50 pence September 2021

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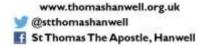


The Parish Magazine of



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All the information here is correct at the time of going to press, but as you know, the situation we find ourselves in changes on a daily basis, so if you need any further help or you're not sure whether the church is open, you can email us a st.thomas.office@btinternet.com



A Prayer for September

Dear Lord,

September – the month of new beginnings for many, as summer fades and school and college terms start.

After such a strange time of restrictions, hopes of freedom, with warnings to be cautious, it is hard to know what to expect this September.

We can't know what lies ahead, Lord, but we can trust you to see us through whatever it turns out to be.

Thank you for your promise, 'I will never leave you or forsake you'. Help us to hold fast to that promise, to keep trusting you - and to be thankful for each September day.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Church, the Vicar, the editors or the PCC.

Adverts in this magazine are not necessarily endorsed by the Church, the Vicar, the editors of the PCC.



From Father Robert

Dear Friends

I hope many of you got some sort of holiday in August. Be it getting away, albeit with the accompanying worries of pinging, cancellations, movements from

green to amber etc, or simply having a 'staycation'.

It seems that August can often feel like a lull before a storm, a place of inactivity to that of feverish activity. Parents move from wondering how to amuse bored children to the frantic logistics of school-runs and so on. In our church we go through a similar experience, everything seems to start up in September (3 months before the official start of the new Church year at Advent!).

Just looking at the Lectionary/Church Diary of Feasts, September is heaving with Saints and Feast Days from Michaelmas to Matthew and Holy Cross to the Birth of the Virgin Mary, and that is even before local celebrations such as Harvest. One is tempted to think maybe August should follow September as we will all need a rest!

Presently, the vicarage has a very different rhythm, as our life does not so much revolve around ecclesiastical festal demands as much as those of the North West University Healthcare Trust i.e. Northwick Park. Of course

we pray for the chance to be immersed into the life of the Church, but... However, whatever situation we find ourselves in there is an important reminder of where we should be placed. In the middle of the month, on the 14th, the Feast of the Holy Cross is celebrated. Despite its dubious origins concerning authenticity (the Emperor's mum, St Helena,

discovered the "true" cross, buried, 300 years after Jesus was nailed to it) the celebration of the centrality of the cross in our lives is essential. At the cross we find love and salvation, and paradoxically new life. At the cross we are reminded that hope conquers fear, love conquers hate and life conquers death.

This feast happens approximately six months after Good Friday, and so re-orientates us back to that moment when everything changed. As we enter September with is change of pace, the Holy Cross encourages us to pause, to stop and to reflect. It asks us to remember something so profound and transformative that our lives can be changed, redeemed.

We really don't know what life will throw at us, something I have been made profoundly aware of. Yet some things remain constant. One of those is the cross, which stands as a symbol of passion and glory, love and hope.

I need to see and hear this, this September, and I hope and pray that you

too will see and hear it also.

May it be so, aided by the multitude of saints and angels we will remember this month.

Your friend and priest Fr Robert

From Father Adam

My Dear Friends!

It is so easy to pass each day without any time or space for reflection in our over-busy world, especially on what we all receive undeservedly.

Thinking about creation is not simply about environmental issues - although they are certainly an essential part of how Christians should engage with the created world. The Bible often describes the awe and wonder of creation, and at times we can lose that sense of awe and wonder. It is good to remember how beautiful and amazing the world is and think about what we can all do to help protect it.

As part of our response, we - as a church community - are planning to celebrate the Harvest Festival on September 19th , which we will combine with Climate Sunday, an ecumenical initiative launched last year by the Environmental Issues Network (EIN), which operates under the auspices of Churches Together in Great Britain and Ireland (CTBI).

In November, the United Nations COP26 meeting is scheduled to convene in Glasgow. In preparation for the gathering, the Church of England has been part of shaping Climate Sunday, a service to explore the theological and scientific basis of creation care and action on climate, pray, and commit to action.

COP26 offers "opportunities for activism, for learning, and for putting into practice what we believe in," says Very Rev. Dr Susan Brown, convener of the Anglican Church of Scotland's Faith Impact Forum. "We need to ensure that the voices of those who are experiencing the effects of climate change are heard loud and clear."

We are convinced that the message from the Harvest Festival liturgy is very close to this initiative. Harvest is a wonderful opportunity to give thanks for all the beautiful gifts of creation and reconnect with our place as stewards of that creation. It is also an opportunity to pray for and with the farming community, many of whom struggle to make a living in today's

global economic climate. At Harvest, we thank and praise God for all his gifts of food and weather.

The Bible clearly states that the earth is the Lord's and that God is the generous author of summer and winter and springtime and harvest. Yes, "harvest", because Harvest is from the Anglo-Saxon word hærfest, "Autumn". It then came to refer to the season for reaping and gathering grain and other grown products. The full moon nearest the autumnal equinox is called the Harvest Moon. So, in ancient traditions, Harvest Festivals were traditionally held on or near the Sunday of the Harvest Moon. This moon is the full moon that falls in September.

Harvest Festival can remind us that we have much to be grateful for, and perhaps it can become a time of gratitude and generosity. We have so much; some have so little. There is enough in the world for everyone's needs, but if the dream of full plates and clean water is to become a reality for all the world's people, those of us with resources must be willing to share them with others. We may not feel rich but compared with many, we have so much.

This year, we continue to support Ealing Foodbank, and we would be delighted to receive further donations of tinned, dried or non-perishable foods suitable for use by the Foodbank.

Let me also express my great gratitude and say thank you to our Churchwardens: Chloe and Lizzie.

Traditionally the job of the churchwarden has been to:

- Look after the welfare of the Vicar.
- \bullet Keep the peace in the churchyard (apparently quite challenging in Tudor times).
- Maintain the fabric of the church buildings.

The past year has added much more to this list. We know that in the future, apart from the maintenance of the church's fabric, there will also be the maintenance of the fabric of the church hall. A huge challenge that requires the commitment of the entire church community. Each of us can join this important work in our own way.

With love and blessings,

Fr Adam



Greenpeace, the international environmental group, was founded in Vancouver, 50 years ago, on 15th Sept 1971.



Urgent Church Hall Roof Appeal

The church hall has been a huge asset to the community of St Thomas' as a meeting place since 1964. In its time it has seen weekly Sunday schools, regular PCC meetings as well as pantomimes, international evenings and wreath making, countless fairs and coffee mornings, regular zumba, yoga and Twisters classes as well as Brownie, Guides, Scouts and Cub meetings and many other fantastic events that are not mentioned as well.

The church hall has been the beating heart of the church community and has been a workhorse in hosting these brilliant events and initiatives for nearly 60 years.

Now sadly the hall roof is nearing the end of its natural life and is in dire need of your 'support' (excuse the pun) to help it last another 60 years.

There is a hole in the ceiling of the office and water is seeping onto the stairs and it is becoming increasingly unsafe. The damp smell that pervades behind the stage is extremely whiffy and the canopy at the front of the building is sagging.

Please help us to raise the significant costs of repair (probably well in excess of £100,000). If you could help in any way to save the church hall we would appreciate it so much. You could give your time and effort into organising fundraising for this appeal either as a church community, group or separately.

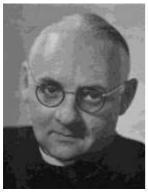
Please come forward and offer some fun fundraising ideas to help save our hall!

We will also set up a justgiving page so that the community can give directly and add reminiscences about their past times in the church hall.

Thanks so much,

Chloe Mason (Church Warden)

chloecoggles26@gmail.com



Contemporary theology.

Hans Urs von Balthasar – Dare

We Hope That All Men Be Saved.

Hans Urs von Balthasar was born in 1905 in Lucerne, Switzerland. He studied German literature and philosophy in Zurich, Vienna and Berlin. During a thirty -day Ignatian retreat, he discovered his priestly vocation and, in 1929, entered the Society of Jesus in south Germany, not long after the death of his mother. After ordination, he became a student chaplain in Basel,

Switzerland. During his first months in Basel, he met the physician Adrienne von Speyr (1902-1967), a mystic to whom he became a spiritual director. Von Speyr was a Protestant but was interested in becoming Catholic.

Von Balthasar, together with von Speyr, founded the

"Johannesgemeinschaft" (Community of Saint John) in 1945 - a Catholic institute of consecrated laypeople living according to the evangelical counsels.

Later they founded the publishing house, "Johannes Verlag", mainly to publish the visions of von Speyr. Between 1944 and 1960, von Speyr dictated to von Balthasar almost sixty spiritual and Scriptural commentary books. Given von Speyr's responsibilities as a mother and a practising doctor, von Balthasar alone worked on arranging, editing, and publishing the texts, recognizing her work and his own as one whole. Apart from this activity, von Balthasar also published his research papers: 30 books, 550 articles, and over 100 translations of other authors' works. Von Balthasar is known primarily for his sixteen-volume systematic theological "trilogy", published between 1961 and 1987 (it is called a trilogy because it is divided into three parts: The Glory of the Lord, Theo-Drama, and Theo-Logic). In von Balthasar's works, we can see that he was greatly disappointed by the academic teaching of scholasticism at that time. Therefore, he developed his style, questioning most classical theology systems for their limitations. Innovation of thought, beautiful language and incredible erudition has made him one of the most frequently commented theologians today. Von Balthasar described his theology as a "kneeling theology" deeply related to contemplative prayer and based on a solid biblical, patristic, and dogmatic foundation. "Theology is essentially an act of adoration and prayer," he insisted.

During the pontificate of John Paul II, the mission of Adrienne von Speyr was recognized by the Catholic Church as authentic, and von Balthasar was nominated to be cardinal. He died, however, in his home in Basel on 26 June 1988, two days before the ceremony which would have formally granted him that position.

Hans Urs von Balthasar is one of the most versatile theologians of the 20th century. The spectrum of his interests is enormous. Nevertheless, von Balthasar considered eschatological problems to be the centre of his theological reflections. It touches directly on the issue of faith, not only in the field of intellectual thinking

but above all in the life of every human being.

Von Balthasar argues that it is unacceptable to separate God's qualities: justice and mercy. "God is love," says the Apostle John (1 John 4: 8, 16). Love is not one of God's attributes but the essence of God. God loves and wants to be loved by man, but when that man rejects him, His love becomes merciful love. The climax of the revelation of this kind of love is the cross on which Jesus, rejected, mocked and crucified, prays for his persecutors: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23: 34).

Heaven and hell are not equal possibilities, says von Balthasar. For man is destined first and foremost to be saved by God who is Love. Of course, man is free, and God respects his freedom, so there can be no salvation of every man against his will. However, since the thief, converted in the last moments of his life, could hear from Jesus Christ: "Today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23: 43), everyone has the possibility of conversion, even in the last minute of life.

Of course, Balthasar is far from trying to deny the existence of hell. He even cites mystical texts about the experience of this place and state as a space of an extraordinary tragedy, where one lives in the sense of hopelessness and extreme despair. God allows free man to choose radical isolation and loneliness. God does not trample on a sinner's freedom. On the other hand, the God who is Love - through the cross - disturbs the loneliness of such a man with his love, violates his narcissistic attitude. The sinner, even in Hell, is no longer absolutely alone.

The trinitarian-eschatological model of the interpretation of eschatology - proposed by Balthasar - allows us to understand why Jesus does not suffer from hellish torments that sinners suffer but transcends them. Thanks to Jesus' sacrifice, every possible hell is affected by God's love. Jesus' sacrifice abolishes the Old Testament symmetrical vision of judgment, based on the proportionality between guilt and punishment. Christ's asymmetry means destroying in his Death and Resurrection the limitations of death and giving a chance for eternal life.

According to von Balthasar, hell does not have to be "eternal" at all, and turning away from God "for eternity" is not definitive because there is hope for a change of this decision in that way of being, which in the case of hell is connected with earthly reality through the time dimension. The eternal features of heaven cannot be extended analogously to the reality of hell, death and evil. Eternity is with God in heaven, and as a concept, it can only be applied to God. Additionally, hell and evil mean a lack of existence. This calls into question the idea of "eternal punishment" (Greek κόλασις αἰώνιος - kolasis aiōnios), which - according to von Balthasar - do not have a strong foundation in the teaching of the Church.

Of course, Balthasar repeatedly says that his considerations are not about knowledge, doctrine, or certainty about the salvation of all people but only about hope. It is not a cover for hidden assurance but is fulfilled in prayer (1 Timothy 2: 1-4: "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth "). This hope also does not eliminate

the need to convert and decide to stand for God permanently. It also does not disavow the reality of hell, which is not merely a pure possibility, but something real. God's mercy does not in any way weaken the real threat of hell as a real possibility for man.

However, this hope should be understood in terms appropriate to Christianity. In this perspective, hope for the salvation of all humankind appears as a reality justified by the acts of beatification and canonization, and the Church repeatedly expresses her faith in the hope of salvation. On the other hand, the Church has never spoken out on the damned people, including even the final fate of Judas, which is a particular case of rejecting God's offer of salvation in Jesus Christ. Von Balthasar poses a rhetorical question: Who can know about his grief when he saw the doomed Jesus?

Undoubtedly, von Balthasar's reflection on hope for the salvation of all humankind is a renewed gaze of the believer at the God of Christian revelation. This God, revealed by his incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, turns out to be the God of inexhaustible, incomprehensible, mysterious love, constantly looking for man, caring for his absolute future. Two thousand years of the history of the Church have clearly shown that the biblical image of God has been repeatedly distorted by philosophical influences and patterns. Theologians have used this to deepen and systematize the Christian message: as a result, they have given us an image of God that was essentially alien to biblical hermeneutics. The idea of God as an Absolute, isolated from the fate of man and the world, is far from a Christian revelation. All this creates a gap between school theology and the practice of piety. The teaching about God is primarily to be immersed in prayer and scripture.

Therefore, we can say that von Balthasar's reflection on the hope of salvation of all people is not the "cheap hope" of apokatastasis, which demands automatic salvation given to people by God against or beside their will. It is a bold "dear hope" under which we find the cross of Jesus Christ.

Fr Adam





Fco-corner Reusing plastic

The plastic boxes that take aways and ready meals come in make good sandwich boxes and are useful for putting left overs in the freezer. They are often microwave safe too. If you get different sorts of boxes from different shops, match them up with nail varnish on

the lid and the box so you know which fit together.

A prayer for Climate Sunday

Glorious God,

The whole of creation proclaims your marvellous work: Increase in us a capacity to wonder and delight in it, That

heaven's praise may echo in our hearts and our lives be spent as good stewards of the earth, Through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen

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www.terracycle.co.uk



Eco-corner

An Eco Church report.

The last Deanery synod challenged local churches to support our Earth and all that is in it, as the greatest of **God's creations.**

Eco Church was started by the A Rocha movement, supported by the major Christian churches in the UK.

As part of this the local Eco Church group has done a survey of St. T's activities to produce a picture of where we are now, and where we want to be in one years' time.

We propose (Fr. R's suggestions) to use 4 festivals over the year to remind the Church of our joint efforts, and to encourage them to think of Eco homes

Possible Green Festival dates:

- a. Plough Sunday
- b. Rogation Sunday
- c. Lammastide
- d. Harvest Thanksgiving.

We have used the A Rocha survey to give us an idea of current activities, and to provide pointers for the future. St Thomas does well with LED lighting in the church, Pauline's recycling program for crisp/cat-food packets, and regular composting, but there is room for improvement!

Please contact Nick Robinson if you would like further details or look at www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk

Copy Dates!.

Copy date for October is on Sunday September 12th Copy date for November is on Sunday October10th







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From the Ealing Foodbank.

Firstly, thank you so much for your support, especially if you have been able to help us during the pandemic. Ealing Foodbank has partnered with a food charity called Bankuet.

This offers you an alternative way to get donated food to us at Hanwell, if you are unable to shop in person and/or bring your donation to Hanwell. You can access Bankuet by going to https://www.bankuet.co.uk/givenow.

You can then select how much money you would like to donate, either as a one off or on a monthly basis. Ealing Foodbank then orders specific items from Bankuet. Bankuet purchases the food and delivers it to Hanwell on a Wednesday morning. Bankuet deducts a small fee from the donated money to recover some of their costs, but this is minimal.

You can, of course, continue to shop in stores, and leave donations in the baskets provided or deliver food yourself to Hanwell. Please see the foodbank website for more details.



Important Foodbank update:

Thank you for continuing to support the foodbank. Due to the current pandemic, and the need to reduce our carbon footprint, we have been assessing the best way of

supporting the Foodbank. So can you please:

- . If you go to your local supermarket leave your donations there as they will have a Foodbank box on their premises
- . If you order online it is possible to click the right button to make a donation for the Foodbank
- . If neither option is available to you then you can continue to leave your donations in the boxes left in the church porches. But there will be some delay in transferring it to the Foodbank warehouse.
- . Another alternative is to give cash or cheque (payable to Foodbank Trussell Trust) to Nicole who will pass it on regularly.

Thank you for all your support and cooperation.

** please remember that our magazine is produced a month in advance, so while we publish the shopping list available to us at the time of going to press, there may other items that are especially needed on the more recent list. For this reason, it's always best to check the current list on the Foodbank website or twitter.

https://ealing.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/

Twitter: @EalingFoodbank.

THE AUGUST SHOPPING LIST **

Vegetarian meals - anything longlife, breakfast cereal, UHT milk - whole or semi-skimmed (not skimmed), long grain rice - 500g or 1kg packets, tinned tomatoes & pasta sauces, savoury biscuits & crackers, chickpeas & kidney beans, drinking chocolate, peanut butter, cooking oil, size 5 & 6 nappies, hair shampoo.

Thank you, but the foodbank has plenty of pasta, meat & meat main meals, tinned fruit & soup at the moment.

From the Editors.

The eagle-eyed amongst you will have spotted that we put the prayer for August in last month's magazine on page 4 and then again on page 11! Our apologies. Look forward to seeing you at our Harvest Festival on September 19th, which will also be our Climate

https://www.climatesunday.org/

Sunday.

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