

## G O D M A N C H E S T E R   P A R I S H   N E W S

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### **New PARISH PRIEST appointed**

On Sunday 18 December, we were delighted to inform the congregation of the Bishop of Ely's announcement that the Reverend Andrew Richard McKearney has been appointed Priest-in-Charge of St Mary the Virgin Parish Church, Godmanchester.

Andrew, who is 48, is currently Vicar of the Church of The Good Shepherd, Chesterton, Cambridge and also Diocesan Officer for Spirituality. He is married to Sarah and they have four adult children.

Andrew has said that he is excited by the stimulating and challenging opportunities that Godmanchester presents. He is very attracted by the parish's mission statement and the direction in which the parish is going; he feels very sympathetic to the whole style and ethos of the mission and ministry of the Church.

Sarah is a Lay Reader and we very much hope she will join the ministry team here in Godmanchester.

As Churchwardens, we too are excited by Andrew's appointment. It is hoped that Andrew and Sarah will be with us at Easter or shortly thereafter. Institution details will follow in due course.

*Penny Jones and Trevor Weedon*  
Churchwardens

### **Ministry Team Letter**

**Jerry writes:**

Dear friends

Why do St Thomas' and St Bartholomew's (Bart's) hospitals in London have those names? Because they were once run by the Church: hospitals were attached to monasteries. These days, hospital staff wear sensible functional clothes and have sensible managerial titles. When I worked in a hospital 50 years ago, nurses wore attractive headdresses and the senior ones were called 'Sister'. Why – because their predecessors were nuns. Healing has always been part of the function of the Church.

Once society became Christian, all sorts of activities – medicine, social care, marriage preparation, bereavement counselling – were taken over by the State and by voluntary organisations. That's good. Each of these activities deserves specialists and there is no way a parish priest can fulfil all of them in the detail the specialists can. If you need your appendix removed, the Vicar is probably not the person to wield the scalpel. Knowledge gets more complicated as the years go by.

That does not mean that the Church is now irrelevant – and it is unfortunate that some folk think it is. One of the current, and helpful, buzzwords is 'holistic'. When I was a boy, doctors treated the disease and seemed to regard the patient as an encumbrance. Now we talk to, and

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enjoy, each other – and the patient gets better more quickly. Patients are thought of holistically – as whole people.

Part of the wholeness is spiritual and it is clear that there is a huge hunger for spirituality. You need only to look at the bookshelves in WH Smith to see that – and to see the dead ends that people go for because they can't see anything better. We ought to love them enough to offer them something more.

I read somewhere that the church in St Marylebone has regular healing services and also has a healing centre, which includes clergy, a psychotherapist and a medical practice. They really do offer something holistic, and they sound like the inspiration for some of Susan Howatch's recent religious novels – which are well worth reading. We are not there yet, but we have started on that road.

We held a well-attended service in September, and the next is at 11.30 on 8 January. The format will be much the same. There will be some Bible, some prayers and a homily. That's not different from what we do at any service. There will be a time when we can pray by ourselves – as we may well do quite normally while we and others receive communion.

During that time, some may want to receive the laying on of hands or to be anointed. Actually, the laying on of hands is quite normal too: it happens every week at the 9.45, but then is limited to those who are not confirmed. But why

should I be left out, just because I have been confirmed? Anointing happens in public whenever there is a baptism or confirmation; and in private for the sick and dying. But why should I be left out, just because I am already confirmed, and am not yet dying?

So what went on in September, and what will happen in January, is about making people whole. I expect we have all read our Gospels well enough not to need telling that making people whole was part of the ministry of Jesus – and it is the privilege of all of us, clergy and lay, to continue that.

*Jeremy Craddock*

### Prayer of the month

Lord of the elements and changing seasons, keep me in the hollow of your hand. When I am tossed to and fro with the winds of adversity and the blasts of sickness and misunderstanding, still my racing heart, quieten my troubled mind.

Bring me at last through the storms and tribulations of this mortal life; and grant that in the midst of my present complexities and confusion I may experience your peace which passes human understanding

*Brother Ramon, member of the Anglican Society of St Francis*

## GODMANCHESTER PARISH NEWS



All are welcome to this service in which we will pray for the needs of the world, for ourselves and for those who are dear to us.

### **'Foundations Group' and preparing for confirmation**

There will be a confirmation service here in St Mary's on the morning of Sunday, 19 March, which will be a very exciting occasion for us. Several members of our own congregation will be baptized and/or confirmed at the service – some from the Youth Group and some from the current 'Foundations' group.

It is now time to think about starting the next Foundations Group – it would be lovely to start one this month so that anyone from the group wishing to be confirmed will be ready in time for the service on 19 March. I am looking at various different possibilities to try and find a time that suits everyone.

Wednesday evenings (8.00-9.30), Sunday tea-time (4.00-5.30), Saturday mornings and Wednesday mornings (10.30-12.00) are just some of the possibilities.

But the Foundations Group is not just for those preparing for confirmation – it is for anyone who would enjoy the fellowship of a small group, and those who would like to refresh their faith, or brush up on the basics. Meetings are relaxed and friendly, and it can be a great way to get to know others from the church congregation and from outside it, as we accompany each other on our spiritual journey.

If you think you might be interested in being confirmed or in joining the next Foundations Group, please do contact me as soon as possible (450852, [ally.barrett@btopenworld.com](mailto:ally.barrett@btopenworld.com)), and do let me know what time of the day and week would suit you for meetings, so that I can try and come up with a schedule that suits everyone.

*Ally Barrett*

### **Our advertisers**

We would like to take this opportunity of thanking all those who advertise in our magazine.

Please look no further if you have a job that needs doing, or a service that they could offer to you. They support us – we are glad to be able to support them.

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### **Mothers' Union**

At the December meeting we all enjoyed the company of visitors from the other branches in the deanery. This year it was extremely well attended and everyone really appreciated the selection of prose and verse on the theme of Advent that had been put together by Penny Jones. We sang a selection of Advent hymns accompanied on the keyboard by Linda Page from Fenstanton, who nobly stepped into the breach when our own accompanist was unable to come. After the entertainment we served tea and refreshments to our guests and, of course, had some ourselves!

The January meeting will take a 'Do you remember?' format. Everyone is invited to bring their own reminiscences to share; photographs, pictures, anecdotes and any other memorabilia. This promises to be a very interesting meeting.

*Jean Morgan*

### **Wives' Group**

As always in December, the Wives Group held their Christmas party and we were delighted to see Janette Birch again. Janette works at the Woodlands Cancer Centre at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, our charity of the year for 2005. She had previously visited in March when she came to speak about the work of the Centre and we were delighted to hand over a cheque for £300, which will go into general funds for the purchase of equipment.

After that one formal piece of business, the rest of the evening was devoted to serious fun. Games included a riotous pass-the-parcel, during which it was decided that Sheila Hartwell has shares in a sticky-tape company. We also found ourselves drawing nursery rhymes and trying to identify each other from pictures taken when we were, let us say, slightly younger than we are now. It wasn't easy...

Following a delicious bring-and-share supper, we sat down to sing a few carols and finished by taking turns to dip into the present box which, as always, brought a few surprises, not least the Chairman snapping away with her camera without warning us first! All in all a lovely evening and one which has come to mean the start of Christmas for me.

Our first meeting of the New Year will be on 10 January, when Joan and Jack Hicks will be talking about the life and work of John Fox, a noted local woodcarver. This promises to be an interesting evening; all are welcome to join us at 8.00 pm in the church hall.

*Kate Robinson*

### **Men's Social Group**

Like hedgehogs at this time of year the Men's Social Group has been somewhat in a state of hibernation for the past few months with very little activity to report. The state of limbo has been so deep-seated that even our normal hyperactive chairman couldn't be roused for long

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enough to organise the December sausage and mash supper. (He does have an excuse though of having to get ready for his trip to America.) However, during a period of wakefulness he did agree to organise something similar later in January to celebrate the New Year. It is hoped then that the thought of food and wine will be enough to tempt old members (and hopefully some new younger members) from their winter quarters, and that there will be a chance to consider plans for 2006 – if no one turns up, though, the Men’s Social Group might well sink back into a even longer period of hibernation!

*Peter Dawe*

### Charity of the Month

#### Church Army

The Church Army is committed to the mission-shaped and fresh expressions of church agenda. It works in partnership with others to encourage new ways of reaching out to those with little or no connection to the life of the church.

More people than ever before are seeking answers to spiritual questions, yet they don’t expect to find them in church, which they see as irrelevant. God has called Church Army evangelists to breathe new life into people and to astonish the church with the need for urgency in sharing the gospel in everyday situations with everyday people.

It is a society of evangelists within the Anglican Communion but working outside church buildings and in partnership with other Christians. With a field force of around 350, they are responding to the home mission challenge with creativity, commitment and imagination. Investment in home mission is more vital now that at any time in our history, and they train and equip evangelists to be salt and light for Christ across the UK and Ireland. The work of Church Army projects and evangelists is making a real difference in the lives of thousands of people each year, and we are happy to support the work they do in our community.

*Bizz Thackray*

### This month’s cover

Lawrence’s depiction of bells reminds us of the passing of the old year and the ringing in of the new.

### The Flower Guild

The Committee would like to thank Sandra Sturgeon who so kindly hosted our Christmas coffee, sherry and mince pie morning on 10 December, as well as all those who came and supported us. This annual event is always a very enjoyable foretaste of Christmas and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

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### Ann Tilley writes:

The Prayer Group has moved. Having been held at 16 The Causeway since 1994, it moves in the New Year to **36 Old Court Hall**, Jean White's home. Third Thursday in the month, 7.30 pm. All welcome.

### An old Jewish joke

Question: How do you make God laugh?  
Answer: Tell him all your future plans.

### A View from the Pew

*This month's view takes the form of recent correspondence between one of our regular worshippers, Lewis Stretch, and our churchwarden, Trevor Weedon*

Dear Trevor,

#### Godmanchester Parish Profile 2005

Having at last found time to read, digest and reflect on the Parish Profile, and dealt with a breakdown in my word processing facilities, my first reaction must be to congratulate you and your colleagues on a most impressive performance. The presentation would do credit to any professional agency; yet – unlike some of them – you have included all the relevant information.

However, there are three facets where the

significance of the data seems to indicate the need to modify the incumbent profile.

#### The effectiveness of our ministry

Without more detailed information, in a town such as Godmanchester one would expect about half the population – if questioned in a non-religious context, such as admission to hospital or enlistment in the forces – to describe themselves as C of E. So your figures for attendance indicate that barely 5% of our members find time to give thanks for the great benefits they enjoy. This hardly reflects satisfactorily on our ministry.

#### Style of worship

You state that this is eclectic, traditional Anglican; yet the two epithets are incompatible. Traditionally the C of E has depended on the disciplined structure of Common Prayer. St Mary's has chosen to reject this, and adopt an unbalanced, over-eucharistic stance. All the various factions going their own way, and fighting for dominance of the General Synod, would do well to note that the secular religions that are drawing people away, mainly sports, enjoy liturgies fixed internationally; so that any one can attend, take friends and family, and take part in their rituals without constant reference to various guide books.

#### Grassroots

This was driven home by the reluctance of many of our members to bring their children to baptism in a eucharistic setting. Only in a traditional setting could children and parents be supported in this important rite-of-passage by many friends and relations who will have a deep

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influence on the child's progress, yet could not take part in our eucharistic pattern with a good conscience.

I suggest that these factors indicate the need for a vicar with the vision and experience to enable St Mary's to climb out of its present narrow rut, and carry the Gospel to the thousands committed to his care rather than concentrate on the small eclectic congregation we now reach. Scriptural literacy is more important than ITC.

With all good wishes,  
Yours sincerely,  
*Lewis Stretch*

Dear Lewis,

Thank you very much for taking time to read the Parish Profile and to write your letter to me. Your kind words about the Profile are much appreciated.

As, no doubt, you would expect, there is some contention between us concerning the style of worship. You seem to suggest that if St Mary the Virgin Parish Church adopted the disciplined structure of Common Prayer, we would be able to attract more members to come to church. I have never seen any evidence of this. Those members of the Church of England who do come to our church prefer the Eucharist Service. Indeed, if we, as a PCC, decided to change from mainly eucharistic services to mainly Common Prayer services, we would probably lose many of the members who worship in our church now – and there would be no guarantee of being able to replace them.

Having given you my view, I do think that your thought-provoking letter deserves a wider circulation within the parish. I wonder whether you would be willing to allow your letter to be published in the monthly magazine – Godmanchester Parish News – with or without this response. I would hope that this would stimulate a lively and worthwhile debate.

To end on a note of concurrence, I am in full agreement that our new vicar will need to reach out into the community. The Profile identified that we need a vicar who will be sensitive to the diverse needs of the existing congregation and the parish.

With every good wish,  
Yours sincerely,  
*Trevor Weedon*

*(The Editor would very much like to have further comments and opinions from other members of the congregation on the points raised in this correspondence. Please don't hesitate to let him have your view).*

**Find time this Christmas** to see the stunning adaptation to screen of C.S.Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia . . . the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. The sensitive screen play, capturing the true spirit of the book, is brilliantly cast. Aslan is a real lion . . . and he is not tame! \*\*\*\*\*

*The Back Family*

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**Book reviews**

John Bryant and John Searle  
*Life in our hands: a Christian perspective  
 on genetics and cloning*  
 IVP £9.99 ISBN 0-85111-795-3

Denis Alexander and Robert S White  
*Beyond belief: science, faith and ethical  
 challenges*  
 Lion £8.99 ISBN 0-7459 5141-4

These books cover the same issues and resemble each other closely. One can't easily make a definitive comparison because *Life in our hands* includes a bibliography but no index, while *Beyond belief* includes an index but no bibliography.

Among evangelicals, say Bryant and Searle, 'there is a growing anxiety about science'; Alexander and White add, 'Christians can become anti-science ... because they really do not want certain scientific truths to be the case.' Both books set out to give evangelicals (and others) enough science to make informed ethical judgements about the modern world. Both books support evolution and make the point that God's creative activity is constant and that the universe depends on him moment by moment. Alexander and White do a satisfying hatchet job on Michael Behe, who claimed that some biochemical reactions are so complex that they must have been designed. They show that the fault lies not with Darwin, but with Behe's biochemistry.

Both books discuss modernism and post-modernism; and examine issues like

genetic modification, *in vitro* fertilisation, when an embryo becomes human, pre-implantation diagnosis of inherited diseases, therapeutic and reproductive cloning, and if and when abortion can be justified.

While the books were helpfully written to dispel evangelical fears, an evangelical insecurity still shows through. Bryant and Searle recommend only Packer, McGrath and Wenham as experts on biblical studies. There are umpteen others of whom some, dear me, are Roman Catholic. They like the ethics of RB Hayes' *Moral Vision of the New Testament* (1966), which includes some less than rigorous comments about sexuality.

There are NT scholars who would be surprised by the confidence with which Alexander and White quote dates for Jesus' birth and crucifixion – and even by the dates themselves. They refer to 'biblical theology' in ways that suggest they are not simply discussing the kind(s) of theology to be found in the Bible. They may be part of the movement to revive *Biblical Theology* – a mainstream method of interpretation that was at its zenith in the 1940s to 1960s. Its demise was announced finally in about 1970 at an International Congress on Biblical Studies. Some, like me, will forget the date; but we shall all remember the trauma.

Despite the caveats, both books will help Christians of all flavours with some serious scientific and ethical issues; and they would do well on the bookstalls of

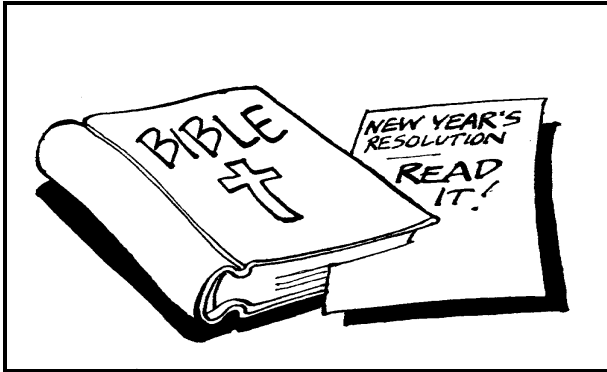
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churches of any churchmanship.

*Jerry Craddock*

*The Revd Jeremy Craddock was a forensic biologist.*



### **Unless common sense prevails the village hall will close for ever**

Like death, taxes and an autumnal crisis at Manchester United, it is a cast-iron certainty of life that you will have spent some time in a village or church hall. Most of us have had our time mapped out within the musty walls of such a place. Our nappies will have been changed there, we will have toddled across its parquet floors, therein we will have said goodnight to Brown Owl. We will have flung each other round at barn dances, warbled at choir rehearsals, forgotten our lines in amateur dramatics and put our backs out at Pilates lessons. From mothers and toddlers, through pensioners' bingo evenings to yoga classes, the hall has hosted the lot.

I can still remember the smell of our local place when I was a child, an amalgam of dust, damp gabardine and milk spilt at a coffee morning. I thought it must be unique, that bouquet, until I went to a

recent birthday celebration at a hall just down the road from where I now live and the whiff was exactly the same, bringing back memories of heady nights at the youth club disco, in which the boys would line one wall and the girls the other, leaving a lone exhibitionist on the dance floor gambolling to the latest from Status Quo.

That smell, though, is drifting away. If we are not careful, we could wake one morning and find it has disappeared altogether. Community halls are shutting around the country faster than you can say, 'No, I'm sorry the badminton club has priority on a Wednesday evening.'

In rural Yorkshire, 50 per cent of the halls have shut in the past couple of years and now lie idle. It is not for want of potential users: everyone from the model railway enthusiasts to the local Tibetan bell-ringing collective is keen to make a booking. But what no one seems to want to do is run them. We are in the midst of the most serious shortage of volunteers in the history of this essential building block of communal life.

I had no idea of the problems until I accepted an invitation to speak at the annual meeting of the National Village Halls Forum last week. There was a clue in the talk before mine, which was from an expert in fire regulations giving advice on how to complete the new licensing application form. He was a jolly speaker, but he lost me somewhere in the middle of an exchange with a representative from Surrey about best practice in the location of smoke detectors.

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This, though, is just the sort of detail to which anyone prepared to look after their hall is obliged to attend. Talking with the delegates at the meeting, and hearing their weary tales of bureaucratic overload, it became clear that running a hall is not only about holding the keys and ensuring there is no double booking between the dominoes club and the over-eighties wheelchair t'ai chi society.

To run even the most modest of scout huts, you need to be appraised of the latest legislation appertaining to the following: health and safety, disabled access, environmental health, noise restrictions, food and beverage sales, employment rights, VAT, building regulations. The list is so long and complex it is enough to scare off even the most enthusiastic volunteer. And that is without even mentioning insurance, the cost of which has increased way ahead of the rate of inflation these past five years.

As it happens, the premiums on community halls are on the rise not because of compensation pay-outs. That is largely a myth: frivolous claims are actually on the decline. What has put up the charges is the fact that insurance companies have not been making the profits they used to from the stock exchange, so instead have to rely on premiums to meet their obligations. All this means that, if *The Vicar of Dibley* reflected what was really happening in our communities, Geraldine would have had to shut up the hall because of the cost of cover for Jim's pipe and would now be holding PCC meetings at the vicarage.

None of this regulation was loaded on with malicious intent. No one could argue that a hall should not be insured or should not be accessible to the disabled. It is just that the £6,000 average cost to meet the requirements of the disability law has put many a hall in financial jeopardy. And many of those who run them, faced with the impossibility of balancing the books, have simply walked away, with no one else prepared to take up the slack. Meanwhile, ministers patronise the voluntary sector with smooth words about what a marvellous job it is doing, even as they lard on the unyielding red tape that is suffocating it. As for David Cameron and David Davis, if between them they have a single policy commitment on the issue, I've missed it.

Yet if we don't sort this out soon, a vital plank of this country's life will disappear and the only memory of such places will be on television dramas about mythical communities in which they do things other than sit around and watch television.

*Jim White (Jean's son) – by kind permission of The Daily Telegraph*

### Thanks

Margaret Bowman would like to say a big thank you to all her friends and relatives for the lovely cards, beautiful flowers, messages and prayers during her recent illness.

Thanks very much.

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*Lawn care in winter – one of our new advertisers offers tips*

### **Mowing**

Mow the lawn as required. Don't be afraid to mow the lawn (if it needs it) even in December or January as long as there is no frost on the ground.

### **Aeration**

Soil compression is a frequent cause of turf deterioration and moss invasion. For optimal effectiveness the lawn needs aerating in autumn. This can be done right through to the spring.

### **Disease**

There has been a lot of disease in lawns this year. We have seen Red Thread and Fusarium. Red Thread is first seen as bleached patches in lawn which on closer inspection reveals red cotton-like threads growing from the older leaves of grass. These diseases can leave scars in the lawn and if the weather remains mild I would advise having it treated.

### **Moss control**

Moss will build up in soils that are not free draining. I recommend that you treat it now so that it doesn't compete with the grass in the spring. If moss is left untreated the grass becomes thin and is suffocated and this leads to a poor lawn in the summer when you need it most. Treat with iron sulphate based fertilisers or spray with a liquid iron or dichlorophen.

### **Fallen leaves**

Leaves should be cleared away as they fall. If they are left for more than a few

days, then grass may become damaged. Compost the leaves and then use on borders.

### **Worm casts**

This month will probably see the appearance of worm casts (small mounds of earth brought to the surface by worms). Of the twenty-five species of worms found in the UK only three are responsible for casting. It is advisable to scatter the casts with a besom/broom; otherwise these casts can smear and kill areas of grass, allowing weeds to grow, adding to deterioration in the lawn. Alternatively treatments can be applied to stop the casts occurring in the first place.

### **Actions required in winter**

- \* Aerate lawn if conditions allow
- \* Treat disease in lawn
- \* If lawn needs cutting do as required on higher setting
- \* Treat worm casts

The lawn owner can carry out some of these tasks; other tasks, such as spraying diseases or moss, may need some professional intervention. For more information about lawn care and the services that Prolawncare Ltd offer call :

*Richard Salmon on 01480 812393 or 0772 007 2446 or E-mail info@prolawncare.co.uk. – 'for that lawn you've longed for'.*

*See also our advertisement in this magazine.*

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### **The Basket and the Bible \***

The story is told of an old man who lived on a farm in the mountains with his young grandson. Each morning, Grandfather was up early sitting at the kitchen table reading from his old Bible.

One day his grandson asked, 'Grandfather, I try to read the Bible just like you do but I don't understand it, and what I do understand I forget as soon as I close the book. What good does reading the Bible do?'

The grandfather turned from putting coal in the stove and said, 'Take this coal basket down to the river and bring back a basket of water.' The boy did as he was told, even though all the water leaked out before he could get back to the house. The grandfather laughed and said, 'You will have to move a little faster next time,' and sent him back to the river with the basket to try again.

This time the boy ran faster, but again the basket was empty before he returned home. Out of breath, he told his grandfather that it was 'impossible to carry water in a basket', and he went to get a bucket instead. The old man said, 'I don't want a bucket of water; I want a basket of water. You can do this. You're just not trying hard enough,' and he went out of the door to watch the boy try again.

At this point, the boy knew it was impossible, but he wanted to show his grandfather that even if he ran as fast as he could, the water would leak out before he got far at all. The boy scooped the

water and ran hard, but when he reached his grandfather the basket was again empty. Out of breath, he said, 'See, it's useless.'

'So you think it is useless?' the old man said. 'Look at the basket.' The boy looked at the basket and for the first time he realised that the basket looked different. Instead of a dirty old coal basket, it was clean. 'Son, that's what happens when you read the Bible. You might not understand or remember everything, but when you read it, it will change you from the inside out.'

### **The future of the world \***

*The following is an extract from a recent sermon given by Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, in Nidaros Cathedral, Trondheim, Norway.*

When God tells Adam in the first chapter of Genesis that he is to subdue and have dominion over the earth, many would say that this is the beginning of a tragic and disgraceful story – the story of how human beings ravaged and exploited the earth for their own purposes, exhausting its resources and ruining it for future generations.

Those who are now most deeply concerned about our environment often accuse the Jewish–Christian tradition of being responsible for a history of greed and abuse directed at the natural world.

But... if humans are to 'subdue' the world, the one thing this cannot mean is that they are licensed to treat the creation

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with indifference or violence or disrespect. The first thing we must do is surely to look at it as God looks; to delight in the joyful order of God's mind as it is shown in what God makes... Before human beings were ever on the scene, creation is looked at by God with this loving joy.

Paul reminds us in Colossians that the entire world holds together in Christ and because of Christ. He is supremely free, the Lord of creation. He above all is free from the downward spirals of sin, greed, selfish longing, violence; he alone is completely surrendered to God the Father, receiving everything from him with total responsive love for all eternity. It does not mean that he manipulates and controls the world; on the contrary, he exposes himself to the greatest risks and dies in anguish on the cross. But it is he who transforms everything, restoring it to its proper dignity and beauty.

So our Jewish and Christian tradition, far from giving us unlimited license to exploit, sets before us a picture of what our real humanity is like; and central to that picture is the loving appreciation of the dignity of all God has made.

It tells us that we are in danger of slipping into subhuman ways of relating to the world and each other. And it shows us the path to freedom – the freedom Jesus speaks of, the freedom to seek God's kingdom and God's justice, careless of the risks we may run, knowing that our value depends ... on God's loving gaze always turned towards us. In his strength we

renew our commitment to honour the world he has made.

### **They really were the 'good old days' \***

Most grandparents believe that financial stress, looser family ties and materialistic children make it more difficult to raise a family now than it was thirty years ago.

And their rosy view of the past, dubbed a 'Tupperware time warp', is shared by the majority of today's parents. One in four parents today admit that they do not give their children the attention and discipline they had as children because they are too busy working.

These are some of the results of a recent survey held for Saga magazine. It seems that despite today's labour-saving devices, such as dishwashers and microwave ovens, and the replacement of towelling nappies with disposables, grandparents believe that it was still easier to raise children back in the 1960s. Two thirds of parents agreed.

The children themselves have changed, it seems: they are far more materialistic today, and have much higher expectations – driving their parents to spend huge amounts of money on them.

### **Food for thought**

God can do wonders with a broken heart if you give him all the pieces.

*Victor Alfsen*

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### A Parent's prayer \*

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray my sanity to keep.

For if some peace I do not find,  
I'm pretty sure I'll lose my mind.

I pray I find a little quiet,  
Far from the daily family riot.

May I lie back and not have to think  
What they're stuffing down the sink,

Or who they're with, or where they're at  
And what they're doing to the cat.

I pray for time all to myself  
(did something just fall off a shelf?)

To cuddle in my nice, soft bed  
(Oh no, another goldfish dead!)

Some silent moments for goodness sake  
(Did I just hear a window break?)

And that I need not cook or clean  
(well heck, I've got the right to dream)

Yes now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray my wits about me keep,

But as I look around I know,  
I must have lost them long ago!

### 6 January – Epiphany \*

On 6 January we celebrate Epiphany - the visit of the wise men to the baby Jesus. But who were these wise men? No one knows for sure. Matthew calls them 'Magi', and that was the name of an

ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia. It wasn't until the third century that they were they called kings – by a church father, Tertullian. Another church father, Origen, assumed there were three – to correspond with the gifts given. Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing – and even embalming. Certainly Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the eighth century, the magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.

*\* These items are from the Parish Pump Church News Service*

### And finally...

There was this medieval monk, much given to mystical prayer, who belonged to a discalced order - that is, he and his fellow monks wore no shoes. In consequence, he developed dreadful callouses. He also ate very little, and that made him frail and made his breath smell odd. (We now understand that starvation results in people exhaling chemicals that smell like nail varnish.) Of course, medievals did not know that and thought of it as the 'odour of sanctity'. Anyway, as Julie Andrews would have said, there was this super calloused fragile mystic hexed by halitosis.

*Jerry Craddock*

## G O D M A N C H E S T E R P A R I S H N E W S

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### The Registers

#### Funerals

7 December George Vernon ‘Taff’ Evans  
 14 December Eunice Maud Hunt

#### The Lectionary

1 January **Christmas 2 – Naming of Jesus**  
 Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:15-21  
 8 January **Epiphany 1 – Baptism of Christ**  
 Genesis 1:1-5; Mark 1:4-11  
 15 January **Epiphany 2**  
 1 Samuel 3:1-10; Revelations 5:1-10; John 1:43-51  
 22 January **Epiphany 3**  
 Genesis 14:17-20; Revelations 19:6-10; John 2:1-11  
 29 January **Candlemas**  
 Deut. 18:15-20; Mark 1:21-28

### Dates for your Diary

#### January

Sun	1	8.00 am	Holy Communion
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist (No Children’s Church or Vestry Group this week)
		3.00 pm	Baptism of Tom McKie
		6.30 pm	Evening Prayer (BCP) – said service (No Youth Group tonight)
Tue	3	2.15 pm	Mothers’ Union – Queen Elizabeth School
		8.00 pm	Wives’ Group (Church Hall)
Thu	5	9.45 am	Holy Communion
Fri	6	7.15 pm	Choir Party
Sun	8	8.00 am	Holy Communion
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist Children’s Church and Vestry Group Dedication of new notice boards
		11.30 am	Healing Service
		6.30 pm	Evensong
		6.45 pm	Youth Group Chillout at 59 London Road
		8.00 pm	Children’s Church leaders’ meeting at 59 London Road
Mon	9	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones (new group for under 5s) – Baptist Church Centre
Tue	10	7.30 pm	Fabric Committee
		8.00 pm	Wives’ Group (Church Hall)
Wed	11	1.30 pm	Foundations Group (59 London Road)
		6.00 pm	St Anne’s Carol Service (in Church)
		7.30 pm	Bellringers’ Practice
Thu	12	9.30 am	St Mary’s 0s-5s (Comrades’ Club)
		9.45 am	Holy Communion
		7.30 pm	Prayer Group ( <b>36 Old Court Hall</b> )

## G O D M A N C H E S T E R   P A R I S H   N E W S

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Fri	13	7.15 pm	Choir Practice (adults from 7.40)
Sun	15	8.00 am	Holy Communion
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist – The Bishop of Huntingdon Children’s Church and Vestry Group
		6.30 pm	Evensong
		6.45 pm	Youth Group (Church Hall)
Mon	16	12.45 pm	Lunchtime prayers for Christian unity (venue tbc)
		1.30 pm	Stepping Stones (Baptist Church Centre)
Tue	17	12.45 pm	Lunchtime prayers for Christian unity (venue tbc)
		7.30 pm	PCC (Church Hall)
Wed	18	11.00 am	Holy Communion (Woodley Court)
		12.45 pm	Lunchtime prayers for Christian unity (venue tbc)
		1.30 pm	Foundations Group (59 London Road)
Thu	19	9.30 am	St Mary’s 0s-5s (Comrades’ Club)
		9.45 am	Holy Communion
		10.30 am	Holy Communion (Oak Tree Court)
		12.45 pm	Prayers for Christian unity (venue tbc)
		7.30 pm	Prayer Group at <b>36 Old Court Hall</b>
Fri	20	12.45 pm	Lunchtime prayers for Christian unity (venue tbc)
		7.15 pm	Choir Practice (adults from 7.40) followed by AGM
Sun	22	8.00 am	Holy Communion
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist Children’s Church and Vestry Group
		7.00 pm	Churches Together joint service (details and venue tbc) NO EVENSONG
		6.45 pm	Youth Group (Church Hall)
Mon	23	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones (Baptist Church Centre)
Wed	25	9.45 am	Holy Communion (McCartney House)
		1.30 pm	Foundations Group (59 London Road)
		7.30 pm	Bellringers’ Practice
Thu	26	9.30 am	St Mary’s 0s-5s (Comrades’ Club)
		9.45 am	Holy Communion
		7.30 pm	Special meeting of the PCC with Archdeacon Hugh McCurdy
Fri	27	7.15 pm	Choir practice (adults from 7.40)
Sun	29	8.00 am	Holy Communion
		9.45 am	Sung Eucharist Children’s Church and Vestry Group
		6.30 pm	Evening Prayer (BCP) – said service Youth Group – details tbc
Mon	30	1.30 pm	Stepping Stones (Baptist Church Centre)

**The Editorial Committee meeting** for the February magazine will be held on Sunday, 15 January. Would you please ensure that material is with one of the following by that date:  
 Peter Irving (Editor), 26 Post Street ([pjibooks@aol.com](mailto:pjibooks@aol.com))  
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