

St Mary the Virgin
EWELL PARISH CHURCH
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WEEKLY NOTES

14 December 2003

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

We have had two extracts from Dame Maria Boulding's beautiful book *The Coming of God*, and there are two more today, and they replace the usual paragraph from the Vicar. The final extract will be next week.

'Gaudete' Sunday.

You have to wait in hope, waiting for the mystery to unfold, going on doing ordinary things but all the time listening, learning, pondering, growing and energetically serving. You have to be silent before the mystery. In the Book of Job the 'comforters' are the ones who cannot be silent before it but must rush in with their explanations. You know your kinship with the mystery. By your closeness to Christ his mind is being formed in you and he is leading you into his own experience, his own joy and longing, and his own knowledge of the Father. Whatever the renunciations, the inner poverty and the successive little deaths and lettings-go, this life of contemplation is a life of joy, because lived in Jesus it is a journey into God, and unfinished tale.

As the poor and faithful of Israel, had said 'Yes' to God in anguish of spirit, not seeing how things could work out but conscious only of the tearing away from what had gone before and the venture forward into the dark unknown, at God's word, so Mary was being asked to make the leap of faith in response to God's self-offer and invitation. There were no models for understanding, no comforting precedents, because this thing had never happened before. The flesh-taking of the Son of God was much more than a fulfilment of Israel's expectations, much more than a satisfactory tying up of all the strands of hope... it was the unheard-of gift, the breaking-in of the wholly new thing.

Like the prophets and the anonymous believers before her, she let go of familiar, intelligible patterns and ways of relating to God and the universe, of those frameworks which had genuinely supported meaning hitherto, and were indeed God-given. She said her 'Yes' to the Beyond, she let go of her securities, faced the misunderstanding, bore the shame, accepted her own bewilderment and risk. She was herself reborn to a new existence, that she might bring forth life for many. There was joy for her, and in newness of life she danced with the Beyond that was within.

As you ponder the word in your heart, like Mary pondering all her life mysteries she served and adored but did not fully understand, you are the Church. Like Israel, the Church is the womb-community sheltering mysteries not yet seen. The Church has received the word but must give it life within its own life, and let the word speak and speak again through every age and culture in its inexhaustible fullness.

this day.) It is one of the two Sundays in the 'western' tradition when the liturgical colour is rose. It is therefore very appropriate that a new 'best' set of rose vestments will be blessed and brought into use today. They are part of a memorial gift, in memory of the late Frank Cannon. The vestments will be blessed at the start of the Sung Eucharist, so at the 0800 service we shall use the older rose set, and, because we use the old English colour sequence for Prayer Book services, the 1100 will be celebrated in violet vestments (the nearest thing we have to blue). However, the new vestments will be laid out for inspection by those attending the 0800 and 1100 celebrations today. We are very grateful for this kind gift, which is a very suitable memorial to a fine Christian gentleman, a zealous and devout member of the church community at St Mary's, and a former churchwarden. Since he also assisted within the sanctuary as a Communion Assistant this gift is particularly appropriate.

Holman Hunt's picture of Old St Mary's has been on display at the pre-Raphaelite exhibition in town, and as a result of some considerable boldness on the part of one parishioner Lord Lloyd-Webber has consented to the illustration of the church in the exhibition catalogue being blown up to full size and displayed here at St Mary's. We are grateful to Lord Lloyd Webber for allowing us to do this, and to the anonymous parishioner who has arranged and financed it all. The framed result is now at the west end of the north aisle, with our fire-damaged print of Holman Hunt's more famous *Lux Mundi* on one side, and the inscription about the 1973 fire on the other. Bearing in mind that the painting was made one year before Old St Mary's was demolished, this seems the most suitable place to put it. It is a welcome adornment to St Mary's, as well as being in its way a very suitable historical record.

Iain McKillop has once again given us a loan of a magnificent set of paintings, this time seven Stations of the Nativity. They are on the nave pillars, together with their accompanying meditations, and with a prayer at the start and finish. They will be with us over the Christmas period. Individuals may wish to use these Stations as a form of personal devotion during Advent; in fact some have already done so. Do come in any time during weekday mornings through the office; the church will be somewhat quieter this week, now that the various Carol Services have taken place. We shall use Iain's Stations liturgically this evening.

Next Sunday. Sunday morning coffee in church, not in the hall, and, after a brief Mattins, the General Decoration of the church for Christmas. This month's *Ewell Parish News* has something to say about our Christmas decoration here; it is an enacted parable of welcome. There will be mince pies and more coffee for the workers after the Angelus at noon. Do bring lots of greenery and pretty things. There are plenty of things to do. Evening Prayer next Sunday will be said in the Parish Room.

Our prayers today. In our regular prayer we pray for this church and parish, and in the worldwide Anglican Communion we pray for the Church in Borneo and in Papua New Guinea. In the diocese we pray for those who work as Chaplains to the various hospices. In the parish we pray for the congregation of Ewell United Reformed Church, awaiting the arrival of their new minister, and in our systematic prayer for the people of the parish we pray today for the residents of Brookmead.

SUNDAY SERVICES

0800 HOLY COMMUNION *Common Worship rite*
 Order 1 in traditional language: page 207 Collect of the Day: page 378
 Other Advent material: page 300. Eucharistic Prayer A: page 216

0930 SUNG EUCHARIST *Common Worship rite*
 'Children's Hour' in the church hall; Crèche in the Choir Vestry.
 Collect of the Day: page 378. Other Advent details: page 300
 Eucharistic Prayer F: page 198 (omit the responses in red brackets).
 (Eucharistic Prayer F is particularly suitable for Advent)
 Setting of the Eucharist: *Leighton* in D

Introit hymn: 12
 Introduction and the *Blessing of new rose vestments* (see note on next page)
Kyrie eleison.
 Collect of the Day: page 378 (*Readings on separate leaflet*)
 Old Testament Reading from the Book of the prophet Zephaniah [Tune: 444]
 Gradual Canticle: Song of New Jerusalem
 New Testament Reading from St Paul's Letter to the Philippians Hymn 443
 The Holy Gospel reading from St Luke
 Sermon by *the Vicar.*
 Nicene Creed: page 173 Collection
 Intercession and Prayers of Penitence (Confession on page 276: 2)
 Then all stand for the Greeting of Peace.
 Hymn 170 (ii)
All sit for the Offertory Anthem: This is the record of John. Gibbons

This is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed and denied not, but spake plainly, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What art thou then? Art thou Elias? And he said, I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, What art thou, that we may give an answer unto them that sent us? What sayest thou of thyself? And he said, I am the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord. (St John 1: 19-25)

All stand for Eucharistic Prayer F: page 198

The Lord's Prayer, etc. on pages 178-180

At the Invitation to Communion: Hymn 6

Post-Communion hymn: Metrical Benedictus (*on Readings paper*) [Tune: 401]

Post-Communion Prayer: page 468. The Blessing and Dismissal

Welcome to any visitors or newcomers to St Mary's today. Please make yourselves known, and join us for coffee in the church hall across the road between the 0930 and 1100 services

1100 SUNG EUCHARIST

Book of Common Prayer rite

Small red hymn-books at this service.

Setting of the Eucharist: *Victoria*, Missa O Magnum Mysterium

Sermon by *Mr Reginald Saunders, Reader*

Introit hymn: Song of God's Herald (*on small slip*). [Tune: *Un bel enfant*]

Then green Prayer Book: page 31

Kyrie eleison (Lord, have mercy): page 33

Greeting and the Collect of the Day

(*There is a separate leaflet for the Collect and Readings*)

The Epistle: 1 Corinthians 4: 1-5

Remain seated for the Gradual Psalm 86: 6-12, sung by the Choir. [2nd part, v.8]

The Holy Gospel: St Matthew 11: 2-10

Nicene Creed: page 34

Offertory hymn: AMR 552 (ii) Collection

All kneel for the Prayer for the Church (page 36), the Prayers

of Penitence, etc., and for the Prayer of Consecration

Hymn at the Consecration: AMR 384 part 2

During the Communion: O Lamb of God (page 44)

Anthem: This is the record of John.

[Words printed at 0930 service]

After Communion:

The Lord's Prayer and the Prayer of Thanksgiving: page 44

(Gloria in excelsis omitted in Advent.)

The Blessing Hymn: AMR 266

1830 STATIONS OF THE NATIVITY (Main church)

In church this week

Tuesday 1000 Holy Communion

Other events and notices

Monday Holy Communion to the housebound.

Tuesday 1930 Standing Committee of the Parochial Church Council

Wednesday After the party last week, the Tuesday Coffee Morning has now finished for the Christmas break. It resumes on 7 January.

It is 'Gaudete' Sunday today, with the famous 'Rejoice in the Lord always' passage from Philippians coming up in the three-year cycle of eucharistic readings. ('Gaudete' was also the opening word in the ancient Latin Introit for