

THE WHITE ROSE

The Parish Newsletter of Old Saint Paul's September 2013

Like a great feast



woodcut by Sadao Watanabe

If, as we hear in many of Jesus' stories, the Kingdom of God is like a wedding banquet, a great feast, or simply a good party, then during August at Old Saint Paul's we have had a month-long glorious foretaste of the Kingdom. From the Hot Chocolate concerts and Festival Masses to my ordination and Ian and Carrie's wedding, it has been a month of many gifts, gracious hospitality and abundant joy.

It goes without saying that OSP is a creative and diverse community, and therefore wonderfully reflects God's creativity and love of diversity. It can be easy to take for granted the sublimity of the music, the imagery of the sermons, the richness of the liturgy, the nurture of our children because this is what we as a community

worship.

It has also been a month of hospitality, of welcoming the strangers in our midst, the many who visited for Hot Chocolate, Festival Masses, the ordination and wedding. The author of the letter to the Hebrews writes: 'Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that, some have entertained angels without knowing it'. Rather than feeling an obligation, 'love of the strange' provides the opportunity to be blessed by exposure to the wider world that God cares deeply about. It is also through 'love of the strange' that we encounter Christ. Hospitality, then, is a gift that feeds and nourishes us as well as our guests.

Abundant joy lies in the sharing of so many gifts, in being shown

do week in and week out. But in August, I felt a greater awareness that it was not only a celebration of what it means to be community at OSP, but also an invitation for all to come to the feast to experience the beauty and creativity of the God we

warm and generous hospitality, in seeing vocations flourish and in witnessing the love between two people. And as we share in that joy as a community, we renew our own commitment to one another, strengthen the bonds of love and grew more fully into the Body of Christ called to serve the world.

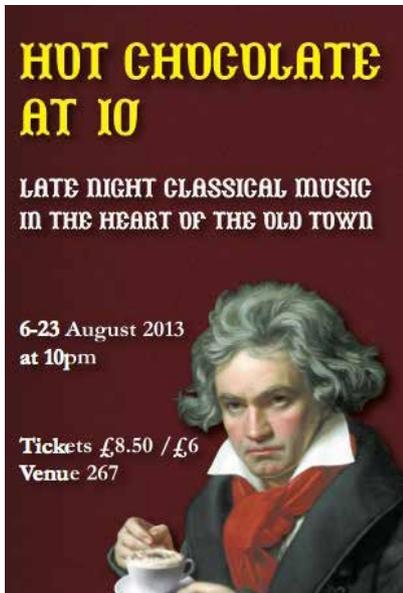
All these things - the many gifts shared, the hospitality shown, the joy of a season of celebration - have their source in God. We rejoice in the endless creativity of a God who is continually making all things new, the hospitality of a God whose feast is open to all and the sheer abundance of a God whose grace knows no limits.

It is therefore not surprising that Jesus uses imagery of feasting and festivity when he speaks of the Kingdom.

None of this comes without great effort, however - a lot of hard work behind the scenes, long hours spent rehearsing, moving furniture, cleaning, flower-arranging, cooking, organising. On behalf of the clergy team, I would like to thank each of you for the contribution you make to this community and to all the many activities of the past month. And let us all join in giving thanks for the gifts that God has given us, the hospitality we have been shown, and the joy of sharing in the feast.

Mtr Kate Reynolds

Festivals Past & Future



Hot Chocolate at 10 has for me become an integral and essential part of the Festival / Fringe in

the summer. That beautiful late hour in a spiritual place with wonderful music in the company of old friends and new! With the added extra of that dark wicked chocolate, I prefer mine without the cream so often got double rations!

I managed to come along to more than ever this year, though I would have loved to have seen them all. It was great to see many of the Edinburgh Society of Recorder Players come along to support Annemarie Klein. My highlights were the star performance from Richard Holloway narrating The Soldiers Tale. Hauntingly beautiful arias from Magdalena Durant and wonderful to hear Gillie Franklin again but now along with her Royal Holloway Founder's

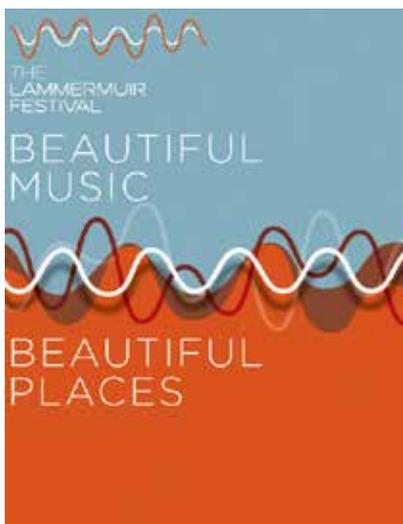
Quartet.

There were of course great performances too from the home team, John Kitchen on the organ and harpsichord, Calum on organ and clarinet and superb appearances from our choir members.

It is a superb advertisement for the Old St Paul's church community: it shows off our wonderful building and our talented musicians and that we are a warm and welcoming place to be.

There was always a friendly face on the ticket desk and it was all so well organised. We had an amazing programme this year. So, from me a final well done and thank you to everyone who planned it all, volunteered on the stewarding and advertising and all who took part.

Hilary Campbell



If you are feeling a sense of impending cultural famine after the musical feasts of the International Festival and the Hot Chocolate concerts, fear not. A wonderful banquet is on

offer in East Lothian at the 2013 Lammermuir Music Festival from 13th - 22nd September. Advertised as 'Beautiful Music in Beautiful Places' it truly lives up to its claim. Concerts take place in venues across the country, ranging from lovely churches (including Stenton, Whitekirk, St Mary's Haddington, Loretto School Chapel) to wonderful country houses (Lennoxlove, Yester House). Musicians include the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, The SSO, The Hebrides Ensemble, Stile Antico, The Kings Singers, violinist Cecilia Bernardini, the Dunedin Consort, and many more. The thrilling programme features works by the Baroque, Classical and Romantic greats; OSP favourites Byrd and Tallis; and twentieth century

composers including Bridge and Kodaly. Benjamin Britten's music features strongly in this, his centenary, including 'Literary Britten, an evening of his music and the poetry of WH Auden. Our own John Kitchen features in a concert in St Mary's Haddington with the NYCOS National Girls' Choir. The programme has both day and evening concerts and an added bonus is the opportunity to enjoy the wonderful golden harvest landscape and light of East Lothian. So go on - feed your souls with beautiful music in beautiful places!

Visit the website at www.lammermuirfestival.co.uk for more information.

Mhairéad Monelle



Designing Immortality

In one of the most fascinating events I attended at this year's Book Festival, 'Would you want to live forever?', the philosopher John Gray and the author Marcel Theroux discussed the strange and somewhat under-reported history of late 19th and early 20th century attempts to undertake the ultimate engineering challenge: the conquest of death by scientific means, the design of immortality.

Both have written books on the subject, Theroux the novel *Strange Bodies* and Gray an essay, *The Immortalization Commission*. If, like me, you've an interest in death, I recommend it: morbid, enthralling stuff.

The first half of the book explores the widespread practice of spiritualism amongst the Victorian and Edwardian upper classes and intelligentsia. As Gray makes clear, seances and other rituals designed to establish contact with the dead were not seen by participants as being the least bit mystical, but rather as sober, practical, scientific experiments. Scrupulous efforts were made to test the credibility of putative communications from the 'other side'. Words channelled through mediums were checked carefully against what was known about the earthly lives of the deceased. The spiritualists saw themselves as investigating hitherto uncharted fields of reality rather than trying to break through to an immaterial realm beyond the empirical world.

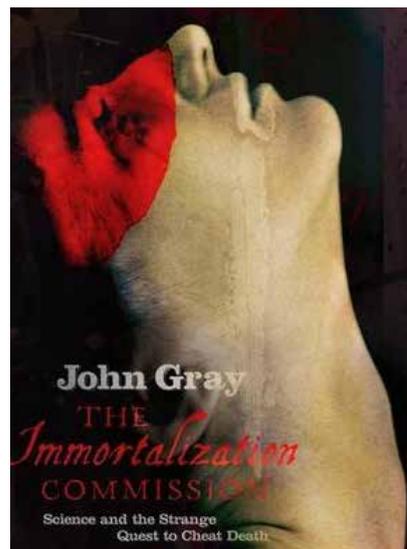
The second half of the book looks at the serious attempts made during the first half of the 20th century to actually engineer immortality, specifically over the course of the early years of the Soviet Union.

Gray tells the story of how the Bolshevik revolution was inspired not just by the desire to re-engineer human society, but to 'perfect' humanity itself. For the Soviets 1917 was the ultimate year zero: the starting point for humankind 2.0, made immortal through scientific ingenuity.

As Gray and Theroux both noted during their discussion, the history of the Soviet Union is a seemingly inexhaustible well of the bizarre and the grotesque, a sprawling work of science fiction that took place in history, not that long ago, on a massive scale, embroiling the lives of hundreds of millions. *The Immortalization Commission* renders the history stranger still.

Their ostensible atheism notwithstanding, many leading revolutionaries were influenced by the 'God-Building' philosophy of the 19th century Russian Orthodox thinker Nikolai Federov. Federov held the Orthodox belief, rooted in the Gospels, that Christian resurrection was thoroughly material, the reconstitution of the physical body of the believer's life on Earth. But that being so, he went on to speculate, resurrection must be governed by natural laws in principle discoverable by science: technology would soon advance to the point where it could discover and implement the methods of revivification hitherto known only to God.

Another God-Builder, the writer Maxim Gorky, sometime colleague of both Lenin and Stalin, urged the regime - in chilling and prophetic terms - to undertake systematic investigation into the physical mechanisms governing human mortality:



'We need to experiment on humans themselves, we need to study the human organism, the processes of intercellular feeding, blood circulation, the chemistry of the nervous system and in general all processes of the human organism. Hundreds of human units will be required.'

Stalin himself was motivated by the dream of human perfectability. The young Stalin annotated his edition of Dostoevsky's 'The Devils' with comments opposing the intended moral of the story:

'The true aim of revolutionaries was not so much to alleviate human misery as to create a type of human being that could no longer suffer'. Stalin recognised this vision, which for Dostoevsky was hateful, as his own.'

On coming to power the Bolsheviks pursued their apocalyptic dreams with utter ruthlessness. The country became a vast laboratory for the Soviet experiment, the present suffering of millions justified for the sake of future, deathless utopia.

Gorky's wishes were fulfilled through the creation of an Institute of Experimental Medicine, which carried out systematic experimentation on thousands of

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Instructions for Living a Life

a sermon for the ordination of Kate

Lectionary compilers add readings from the Song of Solomon on Mary Magdalene's feast day; the da Vinci Code alleges she was Jesus' lover, and from Gregory the Great the church has suggested she was a prostitute. But scripture simply tells us she was a sinner and that Jesus cast seven demons out of her. It does not say anything about sex; does not say what her sin was, does not say she was a demon in bed! But Dan Brown was right - she did love him.

I know that Kate and that this Old St Paul's congregation like a bit of poetry from time to time. So my text today is some lines from Mary Oliver:

Instructions for living a life:

Pay attention

Be astonished

Tell about it.

I think these instructions apply to Mary in the gospel and I want to recommend it as a way for a priest to live, a way for all of us to live.

Pay attention

Here is Mary. It has been said she came looking for a dead friend and found instead a living stranger: head down, in tears, too focussed on looking for the dead to see the living.

Kate, there is still lots to do and learn and be part of, the bishop's commission, being a diligent minister; administering sacraments; busy in prayer. But there should also be a declaration asking you to keep your head up and look around.

Paying attention will mean

being aware of those around you; listening to the voices; spending time in the quiet garden. It also means paying attention to yourself and bringing your own experience of life to your priestly duties, bringing your experience to the altar, to be sacrificed or shared.

And weeping and spending time with the dead. That is one of the ways you are to spend your time: paying attention, thinking with Mary on that death and life, and telling it to others.

You once sent me something from Frederick Buechner about weeping at the grave of a friend: "And that is where and when you will touch the hearts of the congregation, when they see ... that you are human, who knows

what it is to cry at midnight and receive no answer, to be sick at heart and find no healing." That is where Mary is. It is hopeless. Buechner concludes, "The absence of God is not just an idea to conjure with, an emptiness for the preacher to furnish.... The absence of God is just that which is not liveable".

And it is then that you must pay attention, when you are at your most human. That is when we remember that he is already standing by and is looking at us.

Be astonished

Being called is astonishing, and so is being seen as someone called.

Well, an astonishing thing happened to Mary. From this



Noli Me Tangere
woodcut by Sadao
Watanabe



living stranger, she hears her name, feels her heart responding. She knew his voice even though that is impossible. She knew “no one (O God) through all the years, will say the simplest common word in just your way”.

Hearing our name: We have joked that it is almost a proof of a call to ordination - its strangeness, unwelcomness, but still not-so strange, not so unexpected, that our hearts don't respond. We were listening all the time. The voice calling your name.

Rowan Williams reminds us that creating and naming are associated with each other. God in the psalms calls the stars into being by naming them; in Genesis names are given to the new creatures; we are known from the time we were in the womb.

Williams says, “God does not create and then differentiate a variety of roles - but the creation is one multiple, noisy, jostling and diverse reality. And you are made to be you; you are called, and named to fulfill that calling.”

God isn't calling you to be Jeremiah, or St Paul or Mary Magdalene (interesting as that might be!) he is calling you, by name, to be yourself. Vocation, we learn, is what is left when all the games have stopped. We are here to discover and help each other to find out that precious residue.

‘You did not choose me, ...’ We don't choose this. We don't choose whom we love, we FALL in love. Herbert McCabe says Jesus was loved into being in the womb of Mary. As God-bearers, we love him into being. No! God loves him into being in us.

Pay attention (to the gifts in you).

Be astonished

Tell about it

Mary went back to the disciples and told them “I have seen the Lord” She is the first apostle, a witness to his life and an invitation to others.

Kate is to tell about it too. The bishop will require that. Jeremiah is told, “I have put words in your mouth.” And the God of the women is still doing that. So go, go and tell about it.

Go, but do not cling to me...

What is it we are clinging to? What is it that you miss when you let go? What is the absorbing passion, the hurt, the attitude, you cling to? Do not cling to me. The absent God the unbearable, ever present absence. The missing piece that fills the universe. The inconsolable longing.

Don't cling, Jesus says... To any thing, to me, to my being with you, to the fact that you can hold me. To the notion that right at this hour I am very close and so always will be. Do not cling to the beauty of this building and the precious, prayer laden stones; do not cling to the beautiful music of the mass. If, like Mary we could only get our hands on this true love we would never let go. Do not cling even to my flesh and blood in the Eucharist.

Do not cling to me.

Because I did not cling, I am not returning to the old life. All things have been made new by this death and resurrection. There is no going back to that comfortable presence, Do not cling. As I did not cling to God-hood, to equality with God, but was made lower... human... given a name.... Obedient to death. Don't cling but go and tell about it and be yourself, and be my disciple and let me live in you.

A final word from Mary Oliver:
Keep some room in your heart for the



Thank you

Thank you to everyone at OSP who helped to make my ordination such a wonderfully joyous occasion. I was truly touched by all the care that went into the preparation of the liturgy, the music, the catering, the flowers, the welcoming of guests, especially in a month which was already so busy. Thank you too for all your kind cards and generous gifts, and for the beautiful congregational gift of a stock for oil of healing.

And I'd like to say a final thank you for making Justin and me feel so welcome during our year at OSP. We have been so grateful of your love, prayers and support and look forward to spending the next two years with you.

Mtr Kate Reynolds

unimaginable.

May the example of Mary Magdalene, and of Kate, inspire us too, to listen for that voice.

Fr Maurice Houston

Mary the Prophet

a sermon for the Feast of Mary



Henry Ossawa Tanner's Annunciation

Do you trust that you are truly called? Do you accept this call? These were among the questions put to Kate by the Bishop during her ordination to the priesthood yesterday. Much to our relief, Kate said that she did. Today we are honouring that call as Mtr Kate presides at mass for the first time. And we are doing this on a day on which the whole Church honours another calling of another woman, the calling of Mary as Mother of the Lord.

When the angel first announces this call to Mary, he honours her with the words, 'Hail Mary full of grace.' Christians have prayed these words for generations, and at the end of mass we will sing them as we too honour Mary's acceptance of that call.

But I must confess to having a question about that call. (Mary's, I mean, rather than Kate's!) For thousands of years Christians have spoken of Mary's virginity, her humility, and her submission to the will of God. Yet, in the Gospel, these are not what the angel honoured. The honour was given for the grace of God which fills her. Our speech about Mary,

in hymns and devotion - has often made her seem unreal, 'Alone of all her sex' as historian Marina Warner calls her. But this is not what the angel honoured, not what the angel called her to. Nor is it what Mary consented to become.

What Mary was called to become can be heard clearly in her song: 'The Lord has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.' This is not a gentle, sweet Mary, but a passionate, powerful Mary. These are not the tones of submission but the tones of prophecy. I think that 'Mary-the-passionate-prophet' makes far more sense of her calling in the Gospels than 'Mary-the-pious-parent.'

To begin with, her Call occurs in the pattern by which Jewish prophets are recognizably called: angels come to them. To Gideon in the winepress, to Isaiah in the Temple, to Ezekiel in a vision in the sky, to Jonah in dreams in a strange land, angels come asking, 'Will you accept this call?' And each prophet decides, just as Mary

decides: with questions ('How can this be?'), with reflection, and then with understanding of the hope and hardness of what is being asked.

After Mary accepts the angel's Call, she sets out on a journey. Alone. After their Call, Elijah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Samuel, Jonah, also set out on journeys, alone, bearing the word of God to someone who is unlikely to receive it well, mostly kings. So Mary travels to the home of the priest Zechariah (who had not received well an angel's message about his son, John the Baptist), and, on arriving, she sings her Magnificat, with all the authority and clarity of Elijah speaking to King Ahab.

In the Gospels (unlike many classical paintings), Mary is never shown at home. Most biblical women are shown in domestic scenes, but not Mary. She doesn't bake cakes as Sarah and the widow of Zarephath do, and as Hannah longs to do. Her child is born in a stable, not in a home. She is seen at the Temple with Jesus, at a wedding in Cana, outside a place where he is speaking, at the foot of the cross, and at his tomb. The prophets are never shown in their homes, which are places they leave in order to bear God's word to the places they are sent.

And Mary's words, like Jeremiah's, Elijah's, Isaiah's, ring with life. Repeating them, as the Church has done every evening for millennia, never wearies us. There is wildness in them, and immense faith. She sings that her soul magnifies God, not her womb, her soul - which is to say, her entire being.

Scholars often compare Mary's song with that of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, in 1 Samuel 2. Hannah's song is indeed a hymn of praise, familiar to Mary and to Luke, and it influenced their choice



of words. But, where Hannah's song is full of prayer and longing, Mary's is prophetic, bold, in its assertion of history-changing life. There is nothing domestic about Mary, and everything domestic about Hannah, who longs for a child so that she will be more at home. Hannah's child is God's gift to her; but the Child in Mary's womb is her service to God.

And what Mary sings, she has also lived. A young girl, probably uneducated; raised in poverty; destined for anonymity. Everything in her life, up to this point, would have been a put down. Just as it still does in many parts of the world, her life as a woman would have reinforced a sense of lack of worth and value. Wrong gender; wrong age; wrong race; wrong education; wrong background; wrong time; wrong place.

But God calls her to the bearing of this Child. And what makes this Call a prophetic act is that it shows clearly God's purposes for all people and for the world: women, yes; teenagers, yes; working people, yes; poor, yes; different race, yes; unmarried mother, yes. The kingdom of God is a world turned upside down, and Mary's Magnificat is its national anthem.

The Medieval mystic Meister Eckhart famously said, 'We are all called to be mothers of God, for God is always waiting to be born.' Helping each person to answer that call, becoming the midwife to our labour, is the calling of a priest. Thinking of priesthood in such a way makes it seem more remarkable that men were ever allowed to do it at all. (Which reminds me of Carrie telling me about her very young son Theo, who, after her ordination, asked, 'Mummy, can men be priests too?')

In a few minutes, in broken bread and wine outpoured, Mtr



Thank You

We'd like to thank everyone at OSP who did so much to make our wedding a wonderful and happy celebration for us, our families, and everyone who came to share in the day. We were very moved and upheld by all the care that was taken with the liturgy, the music, and the catering, and our guests felt the real warmth of the welcome and hospitality they received from you. We value very much the huge number of cards and emails you've sent us, and appreciate deeply the generous gifts and donations you've made to the charities we chose. And we'll always remember gratefully the love and support you've given to us and our children at this special time for all of us.

We're so happy that we've been able to share it with you, in this wonderful church.

So, a deep and heartfelt thank you from both of us to all of you.

Ian and Carrie

Kate will give us Christ's body and blood, so that we may evermore dwell in him and he in us. He in us – we are the Body of Christ, present in our streets and homes and workplaces. God has made a world in which we can all make a

difference if we choose to. Not just to sing the Magnificat, but to act on it.

Fr Ian Paton

Three in One & One in Three

The OSP Sunday School learns about the Trinity

It is always tempting in a Sunday school setting to gloss over the Trinity, to talk about God and Jesus as God's Son, or perhaps Jesus as God the Son, but avoid getting into the business of God in three persons.... and so relegate the Holy Spirit and lose something about the catholic understanding of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In fact, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is so central to the Christian faith, it needs to be held onto throughout Sunday school, as with other worship, and this is what we aim to do at Old St Paul's.

From time to time, though, the doctrine also needs special attention, as was the case for our Sunday school last term. At Old St Paul's, we use Godly Play in Sunday school, because it is experiential and the theology behind it sits well with us. However, due to the way the curriculum had been planned last term, the Godly Play story about the Holy Trinity wasn't going to be suitable for us this time. This meant I had to plan a lesson, for 4-11 year olds, explaining the doctrine of the Trinity.

This means using visual aids, but not metaphor. Not just because children find metaphor unhelpful, but also because a metaphor may distort the concept of the Holy Spirit as laid out in the Creeds. So where to start?

I turned to the Creed of Saint Athanasius, *Quicumque Vult* in the Scottish Prayer Book (1929); particularly useful were the verses

3-5: "Now the Catholic Faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity; Neither confusing the Persons: nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son: another of the Holy Ghost".

So I needed to communicate that there were one and yet three, the idea of Unity and Trinity, and the idea of personhood. Amongst the Godly Play story telling materials, there are three white pieces of felt, cut into circles - these could be used to show we are dealing with three in one, and one in three. The circles also could represent eternity. For those who could read a bit, the words "UNITY" and "TRINITY" were printed on a sheet of paper.

As for the concept of a person, the American Association for the Advancement of Science had stated dolphins were non-human persons,¹ and amongst the soft toys in crèche, we had two identical dolphins. The plan was to talk about how when most animals

look in the mirror, they think they see another being, but a person is self-aware and knows the difference between a reflection or another person.

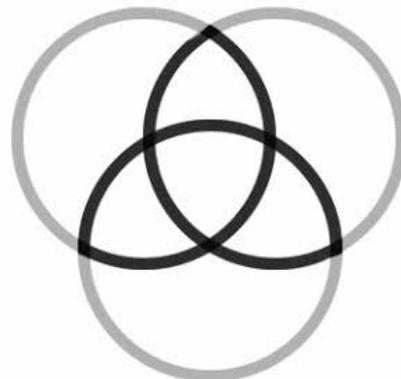
To start the lesson, I brought out the three white felts, and someone said "we're talking about the Holy Trinity today". I piled the white felts on top of each other, and then separated them out: this is one, yet it is three. Then, we looked at the words Unity and Trinity: Oneness and Threeness.

Then we came to the concept of person "all humans are persons, but not all persons are humans; there also angels and dolphins". We had a discussion about how a dog thinks there is another dog when she or he sees his or her reflection, but a person, like a dolphin, is self-aware and could tell the difference between a reflection or its identical twin.

So there is one God, but three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Then I took the three white felts up and threw them behind me: "why did you do that?"

"...because, they are only symbols and that point to God, but aren't really God."

Paul Lugton



¹ *The Telegraph*. "Dolphins should be recognised as non-human persons". 21.2.12. www.telegraph.co.uk/science/science-news/9093407/Dolphins-should-be-recognised-as-non-human-persons.html (visited 2.9.13).



Slán!

Four and a half years ago, on the feast of the Conversion of St Paul in January, Tom Clement said to me “Would you like to come to my church?”

The question came at a point in my life where I was really struggling with the combination of my Roman Catholic faith and my sexuality, so I said “Yes”. I’m so glad I did, for the past four and a half years I’ve spent with all of you have been so spiritually fulfilling.

From the moment I was introduced to Nigel and some of the other servers at the Parish Lunch on that first Sunday, I knew I had found a great home. To go from a wonderful high mass and procession to such a welcoming lunch afterwards couldn’t have been a better welcome.

Fast forward to now, and sadly I have to say goodbye. I’m off to York at the end of the month to start an MSc in Green Chemistry and Sustainable Industrial Technology. I’m excited to move onto a new chapter of my life, but will be sad to leave Edinburgh behind. Old Saint Paul’s will definitely be the thing I’ll miss the most about Edinburgh.

But, I didn’t want to leave without saying thank you. So, to Ian and the ministry team, to Nigel and all of my server colleagues, to John and the choir and to each and every one of you, the congregation of OSPs: Go raibh míle maith agat! (May you have a thousand good things).

Collectively and individually you have made me smile and laugh in times of happiness, comforted me in times of sadness and above

Designing Immortality

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political and military prisoners. Gray notes Stalin’s personal authorisation of the publication of HG Wells’ fantasy ‘The Island of Dr Moreau’, a parable of mutation through the vivisection of pliable ‘human resources’.

Up to 60 million died in the attempt to force march Russia’s overwhelmingly rural economy towards industrialisation and technological sophistication.

The Bolshevik experiment cost many millions of lives, and just one highly visible testament to the Soviet cult of immortality remains, Lenin’s tomb, in Red Square.

As with the philosophy of the God-Builders the decision to embalm Lenin was inspired by Russian Orthodoxy. Lenin would lie incorrupt, like the bodies of the saints, and so channel the religious feelings of the Russian people for the benefit of the regime.

The Immortalization Commission giving Gray’s book its title was established to make Lenin’s preservation permanent

in the hope that by technological means his resurrection would emerge.

The curious three-tiered cubic shape of Lenin’s tomb was inspired by the Suprematist philosophy of the avant-garde artist Kazimir Malevich, which celebrated abstract geometrical form as symbolic of eternity. In another borrowing from Orthodox custom cubes representing the mausoleum were distributed to party members with instruction that they be displayed in the ‘icon corners’ of homes.

Gray relates with black humour the story of the clumsy efforts made to re-ridgerate Lenin by means of primitive cryogenic techniques:

‘The doll-like facsimile that was pieced together from Lenin’s earthly remains could never have been revived. Instead of opening the way to deathless humanity science could only create a lifeless dummy.’

It’s not much, but it’s all that remains of that revolutionary hope of man-made immortality.

Justin Reynolds

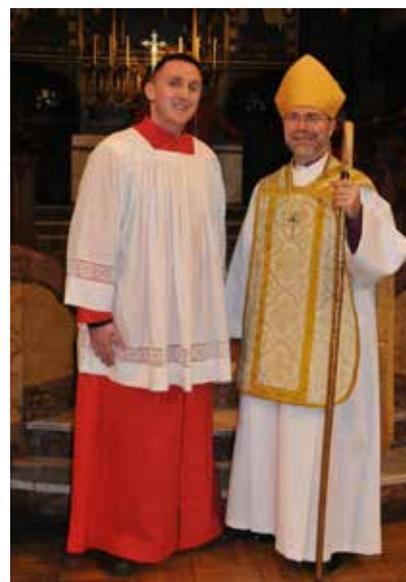
all many of you have become my friends.

So, as I say goodbye I’ll leave you with the last two lines of my favourite prayer:

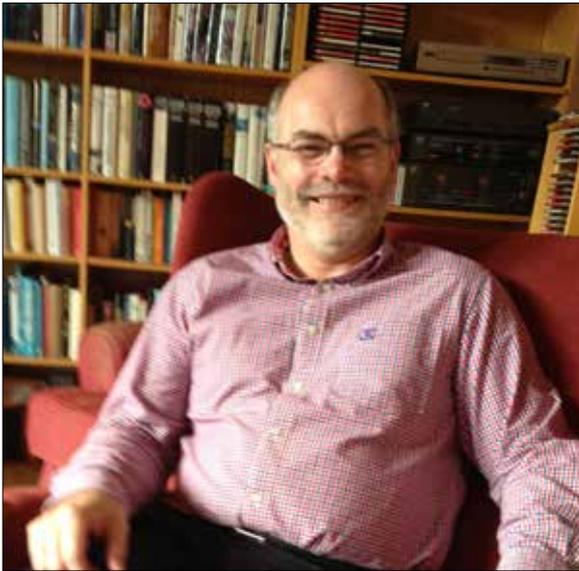
*Go mbuailimid le chéile arís,
Go gcoinní Dia i mbos A láimhe thú
Until we meet again, may God hold
you in the palm of his hand.*

Stiofán McFadden

Stiofán with Bishop John after being received into the Anglican Communion



A Coffee With Eric Stoddart



I was born in Aberdeen, was at school in Aberdeen and went to Aberdeen University and was a minister in Aberdeen. My father, an engineering technician at Marischal College, died when I was 16 but my mother still lives in the Granite City. Even as a child I thought, and others agreed, that I would probably become a minister but in my first year at University I read Geography, before switching to Divinity to graduate with a BD.

I had been brought up in the Church of Scotland but in my 2nd year, I was drawn to the Young People's Fellowship in a Baptist Church and was baptised 'again'. This YPF numbered about 60 or 70, was very active and strongly influenced by the charismatic movement. I became involved in leading worship and prayer meetings, then preaching, pastoral care and work with the YMCA and Teen Challenge.

on the topic 'A Practical Theology of Hell'. I found conservative Christians were often unsettled by the suggestion that their own 'unsaved' loved ones might be destined for everlasting torment. The distant masses who might face that fate didn't, because of their anonymity, generate the same disquiet. After two world wars and the developments in scientific thought, people in general were no longer prepared to accept a Christianity built on deterrence. One result has been that many hell-believing Christians have developed various coping mechanisms to soften the edges of what they still, or think they ought to, believe. How this shapes pastoral care was the focus of my thesis.

By the end of the PhD I realized that if God is a God who can tolerate people being in endless torment, then that God is not worthy of my worship –

I sort of evolved into the role of pastoral assistant, then Associate Pastor when ordained by the local church and later accredited by the denomination. I was in pastoral ministry for eleven years.

In 1996 I decided to do a PhD at Aberdeen, latterly under the supervision of John Swinton

whatever He wants to do to me as a consequence. It was a seminal moment, by far the biggest influence on my life.

In 2000 I came to Edinburgh to work at the Scottish Churches Open College which taught theology by distance learning in an ecumenical setting. Initially I went to Morningside Baptist Church but I was never going to be a good Baptist again. In 2004, I withdrew from the list of accredited Baptist ministers. Briefly I went to St Columba's by the Castle but, if anything, they were too friendly and I could feel myself being sucked in – I wasn't ready yet.

In 2005, after 50 weeks unemployed, I was appointed lecturer in Practical Theology at the University of St Andrews and in 2009 went to Ontario on research leave. I had taken a year off church altogether but while in Canada I risked attending the Anglican Cathedral in Kingston, safe in the knowledge that I could just come and go because I had my return ticket in my pocket. A little earlier Kevin Holdsworth had advised me – before I gave up church altogether – to try Old Saint Paul's, which I did immediately upon my return from Canada in December 2009. The worst bit was going to coffee for the first time!

I recently published a book *Theological Perspectives on our Surveillance Society* addressing our difficulties with handling risk and the limitations of appeals to privacy. Surveillance is my main research focus and I write about



data communications, information analysis and technologies of monitoring society. I draw a lot on feminist and liberation theologies. I also run my School's distance learning postgraduate programme 'The Bible in the Contemporary World' and I'm just coming to the end of a three-year stint editing the international journal *Practical Theology*.

I don't know if I have ever mastered the art of relaxation! If I want to switch off, I suppose I switch on to something like 'Big Bang Theory' or quality situation comedy on TV.

I am constantly reading but almost exclusively work-related or professional literature. I read newspapers on line and I did read a novel two years ago. I'm sure it was by Iris Murdoch.

What makes me angry? Well I have a little list. Photocopiers which never seem to work just when you need them. Travellers at Waverley station with wheeled

luggage guaranteed to obstruct the rushing commuter – like me. Having off-loaded shopping at the end of a long queue in the supermarket just when they decide to open a new checkout! I'll stop there.

I am probably happiest when I have had an article accepted by a journal, when I have a single malt in my hand or when I have something to moan about to somebody who will listen! If I had a patron saint he'd most likely be Rev I. M. Jolly!

What gives me hope? Reuben Alves, a Brazilian theologian expressed it so well when he said: 'Hope is hearing the melody of the future, faith is to dance to it'. I catch this melody when I hear of simple human kindness.

I should like to invite seven people to join me for dinner: a Canaanite mother from Joshua's time whose village has been obliterated by the incoming Israelites and an Israeli mother of

today; the person (man or woman) who invented the wheel and Neil Armstrong – the unknown inventor of the wheel would be astonished at how far that idea had travelled! Judas Iscariot who has been much maligned to sit with Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Mary Queen of Scots because she would be fascinating and because her Craigmillar Castle is only a short walk from my house.

Eric Stoddart was talking with Sheila Brock

Changing Futures

The Grassmarket Community Project is a unique blend of support, nurturing and enterprise, working with people who feel disengaged or marginalised from society. Based in the centre of Edinburgh's Old Town, at the foot of Candlemaker Row, Grassmarket Community Project has an open-door policy and everyone who comes to the project is welcomed as a member, no matter what their background.

It is able to offer members a range of social activities, educational sessions and social enterprises to encourage progress towards healthier and more sustainable futures. With a full timetable of events, classes, drop-in facilities and enterprise activity, Grassmarket Community Project offers something for everyone – including music, arts, gardening and the innovative cookery skills project.

Volunteers are an integral and vital element in generating this rich environment and we are always on the lookout for new and inspiring talents, so if you would like to get involved and help make a difference or just want more information about the project then please contact Nicky Reynolds on Nicky@grassmarketcommunityproject.co.uk or speak to Alexander Glen-Bott after Mass.

1 September 15th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST*High Mass*

Sirach 10.12-18; Psalm 112; Hebrews 13.1-18,15-16; Luke 14.1,7-14

Evensong

Exodus 3.1-15; Matthew 16.21-28

Weekday Observances

Mon 2—Giles of Provence, abbot, c 710; Tue 3—Gregory the Great, bishop of Rome and teacher, 604

8 September 16th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST*High Mass*

Deut 30.15-20; Psalm 1; Philemon 1-21; Luke 14.25-33

Evensong

Exodus 12.1-14; Matthew 18.15-20

Weekday Observances

Mon 9—The Birth of Mary, Mother of the Lord; Fri 13—Cyprian of Carthage, bishop and martyr, 258; Sat 14—Holy Cross Day

15 September 17th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST*High Mass*

Exodus 32.7-14; Psalm 51.1-10; 1 Timothy 1.12-17; Luke 15.1-10

Evensong

Sirach 50.1-24; 2 Cor 2.12-3.11

*Weekday Observances***22 September 18th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST***High Mass*

Amos 8.4-7; Psalm 113; 1 Timothy 2.1-7; Luke 16.1-13

Evensong

Exodus 16.2-15; Matthew 20.1-16

Weekday Observances

Mon 23—Adamnan of Iona, abbot, 704; Wed 25—Finnbar, bishop in Caithness, c 610; Fri 27—Vincent de Paul, priest, 1660

29 September 19th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST*High Mass*

Amos 6.1a,4-7; Psalm 146; 1 Timothy 6.6-19; Luke 16.19-31

Evensong

Daniel 12.1-3; Mark 13.21-27

Weekday Observances

Mon 30—St Michael and All Angels; Tue 1—Gregory the Enlightener, bishop in Armenia, c 332; Fri 4—Francis of Assisi, deacon and friar, 1226

6 October 20th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST*High Mass*

Habbakuk 1.1-4; 2.1-4; Psalm 37.1-9; 2 Timothy 1.1-14; Luke 17.5-10

Evensong

Exodus 20.1-20; Matthew 21.33-46

Weekday Observances

Tue 8—Alexander Penrose Forbes, bishop of Brechin, 1875; Fri 11—Kenneth, abbot in the Western Isles, 600; Sat 12—Elizabeth Fry, prison reformer, 1845

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Next Issue Deadline

The deadline for the September issue of the White Rose is Monday 30th September. Please email contributions to media@osp.org.uk.

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