

St Mary's Parish Magazine



March - April 2018

50p

Notes from the Editor

Spring is almost upon us and will be here before the next Parish Magazine comes out! To celebrate that most magical of seasons I have selected two quotes:

That God once loved a garden we learn in Holy writ.

And seeing gardens in the Spring I well can credit it.

Winifred Mary Letts

Ah, how wonderful is the advent of the Spring! - the great annual miracle.... which no force can stay, no violence restrain, like love, that wins its way and cannot be withstood by any human power, because itself is divine power. If Spring came but once in a century, instead of once a year, or burst forth with the sound of an earthquake, and not in silence, what wonder and expectation would there be in all hearts to behold the miraculous change!... We are like children who are astonished and delighted only by the second-hand of the clock, not by the hour-hand.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

As we start to see the longer days, the warmer weather and the spring flowers bursting into life be thankful for the life you have, but never forget those who are less fortunate.

Tony King

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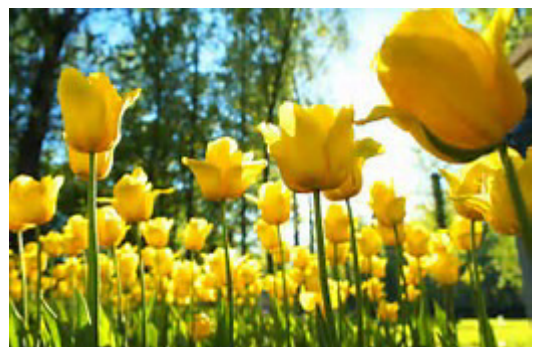
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Footnote:

Copies of the magazine can be posted to your home or friends and relations. Subscription rates are £6.50 for a year (6 editions), including postage. Please contact the Parish Office.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE RECTORY

CLARET & BLUE

In February St Mary's was full of claret and blue shirts from many different eras of Aston Villa's football strip. Although I'm a Villa fan myself, it had nothing to do with me. They were present in church for a very sad occasion – the funeral of Scott Bosley who had died after a knife attack in Warwick on Boxing Day. He was a big fan and had been watching Aston Villa play whilst in a pub on the day he was attacked. The case has yet to go to court at the time of writing so full details are not clear but his funeral prompted some thoughts about death in our contemporary world.

THE BLUES

The service included three tracks of popular music, two secular poems about death, a reading from Psalm 23, an address by me and some prayers, after which many people went to the cemetery for the burial. There were no hymns and no reading the coffin in and out of church. And I was struck by how many people in our culture no longer make sense of their lives and existence through the words and tunes which would have sustained so many in the past. Let me be clear, that's an observation and not the complaint of a grumpy old man.

BLUE SKIES?

As I drove away from the cemetery, I tuned into Radio 5Live where the newly-crowned, world beatbox champion was talking lucidly about his Christian faith. His stage name is Testament and he's just released an album called *Blake Remixed* which – as the title implies – uses the poetry of William Blake. One of the questions he was asked was: Why is Christianity so uncool in the UK? In essence, his answer was: because we're aware of its historical baggage and those Christians who've failed to live up to Jesus' teaching. Testament himself shows that it is possible to bridge the gap between faith and younger people. It is an enormous challenge but one that we should constantly rise to.

Vaughan

The Revd Vaughan Roberts

WE'RE DOOMED!

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus said that he would sit in judgement on the world, separating the people like the shepherd separates sheep from goats. The righteous, who had fed the hungry and given the thirsty something to drink, welcomed strangers, clothed the naked, cared for the sick, and visited prisoners, would inherit the kingdom of God; the damned, who had not done these things, would go to eternal fire.

This has become known as *The Last Judgement*, or *The Doom*. Jesus sits in glory with his wounds visible and may be portrayed with a sword emerging from his mouth, a golden sash across his chest, and seven stars in his right hand, following the description of him in St John's vision in Revelation. The dead rise up from their graves. On Jesus' right, the saved enter heaven; on his left, the damned are dragged by demons into hell.

Heaven can appear as a fortified city, or a garden, and St Peter may be welcoming the souls of the saved. Heaven can also be symbolized by a looped cloth held by an old man. The old man is Abraham, and the image comes from one of the parables of Jesus, in which Dives, a rich man, ignored Lazarus, a poor man who was starving at his gate. Lazarus went to heaven and Dives to hell, from where he could see Lazarus 'in Abraham's bosom'. 'Bosom' could also be translated as the fold at the neck of a toga, used as a pocket – hence the looped cloth. Hell is usually cavernous and sometimes the mouth of a monster, in reference to Leviathan.

Doom paintings, such as that in the Beauchamp Chapel, are often loaded with symbolism. A pair of scales held by an angel (it is the archangel Michael) is the weighing of souls, righteous souls generally being the heavier (the devil or a demon may be trying to skew the balance by tipping one side of the scales towards damnation, while the Virgin Mary tips the other side towards mercy); an angel (traditionally the archangel Gabriel) or angels may be blowing trumpets, from the account of the seven angels ushering the Second Coming in Revelation, and Jesus' words that in the last days 'he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call; a tree entwined with a snake is the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; a ladder symbolizes the cross, by which man can ascend to heaven. Specific sins can also be represented, for example a miser with his money bags.

KEEPER OF THE SPRING

The late Peter Marshall, an eloquent speaker and for several years the chaplain of the United States Senate, used to love to tell the story of "The keeper of the spring," a quiet forest dweller who lived high above an Austrian village along the eastern slopes of the Alps.

The old gentleman had been hired many years ago by a young town council to clear away the debris from the pools of water up in the mountain crevices that fed the lovely spring flowing through their town. With faithful, silent regularity, he patrolled the hills, removed the leaves and branches, and wiped away the silt that would otherwise choke and contaminate the fresh flow of water.

By and by, the village became a popular attraction for vacationers. Graceful swans floated along the crystal clear spring, the millwheels of various businesses located near the water turned day and night, farmlands were naturally irrigated, in the view from restaurants was picturesque beyond description.

Years passed. One evening the town council met for its semi-annual meeting. As they reviewed the budget, one man's eye caught the salary figure being paid to the obscure keeper of the spring. Said the keeper of the purse, "Who is the old man? Why do we keep him on year after year? No one ever sees him. For all we know the strange ranger of the hills is doing us no good. He isn't necessary any longer!" By a unanimous vote, they dispensed with the old man's services.

For several weeks nothing changed. By early autumn the trees began to shed their leaves. Small branches snapped off and fell into the pools, hindering the rushing flow of sparkling water. One afternoon someone noticed a slight yellowish-brown tint in the spring. A couple days later that water was much darker. Within another week, a slimy film covered sections of the water along the banks and a foul odour was soon detected. The mill wheels moved more slowly, some finally ground to a halt. Swans left as did the tourists. Clammy fingers of disease and sickness reached deeply into the village.

Quickly, the embarrassed council called a special meeting. Realizing their gross error in judgment, they hired back the old keeper of the spring...and within a few weeks the veritable river of life began to clear up. The wheels started to turn, and new life returned to the hamlet in the Alps once again.

SONGS OF PRAISE



Nahum Tate was one of that constant line of Irishmen who crossed the Irish Sea to London early in his life in order to make his way in the literary world. Unlike many of his countrymen he never quite made it, although he did write some hymns which will ensure his

name is remembered wherever carol singers and worshippers meet, for many years to come.

He was born in Dublin, the son of a scholarly clergyman called Faithful Teate, a Doctor of Divinity who adhered to Puritan beliefs. Young Nahum rather sensibly changed his family name slightly when he crossed the Irish Sea, by which time he had matriculated from Trinity College, Dublin.

Tate was an honest, unostentatious fellow, rather shy and retiring, for he suffered from an unprepossessing physical appearance which resulted in him going through life with a melancholy, downcast face. He also had a tendency to 'fuddle', so his personal affairs were constantly in a muddle. One imagines him in his London lodgings sitting at a desk with papers and books strewn everywhere, and a half finished stanza written on the back of an unpaid account from his local coffee house!

Fortunately he acquired the patronage of the Marquis of Dorset, who shielded him from his creditors to some extent, and he found that by writing verse in praise of various aristocrats he was at least able to pay the more pressing bills. Such verses were paid for in much the same way that portrait painters make their living today.

Time has proved him a poet and dramatist of no great repute, but he did enjoy his phases of success. His first play, *Brutus of Alba*, was performed in London when he was 26. He had by now built up some contacts with publishers and booksellers, for whom he acted as a translator and editor of other people's work, a useful source of his daily bread and butter. In his idle moments he composed and marketed his elegies on the rich and famous.

His tendency to borrow plots from other writers led to a mania for tin-

kering with Shakespeare's plays. He produced his own version of *Richard II* which opened in London in 1681, but it was repressed after three performances as it was regarded as too close a reflection on the actual political happenings of the time.

He also wrote his own version of *King Lear* which cut out the part of the jester completely and allowed Cordelia to escape death and marry Edgar. Although Joseph Addison protested about this outrage on Shakespeare's name, Johnson rather approved of Tate's revised edition, as he disliked witnessing the death of Cordelia. Remarkably Tate's version survived for over 150 years!

By this time his plays were being favourably commented upon by Charles II, although Tate's father back in Ireland, with his puritanical outlook, would have been considerably less enthusiastic.

Meanwhile, Tate was busy trying out adaptations of other people's work. Chapman, Fletcher and Webster all suffered at his hands before the days of copyright protection, but Dryden was happy to work with him. The two men joined together to produce a second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, Tate doing most of it and imitating Dryden's style rather successfully.

By the time he was 40, his patron had risen to the office of Lord Chamberlain, and largely through his influence Tate was appointed Poet Laureate in 1692 by William and Mary. One of his official duties was to celebrate in verse the victory of the Battle of Blenheim in 1704. Southey was later to place him at the bottom of the league table of poet laureates with the exception of his predecessor Thomas Shadwell, who died from an overdose of opium.

In 1696 he produced his *New Version of the Psalms* in metre, in conjunction with Nicholas Brady, a fellow Irishman who later became vicar of Stratford upon Avon. The ghost of William Shakespeare must have winced every time Tate appeared in his friend's parish in view of the treatment he gave the great man's plays, but the *New Version of the Psalms* was a major work, and although slow to catch on initially, it was 'allowed and permitted to be used in all churches, as shall think fit to receive it'.

Bishop Beveridge attacked the work as 'new and modish', and one sees history repeating itself here with the current reluctance by some to accept new versions of the Bible, the Prayer Book, and contemp-

orary hymns in modern English. But ultimately it was accepted and used almost everywhere, as one suspects will be the case of revised liturgical works today.

The *New Version* did provide us with three fine hymns, amid the mediocrity of the verse in general. These are *While shepherds watched their flocks by night*, *As pants the hart for cooling streams*, and *Through all the changing scenes of life*. These three hymns were almost certainly from Tate's pen.

Tate's best poem, *Panacea, a Poem on Tea*, appeared in 1700 and was well received by his friends in the London literary circle. But life was a struggle for Nahum, and his debts were mounting with each passing month. His philosophy on life seemed to be 'God will provide', which was admirable but none too practical. A hint of this appears in the fifth verse of *Through all the changing scenes of life*:

*Fear him, ye saints, and you will then
Have nothing else to fear;
Make you his service your delight
Your wants shall be his care.*

Tate's death in 1715 occurred in bizarre but predictable circumstances. With his creditors pressing upon him determinedly, he took refuge in the Royal Mint at Southwark, where the heat of the chase proved too much for his 63 years. He was buried in the nearby church of St George.

To Christians everywhere, the familiar words of his carol *While shepherds watched* will ensure that he has a welcome place in every Christmas anthology.

John Large

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FANCY THAT

Three clergymen were having lunch in a cafe. One of them said, "You know, since summer started I've been having trouble with bats in my loft and attic at church. I've tried everything, but nothing seems to scare them off." Another said "Yes, me too. I've got hundreds living in my belfry. I've even had the place fumigated, and they won't go away!" The third said, "I baptized all mine, made them members of the church, and I haven't seen one back since!"

NEVER A CROSS WORD!

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23							24					

ACROSS

1. A desire to jump on a cardinal! (4)
3. Clergyman – previous alternative? (6)
8. OT book shows the queen getting the point. (6)
9. Photos, we hear, of the heir to the throne. (6)
11. Hat and pipe maybe found in a graveyard. (7)
12. King gives that woman an overdose. (5)
14. First lady seen the day before? (3)
15. South Africa spirit, from Salisbury. (5)
16. Type of cross found in West Auckland. (3)
17. Scotsman goes to Germany and Spain – the devil! (5)
19. Beg for a tree in the Kent area. (7)
21. Socialist returns with young boy, and something for Jacob? (6)
22. Goddess then in hospital department. (6)
23. First child of many withheld esteem. (6)
24. A prophetess, whichever way you look at it! (4)

DOWN

1. Biblical tribesman thumped before getting drunk, say. (7)
2. Two Greek letters describe an iconic scene. (5)
4. Patriarch provides a support to Canaan's father! (7)
5. Singer who gets the general drift. (5)
6. Feel compassion for this plant. (3)
7. Always tear round a clergyman. (8)
10. Revolutionary abrasive to angels? (7)
13. Tamar was David's, after changing of the guard. (8)
15. Evildoers upsetting Erin's Nan and sister initially. (7)
16. Saint with heaters to be repaired? (7)
18. Prophet, commonly known as my father! (5)
20. Lucifer or Mr Claus in disguise. (5)
21. Priest confused? It's a fib! (3)

THOUGHT FOR FOOD

Spring salmon with minty veg

An easy-to-prepare healthy meal

Ingredients

- 750g small new potato, thickly sliced
- 750g frozen pea and beans
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- zest and juice of 1 lemon
- small pack mint, leaves only
- 4 salmon fillets, about 40g/5oz each



Preparation: 10 minutes
Cook: 10 minutes

Serves 4

Boil the potatoes in a large pan for 4 mins. Tip in the peas and beans, bring back up to the boil, then carry on cooking for another 3 mins until the potatoes and beans are tender. Whizz the olive oil, lemon zest and juice and mint in a blender to make a dressing (or finely chop the mint and whisk into the oil and lemon).

Put the salmon in a microwave-proof dish, season, then pour the dressing over. Cover with cling film, pierce, then microwave on High for 4-5 mins until cooked through. Drain the veg, then mix with the hot dressing and cooking juices from the fish. Serve the fish on top of the vegetables.

A chilled glass of Chablis makes a fine accompaniment!

NOAH IN MODERN TIMES

And the Lord spoke to Noah and said: "In six months I'm going to make it rain until the whole earth is covered with water & all the evil people are destroyed. But I want to save a few good people, and two of every kind of living thing on the planet. I am ordering you to build Me an Ark."

And in a flash of lightning he delivered the specifications for the Ark.

"OK," said Noah, trembling in fear and fumbling with the blueprints.

"Six months, and it starts to rain," thundered the Lord. "You'd better have my Ark completed, or learn how to swim for a very long time."

And six months passed. The skies began to cloud up and rain began to fall. The Lord saw that Noah was sitting in his front yard, weeping. And there was no Ark.

"Noah," shouted the Lord, "where is my Ark?" A lightning bolt crashed to the ground next to Noah.

"Lord, please forgive me!" begged Noah. "I did my best. But there were big problems.

First I had to get a building permit for the Ark construction project, and your plans didn't meet the regulations. So I had to hire an engineer to redraw the plans.

Then I got into a big fight over whether or not the Ark needed a fire sprinkler system.

My neighbours objected, claiming I was violating zoning by building the Ark in my front yard, so I had to get a variance from the city planning commission.

Then I had a big problem getting enough wood for the Ark because there was a ban on cutting trees to save the Spotted Owl. I had to convince DEFRA that I needed wood to save the owls. But they wouldn't let me catch any owls. So no owls.

Then the carpenters formed a union and went out on strike. I had to negotiate a settlement before anyone would pick up a saw or a hammer.

Now we have 16 carpenters going on the boat and still no owls.

Then I started gathering up animals, and got sued by an animal rights group. They objected to me taking only two of each kind.

Just when I got the suit dismissed, DEFRA notified me that I couldn't complete the Ark without filing an environmental impact statement on your proposed flood. They didn't take kindly to the idea that they had no jurisdiction over the conduct of a Supreme Being.

Then the Royal Engineers wanted a map of the proposed new flood plain. I sent them a globe.

Right now I'm still trying to resolve a complaint from the Equal Opportunities Commission over how many Croatians I'm supposed to hire, HMRC has seized all my assets claiming I'm trying to avoid paying taxes by leaving the country, and I just got a notice from the state about owing some kind of usage tax.

I really don't think I can finish your Ark for at least another five years," Noah wailed.

The sky began to clear. The sun began to shine. A rainbow arched across the sky.

Noah looked up and smiled. "You mean you're not going to destroy the earth?" Noah asked, hopefully.

"No," said the Lord sadly, "Government already has".



SAINT PATRICK'S DAY

St Patrick (c.390 – c.461), the patron saint of Ireland, is enthusiastically celebrated wherever Irish people have settled. He was formerly famous all over the English-speaking world for bringing Christianity to Ireland, although the heroic, almost single-handed nature of his ministry has been greatly exaggerated and his two most famous exploits – banning all snakes from Ireland, and using the shamrock to explain the doctrine of the Trinity to doubting heathens – are much later accretions to his legend.



The key feature of his day has long been the wearing of the symbols of Irishness: the shamrock, the harp, the colour green, and, previously, a St Patrick's cross. The first mention of the shamrock as a national symbol is found in the early 1680's. The same source also describes the wearing of crosses on St Patrick's Day, and for centuries the two symbols existed side by side.

Jonathan Swift, for example, wrote to his 'Stella' (Esther Johnson) from London in 1713:

The Irish folks were disappointed that the Parliament did not meet today, because it was St Patrick's day; and the Mall was so full of crosses that I thought the world was Irish.

The sight of Irish children wearing crosses made of coloured paper or card, decorated with silks and ribbons, on this day was a regular occurrence until the early 20th century. However, shamrocks and harps eventually took over. In her *Lincolnshire Calendar*, Maureen Sutton records that in the 1940s:

My grandmother would send my brother and I a little Irish harp made from cardboard and covered in green, white and gold silk, it was lovely. We wore it to school on the day, or a bunch of shamrock pinned to our coat.

Today, in urban areas with large Irish populations, grand St Patrick's Day dances are held, although even in Ireland these major celebrations of St Patrick's Day appear to be a relatively recent phenomenon.

Beyond these celebrations by Irish communities, the day does not seem to have been marked by any other traditional customs in England. Indeed, John Brand's *Popular Antiquities* (1849) and A R Wright and T E Lones' *British Calendar Customs: England* (1936 – 40), which are the key texts for customs research list no English events for the day at all. Perhaps the 'Irish' nature of the day was simply too strong to warrant any competition. Nevertheless, as with the wearing of Welsh leeks on 1st March (St David's Day), donning the Irish national emblem in England has frequently caused friction by bringing local tensions to the fore, and latent anti-Irish feelings, one of the least-attractive traits of English society, can often be seen below the surface. On 17th March 1944, two English women working in a munitions factory in Croydon recorded in their diary:

St Patrick's Day today and a great many Irish melodies on Music While You Work. Poor Moroney says that since the banning of travel to Ireland the people in the factory who don't like him make his life a burden to him by jibing at Ireland and the Irish..

In an unrelated tradition, recorded in Robert Chambers' *Book of Days*, it was reported that 'The early English calendars pretend that on the 17th March Noah entered the Ark (*introitus Noae in arcam*) and they add, under 29th April, *Egressus Noae de arca*' (Noah left the Ark).

Steve Roud

Poets Corner

Springtime

Bright daffodils adorn the ground
And rise where winter clods were found;
The air is full of scent and song,
(To God both flowers and birds belong);
Sorrows shaking heart and mind
Fall, as blossoms, in the wind.
Now Spring has come, and winter's past
Oh do not pass us by so fast!

Gavin Childress

AIRPLANE TROUBLES

A doctor, a lawyer, a little boy and a priest were out for a Sunday afternoon flight on a small private plane. Suddenly, the plane developed engine trouble. In spite of the best efforts of the pilot the plane started to go down. Finally the pilot grabbed a parachute, yelled to the passengers that they had better jump, and bailed out. Unfortunately there were only three parachutes remaining.

The doctor grabbed one and said "I'm a doctor, I save lives, so I must live," and jumped out. The lawyer then said, "I'm a lawyer and lawyers are the smartest people in the world, I deserve to live!" He grabbed a parachute and jumped.

The priest looked at the little boy and said, "My son, I've lived a long and full life. You are young and have your whole life ahead of you. Take the last parachute and live in peace". The little boy handed the parachute back to the priest and said, "Not to worry, Father. The 'smartest man in the world' just took off with my back pack."

AND FINALLY

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS 1 Hope 3 Pastor 8 Esther 9 Prince 11 Epitaph 12 Herod 14 Eve
15 Sarum 16 Tau 17 Demon 19 Beseech 21 Ladder 22 Athene 23 Eldest
24 Anna

DOWN 1 Hittite 2 Pieta 4 Abraham 5 Tenor 6 Rue 7 Reverend 10 Cherubs
13 Daughter 15 Sinners 16 Theresa 18 Medad 20 Satan 21 Lie

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