

# The Old Church News

O P E N T O A L L - O P E N T O G O D

## VICAR'S VOICE

There has been a lot recently about the King James Bible hasn't there. As it is 400 years since its publication there is every reason to mark such an anniversary. It has had a great impact upon the English speaking world and familiar phrases such as "Am I my brother's keeper?" "A multitude of sins!" "Let there be light!" and "hiding his light under a bushel" are all from it. Its beginnings were fraught: James VI of Scotland succeeded Queen Elizabeth 1 as King of England, which was still subject to the tremors of Reformation. To settle differences the King convened a conference in 1604 at Hampton Court and Puritans (protestant reformers challenging Catholic traditionalists) requested a new translation of the Bible. Seven years later, after much work by six committees of scholarly expertise meeting in six different locations, this Authorised bible was printed. Bishop Miles Smith of Gloucester wrote the text's long and beautiful preface: "Translation it is, that openeth the window, to let in the light." It became universally familiar both in Britain and the American colonies (as they then were) after the Restoration in 1660 (ending the English Civil War) and remained so until the Revised

Standard Version of 1881-1885. The result in 1611 was a masterpiece of English prose and now in 2011 we may celebrate an extraordinary achievement, not solely religious, but also literary, cultural and international. Here in Smethwick we shall mark this in October (and more later upon that). Of course we have a flood of translations these days to help us "let in the light" and that must be all to the good – the Word of God is alive and speaks to us as each of us may receive it. But the Authorised version of 1611 has provided an imaginative space in which it is good to walk. On the flyleaf of a small copy of the Geneva Bible now held in the Bodleian library in Oxford, this note was written in Queen Elizabeth I's own italic hand: "I walke many times into the pleasant fieldes of the holie scriptures. Where I plucke up the goodlie greene herbes of sentences by pruning: Eate them by reading. Chawe them by musing: And laie them up at length in the hie seat of memorie by gathering them together: that so having tasted thy sweetness I may the lesse persue the bitterness of this miserable life." Poor Queen - but a few years on a translation was printed which enabled many, like us, to walk on in life

## PAST MONTH'S NEWS

March has been a very busy month with the onset of Lent introducing many extra opportunities for reflection and prayer. Our young people in "Big Fish" have entered into the spirit of Lent by beginning their challenge to visit 40 places of worship in 40 days.

The Discoverers enjoyed a visit to Bilston Craft Gallery where they viewed displays including works of art created from blown glass. Following this they shared refreshments at a local hostelry.

*The Brie, The Bullet & The Black Cat* was a night of murder, mystery and suspense for The

Thrifties. The evening was hosted by Monsieur Le Grande Butte in the era of 1940s Casablanca with the ladies partaking of French cuisine whilst attempting to solve the murder of mime artiste The Black Cat. Taking part in a murder, mystery was a new experience for many who would highly recommend it to others.

The Thrifties' next adventure is on 28th April when they will be joining in karaoke at The Tap and Spile, Gas Street, Birmingham. Ladies who would like to come along can obtain details from Wendy or Rosie.

## QI... “Maundy Thursday”

- The fifth day of Holy week, the day before Good Friday
- Derived through ‘middle English’ and ‘old French’ *mande* and from the Latin *mandatum* (the first word of the phrase “mandatum novum - a new commandment I give you: that you love one another as I have loved you” John chapter 13 verse 34)
- Known in English as Maundy Thursday – also known as Holy Thursday by the United Methodist church, Covenant Thursday by the Coptic Orthodox church, Great and Holy Thursday by the Eastern Orthodox church and Thursday of Mysteries by the Syriac Orthodox church
- Most Christian churches recall the moment Jesus washed his disciples’ feet
- This is usually celebrated in the evening
- There is a medieval custom during the day when English royalty handed out ‘maundy baskets’ of alms for the poor before they attended Mass for the day; now Queen Elizabeth II offers ‘alms’ to deserving senior citizens (one man and one woman for each year of the sovereign’s age): these coins known as Maundy money, or Royal Maundy, are distributed in red purses (containing currency) and white purses (one penny for each year of the sovereign’s age)



### DIARY DATES

Please see sheets of dates at the back of the church for details of mid week services, bible study and ecumenical meetings.



### THE CROSS IN MY POCKET

I carry the cross in my pocket  
A simple reminder to me  
Of the fact that I am a Christian  
No matter where I may be.

This little cross is not magic  
Nor is it a good luck charm  
It isn't meant to protect me  
From every physical harm.

It's not for identification  
For all the world to see  
It's simply an understanding  
Between my saviour and me.

When I put my hand in my pocket  
To bring out a coin or key  
The cross is there to remind me  
Of the price He paid for me.

It reminds me, too, to be thankful  
For my blessings day by day  
And to strive to serve Him better  
In all that I do and say.

It's also a daily reminder  
Of the peace and comfort I share  
With all who know my Master  
And give themselves to his care.

So, I carry a cross in my pocket  
Reminding no one but me  
That Jesus Christ is Lord of my life  
If only I'll let Him be.

### April

### HOLY WEEK

- 16th Come together for churchyard working morning !!
- 17th **Palm Sunday** 10.00 am St Matthews' 10.15 am The Old Church
- 18th 19th 6.00 pm in The Old Church quiet  
20th service of Compline/Night Prayer
- 21st **Maundy Thursday** 8.00 pm service in The Old Church (washing of feet/hands and Holy Communion), followed by Watch until midnight (“Could you not watch with me for one hour?” asks Jesus)
- 22nd **Good Friday** 10.00 am Walk of Witness for one hour at Holy Trinity church; 12 noon Stations of the Cross in The Old Church (with hymns) 2.00 pm Walk of witness/Songs of Praise and prayers at St Matthews (ending 3pm)
- 24th **Easter Sunday** 10.00 am St Matthews 10.15 am at The Old Church Easter Vigil and Holy Communion services; Easter Lunch in the Dorothy Parkes Centre