

Services at St Michael & All Angels Cuxton		
1 st June Easter 7	9.30 Family Communion	Ezekiel 36 vv 24-28 p868 Acts 1 vv 6-14 p1092 John 17 vv 1-11 p1085
8 th June Pentecost	9.30 Holy Communion	Numbers 11 vv 24-30 p148 Acts 2 vv 1-21 p1093 I Corinthians 12 vv 1-13 p1153 John 7 vv 37-39 p1072
15 th June Trinity Sunday	8.00 Holy Communion	Epistle and Gospel Trinity Sunday BCP
	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 40 vv 12-31 p724 II Corinthians 13 vv 11-14 p1167 Matthew 28 vv 16-20 p1001
22 nd June Trinity 1	9.30 Holy Communion	Jeremiah 20 vv 7-13 p779 Romans 6 vv 1-11 p1132 Matthew 10 vv 24-39 p975
29 th June S Peter & S Paul	9.30 Holy Communion	Zechariah 4 vv 1-14 p952 Acts 12 vv 1-11 p1106 II Timothy 4 vv 6-18 p1197 Matthew 16 vv 13-19 p983
6 th July Trinity 3	9.30 Family Communion	Zechariah 9 vv 9-12 p955 Matthew 11 vv 16-30 p976
Services at St John the Baptist Halling & the Jubilee Hall Upper Halling		
1 st June Easter 7	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	Acts 1 vv 6-14 p1092 John 17 vv 1-11 p1085
	11.00 Holy Communion	Ezekiel 36 vv 24-28 p868 Acts 1 vv 6-14 p1092 I Peter 4 v12 – 5 v11 p1220 John 17 vv 1-11 p1085
8 th June Pentecost	11.00 Holy Communion	Numbers 11 vv 24-30 p148 Acts 2 vv 1-21 p1093 I Corinthians 12 vv 1-13 p1153 John 20 vv 19-23 p1089
	5.30 Evening Prayer Jubilee Hall	Joel 2 vv 21-32 p913 Acts 2 vv 14-38 p1093
15 th June Trinity Sunday	11.00 Holy Communion & Stop! Look! Listen!	Isaiah 40 vv 12-31 p724 II Corinthians 13 vv 11-14 p1167 Matthew 28 vv 16-20 p1001
22 nd June Trinity 1	11.00 Holy Communion & Holy Baptism	Jeremiah 20 vv 7-13 p779 Romans 6 vv 1-11 p1132 Matthew 10 vv 24-39 p975
24 th June Nativity of S John the Baptist	9.30 Holy Communion	Isaiah 40 vv 1-11 p723 Luke 1 vv 57-80 p1027
29 th June S Peter & S Paul	11.00 Holy Communion	Zechariah 4 vv 1-14 p952 Acts 12 vv 1-11 p1106 II Timothy 4 vv 6-18 p1197 Matthew 16 vv 13-19 p983
6 th July Trinity 3	8.00 Holy Communion Jubilee Hall	I Samuel 24 vv 1-17 p296 Luke 14 vv 12-24 p1048
	11.00 Holy Communion	Zechariah 9 vv 9-12 p955 Romans 7 v15 – 8 v1 p1134 Matthew 11 vv 16-30 p976

Holy Communion Wednesdays at St Michael's at 9.30 am		Holy Communion Thursdays at St John's at 9.30 am	
4 th June	Acts 20 vv 28-38 John 17 vv 11-19	5 th June	Acts 22 v30 – 23 v11 John 17 vv 20-26
11 th June S Barnabas	Acts 11 vv 19-30 John 15 vv 12-17	12 th June	I Kings 18 vv 41-46 Matthew 5 vv 20-26
18 th June	II Kings 2 vv 1-14 Matthew 6 vv 1-18	19 th June Corpus Christi	I Corinthians 11 vv 23-26 John 6 vv 51-58
25 th June Ember Day	II Kings 22 v8 – 23 v3 Matthew 7 vv 15-20	26 th June	II Kings 24 vv 8-17 Matthew 7 vv 21-29

Copy Date July Magazine 13th June 8.30 Rectory
<http://www.cuxtonandhalling.org.uk>

Saints Alive! meet at St Michael's at 9.30 am on Sundays during school terms. The first Sunday of the month is a Family Communion.

All are invited to join us for lunch on the first Wednesday of every month in the church hall at 12.00.

Please contact the Rector if you wish to arrange for weddings, christenings or thanksgiving for the birth of a child. Please also contact the Rector to request a home visit, for Holy Communion at home or to arrange for Confession. Also please contact the Rector for the laying on of hands and anointing of oil for the sick and dying.

Food Bank

There is a food bank in Medway (<http://medway.foodbank.org.uk/>) which exists to help people who find themselves temporarily without the resources to buy food. This might be because of a delay in getting paid, administrative problems with the benefits system, an unexpected bill (maybe, for example, the roof starts leaking or the washing machine gives up the ghost) or for a whole host of reasons. If you would like to contribute, you can bring packets or tins (with long sell by dates) to any of our services. We envisage a steady trickle of a few items at a time rather than a bonanza like harvest. You might have something over or buy something specially. It is also likely that during the course of the year other reception centres for goods will be set up. I'll keep you informed.



Not Just Names – Centenary of the Outbreak of the Great War

It is important to realise who these people were – people with similar hopes and aspirations to ours, whose lives were cut short and whose loved ones' lives were so altered when their country demanded of them the supreme sacrifice. It is right that their stories should not be forgotten. At the two events detailed below, we hope to stage a small exhibition of memorabilia – medals, photographs, pay books, letters home, etc.. If you have anything you would be prepared to lend us for these exhibitions, please let me know.

We shall be marking the centenary at Halling on 27th July at 11.00 at our Holy Communion service, in the presence of the Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress of Medway, Cllr & Mrs Ray Maisey, president and preacher the Bishop of Tonbridge. We shall be marking the centenary at Cuxton on 3rd August at 6.30 at Evensong in the presence of the Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress of Medway, Cllr & Mrs Ray Maisey, preacher the Archdeacon of Rochester. Both services will be followed by a reception.

Dates For Your Diary

1st June: Big Lunch Cuxton Recreation Ground
14th June: Deanery Quiet Day Aylesford Priory
24th June: Halling Patronal Festival Eucharist @ 9.30 @ St John's
28th June: Halling Village Fayre
19th July: Parish Barbecue Rectory Grounds
27th July: 11.00 First World War Commemoration Service Halling
3rd August: 6.30 First World War Commemoration Service Cuxton

20th September: 7.30 Christian Aid Quiz, All Saints Frindsbury
5th October: 6.30 Harvest Praise & Harvest Supper St Michael's and Church Hall
25th October: 7.30 Quiz for Parish Funds Church Hall
2nd November: All Souls Services Cuxton 9.30 & Halling 11.00
30th November: 6.30 Evensong @ St Michael's followed by an open invitation to rector's 60th birthday celebrations in church hall.

St John's Draw April: £5 each Mrs Chidwick (9), Mrs Chidwick (27), Mr Silver (77) & Mr Tower (146) – drawn by Mrs Heasman



Puzzled by the Trinity?

Don't puzzle. Worship. *O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him all the earth.*¹ We do live in an amazing world. These last few weeks have seen an almost incredible plethora of wild flowers. You and I inhabit a tiny corner of the habitable globe. The earth is just one planet in what seems to be an infinite cosmos. This universe of time and space is just one aspect of God's Creation. *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*²

¹ Psalm 96⁹

² Psalm 19¹

We see God's Creation marred by sin, sickness and suffering. The daily news media are full of horrors – war, crime, unemployment, disease, one trouble after another, problem piled upon problem. *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.*³

The Almighty Father has not abandoned His errant children. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.*⁴ Moreover, in becoming part of His own Creation, God did not take the form of an angel or of an idol; He became a man, a human being like you or me. *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.*⁵

Having become one of us through His Son, God invites us through faith in the Blood of Jesus to become one with Him in the Holy Spirit. *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*⁶

God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - is the perfect unity of love, the holy, blessed and glorious Trinity. In Christ, we are one with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and therefore we are one with one another, that same perfect unity of love, in all eternity. *After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood roundabout the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen, Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.*⁷

Don't puzzle about the Trinity. Worship God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit - now and in all eternity.

Easter

We had a busy Easter this year, with Baptisms on Easter Day in both Cuxton and Halling, our annual meeting on the Saturday in Easter week, and Ian Childs to speak to us at our 9.30 and 11.00 services on the Sunday following about the Medway Foodbank. Tremendous to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection. Wonderful to baptise into His Body three new Christians. Marvellous to have the opportunity to learn more about what is being done to serve Him by serving one another and to hear about more ways in which we can be involved in doing God's work in the Medway Towns.

But, in all the excitement, there wasn't really time to thank all of you for what you put into our Easter celebration (and indeed into everything we do throughout the year) – musicians, choristers, bell ringers, readers, chalice administerers, servers and sacristans, flower arrangers, cleaners, polishers, general tidy uppers, church and churchyard maintenance people, coffee makers, comestible creators, the organisers of our Easter Egg Hunt, etc., etc.. Bound to have missed someone out, but thanks to all of you from all who enjoy the benefits of everything you contribute. Roger.

On Democracy

“Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary” Reinhold Niebuhr.

³ Psalm 14¹

⁴ John 3¹⁶

⁵ Hebrews 2¹⁴

⁶ Galatians 4⁶

⁷ Revelation 7⁹⁻¹²

From the Registers

Baptisms:

20th April (Easter Day)

Jo-Dee Lofthouse
Charlotte Elizabeth Payne
Joseph William Roser

Poplicans Road
Poplicans Road
Vicarage Close

Wedding:

4th May

Graham David Lee & Tina Lancley

Halling

Funerals:

25th April

1st May

Robert Charles Taylor (71)
Hazel Woodger (82)
Hilda Margaret Law (93)

Bush Road
Meadow Close
Pilgrims Road

Nature Notes April 2014

“Beauty” by John Masefield

I have seen dawn and sunset on moors and windy hills
Coming in solemn beauty like slow old tunes of Spain;
I have seen the lady April bringing the daffodils,
Bringing the springing grass and the soft warm April rain.

I have heard the song of the blossoms and the old chant of
the sea,
And seen strange lands from under the arched white sails
of ships;
But the loveliest things of beauty God ever has showed to
me,
Are her voice, and her hair, and eyes, and the dear red
curve of her lips.

The first of the month is a beautiful, warm sunny day. I walk round the lake at Bluewater with Murphy. Wild cherry blossom adorns the car park with pink flowers and some of these blooms appear from the base of the trunks. A pair of honking Canada geese flies overhead and another pair forage on the grassy path beside the water. In the early evening, I watch a blue tit gathering Murphy's fur from the shrubs for nest building. The next day, there is pollution in the air caused by sand being blown over from the Sahara Desert. It is quite unpleasant. On 3rd, early sunshine soon becomes hazy as a result of pollution. Grey clouds form later in the morning persisting through the afternoon. I hear the strident call of a great tit. Grey skies remain. The next day is grey when I drive to Strood and park by the river from where I feel a raw wind blowing. Later in the day the setting sun paints pink clouds among the grey. It is so good to see daylight hours increasing. At Bluewater, in the early morning of 5th, it is not long before the sun breaks through and clouds disperse to reveal a blue sky. So many trees' leaves have unfurled revealing a beautiful fresh green. A pair of grebe is nest building and broom and cowslips are blooming along the banks. Blossom adorns some trees. The 6th is grey; then rain falls most of 7th. A crow, magpies, feral pigeons,

dunno and a robin come to the garden for food. The 9th is beautiful with golden sunshine and blue skies. In the afternoon, I walk up the church path to the fields where golden dandelions and buttercups, white dead nettle and garlic mustard bloom. As I cross the buttercup meadow, I listen to the melodious song of birds. I enter Mays Wood where celandines, wood anemones and florets of cow parsley bloom. As I progress through the wood, I see violets and the first bluebells. In the field, the young wych elm has burst into leaf and blackthorn displays snowy white flowers. I continue through the wood and see more violets sanicle and ramson plants. Dog's mercury and wood spurge carpet the woodland floor. Beech and hornbeam leaves are unfurling such a delicate green and hawthorn and sycamore saplings have emerged through the brown leaves of Autumn. I cross into Wingate Wood where carpets of beautiful bluebells scent the air. Violets, sanicle, pale yellow primroses wild strawberry flowers and cuckoo flowers bloom along the paths. I sit on a log to drink in the beauty of my surroundings at the top of the path leading to Court Lodge Farm. Eventually, I retrace my steps, enjoying once again all the flowers. I hear blackbirds singing, then see a greenfinch flying ahead of me. and I hear its familiar call. This walk has been an

enjoyable part of Spring. The 10th, which is a fine day, I walk with Murphy at Bluewater where the trees are beautiful. A coot and Canada goose glide on the water. Various trees and shrubs are bearing blossom mostly white and cream. Northeast winds blow for several days bringing a chill to the air. On 12th, I see the first sainfoin flowers in bloom at Bluewater and mauve and white lilac flowers are in bud in the garden. By 15th the skies are still light, then when darkness does fall a bright moon shines in a clear sky. On 16th I am taken round the country lanes beyond Snodland. I see hawthorns adorned with May blossom and wayfaring trees in flower. The countryside clad in Spring green is glorious. East winds continue to blow; so the air maintains its chill. The 20th, Easter Day, begins grey and damp, eventually becoming very wet and rather cold. As I walk to church, I'm aware of the hedgerows, which are fresh and green, and birdsong is in the air. The cold winds persist. The next day there is such a wonderful contrast in the weather, for a warm sun beams its rays down on the earth from a clear, blue sky. I walk with Murphy round the lake where most of the trees are in full leaf. The afternoon skies become rather hazy with high cloud, but the warmth of the sun remains. The mauve lilac in the garden is in bloom and fills the air with its sweet perfume. Roadside verges are clad in frothy cow parsley. There is rather more cloud on 22nd and dark, billowing clouds drift across the sky from the southwest in the morning, bringing the occasional shower. Once again we walk round the lake. I see creamy horse chestnut spikes, apple blossom, dandelions, and daisies, cut leaved cranesbill, speedwell and golden buttercups.

At home, over on the embankment, I listen to a blackbird's tuneful song. Comfrey flowers in the garden are providing nectar for the bees. On the embankment the hawthorns are displaying creamy may blossom. On 26th, when I walk along Pilgrims Road, I notice honesty flowers blooming in the

hedgerows. The next day, grey clouds march across the sky driven by easterly winds. In the churchyard a horse chestnut tree is adorned with creamy spikes. On 28th, we set off for a few days in Wiltshire. Grey clouds are scudding across the sky. Some heavy showers fall but there are episodes of bright sunshine. Along the route, beautiful May blossom adorns the hedgerows. We eventually arrive at our destination of Orcheston, where on the hill new born lambs are gambolling. The next day we travel along lanes bedecked with cow parsley to Devizes. Then in the afternoon I sit in the garden enjoying the warmth of the sun. In the evening, I walk along the lane, up the woodland path to the fields. The views are glorious, birds are singing and there is a beautiful sunset. On 30th, the countryside is enveloped by fog which brings with it a blanket of silence. I hear sheep bleating up on the hill. As we drive through beautiful countryside, the roadside verges bedecked with frothy cow parsley, the fog lifts to reveal sunshine and blue sky. Skies are overcast again when we reach Broad Chalke which has very recently won the Countryside Alliance Award for village shop and Post Office. We had come to know some of the people and were thrilled for them. After spending some time there, we drove on to Wilton then eventually back to Orcheston. I sit in the garden enjoying the sun's warmth. I then visit the local church which is, sadly, now redundant. It is bitterly cold inside so that I do not linger long there. And am unable to feel a presence of the Lord there. It feels abandoned. I am glad to feel the warmth again outside. The evening sunshine is glorious. I forgot to mention that the village shop is also a police station and a place of worship because it is the United Reformed Church. It is really worth a visit if you are in that part of the world. And you will be able to buy coffee and delicious scones and at lunchtime soup. The community really benefits from this service. Elizabeth Summers.

Halling Historical Society

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 19th June at the Jubilee Hall, Upper Halling, on Thursday 19th June at 7.30 pm. The speaker will be Mr Jeremy Clark and the subject Rochester Museum and Guild Hall.

The Vision Thing

And it shall come to pass in the last days saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my spirit; and they shall prophesy. Acts 2^{17&18}).

Robert McNamara citing George Bernard Shaw: *You see things as they are and ask 'Why?' But I dream things that never were, and ask 'Why not?'*

Where there is no vision the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. Proverbs 29¹⁸.

Hymn Writers 15

John Mason Neale

24th January, 1818 – 6th August, 1866

Seated one day at the organ (it was Palm Sunday) I was weary as I waited for the congregation, choir and the Rector to process up from the church hall. My eyes wandered over the first hymn of the service which was “All Glory, Laud and Honour”. I had given Dave Maxwell the starting note of ‘C’ before he went down and I was hoping that as the choir came back over the threshold, they were still in the key of C major as I began to play the continuation of the hymn that had been sung up the path. Otherwise I would have to look for the lost chord of another key to play everyone into the building. In that perfect peace, interrupted only by the talking of those members of the congregation who had decided to stay in church, my eyes settled on the hymnbook where the name of the author of the hymn was dedicated and I read “translated” by J M Neale. It occurred to me then and there that not only were there hymn writers but also hymn translators who studied the words written from the past or from other countries or cultures. When I checked the list of entries of authors in the lists at the back of the hymnbook I found that, apart from Charles Wesley, Neale had more credits than other author, but most of these were for translations into English of several hymns that we are familiar with singing.

John Mason Neale was born in Romford, East London to the Rev’d Cornelius Neale and Susanna who was a descendant of the cleric and hymn writer John Mason. He was educated at Sherborne School, Dorset, and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was the best classical scholar in his year. At university, he was affected by the Oxford Movement and, although he was ordained in 1841, he was forced to resign five years later because of disagreements with his congregation and the diocesan bishop. He then became warden of Sackville College, an almshouse at East Grinstead, an appointment he held until his death. He co-founded an order for women in the Church of England, called the Society of Saint Margaret, dedicated to working with the sick, but Anglicans in his day were suspicious of any suggestion of Roman Catholicism and some felt that he was an agent of the Vatican subverting the church from within and he was threatened by unruly mobs who wanted to burn down his house and throw stones at him. He eventually persuaded by showing a basic goodliness and won the confidence of those in opposition to him and the Sisterhood of St Margaret survived and also prospered. Neale was principal founder of the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association in 1864 bringing together churches from the Orthodox religions with members of the Church of England, but his high church principals still made him endure long periods of alienation.

Neale made translations of the Eastern liturgies into English and wrote devotional commentaries on the psalms. He is best known for his translations of hymn verses from the mediaeval and ancient traditions, from Greek and Latin, together with the hymnody from Russia and Syria. The English Hymnal (1906) contains over sixty translations and six original hymns by him and Ancient and Modern Revised holds thirty-two credits to Neale. In the Christmas listings most widely known are “Good Christian Men, Rejoice” and the St. Stephen’s Day favourite “Good King Wenceslas”. He was responsible for the Advent hymn “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”, based on the “O Antiphons” for the week preceding Christmas and also his hymn “A Great and Mighty Wonder” which was translated from the Greek. Neale is author of “O Happy Band of Pilgrims” and co-author of “Come, ye Faithful, raise the Anthem”. Without translators like John Mason Neale many of the hymns that we know and love today would have been lost to us. The coming together of work that has been written in other countries and cultures enriches our own experience of hymn singing.

*The cross that Jesus carried he carried as your due;
The crown that Jesus weareth he weareth it for you
O happy band of pilgrims, look upward to the skies
Where such a light affliction shall win so great a prize*

JGB

Another Personal Note on the Way We Do Palm Sunday at Cuxton.

In the military, personnel each year have to perform a basic fitness test to demonstrate that they are still fit for duty. I always think of Palm Sunday as my basic fitness test – being able, fully robed, to process up the hill from the church hall to St Michael’s whilst singing a hymn of eight verses, each with a chorus. A further test, as John intimates above, is that we finish in the key in which we started! The processions I have enjoyed most are those in which we have been joined in our worship by passersby. The first year I was here we started in the village and processed with a donkey. Of course we don’t have to be physically fit in order to worship, or mentally fit or even morally or spiritually fit. All we need is faith! RIK.

What the Church Believes About the Holy Spirit – Pentecost or Whitsun (June 8th)

Numbers 11 vv 24-30 p148, Acts 2 vv 1-21 p1093, 1 Corinthians 12 vv 1-13 p1153, John 7 vv 37-39 p1072

What does the Church believe about the Holy Spirit? The fifth of the 39 Articles of Religion of the Church of England is entitled *Of the Holy Ghost* and states, *The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.* It may not be obvious, at first glance, what this means. It does, however, state quite clearly our faith that the Holy Spirit (or Holy Ghost, two versions of one name for the same person of the Trinity) is God. If He were not, it would be blasphemous to say Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

So the Holy Spirit does not come into existence at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit exists eternally with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is involved in Creation and Salvation, as well as in Sanctification. There is one God and He exists eternally as three persons, co-eternal and co-equal. The Holy Spirit is one person of the Godhead. He is not an impersonal force or influence and that is why it is usual to refer to the Holy Spirit as He rather than It. Some people may ask, why not refer to the Holy Spirit as She? It is true that the Hebrew Word, used in the Old Testament for the Spirit of God, is grammatically feminine. So it would not be wrong sometimes to think of the Holy Spirit as She. Normally we would, however, certainly think of the Spirit as a person. The Greek word used in the New Testament for the Holy Spirit is grammatically neuter and, occasionally, it seems right to translate it as It. All this just serves to demonstrate that human words are inadequate when we attempt to speak about God.

We first meet the Holy Spirit in the Bible right at the very beginning. The second verse of Genesis tells us *the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.* Psalm 33 teaches us: *By the Word of the LORD were the heavens made.* Now the Word of God is Jesus. So all three persons of the Trinity, the Son and the Spirit as well as the Father, are involved in the work of Creation. The eternal God creates time and space and energy and matter and these are sustained by His continuing love for as long as it is His good pleasure that they should remain.

The Spirit is the Spirit of the Risen Christ. He is described as *another comforter* (or *paraclete*). Jesus is the original comforter (or paraclete). When He ascends into Heaven, He sends the Holy Spirit on the Church and on the world. The Spirit bears witness of Jesus and works with Jesus in all the work which Jesus does. The Spirit is the fulfilment of Christ's promise, *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

The Spirit intercedes for us in Heaven. He prays with us and for us. He prays on our behalf when we do not know how to pray or feel unable to pray. The Holy Spirit is God's Love in action, caring for us. It is through the Holy Spirit that we know God to be Abba, Father, and also that we acknowledge Jesus as Lord.

We C21 human beings are not sufficiently awed by God. We shy away from the concept that *the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.* Rather than recognising that it is an awesome thing to come into the presence of the living God, the God Who made Heaven and earth, the God, Who, Himself thrice holy, judges us by the standard of Jesus' self-sacrificial love, we take it for granted that we can come and go just as we please. The Bible recognises that *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* We can only enter the Presence through the Blood of Jesus and with the advocacy of the Holy Spirit.

The Church of God is the Body of Christ. We Christians are commissioned to complete the work of Jesus. We are the Temple of the Holy Spirit and it is by the power of the Spirit of the Risen Christ that we are enabled to do this work. The Holy Spirit gives us the gifts which enable us to glorify God and to do His work in the world. St Paul speaks about gifts of the Holy Spirit such as wisdom, faith, healing and miracles, but he says that the greatest of them all is love.

In the Old Testament, more mundane abilities – the talents of craftsmen, artists and musicians – as well as gifts like prophecy, are seen as the work of the Holy Spirit. Whatever you do for God you can only do

through the gift of the Holy Ghost and, whatever good works He has prepared for you to walk in are your privilege and are to be done with all your might and in His strength. *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him.*

There is no problem in seeing the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. It is true that our fellowship with the Holy Spirit is only possible because of the Cross of Jesus. In sacrificing Himself on the Cross, Jesus effects an atonement, an at-one-ment, which makes it possible for us to be reconciled to God. It is because Jesus has died and risen that, through faith in Him, we may dwell in God and He in us. The Holy Spirit works in the Church and the world because of Jesus the incarnate Son. But God is eternal and the effects of the Cross are therefore eternal. So the Holy Spirit operated, operates and will operate in every age of history, because all ages are encompassed in eternity. We can therefore see the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, as well as the New, though we need the New to open up the mysteries of the Old.

Through our fellowship in the Holy Spirit we will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, which St Paul identifies as *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness & temperance.*

These are the fruits Christians may expect to bring forth on earth, but the Holy Spirit is also an earnest – a foretaste and a pledge – of the joy which shall be ours in Heaven.

St Paul says that it is possible to grieve the Holy Spirit. I think this means by failing to open ourselves to the riches of His grace, failing to live in accordance with God's Will for our lives, in particular, perhaps, by failing to live as members of the Body of Christ, united in love and with a common purpose. In the same chapter (Ephesians 4) he speaks of *endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

St Paul also warns us not to quench the Holy Spirit, to put out the Whitsun fire. We would do this if we refused to receive His gifts or if we refused to use the gifts He gives us – the time, talents and money, perhaps – to the glory of God and for the good of the Church and the world. Particularly Paul may be warning us against refusing supernatural gifts, the gifts that enable us to go above and beyond the commonplace.

Terrifyingly, Jesus speaks of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost and He says that such blasphemy is the unforgivable sin. I believe this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is so to harden your heart against God that even He cannot penetrate the carapace of your rejection.

One last thing to think about. People sometimes ask why there is so much more about the Father and the Son in our creeds and in our worship than there is about the Holy Spirit. Possibly, the answer is that it is the Spirit's work to bear witness of the Father and the Son and not to bear witness of Himself. If we really think about it, however, all the clauses of the Apostle's Creed which follow *I believe in the Holy Ghost*, actually depend on the Holy Ghost if they are to mean anything at all. Think about it. *I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholick Church; The communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the life everlasting. Amen.*

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Joke

Two men come out the pub to find they have missed the last bus. They decide to "borrow" a bus. One waits outside while the other enters the bus station. After waiting ages, the first guy says, "What took you so long?" His mate replies, "The 151 was right at the back". "Well," he responds, "If you'd taken the 176, we could have walked from the roundabout!"



Max's Tail Piece

A few days ago, Master and I were listening to a programme on the radio. While Master snorted with derision and indignation, I just laughed. Dogs can laugh, you know. It just doesn't show. The subject was exercise.

Now quite often we hear experts telling us on the radio that, because of advances in medicine, nutrition, sanitation, etc., all you human beings are now going to live to be a hundred. Moreover, because of the declining birth rate consequent on your having more important things to do than to procreate children, there will be nobody to pay your pensions or to look after you in old age. Shock! Horror! You should all be panicking.

That's what you hear about half the time (say Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays). The rest of the time (say Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays), it's all shock, horror, panic, because this is going to be the first generation to die younger than their parents on account of the obesity epidemic (or binge drinking or drugs or knife crime or the internet or whatever subject has caught the attention of the "campaigners" being interviewed this particular week). Maybe it's a good thing we don't listen much to the radio on Sundays. We go to Church to escape the gloom! We don't have a Sunday paper either.

Anyway, last week, lack of exercise was the big killer under discussion. How can people be made to exercise more? was the question. Now Master thinks that "campaigners" and "experts" should mind their own business and that people should be allowed to do what they like with their own lives so long as they don't hurt anyone else and are prepared to accept responsibility for their own actions, but then Master doesn't mind being unfashionable! [He read a piece by a consultant surgeon on how the working classes ought to be made to eat healthily. His response was that, if you are a consultant surgeon with all the job satisfaction that brings, you live in a nice house in a nice area and are looking forward to retiring at a relatively young age on a generous pension, maybe a lettuce leaf and a glass of spring water is all the satisfaction you need at lunch time, but, if you clean toilets all day, working for the minimum wage, live in a damp flat on a sink estate, and expect to retire on just the state pension with a much lower life expectancy than professional people enjoy, and a burger and chips, washed down with a bottle of sugary, fizzy drink and topped off with a cigarette, is all you have to look forward to each day, then why should even that be taken away from you by some do-gooder?]

Take no notice of Master. The day's topic was exercise. First of all, it seemed that lots and lots of you spend hundreds of pounds on annual gym memberships and then hardly ever go. The answer was walking, apparently. Almost everybody can walk. It's good for you. It's difficult to injure yourself walking. It doesn't cost anything. You don't need any specialist equipment. All you need is a pair of comfortable shoes. That raised the question why people buy uncomfortable shoes. Knowing the way your human minds work, it is probable that uncomfortable shoes are regarded as stylish and are therefore expensive because it shows that the wearer can afford a carriage and doesn't have to walk. If rich people do choose to walk in the country, they spend a fortune on stylish boots as status symbols. High heels are supposed to make women more attractive. So that's a feminist issue. Some feminists would say that it is demeaning to women if they feel they have to wear uncomfortable footwear in order to conform to someone else's stereotype of feminine beauty. Other feminists would say that it is always a woman's right to choose. So it is liberating to wear from choice what your grandmother wore because she felt she had to.

Anyway, walking is both cheap and easy, two reasons for not doing it in some people's book. Then came the phone in with all the excuses for not walking. The big one was that walking takes too long. People's lives are so busy with so many activities to fit in. But would they need to fit in so many activities if they walked more? How about the person who needed to get a lift from the station because otherwise she wouldn't have had time to go to the gym? Maybe the person who complained that it would take too long to walk to the shops, visited the shops more often than she needed to. If so, she was not only depriving herself of exercise by driving, she was unnecessarily contributing to pollution and congestion by taking her car every time. You'd have thought that walking was the natural way for human beings to get about, but apparently, many of you never even think about it and automatically reach for the car keys, no matter how short the journey or beautiful the weather. So you deprive yourselves not only of exercise, but of the enjoyment of the landscape and of the opportunity to meet other people. Also research shows that people think better walking than they do sitting. Master's sermons and magazine articles are more likely to be composed in the woods than when he is at his desk. The most sensible suggestion to the phone in was to get a dog!

Sitting still is just not natural. Teachers and parents are always telling children to sit still. Dogs are always being told, *Down boy*. It isn't natural. Our bodies are made to walk and run and jump and frisk and even dance – though you won't catch Master doing that. True, when you reach my age, lying in the sun is also good, but it doesn't stop me chasing the odd leaf or running off with Master's handkerchiefs. Master, too, is considerably less likely than he once was to run a marathon or to cycle a hundred miles – or, truth be told, to go out when it's cold, dark or raining, but he doesn't intend to give up walking. I wouldn't allow him to.

It isn't natural to sit still. Walking and lying are so much better for your backs. There is even a vogue for desks you stand at, rather than sit. You use more calories standing than sitting and it's better for your joints and muscles. Didn't Victorian clerks do something similar? But these days, you don't just stand at a desk with longer legs than normal; you have a special desk with an electric motor which adjusts the height. Wouldn't it also use more calories to move the desk by hand? Walking's still better than standing. So we always walk on to the next stop, rather than wait for the bus. When we've walked on enough stops either it's not worth getting on the bus or it's passed us between stops. Either way, Scrooge has saved the fare. More on this when he qualifies for his free bus pass! Max, the Rectory Spaniel.