

Roger Berry
Guernsey. 2016



Book review
The English Reformation by Derek Wilson

England's King Henry VIII was more than the cranky, overweight, dagger-wielding semi-invalid we're familiar with from the famous portrait by Hans Holbein. OK, those unfortunate wives of his who failed to deliver an heir would have seen it differently. But in his younger days Henry was an intellectual, schooled in theology, whose non-ghost-written treatise on the matter went up for comparison with the works of the top specialist theologians of his day, and held its ground beside them.

Derek Wilson, of Cambridge, is described by Robinson, his publishers as 'one of our leading popular historians with more than 60 books to his credit'. This title, *A Brief History of the English Reformation* (pbk, £9.99, 452 pp), lives up to its name. I found it a highly compelling lay reader's introduction to the topic, on a par with William Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* as an introduction to Hitler's era.

And it's a page-turner. Picking up a book with that for a title, you wouldn't expect it to read like the latest Michael Connelly – and inevitably it has passages where sheer (essential) detail holds back the pace. But, on leafing through this racy yarn about how the Church that holds my personal devotion came into being, I found myself carried along by the narrative as if I'd *really* been reading Connelly.

Admittedly the Tudor period was never my speciality in history, but I was astonished, page after page (all right, not all of them) with the surprises I came across. Unlettered congregations I'd expected – but not priests so illiterate they could barely mumble their way through the Latin Mass, let alone explain it.

At this point, Wilson steers us to the real driver behind the English

Haikus

*The following four haikus in French by Claudine Ossola won the prize
at the August poetry afternoon organised by Dr David Norris*

frissons de parfums
abelia roses et jasmins
je suis au jardin.

lumière et nuages
un petit peu d'ineffable
ferme le garage

fenêtre ouverte
entre allégresse du jour
c'est le grand retour

tableaux immobiles
arrête le temps pour eux ?
un tout petit peu

and one from Paddy Vidal Hall

Seagulls look so proud
Holding my sandwich chest close
Humiliation

and one from me

A boy on a beach
Enjoying being a boy
Sand and sun and sea

GJR

☪ ☪

Julian and Audrey Thompson

Sadly, as most of you will know, Julian Thompson, former Church Warden, former President of the Association, died on 29th July after a long illness. His wife, Audrey, had died back in 2007 on 20th February. Both played a significant role over four decades in developing St Bartholomew's into the vibrant church we are today.

The actual funeral for Julian was in Hertfordshire in August but, in September, their son, Adrian, and daughter-in-law, Helen, were in church and our regular Sunday service of Holy Communion was dedicated to their memory.

Adrian spoke eloquently and at length of his father, outlining some of the many ways Julian had made a real difference. Not least to the fabric of the church, which he made sound and more welcoming and which Audrey helped to finance by her fund-raising baking.

At the end of his address, Adrian presented St Bartholomew's with the Royal Maundy money that Julian received at Westminster Abbey in 2011. It is the Church Council's intention to honour their memory with a brass plaque:

**IN MEMORY
OF
JULIAN THOMPSON d. 2016
PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION
& CHURCHWARDEN
AND HIS WIFE, AUDREY d. 2007
TRUE FRIENDS OF ST BARTHOLOMEW'S**

Father Gareth

Reformation (and the Continental one, initiated most famously by Luther with his 95 theses on the castle church door in Wittenberg): the Bible in the vernacular, so that anyone could read God's word.

This, to the priestly caste, was perilous subversion. If anyone could read the Bible for themselves, where did that leave the clergy who until then had been the only ones who could (at least supposedly) explain Scripture to their flocks?

Wilson tells us of the *English* Reformation, but he rapidly makes clear that the island's side of it was bound inextricably with events on the Continent. He goes on to make what for me is a sound argument that Henry's quarrel with the Pope was not wholly about the legitimacy of his second and subsequent betrothals. Far more than that was in play.

Readers are left in no doubt about how blatant the corruption was in the Roman Church during the High-to-Later Middle Ages. Nor does Wilson shrink from setting out the horrors of revolt against the Church and the price that rebels and 'convicted' heretics ultimately paid.

If you read *The English Reformation* you will seldom find it heavy going. Not never, seldom. This fast-moving historical account was an eye-opener to me.

David Boggis

Personal Column

Congratulations to:

Diane Desaize who was baptised in church on 4th September;

Oliver and Chloé Spier married at La Ville Bague on 3rd September;

and Fredrik and Sylwia Gardefors married at Le Chateau du Grand Val on 24th September.

Walking with Peter 10
Get out of gaol free

Not my first time in prison
nor I doubt my last.
John and me were arrested
the day I healed a beggar
outside the Temple,
by the Beautiful Gate.
The priests didn't like us
speaking up about Jesus
but we were let off
with a warning not to again.
But, of course, we did
and Herod Antipas,
wanting to please people,
had me arrested.
He'd already had James,
John's brother, executed.
After Passover, I was next.
Four sets of soldiers
guarded me in turn,
day and night.
2 outside the door;
2 in the cell with me;
chained to soldiers
by my wrists.
Not free -
no privacy - to do
what needs doing.
Not nice, not good,
not easy to be
alongside strangers
who don't like you.

It was dark.
I was cold.
I was hungry.
Then, like a vision,
like a dream,
out of nowhere
came an angel.
"Get up," he said.
"Get dressed.
Let's go."
I did as bid.
Asleep, the soldiers,
just lay there,
chained to the air.
I was free to leave.
The door opened
and I slipped out,
unnoticed, out
past the guards,
out into the night.
Alone in the street,
I made my way
to John Mark's house,
to the Upper Room,
where they were praying for me.
When at last they let me in,
I told them what had happened,
told them to tell James,
then sought safety elsewhere.
Later, I heard my guards
met the fate meant for me.
God knows why I was spared.
I guess He's other plans for me