

St Bart's



May, 2017



Services

Sunday 11.00 Holy Communion (with hymns)

Thursday 10.00 Holy Communion (said)

A warm welcome to all who worship with us.

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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May, 2017

Dear Friends,

Beautiful feet ?

Do you like the modern hymn that sets Isaiah 52 v7 to music ?

In the King James Bible, the Hebrew is translated as:

*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet
of him that bringeth good tidings*

Certainly, for me, one of the beautiful things about living here in France has been my introduction to a podologue. Now if you know a podologue is the French for a chiropodist, then chances are you will have tried one. And if you don't or have never had the pleasure of having your feet cared for by a professional, then let me recommend mine - Bastien D'Ersu, whose establishment is halfway up Avenue Edward VII on the right opposite the Hotel du Parc des Tourelles.

Certainly, I love the idea that feet can be beautiful. But here, in Isaiah, I am guessing that the prophet is using a transferred adjective - that the feet are not so much beautiful in themselves as the idea that they bear a man who has beautiful tidings to share with us.

Certainly, most of the time we go around with our feet covered - one would be mad to walk barefoot in public on pavements where there might be anything dropped on them from glass to dog's poo that could give one grief ! That said, I always go barefoot around the apartment and enjoy the freedom of being without shoes and socks.

As a priest, I'm appointed to be responsible for the care of souls; a podologue, on the other hand, is responsible for the care of soles.

Father Gareth



Notices

- **Our thanks** to Helen and Sharon and their team of helpers for the lunch at St Bart's after the Low Sunday service which raised 340€ for church funds.

- **Deadline** for submission of material for the June edition of St Bart's is *midday on Thursday 25th May*

- **Church Finances for March**
Income: 3,192€ Expenditure: 4,486€



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

**English-speaking meeting
Tuesdays at 6.00p.m.
(first Tuesday in the month - an open meeting)**

Maison des Associations de la Source
bd André Aubert
22100 Dinan

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Tel Richard C. 02 96 31 60 91



'Judas Iscariot – Redeemed ?' Unease

Slowly,
little by little,
it doesn't feel good.
I don't know why
but what he says
unsettles me.
He talks of Jerusalem:
of going there
to be handed over
to those in charge
who hate him.
He talks of suffering:
the need for each
to bear a cross.
What was joyful
is now so sad –
dust and ashes.
I don't know
what to do
or who I am
any more !
The man I loved,

the man I admired,

has lost the plot.

He rides an ass

into Jerusalem.

He lets Mary

extravagantly

waste money.

What was light

is now shadow.

How much more

can I take

before I

have to go ?



All in the mind

Mental illness is one of those phrases that can send a shiver down people's spines. Better, perhaps, the concept of mental health because all of us are somewhere on the spectrum of mental health.

One of the reasons mental illness is a scary concept is that it calls to mind individuals who have lost the capacity for rational thought. And that's exactly what mental illness is, even when the sufferer is someone perfectly harmless to anyone other than, perhaps, to himself or herself.

Harmless or not, mental illness carries a stigma. People do shy away from the sufferer once they know he or she is suffering. That's why sufferers so often hide their suffering, sometimes denying, even to themselves, that that's what's happening.

Depression - which I prefer to term 'depressive mood disorder' or DMD - is known, not for nothing, as 'the common cold of psychiatry'. Estimates vary, but the usual quoted figure is that one in four or five of us will go through an episode of DMD at some time in our lives.

Most people will get over the trouble in roughly two years, especially given help from the doctor. Sometimes, though, it's a lifelong condition.

I should know. I'm one of those who's struggled against DMD the whole of my life. Or at least from the age of about 12, when life started getting gloomy. It took a further *ten years* before a very wise and perceptive GP diagnosed it in me.

Today, I am 70 and have survived several totally intentional attempts to take my own life. Another attempt on my life is extremely unlikely. One reason is that I am in touch with a psychiatrist here in France (my grasp of French happens to be quite good, which helps). Another is motivation: as long as I stay alive and draw my pension, I can save for my grandchildren's university fees.

The third is quite simple: Saint Bartholomew's Church and the contact it grants me with fellow Christian believers. That contact creates a regular reminder of God's love towards me.

God's love is easy to forget. For more than 20 years, I worked nights, on London daily newspapers, and was free only one Sunday in three. That put tough limits on my church attendance, which fell almost to nil. Not only that: I had, to a certain extent, distanced myself from the Church after a non-conformist, evangelical

upbringing in which I ended up feeling I could never, ever meet the demands of a largely critical, often nitpicking congregation.

They were people who seemed to take pleasure in finding fault with other churchgoers. They scared me and I didn't want to be around them. St Bart's is, put simply, just not like that.

The experience of DMD is often one of feeling worthless, guilty, surplus to anyone else's life; of feeling that life itself is not worth having. Sometimes you can't even drag yourself out of bed. It is when I get feelings like those that I know, in hindsight, I have myself lost the capacity for rational thinking.

You lose your faith. Or at any rate, your faith is stripped down to its barest threads. You feel unworthy even to call on God to get you out of the fix your brain has put you into.

And, yes, it is the brain - malfunctioning. In neurological terms, something has gone wrong, in childhood, in the hard-wiring of the brain. (Parenthood is an immense responsibility - that is why I shied away from it for so long. You have too many ways to wreck your child's life at the mental level.)

Common as it is, DMD even today is not fully understood. On the other hand, a great deal *is* known about it and a huge range of

treatments have been developed, from medication - newer as well as trusted older forms - to ECT (electroconvulsive therapy: I've had some) and transcranial magnetism: using magnets close outside the skull to influence what goes on inside it.

Not all of those treatments are available everywhere. For instance, the talking therapy CBT - cognitive behavioural therapy - is unavailable anywhere near where I live in Côtes d'Armor.

So I make do with regular - albeit brief - contacts with a local psychiatrist, meanwhile taking large daily doses of medication including fluoxetine (Prozac). It works for me. It might or might not work for the next person struggling with DMD. Because we are all different and no two of us experience DMD the same way.

Finding the right treatment for you, for any individual affected, is a matter of trial and error. That opens up the risk that you might be prescribed something that affects you badly - some people speak of 'being turned into zombies' - and that consequently you might avoid medication altogether.

In my experience, avoiding meds after one or even more bad experiences is a mistake. Keep trying, and you'll find something that works for you. I had to keep trying for some years before I found the combination that works for me . . . and, even so, as I get older,

that combination might quite possibly lose its effectiveness, so that I have to try something else again.

The crucial thing is: persevere. Never stop trying.

Even with a set of meds that work, it won't necessarily be plain sailing. Prozac has side effects, severe in some cases. Personally, I take the view that as long as the stuff's keeping me coping with life, I'll accept unpleasant side effects, up to a point. I have ended up taking further meds to cope with the side effects, and then finding ways to cope with the side effects of the side-effects treatment.

Not only that. For me, the Prozac side effects have been fairly benign. Not everyone experiences that. Prozac is a powerful drug and sometimes it has the opposite effect from that intended - people start taking it and pretty soon feel even worse. *That is the point to go back to the doctor ASAP (seriously, we're looking at a medical emergency here) and switch to something else.*

Then you have the dilemma: do you let people know you are suffering from a mental illness or do you hide it ?

The best way of hiding it is, of course, to put a brave face on and carry on as if everything is normal. But you cannot always do that. You can never quite beat DMD. You can hold it to a draw for most of

the time - but sometimes the illness will get the upper hand, and at that point there's no way you can hide it.

I have strong personal views here.

No one likes being around someone who is depressed - it drags the whole mood down. Even so, facts are facts and I believe we should stare them in the face until we stare them down. OK, there's a stigma attached to mental illness - I've experienced that all right. So I see it as my job to join the increasing ranks of people who are prepared to say it out loud:

Yes, I am mentally ill. I am not a danger to you or anyone else, maybe not even any longer to myself. I will help and support *you* whether or not you help and support me. Just keep an eye on me, and you'll see that, most of the time, I'm just like you are. But when I'm ill, then I'm ill. Just like you. And, like you, I deal with it.

And, these days, I have the freedom to worship God alongside you and our fellow believers, and I have God to thank for helping me to keep the condition within bounds and for granting me the support that I get as a member of St Bart's, from Father Gareth and from so many, many other people here at the church.

I am 'out' as a nutter - a pretty highly functioning nutter - and I don't care who knows it. God forgives me and looks after me. What else should I need ?

David Boggis



A Valley Funeral

Again, another day to return to our family home in the Rhondda to celebrate the life of a dear family member.

Mindful of weather conditions and the M4, we rose early, showered, had breakfast and, then, the difficult decision - 'what to wear?' Recently, I'd asked a Priest, a friend of both Linda and myself. His response, essentially, was not what you wear but who you are that matters.

I'm old school, well-schooled by my late Father, a miner, who told me about 'walking funerals' in the Valleys. Then miners and their families observed the loss of family and friends in dark suits, white shirts, black ties and boots highly polished. Myself, a lawyer, I saw my Father's arguments were based on strict respect so I dressed accordingly. No easy matter given the present girth of my neck and midriff. I made a mental note to lose weight.

On arrival at the Crematorium, we placed flowers in memory of my Mother and Father and then had a few quiet words. As I wandered around, I saw evidence of the growing number of cremations, to my mind so much more a modern-day approach to a sombre occasion. Then, I remembered that just up the road over a hundred years ago, we had a 'Welsh Druid' who was the first person in Wales to have his

son cremated. At Llantrisant, there is a monument on top of the hill recording this event.

As we waited for the arrival of the cortege, reflecting on the life of our Brian, a truly great person, I marvelled at the numbers present, more than two hundred, so many mourners that a second chapel was necessary to accommodate the overflow.

There were a myriad of dress styles, dress codes, and I saw my Priest had given me sound advice but, equally, I felt at ease in myself, demonstrating both my ancestry and respect for someone I held in the highest of regard. Again, there was another sense of loss in that with the demise of us 'old ones' will perhaps come the loss of values of our earlier years. Indeed, I witness that almost daily but try not to stand in judgment. Never easy.

Linda and I were joined by one of my brothers and his wife and while Linda and Maureen sat next to each other, Roy and I had to stand. Brian was a great country and western fan so his favourite song, 'Six Spanish Angels' by Willy Nelson and Ray Charles, was played as he was brought in. Years ago, there would have been a plethora of hymns but I like this modern reflection of someone's life.

We then stood for the first hymn and I looked towards my sister-in-law who is a registered blind person. Maureen, a committed

Christian, knew the hymn off by heart - it came from her soul, not from any order of service. It made me realise how lucky I am.

With our loved one being laid to rest, we left for the Trehafod Heritage Park on the site of the old Bertie and Trefor pits and where my late Father worked. When asked where he worked, it was not either at Trehafod or the Berties and Trefor pits, it was in the 2'9" - the width of the coal seam.

Linda and I became immersed in my earlier life in the Rhondda and among family and friends and various well-rehearsed stories came forth, some not too flattering, including one of myself at a family wedding in short trousers. Apparently, there is a photograph which I must look out !

We had come to celebrate Brian's life which we did with both respect and gusto and now he is at rest, out of pain. The family will come together to support Diane, my niece, in her grief. Not a duty, something in-bred, simply a part of our lives - to look after those who are near and dear and whenever possible to be of help.

No plaudits needed: it's simply a lesson embedded in me by one Herbert Sydney Charles Ivin, a miner of the Rhondda Valley.

Ken Ivin

What is truth ?

A priest's reply

*The following is written by The Revd Brian Davies,
the first priest-in-charge of All Saints' Vendée, replying
to Sam Johnstone's response to my letter in the March St Bart's*

Some thoughts on a huge subject. Sam may be in danger of going round in circles. 'Who moved the stone?', written by a lawyer in the last century, began as an attempt to show that the Resurrection of Jesus was an invention and couldn't have happened. An examination of all the evidence by Frank Morrison, a man with legal training, compelled him to say that 'on the balance of probabilities' it did.

What kind of 'truth' are we talking about here ? Is there 'ultimate' truth or is everything 'relative' ? If the latter then it will be arrived at by reasoned argument based on agreed facts. I'm already in danger of going round in circles myself !

If we turn to 'spiritual' (religious) truth, then if such exists, for us as Christians it will be from the Christian perspective of 'revealed' truth. For Anglicans, the source of such truth is not arrived at by majority decision but is to be found in Scripture, God's word.

supported by Tradition and Reason. Essentially, I believe the Christian Faith is 'reasonable'.

What about you ?



Film Review of the Month

'Mr. Holmes' - Bill Condon 2015

If you like Ian McKellan, if you like Sherlock Holmes, then most probably you'll like this modern addition to the ever-popular stories centred on the private detective created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

In 1947, a couple of years before I was born, Mr. Holmes (Ian McKellan) has retired to a house on the Sussex coast where he is engaged in trying to reformulate his last case, 'The Adventure of the Dove Grey Glove' which Dr. Watson, in Holmes's view, has unsatisfactorily recorded.

The plot has three time frames/locations: Sussex (1947); London shortly after 1WW; Japan shortly after the 2WW.

In Sussex, Mr. Holmes is looked after by the local doctor (Roger Allam), his housekeeper (Laura Linney) and Roger (Milo Parker), her young son. The boy is surprisingly curious and intelligent and an unlikely friendship develops between them - Holmes introducing him to the mysteries of bee-keeping and Roger encouraging Holmes to resolve the mystery of the case he can't quite recall.

Essentially, the interweaving of threads of the three strands is fascinating: the growing unease of the present in which Holmes's health is failing; the mysterious disappearance in London before the War of the father of his Japanese host (Hiroyuki Sanada); the case of Ann Kelmot (Hattie Morahan) whose behaviour is making her husband, Tom, (Patrick Kennedy) deeply uneasy.

'Mr. Holmes' caught and held my attention from start to finish - a great way to spend some 90mins+ if you have the time and inclination.

Gareth Randall



Film Review of the Month

'The Lady in the Van' - Nicholas Hytner 2016

'The Lady in the Van', the film of the book by Alan Bennett, is a 'true' account of a real story - his involvement with Mary Shepherd, (Maggie Smith) who had a stationary, nomadic life in a van that ended up parked up his drive, a three-month stay that lasted 15 years.

A Christmas gift from my great niece, Charlotte, it was also on the TV that Christmas but it's easier to watch a DVD than to stay up long enough to start to watch a decent film on British television.

The film is engaging: no sex - well, just a hint of strangers in the night; no violence - well off screen, a cracked windscreen with a splash of blood.

Essentially, a psychological drama, the interaction of people and the question of what made Mary/Margaret the person she became. Mental instability ? Unkindness ? A gifted pianist not playing ? A failed nun, wracked with guilt and with problems with the rule of obedience ?

I'm not sure she's really very nice or that Bennett (Alex Jennings) would say he was really nice in making space for her, accommodating her on the edge of his life.

He, too, comes across as a troubled soul - two characters in tandem, in dialogue: the writer and the ordinary man trying to bring order to his disordered world.

Well, the end, an assumption, an ascension into heaven, renders it truly a fairy tale but 'The Lady in the Van' is a challenge to Christians to go the extra mile in helping those in need who are anything but a 'lady'.

Gareth Randall



Superstitious ?

*Sadly the following sent to me by Geoff Scott is not true
but I did smile to read it !*

Some time in the 19th century, the Royal Navy attempted finally to prove the old superstition among sailors wrong; that beginning a voyage on a Friday was certain to bring bad luck. To prove that this belief was wrong, they commissioned a ship named HMS Friday. Her keel was laid on a Friday; she was launched on a Friday; and she set sail on her maiden voyage on Friday the 13th, under the command of a Captain James Friday.

She was never seen or heard from again !



Breaking UK News - 18th April

Theresa May to call at General Election in June.



Odd Words

Out of sorts

Do you sometimes wake up in the morning not feeling yourself ? Do you ever go to bed weary from all that you've done during the day ? The phrase 'out of sorts' may well aptly describe the state you feel you're in.

But why ?

Writing the other day, I found myself typing the phrase, then wondering how it was spelt - 'SORTS' or 'SALTS'. Instinctively, the former, but the latter made sense to me as a possible bodily imbalance - a physical root for mental unease. Unsure, I checked it out in my 'Brewers Dictionary of Phrase and Fable' only to discover that it was the former, not the latter with the following explanation which I paraphrase herewith:

Out of sorts is best understood in the French phrase - 'être dérangé'. A pack of cards is out of order (deranged) when they are shuffled and the suits are mixed up, at random, out of due sequence.

So the next time you're feeling out of sorts, you'll know the phrase is rooted in a deck of cards !

Gareth Randall



Little gems 4/11

Sent to us by Peter Campbell

When I read about the evils of drinking,
I gave up reading



Questions

'Well being ?'

- ✓ Do you enjoy a sense of 'well being' ?
- ✓ Is 'well being' what you feel about yourself ?
- ✓ Is 'well being' a fact of your life ?

But what is 'well being' ? A sense of contentment ? A sense of being happy in your own skin ? A sense of being centred, at ease, accepting and accepted, respected and respecting ?

Is 'well being' being healthy at heart ? Is it being able to cope with being unwell ? Is it being open to joy - connected to joie de vivre ? Alive, awake aware, is 'well being' being in touch: with other folk, kind of kind; with God, faithfully practising your faith in Otherness ?

Whatever 'well being' is exactly, however you individually make sense of that state of mind and being, to me 'well being' is surely the fruit of a life well lived, of knowing that God is our Father and that one day we will come home to him.

Gareth Randall



From the lectern 2/10

Bill Hughes, one of two Church Wardens, usually has an anecdote to share at the end of his notices. If you missed one or would like to enjoy it again, then this mini series is for you.

A man returned from his doctor's surgery looking very sad so his wife asked what was wrong and was told he had to take a tablet a day for the rest of his life. Trying to encourage him, she said not to worry - that that was perfectly normal nowadays. But it didn't cheer him up: he only had 28 tablets in the packet.



Godly humour 1/3

Barry Jordan's son, Nathan, sent us this treat for Easter !

The pastor asks his flock, "What would you like people to say when you're in your coffin ?"

One member of his congregation replies, "I'd like them to say I was a fine family man."

Another says, "I'd like them to say I helped people."

A third responds, "I'd like them to say, 'Look ! I think he's moving !'"



Quotations of the month

Cricket - a game which the English have invented
in order to give themselves some concept of eternity

Lord Mancroft



Definitions of Wisdom in French 4/6

Michael Frankel sent me these little gems

Nous prévoyons de grandes choses pour l'avenir sans vraiment
connaître ce que sera cet avenir.

C'est ça L'ESPOIR.



What Father Gareth hasn't said yet 4/11

Word play from David Norris.

To buy French pancakes give me the
crêpes !



Wise Words

Quotations and quips, submitted by the late Donald Soum.

Desire makes everything blossom; possession makes everything wither and fade.

Proust

Histories are more full of examples of the fidelity of dogs than friends.

Alexander Pope

The biggest most disabling panic of our age is caused by one dread word -'elfansafety'.

Patrick Kidd



Crackers 4/11

Snippets from Xmas Crackers given me by Jim MacCormack

Have you heard about the new pillow made of corduroy ?

They're making headlines !



Readings in church

May 7th Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 2 v42 - end

Psalm 23

1 Peter 2 v19 - end

John 10 v1 - 10

May 14th Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 7 v55 - end

Psalm 31 v 1 - 5

1 Peter 2 v2 - 10

John 14 v1 - 14

May 21st Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 17 v22 - 31

Psalm 66 v7 - 18

1 Peter 3 v13 - 22

John 14 v15 - 21

May 28th Sunday after Ascension Day

Acts 1 v6 - 14

Psalm 68 v1 - 10

1 Peter 4 v12 -14; 5 v6 - 11

John 17 v1 - 11



Diary dates for May and June, 2017

4 th May	10.30 Council Meeting
17 th May -	Archdeaconry Synod
20 th May	St Jacut de la Mer
25 th May	10.00 Ascension Day
4 th June	11.00 Pentecost



Verse of the Month

A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Ezekiel 36:26



Book of Common Prayer

'Quotation of the month' - 13/20

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life; but above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we shew forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen

General Thanksgiving



Prayer of the month

May the peace of the God go with you,
wherever He may send you.

May he guide you through the wilderness,
protect you through the storm.

May he bring you home rejoicing
in the wonders He has shown you.

May he bring you home rejoicing
once again into our doors.

Celtic Blessing



Prayer focus

Well being

