

# Parish News

A vibrant field of wildflowers, including purple cornflowers, a yellow daisy, and white flowers, with a bee on a purple flower.

St Mary the Virgin, Saffron Walden

St John, Little Walden and St James, Swards End

Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry

July 2020

FREE

## Sewards End Celebrates VE Day



The church bell rang out to mark the silence and afternoon tea is taken – St James Church, Sewards End, along with the rest of the village, hung out flags to commemorate VE Day on 8<sup>th</sup> May.

The Bishops had given permission for one church bell to be rung to mark the day, despite church closures during the coronavirus pandemic, so St James' single bell tolled to mark the beginning and the end of the two-minute silence at 11am.

Around the village, afternoon tea with scones were eaten in the sunshine in many gardens and, after the Queen's speech, villagers came out to join in

singing, while maintaining social distances, 'We'll meet again' – a particularly poignant song at this time.

Clifford Want



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## PARISH NEWS - EDITORIAL DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions for each issue is the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month. Hence, the deadline for the **August-September** issue is **Sunday 5th July**.

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Dawn Saxon

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[www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews](http://www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews)

Front Cover: *Summer meadow*

Photograph by Andy Colebrooke

## During the lockdown...

If you would like to be added to our weekly mailing list, email: -

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**TEAM RECTOR:** Vacancy

**ASSISTANT CURATE:** On maternity leave

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## Pastoral Letter

From The Rev'd Tim Hardingham

Dear friends

This week (7<sup>th</sup> June) the Old Testament reading is from Isaiah Chapter 40. Reading it and thinking about it, it seems extraordinary how sharply pertinent Isaiah's words are, for us, today. Chapter 40 is the beginning of the section of Isaiah known as Deutero-Isaiah, which we can be reasonably certain was written around 550BC while the Jewish nation, or at least its educated elite, were held in exile in Babylon. *'By the waters of Babylon we lay down and wept'* (Psalm 137).

The Jewish nation had been conquered, its capital city and temple destroyed, its royal family were in captivity. Their self-perception as a people who would inherit *'a promised land flowing with milk and honey'* was in tatters, they had been abducted out of their promised land. And so their national conversation was something like *'Why has this happened to us? We have not done anything to deserve this? Why has God abandoned us?'*

Chapter 40 starts with these beautiful words which Handel has made so famous. *'Comfort, comfort my people says your God, speak tenderly to Jerusalem'* it goes on *'A voice cries "In the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God"'*. These are wonderful words of hope in the most terrible of national situations.

But, chapter 40 continues ... *'Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span ... Who has measured the Spirit of the Lord, or what man shows him his counsel ... Who taught him the path of Justice'*. Isaiah is saying that all we know about how to live together in peace, harmony and prosperity is learned from God.

The chapter moves on. It becomes fierce in its remonstrance *'Do you not know, have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning?'* Isaiah is indignant with fury at humankind's self-importance, humanity's idea that it understands how the world works and it can construct for itself its own future and prosperity. *'No, No, No,'* Isaiah reprimands us, *'you owe peace, justice, prosperity and happiness to God and when humanity starts to think it can do without God it will always be destructive because human values, abstracted from God, are always about selfishness, competition, making the most for ourselves, inevitably at the expense of others'*.



For us, in our time, we are beset with the same kind of questions that beset the exilic Israelites. What did we do to deserve this pandemic? Why is human activity destroying the foundations of our prosperity and the security of our future through global warming? What is happening to integrity and truth as fake news shrills through our media and political conversations? Where is justice in a world that justifies profit as the motivation for corporations that have forgotten about service?

Isaiah sets a beautiful, gentle, kindly and loving example to us as Christians. It is for us to speak out, as he does. *'Have you not heard, have you not seen?'*, We have to allow God to be in charge. The capitalist market place, the self righteousness of socialism, the leadership of tinpot kings, presidents and prime ministers who think they are right in their own cleverness, will lead humanity and God's beautiful gift of the earth and its resources, to destruction. We must learn that only if power is exercised by servants under the authority of God can we expect an outcome of hope, justice, peace and prosperity for all humanity. Tell that to Donald, Boris, Vladimir, Xiping, Bashar, Jair Bolsonaro and the rest. We must be Isaiah to our world.

With love  
Tim

## From the Registers

**Funerals**                      *We send our deepest sympathy to the families and friends of:*

1st May                          Suzanne Richardson

14th May                        Audrey Cox

21st May                        John Pennington

*Praying for them and for those who mourn  
"May they rest in peace"*



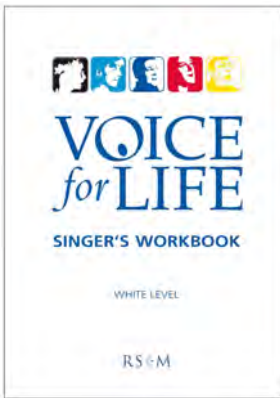


## St Mary's Music News

This month's newsletter focuses on the Junior Choir, with many thanks to Bron Ferland and Karen Goddard for their contributions to this article, as well as to all the families who have encouraged and facilitated the juniors' participation in music making for St Mary's.

During lockdown the normal rehearsals and training programmes for our Junior Choristers and Choral Scholars clearly cannot take place. However, we want to deliver as much continuity as possible. Karen explains that in normal times our choristers all have the opportunity to work towards the *Voice for Life* awards scheme devised by the Royal Schools of Church Music: these range from the introductory white ribbon award for probationary choristers up to higher levels which include advanced musicianship skills. As well as lessons, the choristers also complete written exercises in their workbooks at home and when a workbook and assessment have been completed, the choristers are presented with their award in a church service.

# VOICE for LIFE



Bron and Oli set about facilitating online teaching of the material during the lockdown period, using the Zoom video conferencing software, which we have all rapidly learned to love or loathe. The choristers (and/or their parents!) signed up enthusiastically and Bron and Oli recruited a small army of volunteer trainers, willing to teach the children each week in pairs or very small groups. Of course all the necessary safeguarding checks and risk assessments have been completed both to comply with diocesan guidance and to ensure that our children always are safe and feel safe.

Karen works with some of our youngest, newest choristers. The programme they are following includes some beginner skills such as learning to read music, understand repertoire and the routines and disciplines of being part of a choir, as well of course as the key skills for singers at every stage of posture and breathing. The children seem to enjoy the sessions and this theoretical knowledge underpins and strengthens their

*Continued on page 9 ...*



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*Continued from page 7 ...*

practical singing experience in the choir. The children are very experienced already with online learning from the teaching they receive from their schools, so it has been a relatively easy transition to this new format.

In addition to the ribbon training, Bron reports that the Junior Choir have now been meeting via Zoom for just over a month. All but three members have joined the practices and are enjoying the warm-ups and singing. Oli King composed music for an Ascension-tide hymn 'The Lord ascended up on high' which the children, supported by a few of the Choral Scholars, recorded individually. Oli then merged the tracks (a very skilled and time-consuming part of the process) to produce a recording which was incorporated into the church online and Zoom services on Pentecost Sunday. Elliot, our Organ Scholar, working with some of the Choral Scholars, produced the music used in the services the previous week.



The adults and Choral Scholars have also been busy. As well as regular Zoom practices, we have been recording our second lockdown anthem, and, with the Junior Choir, are working on recording a new anthem written by our assistant organist, Jeremy Allen, for use in July.

Otilie Lefever



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## A past and present thought

Early in the morning, before I get up, I am, like so many other people at this time, very conscious of the quiet world outside. It could be a step back in time, similar to when I was a Chaplain on a Mediterranean cruise ship back in the 70s thinking, as I could see no land, that I could have been sailing there at any time in history.

Now, no car sounds, no aircraft, in fact I could be back in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the days of Jane Austen. She must have lived with the same background, the same sound landscape that I was enjoying, except that she would have heard the sound of horses' hooves and the occasional sound of wheeled farm carts.

Interestingly, she was also living in a world where many people caught smallpox and it was only in 1796, when Jane was 21, that Edward Jenner found the vaccine solution to that plague ..... so history can give hope and teach us lessons!



Chris Bishop

## Prayer for the Month *provided by the Prayer Team*

Eastertide is over, Pentecost Sunday has passed and we are now in the period of the Trinity Sundays until 25th October, the last Sunday after Trinity. On Friday 3rd July we commemorate Thomas the Apostle, 'doubting Thomas!'. The collect for his day is a very appropriate reminder.

Almighty and eternal God,  
 who, for the firmer foundation of our faith,  
 allowed your holy apostle Thomas  
 to doubt the resurrection of your Son  
 till word and sight convinced him:  
 grant to us, who have not seen, that we also may believe  
 and so confess Christ as our Lord and our God; who is alive and  
 reigns with you,  
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, now and for ever.



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## Was there ever a Saxon Church on the St Mary's site?



In his interesting and informative article in last month's Magazine on the subject of choosing the new Rector, John Pickthorn has, alas, perpetuated the myth that there was once a Saxon church on the present site of St. Mary's ('There has been a church on the site ... for more than a thousand years'). There is no evidence for this claim; indeed, what evidence does exist is contra-indicative.

- The archaeological report on the excavations in 2013 at the top of the Common states that 'there were no finds from ... Saxon times'.
- Such Saxon remains as have been discovered in the town were found in the valley where Abbey Lane leads into Audley Park (the present Gibson Estate area).
- Those remains were principally of a graveyard. Surely, had there been a church on Bury Hill at that time the graveyard would have been in its grounds.
- There is no reference to a church in Walden in the Domesday Book (1086 AD).
- There was evidence of a Norman church in the Howard Vault at the East end of St. Mary's but no Saxon remains were found there when the Vault was closed in 1860.

No, John, I fear that your eye-catching Churchillian reference to 'a thousand years' is about a century adrift!

Hamish Walker

Editor of the Dixon History and Guide to St. Mary's (2000)

### John's replies...

Hamish kindly shared his letter to Parish News with me, before publication. I expressed contrition, and have been assured that, having subsequently purchased a copy of the Dixon History Guide to St Mary's (albeit not the version edited by him in 2000, but the subsequent revision by John Read in 2017) that he will not seek my excommunication!

Back in March, I could only use the books that we have in the house for reference. I started with a copy of the pamphlet offered to visitors to St Mary's: *A Walk-Around Guide* which states 'The East Saxons who gave their name to Essex were pagan, but after St Cedd led their conversion to Christianity in the 7th century there was in all probability a Saxon wooden church here.' This is repeated on the St Mary's website, and I'm afraid I accepted it 'as gospel'.

John Pickthorn

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## Gardening Notes

Today it's the last day of May; we've had several weeks of dry sunny weather and I've started my automatic watering system. It's drip feed with some spray assist and is timed to operate twice a day, five minutes only: this is easily enough - and I can always top up with water from the butts if it should be necessary.



*Image by J Garget from Pixabay*

Back in January I tried to place an order with Suttons which included tomato plants, greenhouse ready size: Suttons were unable to process as they had a serious staffing problem, so I looked at my stock of seed packets, then grew all my tomatoes from various of that stock. Success rates have been somewhat variable but sufficient to satisfy a supply of cherry, standard, and beefsteak varieties, and I look forward to several tasting sessions, repeating those varieties that pass muster!

The mesembryanthemums I grew from seed have now been transplanted in small groups and I'm sure that when in flower they'll look jolly good. Can't wait!

Charles White

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## Archive Group *findings...*

### July 1940

Dear Parishioners,

Since my last letter things have got no easier but rather more difficult for the old country through the treachery of the Belgian King, the entrance of Italy into the war and the failure of France. A quarter of a century ago Italy was our friend and when the Germans broke through their lines, it was our armies which rushed to the rescue and saved their country from conquest and spoilation. Our reward for saving them from such a fate is to have them turn against us now - so that we are fighting to-day two swollen headed Dictators destitute both of them of the slightest sense of honour or chivalry and actuated by sheer megalomania and lust of conquest. Meanwhile - as the old saying has it, we put our trust in Providence and keep our powder dry and above all cultivate the virtues of patience and perseverance - perseverance in prayer and in uncomplaining endurance.....

The Flower and Egg Service, on May 26th produced an unusually big offering of eggs for the Hospital. To send 179 betrays a self-denying generosity on the part of many people when we remember present high prices.

L. Hughes.

# LOOKING FOR WORK?



The Transition Project provides a free service to help those who are looking for work. **Our Weekly Clinic is currently cancelled** but we can still provide support by volunteers who have first-hand experience of job hunting and can provide practical support with internet searching, CV writing and interview technique. Advice also available on the website: -

[www.transitionproject.co.uk](http://www.transitionproject.co.uk)

## Carpe Diem!

It has been a joy to see clear, unpolluted blue skies; to hear birdsong rise above the traffic noise and to connect with the beauty of nature on our own doorsteps. And while we've been doing that, daily greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) dropped 17% in April!

They may well end the year 8% lower, but sadly this just goes to show that the abandonment of cars and air travel is not going to be enough to solve the climate crisis.

Even if we continued this painful limit on our lifestyles, we will still have more than 90% of the carbon reduction to achieve to be on track to our Paris target.

Nevertheless, this is a unique, once-in-a-pandemic opportunity for governments to steer their economies away from carbon dependency at a lower financial and social cost than ever before. As they spend trillions getting their economies going again, they have the opportunity to invest in climate friendly infrastructures and sustainable businesses for the future.

There is a historic precedent for this. Amazingly, it was while WW2 was still raging that a new world was being mapped out. There had been a resolve to make 'a world fit for heroes' after the Great War, but it never happened. This time things would be different. In 1942, William Beveridge published a report describing 'universal provision', which was to become our welfare state and beloved National Health Service.

In 1944 our own MP, Rab Butler passed the Education Act, which abolished fees for all state secondary education and introduced grammar schools which offered social mobility to the children of factory workers and miners for the first time.

It's not as if we could afford it then. The war had bankrupted us and the USA was reluctant to extend us continuing peacetime aid. They gave the Atlee government a hard time of it, but there was a powerful conviction that we couldn't afford *not* to invest in a better future.



*Photo by Markus Spiske from Pexels*

It has shocked us that global finances, economies and businesses turned out to be defenceless against one microscopic virus. Our hubris has led us to believe that science and technology would prevent such catastrophes, and no doubt they will eventually, but not before irreparable damage has been done and lives lost.

Both the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) have warned that “global warming will likely accelerate the emergence of new viruses.” There is a connection between this pandemic, biodiversity loss and our relationship with the whole of natural world. If we are to prevent more pandemics, we need to “tilt to green”.

The question facing us all now is whether there is the political will for that. Do we want the extremes of wealth and poverty that have been exposed by this crisis to continue? Do we want to rush back to the same levels of pollution and fossil fuel dependency?

Or are we ready now for the fundamental changes in our economy that will give our children some hope of an inhabitable planet? It is our children who will be footing the bill for this pandemic for the rest of their lives, after all.

Edward Gildea



## What got me into photography

*Photographs by Gilly Hayes have appeared on several front covers of Parish News. Here she describes what got her into photography.*



It all started decades ago, when working as a research immunologist, taking photos of human brain tissue sections. These I had treated using immunocytochemistry (antibodies tagged with chemical dyes) to reveal various proteins of interest in the course of research into multiple sclerosis. So I started off with a camera attached to a microscope and found I really enjoyed the intersection of neuroscience with art. After a while the research moved in other directions but I found photographing and thinking about what I saw was interesting and therapeutic.

Mindful of writing something for the Parish Magazine – I thought that in true sermon style there should be 3 points!

1. Photograph what appeals to you. My observation would be if you want to enjoy photography, find out what you like to photograph and enjoy that. For me that is the natural world. My favourite local places are Lackford Lakes (good for kingfishers!), or Cambridge Botanic Garden. I find it very calming to just look and take pictures.

2. Take time to look, and reflect on what you see. In photography jargon I think this is called 'getting to know your subject'. How something appears is dependent on the light and weather. For example; walk around a building, look for interesting angles, shadows, maybe evening light brings a mellowness to stonework? Recently I realised yellowhammers sang from the tops of the small trees in the fields around Saffron Walden and early spring was my best chance to photograph them, before the birds were hidden amidst dense foliage. It is obvious when you think about it but I never had before! So I am still learning.

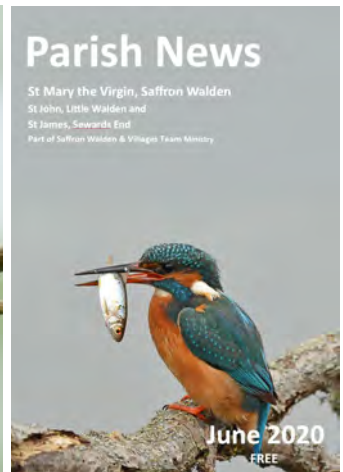
3. Get to know your camera so you can use it when you want to, rather than missing something because you have forgotten how to use it. Cameras have moved on leaps and bounds in terms of what they can do and most phones are pretty amazing these days. Have a go with the kit you have!

Perhaps while we are largely confined to home and the immediate local area think about taking your camera out with you. You might find it interesting

to see what you choose to take pictures of. A great source of tips is online photography magazine articles about how to take better pictures of the thing that interests you, be it architecture, flowers, grandchildren (skipping over the hints that you need this or that camera!). Look at fun projects online for your camera or camera-phone – there is so much help and ideas out there! As digital pictures are so easy to share - perhaps take pictures on a theme within your family, as a 'staycation' activity. Have a go - photography is great fun!

Gilly Hayes

### ***Gilly's cover photographs: -***



### **Calling all photographers**

**The Editor is looking for pictures for the front cover.**

If you have taken your own, good resolution, photographs of local scenes, appropriate to the summer season, why not submit them for inclusion in the August-September edition?

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*Paddy McKeown*



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## **YOU**in**thePEW**

interviewed by Chris Bishop

### **Tessa Hawkes**

Tessa was born in Northern Ireland in County Derry, where her Mother came from, so the roots went deep and still do.

She and her husband came to Saffron Walden in 1975, where their fourth child was born two months later. She thinks Saffron Walden chose them rather than the other way round as they simply seemed to fall into it by chance.... She was near her family and it was an easy commute to London for her husband Russell. It was perfect and has become even more so with all the conveniences of older life. They attended St Mary's as a matter of course and inevitably grew to love it more and more over the years.

Tessa greatly enjoys being a small part of the Saffron Walden community with all it has to offer on so many levels. There is always something for everyone to join in with, or contribute to, and in the parish, being the size it is, she believes every one is free to slot in where they feel happiest. She very much enjoys the Sewing Circle which meets on a Monday morning, stitching away at the kneelers, banners and altar cloths among other necessities to clothe the church. She also sews for the Handicraft Stall at Christmas. It is a good opportunity to exchange news and views. The once a month Julian meetings, which meet at her home, are also very important to her.

Upon reflection, there are many memorable and important events that spring to mind but one important one for her is the washing of feet on Maundy Thursday evening in the church. At the close of the service, in the darkened church, everyone is free to go or to stay, well into the night. At the service the simple large wooden cross is laid up against the chancel steps surrounded by candles outlining the shape of the cross in the gloom. She finds the simplicity of that so beautiful and very moving.

Asked about a motto, she actually has a family motto which is: 'Domini est Terra' (the earth is the Lord's), but she would also choose 'Kyrie Eleison' (Lord have mercy), as she likes the supplication, the foreignness and mystery of it, so each can have their own picture of what it means to them.



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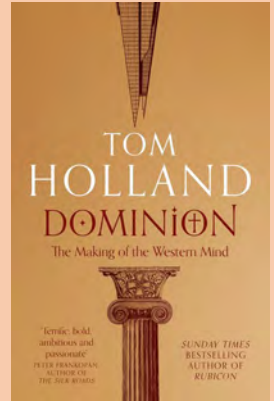
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## What are you reading during lockdown?

In the past whenever I've come across a book of almost 600 pages I've invariably put it straight back on the shelf. However, during these long days of lockdown I've become a little bit braver and I've tackled Tom Holland's latest book, 'Dominion', which is an epic tale of how the West became what it is today, and why it thinks the way it does. The book's subtitle is 'The Making of the Western Mind'. It is a jolly good read, but if you just can't face it yourself (594 pages), here is my simple summary for you, which may get you by at a party - in case you ever go to a party again!



The historian Tom Holland has written award-winning books in the past about the ancient Greeks, Romans, and Persians, and one charting the origins of Islam. This time it's the emergence of Christendom in the west, from its roots in antiquity right up to the present day. Holland, being an expert on the ancient world and its cultures, is well placed to describe the huge gulf that lies between them and us. For example, he describes how crucifixion was not merely an ancient punishment, but a humiliating way of achieving dominance through sheer terror. He writes of what he terms the strangeness of Christianity, in that it finds 'in a twisted and defeated corpse the glory of the creator of the universe'. He demonstrates just how novel and uncanny this idea is and how Christian values flow from it. That human beings have rights, are born equal, and are owed refuge from persecution, are not at all self-evident truths. Nietzsche, the Marquis de Sade, Joseph Goebbels, and Roman caesars before them despised Christianity, because it champions the weak over the strong, a concept emanating from the image of a god dead on a cross.

The book traces the growth of the church in the west over 2,000 years and does not pull any punches. Christians themselves have abused and misused power, sometimes becoming agents of terror, inflicting suffering and slavery on others. Yet it points out that 'the standards by which they stand condemned for this are themselves Christian', and owe little to the classical world. Humanists today will not find inspiration in this book, neither will those who find Christianity wanting and dismiss all religion as pointless superstition, as they do so on the very basis of a Christian worldview they have inherited.

The book's basic thesis is that we in the west are like goldfish in a bowl, unaware of the medium in which we swim; we are so submerged in a culture that is thoroughly Christian, we fail to recognise its origins. Controversial views indeed, written by one with no Christian drum to beat.

Andy Colebrooke

Dominion by Tom Holland, published by Little, Brown 2019

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## Bishop Stephen to be admitted as Archbishop via Zoom



Bishop Stephen Cottrell will be confirmed as the 98th Archbishop of York at 11am on Thursday 9 July 2020, in a service broadcast entirely via video conference due to the Coronavirus restrictions. This virtual service will include a legal ceremony with readings, prayers and music and a film marking the start of his new ministry.

Commenting on the service, Bishop Stephen said:

‘I am looking forward to beginning my ministry as the 98th Archbishop of York. This isn’t quite how I imagined it would begin. It is certainly the first time an Archbishop’s election will have been confirmed via video conference. But we’re all having to re-imagine how we live our lives and how we inhabit the world. These are difficult times. My hope is that through this service the love of God that is given us in Jesus Christ will shine out, perhaps even to those who while never attending a service in York Minster, might have a look online. I can still just about remember what it’s like to not be part of the Christian community. What inspired me to follow Jesus is that vision of a new humanity that I see in him. Following in the footsteps of my many predecessors, I look forward to serving our nation and bringing the love and peace of Christ to our world, especially here in the north.’

The service will be available on the Church of England website: -

<https://yorkminster.org/latest/confirmation-of-election-of-bishop-stephen-cottrell/>

Clifford Want continues his series on Hymn writers

## Bianco da Siena (?1350 - ?1399)

### 'Come down, O Love Divine'

Bianco da Siena was born in Lanciolina di Valdarno, present-day Anciolina, a small village north-west of Arezzo, Tuscany, probably around 1350. He worked as a wool carder at Siena (some sources say 'wood carver' but I blame Spellchecker).

In 1367, he entered the lay Jesuates community, i.e. not the Jesuits but lay followers of the Augustinian Rule of poverty and penitence. The Jesuates became a religious order and the members gave up their original roaming life and settled in Tuscany and in Umbria. Bianco da Siena finally settled in Venice, where he died possibly in 1399 or 1434.

Bianco da Siena wrote several religiously-inspired poems (laude), vernacular sacred songs, widely used in the Middle Ages. Bianco's may be divided into two groups—doctrinal and mystical. It was said that Bianco's poetry was 'inspired by intense religious zeal, his poetry has its mystical roots in that of Jacopone da Todi, a Franciscan friar, particularly in regard to the theme of divine madness. The immediacy of Bianco's language and the unadorned simplicity of his statements enhanced the popular appeal of his poetry.' Four centuries later in 1851, 92 poems were published at Lucca, edited by Telesforo Bini, under the title, *Laudi spirituali del Bianco da Siena*.

Richard Frederick Littledale (1833-1890) published translations of four of the poems. These included *Come down, O Love Divine*, a translation of four of the original eight stanzas of *Discendi amor santo*.

Hymn writer Gracia Grindal notes that 'the entire hymn is an invocation to the Holy Spirit [to] "kindle" the heart so that it burns with the ardour of the Spirit.' The text is intensely personal and intensely passionate. The first line invokes the Holy Spirit to 'seek thou this soul of mine and visit it with thine own ardour glowing.' Classic images of Pentecost appear throughout the hymn, especially those that relate to fire, including 'ardour glowing',



'kindle . . . thy holy flame', 'freely burn' and 'dust and ashes in its heat consuming.' The final stanza is a powerful statement of total commitment to love, to 'create a place/wherein the Holy Spirit makes a dwelling.'

The popularity of the English version owes much to the Vaughan Williams tune, *Down Ampney*, named after his birthplace, which carries the majesty and mystery of the text and is now the standard setting for the hymn.

Clifford Want



© Chris Bishop

**The first rule of The Thesaurus Club:** You don't talk, converse, discuss, speak, chat, deliberate, confer, gab, gossip or natter about The Thesaurus Club.

**Two sociologists** are sitting by the swimming pool. One turns to the other and asks, 'Have you read Marx?' to which he replies 'Yes, it's these wicker chairs.'

**Karl Marx** only drank coffee because, he said, 'Property is theft.'<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup>(Ed: yes, I know it was Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's phrase, but perhaps Marx still didn't like tea!)



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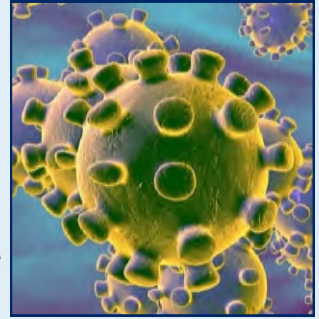
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01799 282 093

## A Scientist Reflects on God's Heart for the Suffering

It's difficult as a scientist to hear information that is fascinating, but which also involves so much suffering for other people. I worked for a time in a leukaemia research lab. We had to let other people's pain drive our research without it crippling our ability to concentrate on our work. But, writing this under lockdown, I have found myself – as a biologically-educated bystander – avoiding looking into the science of COVID-19 because the reminders of its impact on people's lives are everywhere that I look.



One of the ways I have been managing my own feelings during the pandemic is by digging deeper into what God has revealed to us about His character, letting that fuel my faith, my prayers, and my actions. For more academic types like myself, study – particularly of the Bible – can be one of the primary ways we connect with God and hear from Him. It's not wrong to be comforted by books, so long as the contents turn our eyes upwards and outwards.



First of all, God hears: 'The Lord is close to the broken-hearted' (Psalm 34:18a). In Jesus God took on human form, and He showed us His heart for the world. When His friend Lazarus died, He wept (John 11). God is 'the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort' (2 Corinthians 1:3).

*P.T.O.*

Human sin has affected the whole of creation, and I believe this is largely the direct impact of our mismanagement of creation and mistreatment of each other. COVID-19 may well be another animal's friendly virus, pushed by human activity into causing havoc in bodies where it doesn't belong.

But God's world remains good. It is still fruitful, praising Him, as Psalm 19 describes. Even pictures of a deadly virus can seem beautiful – especially to a biologist! These good things are hints of the promised 'new heavens and new earth' mentioned in the New Testament. One day 'creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay' (Romans 8: 21), and for everyone who follows God, 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes' (Revelation 21: 4).

Behind the debates about suffering is sometimes the assumption that God doesn't care. My experience is that God does care deeply, and He invites His Church to care for those around them – especially the most vulnerable. He is with us, He hears us and grieves with us, He helps us and promises a better future.

Dr Ruth M. Bancewicz

The Church Engagement Director  
The Faraday Institute for Science and  
Religion in Cambridge

Ruth writes on the positive relationship  
between Science and Christian faith.





## Book Review

### My Sour-Sweet Days

#### George Herbert and the Journey of the Soul

By Mark Oakley

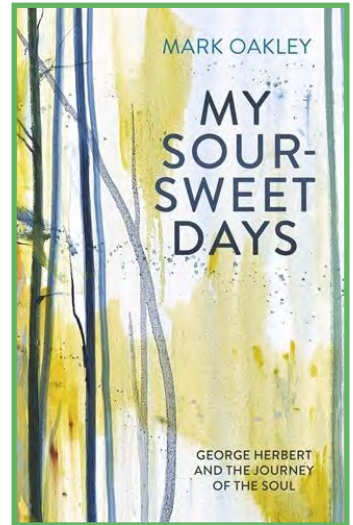
Mark Oakley reveals George Herbert as a fine companion with whom to examine the journey of the soul. His poems are 'heart-work and heaven-work', embracing love and closeness, anger and despair, reconciliation and hope. There is, too, an appealing and audacious playfulness about Herbert: he seems to take God on, knowing God will win, confident God will not abandon him. This sense of relationship with God as primarily friendship is one of many intriguing and healing aspects we are invited to consider.

This book contains 40 well-chosen poems by George Herbert (widely considered the greatest devotional poet in the English language), each of which is followed by a short reflection by Mark Oakley.

My Sour-Sweet Days – George Herbert and the Journey of the Soul

By Mark Oakley, SPCK, £6.99

From Parish Pump



## Prayer Chain News

I am delighted to say that Kathryn Fiddock has agreed to take over the Prayer Chain both in administration of it and receiving prayer requests. I would like to thank Juliette Welch for her wonderful job of running it up to now, taking over from Margaret Taylor and making the transition seamless. There is a small but faithful group of us who faithfully pray for people who have asked for it and who up until Lockdown meet every month to have a group prayer time. I believe this is a very important part of our service to each other and to the wider community so if you would like to be part of it, need prayer or want a friend to be prayed for, please contact Kathryn on 01799 500844.

Sue Walker

# Calendar for July 2020

For information about online Services and resources see our 'Church at Home' page at [www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/churchathome](http://www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/churchathome)

## Festivals

### Friday 3rd Thomas the Apostle

Almighty and eternal God,  
who, for the firmer foundation of our faith,  
allowed your holy apostle Thomas to doubt the  
resurrection of your Son  
till word and sight convinced him:  
grant to us, who have not seen, that we also may believe  
and so confess Christ as our Lord and our God;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

### Wed. 22nd

#### Mary Magdalene

Almighty God,  
whose Son restored Mary Magdalene to health of mind and body  
and called her to be a witness to his resurrection:  
forgive our sins and heal us by your grace,  
that we may serve you in the power of his risen life;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

### Saturday 25th

#### James the Apostle

Merciful God,  
whose holy apostle Saint James,  
leaving his father and all that he had,  
was obedient to the calling of your Son Jesus Christ  
and followed him even to death:  
help us, forsaking the false attractions of the world,  
to be ready at all times to answer your call without delay;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

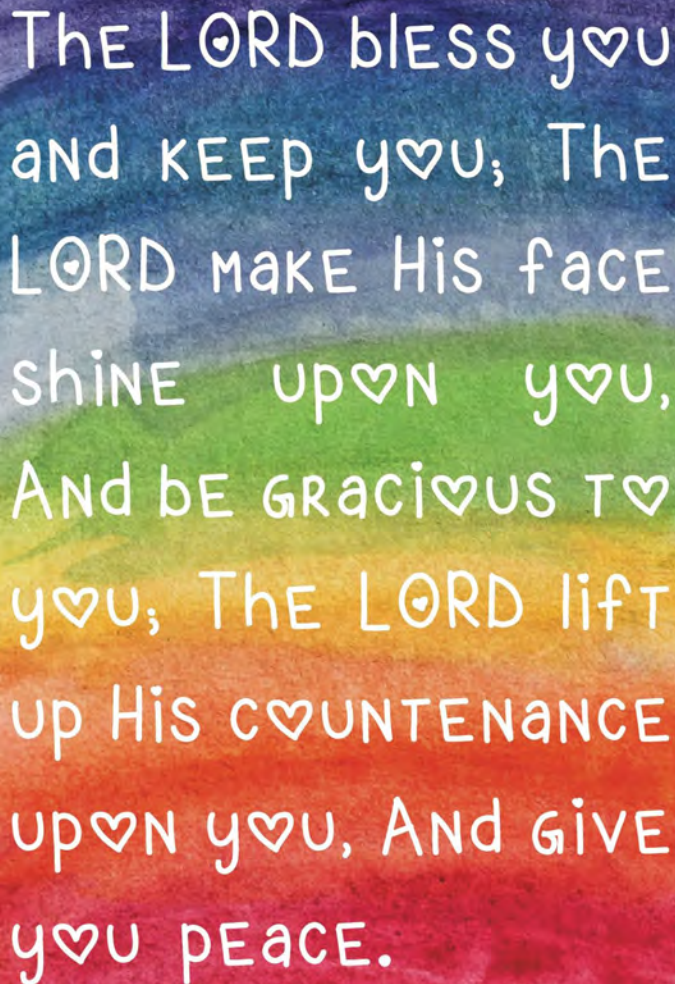
# Parish News - online since October 2019

Back copies can be viewed at [www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews](http://www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews)



## Missing the printed version?

When the Covid-19 shutdown is relaxed and the Diocesan Print Unit is up and running again, a limited number of this and any subsequent issues will be available in printed form.



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and KEEP you; THE  
LORD make His face  
shine upon you,  
AND BE GRACIOUS TO  
you; THE LORD lift  
up His COUNTENANCE  
upon you, AND GIVE  
you PEACE.