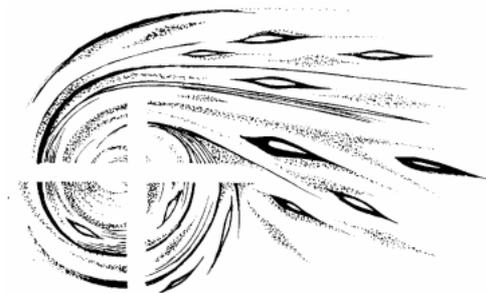


A Handful of Dust



I'm not usually one to go in for excessive displays of penitence, fasting, breast-beating and the like, but Ash Wednesday (March 5th this year) is one of my favourite days in the Christian year. I always find the "Imposition of Ashes" particularly moving, especially the words the priest uses as he or she makes the sign of the cross in ash on our forehead: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ." I'm always brought up short, reminded that Lent is all about reassessing where my life is going, and whether I've left any space for God in it. Ash Wednesday this year is especially poignant for me and Harriet, because it turns out to be the day our new baby is expected to be born. As we wait expectantly, I'm reminded that it's from the dust of the earth that new life springs forth. This is exactly what happens in the Genesis creation story: "then the LORD God formed the man from the

dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being" (Genesis 2:7). It's always hard to believe it when we see a newborn baby, but this new life will eventually become dust in its turn.

Ash Wednesday reminds us of our mortality; it forces us to recall that if we seem to count for anything on this earth it's only a fleeting illusion. There's a memorable line in the graveyard scene in *Hamlet*, where he realises this:

Imperial Caesar, dead and turned to clay,

Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.

O, that that earth which kept the world in awe should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!

And this, of course, is the message of Lent: that we should take a long, hard look at ourselves and realise how much we need God, for "the breath of life" itself if nothing else. If we are anything at all, it is because we count on God's grace alone.

Mark

Chronicle

LENT AT ST JAMES

TUESDAY LENT EUCHARIST & LUNCH



Tuesdays at 12 o'clock beginning on March 11th. The Eucharist is followed by a simple lunch of soup, bread & cheese, fruit, tea or coffee in the Church Centre. Proceeds will go to USPG - serving overseas missions.

LENT GROUPS



We are living in world beset by many uncertainties and fears. This year's Lent Course "New World, Old Faith" focuses on five important themes with the help of contemporary leading figures in the English Church including, **The Archbishop of Canterbury, David Coffey, Joel Edwards, Dr John Polkinghorne and Dr Pauline Webb.**

Please speak with Mark for further details

Sundays @ Six at St James

The first Sunday of the month at 6 o'clock

March 2nd *Evening Praise*

April 6th *Looking to the Cross*

May 4th *Taizé Worship*

June 1st *Waiting on the Word*



Parish Weekend

Friday 20th – Sunday 22nd June

Offa House, nr Leamington Spa

SEASONS OF THE SPIRIT

in the Rhythm of Life



Healing Eucharist

Wednesday

19th March

7.30 p.m.

St James Church



Receive Jesus' promise of healing

Mothering Sunday

30th March

ST JAMES

10.00 am Family Service

11.30 am Sung Eucharist

ST FRANCIS

10.30 am Family Eucharist



Case for war yet to be made, warns House of Bishops

Over the course of the last twelve months the Church of England's House of Bishops, concerned by the rapidly deteriorating situation between the international community and Iraq, has sought to raise those ethical and moral issues that need to be addressed before any final decision is taken as to the use of military force.

These concerns were previously set out in its 9th October 2002 submission to the Foreign affairs select Committee's ongoing inquiry into the war against terrorism. This submission concluded that while military action can sometimes be justified as a last resort to enforce United Nations Security Council resolutions, to undertake a preventative war against Iraq at this juncture would be to lower the threshold for war unacceptably. The House of Bishops at its recent meeting in Leeds issued the following

statement on Iraq:

"We believe that the Government's stated policy of disarming Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction is best pursued by facilitating and strengthening the work of UN weapons inspectors. It is crucial that this process be allowed to run its course. To launch military action while there remains the potential to secure a peaceful resolution would be ill-judged and

premature.

"We continue to hold that a conclusive case has yet to be made in favour of military action against Iraq. We do not believe the evidence presented to date suggests a clear link exists between Iraq and Al Qaeda or that Iraq poses an immediate threat to international security. Without compelling new evidence to the contrary, we contend that military action could not be morally justified.

"It is vital that, however the current crisis unfolds, the UK government should seek the maximum support of the international community, working within the framework of the United Nations. We urge all nations to give the weapons inspectors the full co-operation, resources and information they need. We call on Iraq to present credible evidence to support its claim that it does not possess

Weapons of Mass Destruction.

"We believe that it is vital that proper focus and attention is given in any event to ensuring that the basic humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people are met and that a clear path is constructed for the swift and effective return of Iraq and its people, who have long suffered under the regime of Saddam Hussein, to a rightful place in the community of nations.

"In seeking to resolve this crisis we call on the international community to provide the basis for a lasting and just peace in the region by taking all necessary steps to revitalise the Middle East Peace Process, based on the twin principles of a secure Israel and a viable Palestinian state.

"At a time of widespread suspicion and insecurity we urge the government and the media to avoid the use of language or rhetoric which might cast this crisis in religious terms or contribute to extremist and exclusivist attitudes. We will continue to work with other faith leaders, both here and overseas, to strengthen the bonds of community relations and cohesion at this difficult time.

"We return to our dioceses determined in Christ to call on all members of the Church of England to engage with people of faith to pray for the world and for those entrusted with the grave responsibility of taking decisions which will have immense, widespread and unpredictable consequences not only for Iraq and the Gulf region but for us all.



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



Rosanne interviews Norman Alderson

Who was it who said 'one volunteer is worth ten pressed men'? I think it was Lord Nelson, if not, I'm sure one of you will let me know. We are all aware (aren't we?) that reliable volunteers are vital to the smooth running of our two churches. Well, this month's interviewee slots into that category brilliantly. Actually he has a right hand lady, Mary, to whom he has been married for 55 years but she backed down from answering my questions. Instead she served us up lots of coffee and shortbread – lovely. Incidentally, either of them looks old enough to be five years away from their diamond wedding and it's obvious when you speak to them that they are a long way from the armchair and slippers routine. Norman proudly traces his Yorkshire ancestors back to 1640. He was born in 1922 in Darlington. It is with considerable regret that he describes his family as one 'torn apart'. Sadly his parents were legally separated when he was very young. His mother took Norman and his brother Frank to live with their grandfather whilst the other three children and their father lived with grandmother Alderson. Five years later Frank, Norman and their mother set up home in the country with their unmarried Aunt and the two boys attended the village school. They also sang in the choir of the beautiful village church. The name of the place is

Lastingham. There they stayed until 1934 when they moved south to live in a village near Sevenoaks in Kent. Mrs Alderson took a new job so Auntie helped to bring up the boys. At 14 Norman left school he had 'tolerated' most of his lessons though he shone at arithmetic. Poetry was his *bête noir*.

War took his brother off to join the navy and Norman worked as a waiter in the West End of London. He recalls waiting on eminent generals such as De Gaulle and Wavell at smart hotels such as the Carlton and the Grosvenor. Wanting to help with the war effort he moved to Oxford where he found a job at the Pressed Steel producing wing-flaps for aircraft. His call-up papers arrived and he too joined the navy serving in battleships. His experiences on H.M.S. Malaya and H.M.S. Valiant would fill another couple of pages so suffice it to tell that he had quite a few hairy moments escorting supplies from Gibraltar to Malta, bombarding Penang and when his ship was forced to limp home all the way round the coast of Africa. One pleasant experience he recalls was when he was chosen to sing at the Royal Albert Hall in London alongside famous stars of the day under the direction of (then) Captain Vivian Dunn who went on to become Director of the Queen's Military Music.

Demob brought Norman back to the Pressed Steel and sharing a home with brother Frank. In his leisure time he supported a local amateur football team. An away match at Thame was followed by a dance and on this occasion a young lady supporter caught his eye. He must have had a rush of nerves because at the dance he managed to spoil her best dress by spilling coffee all over it. She forgave him, of course, their courtship began and they were married on 26 July 1947. Their first years together were spent with Mary's mum in Headington. A bungalow in Horspath was their first family home. Their son, Alan, was born in 1949 and they are proud grandparents to his two children, Joanna and Justin. Recently the first great-grandchild has arrived, Norman spoke proudly of Alan's managerial post in Cambridge where he works on the journal of the International Company of Biologists.

For many years a spokesman for people's rights Norman was a shop steward in the Transport and General Workers' Union. He was awarded a gold medal for 40 years' service to his union. Now in retirement he chairs the TGWU retired members club also the Rover Retirees Club. He is a volunteer for Optima Research into the ageing process and also as part of a control group for research carried out on war veterans.

He is a caller at St James's bingo club and offers help wherever and whenever it is needed. Heavy lifting is now off the agenda due to a 'dodgy' back but for almost anything else, Norman's your man. He and Mary moved to Beauchamp Place over four years ago. About that time they met Vernon, our former curate, who suggested they might 'try' a service at St James's. They did and stayed and have made many friends in the parish. Welcome aboard Norman, and Mary too, of course!

Was there one particular person who had a strong influence on your early life?

Auntie Matty. She was there for me all the time – a very gracious lady – she lived till the grand age of 93.

Can you remember an incident in your early life which holds special significance for you?

Our village choir singing in York Minster with other village choirs in the area – wonderful.

What sort of child were you?

I was a serious boy – just enjoyed my little life in the village.

Has your faith been with you since childhood?

I would say God has always been part of my life. I've always believed that you don't have to go to church to be doing Christian things. I really enjoy my life within St James's.

Which period of your life has given you most satisfaction?

Present days, since retirement.

Are there any aspects of modern life you dislike?

I don't like people who are intolerant of those who have fallen by the wayside. (*here Norman spoke of his sympathy for genuine refugees and asylum-seekers*)

What's best about life today?

The majority of people are more affluent.

How do you like to spend your leisure time?

Listening to a good tenor or baritone or fine choral music. I don't have much leisure time but I enjoy crosswords and we never miss Countdown on TV, even taping it when we are out. Oh, and compiling my family history.

What makes you laugh?

I'm a serious sort of person but I do like Tommy Cooper-type of humour.

If you had a magic wand what would you change?

I would like to see a world government where the richer nations could help the poorer ones. That would eliminate war.

What do you hope to be doing in ten years' time?

Hopefully still going to St James's and enjoying the friendly folk we meet there.



No Need to Hide



'Everything is laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give an account.' Heb

4:13

God sits in the living room of your mind and knows your every thought. You can't lie to him, for He knows you inside out. Just be honest and say: This is what I'm being tempted with...I can't hide from You. Cleanse me and give me stronger direction for my life. I praise You for loving me in spite of all You know about me. Forgive me my secret sins. Forgive me for judging others. If it were not for your mercy, I would be guilty of the very things for which I have condemned them. Help me to be merciful.

The book of Hebrews does not stop telling us that God sees and knows everything about us. Listen: "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15) Great news! We have a High Priest! Who has provided forgiveness for all our sins. So this Lent, as you spend time in some spiritual self-assessment, and face your failures and your desperation over your defeats, listen: He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He's been to the point of despair, too. He's faced the tempter in every area, and defeated him! All He asks of you now is an invitation to come in and cleanse your heart and mind. You don't have to hide any more. He's waiting to

Lent at St Francis

A Course for Lent

New World, Old Faith

This year's Lent Course "New World, Old Faith" focuses on five important themes with the help of contemporary leading figures in the English Church including, **The Archbishop of Canterbury**

If you would like to come to a group, contact Fr John or Mark.



Services during Lent

these will all take place in church - Sundays - **Stations of the Cross** at 5.30 pm, followed by **Quiet Prayer** before the Cross until 6.45 pm.

Morning Prayer on Saturdays continues at 9.15 am followed by breakfast.

As we keep the important season of Lent, why not join in one of these times of prayer and devotion? - if you can't come to church, you could always set aside one of these times for prayer at home.

Saint Patrick

Everyone has heard of St Patrick - the patron saint of Ireland. If you've ever been in New York on St Patrick's Day, you'd think he was the patron saint of New York as well... the vast, flamboyant parade is full of American/Irish razzmatazz.

It's all a far cry from the hard life of this 5th century humble Christian who became in time both bishop and apostle of Ireland. Patrick was born the son of a town councillor in the west of England, between the mouth of the Severn and the Clyde. But as a young man he was captured by Irish pirates, kidnapped to Ireland, and reduced to slavery. He was made to tend his master's herds.

Desolate and despairing, Patrick turned to prayer. He found God was there for him, even in such desperate circumstances. He spent much time in prayer, and his faith grew and deepened, in contrast to his earlier years, when he "knew not the true God".

Then, after six gruelling, lonely years he was told in a dream he would soon go to his own country. He either escaped or was freed, made his way to a port 200 miles away and eventually persuaded some sailors to take him with them away from Ireland.

After various adventures in other lands, including near-starvation, Patrick landed on English soil at last, and returned to his family. But he was much changed. He had enjoyed his life of plenty before; now he wanted to devote the rest of his life to Christ. Patrick received some form of training for the priesthood, but not the higher education he really wanted.

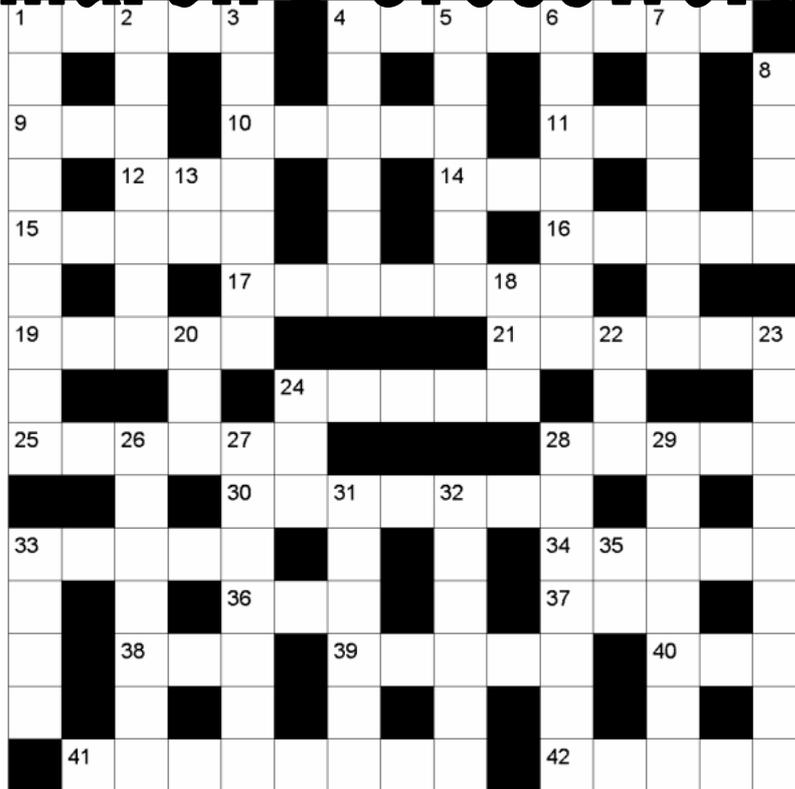
But by 435, well educated or not, Patrick was badly needed. Palladius' mission to the Irish had failed, and so the Pope sent Patrick back to the land of his slavery. He set up his see at Armagh, and worked principally in the north. He urged the Irish to greater spirituality, set up a school, and made several missionary journeys.

Patrick's writings are the first literature certainly identified from the British Church. They reveal sincere simplicity and a deep pastoral care. He wanted to abolish paganism, idolatry, and was ready for imprisonment or death in the following of Christ.

Patrick remains the most popular of the Irish saints. The principal cathedral of New York is dedicated to him, as, of course, is the Anglican cathedral of Dublin.



March's Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Its capital is Beijing (5)
- 4 Its capital is Asuncion (8)
- 9 Not sweet (3)
- 10 Supports (5)
- 11 Ovum (3)
- 12 Highest mountain in Crete (3)
- 14 Monetary unit of Japan (3)
- 15 Burning of another's property (5)
- 16 Brother of Moses (5)
- 17 Its capital is Reykjavik (7)
- 19 Its capital is New Delhi (5)
- 21 Naked-faced Amazon monkey (6)
- 24 Son of Isaac (5)
- 25 Its capital is Luanda (6)
- 28 Its capital is Madrid (5)
- 30 Reflux of the tide (7)
- 33 Ascend (5)
- 34 Hard as finger tips (5)
- 36 To be unwell (3)
- 37 Conclusion (3)
- 38 Devoted follower (3)
- 39 Frosting (5)
- 40 Frozen water (3)

- 41 Resounding loudly (8)
- 42 Legitimate (5)

DOWN

- 1 Its capital is San Jose (9)
- 2 Engraved (7)
- 3 Its capital is Tirana (7)
- 4 Preserved cucumber (6)
- 5 Its capital is Moscow (6)
- 6 Its capital is St George's (7)
- 7 Its capital is Algiers (7)
- 8 Its capital is Tehran (4)
- 13 Perform (2)
- 18 Gist (3)
- 20 Revised form of Esperanto (3)
- 22 Hide of a small beast (3)
- 23 Bursting into flame (9)
- 24 Punch (3)
- 26 Profitable (7)
- 27 Its capital is Beirut (7)
- 28 Its capital is Dakar (7)
- 29 Enduring (7)
- 31 Its capital is Belmopan (6)
- 32 Charge with a crime (6)
- 33 Is ruled by Fidel Castro (4)
- 35 Prefix meaning without (2)

Spring Equinox



On 21 March we have the vernal (Spring) equinox in the northern hemisphere and the autumn equinox in the southern hemisphere. What does this mean, exactly?

Well, according to the UK's National Physical Laboratory, the astronomical events closely related to the four seasons of Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter are the equinoxes and the solstices.

The equinoxes occur in March and September when the Sun is 'edgewise' to the Earth's axis of rotation so that everywhere on Earth has twelve hours of daylight and twelve hours of darkness.

The solstices occur in June and December when the Earth's axis is at its extreme tilt towards and away from the Sun so at mid-day it appears at its highest in one hemisphere and at its lowest in the other.

These four events repeat every 'tropical' year (365 days, 5 hours, 49 minutes), so they become later by about six hours, or (if there has been an intervening leap day) earlier by about 18 hours, from one year to the next. They are not equally spaced in the year, because the Earth's orbit around the Sun is elliptical, not circular.

February's Solution



Sunday Services

ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Sung Eucharist (<i>exc 2nd Sunday</i>) Family Service (<i>2nd Sunday</i>)
11.15 am	Sung Eucharist (<i>2nd Sunday</i>)
6.00 pm	Evening Service <i>[1st Sunday of the month]</i>

ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

8.00 am	Holy Eucharist
10.30 am	Parish Eucharist <i>[Family Eucharist - 2nd Sunday of the month]</i>

Mid-Week Services & Meetings

Monday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Tuesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	12.00 pm	Eucharist & Lent Lunch - <i>St James</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St Francis</i>
	8.00 pm	St Francis Discussion Group – <i>4 Long Close</i>
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St Francis</i>
	9.30 am	Eucharist – <i>St Francis</i>
	10.10 am	Mothers and Toddlers – <i>St Francis</i>
	12.00 pm	St James Prayer Group – <i>13 Clive Road</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Thursday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	9.30 am	Eucharist - followed by coffee – <i>St James</i>
	11.00 am	St Francis Prayer Group
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St Francis</i>
	7.00 pm	Eucharist – <i>St Francis</i>
Friday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St Francis</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	7.00 pm	Friday Club – <i>alt Fridays at St Francis</i>
Saturday	9.15 am	Morning Prayer & Breakfast – <i>St Francis</i>

Arrangements for Baptisms, Banns of Marriage, Weddings, Confessions and Home Communion can be made with any of the clergy.

Days Off

Stephen has Friday off, Fr John and Mark have Monday. Except in emergency, please try and respect these days of rest. Sr Margaret Anne works within the parish on Tuesdays, Thursdays and two out of three Sundays.

Parish Directory

TEAM RECTOR:

The Revd Stephen Hartley,
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Tel: 747680
Email: stephen.hartley
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TEAM CURATES:

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Email: mark.harris@rl.ac.uk
The Revd Sr Margaret Anne
All Saints Convent
St Mary's Road
Tel: 249127

LICENSED LAY MINISTER:

Eric Uren
Tel: 770696

CHURCHWARDENS:

Gwen Ranklin
Tel: 451417
Norah Shallow
Tel: 765199

DEPUTY WARDENS:

Rosanne Butler
Tel: 453257
Pat Chung
Tel: 767124

HALL BOOKINGS

OFFICER:
773620

weekdays only