

Brookfield News

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The Sentinel's long wait

Richard Bewes

Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many..." (Luke 2: 34)

To Homer's waiting watchman of the Greek epic, The Iliad would fall the duty of lighting a beacon that would relay the victory of the Wooden Horse across the Aegean Sea - that Troy had at last fallen! With that, the sentinel was relieved from his long wait.

In his account of the presentation of the infant Jesus in Jerusalem's temple, Luke writes of the relief of another lone watchman – a devout Jew, Simeon – aware of the God-given message that he would

live to see the Christ of the world. Taking the Baby from Mary and Joseph's arms, he uttered a song of praise that – like a beacon - has been relayed everywhere, in words known as The Nunc Dimittis:

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel (Luke 2: 29-32 KJV)

Luke then records Simeon's next words: "This child is destined to cause the fall and rising of many..."

Here was a Figure who had come for the whole world universally - Gentiles and Jews alike. But there would be a cutting edge to His coming. Simeon spelt out some mighty truths:

Our chronologies turn on Jesus Christ. Simeon had been part of the Old Order. But from now, our very calendars would be dated from the arrival on earth of a universal world Saviour. Secondly,

Our characters turn on Jesus Christ. Whether nations or individuals were to 'fall or rise' would turn on the question, What did you do with Jesus? His coming represents Make or Break time for us all!

This Month.....A priceless find.....Page 7

Services

Sundays

11.00am Sung Eucharist

Children are welcome to our services .
There are toys and worksheets on the table
at the back of the church for them to enjoy.

Weekday Services

Said Eucharist

Tuesday 7.30pm
Wednesday 9.30am
Friday 7.30am

Saints' & Holy Days

Wednesday 1st March Ash Wednesday
9.30am Said Mass with imposition of Ashes
7.30pm Sung Mass with Imposition of Ashes

Clergy Day off: Fr. Guy is off duty on Monday but don't hesitate to call him in emergencies.

The Vicar is usually available in the Vicarage, 85 Dartmouth Park Road, from 8:00pm until 9:00pm on Tuesdays for the purpose of interviews, arranging Baptisms, reading of Banns and Weddings etc. he is also available to hear confessions then or by appointment.

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Our confidences turn on Jesus Christ. Here in the Christian Gospel is a blazing beacon – both to 'lighten' believing Gentiles, and to be 'the glory' of the true Israel – that is, the faithful people of all time who place themselves under His saving rule!

Do what we can to help...

Several women in the church prayer group were visiting an elderly friend who was ill. After awhile, they rose to leave and told her; "We'll do what we can to help. We promise to keep you in our prayers."

"Thank you," she said. "But, really, I can do my own praying. The thing I can't do is the dishes in the sink in the kitchen...."

Bye bye

Introducing Friday Focus

Churches across the UK are preparing for mission together in 2018 to make Jesus known. Friday Focus 2017 provides the opportunity for us to pray where we are, and unite across our nations on Fridays (whenever possible) supporting all ongoing mission across the UK and preparing the way for HOPE 2018.

Many Christian denominations, agencies and churches are already part of HOPE 2018 (www.hopetogether.org.uk) There are many local and national initiatives being planned to make Jesus known to people in our villages, towns and cities during 2018. The aim is to see the entire church mobilised to work together for a year of mission, so that the good news of Jesus Christ is shared in words and action. The dream is to see 10 percent church growth in these

next two years. But without prayer and seeking the empowering of the Holy Spirit, our work will not be as fruitful.

Each week Friday Focus takes a different theme: supporting national initiatives of prayer and mission; key seasons in the church's calendar; the different people groups highlighted in the Talking Jesus report (www.talkingjesus.org); the people we know and meet; the communities we are part of, and the places where we live.

Leaders from denominations, mission and prayer organisations and networks are writing the reflections based on a Bible passage, and there will also be a written prayer to accompany each theme. You can use Prayer Focus for private prayer or in church services and prayer meetings.

Colossians 4 verses 2-3 sums up what we long to see from this year of praying together. We want to see every individual and church devoting itself to prayer – being watchful and thankful. We want everyone to be asking God to open the doors for mission opportunities and asking for clarity as we talk about Jesus. We want to encourage each other to make the most of every opportunity, to give the reason for the hope we have, with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).

Do join in – and be part of the answer! Download the prayers from www.hopetogether.org.uk/prayer

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Colossians 4: 2-3

THE WAY I SEE IT : Resisting Temptation

by David Winter

Immediately after His baptism in the river Jordan, Jesus faced and resisted three powerful temptations during 40 days in the wilderness of Judaea. This time of testing and temptation was His preparation for the work God had sent Him to do on earth. It's the principle behind the season of Lent, which begins on 1st March. Although the temptations were personal to Jesus, I suspect most of us will recognize their relevance in our own lives.

The first was simple. 'You're hungry. You can do miracles. Well, turn these hot stones at your feet into loaves of bread'. It sounds

quite plausible, but in fact it's an invitation to put one's own needs first. Temptation rejected.

Then came the second: 'throw yourself off a pinnacle of the Temple. You know that God will send His angels to catch you before you hit the ground'. Again, it's plausible (there was even a verse from the Bible to back it up). But this would be to substitute one spectacular stroke for the hard slog of travel, preaching, healing and touching individual lives. Temptation rejected.

The third was outrageous. 'Fall down and worship corrupt and evil power, and you will have infinite worldly power and success'. In oth-

er words, abandon your principles and reap rewards. For the third time, temptation resisted.

I know these temptations were tests of the Messiah Jesus, but can't we see in them temptations that come to all of us from time to time? Look after number one, and all will be well. Take the short cut to success and avoid all the hard slog. Compromise, in order to fulfill your ambitions. Or walk the narrow path of honesty, commitment and truth. That's really the Lenten choice.

Unhappy in love

I think my girlfriend's hallucinating. She keeps telling me she's seeing other people.

Friday Focus

Prayers for February 2017

February 3 Prodigals Luke 15: 11-24

Jesus tells the story of the prodigal son who rejected his father and left home. But his father waited for him and welcomed him home with a party! Many of us know prodigals. Let's commit to pray for them to come home; that they might 'come to their senses' and realise their loving heavenly Father is waiting to welcome them back.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your generous love and grace to us. We bring before you the prodigals we know. We ask for you to have mercy - on us and on them. We pray that they may hear your call to come home. Give us open hearts and open homes to welcome them back. Amen

Jane Holloway, World Prayer Centre

February 10 Reconciliation in families Ephesians 6:4

This passage invites husbands and wives to love and respect each other, laying down their lives for each other. When this is our aim, we go a long way to providing the role model that our children need to be witnesses to the love of Christ, encouraging them rather than 'ex-

asperating' them, and building the kingdom of God as a family.

Heavenly Father, in Jesus you commanded us to love you, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. May this love begin in our homes, bringing healing where there is brokenness, understanding where there is frustration, joy where there is sadness and hope where there is despair. May we lay down our lives, as Jesus did, for our families and for those in need. Amen

Father Simon Penhalagan, Sion Catholic Community for Evangelism

February 17 What I have I give to you Acts 3:1-10

Peter and John could not bypass need. They had been called by Jesus Christ and filled by His Spirit. Moved with compassion for the beggar, they gave what they had. They had Jesus. They boldly stepped out in faith in Jesus' name. In the face of need, is knowing Jesus the motivation for all we are doing, and are we confident to share Him with others?

Wonderful Saviour, author of compassion, fill us with the language of mercy. Never let our love grow cold and in the face of need may we

always be so close to you that we can say 'What I have I give to you.' Lord let us always be filled by you; excited by you and living for your kingdom coming. Amen.

Fred Drummond, Evangelical Alliance

February 24 The Millennial Generation Psalm 33:11; 20-22

18-35 year olds have been dubbed the missing generation. They have left the church building and aren't fitting into traditional structures. But the Talking Jesus research (www.talkingjesus.org) tells us that they are very open to having conversations about Jesus. Let's pray for fresh outpouring of the grace of God on this vital generation that they may know God's dream for this world and all He has purposed for them.

But the plans of the Lord stand firm for ever, the purposes of His heart through all generations. We wait in hope for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. In Him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in His holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you (Psalm 33:11; 20-22).
Kiera Phyto, Tearfund

Download Friday Focus from http://www.hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/283989/Friday_Focus.aspx

Why you may soon be buying blue cheese and squid

This year, you will probably buy more blue cheese and less cheddar cheese. (Sales of cheddar fell by £60m last year). On the other hand, blue cheese is now even found in fast casual eating outlets, according to the

supplier Eurilait.

And soon you may not be eating fish and chips, but squid and chips. As the Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) explains: "In 2025 and beyond, we

may need to replace cod and other old favourites with warm-water species such as squid, mackerel, sardine and red mullet." Already squid is being found in more and more British fishing areas.

“Dear Friends...”

From the Vicars Desk

How good are you at communicating your faith? St Francis of Assisi is understood to have said: “Preach the Gospel at all times and if necessary use words.” I would certainly not want to argue with that sentiment, but it is none the less important in today’s world that we have confidence to communicate our faith.

So to help us on our journey of faith we are planning a Lent Course this year entitled “Faith Pictures”. Its a series sessions aimed at helping you to talk to friends, neighbours and colleagues about what you believe. At the heart of it is identifying an image that says something about your faith.

So. If you were a household appliance, what would you be?

The course aims to help us to be honest about our faith journey without bracketing out the hard questions.

To be numerous. Fun can be profound and off beat humour and genuine depth can belong together.

Its aimed at the Whole Church. All age groups and abilities.

This is all in line with Bishop Robert’s desire that all parishes should use this year to grow in confidence ready for serious mission in the future. We only have to look around our own congregation to see how we are ageing. If we fail to communicate our faith the church will die. So its up to you. I look forward

to seeing many of you at the Lent course as we grow together.

I wonder how many of you have noticed? Judging by the members of the PCC at our meeting last night not many. At Christmas for the first time in nearly two years the Parish Banner that normally hangs beside the pulpit reappeared.

When we took it down all those months ago it was obvious that its days were numbered, but then by chance a member of the congregation mentioned that they had had a small windfall and that they would like to give a donation to the church. I suggested that the restoration of the banner would be a suitable project and this was agreed. At that stage we had no idea of costs or the real state of the banner.

Sylvia Hearn is a member of the congregation at Old St Pancras, and despite being considerably over retiring age still works at Watts and Co one of the most well known ecclesiastical suppliers in Westminster. Sylvia agreed to have a go at restoration, but as she works it had to be in her spare time. However as she started the banner literally fell to bits in her hands, with some of the embroidery so rotten that all she could do was discard it. However just before Christmas she phoned me to say that she had done all she could and hoped I would approve of her efforts.

In fact it now looks splendid with

all new backing material and where possible the original embroidery transferred. Because of the problems it ended up costing considerably more than originally planned and a second donor very kindly offered to make up the difference. Enormous thanks to Sylvia and both the donors for their generosity. Incidentally if anyone would like to help we have other banners that desperately need attention!

It also became apparent at the PCC that not everyone had picked up on the restoration of the Acolytes candles that was done last summer. These had been held together with blue-tac for years, and were becoming dangerous as the candles were very wobbly. We are indebted to Carol Kenning who paid for this piece of restoration work. They now look resplendent as they were cleaned and polished at the same time as the repair.

And just to round off these thank you’s an additional pair of festal candlesticks have just arrived. Some twenty years ago four were purchased in memory of Herbert Grey who was Churchwarden, member of the choir, server and Magazine editor for many years. The donation of a third pair makes up the set and will look very splendid on the High Altar at major festivals in the future.

Your Parish Priest

The beauty of pearls ± out of darkness and trial

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant seeking goodly pearls; who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it “ Mathew 13:45-46

Have you noticed how often the Queen wears pearls? Is it because pearls are the birth-stone for June (when she celebrates her official birthday)? Or because she loves their natural beauty? Or is it because pearls represent wisdom and purity? We will never know.

Natural pearls form when an irritant - usually a parasite or grain of sand - works its way into an oyster. As a defense mechanism, the oyster secretes a fluid to coat the irritant. Layer upon layer of this ‘nacre’ is deposited until a lustrous pearl is formed. A cultured pearl undergoes the same process, though here the irritant is a surgically implanted bead or piece of shell.

Pearls can come from either salt or freshwater sources. Once the irritant is in place, it can take up to three years for the pearl to reach its full size and nacre thickness.

Sir Cliff's faith `even stronger' after ordeal

Sir Cliff Richard has said that after nearly two years facing false sexual assault allegations, his faith in God has become ‘even stronger’.

Sir Cliff was speaking in a recent interview with Steve Allen on LBC. He said that learning to forgive his accuser was for him the turning point that helped him release ‘all that hate and anger’. And the

Of all the pearls produced, only about five per cent are of true gem-quality.

There is a parallel with the way pearls are formed in nature, and the way we grow as Christians. To form ‘pearls of wisdom’ in humans, three conditions should be present:

Timing – Just as an oyster must mature for about three years before it can transform an irritant into a pearl, so Jesus spent three years maturing his disciples, and when we go through tests as Christians, timing is crucial. Like the disciples, we need to spend time with God, building our relationship with Him. We need to know His promises, so that when testing times come, we already have the precious Word of Truth as our nacre-forming ammunition! With His truth in our hearts we can cover every negative thought with layer upon layer of truth.

It may seem that our struggles will never end, but rest assured God will never give us more than we can bear, and He will never leave us or forsake us.

Irritant – What is the irritant in

support of friends who believed in him and stood by him was of critical help.

During the two year ordeal, “I found I was talking to God a lot more, praying. I felt the need to forgive this person, who I am sure I have never met, because I found myself being filled with hate. I wanted to get revenge, and I thought, ‘I don’t think I’m going

your life? I have faced a few that have forced me to my knees, forced me to fast, and forced me to cry out to God! My irritants came in the form of sickness, divorce, bereavement, friendship failures, financial frustrations, to name a few. Yet through them all, God built up layer upon layer of his Word and His Love in my life, until my ‘irritant’ became a testimony to His faithfulness. Every problem has resulted in another layer of ‘nacre’ of His grace.

Darkness – Natural pearls are formed in the deepest, darkest waters, and we will find ourselves in dark places whilst our pearls of wisdom are being formed. Illness and emotional pain may lead to isolation and depression. Yet I have emerged from deep darkness with more wisdom, more compassion, a greater ability to empathize with others in trouble, a greater love for God, and a greater passion to share His love. All of my best jewelry designs are based on my personal faith journey.

No wonder Jesus describes the Kingdom of Heaven as a precious pearl. No wonder He is also the Pearl of Great Price!

to survive this if that’s the way I’m going to feel.’ So by forgiving him... it released me of all that hate and vengeance. Forgiving is not a simple thing to do, but when I look back, my God, that was the best simple thing I have ever done.”

The singer said he felt he has become a ‘stronger person’, and even now, at 76, has no plans to retire. Instead he plans to downsize his career and make it ‘more compact’.

Give families in debt some space to breathe

The Children's Society's Debt Trap campaign aims to address the devastating impact that debt can have on children, which too often goes unseen. Many families try desperately to build normal lives for their children, but it only takes one setback or unexpected life event to become locked in a perpetual cycle of unmanageable debt.

Our latest research has found that children living in families struggling with debt are five times more likely to be unhappy than children in families without debt troubles, putting them at risk of developing mental health issues. With an estimated 2.4 million children in En-

gland and Wales living in families with problem debt, the potential for harm is staggeringly real.

We believe that children shouldn't have to pay the price of debt with their mental health. Every child deserves to flourish, and be all that God created them to be. The Children's Society is calling on the Government to create a 'breathing space' scheme for families, giving them time and space to repay their debts without the impossible burden of rising interest and charges, or visits from intimidating debt collectors.

This would protect families and ensure that young people are not

affected by unnecessary stress and anxiety. It would allow young people the Sabbath rest that God promises to His people throughout Scripture.

As Christians we are called to make a difference to the lives of these vulnerable young people. At a time when some families are being forced to cut back on essentials like food and heating, your support could make a real difference to children's lives.

Please join us at www.childrensociety.org.uk/breathingspace and take action today.

A Priceless Find ± by accident!

by David Winter

70 years ago this month a couple of shepherds in the hills above Qumran near the Dead Sea idly threw a stone into what they thought was an empty cave. When they heard the sound of smashing pottery they searched inside, and found the most important biblical discovery of the century.

Their stone had led them to what became known as the Dead Sea Scrolls, manuscripts of the entire Hebrew Bible except for the book of Esther, stored in clay vessels. The scrolls were the work of a religious community called the Essenes, who lived near that site before and during the life of Jesus.

As scholars slowly unraveled them – and that task took decades - they discovered that they were handling manuscripts of the Bible which

were hundreds of years older than any we had previously possessed. Most of the biblical manuscripts on which our translations had previously been based were copies of copies, carefully crafted in monasteries over the centuries by people dedicated to preserving the sacred text. But inevitably, in the process, there were occasional slips in the copying, and at times it's obvious that those who were doing it didn't understand the words they were copying.

So, in February 1947, the world had access to a much older and therefore more accurate record of the Jewish Scriptures – the Bible of Jesus and the first Christians. The most remarkable thing is actually how few 'mistakes' there were, seeing the centuries of copying – and not one that seriously affects our fundamental understanding of the Bible.

Those two shepherds 70 years ago ensured that we today have a Bible text which is as close to the original as one could ever hope to get. I'm glad they threw the stone into the right cave!

100 Club Winners

Draw for December 2016

1st prize: Lucy Bowman
2nd prize: Janet O'Carroll
3rd prize: PJ (co The Centurian)
4th prize: Carol Kenning

Congratulations to you all and thanks for your support each month.

If you would like to purchase a number in this monthly draw please do make enquiries of the Mr Mark Williams.

The tragedy of the Solway Martyrs

'The Killing Time' is the name given to one of those sad times in history when Christians were pitted against Christians. In Scotland in the 1680s the forces of The King, based in London, came into direct conflict with the Presbyterian Covenanters who refused to swear the Oath to 'his sacred majesty' the king, saying that the only head of the Church was Jesus Christ. Covenanters were fined, imprisoned or worse. The army was used to quell growing civil unrest.

One of the most notorious incidents during that time was the execution of The Solway Martyrs, Margaret McLachlan a widow aged 63 and Margaret Wilson, aged 18, who were tied to a stake and drowned by the rising tide of

the Solway Firth near Wigtown in 1685.

Margaret McLachlan was seized while she was at prayer. Margaret Wilson and her younger sister Agnes were betrayed by someone they thought was a friend after declining to drink the toast of the king.

The sisters were thrown into jail in Wigtown, where Margaret McLachlan was already being held. All three were accused of being 'disorderly'.

In court the three women faced a notorious persecutor of the Presbyterians. They were inevitably found guilty. They were given the opportunity to swear the Oath of Abjuration, but refused. Agnes'

father paid £100 for her release, but the two Margarets were sentenced to death by drowning.

Margaret McLachlan was the first to die and Margaret Wilson was forced to watch. As she writhed in her last few moments, Margaret Wilson said, 'I see Christ wrestling there.'

Then it was the younger woman's turn. As the tide rose about her around her, she sang psalms and recited from the Bible. Friends implored her just to say the words 'God save the King' and save herself. 'God save him if He will,' she replied. At the very last moment a soldier gave her one final chance to take the contentious oath. 'No sinful oaths for me; I am one of Christ's children. Let me go.' Her head was pushed beneath the water and a soldier cut her throat.

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Nehemiah: Servant Leadership

by Paul Hardingham

Nehemiah was given the task of rebuilding the broken-down walls of Jerusalem. His leadership was characterized by both prayer and action. He was a spiritual man who loved God and brought everything to God in prayer, but he was also somebody who got things done.

Nehemiah went on to be appointed governor: 'The earlier governors placed a heavy burden on the people and took forty shekels of silver from them in addition to food and wine. Their assistants also lorded it over the people. But out

of reverence for God I did not act like that.' (5:15)

What happens to those who are promoted in leadership? They can start seeing others as inferior beings, and the perks of position become theirs by right. If humility is the first casualty, integrity is often the second. We can see this in the political and business world, as well among our work colleagues or even in church. Are we guilty of misusing our leadership position to serve our own ends and boost our own ego, rather than working for the good of those we are leading?

Nehemiah was a leader with a

servant heart. Like Jesus, he exercised his leadership by setting an example and serving the good of others. As he looked at the hardship experienced by the people, he waived his rights as the city governor to cream off a tax which would allow him to live in luxury. He demonstrates that God's work, done in God's way and time, will be fruitful. This is an encouragement in whatever we are doing!

Compared with Nehemiah, our work may seem small and insignificant. However, God sees it differently. Small acts of love and service done in Christ's name can be of greater value in eternity than our greatest achievements!

How will you express love this Valentine's Day?

Valentine's Day reminds us of the importance of expressing our love to those close to us. But how can we go beyond simply flowers and a card? Jesus says: 'A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another' (John 13:34). How can we express love in our everyday relationships like Jesus i.e. spouse, children, neighbours or work colleagues?

Listening We need to listen to others, just as Jesus did. He asked questions of people and waited for them to process their answer. According to James, 'everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry' (James 1:19). How well do we listen to others? When with somebody, do we find ourselves already thinking of what we want to say before they've finished speaking? Listening takes time; you can't rush it!

Touching Jesus reached out to touch the untouchables in his world, including lepers, the sick and children. This was completely out of character for rabbis of his day. One survey has suggested that we all need at least 8-10 meaningful touches a day to maintain emotional health! A warm handshake, touch on the arm or hug can be of real value. Of course, it should be appropriate touch – helpful for the other person, not just for ourselves.

Speaking Jesus' conversation was always full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Do we speak words of grace, by offering comfort, giving encouragement or expressing care and concern? However, we should also be ready to speak words of truth, in asking for forgiveness, seeking reconciliation or addressing conflict. As Paul urges us, don't avoid: 'speaking the truth in love.'

Where is the challenge for us in expressing love this Valentine's Day?

Breath deep

Now here's a trick that you probably haven't tried before: next time you forget something, try taking some deep breaths.

It seems that inhaling stimulates our brain, creating electrical activity where emotions, memory and smells are processed. In a recent American study, individuals were able to identify a face two seconds more quickly if they were breathing in through the nose, rather than breathing out.

The study was carried out at Northwestern University in Chicago, and may also explain why we breath rapidly when afraid. "If you are in a panic state, you spend proportionally more time inhaling. Faster breathing could have a positive impact on brain function and result in faster response times."

God in the Arts ± Miriam and Moses

One of the first stories that impressed me at Sunday School was about Moses as a baby placed in a basket into the river Nile and rescued by Pharaoh's daughter. Moses grew up to become a great leader of God's people in the Exodus. But there was one person whose courage and ingenuity was vital in his survival as a baby – his sister, Miriam. She is there with her mother in this tender scene painted by Simeon Solomon, the Pre-Raphaelite artist, in 1860. Jochabed cradles her son, and Miriam looks on with care and concern as she holds the basket that will keep her brother safe. Birds on the window ledge, a potted plant and a lyre provide a gentle background to the drama that will soon unfold.

Like Noah, whom we looked at



last month, the story of Miriam is linked to water: helping to save Moses from the waters of the Nile; with the people as the Red Sea parted; and the spring that came up from the earth to give abundant water after her death. All that is still to come when we look at this painting. Here Miriam is about to take her brother and the basket to the Nile to begin the journey that will eventually take God's people from slavery and oppression to new life in the promised land.

The Exodus is an inspiring pilgrimage of faith and trust, and Miriam played her part in it as a courageous leader of the women. To celebrate, she sang a hymn. 'Then the prophet Miriam took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them, 'Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.' (Exodus 15). It is a story that can inspire us to sing and even dance when we recall this victory at each Easter.

Asking questions about Christianity

A 16-year-old boy – let's call him Adam – was given a Bible and was curious about it. But he didn't know how to cope with reading such a huge book so he found www.Christianity.org.uk and clicked on the button which allows anyone to ask a question.

Peter Graystone, is the coordinator for the Christian Enquiry Agency, which runs the [Christianity.org.uk](http://www.Christianity.org.uk) website. Peter responds to questions received through the website, and he began an online conversation with Adam last September. Peter writes: 'He and I have been reading Luke's Gospel at the same time, and every time he had a question he emailed me for an answer. Great questions – many have been about praying! At the start of November he discovered one of his school friends is a Christian. So he went to church for the first time ever

and enjoyed it. We have finished Luke, and he has asked me what we should read next.'

Every week around 5,000 people visit the [Christianity.org.uk](http://www.Christianity.org.uk) website and dozens make contact with a question or comment. Peter responds on behalf of the Christian Enquiry Agency, by giving them what they ask for, and only what they ask for. Typically, people might ask to be sent part of the Bible that tells the story of Jesus (a Gospel). They might request prayer about something, ask a question about Christianity or seek a local church where they can explore issues of faith.

Churches or organisations can add the URL [Christianity.org.uk](http://www.Christianity.org.uk) to any website or printed literature free of charge and without asking permission. It means your community and contacts have an easy way to find

answers to their questions about the Christian faith from a huge website of information. With thousands of people visiting [Christianity.org.uk](http://www.Christianity.org.uk) every week, this is an effortless way for you to do evangelism.

You can also join the prayer team who receive weekly emails, passing on the prayer requests from people who visit [Christianity.org.uk](http://www.Christianity.org.uk). Names are disguised for privacy, but we are sure that God knows who we are praying for. If you would like to join the Christian Enquiry Agency prayer team, please email Peter Graystone: peter@christianity.org.uk

Muddy woof

What do you get if you cross a jeep with a dog? A Land Rover.

Hymns and Readings

February 5th 4th Sunday before Lent

Proper 1

Readings Isaiah 58: 1-9

Psalm 112

1 Corinthians 2: 1-12

Matthew 5: 13-20

Hymns 94 We sing the praise

499 Thy kingdom come O God

373 How shall I sing

297 Lord Jesus Christ

Sidesperson: Bill Saunders

Readers: Ray Evans, Jenny Kauntze

Intercessions: Lucy Boyd

12th February 3rd Sunday before Lent

proper 2

Readings Deuteronomy 30: 15-end

Psalm 119 vv 1-8

1 Corinthians 3: 1-9

Matthew 5: 21-37

Hymns 390 Jesus wher'er thy people meet

318 My God accept my heart

338 At the name of Jesus

311 We pray thee heavenly Father

Sidesperson: Irada Fracassi

Readers: Rob Nesbitt, Carol Kenning

Intercessions: Bill Saunders

19th February 2nd Sunday before Lent

proper 3

Readings Genesis 1: 1-2:3

Psalm 136

Romans 8: 18-25

Matthew 6: 25-end

Hymns 397 Let us with a gladsome mind

414 O for a closer walk with God

263 All creatures of our God and King

265 Lord of beauty

Sidesperson: Nick Bethune

Readers: Lucy Boyd, Denise Sealy

Intercessions: Nicky Pittam

26th February Sunday next before Lent

Readings Exodus 24: 12-end

Psalm 2

2 Peter 1: 16-end

Matthew 17: 1-9

Hymns 18 Ye servants of the Lord

178 'Tis good Lord to be here

264 All things bright

494 Christ is the worlds true light

Sidesperson: Rob Nesbitt

Readers: Mark Williams, Nicky Pittam

Intercessions: Ian MacGregor

St Blaise ± the cure for sore throats

St Blaise is the saint for you if you have a sore throat, or a pet who is ill. He was born in Sebastea, ancient Armenia, (now Sivas, in Turkey) sometime during the late 3rd century, and became a physician. But his compassion did not stop there: he went on to become bishop of Sebastea, and thus a physician of souls. Known for his dedication to prayer, Blaise taught by his own example of virtue and sanctity, as much as by his words. His ministry was accompanied by many miracles of healing, and people (and animals) came flocking to him from near and far.

When in 316 the governor of Cappadocia and Lesser Armenia began a persecution of Christians, Blaise was arrested. As he was being led to prison, a distraught mother, whose only child was choking to death on a fishbone, threw herself at his feet and begged for help. Blaise prayed, and immediately the child was

cured. Regardless, the governor had him beaten and beheaded. But the miracle was not forgotten by the people who loved him, and Blaise became the patron saint of illnesses of the throat, and of wild beasts.

Blaise was one of the most popular saints of the Middle Ages. There are several churches named after him in England, from Cornwall to Oxfordshire.

UK's earliest monks?

What is believed to be the oldest example of monasticism in the UK has recently been found at the medieval Beckery Chapel, near Glastonbury. According to a recent story in The Times, skeletons unearthed at this site, which is said to have been visited by King Arthur, date from the 5th or early 6th century AD. <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/remains-are-uks-earliest-known-monks-k...>

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For your prayers

PRAYER CALENDAR FOR MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2017

5th Glenhurst Avenue
12th Gordon House Road
19th Grove Terrace
26th Highgate Road

SAINTS & HOLY DAYS

1st St Brigid
3rd St Anskar
4th Gilbert of Sempringham
5th 4th Sunday before Lent

6th The Martyrs of Japan
10th St Scholastica
12th 3rd Sunday before Lent
14th Ss Cyril & Methodius
17th Janani Luwum
19th 2nd Sunday before Lent
23rd St Polycarp
26th Sunday Next before Lent
27th George Herbert