

PARISH Magazine



February / March 2024

Minimum donation £1.00



St George's Church

The Heart of Christ  The Heart of Waddon

Lent: Giving up or taking on?

Sandwiches, Soup and Sleep Packs – how we can help

Lent and the Corporal Acts of Mercy *Fr Andrew*

Crisis and Me – a volunteer's perspective *Susan Williams*

Tuesday mornings with a difference... *Carol Jewell*

The St Alban's South Norwood Foodbank *Alice Bishop*

A Lent Course based on the film 'I, Daniel Blake' *Fr David*

The Easter Vigil through the lens of the Exsultet *Charles Bishop*

150 Years of the Parish Magazine *Stephen Willmer*

Getting to know... Hilary Barnes *Tiffany Willmer*

Regular service times

Croydon Minster

Morning Prayer, Monday – Friday 8.30am

Sunday

8am Said Eucharist

10am Sung Eucharist

5.30pm Evensong (Choral Evensong in term time)

Monday

11am Said Eucharist

Tuesday

11am Said Eucharist

5.30pm Choral Evensong sung by the Boys' Choir (term time only)

Wednesday

11am Said Eucharist

5.30pm Choral Evensong sung by the Girls' Choir (term time only)

Friday

11am Said Eucharist

St George's

Sunday

10am Eucharist

Thursday

10.30am Eucharist

.....
Front cover: [shutterstock.com/Ju_see](https://www.shutterstock.com/Ju_see) (main image), [shutterstock.com/mz_nu](https://www.shutterstock.com/mz_nu) (150th badge)

Opposite page background and back cover: [shutterstock.com/Kara Gebhardt](https://www.shutterstock.com/Kara_Gebhardt)

Lent Programme

ASH WEDNESDAY, 14 February

11am Said Eucharist with Imposition of Ash

7pm Sung Eucharist with Imposition of Ash

Lent Course, Wednesdays in Lent

21, 28 February, 6, 13, 20 March at St George's, Barrow Road, 2pm

The sessions will last approximately one hour.

This year's Lent Course will examine the issues around poverty and social class raised in the film 'I, Daniel Blake'.

Read more about this in Fr David's article

'Nothing More, Nothing Less'

Rosary Group, Thursdays in Lent

22, 29 February, 7, 14, 21 March

at the Minster, 11am

Compline and Catechesis, Thursdays in Lent

22, 29 February, 7, 14, 21 March

at the Minster, 7–8pm

Lent Lunch, Sunday 25 February

More information from Elaine and Susan on the next page

Prayer and Packing for SCF, Friday 15 March

Venue TBC, 7–9pm

We will prepare simple sleep kits for separated child refugees and pause to pray for refugees. The evening will close with Compline (Night Prayer).



Sandwiches, Soup and Sleep Packs

.....

Sandwiches for Nightwatch

We are proposing to take part in providing sandwiches to take to Nightwatch (who distribute them to the homeless in Queen's Gardens) on behalf of our continued work with the Croydon Churches Floating Shelter. We will need volunteers to make lots of sandwiches on Sundays 18 and 25 February and 3, 10, 17 and 24 March.



To volunteer your support or to get further details, please contact Denise Mead: d.mead@croydonminster.org
Full reimbursement for any expenditure will be available.

The Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call 2024

Each year the Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call seeks to raise funds to support associated projects within Southwark Diocese and in our link Dioceses in Zimbabwe and the Diocese of Jerusalem.

For several years now we have been hosting a Lent Lunch of home-made soup with bread and cheese. We don't charge for this lunch. Instead we ask you to consider what you might pay for a lunch out and give that as a donation towards the Lent Call as part of our church's Lent offering. We know times are hard for many people but hope you will feel able to give your generous support to the Bishop's Lent Call again this year.

We hope to hold it on Sunday 25 February this year. Put the date in your diaries and come and join us. We will put updates in Minster Bulletin when the Diocese has released further details of this year's projects.

Thank you for your support. *Elaine Cooper and Susan Williams*



Separated Child Foundation: Sleep and Packing

Fr Andrew writes: Friday 15 March is World Sleep Day. It's going to be a focus for our parish to support our friends in the Separated Child Foundation (SCF) to prepare sleep packs for child refugees and migrants (*see details in the Lent Programme*).

There have been several sleep-related studies over the past few years to look at the sleep problems experienced by unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. One audit found that 87% of separated children had disrupted sleep patterns, often in addition to post-traumatic stress disorder.

SCF sleep packs contain a nightshirt, a plug-in night light, a lavender bag, an eye mask, ear plugs, tissues, a stress ball and a specially created 'Sweet Dreams' card.

“I had the best sleep ever”

Comments featured on the SCF website (www.separatedchild.org) highlight the difference that these packs make to the lives of young refugees:

A mental health practitioner who works with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children said, “I recently saw a young man who has been sleeping really badly. We discussed his sleep and normal routine. I gave him a sleep pack. When we talked about the night light he said that he keeps his big light on all night. He will now turn the light off and use the night light to stop him feeling scared.”

Comment from the British Red Cross Young Refugee Service: ‘We recently gave a sleep pack to a young person and this was his feedback: “I had the best sleep ever, I fell asleep in five minutes last night. I still remember the smell of the lavender bag. I feel so fresh!”’

Come along on 15 March and play your part in this important piece of work that can be so easily overlooked.



Orthodox icon of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, from Ukraine, Odessa region

Holy Week and Easter at the Minster

PALM SUNDAY, 24 March

10am Sung Eucharist with Blessing of Palms and Procession
Gather in the courtyard of Old Palace School (Old Palace Road entrance)
5.30pm Words and Music for Passiontide

Monday 25 March

7pm Stations of the Cross, followed by Said Eucharist at 7.30pm

Tuesday 26 March

7pm The Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary, followed by Said Eucharist at 7.30pm

Wednesday 27 March

7pm Stations of the Cross, followed by Said Eucharist at 7.30pm

MAUNDY THURSDAY, 28 March

7pm Sung Eucharist of the Last Supper with Washing of Feet

GOOD FRIDAY, 29 March

10am Children's Liturgy: Remembering Jesus' love for us on the Cross
12 noon Preaching of the Cross – The Seven Last Words of Christ
1.30pm Sung Liturgy of Good Friday

EASTER SATURDAY, 30 March

8pm The Ceremonies of Easter: New Fire, Renewal of Baptismal Vows,
First Mass of Easter

EASTER SUNDAY, 31 March

10am Festal Eucharist of the Resurrection
5.30pm Festal Evensong



A YEAR OF SONG IN RENAISSANCE FRANCE

Par Son Art



Sacred & secular music dramas,
featuring the music of

BOUZIGNAC · LASSUS ·
THREE ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS

Saturday 3rd February

CROYDON MINSTER, 8PM

Jasper Schoff | Conductor
featuring Lady Clare's Consort

dir. Daniel Blaze



THE MARCHUS TRUST

Other diary dates

Croydon Minster

February

Fri	02	Eucharist with Blessing of Candles and Procession, 11am
Sat	03	Concert: Par Son Art, 8pm (<i>see further information below</i>)
Tue	06	Minster Juniors Lent Service, 9.30am
Thu	22	Deanery Synod Meeting at St Michael and All Angels, 8pm
Mon	26	Choral Evensong sung by Old Palace School Choir, 5.30pm
Wed	28	Baptism Enquirers' Evening, 6.30pm
Thu	29	Birthday of Archbishop John Whitgift

March

Sat	02	Choral Evensong sung by RSCM Voices (South), 5.30pm
Sun	10	Mothering Sunday
Fri	22	John Whitgift Foundation Founder's Day Service, 11am
Tue	26	Minster Infants Easter Service, 9.30am
Wed	27	Minster Juniors Easter Service, 9.30am Old Palace of John Whitgift School Easter Assembly, 2.30pm

Par Son Art explores ideas of private devotion and choral dialogue in early modern France. The programme centres around the little-performed, dramatic musical narratives composed by Guillaume Bouzignac (1587–1643), interspersed with chansons from the previous generation, from the pen of the ever-prolific Orlande de Lassus (1532–1594). These mix with premières by young composers Greg May, Victoria Longstaff and Mark Zang, on evocative sacred texts from the same period. Through a tapestry of sacred and secular pieces, the programme takes the audience through the liturgical year – from Advent to Epiphany, through the Christmas story; to Easter week, and finally, resurrection.

Directed by Jasper Schoff, and featuring the Cambridge-based Lady Clare's Consort (dir. Daniel Blaze) and a variety of young professional singers from around London. Generously funded by The Marchus Trust.

Our journey through Lent

The journey through Lent is one of self-examination, a deepened relationship with God, our Maker and Redeemer, through meditation on his holy word and through almsgiving and acts of charity.

The word 'charity' can have unfortunate connotations nowadays. It is seen in the same light as 'do gooding' or a condescending attitude to those in need. The English word 'charity' comes from the Latin *caritas* which simply means 'love'. Charity is the making real and evident the love in our hearts. It's walking the walk of love, not just talking about it. The focus of this edition of the magazine is how we respond to the call serve others, as Christ serves us, through acts of charity – in the best sense – and generosity.

A classic way to approach this view of charity is in what are traditionally known as the Corporal Acts of Mercy, that is to say actions that make real Jesus' injunction for us to feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, clothe the naked, give to the poor, visit the sick and imprisoned and bury the dead.

You can read about some of the ways members of our church are doing just this, and I hope it will inspire you in Lent, and not just in Lent, to seek out and play your part in these things too. It is a way to see our work with the Separated Child Foundation, Crisis and the Croydon Churches Floating Shelter (CCFS). We do this out of love for Christ first and foremost. With Separated Child we will continue our regular programme of packing kits to give some comfort to child migrants separated from their families. There is also an opportunity in Lent to do this in a devotional context (about which you can read more). With Crisis we are invited to be regular in our giving and support of their work. Susan Williams writes movingly about her involvement with Crisis over the years and some of the reality of homelessness today. There is a call for involvement in the work of the CCFS in their partnership with Nightwatch, a charity feeding those who are hungry and

homeless. This outward-looking perspective is at the heart of the Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call, which Elaine Cooper and Susan tell us about and explain how we can join in.

Carol Jewell gives an account of her role working with the Croydon branch of Home-Start, an invaluable local community network of trained volunteers and expert support working with families with young children. That sort of work can be rewarding as well as fun. Carol describes how much she enjoys helping children and their parents and carers to have a great time at activity mornings.

Foodbanks have proliferated around the country and the need is acute and ongoing. Whilst we don't have one in our immediate vicinity, Alice Bishop has been volunteering at the foodbank run by St Alban's Church in South Norwood. Alice describes this work, which has been supported by donations from regular worshippers at the Minster.

Sometimes people rightly critique charitable works saying that they don't get to the causes of the problem. Fr David's article opens up the question of how the structures that mean people go hungry, thirsty, poorly clothed or in prison can be challenged as another strand of our practical response to serve our neighbour after the example of Christ. In Lent there will be a focused way to do this using the film 'I, Daniel Blake' as a way in to the questions and reflecting on them in the Christian context.

Lent ultimately takes us to the Paschal Mystery, the Mystery of Easter. In that mystery the Christian is drawn into the intimate relationship of love that Christ has with the Father as revealed in Gethsemane, the suffering love revealed in his death on the Cross, his burial in the tomb and then his resurrection. The great mystery unfolds in the Paschal Triduum, the Holy Three Days of Maundy Thursday through to the Day of Resurrection. The Great Easter Vigil (held at 8pm on Saturday 30th March this year) recapitulates this mystery and at its heart is the ancient hymn, the Exsultet. Charles Bishop explores this text and draws

out some of the significance of it. Our Thursday evening Lent Catechesis will focus on the whole Vigil service, prompted by a question from someone attending last year who asked, 'What's this all about?'

Only after we had planned the theme for this edition we discovered from Stephen Willmer that the Parish Magazine is now in its 150th anniversary year! So we can say 'Happy anniversary' to the magazine. We do hope that you enjoy the Parish Magazine in its current format and with its thoughtful and engaging content.

I hope too that you will enjoy our regular 'Getting to know...' column as this edition we meet Hilary Barnes. I hope we can all grow to know our parish and one another better through all our tools of communication, not least this magazine in its Sesquicentennial year (there's a word that has probably never appeared in the magazine before!

Fr Andrew

Parish Magazine Committee

Magazine Editor: Liz Watkins, 07973 172807

Commissioning: Fr Andrew and Liz Watkins

Liaison with advertisers: Deborah Miller

Proofreading: Alice Bishop

Deadline for the April / May 2024 issue:

Thursday 14 March 2024

Please email contributions to magazine@croydonminster.org

Please note: The views in the articles of the magazine reflect the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the editorial board.

Lent and the Corporal Acts of Mercy

Fr Andrew

.....

Giving up or taking on?

What are you going to give up this Lent? That's a question often frantically thought about on Shrove Tuesday, or the morning of Ash Wednesday!

I have heard a range of things that people will give up and why, some significant, some utterly trivial. I have also heard people say that they *would* give up x,y, or z... but it's too hard, so they won't.

Perhaps in sympathy with the "it's too hard" mentality and also a proper concern that giving up might send out the wrong signals about empty works or tokenism, some have said that during Lent we should not 'give up' but 'take on'. That though risks avoiding Christ's clear teaching for life, not just Lent, that we should deny ourselves that we might take up the cross.

The balance the Church has traditionally struck between giving up and taking on holds good today. So, on a personal level make Lent a time of self-denial so as to focus on the one upon whom we are truly dependent, that is God, and not chocolate, cheese, red wine etc. And then give something and take something on.

The Seven Acts of Mercy: a tool for Lent and for life

That is why the Seven Corporal Acts of Mercy are a good starting point. Again, they are, like following Jesus, for life not just for Lent. They make our words concrete and real: they are 'corporal' which means 'embodied'; they are actions that put into practice our words.

The Acts of Mercy are derived from Jesus' parable of the kingdom, known as 'The Sheep and the Goats' (Matthew 25.31–46). The parable tells how at the

Last Judgement we must give an account of how we have served Christ in other people. This is actually more than just a good thing to do in Lent, but is a measure of how we are citizens of God's kingdom and how we will be judged.

'Scripture tells us that the picture of judgment presented to us by Jesus is of Dives sitting and feasting with his friends while Lazarus sat hungry at the gate, the dogs, the scavengers of the East, licking his sores. We are Dives. Woe to the rich! We are the rich. The works of mercy are the opposite of the works of war, feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, nursing the sick, visiting the prisoner. But we are destroying crops, setting fire to entire villages and to the people in them. We are not performing the works of mercy but the works of war. We cannot repeat this enough.'

– Dorothy Day, 'In Peace Is My Bitterness Most Bitter', 1967

So what are the Seven Acts of Mercy?

1. Feed the hungry
2. Give drink to the thirsty
3. Give alms to the poor
4. Shelter the homeless
5. Care for the sick
6. Visit the imprisoned
7. Bury the dead

You might look at that list and say you can't do any of those, or perhaps just one. The question is not how many, but *how* we do these things. They are a gift to us in our discipleship, not a weapon against us to make us feel guilty or overloaded.

My feeding the hungry might be done through my donations to a foodbank, but it may also be that I go along and volunteer my time: do I need that challenge? We can't always sub-contract our good works to others to do.

'God wants us to be our brother's keeper.'

– Peter Maurin, 'Share Your Wealth'

It's the same with giving water to thirsty, alms to the poor, shelter to the homeless or care for the sick: how am I to do that?

We should also be mindful that we do that in different ways and there are always different opportunities. We might be doing them already! A parent or guardian of children, for example, does the first five works on a regular basis. That is true of care for an elderly relative too.

When it comes to visiting the imprisoned it gets more difficult. Visiting in prisons is not straightforward, though there is an organisation which enables people to do this, the National Association of Prison Visitors (www.naopv.com). Imprisonment takes many forms. The housebound person is imprisoned by their physical or mental limitations, visiting them is good. People are imprisoned by many things, for example dependency and addiction, fear. How could you 'visit' by spending time in conversation, over a cup of tea with people in that situation? And remember you may already be doing it!

Perhaps the most difficult act of mercy to consider is burying the dead. Surely that's what undertakers or gravediggers do, and I can't? The physical act of laying a loved and precious human body in the grave is an act of mercy (see Tobit 1.16–18): it is an act of human dignity but it is not open to everyone to do. Perhaps the *how* of burying the dead is also about how we honour those who have died in our prayers, in attending someone's funeral rather than not, of being present to those who grieve. In that way we honour those who have died.

The instinct to serve others after the example of Christ should be in our Christian DNA, drawn from parables such as The Sheep and the Goats or The Good Samaritan, and seeing Christ's liberating and healing love in the Gospels.

This is why as a parish we have been more explicitly engaging again in our work with the Separated Child Foundation, Crisis, and the Croydon Churches Floating Shelter project to feed the homeless with Nightwatch.

So what are you giving up and taking on?

What are you giving up this Lent? How about this as an answer to ponder: I am giving up my self-preoccupation to serve others after the example of Christ and to the greater glory of God. That would be a meaningful Lent and life!



**‘To feed the hungry,
to clothe the naked,
to shelter the homeless,
to instruct the ignorant,
at a personal sacrifice,
is what God
wants us to do.’**

– Peter Maurin,
‘Share Your Wealth’

*A packing session for the SCF
in the Minster's church hall*

Crisis and Me – a volunteer’s perspective

Susan Williams

.....

So where did it all start? Crisis was formed in 1967 as an urgent response to a growing homelessness crisis, highlighted in a TV drama ‘Cathy Come Home’. Since then it has helped thousands of people out of homelessness by delivering life-changing services and campaigning for change. Innovative programmes centred on housing, education, employment and well-being address individual needs and help people transform their lives.

So what is the problem? The latest figures from Croydon Council report 5202 people registered as homeless in 2022, including over 2000 children. Crisis works only with single homeless, so does not include couples or those with children or those under 18. In 2023 Crisis welcomed 603 new members, roughly 255 of whom were rough sleeping. Of those, 329 were allocated a key worker for ongoing assistance, and 150 were helped out of homelessness into sustainable accommodation or supported housing. Some have no access to funds so their options are limited. Figures from Combined Homelessness Information Network show from 2022/23 a 21% rise in homelessness in London, with those impacted by the cost of living crisis and those newly granted refugee status being heavily affected.

How did I get involved? Having retired from the day job, I replied to an advert by CVA for volunteers at the newly opened Skylight Centre in Surrey Street. I was interviewed, selected, and eventually started on 19th February 2018.

My duties were described as ‘welcome members and visitors, answer phones, keep the reception area clean and tidy, general reception duties’. Sounds easy in theory, but I soon realised that this was no ordinary reception. I was totally out of my comfort zone, and facing a very steep learning curve!

Homelessness can happen to anyone as a result of many and diverse factors. Crisis aims to help by closely working with other agencies to provide the best outcome for single people sleeping rough. Initial help and guidance can be as simple as providing lists of suitable landlords and agents or where to access free food, or legal advice. Sometimes it involves working with an individual for weeks, months or even years to overcome multiple complex issues. Once registered as homeless by a StreetLink outreach worker, members can access other services, help with money management, tackling the multitude of red-tape associated with registering with the council, benefits claims, bank accounts, immigration status enquiries, job applications etc., and English lessons. Mental health and well-being are also high on the agenda. Anxiety, depression and loneliness are commonplace, and thoughts of suicide may never be far away. Crisis provides help with mental wellbeing, including arts and crafts classes which go some way to help the healing process, and restore dignity and self-worth. On a practical level, access to laundry and shower facilities can make someone feel better. Such joy in a hot drink, a clean set of clothes (especially underwear and socks), and how welcome a pair of gloves is on a bitterly cold day. There is also joy when a member, settled in their new home, returns to say "Thank you".

So why do I do it? Every day is different and poses its own challenges. The reception is exceptionally busy with an average daily footfall of 40–50 people, of which probably 20 will present as homeless. It can take a lot of courage to come through the door to seek help for the first time. I make numerous cups of tea and coffee, cope with tears of joy, frustration and sadness, listen to their stories and where possible, offer help and advice. I never know what traumas are on the other end of a ringing telephone. I hand out towels for showers, though I struggle to remember names from one week to the next! There is a fantastic dedicated team of Initial Contact and Case workers who are always on hand to assist.

It can be traumatic sometimes. Incidents are rare, but sometimes anger and frustration mixed with despair and exhaustion can rumble near the surface. There

is a strict 'No drink, no drugs' policy and this can be difficult to monitor and control, as addiction and substance misuse can be a problem.

I go home on a Wednesday mentally and physically exhausted. However, I wouldn't change it for anything. I love the work, and feel I am giving something back to some of the poorest, most vulnerable of society. I believe your value shouldn't depend on your status or social background. And every day I thank God for my home and my warm bed.

I am pleased that we as a Church can continue to support and pray for the work of Crisis. All donations are gratefully received. A fresh set of clothes, clean socks and underwear, and warm hats and gloves make a huge difference to those in need and are essential for the ongoing work of the charity. Full details of how you can help, what and when to donate can be found in the Minster Bulletin.



crisis Together we will end homelessness

Together we will end homelessness

Homelessness is a devastating experience. It leaves people isolated and vulnerable. We believe that no one should be homeless in Britain today.

Did you know:

- There are currently nearly 160,000 homeless households in Britain
- If current policies continue, rough sleeping is expected to rise by 76 per cent in the next decade
- The average age of death for a homeless person is 47
- Someone sleeping rough is 17 times more likely than average to be a victim of violence

Homelessness is not inevitable. We know that, together, we will end it.

Play your part to end homelessness.

Tuesday mornings with a difference...

Carol Jewell

.....



My Tuesday mornings are all about being part of a group running activities for children and their parents and carers. We also signpost parents to other local services.

I leave early – avoiding traffic – for Shirley Children’s Centre where our team of volunteers meet up to prepare the room for crafts, free play, mid-morning snack, music-making as well as outside play. The aim of our feverish preparations is to create a warm welcome to all in an entirely safe space.

We’re poised and ready for action by 10.30am and so are the children! On arrival children run gleefully into free play. Those who feel shy like to ‘home in’ on craft and sit beside their carer to paint, draw, stick things together with an abundance of glue and glitter until all is transformed into a curious sticky kaleidoscope of random patches of colour and exotic glitter. Whilst engaged in creative surprises, parents, carers and helpers love to chat, share experiences and ask questions. Sometimes parents need a good cup of coffee too. As the weeks go by the session becomes an immensely social experience. I particularly enjoy talking to the very young.

As we sing ‘Tick Tock Goes the Clock it’s Time to Say Goodbye’ the signal for home time is clear. Children take their creations away with them. Some unusual products reach home and I daresay grandparents’ living rooms! There’s something rather special about being able to say ‘please try this at home’ (as opposed to ‘don’t do this at home’!).

If you like the sound of any of the above and would like to contribute, please do contact Louise@croymon-homestart.co.uk

The St Alban's South Norwood Foodbank

Alice Bishop

.....

Imagine that you are a mother of five. The six of you all live in one room. There are no cooking facilities. Now imagine that you go to your food cupboard and it is practically bare: the children start saying that they're hungry. You look in your purse and there's very little there. What a nightmare.

Now imagine you work in the hospitality sector. You catch Covid and it leaves you suffering badly from Long Covid. You can no longer work. Your rent already takes up a disproportionate amount of your monthly income and then your landlord announces a rent rise. Food prices are rising and rising. What a nightmare.

You are a pensioner. You have no savings. You are cold but your heating bills keep going up and up. You cut back on food to save money. You worry and worry and worry. What a nightmare.

I have met these people and many more like them, while helping at the St Alban's Church Foodbank in Thornton Heath. The Foodbank started in October 2022 as the Church's response to the growing needs of the people living in the locality and as a practical outworking of Jesus' command to love our neighbour.

Every Wednesday the Foodbank gives an emergency food bag to anyone who comes.

There is no need to be referred, and no questions are asked. Some people come only once, some a few times, some every single week. The numbers have increased and the growing need is evident.



The Foodbank relies totally on donations either of food items or money. We can only give from what we receive, and so far, we have managed to give emergency food bags to around 40 to 50 people each Wednesday.

Can you make donating to the Foodbank part of your almsgiving this Lent? Even a small amount either of money or of food makes a huge difference: popping two or three extra items into your weekly shopping basket is an easy way to do it.

It is wonderful to see the relief in people's eyes as they leave the Foodbank holding their bag. When we feed them, we remember Jesus' words "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat".

It's a small way to help them out of their nightmare.

You can donate to the Foodbank financially at:

www.stalbansouthnorwood.weebly.com/foodbank.html

or by bringing non-perishable food goods to the Minster and I will take them to St Alban's each week.

Nothing More, and Nothing Less – A Lent Course based on the film 'I, Daniel Blake'

Fr David

.....

'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return' are the words spoken to us on Ash Wednesday as our foreheads are marked in ash. As we hear them we recall the beginning of Jesus' ministry, when, just after John the Baptist's arrest, he invites people to join him:

" 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.' " (Mark 1.15)

Like Advent just past, Lent is a season of preparation. But while the former is a time of hope, as we await the coming of God's son who will transform the world, Lent is more sorrowful. It is a season when we reflect on our sins and repent of them. By aligning ourselves with Jesus' forty days in the wilderness, we undertake acts of denial and fasting as we try and focus on our desire to change ourselves and imitate the one who calls us. This is an excellent way to approach Lent, and even if many of us, myself included, often fail to fulfil the promises we make on Ash Wednesday, our attempts to do so help us approach Holy Week with a sense of renewed faith.

But if we concentrate just on our personal failings, we can miss a wider dimension. For Jesus says these words just after being baptised by John, who himself has been inspired by the scriptural injunction to 'prepare a way for the Lord.' John also tells us that 'the kingdom of God is at hand' which indicates that the mission is to bring this kingdom into being in the here and now.

Building that kingdom of God is not simply about asking ourselves to reflect on our individual weaknesses and strive to be better human beings. It is not about some sense of personal salvation, but the salvation of the whole world, together. As the prophet Micah says:

"They shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees,
and no one shall make them afraid;
for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken." (Micah 4.4)

"What does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6.8)

In other words, Jesus came to us in order that we should not just repent of our individual sin, but the structural sins of the society that we are living in. To strive



for justice, to build a world where all are equal and all live in peace. Lent challenges us to reflect not just on our own failings, but also on the failings of our collective society. It is a time when we can ask why some in our society are suffering, and why oppression happens. It is a time to question the causes of injustice and think about what we can do in response, both as individuals and as a community.

This is a risky business! The institutions and corporate practices that are the cause of these sins do not want to be challenged – just as we know that our own sin prefers not to be confronted. Both Jesus, and to a lesser extent, John the Baptist found this out to their cost.

This year's Lent Course will build on the approach that last year's took; taking the film 'I, Daniel Blake', we will reflect on these and other issues in the coming weeks. The film deals starkly with a pressing social issue – the work capability assessment – and through that lens highlights concerns about oppression and suffering, and why such things exist in our society today. It is a hard film to watch; it is realistic, and does not hold back; it is explicit in its belief that society as a whole is implicated in the suffering that many experience through this system. As the course progresses, we'll be thinking about why such things happen, exactly how we as individuals are involved, and what might be done about it in order for us to play our part in the building up of the Kingdom of God.

The course begins on Wednesday 21st February, and will take place at St George's Church, Barrow Road, CR0 4EZ at 2pm. Each session will last for an hour, and will include clips from the film and guided discussion. The film will be made available in advance of the course, and if you would like to receive it, then please email Fr David – d.adamsonhill@croydonminster.org

The Easter Vigil through the lens of the Exsultet

Charles Bishop

.....

Holy Saturday is a day that can feel very strange. The drama of Maundy Thursday and the intense penitence of Good Friday have passed, and we are left in a strange time of waiting. In a way, we share in the death of Christ as, occupying a space of stillness and rest, we sit by Christ's tomb. And then, at the start of the Service of Light, the beginning of the Easter Vigil, comes the great Easter Proclamation or Exsultet: the ancient hymn that proclaims the Resurrection of Christ, and announces that "Jesus Christ our King is risen!"

The origins of the Exsultet are uncertain, although it has traditionally been ascribed to St Augustine in the 5th century. The first formal inclusion in the Easter rites is in the Bobbio Missal of the 7th century. The Exsultet is similar in structure to a Eucharistic prayer complete with preface. This is evident from the inclusion of the words '*dominus vobiscum*' (the Lord be with you) and '*sursum corda*' (lift up your hearts). The Exsultet's proper name is the *Praeconium Paschale*, 'Praeconium' meaning praise or celebration, 'Paschale' meaning Easter. The whole prayer is a prayer of blessing, blessing the Paschal Candle, properly sung by a deacon although a priest may stand in when necessary.

The earliest texts of the Exsultet are remarkable for a number of reasons. A fascinating inclusion is the passage in the 'praise of bees', where we hear these words:

“... accept this candle, a solemn offering,
the work of bees and of your servants' hands,
...
for it is fed by melting wax,
drawn out by mother bees to build a torch so precious.”

This text is included in the ancient Roman Rite and is an option in the Church of England's *Common Worship*. Secondly, there are a number of important theological implications contained within the text. For example, the inclusion of the phrase '*felix culpa*', or 'happy fault', has considerable implications for how we view the nature of humanity. Theologians debate the appropriateness of describing Adam's sin as a 'happy fault', because it raises the question of whether Adam's disobedience can be regarded as a good thing. What the Exsultet suggests is that our redemption by Christ is initiated by humanity's fall and leads to our salvation.

Of great significance in the Exsultet is its use of liturgical time, shown by the repeated insistence that "this is the night". The parallel is explicitly drawn between the Jewish Passover and the Easter feast: "For this is the Passover feast, when Christ, the true Lamb of God, is slain." This rhythm of evening and morning, a feature of creation, is made holy through the words of the Book of Exodus (which is an important text for understanding the Passover and Easter mystery), where we read the instructions to the High Priest:

"And thou shalt put it [the altar of incense] before the veil ... And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it." (Exodus 30.6–8)

The Eucharist being regarded as a sacrifice by the earliest Christians led to the conclusion that the evening sacrifice of the Temple was a 'type' of Christ. Thus, the Vigil was arranged so that the Eucharistic sacrifice of Christ would coincide with the hour of the resurrection of Christ.

We tend to think of Easter as an arbitrary date, a man-made invention which serves to celebrate a particular event. But, as in the *anamnesis* of the Mass, the

.....
Opposite: The Easter Vigil, Basilique du Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre, Paris
shutterstock.com / Alexandros Michailidis

*'Set us aflame with the fire of your love,
and bring us to the radiance
of your heavenly glory...'*



Exsultet insists that this truly is *the* night. In some mysterious way, we share in the exact events of our salvation.

“This is the night when you first saved our ancestors...”

“This is the night when Jesus Christ vanquished hell...”

“This is the night when all who believe in him are freed from sin...”

“This is the night that gave us back what we had lost...”

“Night truly blessed when hatred is cast out...”

There is no ‘we remember’ this night, only that this *is* truly *the* night. This is why our Lenten preparations are so important, and why we keep this sacred feast with solemnity. These are the events of our salvation.

This is worth reflecting upon as we approach this year’s Paschal Triduum, the events from Maundy Thursday to Easter Day. As we immerse ourselves in these magnificent services, we can contemplate to what extent we are participating in Christ’s Death and Resurrection through the lens of the Exsultet. Think of the joy those Israelites who were led out of Egypt and into the Promised Land experienced when it actually happened. Then place yourself in your own Exodus, away from the death of sin and forward to new life with Christ.

“Therefore, heavenly Father, in this our Easter joy
grant that this Easter Candle may make our darkness light.
For Christ the morning star has risen in glory;
Christ is risen from the dead and his flame of love still burns within us!
Christ sheds his peaceful light on all the world!
Christ lives and reigns for ever and ever!
Amen.”

150 Years of the Parish Magazine

It has recently come to light that March 2024 marks the 150th Anniversary of the publication of the first issue of our Parish Magazine. Stephen Willmer tells us about his discovery.

.....

Stephen writes: The reference to the 150th Anniversary is from a small booklet called *Through One Thousand Years: Some interesting events in the long history of Croydon Parish Church*. This was compiled and privately printed in 1960 in a limited edition of 100 as part of the Croydon Millennium Celebrations by James E. Cooper, who was Assistant Verger to Frank Butler, I think in the 1950s. It starts with the reference in 960 to Elfsies, Priest of Croydon, and finishes with the main events of the Millenary year, 1960.

The specific entry is very short. It simply reads “1874, March, Parish Magazine first published.” The only other entry for Croydon Parish Church for 1874 is the ordination of Randall Davidson (subsequently Archbishop of Canterbury, 1903–1928) by the then Archbishop of Canterbury on Sunday 20 September in the presence of the Patriarch of Antioch and the Syrian Bishop of Jerusalem!

Other Anniversaries mentioned in the booklet for this year include:

- the 710th Anniversary of the grant by Edward II in 1314 of a Thursday market and an annual Fair on the vigil and morrow of St Matthew (20–21 September);
- the 620th Anniversary of the gifting of 20 sheep by John de Aldermaston of Croydon on 5 March 1404 in his will (he died in 1403 and was buried in the church) for a new saints’ bell for the new belfry;
- the 420th Anniversary of the burial of Archbishop Whitgift on Friday 2 March 1604;

- the 290th Anniversary of the First Peal of 5040 charges rung in the tower by the newly formed Society of Croydon Ringers in January 1734;
- the 230th Anniversary of the construction of the Avery Organ in the Church in 1794; and
- the 80th Anniversary of the flying bomb in Cranmer Road on the night of 27–28 June 1944, which damaged the Clerestory and other south-facing windows (and created the hole that is now the Old Palace School netball courts).

Minster Records

Holy Baptism

Leila and Mason D'Cruz

Rosie Smithson

Kelani Banjo

R.I.P.

Roy Hewitt, Vivien Board, Michael Idowu,
Ranforda Robert, Billy Wood, Michael Julian,
Alice O'Halloran, Geoffrey van Cuylenburg,
Maya Chakravorty, Marjorie Stemerding,
David Chislett (Priest), Juan Carlos Munoz,
Margaret North, Audrey, John Coote,
Rosemary Durward (Priest), Mosun Olatidoye

Getting to know...

Hilary Barnes

Tiffany Willmer

.....

Hilary is the first of Croydon Minster's bell ringers who I have had the pleasure of interviewing, although I first met her outside of the bell tower at an Advent rosary group in the St Nicholas Chapel. I was delighted when she agreed to meet up later to tell me more about her life.



Hilary was born in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, into a family of four girls who were all trained up as bell ringers by their policeman father. He was a 'big, happy, friendly, hands-on' dad who had originally come from a small village where he had learnt the art of campanology. He continued with this hobby all his life despite the fact that as adults neither he or Hilary's mother Hazel were churchgoers.

With the exception of drama lessons, Hilary did not enjoy school very much. She was the youngest of the four girls and loved to stay at home with her mother, Hazel, of whose extremely challenging childhood more will be said later.

At the age of 11, Hilary made friends with a girl who came from a strong evangelical tradition and started going to church with her. There were wonderful church camping holidays to be enjoyed and before long, Hilary had become a Christian herself.

By now the family were living in Loughborough, where there was a convent school and an actual convent of Roman Catholic nuns called the Rosminian Sisters of

Providence. It was possibly this fact (combined with Julie Andrews' performance in 'The Sound of Music'!) which first gave Hilary the idea that she might want to become a nun. She also found herself drawn to the music and colour on offer at a local catholic church and so introduced herself to its parish priest, Father McDermott. He agreed to meet with her every week for a course of instruction and Hilary was duly confirmed into the Roman Catholic church. As well as regular Sunday services she also took part in retreats at the Rosminian convent, although ideas of becoming a nun herself gradually receded.

On leaving secondary education, Hilary passed an audition to go to the East 15 Acting School in Essex and so left home for the first time. But despite living with a nice family and finding a church to go to in Essex, she didn't settle at the school and became increasingly homesick and unhappy.

Hilary returned to Leicestershire to consider her next move and decided to leave acting for the time being, training instead as an Operating Department Practitioner (ODP), a type of healthcare professional who provides skilled care to patients at all stages of an operation. The two-year course was based at St Thomas' Hospital in London which meant leaving home once again, but this time Hilary was ready for the experience, seeing it as her 'passport to independence'. Despite finding the environment very 'hierarchical' and fainting a lot during operations to start with, she stuck the course out and qualified as an ODP in 1994.

St Thomas' was also important to Hilary as being the place where she met her future husband Robert, though they only finally tied the knot in the summer of last year.

Hilary has been working as a freelance ODP ever since qualifying, with one important interlude in 2016, when she combined her work with the two-year drama course run by The Poor School in King's Cross. Part way through this

course, she learnt the tragic news that her closest sister in age, Alison, had died very suddenly at the age of 50 from a coronary artery dissection. This understandably cast a considerable shadow over Hilary's remaining time at The Poor School. Nonetheless Hilary continues to keep her eyes open for acting opportunities that may arise alongside her ODP work and is signed on with an agent.

Hilary first started bell ringing at Croydon Minster in 2011, the year that her father died. At the time, it was not something she had done since childhood, but she wanted to try and pick it up again in memory of him. When she arrived, she was delighted to find that more than one of the existing Minster team had actually known her father through bell ringing circles.

She has continued to be part of the team at Croydon Minster ever since, but also attends many services, drawn in above all by the music and by the 'warm and friendly' atmosphere. Hilary also teaches bell ringing to beginners at Mitcham Parish Church.

Aside from campanology, Hilary's main hobby is learning to play the piano, having recently passed her Grade 6. She is also a longstanding volunteer with Croydon Cats Protection League and loves baking.



A final word must be added on Hilary's mother Hazel, who died in 2022. She had been taken into care in 1940 when both her parents fell ill with tuberculosis. Aged just 6, she was the eldest of three girls who were all sent to one home while their three brothers went elsewhere. Their parents subsequently died of the disease and all of the siblings except for Hazel also caught it, at least one with life-

changing consequences. As an adult, Hazel wrote and published a book about her experiences called *The Scattered Scruffs* which looks at the experiences of children in care in Leicestershire at that time. Before her death she wrote that she would like her book to be read as part of Social Services training, 'so that everyone understands the hardship and the mental cruelty that all children in care go through when separated from their parents.'

Betterflow Plumbing Services

For all your plumbing work

- **Installation, servicing and maintenance of gas boilers and all gas appliances**
- **Complete central heating installation**
- **Bathroom/shower installation**
- **Unvented cylinder installation, servicing and maintenance**
- **Wall and floor tiling**
- **Installation, servicing and maintenance of all plumbing appliances and fittings**

No job too small

Call Tony on 07751 900899

Website: www.betterflowplumbingservices.co.uk

email: bfps@ymail.com

Fully insured (Public Liability Insurance)

NO CALL OUT FEE

You can check Betterflow Plumbing Services in the Gas Safe Register



Caring for Croydon

Full nursing care

Outstanding and accredited end of life care

Residential care

Trained nursing professionals to assist with daily care and fun activities

Respite care

For whenever you or your carer need a break

Independent living

Self-contained apartments with on-call alarms and daily support

Book a personalised tour
020 8256 1596
enquiries@whitgiftcare.co.uk
whitgiftcare.co.uk

Whitgift
Care

Part of the
john
whitgift
foundation

RETIREMENT HOUSING TO RENT IN CROYDON

Independent living in self-contained flats
some developments with Extra Care facilities
including on-site care teams and midday meals.



 housing@eldonhousing.co.uk

 020 8655 6724

 Scan me for our website

eldon housing
PASSIONATE | PROFESSIONAL | CARING



Rowland Brothers

Independent Funeral Directors

Funeral Services Managed by the Rowland Family since 1873

A proud tradition of care, understanding and trust



Rowland Brothers is a family business serving the needs of bereaved families since 1873. During this time we have earned an enviable reputation for excelling in the traditions of quality, service and reliability.

Our range of products and services are designed to provide you with a funeral that lets you remember your loved one with dignity and respect.

- Burials & Cremations
- Chapels of Rest for all Religions
- Specialists in Worldwide Repatriation
- All Memorial & Stone Work
- Grave Maintenance Plans
- After Care Services & Home Visits
- 24 Hours, 365 Days Service
- Pre-Paid Funeral Plans
- Exhumations
- Easy payment plans available

Established in 1873

Email: info@rowlandbrothers.com

www.rowlandbrothers.com



299 - 305 Whitehorse Rd,
Croydon CR0 2HR
020 8684 1667

44 High Street,
Purley CR8 2AA
020 8660 5547

9 The Parade,
Old Coulsdon CR5 1EH
01737 555 202

434 Limsfield Rd,
Waringham CR6 9LG
01883 623 067

372 Central Parade,
New Addington CR0 0JD
01689 842 046

J.B. Shakespeare

Limited

FAMILY FIRM OF

Funeral Directors

Established 1877

Immediate Personal Service

Head Office:

1 Norfolk House

Wellesley Road, Croydon CR0 1LH

Telephone – 020 8688 1447

Email – croydon@jbshakespeare.com

Branch Office:

175 Selsdon Park Road

South Croydon CR2 8JJ

Telephone – 020 8657 3616

Email – selsdon@jbshakespeare.com

National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD)

Contacts

CROYDON MINSTER (St John the Baptist)

Church Street, Croydon CR0 1RN 020 8688 8104

Email: office@croydonminster.org Website: www.croydonminster.org

ST GEORGE'S CHURCH

Barrow Road, Waddon CR0 4EZ <https://stgeorgewaddon.org/>

Priest-in-Charge	Revd Canon Dr Andrew Bishop	020 8688 8104
Priest, St George's	Revd David Adamson-Hill	020 8688 8104
Honorary Assistant Priest	Canon John Ackland	<i>on sabbatical</i>
Assistant Priest	Revd Alan Bayes	07792 846452
Assistant Priest	Revd Folake Makanjuola	020 8688 8104
Lay Reader	Elaine Cooper	020 8686 7315
Southwark Pastoral Auxiliary	Diana Hemmings	020 8688 8104
Churchwardens	Arlene Esdaile	020 8688 8104
	Pamela Hall	020 8688 8104
St George's Wardens	Mark Mason	07894 793243
	Carol Milgate	07984 112804
Director of Music	Justin Miller	020 8688 8104
Verger and Parish Administrator	Denise Mead	020 8688 8104
PA to Fr Andrew and Communications Officer	Trisha Kierzek	020 8688 8104
	t.kierzek@croydonminster.org	
Master of the Ringers	Shirley McGill	020 8406 3083
PCC Secretary	Jodie Richards	020 8688 8104
	pcc.secretary@croydonminster.org	
PCC Treasurer	Deborah Miller	020 8688 8104
	treasurer@croydonminster.org	
St George's accounts	Carol Milgate	07984 112804



Croydon Minster, Church Street, Croydon CR0 1RN

www.croydonminster.org

Printed by Solopress