

# MAINDEE

PARISH  

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MAGAZINE

MAY 2021

50p



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### **PARISH OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR**

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### **PARISH AREA WEBSITE**

<http://www.stjohnsmaindee.org.uk/>

## **THE COMBINED PARISHES OF MAINDEE & LLISWERRY**



*The Churches of  
St John the Evangelist, St Mary's,  
St Andrew's & St Philip's*

### **PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL SECRETARY**

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### **SUNDAY SERVICES**

- ▶ St John's: 10.45am
- ▶ St Mary's: (Wharf Road): 9.15am
- ▶ St Andrew's Church: (Nash Road): 10.00am
- ▶ St Philip's Church: (Jenkins Street): 6.00pm

### **WEEKDAY & HOLY DAY SERVICES**

Details appear in the Weekly Bulletin

### **BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS, ETC.**

Baptisms, Weddings and the hire of the church halls are available by appointment with the Clergy. Please telephone the Parish Office Mon - Fri 10am until 1pm on Tel: 271749 (to make these arrangements).



**The Parish Churches of Maindee & Lliswerry**  
**The Diocese of Monmouth, Church in Wales**

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May 2021

Dear Friends,

It has been a pleasure to welcome everyone back to church. Whilst many aspects of our lives, and indeed our worship, are not yet back to normal (or whatever normal might look like going forward), still I find it hard even to put into words what a great pleasure it is looking out at a full, albeit masked and socially distanced, church once more. I don't think that any of us now take for granted how blessed we are to be able to attend, to meet our friends, and most importantly to meet Christ in the worship and the sacrament. It's also worth thanking you all yet again for your faithfulness during the online worship period. I may, of course, end up eating these words if yet another wave of Covid should rear its head and another lockdown occur — at this stage I rule nothing out — but I do need to say, all the same, that I feel as if exciting things are afoot, both locally, and more broadly.

We have been blessed, for example, to welcome not one, but two ordinands this year: Sarah Rosser and Glen Wilkins. They are both bringing a new voice to our worship, and their presence with me at the altar — and, from time to time, the pulpit! — gives greater depth to our worship and liturgical presence. It is gratifying to know, too, that we as a congregation (not just me as a priest) are entrusted with real, substantial care for these ministers as they take early steps in public ministry in the Anglican Church.

It is also the case that Ministry Areas, as I've so often spoken about, are finally — finally — on the way. For real, this time! The Bishop having consulted, then developed and released her plans in the course of the last few months, we are now at a stage when the ground-work begins in earnest. In the last few days, we have convened the first meeting of the **Ministry Area Transition Team**, a representative body which will be laying the groundwork for our future governance and organisation. I don't want to give away too much here, as soon we'll be putting into your hands at regular intervals a dedicated newsletter to keep you up to speed with the MA developments. But suffice to say that the introductory meeting was cordial and good-natured, and I am looking forward to working with the clergy and parish reps involved. Please stay tuned for more news to come, and please don't hesitate to ask questions as and when you need to. Now that things are underway, the news will start coming thick and fast!

Finally, I wish to note that, with everything so stripped back because of Covid — together with fresh faces and a new Bishop's lead — we have an opportunity here to think carefully about how we plan to move forward. Whatever else the lockdown has meant, it has given us the opportunity to clarify what's important about our church experience — what we've missed, and frankly what we haven't missed. It's given us an opportunity to try new things (such as online worship and "virtual" music), even if those were borne only of necessity. And now we have an opportunity to be more deliberate about investing in the things that make us thrive and leaving behind that which didn't.

I look forward to seeing what God has in store for us in this new season, for indeed it does feel like a new season.

God bless,



## ***From Revd. Linda Batt Associate Priest***

### Faith in the Midst of the Pandemic from Rev Linda

Walking the road of faith can be a challenge at the best of times. As we seek to trust in a God that we cannot see, touch or hear we are challenged to walk by faith and not by sight. Like Thomas, our minds want concrete proof, the surety of truth and the reality of a tangible god, **but the rational part of our mind tells us that's not who God is. He is, instead, a contradiction** of sorts that we can neither explain nor express with our limited vocabulary. God is all knowing, but not fully knowable. He is just, but forgiving. He is constantly present, but not visible. He is grace-filled and righteous.

The tension of this oxymoron was not evident to me in my early years as a young child and **teen who naively believed what others told me "about God."** Growing up, my relationship and understanding of God evolved into a deeper and, truth to tell, more confused sense of being with a God of what sometimes seemed contradictory statements. God is not at all predictable, but I depended on him thoroughly, as my entire worldview revolved and revolves around his existence.

**As I've grown in my faith and walked the path of belief in this God of contradictions, it's been most challenging for me, like many others, to grasp God's ability to be 'GOOD' and yet be in the midst of the of so much pain in the world. Pain isn't a new reality to any of us, but it's an experience that has hit each one of us hard this past year.**

**Reflecting back on last year, I also noticed the constant spiritual warfare and work of Satan. It's** often through the smallest emotional and spiritual struggles that Satan implants lies into the heart. Pain and stress cause the best of us to question God, his goodness, his basic existence and why he allows these painful experiences to happen.

**The images that were displayed daily on our TV's continue to haunt me and now they are transposed to India and how the plague we call Covid is sweeping through that country. I find myself, at times, in a spiritual battle with God over the scenes of death and suffering this pandemic continues to inflict on humanity.**

In the midst of all this, it can be difficult to recognize God in our lives. It may feel and sense like he has abandoned us when we needed him the most. As so **many have lost loved ones it's understandable that they railed at God. People** have been hurting and our world seems like a broken mess. Satan seizes these opportunities to plant seeds of doubt in the minds of those grieving. The whisperer makes us question our relationship with God and our faith in Him. **It's alarming really, how quickly Satan destroys strong faith of many years; when we can't understand why God would allow such deep pain in our life, while still expecting us to trust in him as a good God. When we're at our weakest Satan** seeks to make us weaker by moving us away from God.

With the discovery and dispensing of a vaccine, we in the UK have, in a sense, come out of the worst of this painful experience. We are again, able to breathe after having the crushing weight of this pandemic which has been forcing the life out of us.

Our faithful God reminds us of two important truths. The first, that He is close to the broken-hearted, and we cling to that in our grief, stress or loneliness. The second is a recognition that God can strip away all our self-made ways of knowing him, until we recognise only belief in Him can carry us through the storms of life. God calls us to know him through the storm. I think there is great beauty in this brokenness that produces a simple faith in each one of us. And the magnitude and wonder of being known by God and seeking to know Him answers our deepest longing; as the unique, precious and beautiful individuals that he created us to be. The experience of facing pain with God is like a refining fire, producing a finer, more beautiful faith in God and a deeper trust in his true, albeit oxymoronic character. I hope and pray that we remember these truths from this day forward, trusting in the true God.

Love and Blessings,

*Linda xx*



*The Parish of Maindee  
St John's Choir*

**It's lovely to be back in church for our Sunday worship and I'm looking forward to further easing of lockdown restrictions which will mean we can get back to choir practice and everyone, choir and congregation, singing in church services. I'm hopeful that we won't have too long to wait now. In the meantime, I'm planning on holding outdoor choir practices on the grass in front of church with the electric keyboard plugged in to a long extension lead and hopefully I will be able to plug in Margaret Wren to play as I conduct the rehearsal. I'm waiting until the evenings are a little milder than they are at the moment and then we'll give it a try. The choristers seem up for this so fingers crossed!!**

As I write these notes, the organ work has not been completed and we are awaiting the return of the bellows that provide wind to the pedals on the organ. Once they are back in place the work will have been completed. We are very pleased with the work undertaken by Gary of Liberty Organs and, out of interest here is a list of what he has used to make the repairs: fourteen skins of gusset leather, sixteen skins of salt and alum and one cow hide of bedding leather!! So there we are!! **I'm sure you will all know what these materials are, but if not ask Brian Hockey and not me, as I haven't a clue!!**

I have written about three of the young choristers enrolling on the RSCM Bath Abbey residential course in the summer. I am delighted to say that I have received three further generous donations **to the choir fund to assist the girls' families in funding the course and this kindness and generosity** are very much appreciated by me, the girls and their families. You know who you are! Thank you so much.

**I am currently delivering the latest and, hopefully, the last of the Virtual Choir's Lockdown music** booklet to members of the choir. Hymns and anthems will be available to use in worship through May to September, including Pentecost. I am really very grateful to Dr Emma Gibbins, Director of Music at the Cathedral, for once again helping me out by recording the organ parts at the **Cathedral as the St John's organ is not in a fit state to record, and to Canon David Neale and Father Will** who are going to share the production of the Virtual Choir recordings. Whilst this has been a mammoth task for us all to complete over the last twelve months, it has been both worthwhile and rewarding for all concerned, but I hope we will be back singing live, with no need for recorded music!!

We enjoyed a lovely picnic in Beechwood Park last summer because we were not able to be together for choir practice and we were joined by several members of the congregation. Another picnic is being planned for May and when we are assured of a warm, sunny dry spell of weather I **will announce arrangements via email and Fr Will's Sunday notices. Keep your eyes peeled and ears** fully attentive!!

If you wish to learn more about the choir then please check out the church website at: [stjohnsmaindee.org.uk](http://stjohnsmaindee.org.uk) **All the music that the St John's Virtual Choir has recorded is available for you to listen to: click on 'the choir' at the top of the web page and you will be able to access the dropdown menu including 'virtual choir'.**

*John Granger*



"After a year of working from home, Anthony will seize any opportunity to put on a suit"



## Ramblings from Gwyn.

It was with a deep sense of sadness that I read in the Argus that a nurse who I worked with had died. I saw that she was the same age as me. I sat thinking and remembering, and how the years rolled back. This nurse would tell you she was a good Catholic girl, she often recited it to me, like a mantra. Especially after I might have mentioned to her that she should not have said something nasty in temper to another nurse. Most of us have a temper, but we must think of what we are saying because it can wound a person.

I then thought of a passage in the bible, Matthew chapter 7 v21 which I often think of in my daily life. Jesus tells us that not everyone who calls Lord ,Lord shall enter into His kingdom but only he who does the WILL of His Father who is in heaven. I understand from this passage that it is not enough just to go to church and think I should not have said or done that. We should live the Faith ,think and do as Jesus would.

Do you remember Jean Draper? I remember her as a Priest who was very wise and went about quietly living her Faith. I remember when I was having trouble with a neighbour , she advised me to imagine Jesus standing between myself and the neighbour and although just because you are a Christian it does not mean people can do as they like to you, there are ways and means of standing up for yourself.

I remember as a child being told, just quietly and with dignity state your grievance to the person. There is no reason to raise your voice.

No I am not judging this nurse, after all who am I to judge anyone?

Frequently she would try to encourage me to convert to her Faith, but I knew it was not for me.

I like to think and ask questions but, alas, not all Faiths encourage this. I think this is one of the strengths of the Anglican Church in that you are encouraged by our priests to ask questions and ponder on the answers.

Please if any of you have a comment to make about this you don't have to own a computer, just write it down and Linda will sort it out for you.

Dear Lord , remember me when I come into your Kingdom and do not I pray, judge me too harshly.

Gwyn

## Mel's Meanderings

Well this month's offering is from the film. The Nut Job. It is an animation of a group of animals in a park and how they survive. Surly the Squirrel decides to break into a Nut Shop and get his winter store. But as it happens the store is the home of Bank Robbers, which leads to all sorts of mayhem as you can imagine and Surly finds himself helping the other animals get their winter food. And just before I move on, my favourite Animal in it is Grayson the hero, if you watch it look out for him, we all know a Grayson.

Towards the end of the film it says " Life is for the taking but really Life is for the sharing " . And yes Life is there to provide for yourself and your family, you do what you can, you use your talents to the best of your ability, but also life is about sharing ,we help those who are our friends, those who may be in a difficult position. It is doing the little things as we go along, even just a smile to brighten someone's day. It can be something quite insignificant, but it is helpful. We lead such busy lives and maybe during this Covid pandemic people have had to step back, but we all share this world. God loves us let us share his love and kindness.

And as the film ends it says " Really we are all a little Nuts"

Keep God First Place

Do the Dance Now

*Mel*

## ***CARD MAKING GROUP***

The Card Making Group would like to thank everyone who has supported us over the past year. Despite a very unusual year the total income made from the sale of the cards from December 2019 to December 2020 was £754.

A small selection of cards are available and we hope to have a full selection when we are able to meet again.

# PRAYERS & POEMS

## Christ

Christ my Saviour, Christ my Friend  
Christ my Treasure without end;  
Christ when waves of sorrow roll,  
Christ the Comfort of my soul.

Christ when all around should fail,  
Christ when enemies prevail:  
Christ when false accusers rise,  
Christ my Solace in the skies.

Christ when days are dark and drear,  
Christ when all around is clear;  
Christ when all the earth is gone,  
Christ my Portion on the throne.

Christ at home, and Christ abroad,  
Christ my Company on the road;  
Christ in sickness, Christ in health,  
Christ in poverty and wealth.

Christ who once on earth has trod,  
Christ the blessed "Son of God"  
Christ for time and Christ for aye,  
Christ for all eternity.  
—Edwin B. Hartt

*Submitted by Linda J. Stevens*

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## Ascension

(Luke 24:44-53)

Scriptures fulfilled,  
Minds opened,  
We followed Him to Bethany.  
And there was joy in the blessing  
Of our risen Lord,  
Jesus, God on earth.

And in the blessing  
Was the leaving,  
And in the leaving  
Was the blessing —  
His Spirit of life and power  
To witness to the world  
Of our ascended Lord,  
Jesus, man in heaven.

*By Daphne Kitching*

Prayer for Pentecost

Loving Father God,  
Thank you for sending your Holy Spirit;  
Your Spirit who knows no restrictions or barriers;  
Your Spirit who can reach us and be with us and in us, wherever we are, whatever our circumstances;  
Your Spirit who comforts and heals and empowers us to live with confidence that, ultimately, all shall be well;  
Your Spirit who connects us, through the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

**Because of Jesus' victory over death we have hope and life forever.**

Thank you, loving Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

*By Daphne Kitching*

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## My Garden?

I thought I owned a garden  
A lovely place to be  
**A bird said, "Beg your pardon,  
"This land belongs to me!"**

A squirrel dropped a nut on me  
**Which wasn't what I'd planned  
"Get lost!", said he, "for can't you see  
"You trespass on my land?"**

A pheasant flapped and squawked so loud  
I scarce could hear me think!  
**"Get off my ground, for two's a crowd!"**  
He kicked up such a stink!

The wild-life around me  
So loudly do protest!  
They growl and screech till I can see  
That I am just a guest!

*By Nigel Beeton*

# All in the month of May

It was:

200 years ago, on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1821 that Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of France (1804 – 1815) died of stomach cancer. He was in exile on the island of Saint Helena in the South Atlantic, aged 51.

150 years ago, on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1871 that John Herschel, British astronomer, mathematician, chemist and pioneering **photographer died. Amongst other things, he named seven of Saturn's moons and investigated colour blindness.** He was also President of the Royal Astronomical Society three times.

100 years ago, on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1921 that Ireland was divided into Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland (now known as the Republic of Ireland).

Also 100 years ago, on 15<sup>th</sup> May, that the British Legion was founded.

90 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1931 that the Empire State Building in New York City was officially opened.

80 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> May 1941 that the German Blitz on Liverpool left nearly 3,000 dead and 70,000 homeless. Liverpool was the second most heavily targeted British city, after London.

Also 80 years ago, on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1941 that the last major attack on London during the Blitz caused heavy damage to many important buildings, including the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, St James Palace and Lambeth Palace, several railway stations and hospitals, the British Museum and the Old Bailey. More than 1,300 people were killed on one night. At one point during the Blitz, London was bombed for 57 nights in a row.

75 years ago, on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1946 that the first CARE packages for Europe arrived in Le Havre to help people who were starving after WWII. The first CARE packages were actually surplus US Army rations.

70 years ago, on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1951 that the Festival of Britain and the Royal Festival Hall in London were opened. **The aim of the Festival was to lift the nation's spirits by celebrating British industry, arts and science.**

Also 70 years ago, on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1951 that the **Lake District National Park was established. It was Britain's second national park.**

Also 70 years ago, on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1951 that the British spies Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean fled to Moscow. They were members of the infamous Cambridge spy ring, and their whereabouts remained unknown until 1956.

65 years ago, on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1956 that the first Eurovision Song Contest was held in Lugano, Switzerland. It was won by Switzerland.

60 years ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1961 that betting away from racecourses was legalised in the UK and the first betting shops opened.

Also 60 years ago, on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1961 that Amnesty International was founded in London.

40 years ago, on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1981 that Pope John Paul II was shot and seriously wounded by a Turkish gunman in an **assassination attempt in St Peter's Square, Vatican City.**

30 years ago, on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1991 that Queen Elizabeth II became the first British monarch to address the US Congress.

20 years ago, on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2001 that Great Train Robber Ronnie Biggs returned to the UK from Brazil where he had lived as a fugitive for 36 years. He was immediately arrested and sent to prison to complete his sentence. Released on compassionate grounds in 2009, he died in 2013.

10 years ago, on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2011 that Osama bin Laden, Saudi Arabian-born terrorist, died. Founder of al-Qaeda, he was thought to have masterminded the 9/11 attacks on the USA. Shot dead by US forces in Pakistan.

# NEWS

## Majority of mourners during pandemic unable to say goodbye properly, research finds

More than half of young adults have lost someone close to them over the past year, with this age group most active in helping to comfort the bereaved and organise funerals, according to new research by the Church of England on the impact of the pandemic.

People aged between 18 and 29 years old have been worst affected by bereavement since the first lockdown last year. 51% report they have lost someone close to them, compared to 31% of people aged 60 or above, a survey commissioned by the Church of England has shown.

In spite of this, the majority of 18 to 29 year olds, 54%, reported that they had been active in helping others cope with bereavement, compared to 26% of people aged 60 or above. More than a quarter of young adults said they had helped organise a funeral in the last year, compared to 7% of the older age group.

The online survey of more than 2,000 adults showed that nearly three quarters of people – more than seven in 10 - who wanted to attend a funeral over the past year were unable to do so because of the pandemic.

The vast majority of mourners, 89%, said that people had not been able to say goodbye properly to those who have died, while a similar proportion, 84%, said that people had not been able to fulfil the funeral wishes of the person who died. Overall four in 10 people said they had lost someone close to them since March 2020 from any cause, including Covid-19.

The majority of those surveyed said they believed the Church of England should provide both outdoor and indoor spaces for quiet reflection and prayer for those coping with death, dying and grief.

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## C of E responds to child sexual abuse report

The Church of England has recently published a detailed response to the recommendations of the IICSA (Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse) report from October 2020.

**The response includes an admission that “the Church of England failed to protect some children and young people from sexual predators within their midst.”**

**It goes on: “While the Church will continue to apologise, the main focus is now recognising the distress caused, and acting to improve its safeguarding structures.”**

**The Church has accepted in full the recommendations made by the Inquiry. “Our response document focuses on response to victims and survivors including redress, structure and independence, information sharing, revision of the Clergy Discipline Measure and external audits.”**

**The Church has set up an IICSA safeguarding programme, for which the Archbishops’ Council will be responsible.**

# LOOKING AT GOD

## Pentecost

The celebration of Pentecost this month could be described as a birthday party for the Church, as we remember the gift of the Holy Spirit to the first disciples (Acts 2:1-13). What are we celebrating?

### **God's Promise:**

The disciples obeyed Jesus' instructions as they gathered in the Upper Room: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised' (1:4). They met expectantly in prayer for God's promised gift. Just as we look forward to birthday presents, how eager are we to receive more of the Spirit in our lives?

### **God's Power:**

'All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit' (4). The disciples needed the power of the Spirit to be different: not fearfully gathered behind locked doors, but energised to make Christ known. The Spirit can transform our lives into the likeness of Jesus and give gifts to equip our witness. Although the disciples' experience of this power was overwhelming, it was essentially an encounter with God's love. For us, this can be equally emotional or quiet, but all are included, and nobody is excluded from this experience.

### **God's Purpose:**

The disciples 'began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.' (4). The Spirit empowered their witness, so that everyone heard them speaking in their own 'native language' (lit: dialect, v8). We all have a story to tell of God's activity in our lives and it's the Spirit who translates our words and actions into a language that those around can understand! At Pentecost, 3,000 people were added to the church in one day! What do we expect of the Spirit in our day?

'Let the Church return to Pentecost, and Pentecost will return to her. The Spirit of God cannot take possession of believers beyond their capacity of receiving Him' (Andrew Murray).

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# LOOKING AT YOU

## Do you love a bargain?

Some people adore bargains, promotions, and cut-price items. They are the ones who always forage out reduced clothing and food, collect coupons and loyalty points with great care, and are at the front of the queue to bag items on Black Friday.

Now a new study has found that such deal-prone bargain-hunting may be more than a preference – it may even run in your genes. It could be a tendency which is passed on genetically as well as learned.

The study was published in the Journal of the Association for Consumer Research.

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## Is there life without the BBC?

Could you live happily without the BBC? Just try it for two weeks.

**That was the recent challenge of the corporation's outgoing chairman, Sir David Clementi, to a group of critics who said they resented the licence fee.**

Apparently, nine days later, two thirds of the critics had changed their mind and said that the licence was **worth every penny. Sir David observed that when "things that they took for granted are removed from them, they realise how valuable the BBC is."**

So he encourages anyone else who thinks that the license is not worth £3 a week, to try life without the **BBC. "I think that most people would find it very hard to cope."**

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## Beware the use-by date

Nobody likes to throw food away, but if you ignore the use by dates and go by smell alone, you can risk serious illness.

So warns the Food Standards Agency. In a recent study, the regulator found that half of us do not always check use-by dates.

Many of us still smell the milk to see if it is still okay, and even Theresa May, the former Prime Minister, has admitted to scraping the mould off jam in order to cut waste.

The agency has warned that some Britons who actively ignore use-by dates could risk being hospitalised. Use-by dates are carefully calculated by assessing bacteria on food which could multiply to make them ill.

**A spokesman for the agency said: "It's great that consumers are trying to minimise food waste, but there are lots of ways to do that without gambling with your health, such as planning your meals ahead of time, checking what you have in the fridge that is close to its use-by date, and freezing food right up until the use-by dates."**

Sadly, there are around 2.4million cases of food poisoning each year, and 180 deaths.

# LOOKING AT YOUR COMMUNITY

## Amnesty International celebrates 60 years

Amnesty International was founded in London 60 years ago, on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1961.

A non-governmental organisation with its headquarters in the United Kingdom, Amnesty International focuses on human rights and is believed to have more than seven million members **and supporters around the world. It was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977 for its “defence of human dignity against torture”.**

Amnesty came together following the publication of an article in *The Observer*, ‘**The Forgotten Prisoners**’, by **Peter Benenson, a Jewish lawyer whose mother Flora Benenson was Russian. His father Harold Solomon was British, but he died when Peter was nine. Peter, who was tutored by W H Auden and went to Eton and Balliol, took his mother’s name much later as a tribute to his grandfather, a gold tycoon.**

With a group of lawyers and as a member of the Labour Party he founded Justice, the influential human rights and law reform organisation, in 1957, but the following year he fell ill and moved to Italy to convalesce, where he converted to Roman Catholicism.

Amnesty campaigns to put pressure on governments where human rights abuse takes pace. It **considers capital punishment to be "the ultimate, irreversible denial of human rights."**

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## Famine may be on the way

That is the stark warning of the Disasters Emergency Committee coalition of UK aid agencies, who says that the economic devastation caused by the pandemic is leading to increasing hunger in poorer countries.

Thousands are likely to die this year as the knock-on effect of Covid-19 worldwide has left millions less able to afford food. South Sudan and Yemen are already on the brink of famine, and Afghanistan and Democratic Republic of the Congo are also in deep trouble.

Just at a time when Covid-19 and wars have crippled the economic and health systems of many countries, humanitarian funding has dropped as donor countries also struggle.

**Saleh Saeed, the committee’s chief executive, explained: “People living in places made perilous by conflict, violence and climate disasters are coping as best they can, but the odds are stacked against them. The knock-on effects of the pandemic have crippled economies, making the world’s poorest people even poorer.”**

# High Days & Holy Days

1<sup>st</sup> May - May Day: unbridled merriment

May is the month when the ancient pagans used to get up to **'all sorts'!** The Romans held their festival to honour the mother-goddess Maia, goddess of nature and growth. (May is named after her.) The early Celts celebrated the feast of Beltane, in honour of the sun god, Beli.

**For centuries in 'Olde England' the people went mad in May.** After the hardship of winter, and hunger of early Spring, May was a time of indulgence and unbridled merriment. One Philip Stubbes, writing in 1583, was scandalised: **'for what kissing and bussing, what smooching and slabbering one of another, is not practised?'**

**Henry VIII went 'maying' on many occasions. Then folk would stay out all night in the dark rain-warm thickets and return in the morning for dancing on the green around the May pole, archery, vaulting, wrestling, and evening bonfires.** The Protestant reformers took a strong stand against May Day, and in 1644 May Day was abolished altogether. Many May poles came down - only to go up again at the Restoration, **when the first May Day of King Charles's reign was 'the happiest Mayday that hath been many a year in England', according to Pepys.**

May Day to most people today brings vague folk memories of a young Queen of the May decorated with garlands and streamers and flowers, a May Pole to weave, Morris dancing, and the intricacies of well dressing at Tissington in Derbyshire.

May Day is a medley of natural themes such as sunrise, the advent of summer, growth in nature, and - since 1833 - **Robert Owen's vision of a millennium in the future, beginning on May Day, when there would be no more poverty, injustice or cruelty, but harmony and friendship.** This is why, in modern times, May Day has become Labour Day, which honours the dignity of workers. And until recently, in communist countries May Day processions were in honour of the achievement of Marxism.

There has never been a Christian content to May Day, but nevertheless there is the well-known 6am service on the top of Magdalen Tower at Oxford where a choir sings in the dawn of May Day.

An old May carol includes the lines:  
*The life of man is but a span, it flourishes like a flower  
We are here today and gone tomorrow - we are dead within an hour.*

There is something of a sadness about it, both in words and tune, as there is about all purely sensuous joy. For May Day is not Easter, and the joys it represents have always been earth-bound and fleeting.

9<sup>th</sup> May - Rogation Sunday (Sunday before Ascension)

Rogation means an asking of God - for blessing on the seed and land for the year ahead. It is appropriate in any emergency, war, plague, drought or foul weather.

The practice began with the Romans, who invoked the help of the gods Terminus and Ambarvalia. In those days a crowd moved in procession around the cornfields, singing and dancing, sacrificing animals, and driving away Winter with sticks. They wanted to rid the cornfields of evil.

In about 465 the Western world was suffering from earthquake, storm and epidemic. So Mamertius, Bishop of Vienne, aware of the popular pagan custom, ordered that prayers should be said in the ruined or neglected fields on **the days leading up to Ascension. With his decision, 'beating the bounds' became a Christian ceremonial.**

Rogation-tide arrived in England early in the eighth century and became a fixed and perennial asking for help of the Christian God. On Rogation-tide, a little party would set out to trace the boundaries of the parish. At the head marched the bishop or the priest, with a minor official bearing a Cross, and after them the people of the parish, with schoolboys and their master trailing along. Most of them held slender wands of willow.

At certain points along the route - at well-known landmarks like a bridge or stile or ancient tree, the Cross halted, the party gathered about the priest, and a litany or rogation is said, imploring God to send seasonable wealth, keep the corn and roots and boughs in good health, and bring them to an ample harvest. At some point beer and cheese would be waiting.

In the days when maps were neither common nor accurate, **there was much to be said for 'beating the bounds.'** It was still very common as late as the reign of Queen Victoria. Certainly, parish boundaries rarely came into dispute, for everyone knew them. (Do you know yours today?)

\*\*\*\*\*

# High Days & Holy Days

*Continued.....*

13<sup>th</sup> May - Ascension Day: 40 Days with the Risen Christ

40 days after Easter comes Ascension Day. These are the 40 days during which the Risen Christ appeared again and again to His disciples, following His death and resurrection. (*Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; and John 20.*)

**The Gospels give us little of Christ's teachings and deeds** during those 40 days. Jesus was seen by numerous of His disciples: on the road to Emmaus, by the Sea of Galilee, in houses, etc. He strengthened and encouraged His disciples, and at last opened their eyes to all that the Scriptures had promised about the Messiah. Jesus also told them that as the Father had sent Him, He was now going to send them - to all corners of the earth, as His witnesses.

**Surely the most tender, moving 'farewell' in history** took place on Ascension Day. Luke records the story with **great poignancy: 'When Jesus had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, He lifted up His hands - and blessed them.'**

**As Christmas began the story of Jesus' life on earth, so Ascension Day completes it, with His return to His Father in heaven. Jesus' last act on earth was to bless His disciples.** He and they had a bond as close as could be: they had just lived through three tumultuous years of public ministry and miracles – persecution and death – and resurrection! Just as we part from our nearest and dearest by still looking at them with love and memories **in our eyes, so exactly did Jesus: 'While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into heaven.'** (Luke 24:50-1) He was not forsaking them, but merely going on ahead to a kingdom which would also be theirs one day: **'I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God...'** (John 20:17)

The disciples were surely the most favoured folk in history. Imagine being one of the last few people on earth to be face to face with Jesus, and have Him look on you **with love. No wonder then that Luke goes on: 'they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.'** (Luke 24:52,53)

No wonder they praised God! They knew they would **see Jesus again one day! 'I am going to prepare a place for you... I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.'** (John 14:2,3) In the meantime, Jesus had work for them to do: to take the Gospel to every nation on earth.

**23<sup>rd</sup> May - Day of Pentecost: Whit Sunday**

Pentecost took place on the well-established Jewish festival of Firstfruits, which was observed at the beginning of the wheat harvest. It was seven weeks after Easter, or 50 days including Easter.

**A feast day to celebrate the country's wheat harvest** does not sound exactly world-changing, but that year, it became one of the most important days in world history. For Pentecost was the day that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit - the day the Church was born.

Jesus had told His disciples that something big was going to happen, and that they were to wait for it in Jerusalem, instead of returning to Galilee. Jesus had plans for His disciples, but He knew they could not do the work themselves. They would need His help.

And so, they waited in Jerusalem, praying together with His other followers, for many days. And then on that fateful morning there was suddenly the sound as of a mighty rushing wind. Tongues of flame flickered on their heads, and they began to praise God in many tongues, to the astonishment of those who heard them. The curse of Babel (Genesis 11: 1- 9) was dramatically reversed that morning.

That morning the Holy Spirit came to indwell the disciples and followers of Jesus. The Church was born. The Christians were suddenly full of life and power, utterly different from their former fearful selves. The change in them was permanent.

Peter gave the first ever sermon of the Christian Church that morning, proclaiming Jesus was the Messiah. His boldness in the face of possible death was in marked contrast to the man who had denied Jesus 50 days before. And 3,000 people responded, were converted, and were **baptised. How's that for fast church growth!**

Of course, Pentecost was not the first time the Holy Spirit had acted in this world. All through the Old Testament **there are accounts of how God's Spirit guided people and strengthened them. But now, because of Christ's death and resurrection, He could INDWELL them.** From now on, every Christian could have the confidence that Jesus was with them constantly, through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit.

\*\*\*\*\*



## Mea Culpa

A group of lads took a trip to France and decided to attend Mass in a small town, even though none of them understood French. They managed to stand, kneel and sit when the rest of the congregation did, so it wouldn't be obvious they were tourists. At one point, the priest spoke and the man sitting next to them stood up, so they got up, too. The entire congregation broke into hearty laughter.

After the service they approached the priest, who spoke English, and asked him what had been so funny. The priest said he had announced a birth in the parish and had asked the father to stand up.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Finding

The shin bone is a device for finding furniture in the dark.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Sportsmanlike

During a game, the coach asked one of his young players: "Do you understand what cooperation is? What a team is?" The little boy nodded yes. "Do you understand that what matters is winning together as a team?" The little boy nodded yes. "So," the coach continued, "when a strike is called, or you are out at first, you don't argue or curse or attack the umpire. Do you understand all that?" Again, the boy nodded yes.

"Good," said the coach. "Now go over there and explain it to your mother."

\*\*\*\*\*

## What did I do with the car?

As I left a meeting at our church, I could not find my car keys. They were not in my pockets. They were not in the church. Then I thought – **I've left them in the car! As I burst through the doors of the church, my heart sank: the church car park was empty.**

With a heavy heart I called the police, confessed that I had left my keys in the car, and that it had been stolen. Then I made the really **difficult call: "Darling," I began (I always call her 'darling' at moments like this). "Darling, I have left my keys in the car, and it has been stolen."**

**There was a little gasp. "You did not have the car. I dropped you off. Remember?"**

**My heart sang as relief flooded through me. "Of course! Thank God! Well, come get me quick – I am already running late... what is keeping you?"**

**My wife replied with ominous calm: "What's keeping me? I'll tell you what's keeping me. The police are here. They think I've stolen our car..."**

\*\*\*\*\*

## Well known hymns – with a twist of honesty

*The way we might sing some well-known hymns if we were being honest:*

1. I Surrender Some
2. There Shall Be Sprinkles of Blessings
3. Fill My Spoon, Lord
4. Oh, How I Like Jesus
- 5. He's Quite a Bit to Me**
6. I Love to Talk About Telling the Story
7. Take My Life and Let Me Be
8. It is My Secret What God Can Do
9. There is Scattered Cloudiness in My Soul Today
10. Where He Leads Me, I Will Consider Following
11. Just As I Pretend to Be

\*\*\*\*\*



## Finger

The Moving Finger writes, and, having writ, moves on.  
And so, I stare and wonder - where does the ink come from?!

\*\*\*\*\*

## Ah – but where are they now?

The children had been grouped together around the minister to pose for the annual Sunday School photograph, and the minister was smiling encouragement.

"Just think how nice it will be to look at it when you are all grown up," he said. "You could point to each other and say: 'There's Jennifer; hope she's made it as a solicitor,' or 'That's Michael, hope he's made it as a doctor.'"

A small voice at the back rang out, "And there's the minister – hope he made it to heaven..."

\*\*\*\*\*

## The puppies

A client brought a litter of Golden Retriever puppies to the local veterinary clinic for inoculations and worming. As the look-alike pups tumbled over and under one another in their box, the experienced vet realised it would be difficult to tell which had been treated and which hadn't. So, the vet turned on the water tap, wet her fingers and gently moistened each dog's head as she finished giving it the necessary shots.

After the fourth puppy, the vet noticed her hitherto talkative client had grown silent and was looking rather reverent. As the animal doctor sprinkled the last pup's head, the owner leaned forward and whispered, "Thank you so much. I hadn't realised you baptised them, too."

\*\*\*\*\*

## Gift?

I asked my mother if I was a gifted child. She said I must be, because they certainly wouldn't have paid for me.

## Do the maths

A teacher posed the following problem to one of her maths classes: "A wealthy man dies and leaves ten million pounds. One-fifth is to go to his wife, one-fifth is to go to his son, one-sixth to his butler, and the rest to charity. Now, what does each get?"

After a very long silence in the classroom, one little boy raised his hand. With complete sincerity, he ventured, "A solicitor?"

\*\*\*\*\*

## Chicken run

Idealistic politician: "I dream of a better tomorrow where chickens can cross the road and not have their motives questioned."

\*\*\*\*\*

## Skydive

You do not need a parachute to skydive - you need a parachute to skydive *twice*.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Anaesthetic

As the manager of our hospital's cricket team, I was responsible for sorting out the equipment for the games.

One day as I walked through the surgery department carrying a bat that belonged to one of the surgeons, I passed several patients and their families in a waiting area. I heard one man say to his wife, "Look, darling, here comes your **anaesthetist**."

\*\*\*\*\*

## True love?

I was officiating at a wedding and during the preparations the bride and groom wanted to have two turtledoves on the altar as a symbol of their forever love. I politely said no birds or animals.

They hid the birds in a back room, anyway. Immediately after the service they went outside, each of them with a bird in its cage. They opened the cages in unison. One bird flew out and made a hard right turn. The other flew out and made a hard left turn.

We all stood there watching the symbols of their forever love fly off in opposite directions.



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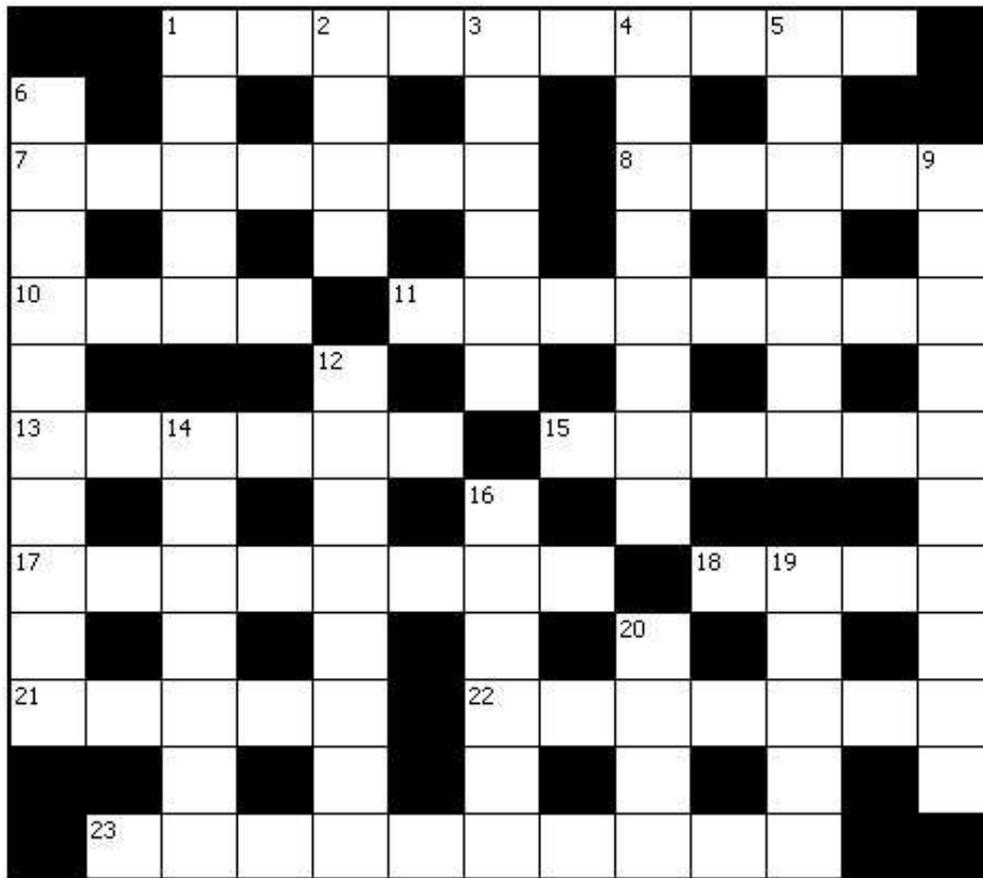
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# CROSSWORD



## CLUES

### Across

- 1 Sense of right and wrong (*1 Corinthians 8:7*) (10)  
 7 Coming (*John 11:17*) (7)  
 8 **'All I have is — , and all you have is mine'** (*John 17:10*) (5)  
 10 Smarten (*Acts 9:34*) (4)  
 11 Hold back (*Job 9:13*) (8)  
 13 Member of the Society of Friends (6)  
 15 At ague (anag.) (6)  
 17 Citizen of the Greek capital (8)  
 18 So be it (*Galatians 6:18*) (4)  
 21 Twentieth-century poet and dramatist who wrote *Murder in the Cathedral*, T.S. — (5)  
 22 Empowers (*Philippians 3:21*) (7)  
 23 Imposing (*1 Samuel 9:2*) (10)

### Down

- 1 Healed (*Luke 7:21*) (5)  
 2 Central space in a church (4)  
 3 Co-founder of Spring Harvest and General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance 1983–97, Clive — (6)  
 4 Moses killed one when he saw him beating a Hebrew labourer (*Exodus 2:12*) (8)  
 5 Bravery (*Acts 4:13*) (7)  
 6 It interrupted Paul and Silas singing hymns in a Philippian jail (*Acts 16:26*) (10)  
 9 Transgression (*Psalms 36:1*) (10)  
 12 Irish province in which Dublin is situated (8)  
 14 Same hit (anag.) (7)  
 16 **'The Spirit of God was hovering over the — '** (*Genesis 1:2*) (6)  
 19 Author of the immortal stories of Winnie the Pooh, A.A. — (5)  
 20 Cab (4)

### May Easy Sudoku

	7			5	4	6	3	8
		9			7	1		
				8		7		9
	8				6	3	7	1
		3				2		
1	4	2	5					9
3		8		2				
		7	3			5		
5	2	6	7	9				8

### May Intermediate Sudoku

	1	9	2					7
		7	8				5	9
	5				7			1
			5					8
9				3				5
1					6			
3			6				7	
5	7				1	9		
4					8	5	3	

### April Easy Sudoku Solution

6	5	7	4	8	9	2	1	3
3	8	2	7	1	5	9	4	6
1	4	9	2	3	6	5	7	8
7	6	5	1	2	8	4	3	9
4	1	3	9	5	7	6	8	2
2	9	8	6	4	3	1	5	7
5	7	6	3	9	1	8	2	4
9	2	1	8	7	4	3	6	5
8	3	4	5	6	2	7	9	1

### April Intermediate Sudoku Solution

9	6	4	1	5	7	2	3	8
3	7	1	2	8	6	4	5	9
2	8	5	3	9	4	1	7	6
1	5	8	4	6	2	3	9	7
4	9	3	8	7	1	5	6	2
6	2	7	5	3	9	8	1	4
8	3	6	9	2	5	7	4	1
5	1	9	7	4	8	6	2	3
7	4	2	6	1	3	9	8	5

## Miscellaneous observations on daily life:

- You know you're into middle age when you realise that caution is the only thing you care to exercise.
- Some people you're glad to see coming; some people you're glad to see going.
- How do you start a fairy tale in the modern age? "If elected, I promise..."
- 

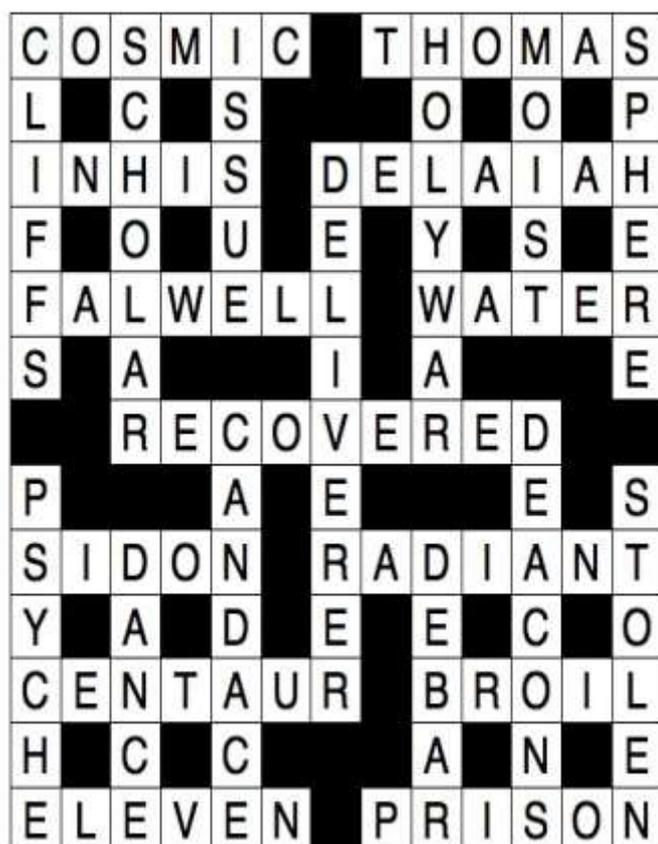
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## Coronavirus – warning about vaccine

This happened recently and is an important lesson for our friends and family in the older age group. A friend had his second doze of vaccine at the vaccination centre. Shortly afterwards he began to have blurred vision and struggled to get home.

He rang the vaccination centre and asked if he should go straight to the hospital for help. He was told NOT to go to the hospital, but instead to return at once to the vaccination centre and pick up his glasses....

## Solution to the April Crossword



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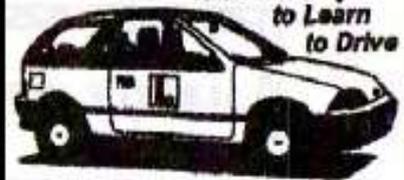


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