

THE OLD CHURCH NEWS

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

What does 'June' conjure up for you? Sunshine and time in the garden? Or hay fever and exams? In the church's calendar we have left behind the great festivals of Easter, Ascension and Pentecost, and have moved into 'Ordinary Time'. At Pentecost we prayed for the Holy Spirit to inspire and encourage us, and now, though our weekday routines, and our Sunday by Sunday Eucharistic worship, the Spirit's transforming activity is at work. What are your weekday routines? Are you under pressure in a demanding job, with targets to meet? Or do your days stretch out somewhat empty? Are you busy entertaining young children, or caring for a relative? Or are you coping with pain and physical frailty?

Each of us has our own particular challenges and opportunities. And many of us are tempted to fantasise that life would be so much easier if our situation were different. But this is where we are, and it is from here that the Spirit will move us forward. For most of us, most of the time, discipleship will not consist of dramatic gestures, but of how we approach our daily tasks. I lived for a time in one of the l'Arche communities, half of whose members have learning disabilities. The founder of l'Arche, Jean Vanier, writes, 'Love doesn't mean doing extraordinary or heroic things. It means knowing how to do

ordinary things with tenderness.' What are the ordinary things you hope to do with tenderness?

On June 15th, the Church of England remembers Evelyn Underhill. She was an Anglican laywoman, born in Wolverhampton, who lived from 1875 to 1941. She gave talks, led retreats, and wrote books on mysticism and the spiritual life.

Here are some of her words:

If we desire a simple test of the quality of our spiritual life, a consideration of the tranquillity, gentleness and strength with which we deal with the circumstances of our outward life will serve us better than anything that is based on the loftiness of our religious notions, or fervour of our religious feelings. It is a test that can be applied anywhere and at any time. Tranquillity, gentleness and strength, carrying us through the changes of weather, the ups and downs of the route, the varied surface of the road; the inequalities of family life, emotional and professional disappointments, the sudden intervention of bad fortune or bad health, the rising and falling of our religious temperature. This is the threefold imprint of the Spirit on the souls surrendered to his great action.

May the Spirit imprint tranquillity, gentleness and strength in your life.

Ann Conway-Jones

PAST MONTH'S NEWS

The Discoverers visited St Giles Roman Catholic church at Cheadle. It was built through the generosity of John, 16th Earl of Shrewsbury in 1846 and Augustus Welby Pugin was commissioned to design and build a church that would have no rival. It is certainly an impressive place of worship.

A wonderfully moving confirmation service was led by Bishop Peter Hall when he confirmed Hamid, Neda, Liliya Shahryar,

Shahrokh, Amin, Hossin, Charlotte, Thomas, Anna, Reza and Lotoya. Later that day, baby Amelia-Jayde, together with brothers Aiden and Ethan were baptised with their respective Parents and Godparents making vows on their behalf.

On Ascension Day an evening Eucharist service was held when all present recalled the past forty days of Easter and celebrated the Ascension of our Lord.

IMMANENCE *by Evelyn Underhill*

I come in the little things,
Saith the Lord:
Not borne on morning wings
Of majesty, but I have set My Feet
Amidst the delicate and bladed wheat
That springs triumphant in the furrowed sod
There do I dwell, in weakness and in power:
Not broken or divided, saith our God!
In your straight garden plot I come to flower:
About your porch My Vine
Meek, fruitful, doth entwine;
Waits, at the threshold, Love's appointed hour.

I come in little things,
Saith the Lord:
Yea! on the glancing wings
Of eager birds, the softly pattering feet
Of furred and gentle beasts. I come to meet
Your hard and wayward heart. In brown eyes
That peep from out the brake, I stand confest
On every nest
Where feathery Patience is content to brood
And leaves her pleasure for the high emprise
Of motherhood -
There doth My Godhead rest.

I come in little things,
Saith the Lord:
My starry wings
I do forsake,
Love's highway of humility to take.
Meekly I fit My stature to your need.
In beggar's part
About your gates I shall not cease to plead -
As man, to speak with man -
Till by such art
I shall achieve My Immemorial Plan.
Pass the low lintel of the human heart.

PAST MONTH'S NEWS contd.....

The second Sunday worship saw the young people of Big Fish contributing in many aspects of the service. This began with them joining Claire to teach the congregation to sing "Oh Happy Day" and then reading the lessons. During the sermon they shared their own personal statements of faith and invited the congregation to take part in holding ribbons to demonstrate the church's unity as depicted in the Gospel reading from John chapter 17 verses 20-26.



JUNE

- 2nd **60th Anniversary** of the Queen's Coronation
- 9th 12.15 pm **Baptism** of baby Lewis James & baby Tillie-Mae Jayne
- 16th 6.00 pm **Taize** service in Old Church
- 20th **Discoverers** Trip to Halfpenny Green
- 27th 2.30 pm meet for **Prayers** in The Old Church (see Rose Guest for details)
- 27th 7.00 pm **Compline** in The Old Church (see Wendy Fullerton for details)
- 29th 2.00pm **Summer Fete**

On 16th June the Church of England remembers St Richard, who was Bishop of Chichester for eight years in the mid-13th century, and was well acquainted with both hard work and suffering. Though a gifted scholar and lawyer, he did not flinch from physical labour; and as Bishop he found himself a homeless outcast in his own diocese, until King Henry III finally accepted his appointment by the Pope. His prayer reflects the commitment and 'stickability' needed by anyone who seeks to be a true follower of Jesus.

**Thanks be to you, our Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits which you have given us,
for all the pains and insults which you have borne for us.
Most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,
may we know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly,
day by day.
Amen.**

The prayer acknowledges that Christians don't become saints overnight! Instead, there is a gradual (and sometimes uncomfortable) re-orientation of our lives into God's way. Why not use this prayer (or your own words) to ask Jesus to help you take just one small step forward in the Christian life?