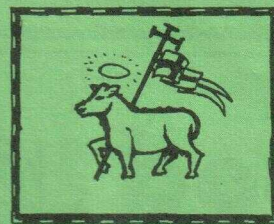


St John-in-Bedwardine Parish Magazine

with which is incorporated Worcester Diocesan NEWS and The Sign



10p
1986

MARCH

Vicar:
Revd John Green
143, Malvern Road
Worcester
Telephone 422327

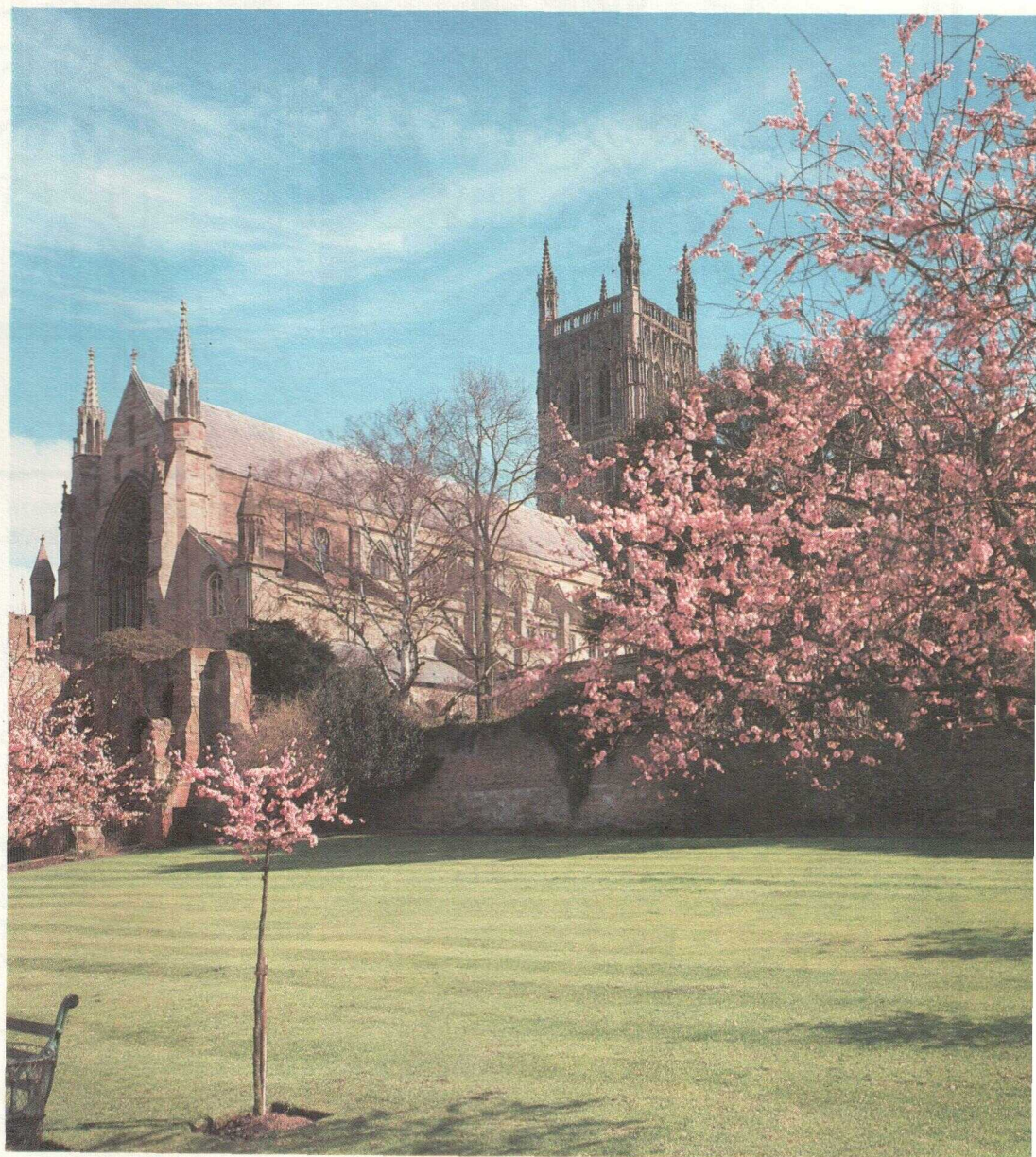
Deaconess:
Ruth Wintle
72, Henwick Road
Worcester
Telephone 422841

Curate:

West Worcester
Group Clergy:

- Revd Jim Leverton
St Michael's Vicarage
Burleigh Road
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Telephone 421986

- Revd Frank Holt
St Clement's Rectory
Laugharne Road
Worcester
Telephone 422675



*Blossom at Worcester cathedral, by Bill Meadows
(S series cover published by A. R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd, Saint Thomas House, Becket Street, Oxford, OX1 1S.J;
printed in Great Britain by Stott Brothers Ltd, Halifax, West Yorkshire)*

Sunday Services:

8 am: Holy Communion

10 am: THE PARISH COMMUNION with JUNIOR CHURCH

4.30 pm: EVENSONG (*January to Passion Sunday*)

6.30 pm: EVENSONG (*Palm Sunday to December 31st*)

10.30 am: LAST SUNDAY OF MONTH — Lower Wick Communion Service
(MANOR PK. SCHOOL)

Weekday Services: Holy Communion, Thursday 10 am; Friday 7.45 am

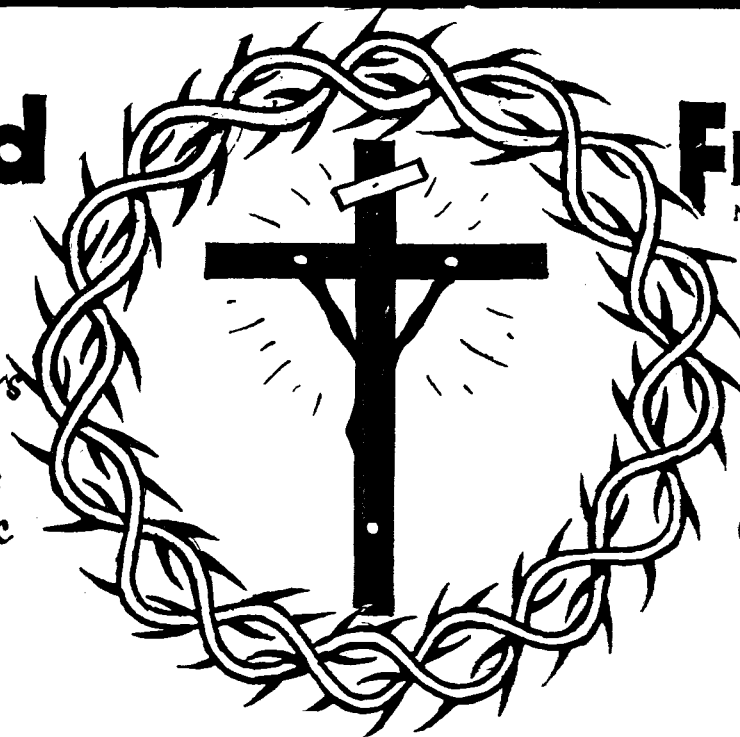
PARISH OFFICE, in the Old Cottage (Tel 420490) Wednesday and Friday 9.30 am — 12.30 pm

BAPTISM/WEDDING BOOKINGS — Saturday 5.45 pm — 7.00 pm in the Church

Good

Friday

March 28th



The royal banners
forward go;
The Cross shines
forth in mystic
glow;

Where He in
flesh, our flesh
who made,
Our sentence
bore, our
ransom paid.

PASTORAL LETTER

Most of the important decisions we make in life involve us in taking risks. Perhaps we change our job - or move house - we may move from one area of the country to another, or even go overseas. All these are decisions which involve a measure of risk. The job may not be quite right for us; it may not be what we thought it was. Our new neighbours may not be "our sort of people", and so on and so on.

On a more profound level, two people take a risk - hopefully an acceptable risk - when they choose to marry each other. If the preparation for this major change in living has been adequate all should be well. However, there is still a risk. We may take all the precautions in the world but, as human beings, we are still finite. We cannot hope to master all the implications of every decision we make or all the depths of another personality. Therefore, risk-taking is an inevitable part of living.

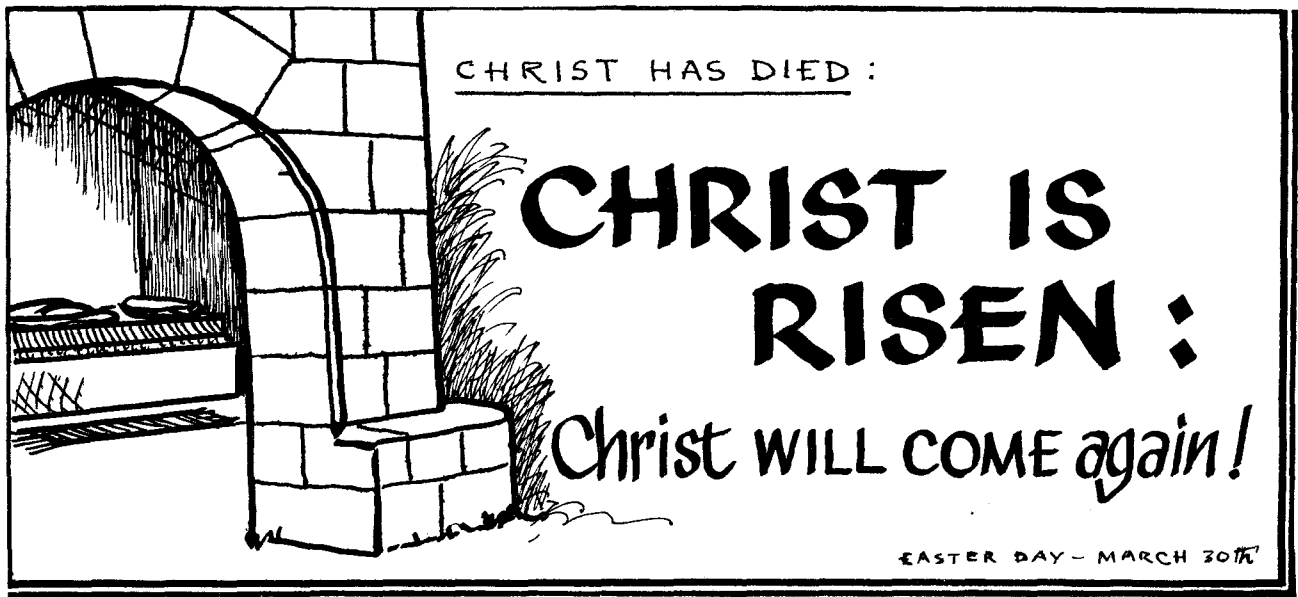
In his book "Searching for God" Cardinal Hume says that love is reckless. In other words, it is a force which is prepared to accept risks as a necessary consequence of loving another, or - to put it another way - true love runs the risk of hurt and suffering as it reaches out to another with the open arms of acceptance and caring.

Jesus reaches out to us with open arms on a cross created by his reckless love for us. On Good Friday he was prepared to take the greatest risk of all - of continuing to love us even as our prejudice, hate and anger killed him. The agony of this risk reaches down the ages in his tormented words from the Cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me".

Thankfully, for christians, this is not the end of the story but only the beginning! This reckless love which squandered its life on a cross of wood received back life in full abundance. Jesus was raised from the dead and his continuing love for us is now the power at the centre of our lives!

The message of Easter is that if we are prepared to be reckless in our loving and to give ourselves away in the service of others, we shall discover that our lives can be charged with new meaning and purpose. We shall have discovered peace and joy in the midst of the turmoil of living. We shall have found our true self.

John Hall



MARCH DIARY

- Sunday, 2nd. 10 a.m. Parish Communion - Preacher: Dss. Ruth - Theme 'The People of the Passion' (3) "The Crowds".
- Tuesday, 4th. 3 p.m. Women's Fellowship Lent Service
7.30 p.m. Cathedral Lent Course on the Archbishop's Report on The Inner City.
- Friday, 7th. 10.45 a.m. Women's World Day of Prayer Service (Members of the Male Sex warmly invited !) Coffee served from 10.15
7.30 p.m. Service at St. Michael's, Dines Green.
9 p.m. Compline.
- Sunday, 9th. 10 a.m. Family Communion for Mothering Sunday.
- Tuesday, 11th. 10 a.m. - 3p.m. Quiet Day at the Convent of the Holy Name, Malvern Link, led by one of the Sisters. Coffee and tea available. Please bring a packed lunch.
3 p.m. Women's Fellowship Lent Service.
7.30 p.m. Cathedral Lent Course - Speaker: The Rt. Revd. David Sheppard.
- Wed. 12th. 7.30 p.m. Friendship Evening in the Vestry - 'Desert Island Discs'.
- Friday, 14th. 9 p.m. Compline.
- Sunday, 16th. 10 a.m. Parish Communion - Preacher: Canon Neil Robinson - Subject 'Judas'
- Tuesday, 18th. 3 p.m. Women's Fellowship Lent Service
7.30 p.m. Mothers' Union Deanery Service.
7.30 p.m. Cathedral Lent Course - Panel of Speakers.
- Wed. 19th. 7.30 p.m. P.C.C. in Vestry.
- Friday, 21st. 9 p.m. Compline
- Sunday, 23rd. (Palm Sunday) Holy Week Begins.
10 a.m. Parish Communion - Preacher: Dss. Ruth Wintle - Subject 'Pilate'.
10.30 a.m. Lower Wick Communion - Preacher and Celebrant: The Vicar.
- Monday in Holy Week. 9 p.m. Compline
- Tuesday in Holy Week. 3 p.m. Women's Fellowship Lent Service
8.30 p.m. Holy Communion followed by
9 p.m. Compline.
- Wednesday in Holy Week. 8.30 p.m. Meditation in preparation for Easter
9 p.m. Compline
- Maundy Thursday. 7.30 p.m. Communion at St. Clement's Church.
9 p.m. Compline
- GOOD FRIDAY 10 a.m. Family Service - Act of Witness and Worship sponsored by The Worcester Council of Churches.

EASTER EVEN 9 p.m. Service of Light - with re-affirmation of Baptismal vows.

EASTER DAY 8 p.m. Holy Communion
 10 a.m. Easter Parish Communion for all the family.
 6.30 p.m. Easter Carol Service

WORCESTER & DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CHURCHES. MARCH.

Unity Service in the Chapel of Unity - The Cathedral Crypt.

As we pray with and for the Community this year, our theme for the Service this month Thursday, March 6th at 7.30 p.m. is the Police. The Service will be led by members of the West Mercia Constabulary. Do come.

Maundy Thursday Vigil.

The Chapel of Unity will be open for private prayer from 10 p.m. to midnight.

Good Friday.

9.30 a.m. Free Church Service in Worcester Baptist Church
 10.45 a.m. Procession of Witness from the Shire Hall.
 11.30 a.m. Open Air Service of Witness outside the Guildhall - Preacher: The Bishop of Worcester.
 7 p.m. United Service at St.John-in-Bedwardine.

Easter Day


The Easter Morning Dawn Service begins at 6.30 a.m. on the Cathedral Terrace.

Looking forward to Whit Sunday (May 18th)..

... to the common Re-affirmation of our Baptism in a short Service at 3 p.m. on College Green.

READERS AT THE LECTERN. MARCH

	<u>OT/EPISTLE</u>	<u>GOSPEL</u>	<u>OT</u>	<u>NT</u>	
2nd	Gen.Ch.12 v1-9 Mr.G.Oram	Matt.Ch.16 v13-end Mrs.G.Core	Is.Ch.59 v9-20 Mr.G.Evans	Cor.Ch.1 v24 Ch.2 v7	Mr.A. Fisher
9th	FAMILY SERVICE MOTHERING SUNDAY		Ex.Ch.34 v1-5 & v29-end Mrs.J.Ingham	2 Cor. Ch.3	Mrs.P.Bamford
16th	Jer.Ch.31 v31-34 Mr.B.Gater	Mark Ch.10 v32-45 Mrs.M.Goodyear	Is.Ch.63 v1-16 Mr.J.Hughes	John Ch.12 v20-36a	Mr.R.Houghton
23rd	Is.Ch.50 v4-29a Mrs.R.Lindop	Matt.Ch.21 v1-13 Mr.E.Reeves	Is.Ch.5 v1-7 Mrs.M.Fisher	Mark Ch.12 v1-12	Mr.A.Burgess
30th	EASTER DAY (to be arranged)		EASTER CAROL SERVICE (to be arranged).		

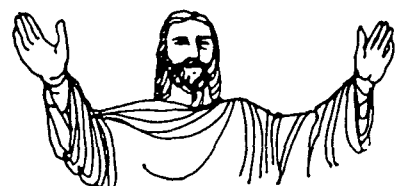


Maundy Thursday

(MARCH 27th)

at 7.30pm in St Clement's Church
 Holy Communion will be celebrated.
 This service honours our Lord's Presence with his disciples at the Institution of The Last Supper.

ST.JOHN'S COMMUNITY PLAYGROUP are holding
 AN EASTER FAYRE
 on Saturday, March 22nd- 10 a.m. - 12 noon
 at St.John's School, Bromyard Road.
 Many stalls including soft toys, good-as-new
 bric-a-brac, plant stall, cake stall, and
 refreshments, etc. etc.
 Easter Bonnet Parade 11.30 a.m.



As you all know by now, a new Curate will be joining St. John's parish in June this year, and he has agreed to tell us something about himself so that when he and his family arrive in Worcester we will feel we already know them, and they will not be strangers to us. His letter to us follows:-

'Thank you for the opportunity of letting us tell you a bit about ourselves in the magazine. I'm certainly glad of the chance because it seemed only right that I should reassure you that Holzapfel isn't as bad as it sounds ! It's easy to say if you split it into three parts - a hol a zap and a fel. You can tell, however, why I prefer to be called Peter, and why other people usually prefer it as well ! It's a German name as my father was a German prisoner who married my mum straight after the war and has lived in this country ever since. I'm an only child brought up in a place called Todmorden near Halifax in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The accent doesn't quite go with the surname as you'll discover. Todmorden is very much a Yorkshire mill town specialising in textiles, and both my parents worked in local factories. My mother's side of the family were Methodists, and my father's Lutheran, and it was the Methodist Church I attended during my teenage years.

After attending the local grammarschool I left at 18 and journeyed to Thailand where I taught in a boys' home, some twenty miles north of the Thai capital, Bangkok. I went out with Voluntary Service Overseas on a twelve month contract to teach English and games. It wasn't altogether an easy or comfortable experience in terms of climate, food, or cultural adjustment, and yet extremely rewarding. Certainly I gained a lot more than I gave, which perhaps isn't surprising at such an early age. At any rate, the prospect of a German Yorkshireman teaching English in Thailand when he didn't speak a word of Thai, and hated hot food, is a daunting one ! Certainly apart from much genuine affection, I also witnessed extreme poverty and deprivation, as well as much lack of respect for human life and dignity, which made me more aware of God's call to become the kind of people that He intended us to be in His image. I also became a Buddhist monk for six weeks whilst I was out there..... which is quite another story which I shall tell you all about sometime.

When I came back to England I went to Exeter University where I studied Theology and Sociology. I was there for three years, and it was there that I met Chris. Chris comes from Fareham in Hampshire, and she also did Theology. If any of you know it then I'm sure you'll agree that Exeter University is a beautiful campus in a very lovely part of the country, and our years there were very enjoyable and rewarding. After both graduating in 1974, I went off for a year to Southampton, where I worked as an unqualified social worker, whilst Chris remained in Exeter and did her teaching diploma.

I had been quite involved in the Christian Union at University, and had thought about the ministry, but I certainly wasn't mature enough either in my christian faith or in terms of experience. We were married in 1975, and our first home was in Llanishen, Cardiff: a one roomed bed-sit - very luxurious - you could cook breakfast without getting out of bed ! We were in Cardiff for two years whilst I qualified as a social worker. The next move was to Wincanton, Somerset, and I worked on a social work team based in Yeovil. The work was varied, dealing with mental illness, family and marital breakdown, delinquency, and quite a number of elderly. It was certainly an excellent training for ministry, as I've realised since being here at college. It was there that our first daughter, Clare, was born in 1979. We lived in a 400 year old cottage where I had pretensions to become rather a handyman, but in the end proved to be rather more of a handicap !

After nearly four years in Somerset we moved to Dudley where I became a senior social worker at Brierley Hill on a child care team, dealing with family breakdown, abused children, and those needing alternative homes. What a contrast to rural Somerset ! It was a very deprived area in many ways and taught me a great deal about the urgent need for spiritual renewal to give meaning to broken lives. We lived at Wollescote, Stourbridge, and attended the Anglican church at Lye. This was the first Anglican church I'd attended as my roots are in Methodism, but by God's grace we were led there and discovered there a fellowship both deeply committed to the Gospel and to living out the implications of their Christian faith. It was through their witness and love that I was led into a renewed faith and vision, and felt finally released to use the gifts that God had given me for His service. Consequently myself and Chris became involved in the life of the church, and it was suggested that I seek ordination. It was as if the seed planted many years before

had suddenly flourished and grown. By that time our Janet had been born in 1981 and in 1983 I applied and was accepted as a candidate for ordination. Then in September 1984 I started at St. John's College, Nottingham.

There's obviously much more I could say, but for the moment I'd just say how much we're all looking forward to joining you and being part of a fellowship in which we can both give and receive. It's both a great privilege and responsibility to minister to one another in God's name, and so for me there's a great mixture right now of excitement and nervousness. The nervousness comes from a knowledge of my own limitations, but the excitement from a certainty of His Love and His Strength that can enable us to do all things in His Name.

Peter Holzapfel.

Q U I E T D A Y

There will be a Quiet Day for anyone who would like to share in it, at the Guest House of the Convent of the Holy Name, Ranelagh Road, Malvern Link, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Tuesday, 11th March.

Times of meditation will be led by one of the Sisters at the Convent, but please bring your own book (or books) to read. There will be times of silence in between times of meditation and prayer.

Please bring a packed lunch.

Tea and Coffee will be available at a small cost, and there will be a collection for the work of the Convent.

It is not necessary to know exact numbers of those coming, but in order to have some idea, would you let Deaconess Ruth know if you are hoping to share in this day of quiet.

R.W.

NAVE OR CENTRAL ALTAR

Quoted below are two comments following on the item regarding the suggested Nave Altar in last month's Magazine.

From M.W.: - Yes, I share the view of J.H. about the modern Altar Cloths. I always think they look so out of place in our own beautiful Cathedral. When I mentioned it to someone, the person smiled and said, "We are old-fashioned!".

From A.P.: - While appreciating and agreeing with your ideas on it may I make one observation ?

The Nave Altar will be used for the Family Eucharist which has the biggest congregation, and a good many of us have to, or may prefer to, sit in the side aisles. At present it is just possible to sit in the Lady Chapel and see the Celebrant and the Preacher in the pulpit. With a nave altar I think it will be either/or. Perhaps this will be the penalty for sitting in the quieter part of the Church.

With reference to J.H's comments: I agree that we do not want 'garish' furnishings for the altar, but let us have bright, modern, good design. All ages have contributed to the furnishings and memorials in the church. Let us make our contemporary contribution.

CANCER RESEARCH CAMPAIGN - Coffee at the Guildhall, under the patronage of the Mayoress (Mrs. Jane Poole). Friday 14th March 10 a.m. - 12 noon
CAKES - BRING & BUY - RAFFLE.
Donations & Subscriptions to Manager, National Westminster Bank, The Cross, Worcester.

Do please come and support this worthy cause.

PROMISE AUCTION in aid of THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY'S LADY HAILSHAM FUND at the Guildhall - Friday 14th March starting at 7.30 p.m.
Admission £1.50 (incl. one glass of wine).
Further information and catalogues from Mr. John Smith - Tel: 1432 71

MAGAZINE - All items for next month's edition should be in by Friday 14th March (to The Cottage Parish Office). Collation day Thursday, 27th March. 6.

LENT, 1986

AT ST JOHN-IN-BEDWARDINE PARISH CHURCH =

Morning Sermons at 10am Parish Communion ~

~ Theme ~

PEOPLE OF THE PASSION

SUNDAY 16th FEBRUARY

PETER — Preacher: The Revd John Quill

Diocesan Adviser for Community Services

SUNDAY 23rd FEBRUARY

JAMES and JOHN — Preacher: The Vicar

SUNDAY 2nd MARCH

THE CROWDS — Preacher: Deaconess Ruth Wintle

SUNDAY 9th MARCH (Mothering Sunday) }

Special Service with the Junior Church Children

SUNDAY 16th MARCH (Passion Sunday) }

JUDAS — Preacher: Canon Neil Robinson

Precentor of Worcester Cathedral

SUNDAY 23rd MARCH (Palm Sunday) }

PILATE — Preacher: Deaconess Ruth Wintle



Compline

Every Friday during Lent at 9:00 pm ~

75 YEARS OF GUIDING

1985 was a very memorable year for Guides as it was their 75th Anniversary, since Olive Baden-Powell first started the Guide Movement. Every Guide and Brownie was given a large red 75th Birthday Badge to wear proudly on their uniforms throughout the year, and many special events and celebrations took place. In June there was a week of celebrations: on the Tuesday, the County Commissioner was carried to Pitchcroft on a cart by young leaders and Rangers carrying a torch, signifying Guiding all round the county; each division then lit their own candles by the torch and took them back to their division, when many parties were held. The climax of the week was a Carnival for Guides and Brownies in Hereford and Worcester on the Three Counties Showground, where everyone dressed up as clowns, each division producing a decorated float, entertainment and a Chinese dragon towards the event, all of which proved very successful. Also during the week many balloons were released which travelled to places as far away as France and Holland.

The highlight of the year was definitely an international camp 'MAGIC', held on the Three Counties Showground. Guides from all over the world joined English Guides there and, despite the rain and freak whirlwinds, everyone enjoyed themselves, learning new skills and songs from many lands. It was a camp everyone will remember.

In September each division performed a short play and speech about the events that had happened during the last 75 years.. This took place at Pitchcroft and during this Rustie Lee was presented with a cheque from the Guiding Movement which would go towards providing a kidney machine for use by a child, and towards the Sri Lanka Appeal.

Many other events during the year included swimming sports, weekend camps, Services at the Cathedral, and various Church parades.

1985 was certainly a busy year for Guides and one we shall all remember.

Margaret Rastall.

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER FROM ARTHUR & BESSIE LEE to Irene Allen.

We are very busy and looking forward to a long holiday at the coast. We go on the 20th, stay overnight in Nairobi, then off early in the morning, stopping two nights in Voi, with missionaries we haven't met before, and from there to Diani Beach, 20 miles south of Mombasa. We are sharing a cottage for 12 days and come home on the 4th January. It will be very hot but Arthur will enjoy that.

We quite enjoyed the craft fair. We sold a fair bit of stuff, and there were a lot of enquiries about other goods. At least people now know there is a C.I.T.C. in Thika, which is the main aim. We had been making things for weeks before, as Arthur shared a stall with Sister Chris. I began to look like a soft toy. There were 77 stalls selling all sorts of things...

We have a Women's Fellowship at our house on Monday mornings, just 6 of us, and we had a lunch together at another house, to give me a rest. What a house! It is an American couple who have lived most of their married life in Africa, but are new to Thika. We had groups of gorgeous candles all over the place, and a background of Christmas music. It was like something out of Homes and Gardens. We had a jolly good lunch too! I took 'pudding', and another woman took cheese and biscuits, and peppermints.

Nancy Williams has a sewing group at her house. I go and help now I am not teaching. There are usually 10 Africans, and they bring goodies for tea and coffee time. They try the most complicated things for beginners, but we sort them out somehow. They are most entertaining, and I really look forward to it.

We went to Joytown Primary Christmas Service. The singing was beautiful, and one group did the 'Good Samaritan' with great feeling, hobbling around on their crutches and calipers, with all the enthusiasm of professional actors. I went to a Nursery School concert as well, about 70% Asian and 30% African. They were well trained, but you know what 2-4 year olds are like! It was absolutely lovely

I know we are too late for the January Magazine, but could you put in our thanks to Ruth and Edward Reeves, and all the folk who supported their Open House and sent us such a generous gift for tools. We are really grateful.

(continued over)

WHO'S WHO - CHURCH OFFICERS

(Clergy - - - listed on front of Magazine)

<u>CHURCHWARDENS:</u>	Mr. Arnold Fisher	2 Earlsdon Rd.	Tel: 424520
	Mr. Roy Houghton	11 Georgina Ave.	424747
<u>P.C.C. SECRETARY:</u>	Mr. G. Muir	53 Bromwich Rd.	424219
<u>TREASURER:</u>	Mr. G. Chalmers	Glengarriff, Nunnery Lane	354574
<u>STEWARDSHIP:</u>	Rev. J. Newton	5 Georgina Ave.	425291
<u>COVENANTS:</u>	Mr. W.E. Roberts	266 Malvern Rd.	423466
<u>ORGANIST &</u>			
<u>CHOIRMASTER:</u>	Mr. D. Lindop	16 Chamberlain Rd.	427503
<u>RINGING MASTER:</u>	Mr. Tom Lewis	12 Wellesley Crt.,	
		58 Bransford Rd.	427879
<u>JUNIOR CHURCH:</u>	Miss Margaret Bishop	143 Comer Rd.	423458
	Mr. Arthur Burgess	8 Ashdown Close	424977
<u>CHURCH FLOWERS:</u>	Mrs. Myra Houghton	11 Georgina Ave.	424747
<u>PARISH MAGAZINE:</u>			
Editor:	Mrs. A. Hughes	12 Charnwood Close	422450
Co-Editor:	Miss I. Allen	207 Malvern Rd.	422684
Distribution Secy.			
& Treas.	-do-	-do-	-do-
<u>MOTHERS' UNION</u>			
<u>ENROLLING MEMBER:</u>	Mrs. M. Sleath	6, Skinner Rd.	426517
<u>WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP:</u>	Mrs. J. Parrott	53, Calgary Drive.	421406



CHURCH REGISTERS

FUNERALS

- 6.1.86 Ivy Thorp
- 14.1.86 Horace Ashby Margetts
- 16.1.86 William Henry Weaver
- 17.1.86 Richard John Smith
- " Sidney Arthur Evans
- 30.1.86 Harold George Frederick Beechey
- 31.1.86 Kate Algie
- " Jack Shearer
- 6.2.86 Frederick James Hall

IN MEMORIAM

- 1.3.80 Beatrice Edna Gilbert
- 2.3.63 Archibald (Bob) Sim
- 3.3.72 Ann Brickwell
- 4.3.77 Mickey Brown
- 8.3.59 Charles William Hinds
- 9.3.77 Dennis Ernest Wheeler
- 11.3.66 Thomas Teague
- 14.3.53 Jonathan Nicholas Sigley
- 31.3.78 Reginald Joseph Sigley
- 22.3.84 Marjorie Mary Jones
- 15.3.83 Lily Williams

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

During March we will be meeting in the Church for Lenten Services at 3 p.m. on Tuesdays - theme: 'The People and the Passion'.
J. Parrott

BRASS CLEANING ROTA

- March 9th - Guides & Brownies
- March 23rd - Mrs. Gordon, Mrs. Pardoe & Mrs. Greenway

<u>MARRIAGES</u>	Nil
<u>BAPTISMS</u>	Nil

<u>JANUARY FIGURES</u>	(5 Sundays)
Stewardship	£1,208.68
Open	<u>263.19</u>
Total	<u>£1,471.87</u>
Communicants:	904 .

MOTHERS' UNION

Deaconess Ruth is to be our speaker on Wednesday, March 12th at 3 p.m. in the Church Vestry.
Our annual Deanery Service is at St. John's on Tuesday, March 18th at 7.30 p.m. when we hope to have five M.U. branches as our visitors. Anyone is welcome to this service - several husbands are keen supporters.
To the various members who have been laid up over the past few weeks, we hope you will all soon be well again.
M.U. Prayer Group meets in The Cottage on the Wednesday in Holy Week, March 26th at 2.30 p.m. This get-together is open to anyone who cares to join us.
A Joyous Easter to you all. M. Sleath.

SHERWOOD W.I.

Tuesday, March 4th - 7.30 p.m. in Manor Park School. 'Aspects of Embroidery' by Mrs. Joan K. Thomson.

- March 2nd - Mr. and Mrs. Austen
 - March 16th - The Slater Family
 - March 30th - Mrs. Ricketts & Mrs. Smith
 - April 6th - Mrs. D. Jones & Mrs. A. Day
- M. Slater - Tel: 422153

New Light on the Parables

by the Revd Dr A. L. Moore
Sower or soil?

'A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the footpath, and the birds came and ate it up. Some seed fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil; it sprouted quickly because it had no depth of earth, but when the sun rose the young corn was scorched and as it had no root it withered away . . . And some of the seed fell into good soil, where it bore fruit, yielding a hundredfold . . .'

See *Matthew 13.3-9, 18-23 (NEB)*

Though traditionally referred to as the Parable of the Sower, a number of modern scholars refer to this story as 'the parable of the soils'. On the surface they seem to be right. For the story depicts four kinds of soil, representing, we may suppose, four kinds of response to God's work in Jesus (or to the message of the Church). Some people entirely ignore it: some after an initial excitement quickly tire: some try to accommodate it with other interests and values, only to find that those other interests 'choke' the message: others respond with genuine commitment and 'bear fruit', that is to say, they shape their lives around the truth of what Jesus is and says.

The trouble with this interpretation of the parable is that it is so obvious, so banal, as hardly to be worth saying! It is self-evident that different people respond to Jesus (and to the Church) in different ways. Can this be all that our 'riddle' is hinting at? Perhaps, after all, we

to page two

Bible Quiz

Find these references to Ears

1. 'Itching ears'
2. 'The ear of the wise'
3. 'The Attentive Ear'
4. 'A piece of an ear'
5. What 'you hear in the ear'
6. 'Smote off his ear'

Solution on page 2

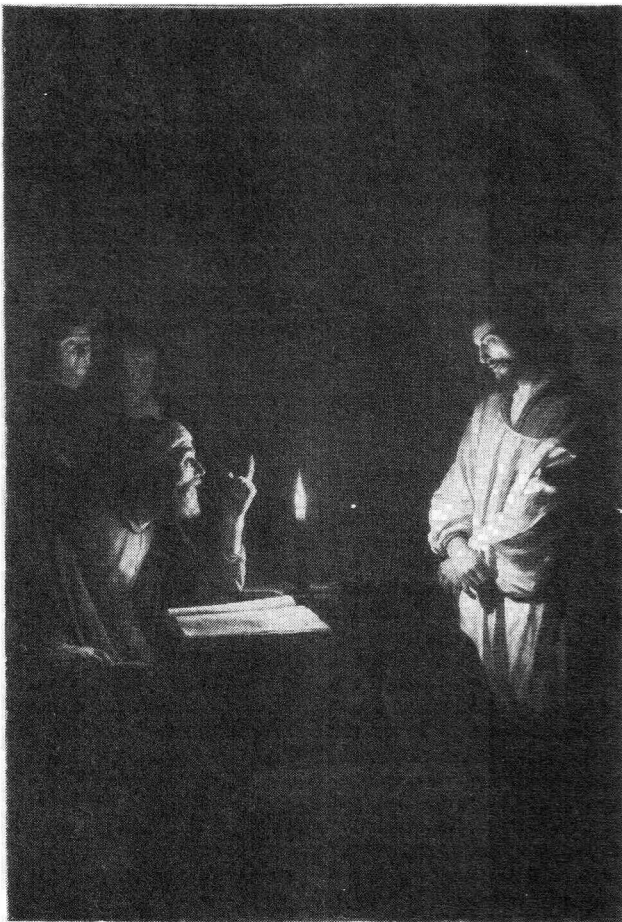
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The Editor of *The Sign* wishes all readers a blessed Holy Week and Easter.



Christ before the High Priest by Honthurst. Reproduced courtesy of the Trustees of the National Gallery.

Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest.
Matthew 26.57

QUESTION COMPETITION REPORT

We asked readers, *Are there nowadays too many new translations of the Bible?*

The winning entry to this competition comes from Mrs L. N. Swadling of Leighton Buzzard, Beds, whose letter is printed below. Other letters are on page 2.

Language is not rigid and unchanging and each generation uses words in a slightly different way to its predecessors. We even find ourselves using words in a different way now than when we were younger. Bible reading or study is bound to be helped by a better understanding of what the writer intended to say, and

keeping to an out-of-date phraseology can actually confuse matters. Sometimes a familiar translation can be unclear. Then, comparison with other translations can be very useful even if original wording is preferred. We should always welcome good, new Bible translations.

What Do You Think?

Question Competition

Should all people, whether Church members or not, be allowed to be married in church?
Answers in not more than 100 words, should be sent to Question Competition, The Sign, St Thomas House, Becket Street, Oxford OX1 1SJ by 31 March. A £6 Book Token will be awarded to the winning entry.

WOMEN TODAY

by Marjorie Idle

I wish you all a thoughtful Lent and a joyful Easter.

Deadlines

Sometimes I am disappointed because your letters arrive too late to be considered for the competition, especially after the summer holidays.

So your letters need to reach me by the 25th of any current month. Why not reach for your pen now?

Trend

The Band of Hope is moving with the times. It deals not only with alcohol but also with glue-sniffing and other drug-taking.

It runs summer holidays, publishes books and issues a teenage magazine called *Trend*.

I have just been reading one; it has a slim, fold-up format so it can be used as a poster. The easy-to-read articles include a photo-story of three youngsters coping alone with an alcoholic mother.

Trend costs 20p a time and can be obtained from the United Kingdom Band of Hope Union, 45 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 3LT.

Fruit juice

It is interesting to find generous quantities of fruit juice available at secular get-togethers. This contrasts with some overtly Christian 'do's' where the only alternative on offer is a small amount of ancient orange squash. Water would have tasted better!

Competition

Do you find this too? What do you do about it, either at the time or earlier if you suspect it is going to happen? Write and tell me how you handle it graciously.

Please send your letters, marked 'Competition' to Mrs M. Idle, c/o St Thomas House, Becket Street, Oxford, OX1 1SJ.

Casually

Thank you for your letters about children and meals. Everyone was firmly against children having to eat what they dislike.

A picture emerged of mealtime as a relaxed occasion for all the family.

Mrs Lois Hampson of Sidmouth receives the Book Token this month for her wise paragraph 'Later on, enquire casually why he did not want the food and listen with understanding to his reasons.'

YOUR LETTERS



Questions? Problems? Opinions? Let the Editor hear about them. Write to 'Your Letters and Comments', *The Sign*, St Thomas House, Becket Street, Oxford, OX1 1SJ. Please enclose s.a.e. A £4 Book Token will be sent to the writer of any letter published.

We asked readers whether they felt there were too many new translations of the Bible nowadays. Rather surprisingly, most seemed to think that there were. But many different views were expressed. The winning entry is printed on page one.

Modern Idiom

Christians are becoming confused at the spate of new translations which contain nothing new. The underlying message about the salvation of mankind remains, but all the new translations are tempted to talk in modern idiom, fondly hoping that this modern age will

understand better. We as children learnt from the beautiful Authorized Version, with its second person 'thee' and 'thou', a translation which will never be surpassed. The Lord's Prayer in Corinthians 1.13 has been especially impoverished in the modern versions.

— G. CREMER, HORNSEY

Frustrating

Yes: I think there are too many new translations of the Bible. Now that the ASB Prayer Book is more widely used in churches one sees that other translations are not the same. This can be frustrating. Our study group people each come along with a different edition. I will concede that some versions are easy to understand. But now we have got these new translations in plenty does it encourage more people to use their Bibles, or is it just another book on the bookshelf? I think so.

— J. ROBINSON, SEDBERGH

Solution to Bible Quiz

on page one

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. 2 Tim. 4.3 | 4. Amos 3.12 |
| 2. Prov. 18.15 | 5. Matt. 10.27 |
| 3. Neh. 1.6,11 | 6. Mark 14.47 |

Advertisement



Could this be YOU in a few years' time?

- remembering who used to sit beside you?

Like you, he worked with dedication and sincerity through a lifetime often spent in helping others. Like you, he saved sensibly for the retirement he hoped to enjoy with his nearest and dearest. Then bereavement robbed him of the love and companionship he treasured most, and inflation robbed him of the basic standards of dignity and comfort he had known since childhood. He is typical of the gentle, deserving men and women the DGAA tries especially to help. Help to stay in their own homes for as long as possible and - later perhaps - to be cared for in Residential and Nursing Homes where they can grow old with dignity.

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HELP THEM GROW OLD WITH DIGNITY

Confusion not Conversion

I believe that there are too many translations used in public worship. This year I went to the rally of a well-known evangelistic training college. To my surprise and dismay I heard the Principal give the address, using the Jerusalem Bible. Later, I visited a prominent Methodist church, whose pews were supplied with a modern version. But the preacher used another in his sermon. These are not isolated incidents. The result is

Think it Over

God does not want us to do extraordinary things: he wants us to do ordinary things extraordinarily well.

Charles Gore

confusion and not conversion. Why not use the Authorized Version in all pulpits, preserving uniformity, and use the others in commentaries?

— J. MOORFOOT, EASTBOURNE

MY FAITH



The Housewife and Mother

by Katherine Brice

*'Who sweeps a room as for thy laws
Makes that and the action fine.'*

These words of George Herbert's should be the housewife's motto. Unfortunately, my own view is closer to the preceding line, which implies that housework is 'drudgery'. I am not particularly houseproud, and if cleanliness is really next to godliness, then I cannot claim to be very godly. The arrival of guests acts as a much greater spur than my conscience when it comes to cleaning. It is a different matter with my young son, who is just over a year old. Bringing up the next

generation is an awesome responsibility and raises plenty of questions about one's own attitudes and priorities. When one adds a religious dimension, there is the concern about how to introduce a living faith to one's children, striking a balance between indoctrination, which might lead to rebellion and rejection later in life, and being so wary about speaking of one's own faith that it appears meaningless to the children. This is a problem we have not yet really had to face, but we do say grace, holding hands, which Peter finds a great joke!

Give thanks

Something all parents share is the agonizing moment when they lose sight of their child in the street, or see them heading close to disaster as they totter perilously towards

to page four

New Light on the Parables

from page one

should concentrate on the sower rather than on the soil; then we shall see that the story concerns not so much our attitude to God as God's attitude to us. In the parable, God is the sower who with lavish, indiscriminate generosity gives himself (in Jesus, his 'word') to man.

Self-giving

In this self-giving, God is motivated not at all by any considerations of the 'soil'. He does not impart his love only there where it seems likely to be recognized and reciprocated. He does not give himself only to those who seem 'worthy', 'receptive', 'worthwhile'. He looks only to his own inner motivation, his own

determination to be gracious and he is never inhibited by the obvious fact that his goodness is often ignored or scorned.

God's self-giving has, of course, the incidental effect of setting up divisions within society and within families — 'do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth: I have come not to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother . . .' (Matthew 10.34-35). The 'soils' are indeed differentiated. But God's concentration is basically upon his final success and the magnitude of his 'harvest' — some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, some a hundredfold! Undaunted by the apparent waste, he knows that his goodness will finally triumph and his grace conquer.

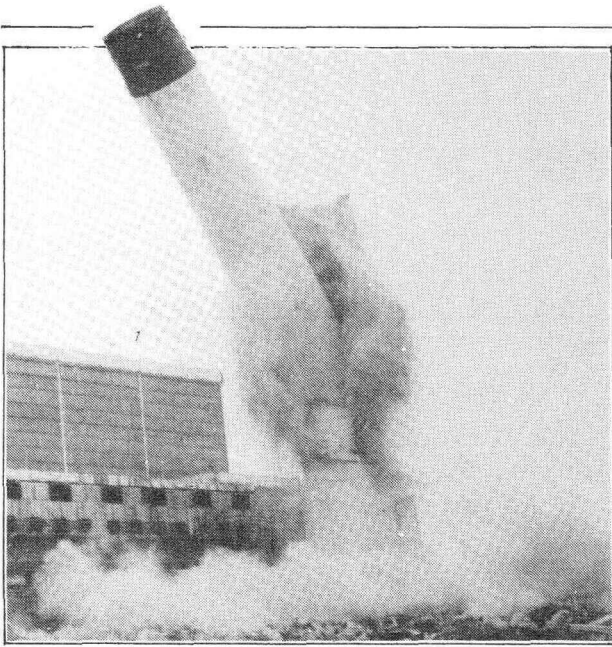


photo courtesy of CECB

Making all things new

Watch how a small child plays with his building bricks. With care and concentration he will set up one upon another and, in imagination, he has made a fine house or a high tower. And then, with one sweep of his arm and with gleeful delight he knocks it all down! We grown-ups, too, watch with intense interest and fascination the demolition of, it may be, a cooling tower or a factory chimney — how exciting it is to smash things!

God could, of course, destroy things if he wished. The ancient Bible story of the Flood teaches us that God has the power to unmake what he once made; to destroy in dissatisfaction what he once created with delight. But the story concludes with the promise that God will not, in fact, do so. God is not really in the business of pulling things down, only of building them up. He is not interested in destroying things but only in

creating and re-creating them. He is intent on (as the Bible puts it) 'making all things new'.

God's purpose

Making things new, healing what is sick, mending what is broken, bringing to perfection what is faulty, making beautiful what is ugly — this is God's purpose with us and with the world. We see it all in the strange story of Jesus on Good Friday and Easter Day. On Calvary's hill we see all that is amiss with our world. We see human hatred, cruelty, folly, indifference, destructiveness; and we see it culminate in a spiteful scene of darkness, betrayal, violence and death. But God brings out of all this something wonderfully new. He who was destroyed by human cruelty was made new by God's creative love. Of our fragmented lives and of our disordered world, God will eventually make something surpassing good and lovely: it is guaranteed in the resurrection of the crucified Jesus.

For Children. Prizewinners. October 1985

Melanie Bunn, Northampton.
Heather Hunt, Tottington.
James Keith, Norwich.
Ian Wilde, Shevington.

MARCH CALENDAR

- 2 S 3 in Lent (4 before Easter)
- 9 S 4 in Lent (3 before Easter)
- 16 S 5 in Lent (2 before Easter)
- 19 W St Joseph, Husband of the BV Mary
- 23 S Palm Sunday (Sunday next before Easter)
- 24 Monday in Holy Week
- 25 Tuesday in Holy Week (Annunciation to 7 April)
- 26 Wednesday in Holy Week
- 27 Th Maundy Thursday
- 28 F Good Friday
- 29 Sa Easter Eve
- 30 S Easter Day
- 31 Monday in Easter Week

Tablets for Today

A simple Guide to the Commandments

TOO MANY GODS

You shall not make for yourself a graven image . . .

(Exodus 20.4, RSV)



WHO WANTS to make graven images, anyway? Some people seem to find the wording of this Commandment so unreal that they do not think it is important. But they are quite wrong. It becomes filled with significance for our lives when we look inwardly into ourselves to find the things, the images, the ambitions, the desires, the motivations which in fact we do worship in the sense of giving them the best of our time and energies. These are our idols. These are our false images. The worship of the false in any form is idolatry — worshipping of images — and that is exactly what this Commandment is about. It is saying that we should not make idols out of any of our own personal desires. What are some of the idols of today which people worship? There are many; but it is useful to pick out four obvious ones: Money, Self, Status and Pleasure. None of them is wholly evil. Money has its place in the

scheme of things. Status can be concerned with personal dignity. Pleasure can help us to enjoy life. Where things go wrong is when we start to worship them to the exclusion of all else.

Great destroyer

Take the case of Money. The concentration on getting it is a great destroyer of right living. Paul spoke the truth when he wrote to Timothy: 'The love of money is the root of all evil things. And there are some who in reaching for it have wandered from the faith and spite themselves upon many thorny griefs' (1 Timothy 6.10). The worship of money destroys right judgements. Once it is enthroned as the object of existence things go badly wrong. Self is a dangerous idol because, when Self is worshipped, personal interests come first in all things. This is 'looking after number one'. But the worship of Self is destructive to the power to love others. There is an old story which makes this plain. There was a handsome young man called Narcissus who was so preoccupied with his own looks that he spent all his time looking at his reflection in a stream. At the same time there was a nymph, a girl, who was in love

to page four

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Family Week. 6th to 12th April.



Family Week is a special time for The Children's Society.

It's a week when thousands of our supporters not only raise money, but show the entire country just how The Children's Society helps those in need.

Every year over 10,000 children and families benefit from our work.

For every child we help, however, there are many we can't.

So please see if you can spare a little time to help us in any way you

can during Family Week.

Would you be able to organise a door-to-door collection in your parish? Or run a fund raising event?

Or join others in your area who already give up a few hours of their time to help the children in our care?

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I'd like to donate £5 £10 £50 Other £ _____ for Family Week.
(Gifts over £10 can be covenantated if you wish.) I wish to make my donation by Visa / Access
Please debit my Visa / Access No: _____ 2371

The Children's Society. Needed now more than ever.

Tablets for Today from page three

with him and wanted him to look at her. But that he never did because he was busy looking at himself.

Status is another false idol. You could call it a sense of self importance. The danger of this one is that worship of it falsifies all our human relationships. Pleasure is another idol which needs watching very carefully. To devote most of our time to the pursuit of enjoyment is expensive. The danger of this sort of worship is that it makes life trivial, as in a constant TV ad.

Human need

It is a human need to worship something, and it is fatally easy to worship the false and once worship of the one true God is abandoned, the cultivation of these little gods creeps in. Anybody who thinks about it can see it happening today. The worship of false gods is idolatry, which is what this second Commandment is talking about, and is talking about meaningfully now.

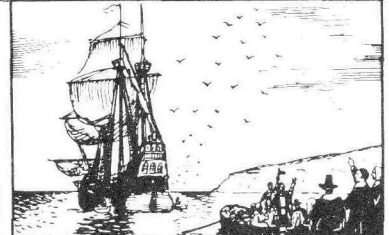
Here are three questions to

THE STORY OF OUR CHURCH

The Puritans and James I



THE 'AUTHORISED VERSION' OF THE BIBLE IS PRESENTED TO KING JAMES



THE PURITAN 'PILGRIM FATHERS', ENGLISH AND DUTCH, LEAVE ENGLAND IN THE "MAYFLOWER"



AND LAND AT PLYMOUTH ROCK IN MASSACHUSETTS

illustrated by C. W. Bacon MSAI D

IN THE REIGN OF JAMES I THE FIRST, THE PURITANS AGAIN TRIED WITHOUT SUCCESS TO IMPOSE EXTREME PROTESTANT IDEAS ON THE CHURCH, AND TO ABOLISH BISHOPS.

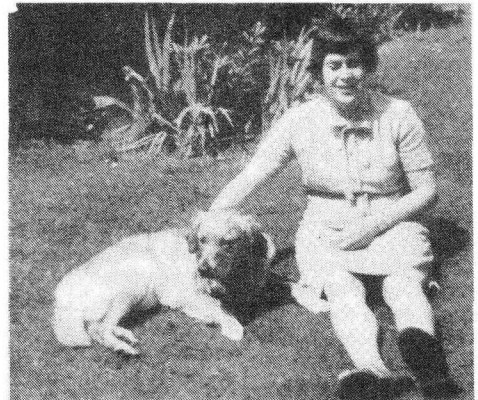
think about:

1. How important to you is money?
2. What do you think are the most worshipped false Gods today — Money, Self importance, Status, Pleasure?
3. What would you say was your own particular false God?

FOR CHILDREN

Here is a picture of my friend Rose, with her dog Jayne. Jayne is a very special dog. She is called a Guide Dog. Rose, you

special harness on Jayne, with a handle which she holds. Jayne knows then that she is on duty. She guides Rose wherever she wants to go, perhaps to the shops, for Jayne knows where all the shops are. When they have to cross a busy street, Jayne sits by the kerb until there is no traffic, and it is safe to cross. Then she leads Rose across the street. Don't you



see, is blind. When she wants to go out by herself, she puts a

think she is a clever dog? Without her Rose would hardly be able to go anywhere alone.

My Faith from page two

the head of the stairs. I imagine everyone at these moments, sends up the arrow prayer, 'Please God, let them be all right'. I only hope we remember to thank God when it is all right. This is faith in action at its most basic, but the concern that we naturally feel for our own children brings home the force of Jesus' words about God as loving Father, 'If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him' (Matt. 8.11-12).

I also pray very earnestly that God will help me to bring up my children to be loving, honest, kind and generous, and to look to God as their refuge and strength. My own spiritual life and study of the Bible seem to have taken a back seat at the moment, but no doubt I will return to them as the children grow up. In the meantime I am engaged in the most important activity I can think of — the care of the next generation.

There are special centres where Guide Dogs are trained, and Rose stayed at one, to be taught how to use Jayne, before she brought her home. But who first thought of training dogs to help blind people? In 1916 a German doctor was looking out at his garden when he saw one of his patients, a blind soldier, walking uncertainly over the lawn. He was making straight for a tree, but just when Dr Rimner thought he would bump into it, his Alsatian dog stopped the soldier by standing in his path. Dr Rimner watched as the dog led the soldier round the tree and between the flower-beds. That gave him the idea which has meant so much to blind people ever since.

Competition. Tell me what you would miss most if you were blind. Send, by 31 March, with name, age and address, to Jennie, St Thomas House, Becket Street, Oxford OX1 1SJ. Prizes.

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Loneliness is just one problem

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And we are there, ready to give all the help we can, in all parts of the world. To give this help we depend entirely upon voluntary contributions. Please help us to continue the Anglican Church's ministry to seafarers by a legacy, or please send whatever you can to The Missions to Seamen, Freeport, London, EC4 4EP.

The Missions to Seamen

St. Michael Paternoster Royal, College Hill, London EC4R 2RL.

