



ST CYPRIAN'S NEWSLETTER

August 2016

Services in August

Sunday 7th August

Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

10.30am Mass Celebrant: Father Michael Fuller

Sunday 14th August

Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

10.30am Mass Celebrant: Father Michael Fuller

Sunday 21st August

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

10.30am Mass Celebrant: Father Gerald Beauchamp

Thursday 25th August

9pm – Compline

Sunday 28th August

Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

10.30am Mass Celebrant: Father Michael Fuller

Weekday Mass – Thursday, 1.10pm,

Morning Prayer – Tuesday – Friday, 8am



The Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is held on 15th August. The origin of the feast is uncertain – it is probably the anniversary of the dedication of some church rather than the actual anniversary of Our Lady's death. The belief in the corporeal assumption of Mary is founded on the apocryphal treatise *De Obitu S. Dominae* dating from the fourth or fifth century. In 1950 Pope Pius XII defined the Assumption of Mary as an article of faith, the clearest example of an *ex cathedra* decree since 1870, when the first Vatican Council solemnly declared the modern dogma of papal infallibility. This statue in the Lady Chapel is a memorial to the Shand family. *(Photo: David Peet)*

Letter from Father Gerald

Just before I celebrated the midday mass at the Annunciation on Tuesday 26 July I heard the news that a priest and two would-be hostage-takers have been killed in a church in Northern France. The day before, 19 residents in a care home for disabled people in Japan were killed by a disgruntled former employee. Before that nine people were shot dead in Munich, there were the events in Nice, the killings of black people and police officers in the US and the hundreds who died in the attempted coup in Turkey. We may ask: Is the whole world going mad?

The challenges facing us are growing. When politicians stand for election they talk about hope; promising a better world. In America, Donald Trump has vowed that 'safety will be restored' if he is elected president. Most of us know, however that life isn't like that. No one has a magic wand and there are no easy solutions to the grave dangers that we face be that at a personal level as we go about our daily lives or in the big picture of continuing wars and the threats posed by climate change and scarce natural resources.

Yet alongside all the agony and flux there are constants: the bonds that people forge; the desire to create what is beautiful; the generosity of spirit that goes the extra mile when folk are in trouble. The need today is to turn these values into the way of life of the many. We won't do that if we are like rabbits caught in the headlights, stupefied by the madness of the age. We need hope.

Hope is realised not through political strategies alone although we really need some new positive ideas about how to engage with our current problems. Hope is a gift, the sort of gift that sees threats as opportunities. 15 August is the day on which the church celebrates the place of the mother of Jesus in the drama of salvation. I put it like that because the place of Mary in the life of Christians goes on being a bone of contention for many.

Devotion to the Virgin Mary has been controversial over the centuries. In the early church as theologians sought to describe how Jesus was both God and man at the same time the phrase 'Mother of God' was disputed. At the Reformation shrines like the one at Walsingham which were wealthy and internationally renowned were destroyed because they were thought to be hotbeds of idolatry. More recently, feminism has cast Marian devotion in a negative light.

Images of simpering purity have nothing to do with modern women however, be they the likes of our Prime Minister or the millions of women struggling in poverty fighting off male abuse and protecting their children. For me Mary is the hinge of history. She springs from a people who had repeatedly failed to live up to God's calling to be a holy nation. Mary's obedience, her 'yes' to God was in stark contrast to so much of her nation's history.

The prophets often likened Israel's behaviour to adultery. Mary's purity isn't about a misplaced male understanding of what women should be like but points to her clarity of vision and strength of purpose in doing what she believed God wanted of her. 'Full of grace' she became a model of what people can be like even when they stand alongside their child on a cross.

In her time and place the dangers of Mary becoming pregnant were great. 30 or so years later standing by a 'criminal' she was in even greater danger. If Christ is love incarnate then Mary is the embodiment of hope.

Fr Michael will be celebrating the Assumption at St Cyprian's on Sunday 14 August and there is a High Mass & Procession at All Saints Margaret Street starting at 6.30pm. Let's 'Hail Mary' with gusto in these challenging times.

Yours in Christ

Fr Gerald

Father Michael writes

Prayer & Worship.

We grow as Christians when our everyday prayer and our corporate worship deepen and spill over into each other. I am hoping shortly to introduce a series of open discussions on the question of prayer & worship. The aims of the discussions are:

- i) To encourage each other in our personal prayer and everyday relationship with God, affirming what we already do and opening up new possibilities.
- ii) To look at what happens in church services and how we engage with worship, with a view to deepening our understanding of what we do and why.
- iii) To explore how our corporate worship can enrich our on-going spiritual journey, and vice versa.

If you think that you would be interested in such a time together please let me know and we can set up informal sessions to explore these questions. There would probably be six initial sessions, held on alternate weeks either in my flat or here in church.

A Sunday school?

The PCC recently agreed to examine whether we could start a Sunday school for children during the Sunday Mass, starting in the autumn. We are hoping to get some help with this (advice, perhaps some training, perhaps some practical assistance) from more experienced people elsewhere in the diocese. But to make it work, we will need some volunteers from within the parish who would be willing to help lead the children's activities on at least some Sundays - enough to share the load around, and also to have at least two people each Sunday. If you have any interest in possibly helping with this - not every Sunday, but perhaps sometimes - please talk to William Nye - or email him on william.nye@churchofengland.org. You don't need to be a parent, or an experienced teacher, or to make any commitment at this stage: all you need is to care about our children, and be willing to consider helping. You will be required to undergo safeguarding training.

NEWS

St Cyprian's Festival Weekend

Thursday 15 September, 7.30pm High Mass.

Preacher: Ven Luke Miller, Archdeacon of London

Friday 16 September, 6.30pm Purcell's Dido & Aeneas performed by Francis Holland School

Saturday 17 September, 7.30pm Quiz Night

Sunday 18 September, 10.30am Parish Mass