



# St Peter's Parish Newsletter August edition 2019

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## Letter from the Vicar.

Last week, whilst traveling back from the West Country on the train I got to chatting with a very nice lady called Judy. She was a retired headteacher heading back to London after spending a couple of days looking after her new granddaughter. We began chatting as we shared an enjoyment in the stretch of the railway that travels down the Exe Estuary and along the coast of Dawlish and Teignmouth. If you've not been along that stretch, I fully recommend it, it's worth the train fare. Unfortunately it is the stretch that always gets washed out in big storms, cutting the West Country off from the rest of civilisation.

As we chatted she began to gather what I do or what I am (depending on your understanding of ecclesiology). Then, during the conversation, after a short lull, she shared that she had been a server. I asked why she stopped and initially she gave some comment about getting older and wiser. Thinking I had a convert to atheism with me I probed a little further, 'Why did you stop going to church?'. Her answer wasn't unusual. She said that she valued and enjoyed all the beauty in the world and could see how this might point to the existence of God but then why did God allow such awful things to happen in the world. Why did God allow starving children or broken people or natural disasters? She told me of some neighbours who were professed Christians. For years they had wanted a family and eventually they conceived and had a child but the child was born with a severe disability. She didn't elaborate any further but shared how the wife lost her faith and the husband struggled on for many years trying to make sense of this situation. Judy felt she could not believe in a God like that, a God that allowed such awful things to happen. And I don't blame her.

This is part of the age-old problem of evil. If God is so good, why is there evil? If God loves us why do bad things happen in the world? Why did God allow that neighbour's child to be born with a disability?

I think there are several things wrong with these questions. The basic premise that God is some sort of controlling divine oppressor for a start. Yes, God is our father. But God does not stand up above us punishing us and sending down judgement. God is not that kind of Abba. Through the cross of Jesus, in which our God died for us, a new understanding of our relationship

with God is born. Through his death and resurrection God now shares totally in our humanity, shares in our pains and joys, understands what makes us tick. It is in the hunger of the child that Christ continues to cry out to us, it is the disability that God shares, yes, even to the point of truly showing us how deep God's love is for us. I have met some amazing people living with disability who have taught me so much and, in many ways, shown me so much of God's love in their lives.

If we think God is there to kiss our wounds, to say there, there, pat us on the head and say, "everything will be fine" we are quite mistaken. God didn't even do that for his son who hung in agony upon the tree of shame. As Jesus cried out, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' no divine hand came down from the sky to take him down. No angelic host came and took away his pain. The salvation of humanity is not declared through some divine analgesic.

Creation is broken. In our sinfulness we see fit not to do all we can to repair it. We could, with our skills, solve world poverty tomorrow. The present Ebola outbreak in Uganda could be stopped in its tracks if the authorities would release the second strain of vaccination serum. We already produce enough food on the planet to feed everyone. We have the technology to make sure everyone has good sanitation and clean water. But we don't. That is not God's fault. Is it not the fault of broken humanity?

These may not be the answers to Judy's neighbour's trauma. There is another question there about our understanding of love, acceptance and what is normality. But that is for another time. I do think they show we have to stop seeing God as some inactive divine fixer and realise that through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we are shown a God that walks alongside us, that hears our prayers, doesn't always answer the way we want but always the way we need, that loves us so deeply and cries with us daily and only wants us to love her back.

The Passion story is one in which God shares in the reality and truth of the human condition. It is also one that draws us deeper into God's desire for that which is better, that is healed and whole, that is salvation and forgiveness, not just in God but in each other, for we are the body of Christ; it is in the one spirit we are all baptised into Christ. I hope I was able to leave Judy thinking a bit more about God and how the God she pictured is nothing to do with the God of the Christian faith (indeed the Abrahamic faiths); more a wrong way of understanding existence. I pray she and others like her, for there are millions, who actually do believe in God, otherwise how would the question stand, see that the God in the passion, death and resurrection of the Christ is one of love in all things, even the pain of our existence.

**Fr David**



# Contemplative Prayer

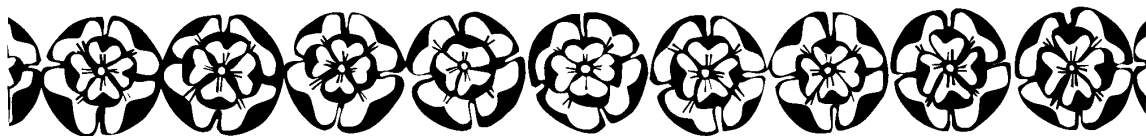
The Contemplative Prayer Group had its first meeting in July and we have come up with a programme we would like to share with you. For those who didn't see our article in last month's Newsletter the Contemplative Prayer Group has come out of one of our lent 2019 projects and is based upon the Contemplative Outreach an international contemplative prayer movement. Of themselves they say

“Many great Christian saints have cultivated contemplative prayer throughout the centuries: the Desert Fathers, John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, Meister Eckhart and Thomas Merton.

Firmly rooted in ancient Christian tradition, inspired by a centuries-old Christian text, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Centering Prayer was developed in the 1970s at St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts by three Trappist Monks: Fr Thomas Keating, Fr William Meninger and Fr Basil Pennington. The Contemplative Outreach movement has been growing ever since. People from all races, nations and faith traditions are discovering a way to develop a life-changing way of connecting with God by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

As from September we will meet as a group twice a month; on the first and third Wednesday's at 5pm in the Lady Chapel. We will use the time to share our experiences of practicing CP; to study and share in reading spiritual books and to support each other as we explore what CP might mean for us. The group is open, you are welcome to come along and find out more or share in the prayer time.

We are beginning on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September, 5pm in place of Evening Prayer. We will also practice CP every Monday evening as part of Evening Prayer. This allows us a regular slot in our programme of prayer in the parish. Again this is open to anyone who wants to come along, as are indeed all our prayer opportunities.



## Happy Birthday Ivy Café.

Our open group initiative, Ivy Café, celebrated its first birthday in July. Begun last year by Fr Michael and a small band of willing helpers Ivy Café is an initiative to provide fellowship and friendship with anyone who would like to come along. Ivy Café meets every Wednesday afternoon in the church hall from 3-4pm where tea and cake are liberally shared and enjoyed. If you would like to come along or you know of anyone who would like a little extra company and fellowship you would be most welcome. We have anything from 6 to 15 attendees, the group varies from week to week depending on who is around; there is always plenty of tea and cake and chat.



A little birthday party with plenty of cake.

## Harvest Celebrations 2019 – 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> October

We are planning a more traditional Harvest Celebration this year with a Harvest Supper on the Saturday evening and a Harvest Mass on Sunday. Please put this in your diary.

The Harvest Supper – this will be a hot two course supper followed by a little dancing. Bring your own bottles, soft drinks provided. Ticket cost to be announced.

Harvest Mass – we will be collecting offerings for the Ealing Food Bank again this year. No perishable items please. There will be a prize for the best presented Harvest Gift. A retiring collection for Water Aid will be made, please bring some extra notes!

## **Parish Pilgrimage – 'Along the Camino to Santiago de Compostela' 9<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> September 2020**



In the 9th century, the king of Spain believed he had found the burial place of Saint James and, ever since, pilgrims have made the long journey to his shrine in the magnificent Cathedral in Santiago de Compostela. Ideally, people walked the whole of El Camino, 'The Way of St James', whilst still young and carrying a pilgrim's scallop shell - our journey will be a little different.

Our 10 day pilgrimage is by plane and coach, but we will be walking some of the most interesting segments of the route (though this is optional). In addition to these walks, we will visit towns and cities along the way, seeing the cathedrals, monasteries, Romanesque churches, wayside chapels and bridges which stood on the ancient Way. We start our journey in the French Pyrenees and follow The Way across northern Spain, staying en route in very comfortable hotels.

This part of Spain has a mild climate and from June to September temperatures range from around 16-22°C, making it an ideal time to visit. A pilgrimage is a spiritual adventure, where the journey itself is as important as the destination. This will be a wonderful opportunity to walk, talk and share stories with each other, traditional ones and our own, as we travel together.

### **TOUR INFORMATION**

The cost is £1,645 sharing a twin-bedded room with private facilities. Hotels are of a good standard and locally graded with three and four stars. Accommodation is on a half board basis with breakfast and table d'hôte dinner included daily.

Our journey along The Way will be in our own air-conditioned coach with a local guide and all visits with entrance fees are incorporated in the tour price.

Flights are from London Gatwick with British Airways to Bilbao returning with Vueling Airlines from La Coruna to London Gatwick. Current taxes are included and all gratuities.

The travel insurance premium is £59 up to age 75 and £103 age 76-90 (no medical screening is required). Travel insurance is essential but you may have other suitable insurance.

Some single rooms are available at a charge of £295. But please read our note Travelling Alone in the brochure. Any special requests (e.g. special diets) should be printed on the booking form.

A deposit is payable on completion of the booking form with the balance due eight weeks prior to departure. Final flight and accommodation details will be confirmed in your travel wallet two weeks before departure.

Booking forms and brochures available from Fr David.



Last month, in response to a previous Newsletter article about Fr Michael's work on getting us involved in Eco-Church, an AROCHA initiative to encourage a more ecological friendly approach to our worship life, we called a meeting of those who might be interested in continuing this work. Unfortunately, those who had expressed an interest couldn't make the meeting. I wondered if we might give it another go. After all, the survival of the planet has to be one of the if not the most important question of our time. Each of us must ask what we can do to play our part. It should be part of our Christian life to ask questions about how we support rather than simply use the creation that God has placed in our hands; how can we make St Peter's more ecologically responsible? It may also be a forum in which we can explore theologically how we as Christian individuals as well as a Christian community can take our responsibility for creation more seriously. If you might be interested in being part of this project I shall be hosting a meeting at the Vicarage on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October (Harvest Sunday) at 12 noon. You will be very welcome

Please remember the work of our Food Bank drop point. When you go to the shops and there's 3 for 2 offers why not donate the 3<sup>rd</sup> item to the Food Bank. The shopping list below is what is being asked for this month but in the end anything offered is welcomed (though still no baked beans or tinned toms please).



**This months shopping list is:** Tinned Meat & Fish, Tinned Soup, Tinned Fruit, Long life fruit juice & squash - 1 litre, Jam & Peanut Butter, Rice - 0.5kg/1kg, Tinned Kidney beans & Chick peas, Tinned Custard & Rice Pudding, Potatoes - Instant & Tinned, Shaving Foam & Razors, Nappies - Size 3

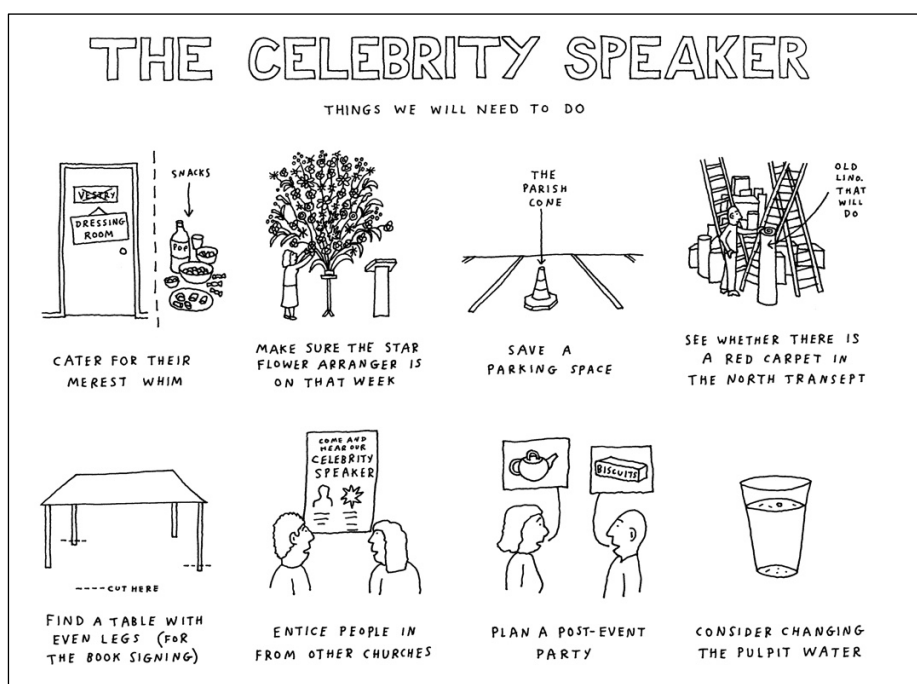
Please remember, no perishable items and please no baked beans or tinned tomatoes. We have a lot of those already. Thank you for all your support.

## Parish Contact Details:

Vicar:	Revd David Neno St Peter's Vicarage 56 Mount Park Road Ealing W5 2RU 020 8997 1620 david.neno@london.anglican.org	Parish Administrator:	Mrs Lesley Brooks St Peter's Parish Office St Peter's Parish Church Mount Park Road Ealing W5 2RU 020 8997 3655 admin@stpeterrealg.org.uk
Assistants	Revd Dr Margaret Joachim, c/o The Parish Office, Revd Harold Stringer, c/o The Parish Office	Parish Reader	Mrs Susan Peatfield, c/o The Parish Office
Churchwardens	Mr Trevor Bates, Mrs Jane Campbell c/o The Parish Office	Parish Treasurer	Ms Linda Foster c/o The Parish Office

## Worship at St Peter's:

Sunday	09.15 Pebbles (for 0-5s) 1st & 3rd Sundays of the month 10am Parish Mass with Stepping Stones in term time 5.30pm Evening Prayer (not in August)
Monday - Friday	8.30am Morning Prayer (not in August) 5.00pm Evening Prayer (not in August)
Wednesday	7.30pm Holy Communion (not in August)
For seasonal celebrations please check the weekly bulletin sheet	



## August Calendar

Date	Day	Event	Venue
<b>August</b>			
Sunday 4th	Trinity 7 <i>Proper 13</i>	10am Parish Mass	Parish Church
Wednesday 7th		15.00 Ivy Cafe	Church Hall
Sunday 11th	Trinity 8 <i>Proper 14</i>	10.00 Parish Mass	Parish Church
Wednesday 14th		15.00 Ivy Café	Church Hall
Saturday 17th		17.00-20.00 Parish BBQ	Vicarage
Sunday 18th	Trinity 9 <i>Proper 15</i>	10.00 Parish Mass	Parish Church
Wednesday 21st		15.00 Ivy Café	Church Hall
Sunday 25th	Trinity 10 <i>Proper 16</i>	10.00 Parish Mass	Church
Monday 26th		Bank Holiday Monday	
Wednesday 28th		15.00 Ivy Café	Church Hall
<b>September</b>			
Sunday 1st	Trinity 11 <i>Proper 17</i>	09.15 Pebbles 10.00 Parish Mass 12.00 Mission Team Meeting 17.30 Evening Prayer	Lady Chapel Parish Church The Vicarage Lady Chapel
Monday 2nd		09.00 Standing Committee Meeting	The Vicarage
Wednesday 4th		15.00 Ivy Café 19.30 Mass	Church Hall Lady Chapel
Saturday 7th		10.30 PCC Study Day	Church Hall
Sunday 8th	The Feast of The Blessed Virgin Mary	10.00 Parish Mass 12.00 Building & Grounds Team Meeting 17.30 Evening Prayer	Church The Vicarage Lady Chapel
Wednesday 11th		15.00 Ivy Café 19.30 Mass 20.10 Amnesty International Letter Writing Group	Church Hall Lady Chapel The Vicarage
Thursday 12th		19.00 Men's Beer & Curry	The Forester, W13 then Kathmandu Restaurant
Sunday 15th	Trinity 13 <i>Proper 19</i>	09.15 Pebbles 10.00 Parish Mass with the licensing of The Revd Dr Adam Dobrzynski by The Ven Duncan Green, Archdeacon of Northolt 12.00 Events Team Meeting 17.30 Evening Prayer	Lady Chapel The Parish Church  The Vicarage The Lady Chapel