



St Peter's Parish Newsletter January edition 2019

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Letter from the Vicar.

A new year has dawned (or soon will have) full of hopes and expectations and maybe just a few fears and concerns. On the whole we have no real idea what will happen as the year unfolds. We will have made some plans; maybe a holiday or two, a new job, new school plans but there will be lots of surprises as well as much of the same old same old. Much of the daily stuff will be just the same: get up, go to work or get on with the day, come home, supper, tv and bed. We look forward to the highlights but they are cemented by the grouting of the ordinary that runs through our lives. In this routine we can sometimes miss the important yet less obvious.

If you haven't heard I had the real joy of having a three-month Study Leave towards the end of 2018. I had lots of expectations and plans. It took two years to put together and what seemed like 5 minutes to carry out. One of the things I hadn't expected was a re-evaluation of the place of God in my life. Being a parish priest you wouldn't necessary expect that to be an issue. You would think a priest would have all that sorted. Well, you would be wrong. Priests, like everybody else (and yes they are like everybody else) take stuff for granted and trundle on through the daily tasks set in the diary, looking forward to those highlights they have planned, like anyone else, at the beginning of the year; holidays, family gatherings, conferences and the like. The ordinary, daily stuff is taken for granted.

I know we have in the ordinary daily stuff a set programme of prayer. That is one of the reasons we normally make the daily office, morning and evening prayer, a public affair. It is part of the job and it makes sure we do it. In the midst of this there is one thing priests do that everyone else does too I suspect; we take God for granted.

God is in the ordinary of life and wouldn't want to be anywhere else, for anywhere else would not be with us. To be anywhere else would be to be in the unusual and special places were we only go from time to

time. We have times that are special when we celebrate God and the story of salvation God has given us in Jesus; times like Christmas and Easter. For God these would be highlights and what God really wants is to be with us in the everyday. That is why when he came to earth he chose an ordinary, everyday family in Mary and Joseph. Being in the ordinary though means that God can be missed. God can be taken for granted. God isn't necessarily ignored, more over-looked.

In changing my routine I was confronted with this fact. In my travels I worshipped differently, shared in people's different traditions and patterns of worship. I had to force myself into a new routine for my own prayer and see prayer differently, and yes I could pray in an airport departure lounge...might just have to finish it after boarding. Of course it is in focusing on prayer that God returns to God's rightful place in the life of the faithful. God's place in our daily, ordinary life becomes more real and obvious as we don't take our prayer life for granted or even push it to one side because 'we are too busy'. Prayer does require us to stop and be focused, on silence as well as words. To be peaceful, respectful and honest. Being with God or realising his presence with us changes us and renews us. It does have to be intentional.

On my journey I attended a training on the prayer of Fr Thomas Keating a Cistercian (Trappist) Brother who has become a leading light in Western Spirituality at the end of the Twentieth Century, promoting Contemplative Outreach, an approach to centring prayer, a method of prayer that encourages us to purposefully engage with God in a very simple, gentle manner using silence and scripture. He admitted this is nothing new, just refreshed for a modern age. I have begun to find it an interesting way to pray. I say begun because like all these things it is a journey and at first I have found it challenging. Twenty minutes of silent prayer. Simple but challenging.

Over the coming year I hope to be able to share this with those of you who would be interested. As you make your plans for the coming year maybe this could be part of them. Even if not, think and pray about how you may be helped to be more aware of God in the ordinary everyday life you lead, so that you may let God come closer to you and you might get to come closer to God.

Happy Christmas and a love-filled New Year,

Fr David



Do please keep the foodbank on your shopping list. Winter is here and food becomes all the more important when you are cold. We are trying to help the people of Ealing who are struggling. Many who use the food bank are in work, they just can't make ends meet as food prices rise and wages don't. Especially in these uncertain times as jobs come under pressure your contribution becomes all the more important.

Foodbank is really pleased to accept any donation. However, this month they are particularly looking for:

Tinned meat; Tinned fish; Dried milk; Long life sponge puddings; Potatoes - tinned and instant; Long life fruit juice and squash; Tinned custard & rice pudding; Vegetarian chilli & curry – cans; Washing up liquid - small sizes please

And of course, if you can offer anything that would be great. Thank you for all you do to support those in need in our locality.

Stewardship Programme 2018: Giving in Grace.



Giving in Grace: The Results

On Stewardship Sunday - 23 September - 37 cards were completed, including three children's cards. This was significantly fewer than in 2017 when 56 cards were completed (this may be due to a lower attendance at this year's service), but we have received a number of "late" cards and the increase in pledged donations this year has been encouraging.

Looking at the "talents" offered, many people in our congregation continue to give most generously of their time and talents. There was a total of 161 individual pledges across 29 areas of activity/teams. The area with the greatest number of pledges were:

- To donate regularly and efficiently (i.e. by direct debit, or by one-off annual amounts)
- Working with the Ealing Night Shelter
- Praying for the Parish
- Distributing cards around the Parish
- Participation in the Reading Team

The majority of monetary pledges were for a monthly amount, with one weekly amount and several annual amounts. Eleven pledges showed an increase over the previous year, amounting to £284 per month, while 5 new pledges amounted to £352 per month, giving an annual increase of £632 per month or £7,632 annually - a much needed addition to our income.

Linda Foster

Ivy Cafe

Ivy Cafe is going from strength to strength as a means of community making, for many who are lonely or for whom the week can seem terribly long and boring - the coming together to chat and share food and drink is invaluable. Many come, not because they need to, but because others need them to be there. It is a ministry, in attending, smiling and being someone to share with. The future of the Ivy Cafe will depend on all those people themselves, and as the children in Pebbles say, 'sharing is caring.'

The numbers attending the Wednesday cafe vary from 7 all the way up to 24. Our average has just risen to 12, and so there is much to give thanks for. Jean Vanier has written, "In years to come we are going to need many small communities which will welcome lost and lonely people, offering them a new form of family and sense of belonging."

(Jean Vanier, *Community and Growth*, (New York, Paulist Press, 1989), p.283) Small communities that mingle and meet are healthy, and have potential to build and allow for a witness of Christian welcome and hospitality.

Hospitality is never far away from being a central theme of the Bible. From the hospitality of God in the garden of Eden, through Abraham welcoming his strange visitors into his tent; giving them food and rest; to Jesus and his feeding of thousands or his teaching on

hospitality as a kingdom value. Jesus even described himself as being a gate and a door, a doorkeeper and a stranger to be welcomed. Paul speaks of the church as 'one body', many parts needing each other and not one individual thinking too highly of themselves.

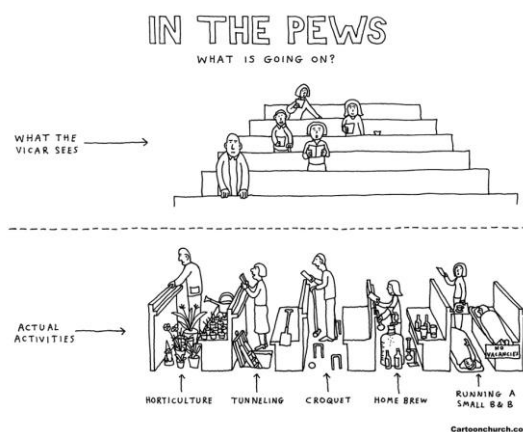
Hospitality is risky and inclusivity is not easy, but Jesus in feeding the five thousand or the seven thousand fed all that were there; he did not first ask who they were or what they stood for, what their party line was! For Jesus the neighbour was the 'other' - anyone in need or not, everyone was fed. Everyone has the need to be loved, accepted and fed for we are all empty in our need for God and God's grace, healing and forgiveness. This gift from God is what we share as Christians when we show hospitality to others.

At Ivy Cafe we give and share hospitality, where attendance is more important than putting money into a bowl. Ivy Cafe is free, to all who come through the doors, and yet, the church has never had to be asked for money. A welcome donation started the cafe off and subsequent donations have kept it afloat. We have so much to be thankful for.

Fr Michael

Beer and Curry – Thursday 10th January

The regular participants in the Beer and Curry group are always looking for more men to join in our time of fellowship over a pint and a curry. Our next gathering is on Thursday 10th of January 7.00pm at the Drayton Manor Hotel, West Ealing, followed by a curry at Haweli of Ealing on the 127 Uxbridge Road. Do let Fr David know if you can come, so that he can book a table for the correct number of diners.



Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter 2018.



“The church must never be surprised at who is inside the building, as in welcoming the stranger, we may be welcoming Christ himself.”

This is something I wrote as part of a reflection while at Ripon College Cuddesdon, and I have been reminded of this these first two weeks of the Night Shelter.

What a lovely group of people we have been able to host in our beautiful church building. Our guests have come in from the dark and cold and found a warm welcome and a warm drink. They decide where they want to sleep, which bed they will use and they make a little home with us for one night each week.

We have much fun, talking with them, playing games and eating together and there is much laughter and many smiles. After a night's sleep in a holy place they are woken by soft music and lights are gradually switched on and a hearty breakfast awaits them.

The offer of help from volunteers has been particularly impressive this year. We have many people from the congregation and the wider community to thank for their sterling work and on this my third year of involvement I am overjoyed to see friends who I see coming back year after year, because the volunteering is so rewarding. There is a feeling that this prepares us so well to celebrate Christmas when we welcome a little baby, God incarnate come to earth, and the child dwells among us.

Fr Michael

Reflections from the top floor flat.

There is a special mystery and awe at Midnight Mass each year and I must admit I never tire of it. For this is the night when God gives us the most amazing gift, His Son, Jesus Christ. And on this night we come to church with the poor gift of ourselves, with all our faults and worries and we are met by Jesus in bread and wine. The meal which he gave his followers at the end of his life, where Jesus gives himself to them and us in his body and blood, that life began at Christmas.

God's plan in sending his Son was to save us. Through his love for us he offers us all repentance and asks for service, that as we love our neighbour we build the kingdom on earth. At mass we share in that kingdom and we aim to make the Kingdom more real in our lives.

God uses very ordinary, and often poor people to make his plan work. He chose Mary, a village girl; Joseph the carpenter, a good man; Elizabeth and John the Baptist. God actually needs the help of these people for his plan for our salvation to become a reality. He asks of them and they say 'yes.'

And it's not much different now! He needs you and me to make his plans for this world work. For the kingdom to come on earth he needs good people who care about God and care about each other. Those who care about neighbour and care about this earth and all of God's creation are reflecting God's love for humankind and love will win the day. And love did win the day when the little baby in a wooden manger became the man on a wooden cross. *'And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.'* John 1. 14

Fr Michael

RENEWING THE LADY CHAPEL

The Lady Chapel Project will restore the unique and beautiful heritage of our Lady Chapel, and provide an enhanced space for prayer, meetings, and other activities. As well as conserving the wall paintings and reredos we aim to repair the Chapel's north wall and then redecorate it.

The project may encompass other pieces of work if funds allow, such as repairing the stained glass window.

Work will go ahead as soon as we have approval from the Diocese and funds are in place. The total cost is likely to be over £10,000 and we are seeking to secure a proportion of this sum via applications to charitable trusts and foundations.

To-date we have secured £3069 through the generosity of our parishioners who have made donations and via our coffee cup campaign on Sunday mornings after Mass. Please continue to support this initiative – for just the price of a weekly flat white coffee you will be helping to secure St Peter's for the future!

Moir Babary

January's Calendar

DATE	DAY	EVENT	VENUE
TUESDAY 1 ST	New Year's Day	12.00 Mass	Lady Chapel
SUNDAY 6 TH	Feast of the Epiphany	09.15 Pebbles 10.00 Parish Mass 17.30 Evening Prayer	Lady Chapel Parish Church Lady Chapel
WEDNESDAY 9 TH		15.00 Ivy Café 19.30 Mass	Church Hall Lady Chapel
THURSDAY 10 TH		Men's Beer and Curry	19.00 Drayton Manor Hotel 20.00 Haweli Restaurant, 127 Uxbridge Road
SUNDAY 13TH	<i>Epiphany 2/ Baptism of the Lord</i>	10.00 Parish Family Mass 17.30 Evening Prayer	Parish Church Lady Chapel
TUESDAY 15 TH		20.00 Christians in Central Ealing Meeting	Ealing Abbey Coffee Bar
WEDNESDAY 16 TH		15.00 Ivy Cafe	Church Hall
SUNDAY 20TH	<i>Epiphany 3</i>	19.30 Mass 09.15 Pebbles 10.00 Parish Mass 17.30 Evening Prayer	Lady Chapel Lady Chapel Parish Church Lady Chapel
WEDNESDAY 23 RD		15.00 Ivy Cafe 19.30 Mass	Church Hall Lady Chapel
THURSDAY 24 TH		19.30 PCC Meeting	Vicarage
SUNDAY 27TH	<i>Epiphany 4</i>	10.00 Parish Mass 17.30 Evening Prayer	Parish Church Lady Chapel
WEDNESDAY 30 TH		15.00 Ivy Café 19.30 Mass	Church Hall Lady Chapel