

GRAPES VINE

No 94

Spring 2011

THE MAGAZINE OF THE DIOCESE OF BRECHIN

The Bishop of Aberdeen & Orkney writes:

Freedom to Pray!

Eileen was a lady in my last congregation. She was a crusty sort of individual who had been an enthusiastic smoker for about eighty of her ninety-something years. Eventually ill health got the better of her and one day she said to me:

"My dear boy, I'm going to have to go into hospital. I know there's no point me asking you not to pray for me out loud in church because I know you will whatever I say."

She knew me well. And she trusted me. And she had heard me teach about prayer on numerous occasions. And she knew that I always voiced prayers for people by name.

What Eileen was saying to me was that from deep within the Christian tradition the worshipping community voices prayers for people as a normal part of its regular life.

Not long back I led a three evening course on intercessory prayer in one of our churches and was developing the theme that to pray for people should be the default position of all churches. I didn't realize it at the time but providentially I was reversing some teaching that had been given several years previously whereby people had had to give their consent (written I think) before they would be prayed for by name aloud at the Sunday worship.

It seems to me that our churches should be places where people are prayed for freely and openly. In several churches where I've been these last few months it has been a joy to have heard and experienced numerous people praying out loud when invited to do so in the course of the Sunday liturgy. And this has happened even in some of the most traditional of congregations.

A rough translation of the word 'liturgy' is 'the people at work with their prayers'. I like that. That's what we should be – people at work with our prayers.

And whole congregations should be places and people who are at work with their prayers not only individually but also together. Churches must increasingly become places where people know they can go to them and be confident that if the need arises there will be people there who will pray for them and pray with them.

This shouldn't surprise us, though it needs to be said and constantly repeated. Indeed I want us to begin to expect it to become the norm. Namely that whenever our congregations meet there is that normal confidence simply to get on and get to work with our prayers and to name, in quiet and aloud, before God those who most need our prayers. If there are folks alongside us at the time then my encouragement to them and to you is to have the confidence to pray for them then and there.

At the very least there's enough to reassure us in the New Testament that this is what

Christians should be doing. It's also one of the best possible advertisements for the loving dynamic that is at the heart of the gospel.

My blessings to you,



Acting Bishop of Brechin



'Hands' (often called Praying Hands) by Albrecht Dürer

Albrecht and his brother Albert both had great artistic talent but were too poor for both to go to the Academy in Nuremberg. Albert went to work in the mines to finance his brother. Four years later when Albrecht had achieved a great reputation he wanted to provide funds for his brother to go to the Academy. But Albert's hands were so damaged with the harsh work, broken fingers and arthritis that he could hardly hold a cup let alone a brush. Albrecht drew this picture of his brother's hands – a record of the sacrifice that Albert had made.

The Rt Rev'd Dr John Ambrose Cyril Mantle

1946 – 2010

(Bishop of Brechin)

Bishop John Mantle's death with all its sadness will be marked with a sense of affection and thanksgiving for his ministry within the Diocese of Brechin.

He returned to the Diocese of Brechin as their Bishop when he was consecrated in St. Paul's Cathedral, Dundee on 8 October 2005. Bishop John, as he was known affectionately by many in the Diocese, had his Episcopal ministry cut short through illness when he retired in October 2010. He was no stranger to the Diocese of Brechin and as Bishop he began to build the direction, spirituality and collegiality within the Diocese which was appreciated and valued by many who came across him. His Episcopal ministry was also greatly enhanced by his wife Gill in her own ministry as she travelled round the Diocese with her husband.

Bishop John was no stranger either to the Diocese of Brechin or to the Scottish Episcopal Church. He was born in Aberdeen in 1946, a son of the Rectory, his father, Canon Rupert Mantle, being a highly respected priest within the church. At the age of 9 John first arrived in Dundee when his father began his ministry to the congregation of St Ninian's, Mid Craigie in the city of Dundee. They moved as a family from Inverness to Dundee and for John Mantle it was not the best of experiences having to re-settle in Dundee. Very quickly however the Diocese of Brechin and the city of Dundee grew on him. He loved and was inspired by Festal Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral, Dundee where he would attend with his father. These and other experiences opened him up to a searching spirituality and a flowering vocation to the priesthood.

Many of the older members of churches in Dundee hold photographs of John Mantle as an Altar Boy and one of them shows

him holding the crosier at a ceremony in St Ninian's over which Bishop John Sprott presided. This is the same crosier known in the Diocese as Bishop Forbes' Crosier that he carried at his own consecration.

As a young man Bishop John left the Diocese of Brechin to train for the priesthood and returned to be ordained and serve his curacy in St Mary's Church, Broughty Ferry. His ministries were varied and these experiences and the contribution he made to them gave him a broad base from which he developed an understanding of the work of the church. He worked in broadcasting, teaching, chaplaincy work, congregational work and all of this led him to be called as the 54th Bishop of Brechin. Not only did Bishop John bring a wealth of experience and ministry to the Diocese but a depth of spirituality to an ancient Diocese which was formed in 1150. His spirituality and theology were grounded in the traditions of the church and this was the key to much of his work within the Diocese. He was a rich spiritual leader to a Diocese deeply bedded in the core of the historic Episcopal heartland of Scotland.

Many within the Diocese were moved and inspired by his addresses to the Diocesan Synods drawing on much of his own experience but also on the life of Charles de Foucauld, the former French Cavalry Officer who became a desert hermit. Bishop John encouraged many to engage in the activities such as retreats and to face the challenges that they could bring to individuals. He was always at ease with people from all sorts of backgrounds and enjoyed engaging with them and in the relationships he built up with them. He used his creativity, including illustrating his talks with his own photographs, to let people have a glimpse of the Kingdom; and his intellect helped them to grow in knowledge and love of

God. His wider experience of life brought much to his leadership.

At his Retiral Service there were two words which were used by the speakers on that special occasion. They were words that related to Bishop John and to his wife Gill. They were affection and thanksgiving. These words reflected the feelings of many within the Diocese of Brechin for the life and work of Bishop John. It was clear from the words of the Primus on that occasion that Bishop John had played his full part in the College of Bishops and from others who spoke of the affection that had grown for Bishop John as a result of his return to the Diocese. All within the Diocese and those in the wider community were thankful for his ministry during his period as Bishop.

His illness and retirement as Bishop was a loss for the Diocese and for the Scottish Episcopal Church. He will be sorely missed by those who were privileged to work with him but more particularly he will be sorely missed as a husband to his wife, Gill, and a father to their children Tim and Anna.

J.J. Morrow

St Drostan's Picnic 2011

**Come along to
St Drostan's, Tarfside
on Sunday afternoon,
10 July
and join in the annual
Patronal Festival and
Picnic.**

**For more information:-
Tel: 01569 730967**

**Email:
stdrostansbook@btinternet.com**

The Diocesan Synod

The Annual Meeting of the Diocesan Synod took place on 5 March at the same venue as in 2010 – Chalmers Ardler Church in Dundee – chaired by the Rt Rev'd Robert Gillies, Acting Bishop for the diocese.

During the Eucharist in his Charge to the Synod he noted that in the course of his ministry there had been many programmes for church growth and evangelism. What is essential if these are to be successful is a change in mindset from the presumption of decline to the reality that churches can grow. Prayer is crucial to allow the seeds of growth to germinate, as is leadership and trust.

Applying the thoughts of the 19th century social economist John Ruskin, he said that setting targets only dispirited people when these are not achieved. What is needed is good relationships, which could be summed up in three words: affection, trust, loyalty. These are at the heart of how God has treated us:

“God so loved the world” – Affection

“That he gave his only Son” – Trust

“That all who believe in him should not perish but have life eternal” – Loyalty

And so these qualities should be ours, too, for “insofar as we have done it unto the least of those around us we have done it unto him”.

The business of the meeting proceeded efficiently with the usual reports, none of which gave rise to controversy or the need for debate, and all proposals were agreed. In presenting the proposed budget and quota the treasurer said that although the overall requirement was less than in 2010 because there was no bishop's stipend to pay, provision had to be made for the expenses associated with the episcopal election and consecration of the new bishop.

Within the report of the Mission & Ministry Board there was launched the Church in Society Resource Booklet entitled *Brechin to Emmaus*. This is the outcome of the audit made of the wide variety of ways in which the churches throughout the diocese reach out both to the local community and the wider world.

Synod was greatly impressed by the illustrated presentation given by Pat Millar on her recent visit to Swaziland. A resumé of this is to be found on page 9.

Following the decision of the 2010 Synod to hold a consultation on Ethical Banking in the diocese, a report from two consultations and views from vestries was given. In consequence a motion was presented: “The Diocesan Synod notes the content of this report and encourages both the Diocese and the congregations (where necessary) to change their bank to one which has an acceptable ethical banking policy.” This was passed by an overwhelming margin.

After the close of the Diocesan Synod there was a brief meeting of the Electoral Synod which was informed that, due to circumstances which had arisen, the original dates for the Election of a new Bishop had to be changed. Now the Meeting with the Candidates will take place on Saturday, 7 May and the Electoral Meeting itself will be on the evening of Wednesday, 18 May.

Diocesan Youth Action Group

2 New Activities Planned For Young People in the Diocese

The Diocesan Youth Action Group is planning the following activities for Young People throughout the Diocese.

Diocesan Youth Council

This group will plan future activities for Young People throughout the Diocese. We hope to meet 3 times a year to do the planning but also have fun & fellowship. The group is open to all Young People aged 12 – 18. Don't let the title of the group put you off. We'll think of a better name at our first meeting.

Diocesan Music & Drama Group

We are looking for enthusiastic Young People who have an interest in music and drama. You might like music but don't do drama or like drama but don't like music. It doesn't matter as this new group will cater for everyone. Come along and make new friends and have fun.

We already have some Young People who have shown an interest in these groups but we would like more to get involved. If you think you might be interested please e-mail the Diocesan Youth Action Group Convener, Steven Cassells, at <steven.cassells@blueyonder.co.uk> for further information. We'll then decide where and when we meet.

Full information will be sent to each congregation once the details have been finalised. We hope to have our first meeting in late March/April.

3rd Sunday

Don't forget the 3rd Sunday events that take place each month around the Diocese. If you would like more information on this please contact <brechin.youth@gmail.com>.

If you are interested in helping with Youth Events in the Diocese please do not hesitate to contact Steven Cassells at <steven.cassells@blueyonder.co.uk>. All offers of assistance are of course subject to the usual checks being carried out.



A Service of Music & Readings for the start of Holy Week

Sunday, 17 April at 6 p.m.

St John the Baptist Church, Dundee

St Mary's, Broughty Ferry and Balgillo Nursery Too

What have CATs, cuddly toys, lots of paint, lots of fencing and antibacterial handwash got in common?

Well, they are all part of what has gone into making the new and innovative partnership between Balgillo Nursery and St Mary's, Broughty Ferry such a huge success already.

It all began in February 2010 when St Mary's Vestry agreed to explore what the Rector, the Rev'd Jonathan Bower, called St Mary's CATs – Carers and Toddlers group. After carefully consulting with the local community, we discerned that Wednesday mornings were without any carer and toddler provision in the Ferry. The Rector then designed a postcard to be handed out inviting carers and their toddlers to the first session. The help of the Mothers Union proved invaluable. A small team handed out postcards to anyone in the Ferry spotted with a pushchair.

It quickly emerged that there was a lot of positive interest in the CATs project. Around the time of our preparing to open CATs, a local (Monfieth) nursery was, sadly, having to close. St Mary's was invited to consider purchasing some of the equipment from that Nursery in order to set up CATs. The Vestry approved the purchase and St Mary's CATs was almost fully equipped overnight!



The Main Hall

It was very hard work running CATs. Each Wednesday saw the Rector down at St Mary's opening up the Halls at 7 a.m. to set up the equipment and get the kettles on. A faithful team of volunteers came

and made coffee, tea, and prepared a healthy nutritious snack for the children. The session opened at 9 a.m. and ran until 11.30 a.m. – sometimes finishing with a time of singing together. Parents and Carers stayed with their children throughout the session and those two and a half hours were a time of fun, developing friendships and contacts, and much chatter!



Jennifer and Kim

Running CATs and providing a generous welcome to local families and children was a real buzz for St Mary's, but given the ageing profile of our congregation it became clear after 5 months that we simply did not have the energy or people power to continue as we were. We were a victim of our own success – rapidly becoming known as one of the best service-providers in the Ferry.

Around that time, a parent who had attended CATs indicated that there was interest from another local Nursery in developing another setting. This was an opportunity to explore new possibilities that could not be missed.

Soon conversations were being had about the reality and practical implications of a full-time Nursery at St Mary's. Given our halls were used for only a tiny fraction of the week at rates that really did not realistically cover overheads, the Vestry felt that, with tightening finances, we should explore the possibility further of more creative and productive use. The Nursery project was not the only option we considered, but it was the most realistic and most beneficial to St Mary's.

Pamela Gall (proprietor) and Kim Sharpe, from Balgillo Nursery

then worked closely with the Rector in exploring the potential. There was a real and genuine desire on both sides to build not only a business relationship but also a true partnership between Church and a community service-provider. This relationship has blossomed, and after much hard work, the formulation of legal agreements, Care Commission agreement and significant investment in St Mary's Halls by the Nursery, the project is now almost complete and ready to be launched.

Pamela, Kim, the Rector, and the Vestry have all worked exceptionally hard together to ensure the best and most creative use of St Mary's Church Halls. The new Nursery will mean that St Mary's is once again alive with sound of children's laughter and learning.

For St Mary's to be able to facilitate this venture is a great privilege and honour. Good stewardship of our historic resources is part of the God-given responsibility for all the faithful, and we are all pleased that this community-oriented project will have its home in St Mary's Halls.



The Baby Room

Having worked hard to secure and grow this new partnership and venture, the Rector is delighted that he will be able to see it come to fruition before he comes to the end of his time in office as Rector, and he wishes **Balgillo Nursery Too** at St Mary's every blessing for all the work and friendships that are ahead.

The Rev'd Jonathan Bower

OBERAMMERGAU 2010

In August 2008, during of our ecumenical services at Stobswell Parish Church, the Rev'd William McLaren advised the Congregation that he was planning to take a group to Oberammergau in 2010 and invited all present to join him. As the Passion Play has been on my 'To Do' list for years, I could not miss this opportunity – so I signed up. William had two informal get-togethers before the trip.

So, on 14 September, 2010 at 6.30 a.m. an eager band of 20 pilgrims finally set-off from Dura Street Car bound for Austria/Germany to see the long planned for *Passion Play* at Oberammergau – they were not to be disappointed.

We stayed in a beautiful family run hotel in the little Tyrolean village of Arzl in Austria (real *Sound of Music* country) with wonderful, breathtaking views. Our accommodation was first class, with five course meals each evening !!! served by staff in traditional dress. My room-mate was Betty Wood from Stobswell, who was very gracious and sharing; we had a great time.

Our first two days were spent sight-seeing, shopping and sampling local delicacies – the apple strudel was 'to die for'. Our guide, Rheiner, was super and explained the history of the towns/villages, the buildings, cultures etc.

On Friday morning, we set off for Germany, and Oberammergau which is truly picturesque. After lunch we walked to the magnificent auditorium to join the rest of the 4,700 throng for the Play which was performed in two parts – from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., then 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. after a break for dinner.

I cannot tell you how moving and thought provoking this wonderful enactment is. I am so glad I decided to go. From the amazing music and 50 strong choir, to centurions on horseback, children, babies, donkeys.... The tableaux of scenes from the Old Testament between acts were beautiful and so life-like. As the play is performed in German, we all had translation booklets to follow. The most moving part for me was when Jesus was taken down from the cross and laid in his mother's arms. I felt for her, for all of us, but as a

mother, how must she have felt? That we did this to her son? I am not ashamed to say I cried. The whole performance was amazing. As we discussed it rather quietly over breakfast the next day we all agreed we had experienced something very, very special.



The Raising of the Crosses
(in the 1960 production)

On a lighter note, it was rather funny to see Judas riding a push-bike through the middle of the town the next morning – on the way to his day job – he's a dentist!

On the Sunday, William led a lovely simple service under a little awning in the grounds of our hotel and as we sang 'How Great Thou Art' in the open air with the Alps as back-drop, what can I say – not a dry eye in the group. We also made good friends with a group of Germans staying at our hotel; we sang and danced with them and they waved us off on our journey home.

This was a really wonderful trip; I visited a new country, made new friends and I thank William very much for taking along the token 'pisky' from St. John's.

Gillian Millar
St. John The Baptist, Dundee



Members of St Ninian's, Dundee entertained customers at Tony's Chipper in Mid Craigie on Christmas Eve along with a Brass Quartet from Carnoustie and District Brass Band.

GODLY PLAY

In most Christian Education children are *told* who God is ... in Godly Play they *discover* who God is.

We can tell you about the circle of children, about the story-telling, the wondering, the reflection and response and the feast, but it's really better to see for yourself. So, join us on a Discovery Day and find out what it's all about.

Saturday, 9 April 2001 from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.
at Holy Rood Church Carnoustie, DD7 6AB

Cost £10

Tel. 07957 885930; e-mail <admin@godlyplaysotland.co.uk>

THE MEMORIAL SERVICE

FOR

THE RIGHT REVEREND DOCTOR JOHN MANTLE

The Church of Saint Paul, Dundee was filled on Saturday, 22 January with people from near and far who gathered to give thanks for the life and ministry of John Mantle especially as Bishop of Brechin since October 2005.

His funeral had taken place at Castor in December, but several of those who had been present then also came to the Memorial Service. In particular Canon Trevor Pitt, a long-standing friend, who delivered the address which is printed below.

Besides clergy and laity from all the congregations of the diocese there were representatives of other dioceses in Scotland as well as those from other denominations of the Church.

A number of politicians attended and others who serve in public life, including the Lord Provost of Dundee, John Letford and the

Provost of Angus, Ruth Leslie Melville.

The service was conducted by the Primus, The Most Rev'd David Chillingworth. At the end of the service tributes and

College of Bishops; the Rt Rev'd Alan Scarfe, Bishop of Iowa, spoke as one of bishops in the tripartite linking of dioceses; a message from the Rt Rev'd Meshack Mabuza, Bishop of Swaziland, who was unable to be present; and the Rev'd Canon Burke, parish priest of St Kyneburgha's Church, Castor spoke as a colleague and friend from when Bishop John had lived there and to where he and Gill had returned last October.

The Primus remarked: "John was a child of the Scottish Episcopal Church and he returned to his native Dundee as Bishop of Brechin to share his faith, his passion for ministry and his experience with clergy and people. Last

October we celebrated that ministry at his Farewell Eucharist. John laid the foundation upon which others will build and we give thanks for the ministry which he so faithfully carried out among us."



remembrances were given by various people. The Rev'd Canon Fay Lamont spoke on behalf of the Diocese of Brechin; the Rt Rev'd Mark Strange, Bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness, spoke for the

The Address at the Funeral and Memorial Service of Bishop John Mantle

given by The Rev'd Canon Trevor Pitt, Canon Emeritus of Newcastle Cathedral

I say to you, among those born of women there has been no-one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (Matthew 11:11)

Too soon – far too soon. We still had so much to say. John's death still leaves me in profound shock and sadness. Hard to believe I shall not hear his voice again, nor find myself challenged by his restless energy and intellectual

questioning. John was indeed a challenging person ... I suspect he was always challenging himself, really.

I certainly found it a challenge when he asked me to preach at his consecration as a bishop. Now, only five short years later, he challenges me again by writing me into his own funeral plans. I suppose he must have trusted me – and I'm sure I'm not the only one to feel that. John was someone

you could trust – and find it returned.

John's friendship and colleague-ship have meant a very great deal to me since we first met nearly 30 years ago. We worked together on the staff of the Canterbury School of Ministry all through the 1980s, and I have received numbers of letters and emails from those who were ordinands then, reminding me of the enormous influence John had on their subsequent

ministries, particularly those who were inspired by what became his ground-breaking doctoral work on the British worker-priests.

John, of course, knew all about the demanding life of ordained ministry from his own early years in Dundee's east end. But he loved the life of cities. I have vivid memories of a Summer School Eucharist he led in Cambridge: with his usual creative flair he had set up a visual presentation as background to an inspired sermon (I think it was some pictures of the holocaust – the 2nd world war was one of his deepest obsessions). Wearing his chasuble at the altar, he remarked that those who loved the altar lights and smells of Catholic worship would not make the grade as priests if they did not love the neon lights of the city more. It is no surprise to me that John selected such a significant passage from Bonhoeffer's prison letters. We were both theological children of the 60s, 'theology for a world come of age'. As Bonhoeffer wrote elsewhere: 'it is only by living completely in the world that one learns to have faith'.

Yet this was the same man, as you know, who shared a deep personal devotion with Charles de Foucauld, the French desert hermit, and who sought out in his own spiritual journey the communities of the Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus who build on de Foucauld's original inspiration. The same goes for John's deep attachment to the community of Brothers at Roslyn.

Despite all John's creative talents, his artistic and musical skills (I did hear him playing drums once!), despite his powerful intellectual grasp and academic achievements, the real John was at heart a gentle, gracious, kind and humble person. He never coveted gongs, honours or preferment. This is no doubt why Matthew's Beatitudes came to be read today alongside Bonhoeffer. John well knew how deeply secular our world has grown, a world which regards the periodic table as an exact and secure description of reality, but which dismisses the wisdom of the

Beatitudes as the take-it-or-leave-it opinion of some ancient sage. No, John was, at the most basic level, very close to Jesus. For him, the Beatitudes would have represented a set of attitudes and values that are in no way narrowly religious, but which evoke a deep sense of social justice tempered by non-confrontational patience. He knew the Beatitudes are not an ethic for the faint-hearted. They were clearly spot on for a Bishop of Brechin with all the various demands, cares, anxieties and crises that go with the job. His episcopal ministry was rooted here, in Jesus. I shared a room with him once on a study course in Jerusalem. I was reading a book on *Excavating Jesus* (on biblical archaeology), but he pestered me all week with his book, Richard Bauckham's *Jesus: The Eye Witnesses*. 'Look, Trevor, he thinks we can get closer to the real Jesus'!

"Brother, sister, let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you ..."

John never wavered in this. Those widely sung and deservedly popular words were sung in his Cathedral five years ago, and we do so again today. They can also be taken, of course, as a hymn to married life, to the joy and the cost of mutual love and service. I have no doubt Gill often found herself married to the diocese as well as to its bishop, and all our thoughts and prayers today are with her, along with Tim and Anna. Still, the sentiments in that song reveal a great deal about where John was taking his diocese, and 'servant bishop' is an apt description of how it was being done. The same applies to my text taken from this week's Advent gospel, for it was John who came immediately to mind on hearing those words in church last Sunday. Our John was also 'the least in the kingdom of heaven', that is, close to Jesus, at the bottom, from where everything is supported.

John's life has been played out in a huge variety of contexts: universities, parishes, sometimes working alone, at other periods with colleagues in staff teams and groups, and usually in demanding

and stressful situations. He demanded a very great deal of himself. There was a certain sternness about John. There was nothing flabby in his thinking, nothing loose in his application to what needed to be done. One thing I admired in John above all else was that he was always the same John, whatever the context. Always the same level of serious, intense integrity. When speaking with him, you could almost see his mind ticking over, listening, processing and then moving on incisively. I'm sure it has been the same as he approached his death – moving on, incisively.

Only last year I spent a day with him at Auschwitz, a place where theology, and often prayer, grind to a halt. Even the immense crowds of fellow visitors that day could not fill the vast, bleak, empty space. I confess that I became greatly fascinated by the line taken by our Polish guide, and by the political questions he raised about the future of Europe. I assumed John was equally fascinated, until he pulled out a notebook from his pocket and said to me, 'Come on, let's find somewhere we can pray the litany I have prepared – we need to pray here'.

This is in many ways such an empty day, a bitter space in our lives. But our sense of loss is not the final reality. I leave you with words from another German theologian of the last century, Karl Rahner, who knew that all theology and all praying begins from within the reality of the human condition, and flows from the honest truth and the often bleak spaces of raw human experience.

"There is no such thing, either in the world or in the heart, as a vacuum. And wherever space is really left by death, by renunciation, by parting, by apparent emptiness – and provided the emptiness that cannot remain empty is not filled by the world, or activity, or chatter, or the deadly grief of the world – there is God."

It is with this God, whom John knew well, and in many different ways enabled so many of us to know, that we now leave him.

SEX MATTERS

A few thoughts on gender by Ken Tonge

There has been a lot of talk about the sexes lately. The recent "Inspires" magazine had several pages given over to the subject. And the October Synod spent some time discussing the Episcopal Church's "gender audit" i.e. the collected data on the distribution of men and women in congregations, decision-making bodies, ordinands and laity in the church. It seems that the assumption underlying all these reports and discussions is that people can be divided into two distinct groups namely, male and female; girls and boys; men and women.

In my ignorance I would have agreed with that up to a few weeks ago. Then I heard a very moving real life story on the radio given by a young woman who had been born as neither male nor female. And, it seems, she is not unusual. The statistics are not exact, but it is likely that about one in fifteen hundred babies are not readily assigned a sex at birth but, because there are only two boxes on the birth certificate they have to be recorded as one or the other.

The lady on the radio had been put down as female and had been brought up by her parents as a girl but her internal reproductive organs were actually testicles, not ovaries. With no consultation and very little information given to her parents she was surgically transformed into what is effectively a female eunuch at the age of eight. The discovery of this has had a profoundly disturbing psychological effect on her.

It may be that there were good medical reasons for doing the operation (e.g. heightened risk of cancer) but she, herself, wishes they had left her to be what she was born as; an intersex person. Intersexuality (which includes androgeny and hermaphroditism) has not been perceived in the West as normal and intervention by "normalising surgery and/or hormone therapy" were considered to have social benefits which outweighed the costs. The costs in terms of trauma to the individual are nowadays becoming better recognised and control of interventions is governed by the United Nations' "Yogyakarta

Principles" aimed at protecting the child. Too late, unfortunately, for the sad lady on the radio.

And too late for the late Sir Ewan Forbes of Craigievar, one-time GP in Alford, who was christened Elizabeth in a "ghastly mistake" in 1912 and brought up as a girl, "sacrificed to prudery, and the horror which our parents had about sex" (in his own words).

To get to the point of all this, however. If there is so much evidence that sexual identity may not be so clear cut, even though most people may actually be one or the other of the sexes, why have boxes labelling e.g. job applicants as M or F? Shouldn't it just be the best person for the job, irrespective of gender or, even, lack of gender? Isn't it more important that all jobs should be open to all types?

And spare a thought for those who have to hide their gender, who feel they must pretend to be Male or Female, simply because society regards intersexuality as a disorder, a defect, a mistake of nature, when really it is just statistically uncommon.

Silent Retreat

organised by the Epiphany Group Aberdeen

Monday October 24 – Sunday October 30

This retreat will take place at St. Drostan's Lodge, Tarfside amongst the beautiful hills and glens of Angus.

The cost will be £240 for full board and daily guidance with a trained Spiritual Director. If the cost seems excessive to you there are various grants that can be accessed so please let the Rev'd Jane Nelson know (telephone 01569 730967).

This year, priority will be given to those who can commit themselves to the whole retreat. After watching the BBC series *The Big Silence* last year there were several people who expressed an interest in having such an experience for themselves.

If you would like to book a place, send name, address and deposit of £25 to Carole Phelan, Hilsea Cottage, 2, Loirston Road, Cove Bay, Aberdeen, AB12 3NS. Cheques should be made out to 'Epiphany Group, Aberdeen'.



On Sunday, 27 February 2011 Bishop Bob confirmed Michaela Longmuir, Natasha Jordan and Karma Fox, three young members of St Ninian's, Dundee

Swaziland Revisited

In October and November last year I went back to Swaziland, having been there in 2007 and 2008, partly to see how various projects had developed and partly to give further practical support.

About the geographical area of Wales, Swaziland is a beautiful, landlocked country which has a population of about 1 million, though this is falling. As in most countries there is wide disparity between rich and poor, but in Swaziland the poor are numerous. About 70% of the population live below the United Nations' poverty line of an income of less than one United States dollar a day.



Cooking in the 'tarpaulin kitchen' at St Augustine's, Mpaka

Apart from endemic poverty the greatest problem is the catastrophe of HIV Aids with over 40% of the population testing positive. But because of discrimination and stigma most don't talk about it by name or admit to having it. They 'get sick' or 'get thin'. Life expectancy has continued to fall in the brief period since I was last there. In 1997 it was 60 years; now it is half that.

This has an impact on every aspect of life and society. There is increasing reluctance for businesses to invest because of the bleak prospects. Most of those who are dying are in their wage-earning years – the people the country needs most.

Although there is now free education for 6 and 7 year-olds (and starting for 8 year-olds this year) with an increasing number of teachers ill and dead, classes have become impossibly large, affecting the quality of education and lack of finance means schools are poorly equipped and resourced.

Health care facilities and resources are totally inadequate. Around 120,000 need medical care, but there are only 2,000 hospital beds. As well as a steep increase in chronic illnesses, mainly attributed to HIV Aids, there has been a dramatic rise in tuberculosis.



Lunchtime at Mpaka – with the spoons taken in 2008

The majority of people live in the countryside as subsistence farmers. With little to fall back on if crops fail or sickness strikes many are forced to sell tools and animals, and to stave off starvation even eat the seeds needed for planting the next crop. Malnutrition then adds to the list of health problems.



A new toothbrush!

With a disproportionate number being sick or dying in what would normally be wage-earning years many families comprise only the very young and the very old. About 15% of households are headed by a child and about 120,000 (12% of the population) are orphans or vulnerable children.

Yet all is not hopeless and certainly the Church is endeavouring to redeem the situation, even if in only small ways. Despite meeting opposition attempts are being made to

change men's sexual behaviour on the principles of abstinence, faithfulness and the use of condoms. If practised this would make a significant impact on the incidence of HIV Aids.

The parishes run Neighbourhood Care Points with various levels of success and support. At St Augustine's Mpaka the children had breakfast and lunch in 2007. A year later they had lunch 3 times a week. And when I went last year they hadn't had any supplies for 4 months: so my first 3 days were spent spending nearly £2,000 on foodstuffs!



Sewing with the Women's Craft Group

In 2007 the children washed their hands in the same bucket – and cross-infection was rife. In 2008 I took 250 metal spoons and infections were reduced. This time I took 300 toothbrushes as many children had poor dental health.

With many of the women in the parishes affected themselves or in their families by HIV Aids doing something, especially if it can generate a modest income, lifts the spirit. Previously I had got some involved in craft works, mainly knitting. This time I took plenty of sewing resources and these proved very popular.

Pat Millar



Three boys with a barrow - a business. Next time 3 boys with 3 barrows? - Success!

Comment

At the time of writing, what the late premier Harold Macmillan described as a 'Wind of change' is blowing through the Arab nations from Algeria to the Yemen. We, sitting cosily in our homes, watching the courageous yet dignified behaviour of the anti-government protesters cannot fail to be impressed by their orderly and non-violent deportment. Many people, too, will contrast this with the disgraceful vandalism, uproar, and common assault which even included a cowardly attack on the Prince of Wales' car by some so-called 'students' protesting against the admittedly morally questionable 'U' turn of Nick Clegg over the funding of tuition fees. I believe in justifiable protests: it is the right of anyone living in a free society. But the mob violence of these hooligans completely outlawed them from the genuine student body, who have both the verbal skills and a sense of correct academic procedure to express

their grievances in a predictably civilised manner. The present day barbarism of so many of our young people does force us oldies to wonder whether the old adage of 'spare the rod and spoil the child' may not have been so very wrong after all. Children are like puppies, they need to be correctly conditioned, through initially very firm training, to ensure their sound personal development.

When I was a child during World War II, my father explained to me how stereoscopic photography was used by RAF reconnaissance 'planes to get three-dimensional image of things seen from the air. Those analysing the pictures didn't always have stereoscopes, so they squinted one photo upon the other to achieve the same effect. I was taught how to do this, as were many other folk. When, much more recently, I taught illustration, I tried to teach my students the same trick. Very few managed it. I

believe that the reason for this was because today so many youngsters spend so much time looking at TV, computers, and computer-games, that they have lost the ability to see things correctly. I spent the happiest moments of my childhood studying wildlife in the surrounding hedgerows of my home. I remember how, at the age of nine, finding a minute baby common lizard, just over an inch long, but with perfect minute eyelids and claws. It was a thing of incredible wonder, it made herpetology a very special and rewarding study for the rest of my life. Perhaps now that folk have successfully petitioned the government to keep their forests, they too will gain the same inspiration from them as I did from that rough little patch of country all those years ago.. As the psalmist said:- "The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handywork"

Francis D. Bowles

Action of Churches Together

A working party of Action of Churches Together in Scotland has recently published a report on 'Just War criteria and the War in Afghanistan'. The Dean of Brechin was a member of this group. The report can be read on the website of the Religious Society of Friends at <www.quaker-scotland.org>. It casts serious doubts as to whether continuing British military involvement can be justified under just war criteria and is especially concerned about the situation of British and other troops operating outwith the ISAF mission.

There will be an Easter Witness for Peace at Faslane main gate on Saturday, 16 April at 12 noon. This is organised by Scottish Clergy against Nuclear Arms, and will be a 'safe event for people of all ages' with an act of worship. Cardinal Keith O'Brien and the representative of the Moderator of the Church of Scotland will be participating and speaking.

There will be a residential conference at St Drostan's, Tarfside, organised by the Fellowship of Reconciliation (Scotland) from the 13-15 May. The Rev'd Hansuli Gerber who was director of the World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence will be the main speaker on the theme of 'No future without Non-violence'. Chris Cole will also be speaking on Drones, Chariots and Horses (unmanned aerial vehicles). The cost is £65 for the full weekend - day visitors welcome. Further details from David Mumford, email <dmumford@phonecoop.coop>.

On Sunday, 26 June there will be Choral Evensong at 7.30 p.m. in St Mary Magdalene's Church, Dundee to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of Bishop Luscombe coming to Dundee. This service will include the first performance of a new anthem "Sunset and Evening Star" based on a poem by Tennyson, which has been set to music by Christopher Tambling. The service will be followed by refreshments in the hall.



On 26 February in St Paul's Cathedral Bishop Robert Gillies ordained Joyce Mumford to the diaconate.

A warmer Welcome in the North!

The Vestry and Congregation of St Ternan's Muchalls are proud to announce that the Planning and Premises Group, formed early in 2008 to review the current usage of the Church as a place of worship and community hub in the 21st Century, has now completed major renovations.

With the help of an Architect, Energy Consultants and many hours spent applying for Grants, our very old electrical system, which barely warmed the Church in the colder months has been replaced with a biomass wood pellet boiler, heating both the Church and Rectory and new Extension. The new heating system was completed in April 2009 at a total cost of £45,113 mainly funded by Grants and a contribution of £7,113 from ourselves. In February 2010 all monies were in place to allow us to proceed with our plans to provide an extension comprising fully fitted kitchen, toilets (including disabled toilets) and a meeting room with a capacity to hold 30 people. The cost of this phase of the project was £103,337 with St Ternan's contributing £34,566.

Building this extension has allowed us to remove the severe restrictions that were in place due to the lack of running water, kitchen and toilet facilities, particularly disabled toilet. Flasks of hot water were carried by ladies

from their homes on a Sunday to allow us to enjoy a cup of tea after the service. Part of our Mission Statement is to show God's love in the community and our hope for the future is that many groups out there in the community will make use of the new facilities. We have extended our Loop System for the hard of hearing and installed baby changing facilities. A First Aid Course for Girl Guiding, the North Mearns Reading Group meeting monthly, a very successful

Harvest Supper and all Church meetings are making good use of the facilities. The meeting room looks out over lovely countryside and is an ideal situation to attract groups from the community and we welcome anyone who wishes to use it whether they are a member of the church or not. We are holding our first coffee morning in April which hopefully will help to show people in the community what we have achieved and what is on offer. The facility can be hired out for children's parties,

lunch clubs, craft and music groups, counselling and reading groups. All queries regarding rental should be directed to Sheila (01569 730618) or Audrey (01569 730600).



The new community room

The facilities were officially opened early in November by Dr Elizabeth Green widow of a former Priest in Charge with local Councillors and Sir Robert Smith MP also in attendance. This was a very proud day and the culmination of lots of hard work and soul searching. The Rev'd Canon Joe Morrow blessed the new facilities on a recent visit.

We are a small congregation comprising mainly of "mature" individuals who took a "Leap in Faith" and have finally achieved it.

The Narrow Road

St Paul's Cathedral Dundee will host a visit from the Riding Lights Theatre Company, who will be performing their powerful new play *The Narrow Road* by Paul Birch. This Passion play, newly commissioned by the Dean and Chapter of York, introduces us to the people of the gospel and the story takes its audience with Jesus back along the road to the Cross, making us consider the challenges this journey brings to our own life and faith.

At various points in the play, space is created for other expressions of worship, music and reflection arising directly out of the drama, so that the whole performance becomes a potent mixture of participation, worship and meditation.

York-based Riding Lights is one of the country's most successful independent theatre companies, having toured for over thirty years, and is internationally celebrated for its entertaining, yet moving and challenging productions. This performance of *The Narrow Road* will be a thought-provoking and inspiring event in the weeks leading us up to Easter and should not be missed!

This performance will be on April 12 at 7.30 p.m. Further details or information about booking tickets for this performance can be obtained from St Paul's Cathedral, Dundee (01382 224486) or from Jane Phillips at <castlehill.angel@googlemail.com> or on 07401 799702

Diary Roundup

Good Friday, 22 April, 6.15 p.m.

Stations of the Cross

St John the Baptist Church, Albert Street, Dundee

Easter Day, 24 April, 9.45 a.m.

Sung Eucharist for Easter Day

St John the Baptist Church, Albert Street, Dundee

Saturday, 30 April, 10 a.m. – 12 noon

Coffee Morning

St John the Baptist Church, Albert Street, Dundee

Thursday, 2 June, 7.30 p.m.

Choral Evensong followed by Wine & Cheese

St Mary Magdalene's Church, Dundee

IN BRIEF . . .

Congratulations to Helen Sanderson of winning the last edition's Crossword Competition. Sorry there is not room for one in this edition.

Have you looked at the new St Mary Magdalene's website? It is at <www.stmarymagdalenesdun.dee.org.uk>

Correction: The 'Comment' article in the last edition might have given the wrong impression. The College of Bishops has authorised 8 optional (not mandatory) changes to the 1982 Liturgy. These do not change the nature of the way we address God; rather they focus on how we refer to people in general and the Christian community in particular.

James Gregory Lectures

The next public lectures focusing on the interface between science and religion will be given in the Younger Hall, St Andrews

on Thursday, 28 April at 5.15 p.m.

entitled

"Psychology and Religion"

by David Myers

(widely accredited social psychologist in the United States)

and

on Thursday, 2 June at 5.15 p.m.

entitled

"Are we alone in the Universe"

by Professor Katherine Blundell

(Professor of Astrophysics at Oxford University)

Help needed !

Are you any good at general gardening jobs – weeding, simple pruning etc.? Help is needed in the garden at the Bishop's House, while it is vacant. Employing gardeners is costly, so we propose having 2 gardening work-parties (weather permitting) on Saturday, 9 April and Tuesday, 12 April from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bring some packed lunch to sustain you, and tea or coffee will be laid on. Also bring tools, e.g. trowels, small forks, secateurs, edging shears, gloves and at least 2 strong black bags for rubbish.

If you are able to help, please contact Judy Robinson on 01382 645305 or by email: <judy.robinson@virgin.net>, so that she knows how many to expect each day. If you can only manage an hour or so, please still come.

Bishop's House is at 5 Glamis Drive, Dundee, but please park round the corner in Glamis Road, just north of the Blackness Road roundabout.



in association with St Paul's Cathedral presents

Plainchant for All

directed by

Edward Caswell

(bass, and Cappella Nova's Outreach Director)

This is suitable for anyone who wants try singing Gregorian chant in the beautiful ambience of a cathedral acoustic – and gain tips on...

...warming up your voice
...developing breath control
...good vocal practice

Saturday, 4 June

10.00 a.m. for 10.30 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

(concluding with informal performance)

Bookings must be made **in advance** by completing and returning the form which can be obtained from the address below. Places are limited – apply now to avoid disappointment. £15.00 full price, £10.00 senior citizens, £5.00 students and unwaged.

Cappella Nova

172 Hyndland Road, Glasgow G12 9HZ

For further information, contact:-

0141-552 0634, cappella.nova@strath.ac.uk

The next issue of **Grapevine** will be coming out for 28 August 2011.

All articles, letters, comments should be with the Editor by 6 August 2011.

Preferably articles should be no longer than 500 words.

The Editor of Grapevine, Beattie Lodge, Laurencekirk, Kincardineshire, AB30 1HJ
(E-mail: <office@brechin.anglican.org> or <mjturner@zoo.co.uk>)