

St Peter's Parish Chest February 2015

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A monthly bulletin of all that is accomplished by and within our church's community

Suggested Contribution 30p

Letter from the Vicar

Lent: Stewardship and Prayer

Hopefully by now you are aware or at least are becoming aware of this year's Stewardship Programme. Cards on the table, we are financially up against the wall at the moment and when this became apparent to the PCC there was a strong desire to get a stewardship programme in place and quickly. There was to be a programme in May but that was a way off. I have to admit I was less than keen to have a stewardship programme in Lent. But timing being as it was we seemed to have little choice.

Lent should be a time of reflection and prayer as we prepare to celebrate the great resurrection feast of Easter. It is a time we set aside in the calendar to study and stretch ourselves spiritually (see suggestions in this issue for reading and prayer), not to think about the things of mammon, finance and the church coffers; or at least that is what I thought initially.

Stewardship is about our relationship with God and the place we give God in our lives. As Christians we believe that everything we have comes from God and without God we would have nothing. We may have possessions but being children of God we have a different view on the place of these transient things in our life.

In some ways stewardship is easy to talk about. Over the past few years we have become used to talking about church finances and we realise that the finances of the church are our responsibility. We realise that giving is part of our commitment to the life of our church. Stewardship should be part of our spiritual life too. And this is where I began to think that a stewardship programme in Lent wasn't such a bad idea after all.

Stewardship is about our relationship with God; this should also be a key element in Lent. The exploring or examining of our relationship with God, renewing our commitment to him should include stewardship. In fact isn't it a sort of stewardship in itself? Part of our Lenten journey is about taking stock of our life, spiritual and temporal; taking time to be in God's presence, taking time to reflect on our faith life, how we might make it stronger or better. We take on disciplines to encourage that reflection and to make us mindful of the God whom we profess; witnessing to the love we declare for him in our actions as well as our words. Isn't this integral to stewardship?

Over the coming weeks PCC members will be making contact with you as members of our community to

deliver information and to encourage us to constructively share in the stewardship programme.

I would also encourage you to reflect on how this programme can and should be part of your Lenten discipline, prayerfully approached as a path of engagement with God, deepening our relationship with Him and seeing stewardship as another tool at our disposal to be used as part of our spiritual journey.

'Shine as a light in the world, to the glory of God the Father.' (Matthew 5.16)

Fr David



The Light to lighten the world.

Candlemas Calls

This issue of *The Parish Chest* goes to press too late to include a report and pictures from our Candlemas Barn Dance held yesterday evening, **Saturday 31st January 2015**. We hope to include an account of this in the March issue. No doubt a very good time was had by all as we finally said goodbye to the Christmas season.

This year we have barely three weeks of Ordinary time before we start Lent and our journey to Easter - **Ash Wednesday is 18th February**. In this month's *Parish Chest* we shall look at some ways of making the most of the Lenten season (if that is the right phrase!) as well as looking forward to the great festival of Easter.

A Sonnet to start Lent



Malcolm Guite's new sequence of sonnets looks at some of the sayings of Jesus. His recent posting is a response to John 6:68 "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

You have the words of life, where should we go
Except to you, to try and take them in?
We want your words to quicken us, to know
And be transformed by knowledge deep within.
How is it then, these words seem dead in us?
We neither let them go nor let them live,
Their empty echoes always seem to haunt us,
As daily we refuse what they might give.
Oh Teacher we need more than just the hearing,
More than these readings we have set apart,
Somehow the two-edged sword we have been
fearing
Must pierce at last the well-defended heart.
Unsheathe it now and help us take the pain,
Pierce to the point where we can start again.

Malcolm Guite's website has a wonderful collection of his poems for all seasons of the church year. You can find these at malcolmguite@wordpress.com.

Daily Bread



After the pancakes....(www.kitchenist.com)

Lent is traditionally the time of fasting and restraint. It is certainly good to think carefully about the things we eat, drink and buy at this time and to see it as a period of physical as well as spiritual preparation for the feast of Easter. Some practise the discipline of eating more simply and donating the money not spent on more luxurious food to suitable charities. Whatever your practice, good hearty vegetable soups are cheap and cheering and the following recipe is an excellent accompaniment to a wholesome lunch or supper. The recipe is Nigella Lawson's with adaptations:

Really Easy Muesli Loaf

Ingredients

2¾ cups whole wheat bread flour
2 cups best-quality oatly unsugared muesli (do not use granola)
2½ teaspoons (1 package) rapid-rise or instant yeast
2 teaspoons or 1 teaspoon table salt
1 cup milk
1 cup water

Directions

Mix the flour, muesli, yeast, and salt in a bowl, then pour in the milk and water and stir to mix. It will be a thick porridge.

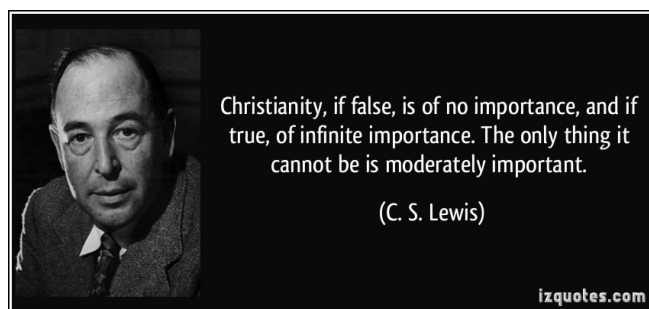
Transfer to a greased or silicon 2lb loaf tin or two 1lb tins. Put this in a cold oven, turning it immediately on to 225°F, 110° C, Gas Mark 1/4 and leave at this temperature for 45 minutes.

When these 45 minutes are up, turn the oven temperature up to 350°F, 180°, Gas Mark 4 and leave for 1 hour, by which time the bread should be golden and cooked through. Slip it out of its pan and although dense — it is that kind of loaf — it should feel slightly hollow when you knock it underneath. You can always slip it back in the oven, out of its pan, for a few minutes if you think it needs more baking. Remove to a rack and let cool.

Lenten Reading

Although we are not blessed with any more hours in the day in Lent, we do sometimes try harder to make good use of our leisure hours at this time. Perhaps we have not yet got round to reading some of the books we received for Christmas (or last Christmas!) or are looking for new suggestions? If the latter is the case, then the following two titles make suitable Lenten fare in their very different ways. Tom Kelsey reviews an unusual work of science-fiction by C.S. Lewis, while members of the St Peter's Book Club are reading *H for Hawk* by Helen Macdonald, so this is more of a preview than a review.

***That Hideous Strength* by C. S. Lewis** (first published in 1945)



Tom Kelsey writes:

The story plays out in *That Hideous Strength* like C. S. Lewis is not quite aware of the power of his own ideas. In fact, at times it would seem like the narrative marches on with the same peculiar lack of self-awareness with which Lewis wants not to attach to literary figures like himself, but to a particularly modern and powerful elite – the scientists. His book chronicles the story of a small group of quintessentially Anglo-Saxon eccentrics who, combined with the magic powers of Merlin and a

bear, manage to quash the efforts of the ultra-futuristic National Institute for Coordinated Experiments (aka NICE.) This is a story which puts tradition and Christianity against technocracy and modernity.

In fact, the rise of NICE was a direct product of the emptiness of the modern world. Lewis makes this point through one of the novel's main characters, Mark. He goes from working as a young academic in a besieged refuge of the traditional, the University of Edgestow, to being a stooge for NICE. Neither the content, the impact nor the purpose of his role at NICE is very clear to Mark, but they seemed to offer him the chance of being at the centre of something which had the look of being important alongside, of course, a very decent pay package. In this is Lewis' central criticism of modernity. The rejection of the traditional has produced directionless individuals who seek a sense of belonging not in the reality of things, but in how they appear.

This penchant for superficiality all goes back to Mark's education. Lewis described how it was neither scientific nor classical, but modern. Such learning left Mark as a "man of straw, a glib examinee in subjects that require no exact knowledge." This theme, the emptiness of modernity, can be seen across Lewis' work. For instance, there is a wonderful part in *The Screwtape Letters* where he describes how devils do not need to distract people through a good book any more as a column of advertisements from yesterday's paper will suffice. For Lewis the way in which modern society was organising itself was making it much harder for people to actually believe in anything and so was putting people's souls at risk. It is no surprise that when George Orwell reviewed the book he praised Lewis' portrayal of the mad way in which political enthusiasm for science had manifested itself in British political life, but loathed all of that sorcery. After all, one can see 1984 as *That Hideous Strength*, but without the wizards or God. But what connects the socialist in a Godless world Orwell and the Christian who loathed the state Lewis is that they both believe that society is about a shared conception of what constitutes the good life and in some way along the 20th century this had been lost. Whether one agrees with this sentiment or not, it is more interesting to think about than yesterday's advertisements.

***H for Hawk* by Helen Macdonald** (published by Jonathan Cape 2014)

Winner of the Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction 2014, this is the very powerful account of what happens when, devastated by the death of her father, the author buys and trains her own goshawk. Although critics agree that it is destined to be a classic of nature writing it also "a record of a spiritual journey...[and] at the same time, it's a kaleidoscopic biography of the troubled novelist T.H.White. It's a book about memory, nature and nation, and how it might be possible to reconcile death with life and love." Truly themes for Lent.

St Peter's Book Club will meet to discuss *H for Hawk* by Helen Macdonald, and *The Miniaturist* by Jessie Burton on **Monday 9th March 2015**. Please email sjpeatfield@aol.com for more details.

Bible Blind Spots



A thrilling moment in the Book of Esther

Another recommended reading activity might be to visit a book in the Bible that might have escaped our attention or memory. It might be that hearing a passage read in church on a Sunday we find it hard to "place". Some of the shorter books are easily managed in one sitting. In the Old Testament we might acquaint ourselves with the stories of Esther and Ruth in the books named after them. In the New Testament the First Letter of Peter to a young and struggling church, and the First Letter of John make fine reading.

To support this reading there is now a wealth of resources on the internet – not all of the same value! Biblegateway.org is fairly straightforward on most topics.

Film Food for Thought



No ordinary couple...

The Theory of Everything has proved a "must-see" film this year. Not just because of the extraordinary performance of Eddie Redmayne as he portrays, (one might almost say "becomes"), Professor Stephen Hawking, but also because of the wider questions it asks. The film deals with the love story between Stephen and his first wife Jane and the effect of Stephen's illness on their lives. It also looks at the background to the writing of *A Brief History of Time*.

It has been very favourably reviewed everywhere, but this account by Richard Barron touches upon some of the key issues at stake in what is so often framed as the conflict between science and faith.

Richard Barron writes:

The great British physicist Stephen Hawking has emerged in recent years as a poster boy for atheism, and his heroic struggles against the ravages of Lou Gehrig's disease have made him something of a secular saint. The new biopic "The Theory of Everything" does indeed engage in a fair amount of Hawking-hagiography, but it is also, curiously, a God-haunted movie.

In one of the opening scenes, the young Hawking meets Jane, his future wife, in a bar and tells her that he is a cosmologist. "What's cosmology?" she asks, and he responds, "Religion for intelligent atheists." "What do cosmologists worship?" she persists. And he replies, "A single unifying equation that explains everything in the universe." Later on, Stephen brings Jane to his family's home for dinner and she challenges him, "You've never said why you don't believe in God." He says, "A physicist can't allow his calculations to be muddled by belief in a supernatural creator," to which she deliciously responds, "Sounds less of an argument against God than against physicists."

This spirited back and forth continues throughout the film, as Hawking settles more and more into a secularist view and Jane persists in her religious belief. As Hawking's physical condition deteriorates, Jane gives herself to his care with truly remarkable devotion, and it becomes clear that her dedication is born of her religious conviction. Though the great scientist concluded his most popular work with a reference to "knowing the mind of God," it is obvious by the end of the film that he meant that line metaphorically. The last bit of information that we learn, just before the credits roll, is that Professor Hawking continues his quest to find the theory of everything, that elusive equation that will explain all of reality.

Why in the world would a scientist blithely assume that there *is* or is even likely to be one unifying rational form to all things, unless he assumed that there is a singular, overarching intelligence that has placed it there? Why shouldn't the world be chaotic, utterly random, meaningless? Why should one presume that something as orderly and rational as an equation would describe the universe's structure? I would argue that the only finally reasonable ground for that assumption is the belief in an intelligent Creator, who has already thought into the world the very mathematics that the patient scientist discovers. In turning his back on what he calls "a celestial dictator," Stephen Hawking was indeed purging his mind of an idol, a silly simulacrum of God, but in seeking, with rational discipline for the theory of everything, he was, in point of fact, affirming the true God.
(Reprinted with permission from RealPlaceReligion website)

Discuss! – and go and see the film!

Just a thought...

"You can get excited about the future. The past won't mind." (Hillary Del Piano)

Calling our own correspondents!



In between all the activities of the month ahead it would be wonderful if some more readers of *The Parish Chest* could write a short piece about something they are involved in, feel strongly about or have seen/read/thought and would like to share with others. If you have been thinking about writing something then please do turn that thought into action. Ideally pieces should be sent to sipeatfield@aol.com, but hand (see picture!) or typewritten articles are always welcome. Deadline for the March issue is **Wednesday 18th February**. For April, our Easter issue, it is **Wednesday 25th March**. Please get writing!

Lent reflections

Setting aside (or carving out) some time to pray or just be still is especially relevant in Lent. Christ the Saviour Church this year is putting on what promises to be an excellent course on prayer, called "Prayer:Explored" it runs for every Wednesday in Lent starting on **Wednesday 25th February**. For more details see the weekly news sheet. To register your interest email xthesaviou@gmail.com.

Here at St Peter's we shall be holding a series of short reflections followed by compline in the Lady Chapel at 9pm each Thursday in Lent beginning on **Thursday 26th February**.

Around the Parish



The Moullin House: Missing Mission?

The Editor writes:

Every Palm Sunday for many years the procession which starts on Haven Green pauses half way up Mount Park Road at **The Moullin House**, the large and imposing neo-Georgian building opposite numbers 23 to 29. Many at St Peter's will remember with affection the late Colin Pratt, and Stuart Macpherson who were wardens here when it was a Methodist Student Hostel.

Those who walk up and down Mount Park Road now though will see that it is in rather a sorry state, with ugly metal shutters on its windows and no signs of any purposeful activity. The following account of its history tells of the fine aims with which it was built:

"The Moullin House is a hostel for students owned and managed by the Ealing Trinity Circuit of the Methodist Church. The house was built through the generosity of Mr and Mrs T.J. Moullin in memory of Mrs Moullin's sister. The family were originally from Guernsey but lived in Ealing for many years. They were members of the Ealing Broadway Methodist Church. This church has since amalgamated with the United Reformed Church on Ealing Green and the original building is now used by the Polish Catholic Church. Mr Moullin was one of the founder members of the Pearl Assurance Company.

The house was opened in 1951. It is a four-storey, red-brick building in the Georgian style. The ground floor is mainly public rooms and there are single and twin rooms for about fifty people on the upper floors. The house stands in a prominent position on a curve along Mount Park Road. It is set well back behind a generous lawn and mature trees. The house was built to provide a Christian home with a family atmosphere for students coming to London for university or college, or for training in work." (Methodist website)

Neighbours of Moullin House noted the departure of the last students and found out from *Ealing in London Magazine* that:

"Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College's governing body has purchased the 50-bedroom Moullin House hostel in central Ealing for £2.6 million, which it plans to redevelop into a hall of residence for international students. (June 2013) Refurbishment work will start on Moullin House this summer, with a view to opening the accommodation for the 2013/2014 academic year.

The hostel was purchased from the local Methodist Church. Iain Mackinnon, one of the college's governors, said: "We are pleased to have come to a mutual purchasing agreement with the owners of Moullin House. 'This acquisition enhances the college's offer to its international students and commitment to provide a safe, comfortable and secure environment whilst they study with us.'"

It is now well into the academic year 2014-15 and the shutters are still firmly down.

Looking into this story prompted a memory of a conversation with an elderly parishioner in the early 1990s. Speaking of The Moullin House, this lady remembered when in the 1920s a maternity hospital had been on the site: St Faith's. A quick internet search found this intriguing advertisement (notwithstanding Tom Kelsey's final sentence!) in *The Times* of 8th May 1926.

"TWILIGHT SLEEP (specialized since 1916) or Ordinary Maternity. Resident specialist. Treatment also given at patients' own homes. — St. Faith's Nursing Home, Mount Park-road, Ealing, W.5. Established 1891. 'Phone, Ealing 1485."

Wondering what on earth "Twilight Sleep" was and what it had to do with having a baby, further research revealed the following:

"In 1913 two female reporters from McClures Magazine in New York, Marguerite Tracy & Constance Leupp, went to the Frauenklinik in Freiburg Germany to witness and write about "Dammerschlaf," the apparent miracle of Painless Childbirth. The Frauenklinik was the Women's Clinic of the State University of Baden, directed by Dr. Bernhardt Kronig and Dr. Karl Gauss. Dr. Kronig had both a scientific and humanitarian interest in the pain of childbirth and had been obsessed for a decade with the development of Twilight Sleep. He believed labour pain was destructive - causing trauma and terror of future births. He especially deemed this true for "modern" (weak, vulnerable) vs. "peasant" women (strong-willed, hardened).

Twilight Sleep was based on the earlier research of Dr. Richard Steinbuchel. Scopolamine, though derived from a highly toxic plant (henbane), was gaining acceptance in general surgery, but many obstetric experiments with it ended badly or in overdose. Reports, including those by Kronig & Gauss, recorded the desirable sedated state but also the problems and side effects: slowed pulse, decreased respiration, delirium. Experimentation continued, with repeated small injections of varied doses of scopolamine and morphine."

Hazardous or not it was clearly all the rage in 1926 as no fewer than ten other maternity homes advertise their services in providing "Twilight Sleep" in the same issue of *The Times*. In this period too we find details of rooms to let in Chiswick, Kensington and Piccadilly all for a few pounds a month - sometimes with meals too. Inflation aside, one must ask if there was seen to be a need for reasonably priced student accommodation in those days, how dire is the need in our current time of sky-high rents! If anyone knows what is happening at Moullin House please let us know, it would be good to see it awoken from its Twilight Sleep and to renew our connection with the vision of Mr and Mrs Moullin in our own day and age.

Looking forward...



Good Friday 2015 will not begin as in previous years with the Churches Together Walk of Witness but with an altogether more dramatic experience of the Easter story. This year an enactment of *The Passion* will take place on Haven Green and in the churchyard of Christ the Saviour. Rehearsals are now taking place, but there is still plenty of time to get involved in many different ways. Please speak to Helen Peatfield or contact her via sipeatfield@aol.com to find out more.

Monthly Martyr: St Valentine



The origin of St. Valentine, and how many St. Valentines there were, remains a mystery. One opinion is that he was a Roman martyred for refusing to give up his Christian faith. Other historians hold that St. Valentine was a temple priest jailed for defiance during the reign of Claudius. Whoever he was, Valentine really existed because archaeologists have unearthed a Roman catacomb and an ancient church dedicated to Saint Valentine. In 496 AD Pope Gelasius marked February 14th as a celebration in honor of his martyrdom.

The first representation of Saint Valentine appeared in a The Nuremberg Chronicle, a great illustrated book printed in 1493. [Additional evidence that Valentine was a real person: archaeologists have unearthed a Roman catacomb and an ancient church dedicated to Saint Valentine.] Alongside a woodcut portrait of him, text states that Valentinus was a Roman priest martyred during the reign of Claudius the Goth [Claudius II]. Since he was caught marrying Christian couples and aiding any Christians who were being persecuted under Emperor Claudius in Rome [when helping them was considered a crime], Valentinus was arrested and imprisoned. Claudius took a liking to this prisoner -- until Valentinus made a strategic error: he tried to convert the Emperor -- whereupon this priest was condemned to death. He was beaten with clubs and stoned; when that didn't do it, he was beheaded outside the Flaminian Gate [circa 269].

One legend says, while awaiting his execution, Valentinus restored the sight of his jailer's blind daughter. Another legend says, on the eve of his death, he penned a farewell note to the jailer's daughter, signing it, "From your Valentine."

St. Valentine was a Priest, martyred in 269 at Rome and was buried on the Flaminian Way. He is the Patron Saint of affianced couples, bee keepers, engaged couples, epilepsy, fainting, greetings, happy marriages, love, lovers, plague, travellers, young people. He is represented in pictures with birds and roses.

(Our usual Martyr columnist is preoccupied with GCSE revision, so this month's account is courtesy of Catholic Online.)

St Margaret of Assisi?



Unflappable!

It was of course, famously, St Francis of Assisi who preached a sermon to the birds. It was Margaret who presided at the Eucharist on the Sunday when we celebrated the Baptism of Christ with a blackbird joining in the choral moments and bringing down the dust of ages from the rafters. After the service Margaret performed her Franciscan act by enticing the by now tired and hungry bird out of the door with a sultana from an old Christingle!

Year's Mind

2 February	Richard Doe (2005)
4 February	Emily Caterer (1974)
9 February	Donald Gordon (1995)
17 February	Keith Hall (2005)
	Lionel Paget (2009)
18 February	Joan Price (2008)
19 February	Bernard Smith (1958)
25 February	Albert Dale (1991)

