



ST GILES HORSPATH PARISH MAGAZINE

November 2009

Notes from the Vicar....

As you are probably aware, Horspath church belongs to a team of twelve churches in the local area, collectively known as the Wheatley Team. Over the past few months the four clergy members of the team: James Watson, Stevie Cross, Caroline King and myself, have been sharing the writing of the 'reflective' article for our various magazines, partly as a way of easing the workload, but also to give everyone a sense of their corporate identity. This month I have written a piece on the cult of saints. Whilst it has been very good to have a 'reflective' piece written by the members of the team, I am aware that there is at present no opportunity to inform you about the many exciting things that are going on in the church and what has been planned for the future. Therefore I hope each month to offer some 'Notes from the Vicar', in order to keep you as fully informed as possible.

As a team we were commenting the other day that once the children have gone back to school the rest of the year seems to quicken until we dive headlong into Christmas. This month contains a number of significant festivals from All Saints and All Souls on 1st November to Remembrance Sunday on 8th November. But I want to draw your attention to the Cluster service at the end of the month as well. I am fully aware that for many the fifth Sunday, if there is no service in St Giles, can be seen as a week off. I perfectly understand the deep attachment to your own parish church and the feeling that it is just not the same somewhere else. Of course it is not the same, but the difference is not necessarily a bad one. The last time the three parishes came together to worship was at the beginning of September for Evensong. For those of you who were there, either in the choir or congregation, I am sure you will agree with me that it was wonderful being in a full church along with the folk of Garsington and Horspath. Unable to sustain a choir separately when the three churches came together, we had a wonderful choir of over 40 strong. At that service we asked those who sang if they would like to sing at Cluster events. True to our word Jonathan will be contacting you about singing on 29th November for our Cluster service, which will be held in St Giles. We all have very busy lives so the commitment to sing would only be on the day, with a rehearsal at 9.30 am and the service at 11 am. I guess the Cluster service is what we make it. It can continue to be the non event that it is at the moment and a good reason to have a week off, but the opportunity it gives for us to deepen our fellowship with one another and to sing in a choir is something worth getting up for on that dark fifth Sunday in November.

Another event that took place in the summer but is still bearing fruits in the autumn is the August sermon series. If you remember with Jonathan and I taking the services across the Cluster in the month of August we decided to pool resources and preach for the five consecutive Sundays on Paul's letter to the Ephesians. For those of you who could only hear one or two of these sermons, I have edited them into a booklet, which is available in the church for £1. It contains not only the sermons but also the scriptural texts and questions to ponder. From general feedback it seems that the series was well received so I will be planning another series for Lent.

It was in August also that we decided to follow the archbishop's recommendation to cease the giving of the chalice at communion. I want to thank you for your understanding and sensitivity on this matter. Many people have been ill this autumn even if it has been only for a day or so. It seems that we have been wise in our duty of care to each other. However, following a discussion with Mark, we will review the situation once the cold weather comes in and hope very much that we will be able to hand out Communion wine in time for Christmas.

Finally, may I draw your attention to a couple of changes we have made to services this Christmas. The first is the shifting of the Christingle service to Candlemas in February. As many of you know, the Christingle service is a wonderful family occasion and can be celebrated at any time from Advent to Candlemas. Given that there is nothing to look forward to once Christmas is over and everyone has gone back to school, I thought it would be a good idea to try it in those dark winter days. Any helpful comments after the event would be gratefully received. Secondly, in the place of the Christingle service we will be holding a Crib service on the Sunday before Christmas at 11 o'clock where we will tell the story of Christmas and sing carols. I am very grateful that Jo, her staff and the children from the Nursery, will be singing carols for us.

If you would like me to make a pastoral visit or wish someone to be remembered in the prayers, please do let me know on 361381.

Emma

CHURCH SERVICES IN NOVEMBER

1st November – All Saints' Day

11.00 am	Cuddesdon Village Songs of Praise for All Saints' tide
3.00 pm	Service of Light to remember those who have died at St Mary's Garsington
5.30 pm	Time Out at Horspath Methodist Chapel

8th November – Third Sunday before Advent/ Remembrance Sunday

8.00 am	Holy Communion
10.50 am	Parish Communion with Act of Remembrance
3-4.30 pm	Messy Church

15th November – Second Sunday before Advent

11.00 am	Family Service with the Baptism of Molly Deakin
3.00 pm	Baptism of Susan Simpson

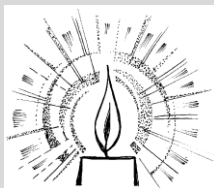
22nd November – Christ the King

11.00 am	Family Service with Baptism of Charlie Hodgson
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29th November – The First Sunday in Advent

11.00 am	Cluster Service at St Giles Horspath
6.00 pm	Advent Carol Service at All Saints Cuddesdon

A Service of Light
To remember and give thanks for those we love and see no longer



1st November at 3.00pm in St Mary's Church, Garsington, followed by tea
If you would like someone to be remembered at that service then please contact Emma on 361381

FLOWER ROTA FOR NOVEMBER

Sundays	1 st	Nell Gray Penny Mercer	8 th	Nesta Long Friends of Horspath Churches
	15 th	Brian and Carol Lowe	22 nd	Barbara Lewis
	29 th	Gill Gray Carol Cuthbert		

HORSPATH SENIOR RESIDENTS' CLUB

Wed. 4th November: Mini sale and fish & chips lunch, 10.00 am in the village hall

Wed. 18th November: Day trip to Salisbury. Coach leaves at 9.00 am. Fare is £8.00

Wed. 2nd December: Shared tea, 2.00 pm in the village hall

- Sheila Dandridge

HORSPATH GARDENING CLUB

Horspath Gardening Club meets on the second Tuesday of every month in Horspath Methodist Chapel at 8.00 pm. We welcome everybody so come and enjoy an interesting talk, followed by refreshments and a time to catch up on all the gardening news! The next event is:

Tuesday, 10th November: Mary Gill from **Headington Sustainability Group** will talk about what has happened in Headington during the last year and how everybody can help in all sorts of small ways to make a difference to the growing problem of global warming. How can we all help to make a *Low Carbon Horspath*?

Tuesday, 8th December: *Recipes and Tasters* from the autumn harvest and any special Christmas recipe ideas. Bring along a recipe or a taster, for jams, chutneys, pickles or Christmas sauces or accompaniments. We will be trying them and producing a booklet of recipes so that we can try them out for ourselves. Cheese and crackers will be provided, along with fruit juice and the usual tea and coffee. Come and celebrate an early Christmas treat!

There will be a charge to cover the costs of visiting speakers and the hire of the hall. For further information contact Sheila Frankum on 872793.

You are cordially invited to come and sing in the Cuddesdon scratch *Messiah* on **Saturday, 5th December at All Saints Church, Cuddesdon** – rehearsal 10.00 am-1.15 pm; concert 7.30 pm

Selected choruses and solo arias from Handel's great musical account of the life and significance of Jesus. To include: *O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, For unto us a child is born, I know that my redeemer liveth, The trumpet shall sound, Hallelujah!* chorus. Great music, great fun – mulled wine and mince pies!

Conductor and Chorus Master will be Hugh Jones, Director of Music at Ripon College Cuddesdon. The event is open to all (space permitting): those who wish to sing in the chorus and those who prefer just to listen.

For information and tickets (£5) please contact: Messiah@ripon-cuddesdon.ac.uk or tel: 01865 874404.

Brought to you by those lovely people from St Giles.

Contact Clare on 876439 or Revd Emma on 361381

MESSY CHURCH

*A family-friendly time full of fun, games, food and crafts
3.00-4.30 pm, 2nd Sundays at Horspath Methodist Church
Con't come alone - bring all the family along for the fun!*

VISIT THE Christmas Craft Show

**ON SATURDAY, 21ST AND SUNDAY, 22ND NOVEMBER
FROM 10AM TO 5PM**

AT THE BARN ON THE GREEN IN CUDDESDON (ADJACENT TO 12 THE GREEN)

FOR THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS PRESENT

SEASONAL REFRESHMENTS

**HAND-BUILT CERAMICS; DRAWINGS AND PAINTINGS; HAND-CRAFTED SILVER JEWELLERY;
FINE, COLOURFUL STONEWARE POTTERY; HATS, SCARVES AND JEWELLERY; TURNED WOOD**

Christmas Craft & Gift Fair

at Wheatley Park School, Holton

on Saturday, 28th November from 12 noon to 3.00 pm

**Come and do your Christmas shopping without the hassle of crowded shops!
Over 20 craft stalls selling wonderful trinkets and handbags to gladrags plus
tombola, fun activities, refreshments, Christmas hamper raffle and much more!**

Published by the Horspath Parochial Church Council. Subscription for the year £2.00. Single copies 15p each. Items for inclusion in the magazine should be left with Mrs Rosemary Goss at College Farmhouse, Manor Farm Road (tel: 874574) or email chris.goss@dsl.pipex.com by the 20th of the month, please.

Reflecting on the Cult of Saints by Emma Pennington

At this time of year as the evenings darken and all around us retreats into the deathliness of winter, our minds turn from this transient world to the heavenly realms and to those who people them. When I asked the children in an assembly recently what was the next major festival we celebrated after harvest it was of course Halloween. It is so much easier to have fun with pumpkins and witches costumes than it is to dress up as saints and yearn for the life of holiness. Today we have a distinct uneasiness about the cult of saints. As good enlightened and post Reformation Christians we have of course moved away from the dark and ignorant days of the medieval church and now need no help or assistance on our road to holiness, or have we? Last month the Roman Catholic Church did a remarkable thing. They took the relics of St Therese of Lisieux on a tour of over 40 countries and for a night and a day the relics came to the Oratory in Oxford.



For those of us who queued up and bought our rose petals to cast over the casket which held her leg and foot bones, it was as if the Reformation had never happened and the memory of our spiritual heritage had been reawakened. The Roman Catholic Church were naturally criticised for doing just that and reducing Christian faith to the superstitious days of the old Church. As someone who has been on a holy bone hunt around the country of Italy, piecing together the face, foot and hand of St Catherine of Sienna, I can sympathise with this reduction of faith to a gruesome spectacle but I have to say this time it was different. It was not so much the reverence and earnestness of the faithful who convinced me that to see the relics of St Therese was of great spiritual worth but rather the person whose bones I came to see. Whereas many saints are distant, superhuman figures whose lives are more legend than fact, here is a saint whose photograph we have.



For many she fits into that category of people, like St Therese of Calcutta or Maximilian Kolbe, whose devotion and courage are truly inspiring and stand above us as icons of perfection that we can look up to in awe. And of course this is where we want our saints to be. In the same way as our modern celebrities are airbrushed to look perfect, so too are the lives of the saints airbrushed into legends and models of sanctity.

However there is a difference: whilst the unhappy stories of marital breakdown and unflattering celebrity pictures too often bring out the unsavoury side of our natures, it is the failures and despairs of the saints that make them as such. For me, this is why I deeply wanted to be in the presence of St Therese, not because of her holiness and piety, not because she entered the Carmelite order at 15 and left a spiritual path of littleness that many could follow, not because she heroically bore such terrible pain and turned her suffering into joy but because for most of her time as a nun she knew none of the consolation of faith. She felt alone and abandoned. As Simon Tugwell in his *Ways of Imperfection* describes it, unlike her Carmelite contemporaries her life was not a gradual journey up Mount Carmel to an ever closer, if dazzling, relationship with God. Instead, it was a descent from the highest realms of communion with God in her early years to the very depths of despair. This was the extent of her spiritual life: non-existent. What makes her a saint is that in this darkness she found her vocation to love, to stand alongside those who were far from God and to pray for them, as one of them. On her deathbed Therese looked with joy to the life to come, not to find peace or joy in the presence of the Lord but to begin her work. As she writes:

'I feel that my mission is soon to begin - to make others love God as I love him... to teach souls my little way. I will spend my heaven doing good on earth. This is not impossible, for the angels in heaven watch over us....After my death, I will let fall a shower of roses.'



It was for this reason that the Roman Catholic Church took such a bold and potentially divisive step, for Therese is a saint not because she is better than us but because she is one of us. She does not so much show us the way to God as walk alongside as a fellow pilgrim and friend, reassuring us of the truth of God's saving love for all of us, both saint and sinner.