



St Peter's Parish Newsletter

February edition 2020

www.stpeterealing.org.uk

The Vicar's Letter

I suppose it's a bit late to wish you a Happy New year, at least that's the result of an idle conversation I had last week at a clergy gathering. It was the first time we had been together in 2020 and a number of us greeted each other with the acclamation 'Happy New Year'. 'Oh, I've stopped saying that by now' was one reply hence the development of the conversation about when does one stop greeting people with the New Year felicitations.

One bright spark suggested the greeting should fall into disuse once we have given up on our New Year resolutions. Seemed a little pessimistic, admittedly it was said slightly tongue in cheek. There is a question here for me about sustainability. I gave up making resolutions years ago when I finally admitted to myself my seeming inability to sustain the disciple. I think I managed to keep one resolution going nearly to the end of the year. Part of the problem for me is the inherent falseness of the resolution. It is made because it is New Year not because it is necessarily something we want to do. I used to smoke and every New Year I would resolve to give it up and I would last about a week, if that. I eventually gave up because the time was right and I wanted to. It is shameful to say I even did it in the first place, what can I say?

There is a connection here with the life of faith. We know we're called to follow Jesus and we do so in many different ways; some by fulfilling a call to ordained ministry, some to lay ministry, some to the place of work or the bringing up of a family. As we fulfil this calling we know we want to come closer to God and we know a couple of ways to do this is to build on our prayer life and to study our faith. It can be a bit like that New Year's resolution, saying I will say my prayers every morning getting up 15 minutes earlier and reading my bible. We manage it for a few days, maybe a week or so and then the practice breaks down as other things get in the way. Or we say every evening before going to bed I shall sit down with a Christian book and read a chapter. Again we do this for a few days or a week or so and then tiredness, work pressures, dinner parties get in the way and the practice falls into abeyance. Like all resolutions planning for success is planning for something manageable, and when we fall out of the saddle rather than give up we get back on and start again. Lent gives a chance to do this. A short manageable programme of about 5 weeks is offered, either with prayer, study or reading. We can then set ourselves a gentle, new pattern which may be sustainable thereafter. And if not then we take the next opportunity offered knowing that it is a manageable chunk of time. If the plan works but not the timing let one of the Staff Team know and we can tailor programmes to suit. We want to help you grow in your faith, this may be a way to do it.

Safeguarding and Past Case Review

You will remember, at the end of 2019 the Bishops of London & Willesden asked all the parishes of the Willesden Area to participate in the first stage of a Diocesan wide Past Case Review of safeguarding issues. As your vicar I wrote to all past incumbents to ask if they knew of any cases that should be brought to the attention of the Diocesan authorities. We scoured the parish records (and our administrator's copious memory!). We wrote to churchwardens of the previous thirty years and we asked you if you could remember any instances you thought should be reported. The process took nearly two months and you will be pleased to know we returned a nil report to the Diocese.

Link to this should you ever come across something you think should be reported do not hesitate. We would much rather you spoke up and we discovered there was nothing to answer than for cases to go unreported. And if there is anything on this subject or relating to it you would like to talk about then do not hesitate to contact me.

Annual Parish Church Meeting 2020

The APCM will soon be upon us. Due to diary issues we have had to delay the APCM until Sunday 26th April. However, we are now asking for reports with the hope of publishing before Easter. All reports to Ailsa Stuart, our PCC Secretary please by 14th February.

There are several vacancies on the PCC this coming APCM. We are looking for a new churchwarden as Trevor Bates stands down; there are two Deanery Synod positions to be filled as the new triennium begins; three PCC members come to the end of their current term, Sue Barr, Simon Baker and Alexander Pridgeon, and we are carrying a vacancy. Please do consider standing for office. We cannot function without you.

St Peter's needs you!

Recently, in a conversation over coffee with one of my evangelical colleagues our conversation rambled into the subject of congregational involvement. "The one thing I am jealous of the catholic tradition," he said, "you have so much more in your worship congregation members can be part of." Indeed, much of our worship is dependent on congregational involvement: reading, welcoming, serving, intercessions and counting the collection. But it is dependent upon volunteers; and we are desperately short in virtually all areas and without more volunteers our worship life will change. You will have noticed for example the serving team is often down to two servers; intercessions team are down to five; there about a dozen readers. Yet there are many more in the congregation who could be part of this ministry. Please think and pray about this problem and ask God if this is the right thing for you to help out with. Servers do not have to be children, welcomers do not have to be adults. We can all share in these vital ministries in our church.

Fr David

Ministry of Healing

Throughout the Bible, God encourages us to call upon Him for healing. He says in Exodus 15:26b, "I am the LORD who heals you". Psalm 103:2-3 says, "Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits – who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases." God's Word reveals how deeply He loves us and wants us to have health and wholeness. God has the power to heal the whole person: spiritually, physically, emotionally and mentally.

We know, Jesus did this through prayer. The Word of God is full of accounts describing the power of prayer in various situations. The power of prayer has brought healing (James 5:14-15) and defeated demons (Mark 9:29). Jesus, through prayer, opens eyes, changes hearts, heals wounds, and grants wisdom (James 1:5). The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John give numerous accounts of how Jesus healed people of serious infirmities and illnesses, including blindness, deafness, leprosy, seizures, and paralysis.

Also, laying on of hands seemed to be a practice of Jesus and the early church. Jesus laid hands on people for healing prayer (Matthew 8:3; Luke 4:40). Paul used this for the bestowing of Spiritual gifts (2 Timothy 1:6). In Acts 6:6, when the church has chosen seven men to serve as official assistants to the apostles, "These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them."

During His earthly life, Jesus carefully prepared the disciples to perform these very same miracles. By His suffering and crucifixion, Jesus once and for all won our salvation, forgiveness, healing and eternal life. Through His resurrection, we have new life. Just before ascending into heaven, Jesus promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit would come upon them, empowering them to continue His ministry in the world (see Acts 1:8). Luke 9:1b-2 says, "He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick."

This was first fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), and the same Holy Spirit is available for us today. God is pouring out His Holy Spirit in our day and age – all we need to do is to come and to ask.

This is why the Church has specific liturgical prayers that can be said when seeking healing. The Book of Common Prayer, used chiefly in the Anglican and Episcopalian churches, has specific prayers for what it calls "Ministration to the Sick." And it is based on very specific instructions about healing. It has been given to us by James (5:14-16): "Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."

But as we can see, there is one condition before we will ask. Jesus said, "When you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins" (Mark 11:25). That reminds us, we should forgive others or seek forgiveness before we pray for our healing. Unconfessed sin, bitterness and grudges

can close the door for a miracle. Psalm 66:18 says, "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened."

Our task is simply to ask God in faith for healing, to believe that He is at work, and to trust Him for the outcome. Our faith is crucial. When Jesus healed two blind men, He said, "According to your faith will it be done to you" (Matthew 9:29). And yet, when Jairus requested healing for his daughter, Jesus said, "Don't be afraid, just believe, and she will be healed" (Luke 8:50). Acts 3:16 says, "It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see."

This is why healing may not take place due to lack of faith. In Mark 6:5-6 it says that only a few were healed and Jesus "was amazed at their lack of faith." But not only for that reason. We are not received what we ask for, because it is God's ultimate choice. We know that God is compassionate and merciful. He has full authority over all sickness and can choose to heal whomever He chooses. We don't always know all of the answers as to why. His answers may not be what we want. He truly knows what we need and sometimes there is something greater to what He does, than we may know or understand. Paul makes it clear that healing, like all the spiritual gifts, is given for the "common good" of the church (1 Corinthians 12:7). Healing ministry connects us to one another and encourages the path to wholeness.

So, prayer isn't about getting what we want. Prayer is about accepting God's will. This is why, the act of praying for healing should not be dramatic. Jesus often tried to keep the healing drama to a minimum. We should also remember that being answered is not based on the eloquence of our prayers. We don't have to use certain words or phrases to get God to answer our prayers. In fact, Jesus rebukes those who pray using repetitions, "And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him" (Matthew 6:7-8). We should pray according to the will of God.

So, come and ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives the best God's gift, and everyone who searches finds what he really needs, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened (Luke 11, 9-10).

Fr Adam

Rule of Benedict – The Three Legged Stool.

In our last Parish Newsletter we began to publish the talks offered at the Parish Retreat in October held at the Convent of St Mary the Virgin, Wantage. The theme for the talks being the spirituality of St Benedict and his 'three-legged stool' of faith, work and prayer. The first talk published in the last edition looked at the place of study as an important source of sustenance in the life of faith. This edition offers the second talk: Work.

Rule 48.1 "Idleness is the enemy of the soul; and therefore the brethren ought to be employed in manual labour at certain times, at others, in devout reading."

At the beginning of the summer I had the bittersweet pleasure of taking the funeral service of a past parishioner. I went back to my previous parish and had the joy of meeting up with old friends. After the burial we were all standing around chatting when Wendy said, "Hey, Fr David, did you know I had retired? It's the best thing ever!"

For many, work is the bane of life and if we can get out of it, we will. It is sadly too rare that people end up in jobs they love. Often as not they are jobs that have fallen into and have to bear because they have to pay the bills. Wendy had been a medical secretary. She quite liked her job. But even for her it was oh so much better being retired.

For Benedict idleness was the enemy of the soul. I doubt for one minute Wendy was idle and I know you who are retired rarely get a moment to yourselves let alone have idle hands. The question for a Christian, looking at our three-legged stool, is what kind of work are we engaged in?

In the letter of James we have a famous phrase – faith without works is dead (James 2.17). In other words, just saying the right thing and not backing it up is pointless. To say to some who is hungry "God loves you" and not showing it by feeding them for example.

It is no accident that as we read from Benedict's Rule the invocation to manual labour and the directions surrounding it were couched in the midst of prayerful reading. The idea that work and study come together, informing and shaping each other.

Without study how are we to know how a Christian should act live? We might want to call upon natural justice and what might be labelled 'norms' but here we are refereeing to faith. How does a Christian carry out tasks? Make decisions?

For Benedict, the work carried out, whether practical day to day tasks – cooking, washing, cleaning – or some more specific acts of charity – feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the prisoner – are all to be set in the context of understanding and informed decision making.

The tasks then become reflections, examples and outworkings of that more informed and knowledgeable approach to faith; don't forget it was prayerful reading Benedict encourages us to.

So how we approach work is important too; not just the occupation of idle hands but an informed expression of the faith we believe in; whatever that work is; laying the table, washing the floor, healing the broken.

James 1:22 (NIV) "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves but do what it says."

Lent Programme 2020

As with previous years we are offering a variety of opportunities to use the season of Lent as a chance for spiritual refreshment and renewal.

There are three extra options alongside our regular pattern of worship through the weeks.

On Sundays in Lent, Fr Adam will be leading a Sunday School for Grown Ups between 12 noon and 1pm entitled 'Do You Want to Be Healed?' In this Fr Adam will be offering space to explore the Eucharist, helping us to come to the core of our lives with fresh eyes and renewing our relationship with an act of worship begun by Our Lord Jesus.

On Monday afternoons, 2.30-3.30pm, Fr David will host a study group following the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent book for 2020, 'Saying Yes to Life', by Ruth Valerio. Following the first creation story in Genesis, Ruth helps us to think more deeply about the relationship between salvation and creation, about our world, our faith and our part in it.

Thursday evenings there will be Compline and reflection from 9pm. Ending the day with reflective worship, food for thought and silence, drawing us into the presence of God who loves us.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday. As in the previous couple of years we offer Mass with Ashing at 7.00am and 8.00pm. There will be 'Ashing to Go' on the Church steps from 7.30am until 8.30am.

Lent Programme 2020

Event	Dates	Venue
Ash Wednesday 7.00am Said Mass with Ashing 8.00pm Sung Mass with Ashing	Wednesday 26 th February	Lady Chapel Church
Sunday School for Grown Ups. 12 noon-1pm	1 st ; 8 th ; 15 th ; 22 nd & 29 th March	Lady Chapel
Say Yes to Life Study Group. 2.30-3.30pm	2 nd ; 9 th ; 16 th ; 23 rd ; 30 th March	The Vicarage (group size allowing)
Lenten Reflection & Compline. 9pm	5 th ; 12 th ; 19 th ; 26 th March & 2 nd April	The Lady Chapel



We continue to support the work of Ealing Foodbank. Sadly, the services of the foodbank are still desperately needed. So please remember the foodbank when you do your shopping and add a little extra so others might be able to eat in our borough. We have done brilliantly this year; we can always do more. Keep up the good work, it is so appreciated.

We received a fantastic quantity of Christmas donations - thank you! At the moment we only require the following items for our January Shopping List:

- Tinned vegetables - carrots, peas, green beans, sweetcorn, mushrooms;
- Vegetable Curry – tins; Vegetable Chilli – tins;
- Macaroni Cheese/Cheese Ravioli in Tomato Sauce – tins;
- Fray Bentos Tinned Pies - cheese & onion,
- vegetable balti - vegetarian flavours only please;
- Tomato Ketchup; Mayonnaise; Brown Sauce; Nappies - size 5.

Foodbank has plenty of pasta, baked beans and pulses thank you.

Candlemas Quiz Night and Supper in Aid of Christian Aid – Saturday 1st February 2019.

As part of our celebrations of Candlemas and the end of the festive season we will be holding a quiz night and supper on Saturday 1st February 2020. Tickets will be on sale from 5th January, £10 per adult, £5 per child (11+). Profits from ticket sales go towards the work of Christian Aid.



Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter 2019

Thank you to everyone who took part in the hosting of Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter this year. We hosted twelve guests including two women, one of whom was five months pregnant. Our guests were well watered and fed, kept warm and safe. They were a delight to host and we now wish them well. Please keep the work of Night Shelter in your prayers as the works continues through the rest of winter until the end of March.

February's Calendar

Date	Day	Event	Venue
Saturday 1 ST		18.00 Candlemas Quiz Night and supper in aid of Christian Aid	Church Hall
Sunday 2nd	Candlemas	09.15 Pebbles	Lady Chapel
		10.00 Parish Mass	Parish Church
		12.00 Buildings and Grounds Team Meeting	The Vicarage
		17.30pm Evening Prayer	Lady Chapel
Wednesday 5 th		15.00 Ivy Café	Church Hall
		17.00 Contemplative Prayer	Lady Chapel
		19.30 Mass	Lady Chapel
Saturday 8 th		10.00 Best Feet Forward	Langley and Black Park Meet at Church car park
Sunday 9th	Third Sunday before Lent	10.00 Parish Mass	Parish Church
		12noon Finance Team Meeting	The Vicarage
		17.30 Evening Prayer	Lady Chapel
Wednesday 12 th		15.00 Ivy Café 19.30 Mass	Church Hall Lady Chapel
Thursday 13 th		19.30 Deanery Synod	All Saints Church, Ealing Common
Sunday 16th	Second Sunday before Lent	09.15 Pebbles 10.00 Parish Mass	Lady Chapel Parish Church
		17.30pm Evening Prayer	Lady Chapel
Monday 17 th – Friday 21 st Ealing Borough Schools half term			
Wednesday 19 th		15.00 Ivy Café 19.30 Mass	Church Hall Lady Chapel
Sunday 23rd	Sunday next before Lent	10.00 Parish Mass with baptism of Luke Harris	Parish Church
		17.30 Evening Prayer	Lady Chapel
Wednesday 26 th	Ash Wednesday	07.00 Mass with Ashing 07.30-08.30 Ashes to Go	Church Hall Church Steps
		15.00 Ivy Cafe	Church Hall
		20.00 Ash Wednesday Mass	Parish Church