

Brookfield News

October 2015
No 330
Price 50p



Calais migrant church leader 'happy' to stay in camp

The leader of the church in the so-called 'Jungle' refugee camp in Calais has said that he no longer wants to get into the UK. Instead, he now believes God has put him in the camp for a reason.

Mima, from Ethiopia, who's not revealed his full identity or back-story for security reasons back home, had previously been trying to cross the border. But in a recent interview with Marcus Jones, a reporter from Premier Radio, he says he is now happy to stay and support the thousands who are living at the camp.

"I'm happy. I'm not going to the train station to try," he said. "May-

be Jesus has brought me [here]. For me it's better than to go to England."

In a message to British Christians, Mima said: "If you can, come and visit us. If you can't do that - pray. Pray for the immigrant people...the ones who are dying on the Mediterranean Sea, those who are dying on the train station when they try to go to England. All Christians need to pray for these people. Ask Jesus to give us protection and send the angels."

Mima also highlighted the desperate situation many in the camp are facing. "We're eating once a day. We don't have any facilities here," he said. "People are getting pneu-

monia. People are dying."

What's become to be known as the 'migrant crisis' has split public opinion in recent months and BBC Songs of Praise received criticism for broadcasting from the camp. But the Church of England has called for more sympathy for those in the camp.

The Bishop of Dover, the Rt Revd. Trevor Willmott, recently told Premier: "Some of those people in Calais at the moment have come from the most horrific situations, where they've been subject to violence; where they've had their homes destroyed. And we have to say to ourselves what would happen to us if we were in that place?"

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Services

Sundays

11.00am Sung Eucharist

"Sunday Supplement" the children's activity takes place every Sunday in the sacristy during the service

Weekday Services

Said Eucharist

Tuesday 7.30pm

Wednesday 9.30am

Friday 7.30am

Saints' & Holy Days

Sunday 4th October Harvest Festival

11.00am Family Mass and presentation of Harvest Gifts for the Holy Cross Crypt Centre

Sunday 18th October St Luke

11.00am Parish Mass

Sunday 1st November All Saint Day

11.00am Parish Mass

Monday 2nd November All Souls

7.30pm Solemn Requiem

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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We're very fortunate in England, we've got freedom."

The Bishop of Leeds, The Rt Revd. Nick Baines, said he had been appalled at the attacks on the BBC for filming at the 'Jungle Camp'. "Songs of Praise usually gets slagged off for being ... er ... Songs of Praise. Often the critique is that it is bland or anodyne. Well, not now it isn't."

The corrugated iron church, known as St Michaels, is predominantly used by Eritrean and Ethiopian Orthodox Christians and was built over a weekend by a team of 30 volunteers. An estimated 5,000 migrants, displaced from countries including Eritrea, Libya and Syria, are living in several camps around Calais.

Join us on the road to Paris!

Schools, churches and individuals throughout the UK are being encouraged to show their support for a 250-mile pilgrimage from London to Paris this autumn. The aim is to encourage world leaders to agree a fair, ambitious and legally binding deal at the United Nations Climate Change Conference.

The Church of England is launching the pilgrimage to Paris with an invitation to participate by walking some or all of the route, cheer on pilgrims as they pass by schools or other local centres, or by holding 'mini-pilgrimages' in local communities and prayer vigils for the success of the talks.

The pilgrimage will begin at St Martin-in-the-Fields in central London on November 13 and finish in the French capital on November 27, as negotiators from more than 190 nations gather for the start of the talks.

The pilgrims will hand in campaign petitions to Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of

the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on November 28 before joining an interfaith gathering and a mass mobilisation of prayer in Paris.

The Rt Revd. Nicholas Holtam, Bishop of Salisbury and the Church of England's lead bishop on the environment, said: "It is really important we join the journey – and we can do it in all sorts of ways, either by taking part in all or part of the pilgrimage, or by gathering people to pray within our own communities.

"Through our prayers and our pilgrimage we are strengthening and encouraging those taking part in the Paris talks to reach fair, accountable and firm commitments which will change the way we act and move us towards a low carbon economy."

The group will be joining Christians around the world taking part in pilgrimages to raise awareness of the talks.

James Buchanan, project coordinator for the Paris pilgrimage, said: "Embarking on a pilgrimage is an important event both in Christian and other faith traditions, with both the journey and the destination having a spiritual significance. The Pilgrimage2Paris follows in this tradition, as the Church seeks to have a strong voice in the climate change talks in Paris this December, with people from across the UK making the journey in faith that a lasting agreement can be made for a low carbon future."

The pilgrimage has the backing of the Church of England and major aid agencies, Christian Aid, Tearfund and CAFOD.

It comes after the General Synod, the Church of England's national assembly, this summer overwhelmingly backed calls for urgent action to tackle climate change, acknowledging that global warming is already hitting the poorest of the world hardest.

More info & to sign up at: www.pilgrimage2paris.org.uk

Psalms on the go ± CofE launches new mobile app

The latest publication from the Church of England brings an ancient tradition of following the Psalms to mobile devices and e-readers. Reflections on the Psalms is a standalone book, ebook and mobile app written for anyone wishing to follow the ancient practise of the Psalter, reading the Psalms of the Bible each morning and evening.

The mobile app is available to buy on the iOS App Store, with an An-

droid version coming soon. Users are asked to tweet their favourite #myspsalm @chpublishingUK.

The new publication provides short meditations on each of the Psalms written by Bishops, well-known writers, experienced ministers, biblical scholars and theologians. The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, a contributor, said: "Reading and listening to the Psalms is a great way to start a conversation with God. I love reading

and reflecting on them daily."

The book (physical or electronic) is available at: www.chpublishing.co.uk

The iOS app is available to purchase at bit.ly/PsalmsApp

Growing up

Your child has started growing up when he stops asking you where he came from and starts refusing to tell you where he's going.

'O happy band of pilgrims' - leave room for God to surprise you

When we go on pilgrimage, we must decide where to go. Then we prepare for the journey. We read about it or google. We make plans: what to take, where to stay, and cost it all. There is a part of us that likes everything to be organised so that there are no hitches on the way. But we have to remember that pilgrimages are made in faith. Whatever our plans, we need to find a place for God in all the preparations and allow for those God-given moments, unplanned and unscheduled, where we can meet His love and grace. That is why we underpin the journey with prayer as well as preparation.

If we think of the journeys in

HALLOWE'EN? Try another way!

Across the centuries there have been two traditional feast days that signal the end of Harvest and the beginning of Winter. They were known under the name of 'Hallowtide.' All Saints Day, on November 1, is followed in some traditions by All Souls Day on November 2. Both, to a large degree, have been held to commemorate the lives of past saints and martyrs of Jesus Christ. They are preceded on October 31 by Hallowe'en - a derivation from 'All Hallows Evening.'

Partly because Hallowe'en heralded the dark days of Winter, it steadily came to adopt a 'darker' feel, featuring - along with the traditional carved pumpkins and apple-bobbing - a party atmosphere, geared to children, with play-acting along the lines of goblins, witches and

scripture - Abraham or Elijah, the wise men or the shepherds - what characterised them was not the preparation, but the spirit of faith in which they travelled. We need to journey with that same trust in the God who may surprise us. David Sox realised that in the Holy Land. He had consulted maps and guides. But when he was there in person, the places made a special impression on him above and beyond what the books told him - even in the barren wilderness. 'At sunset the Bedouin scurry to light their fires and bring in their wandering goats; there is an eerie quiet in this region. Stopping in the desert at night and experiencing the quiet is unforgettable.'

broomsticks. This ethos has been dramatically fed in recent years by films and books teetering on the magical and the occult, to the extent that Hallowe'en today, with the help of massive commercialism, has become Britain's third biggest festival of the year.

In earlier times these antics could perhaps be accommodated, even adopted, as a piece of fun within the life of a village. But with the growing influx of cultures that are alien to the traditional Christian West, we now have on our doorstep heathen ritual malpractices, 'honour killings' and sub-human hatred and terrorist plots that echo Solzhenitsyn's diagnosis: "The demon of evil like a whirlwind triumphantly circles all five continents of the earth." What genuine place can Hallowe'en have in all this?

Gerard Hughes wrote about a pilgrimage to Rome when he sat to enjoy a coffee at Grenoble. As he stretched out on a bench, he noticed that his boots were now without tread, his arms and legs were sun-tanned, and the soles and heels of his feet were hard. 'But,' he wrote, 'the important change was within me. I felt a great sense of peace, the peace of at-oneness...I felt I was seeing more, hearing more, and living more fully.'

He had changed physically, but he had also changed spiritually. His experience is a moving testimony to the way in which God can surprise each of us when we go on a special pilgrimage or make our journey through life. God can meet us, often when we least expect it, and transform our lives.

It is timely that churches and Christian groups are now putting on their own creative fun nights on October 31. Just click to the internet to devise yours!

True; evil can feel fun! But - emphasised the French philosopher Simone Weil - it is only FICTIONAL good that is boring and flat, while it is FICTIONAL evil that is attractive and profound. By contrast - she insists - real life turns the tables: "Nothing is so beautiful and wonderful, nothing is so full of sweet and perpetual ecstasy as the GOOD; no desert is so dreary, monotonous and boring as EVIL"

Women

There are two theories to arguing with women. Neither one works.

“Dear Friends...”

From the Vicars Desk

As I write Fr. Robert is being consecrated the fifth Bishop of Edmonton in Canterbury Cathedral. It will be only the second time that we have had a Bishop who was not either already an experienced Bishop or senior cleric in the Area. Bishop Alan Rogers had been Bishop of Mauritius (The Indian Ocean) and then Bishop of Fulham, Bishop Brian Masters had also been Bishop of Fulham and Bishop Peter had been our own Archdeacon. It was only Bishop Bill Westward who came with only experience of Parish life as does Bishop Robert. This will inevitably mean that he will have a very steep learning curve as he has not even been an Area Dean. People often commented on Archdeacon Luke that he was like a puppy, all bouncy and very lively! I suspect we may well find our new Bishop much the same.

His time in Hackney has been one of great change for the parish, with huge developments in their secondary school, and the planning of an enormous housing development on the rectory site. This looks as if work will finally begin very shortly. Fr. Robert was also very much involved in the aftermath of the riots in 2011 working hard at rebuilding community in Hackney.

Having served in our own Deanery at St Mary Eversholt Street he does have some understanding of the joys and sorrows of living and working in Camden so we will look forward to helping him to get to grips with the way things are now and how we might all move forward enabling us to proclaim the gospel more fully in the years

to come.

Also this morning we have had the first of the “Bach to Babies” sessions in the Church. I am pleased to report that it was very well attended. The organisers were hoping for around twelve children with mums and carers to turn up. When I last looked there were at least thirty there! So a very successful venture of allowing very small children to be immersed in classical music live. The church is an ideal location and I look forward to it being used each month for this project. Music is so much part of the life of our church that it is vital that the heritage is passed on to the next generation. Children who are very young do take in both the sounds and sights that surround them. Not only is this a time of experiencing music, but also the ambiance of the church building. We are so often told today that getting people over the threshold of the church is one of the major barriers to church membership so this may just help for both parents and children.

Although it is not actually in this month may I take this opportunity to give you a reminder of All Souls Day on Monday 2nd of November. We shall as always have a choral Mass of Requiem at 7.30pm when we shall remember all those of our loved ones who have passed through death to life in Christ. Please do remember to add the names of your friends and loved ones to the list at the back of the church during October so that I can make up the list in advance of the service. No names are carried over from year to year, so if you

don't add them to the list they will not be read out. This year the music for the service will be the Requiem Mass in D Josef Rheinberger. Many commented last time we had this setting on how much they liked it, so here is your chance to hear it again.

Lastly I shall be Christmas cake making for the week after church on Sunday 4th October so I will not be available unless it is an emergency. This is going to be a new experience for me as I have always made my cakes at my house in Norfolk but with that now sold I have to rethink the production line in the Vicarage kitchen! It will all be very different, no Aga to cook in, and no second cooker to take the excess of my daily batch of ten cakes. So we will have to see how it goes. Hopefully they will taste as good and be just as moist as ever, I will do my best to ensure they are up to standard!

Your Parish Priest

Right resting place

The new vicar was a bit of an efficiency expert, whose obsession was to move around the hymnbooks, the notice-sheets, the magazines, the guides, and most of the other portable things in his church, in search of the perfect place. From porch to display stand to table to vestry to side chapel – round and round various things went, week by week.

After several months, a visitor approached a harassed churchwarden before church one morning, and asked if he could tell her where the copies of the church guides were kept. “No, I’m sorry,” he said wearily. “But if you just stand here a while, I’m sure you’ll see them go by!”

Time to take advantage of Will Aid's 'Make a Will' Month

Been putting off writing or updating your Will? This November, Will Aid's Make a Will Month returns and will offer you the opportunity to put your affairs in order, secure your loved one's future and give to charities helping the young, the elderly and whole communities in the UK and overseas.

Participating solicitors are inviting people to contact them to book appointments for November, when they will prepare basic Wills without charging their normal fee. All that they will ask in return is that clients consider making a voluntary donation to Will Aid. The suggested donation is just £95 for a single Will, or £150 for a pair of mirror Wills.

The money raised is shared by nine UK charities that carry out life-changing work here in the UK and around the world, namely

ActionAid, Age UK, British Red Cross, Christian Aid, NSPCC, Sightsavers, Save the Children, SCIAF (Scotland) and Trocaire (N. Ireland).

More than half of UK adults (53%) don't have a Will and so have not made any legally valid provision for what they would like to happen after their death. Even worse, around one third of people who die each year do so without a Will and their estate is therefore distributed according to a set of rules which cannot adequately cope with modern family circumstances. This can lead to a great deal of stress and uncertainty, as well as financial hardship, for those left behind.

Even if you have a Will, it is important to keep it up to date. Will Aid's research shows that almost 60% of people with a Will have not revised it for more than three years and these older Wills are almost

certain to be out of date – assets will have been disposed of and new ones acquired; children and any named guardians will have grown older; whole families could have been re-configured.

Experts recommend routinely reviewing a Will every three to five years, and making a new Will as soon as significant family changes occur.

Will Aid's Make A Will Month is the perfect opportunity to gain the peace of mind that comes from knowing your affairs are in order and that your wishes will be carried out after your death. In fact, writing a legally valid Will is the only way of ensuring that this happens.

Please book early as solicitors tend to fill their appointments very quickly. Find a convenient participating solicitor at www.willaid.org.uk or by calling the hotline 0300 0309 558.

THE WAY I SEE IT : of House and Home

Houses have been in the news in recent months – a hot political topic for those in power or seeking it, a source of desperate concern to those who simply can't find a place to live.

Prices, especially in London and the south-east, are staggeringly high. A semi-detached suburban house in the road where my wife and I brought up our family forty years ago is currently valued at a million pounds. We bought it in 1964 for £4,500! Of course, it's not 'real' money – more like Monopoly finance. And many of the people paying those exaggerated prices aren't even buying a house to live in, but as an investment.

Equally, in towns and villages across Britain, young people planning to set up home together face years and years of saving simply to afford the deposit on a house. Many settle for renting, which means that there's no money left to save for that deposit. The short answer, obviously, is to build more affordable houses. Everyone agrees, but whenever there are plans to build some, the cry goes up 'Not in my back yard!' The Government also agrees that we need such housing, but what, in terms of the average monthly wage, is 'affordable'? Certainly not the prices we see discussed in all these TV programmes about 'a place in the country' or 'Location, Location.'

Houses matter. Or, rather, homes do. There's a lovely vision drawn by the Jewish prophet Micah of a day when everyone will 'sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid'. It doesn't mention a house, but it's a lovely picture of a home: a place where we feel secure, welcome and loved.

Sadly, not every house is a home, but every home is a precious gift, whether it's two up and two down or what has recently been dubbed a 'mansion'. Somehow or other, and before it's too late, we need to find a way to house all those would-be families, not luxuriously, but decently. The fig-tree in the back garden can be optional.

Lucien La Gasse by Caroline Deys

Thank you all for your prayers for Lucien my great nephew who has Rheumatoid Arthritis of the Young (Still's Disease). First diagnosed in the week of his third birthday, he is now a regular at Great Ormond Street for a new magic anti-rhumatoid drug given by intravenous injection fortnightly.

Living with a chronically ill child is a nightmare. Watching the pain is bad enough but the daily routine is punishing. He needs to eat before he takes his pills, iron-steroids and pain medication all affect the stomach. Then there are two hours of physiotherapy. He never goes to school on Friday's. There are two

weekly injections, physio, xray, dietician and orthopaedic consultations as well as lengthy paediatric appointments.

Luckily, or as his mum says "The prayers are working"; he has remarkably little residual damage to his joints. His hands are still a problem, and his writing is well behind. When the school gets him "statemented" he will get a computer so won't need to hold a pen. Ask Irada to show you her hands: she is Rh.A of Adulthood and you will get an idea of the problem. The most difficult challenge is the unknown. Ask Diana, who also has a mild form of the disease. You don't know from day to day - one day you feel

awful and can't move, another day almost normal.

The family are devout atheists so Lucien is a bit confused by the idea of prayer. But, along with all children, he loves Bible stories. Absolutely the best is the Plagues of Egypt where stupid Pharaoh says no despite each plague and then when he does say yes changes his mind and then the whole Egyptian army gets drowned!

So please go on praying for Lucien. The recipient of prayers doesn't have to believe for them to work! Thanks to very modern medicine, a devoted family and very old fashioned prayers he is a small but normal five year old.

HYMN: The story behind ° O God, our help in ages past

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home!

Under the shadow of Thy throne
Still may we dwell secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defense is sure...

A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the
night,
Before the rising sun.

Isaac Watts (1674 – 1748) is often called the 'Father of English hymnody'. Certainly before his hymns came along, congregational singing was a tedious business.

Watts was born in July 1674 in Southampton. (At the time of his birth, his father, an educated deacon in a dissenting Congregational church, was briefly in prison for his

non-conformist beliefs.) As a boy, Watts showed outstanding ability with language (learning Greek, Hebrew, Latin and French). He also had an unusual ability for easy rhyming in English. (At the age of five, when scolded for giggling in family prayers, it was because he had seen a mouse on the bell-rope, and instantly composed the line: 'There was a mouse, for want of stairs, ran up a rope to say his prayers!')

Watts' literary ability, combined with his interest in theology, made him very unhappy with the congregational singing of the day, which focused almost entirely on strict metrical versions of the psalms. One Sunday after church, Isaac complained to his father about this. His father challenged him to write something better. Though only 18, Watts accepted the challenge, and produced his first hymn – which was duly sung the following Sun-

day.

It was such a success that he wrote new hymn texts every Sunday for the next two years. In all, he went on to write more than 600 hymns. Some of them are still well-loved today: from this one, 'O God, Our Help in Ages Past', which is a paraphrase of Psalm 90, to 'When I Survey the Wondrous Cross', and the Christmas carol 'Joy to the World'.

100 Club Winners

Draw for August 2015

1st prize: Luigi
2nd prize: Shirley Caton
3rd prize: George Nesbitt
4th prize: Helen Nesbitt

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

Denys of Paris ± why losing your head is not always a bad thing

Have you ever held your head in your hands and felt that events were against you? Then Denys is the saint for you. This Christian martyr knew all about holding his head in his hands when times got rough.

According to Gregory of Tours, Denys was an Italian bishop who became the first bishop of Paris. Along with five other bishops, he had been sent by the Pope to convert all of Gaul. Denys reached Paris, where the common people welcomed him, and his preaching was met with great popular success. In time he even went on to establish a Christian centre on an island in the Seine. That was the beginning of Christianity in Paris. However, Gaul was still under Roman rule, and trouble began

for Denys when in the year 250 the Emperor Decius issued an unusual Roman imperial edict. All the citizens of the empire were required to sacrifice to the Emperor in order to prove their loyalty to the old ways. Once they had sacrificed, they could obtain a libellous (certificate) to prove they had complied. This sacrifice was of course out of the question for any Christian, and Denys and several leading Christians in Paris refused. Soon Denys, along with a priest called Rusticus and a deacon called Eleutherius, were imprisoned and beheaded.

So loved had Denys been by the people that stories soon sprang up about how he had then picked up his head and carried it for ten kilometres, preaching a sermon as he walked. Today you can see a stature

commemorating this unusual (!) event in the crypt of the Roman Catholic Basilica of Denys in Paris.

Signs of our times? When you know what they meant, but°!

Toilet out of order. Please use floor below.

In a Laundromat: Automatic Washing Machines. Please remove all your clothes when the light goes out.

In a London department store: Bargain Basement upstairs.

In an office: Would the person who took the step ladder yesterday please bring it back, or further steps will be taken.

In an office: After the tea break, staff should empty the teapot and stand upside down on the draining board.

Notice in health food shop window: Closed due to illness.

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On what those adverts from parishes wanting clergy REALLY mean^o

The Rectory
St. James the Least
My dear Nephew Darren

So, you are being encouraged to look at adverts for parishes for that happy day when you will have charge of your own church. You wonder if you should look to moving to another part of the country; I suspect it may be better if you look to moving to another planet, as your reputation may not yet have travelled that far.

Reading the specifications that parishes provide, giving a picture of life in their community, need to be read in the same way as estate agents' specifications for houses for sale. Both demonstrate a triumph of optimism over reality. Let me help you decode some of the statements you will find:

"We look to grow our Sunday School" – We do not have a Sunday School.

"We have an enthusiastic choir" – We have a choir totally out of control.

"Our youth group is always eager to learn." – Our youth group experiments with some strange substances.

"The new incumbent should be sympathetic to our musical tradition" – The new incumbent must be able to play the organ as well as lead the Services.

"While cherishing our traditions, we see the need for change" – We always see the need for change, but alter anything at your peril.

"Plans for church renovations are in hand" – The building is in imminent danger of collapse.

"We have a large range of church groups" – You will have to run a large range of church groups sin-

glehandedly.

"The vicarage is being refurbished" – The vicarage is a death trap. Its rising damp and dangerous electrics will not be fixed for many months yet.

"There is opportunity for developing ecumenical relations" – No one in living memory has ever spoken to clergy of other denominations in our town.

"The new incumbent should have a sense of humour" – He or she will need it when reading this specification.

My dear nephew, caveat emptor.
Let the buyer beware!

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

Words and their changing meanings

In the children's classic 'Alice in Wonderland,' Humpty Dumpty says, 'When I use a word it means what I want it to mean.' Lewis Carol was pointing out what we all tend to do. Perhaps that is why over time some words change their meaning, or are used in new ways. A few decades ago, before home computers, no-one would have wanted a mouse on their desk. And 'paste' and 'cut' was what we did with glue and scissors.

Sometimes the change in meaning can be extreme. Take, for example, the word 'relict'. In the past this was a legal term for a widow or widower, meaning the one left behind. You often see it on old tombstones. But no-one today would dream of

calling a widow a relic!

There is a prayer at the end of Holy Communion, in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer that begins: 'Prevent us O Lord in all our doings with thy most gracious favour...' Are we really asking God to hinder everything we do? Of course not. The earlier meaning was much more positive. We are asking God to 'go before us' (pre-vent us), which is how the modern version of the prayer is worded. The prayer is about guidance rather than protection.

A more subtle example is in the prayer of Intercession in the 1662 Prayer Book Holy Communion. The prayer asks that those in authority should 'truly and indifferently administer justice...' Today the word 'indifferent' means not caring one way of the other – a shocking basis for 'justice'. But when the prayer was written 'indifferent' meant 'without prejudice, unbiased'. That's more like it.

Finally, consider Joseph in the Old Testament. In Genesis Chapter 39, we note that despite all Joseph's misfortunes he always came up smelling of roses. The New English Bible, following the King James Bible, translates it: 'Joseph prospered for the Lord was with him'. But in the first English translation, by John Whitcliffe, in the 15th Century, it reads (modern spelling), 'The Lord was with Joseph and he was a lucky fellow'. To be lucky today would mean, to be successful, perhaps winning the Lottery. But in Whitcliffe's day to be 'lucky' was to be blessed. Joseph's luck was not that he made a fortune, though he did, but that 'the Lord was with him.' Aren't we 'lucky fellows' too!

General Synod candidates wait with bated breath^o

Hundreds of clergy and lay people, across 42 dioceses, are waiting to hear whether they have been elected to their 'parliament', the Church of England's General Synod. With votes in by October 9 and counts completed by October 15, they have until November 23 to think about what this means for them.

On November 23, the 477 members will gather at Church House, Westminster, where HM Queen Elizabeth II will formally open the new five-year General Synod: known as a quinquennium. Each of some 430 elected members (the 42 diocesan bishops are automatically members of the Synod) will have been proposed, seconded and elected on the basis of their election address.

Each is elected by their own constituency. The suffragan bishops elect 10 of their number to join the diocesan bishops in the House of Bishops. The clergy in dioceses elect some 200 of their number, representing cathedral deans, parish clergy, armed services chaplains and clergy in universities and religious communities to form the House of Clergy. The lay members of deanery synods elect some 200 communicant members of the Church of England, including lay representatives of religious communities and the armed forces, to form the House of Laity.

Members of General Synod are not representatives in the traditional sense. They bring their own views to Synod, rather than being told what to say by their electors. That said, being elected on the basis of their election addresses, they should have been elected by

like-minded voters. All candidates are encouraged to be as honest and clear as possible about what they stand for in those addresses.

Meanwhile, there will be plenty of reading for all members. All Synod sessions come with lots of reading material and many members, nowadays, will download it on to laptops and tablets rather than carry around large files.

For brand new members, the most useful documents may well be the guide to General Synod and Standing Orders to find out how to get your point across. Most important of all may well be a list of local hotels and maps of Westminster and the corridors of Church House.

Law and Grace ± live on Stage

Translated into 22 languages including Hebrew, Icelandic and Korean, performed in 319 cities, seen by over 700 million people: it's the world's longest running musical, *Les Misérables*, which was first staged thirty years ago this month. It was 'I Dreamed a Dream' from that show which unexpectedly thrust Susan Boyle into the limelight when she took everyone's breath away on 'Britain's Got Talent' in 2009.

The opening night received poor reviews, as did the publication of Victor Hugo's novel, on which it is based, when published in 1862. But its haunting, utterly human themes, memorable tunes and a profound Christian message have outlasted the critics.

A reformed ex-convict Jean Valjean, moved by the mercy shown

People with faith cope better with cancer

People who have a religious faith tend to cope better with cancer than their non-believing neighbours. Their faith is a comfort to them, and those with the strongest faith feel healthier and mentally better.

These are the findings of a recent study in the USA, published online in *CANCER*. It analysed the impact of religious belief on people's physical and mental health, using data from more than 44,000 patients. It found that believers had better physical health, greater ability to keep doing daily tasks, and fewer physical symptoms of cancer and its treatment. Those with faith who could reconcile their illness with their beliefs also experienced less anxiety and depression.

It seems that even what type of deity a patient believes in also affects their health. Those who believed in a benevolent god that answers personal prayer made them more outgoing and more able to maintain relationships.

him by a bishop whom he had robbed, went on to spend his life trying to improve the lot of the poor. Nevertheless, he is pursued relentlessly by a policeman for having broken parole years before. Interwoven with his life are stories of political hopes raised and dashed, affection spurned, grinding poverty and, in spite of all that, the endurance of divine love.

The theme is deeply biblical, encapsulated in John 1.17: "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

Hymns and Readings

4th October Harvest Festival

Readings Joel 2: 21-27
Psalm 126
1 Timothy 6: 6-10
Matthew 6: 25-33
Hymns 259 Come ye thankful people
Autumn days (4 come nad praise)
262 We plough the fields and scatter
265 Lord of beauty thine the splendour
Sidesperson: Bill Saunders
Readers: Ruth Godwin, Stephen Nicoll
Intercessions: Carol Kenning

11th October Trinity 19 p23

Readings Amos 5: 6-7 & 10-15
Psalm 90
Hebrews 4: 12-end
Mark 10: 17-31
Hymns 499 Thy kingdom come O God
416 O God of Bethel
362 Glorious things for thee are spoken
What a friend we have in Jesus HON 727
Sidesperson: Mark Williams
Readers: Rob Nesbitt, Denise Sealy
Intercessions: Lucy Boyd

18th October St Luke

Readings Acts 16: 6-12a
Psalm 147
2 Timothy 4: 5-17
Luke 10: 1-9
Hymns 415 O for a thousand tongues
225 Give us the wings of faith
486 We have a Gospel to proclaim
372 He who would valiant be Sidesperson:
Nick Bethune
Readers: Carol Kenning, Jenny Kauntze
Intercessions: Nicky Pittam

25th October Last Sunday after Trinity p25

Readings: Jeremiah 31: 7-9
Psalm: 126
Hebrews 7: 23-end
Mark 10: 46-end
Hymns 272 All for Jesus
365 God move in a mysterious way
353 Dear Lord and Father
467 Through all the changing scenes
Sidesperson: Elizabeth Oyedemi
Readers: Lucy Boyd , Mark Williams
Intercessions: Ian MacGregor

Mother Teresa ± 65 years after foundation of the Missionaries of Charity

Mother Teresa – known officially as Blessed Teresa of Calcutta since her beatification in 2003 – was something of an icon. This month marks the 65th anniversary of her foundation of the Missionaries of Charity to look after people who had been abandoned by everyone else. She believed love by itself had no meaning and had to be put into action through service.

She was born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu in what is now Skopje, Macedonia, but was at the time part of the Ottoman empire. Her family was Albanian, originating in Kosovo. She died in 1997, within a week of one of her greatest admirers, Princess Diana.

When she was 18 she joined a group of nuns in Ireland, and took her religious vows in 1931. She moved to India originally as a teacher.

She usually wore a white Indian sari, with blue trim-

mings, out of respect for the traditional Indian dress but was regarded as a traditionalist, being against contraception, and when she won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 she described abortion as “the greatest destroyer of peace today”.

She attracted a great deal of criticism for this and for what some people considered was rough handling of the patients in her homes, as well as the lack of hygiene, and her acceptance of suffering.

In later years she travelled outside India, and in 1991 returned to her homeland to open a home in Tirana, Albania. The Missionaries of Charity now consists of over 4,500 religious sisters and is active in 133 countries.

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For your prayers

PRAYER CALENDAR FOR MONTH OF OCTOBER 2015

4th Dartmouth Park Hill
11th Dartmouth Park Road
18th Glenhurst Avenue
25th Gordon House Road

SAINTS & HOLY DAYS

1st St Remigius of Rheims
4th Harvest Festival
Trinity 18
9th St Denys of Paris
10th St Paulinus of York

11th Trinity 19
12th St Wilfrid of Ripon
13th St Edward the Confessor
15th St Teresa of Avila
17th St Ignatius of Antioch
18th St Luke
Trinity 20
25th Last Sunday after Trinity
26th St Alfred
28th St Simon and St Jude