

## All Systems Go for the Spire!



The brilliant news has come in that sufficient funds have more or less been raised to start off the Spire restoration project.

After 4 years of massive campaigning work, the Spire Appeal funds at both St Mary's and Spirewatch have just about reached the levels for the project to get underway.

Happy New Year to the Spire!



### Bell Ringing in Celebration of the 930<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Consecration of St Mary's Church

On the morning of Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024, six ringers of the home band came together at St Mary's to ring a Quarter Peal attempt of Plain Bob Doubles to celebrate the 930<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the consecration of

St Mary's Church. We rang continuously for forty five minutes and successfully completed the Quarter Peal. There are ten bells in the tower and we rang on the front six. Unfortunately the Spire Café could not run that morning so we adjourned to Battels instead for a hearty brunch.

It is always a pleasure to ring for special occasions but we also ring each week from 9.45am to 10.30am for Sunday morning service, and we practise on Monday evenings from 7.30pm to 9pm. If you would like to enquire about learning to ring please email the Guild Secretary, Pauline Chandler, on [stmarys.harrow@btinternet.com](mailto:stmarys.harrow@btinternet.com) or email the Tower Captain, Bridget Campbell, on [bcampbell2114@icloud.com](mailto:bcampbell2114@icloud.com)



In this issue:

Page 2 -Father James reflects on changes coming up this year. We may hear that It's A Long way to Tipperary, but that Templebreedy has more similarities to Harrow than you might think!!

Page 3-We have all the details for Lent

Page 4 and 5—Revd Alison Christian allows us to re-read her New Year's Eve Sermon about Time.

Page 6— Marian continues her reflections about Mary.

Page 8-We look at Jonathan Hutchins studio and the work he is doing on the Stations of the Cross for Lent and Easter St Mary's.

Page 10-We hear about our very own New Years Honours!

And lots more news not to be missed besides!

Dear Friends,

This is the first opportunity to wish you all happy 2024, at least through the pages of The Spire! This edition both looks back to Christmas and forward to Lent which begins with Ash Wednesday, 14 February, when most people will have their minds on the one human quality which underpins everything that the Gospel is about – love! Perhaps we don't always recognise romantic love as that foundation but the yearning which lovers experience for each other is absolutely the yearning that God shows for his creation – you and me and the created order. We face the cost of that love on Ash Wednesday as we begin our journey through Lent to the cross.....and beyond to the consummation of that love in resurrection. As such, waiting for Lent to begin and celebrating the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas) we are in a “liminal space” – Alison reflects on both that concept and the Presentation in her sermon of New Year's Eve which is printed in this edition. Marion reminds us of the sacred nature of Mary's womb and the crucial role Our Lady plays in being Theotokos – Mother of God. It is a special privilege to which we don't always give full significance to be a community under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary, joining her in pointing to her Son. That truth is what underlies our annual celebration of the feast of dedication (the “birthday service”) recently kept on 14 January at which Alastair Land, Head Master of Harrow School, spoke so reflectively.

It is the same truth – pointing always to Jesus – that the spire represents on our “iconic” building. You will not have missed in either the front page headline or in the PCC Report that the decision has been made to proceed with the necessary restoration work on the spire over the course of this year.

There is still some fundraising to be done but we are now in position to begin the work – another £100,000 would not go amiss!! Some of that is already pledged and I hope that the decision now made will encourage generous further donations and final fundraising to take place with enthusiasm and determination. I take this opportunity to thank all those who have worked so hard to ensure we are now in the fortunate position we are, most particularly the members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Stewardship Committee, Spire Cafe and the membership of Spirewatch.

The year ahead will bring change for all of us. I am writing this letter on the weekend that the Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross in the Church of Ireland are holding a day of thanksgiving a year on from a day of prayer focused on the large number of vacancies to be filled in the diocese. As most of you reading this will know, I am filling one of those vacancies in July, becoming Rector of Templebreedy.

The Templebreedy Group of parishes consist of two churches, Holy Trinity, Crosshaven and Novohal (without dedication) just south of Cork City on the coast; indeed, Crosshaven is the home of the Royal Cork Yacht Club, the oldest yacht club in the world! The Group takes its name from the ancient dedication of area to St Brigid or St Bride, whose feast day is 1 February, now declared a national holiday in Ireland. If you see me wearing a cross of St Brigid next weekend, you will know why!

In the mean time, there is much to be done here on the Hill, not least during Lent, when there will be an opportunity to join one of four different discussion and study groups, details of which are contained in the leaflet which will be available in church. I urge you to consider taking up one of these invitations – two are face to face meetings and two are on Zoom so you can take part without necessarily leaving the comfort of home!!

Prayer gives the foundation to all we do and so please do pray during these Lenten weeks for the wider life of the parish – a deepening of our own individual relationships with God, the essential work on our ancient building and eventually for the process whereby my successor will be appointed.

With every blessing, Fr James

Note from Spire Editor!!!!!! Isn't it a small world!!

The foundation stone of Holy Trinity Church Crosshaven was laid on 31 October 1866 by the Right Rev'd John Gregg, D.D., then Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross. The town had been growing in popularity as a holiday resort and its original church was deemed insufficient for the increasing population. William Burges was appointed architect for a new church with a budget of £1,700, of which £500 was subscribed by parishioners and £1,200 given by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

## February Round-Up

### Summary of PCC Meeting 18th January.

**The parish office transfer** has now been fully carried out with Roger Horne securing miraculous results in setting up the Internet. The Vicar proposed many thanks to Keith for all the work on this as well.

**The Charitable Giving programme** has been displayed on the notice board and we will try to invite speakers for each major Charitable Giving Sunday. We are hoping to get literature about the Children's Society for the Christingle service on January 28th. We need to establish a date for the bereavement service.

Regarding the **young people inclusion in the readings** more work is still being done on this but some great readers have come forward.

We have still to determine where the **Commonwealth War Grave** notice should go.

Regarding the **Interregnum** Pauline and Matthew had met the Archdeacon of Northolt on January 3rd and there is a further meeting scheduled for 20th February between the Archdeacon and the Headmaster of Harrow School. It's very likely that the PCC will meet to discuss the vacancy in July. The Archdeacon of Northolt is one of 3 Patrons responsible for the appointment-and she has reassured Pauline and Matthew that she will take this very seriously!

We now have all the funds to launch ahead with **the Spire** re-leading. It's possible that the scaffolding itself can take three months to set up. The PCC approved the motion to appoint the construction company and the project manager-so **ALL SYSTEMS GO!!** Revd Graham Dale highlighted that this was magnificent work and thanked all involved.

The **Mission Action Plan** has been drafted up in quite a lot of detail by Father James and was sent out to the PCC for review. The AGM is being set for 21<sup>st</sup> April. Plans for **Lent and Easter** are well underway with two day groups, a face to face evening group and a confirmation course, so four prongs are available for people to join in. We are also working with Jonathan Hutchins to set up and display his amazing new works on the stations of the cross specifically painted for Saint Mary's church. Revd Alison Christian also raised the point that she has been looking at a new six-week Christian Aid course which will be run after Lent which will help people focus on some of the issues that will need to be addressed by

Christian Aid given the backdrop of the World Economic crisis and the possible general election in 2024.

### LENT GROUPS AT ST MARY'S

There will be three groups at St Mary's meeting during Lent to study two books.

#### **Wednesday Morning Group. 10.30am – 12pm.**

**Dates:** February 21st and 28th, and March 6th, 13th, 20<sup>th</sup>. This is a face to face group.

Book: *"Beyond the Edge"* by Andrew D Mayes

#### **Wednesday Evening Group. 7.30pm – 9pm.**

**Dates:** February 21st and 28th, and March 6th, 13th, 20<sup>th</sup>. This is a face to face group.

Book: *"The Return of the Prodigal Son"* by Henri Nouwen

#### **Thursday Afternoon Group. 3.30pm – 5pm.**

**Dates:** February 15<sup>th</sup>, 21st and 28th, and March 6th, 13<sup>th</sup>. This is a group that meets on Zoom

Book: *"The Return of the Prodigal Son"* by Henri Nouwen

**TO SIGN UP AND GET FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE EMAIL REV ALISON CHRISTIAN OR SPEAK TO HER IN CHURCH. alijchristian@gmail.com**

**"The Return of the Prodigal Son: The Story of a Homecoming"** by Henri Nouwen

*With over a million copies sold, this classic work is essential reading for all who ask, "Where has my struggle led me?" The themes of homecoming, affirmation, and reconciliation will be newly discovered by all who have known loneliness, dejection, jealousy, or anger. The challenge to love as God loves, and to be loved as God's beloved, will be seen as the ultimate revelation of the parable known to Christians throughout time, and is here represented with a vigour and power fresh for our times.*

**"Beyond the Edge:"** by Andrew D Mayes  
*Jesus calls his disciples to follow him, but where does he lead us? Responding to Jesus' summons, we find ourselves leaving familiar certainties and securities behind as we step out boldly in faith. Old boundaries dissolve as we are led into liminal spaces - exhilarating situations, new places of discovery and radical spiritual growth. In such experiences Christ reveals himself to us anew. The place of risk is the threshold of the divine. Beyond the Edge is for people who wish to go deeply into the spiritual life*

A perfect sermon for New Year's eve—Revd Alison Christian has sent through her reflection on Simeon



in the Temple, by Rembrandt.

***Simeon in the Temple*** or ***Simeon's song of praise*** is an oil on canvas painting by the Dutch artist Rembrandt from c. 1669. It has been in the collections of Nationalmuseum in Stockholm since 1949.<sup>1</sup>

So, what does one say, that hasn't been said before, about arguably the most well-known parable in the The 31<sup>st</sup> of December. The last day of the year. Say goodbye to the old. Bring in the new. With what relief or sadness do we let 2023 go? With what anticipation and trepidation do we look forward to 2024?

New Year's Eve / New Year's Day is a totally manufactured, man-made date. So why does it have such emotional power over us? Because it is "liminal space". Liminal space is the space between. Imagine standing in a doorway, looking back into the room you have just been in and then forward into the room you are about to enter. You are neither in one room or the other. You are in liminal space. We enter liminal spaces all our lives, whenever there is change. When we move house or job.

When we marry or have our first child. When we leave home or retire or go through bereavement, we are in liminal space. It is a disorienting, uncertain place to be. We are leaving what we knew, however good or bad, and entering into a whole new world, a world we don't know yet. A world where we are not at home. So New Year's Eve is the liminal space we find ourselves in now and many of us, if not most of us, have pretty mixed feelings about being here.

New Year's Eve is all about time. We mark the inexorable passing of time, the hopes and fears of all the years, with this rite of passage.

Christmas; this whole season of Christmas, which we are still in, is also liminal space, but in a different way. Christmas, especially Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, is about time "out of time". There is a sense that, despite all the comings and goings of family members, the over-indulgence, even the family squabbles and the over-excited children, there is a sense, that time, as we usually experience it, is altered. We are in a different place. We know there will be a before and after, a before Christmas and an after Christmas, but for now time has changed, paused. Instead of being in "Chronos" time, clock time we are in "Kairos" time. The ancient Greeks had two words for time, and Kairos was the second. The first was Chronos, which we still use in words like chronological and anachronism. It refers to **time that can be measured — seconds, minutes, hours, years**. Where Chronos is quantitative, Kairos is qualitative. It measures moments, not seconds. Kairos time is God's time, outside time as we usually experience it. I would like to suggest that one of the reasons people so love Christmas is that just about all of us, whether we are formal believers or not, are touched by a little bit of God time in the night.

At Christmas, we sense the Holy come close; Emmanuel: God with us.

## Sermon on Simeon in the Temple.. continued

There is a pop song – I am sure you all know it – called, “I wish it could be Christmas everyday”. Well, it can’t be. We all know that. We all have to live most of the time in Chronos time. We have to go through the stages of life, in and out of liminal space, moving forward. Why? Because, I suggest, each season of our life has something to teach us. But every now and then God in Christ comes close and our gospel today shares one such occasion.

Most of us know the story of Jesus’ being presented in the temple, his meeting with the Godly old man, Simeon, and Simeon’s prophecy about Jesus. But what really brought this story to life for me, is a painting by Rembrandt called “Simeon in the Temple”.

At first glance, you see what you expect to see – the old man, Simeon, holding the baby Jesus. Just behind Simeon’s left shoulder stands a woman who could be the old prophetess, Anna, but looks too young for that, so I assume it must be Mary.

A second look might invite you to see that the picture is composed in a similar style to many Virgin and Child icons, in a triangular shape. The baby has wide-open eyes and is looking at Simeon. Simeon, holding the baby, appears to be looking at us, as if presenting the baby to us, as if saying, look at Him. So, our eyes are taken to the baby, whose gaze again takes us to Simeon who looks at us as he presents the baby to us and so we look again at the baby. The circle goes round and round and we realise that we are part of the picture, recipients of a message.

But, look again, and there is a third, metaphorical message here. Simeon is not holding the baby, not in any normal way. He has his hands out, palms face to face, nearly touching, as if about to go into prayer or come out of prayer. The baby Jesus is resting on his arms, but if that were the only support the baby was getting this child would be in danger! Fortunately, the baby’s head is being gently held by the hand of Mary and she is looking at the baby. Look at Simeon’s eyes and we see that they are not actually looking at us. They are old eyes that may already be blind or only see the outside world dimly. They are eyes that are turned inward in deep meditation. Simeon is a man who has been faithful all his life, who has meditated and prayed all his life, who has come to worship in the temple, who despite the passage of time and all life’s hard experiences, has trusted God, and now what we are seeing is a moment of Kairos time. The light coming from above, shining on Simeon’s face and that of the Baby, signifies the Holy Spirit illuminating this moment. Simeon is seeing the child internally and in this deep place, this timeless moment, he “gets” God’s plan for the world. He “gets” what it will cost God, the Child and Mary and he speaks.

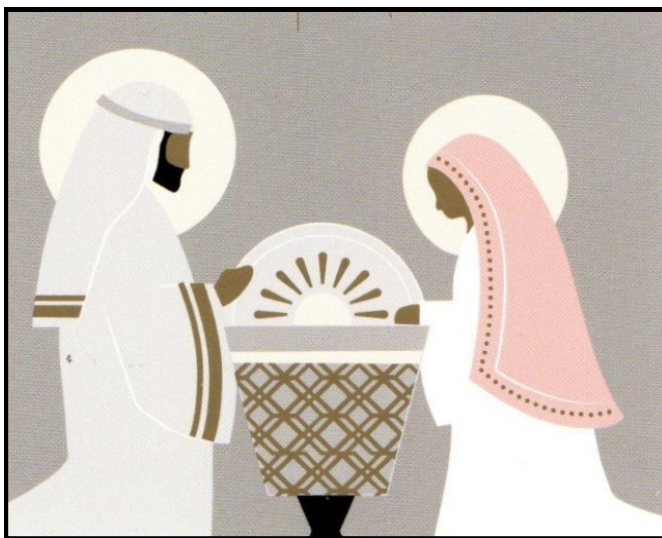
I am left wondering when looking at this picture, whether it is about an actual physical moment in time when Simeon saw and recognised in Jesus, the promised Messiah: the one who would not only save his own people but would reveal who God is to all Gentiles, to the whole world. Or, whether, it is a painting about prayer. Might Rembrandt be saying to us, “This is why we pray – and go on praying although bound by Chronos time, day after day, week after week, year after year; this is why we pray. For that moment when, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, we find ourselves receiving the grace of God in the gift of the baby Jesus Christ. That moment when he is born within us, into our minds and hearts and our lives are changed forever. That moment when our blind eyes are opened and we see the meaning, the power, the beauty and the infinite mercy of the Incarnation – that God became man so that man might become God, children of God by adoption. And with the birth, we also see the cost; the cost to human love betrayed by the evil that men do and the cost to God who can only offer love personified in the tiny Child of Bethlehem who will grow to be our adult, crucified Lord.

New Year. As we welcome in (or not) 2024, will we be considering that age-old tradition of making New Year Resolutions? If so, perhaps we might contemplate a resolution of taking more of our time (Chronos time, clock time) to be with God so that God has more opportunity to be with us. Perhaps we might pray that whatever 2024 brings we will not lose faith as Simeon never lost faith through all those years of waiting. Not lose faith, not just on our own behalf but on behalf of the world. For if Christmas teaches us anything, it teaches us that everyone longs for Kairos time and a little touch of God-with-us in the night.

Much has been written about Mary's heaven-saluted womb and the activity therein. It was seen as a sacred place of utter purity which protected and cocooned the divinely implanted seed throughout its gestation. It has been called a temple, a shrine, a vessel, a sanctuary, a fortified castle, a fruit basket. Sedulius wrote (c. 450) 'a maiden in her lowly place became the vessel of God's grace'. The Advent Office Hymn *Creator of the stars of night* tells us of 'the Son of Man, yet Lord divine, proceeding from a Virgin shrine', Peachey (1896-1972) states that 'she gave her body for God's shrine ... and suddenly the promised Lord that pure and holy temple filled'.

Consideration has been given to the development of the embryo. Dante speaks of the warmth of Mary's womb in which a flower germinated. Hildegard of Bingen praised its chastity as it grew radiant with God. A certain line of thought has been influenced by part of chapter 4 of the Song of Songs which describes 'a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed' where an orchard flourishes and the beloved is invited to enter and eat the fruit. This passage, it is claimed, foretells the seed being sown in the confined safety of Mary's reproductive system.

Attention has been paid to the swelling of her abdomen. Ambrose wrote of the co-existence of pregnancy and purity: 'The Virgin's stomach swells, remaining a defence against shame. The banners of moral perfection shine forth. God abides in his temple.' St. Hilary of Poitiers (4th century) spoke of her body growing with its holy offspring. In one of his carols John Rutter urges the donkey to 'carry Mary with her heavenly load' recalling Luke 2: 5 'being great with child' which corresponds with the *Vulgate's* *praegnante* indicating the imminence of giving birth.



Then 'Jesus issued forth from his temple, the palace of royal chastity' (Ambrose). Genesis 3:16 recounts how Eve was to be punished: 'I will multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children.' The *Vulgate* stresses the anguish with 'in dolore', in pain. Did Mary feel the agony of childbirth? Opinion is divided. A medieval motet asks plaintively how we can fathom from the depths of our hearts her

labour's beginning and ending. Some poems contain the words 'enixa est puerpura',

labour is strenuous. Vernon Scammell (20th century) believed that she suffered much: 'A child born from a mortal house of flesh, painfully borns.' Another poem pictures her lying on a bed of straw, her travail over. Some have thought otherwise. The *Odes of Solomon* (1st century) opine, 'the Virgin became a mother but without pain.' St Ephrem (4th century) declares 'Your womb escaped the pangs of the curse.' *The Debate between the Months of the Year* (15th century) also subscribes to this view: 'He breached his mother and she gave no cry. She raised no complaint.'

Writers in Latin have employed gynaecological vocabulary in respect of the mechanics of childbirth - venter (stomach), uterus, vulva or viscera (intimate female organs). Mary's viscera were worthy of bearing Christ. English has been more circumspect and has used macaronic verse for delicate details. The carol *All and Some* avoids 'the fruit of the abdomen' in this way: 'de fructu ventris of Mary bright, both God and man in her alight'. *Ding - dong - Ding* illustrates the use of the explosive EX to convey the force of the ejection of the infant: 'Born of mother blessed all other, EX Maria Virgine'.

Ezekiel 4: 2-5 relates part of the vision of his guided tour around the Temple precincts where he is at the closed gate of the outer courtyard and is informed that '*this gate shall be shut: ... it is for the prince; he shall enter by the way of that gate and go out by way of the same*'. This has been construed as meaning that Mary, having borne Jesus, had no conjugal relations with Joseph. This contradicts the statement in Matthew 1: 35 that he '*knew her not till she had brought forth her first - born son*'. Ambrose believed that virgin bodies were protected from intrusive sullyng and so Joseph and Mary lived without sexual contact. Such opinions are hotly disputed.

Anselm likens Mary's unblemished state to that of a crystal receiving and reflecting sunlight without cracking or damage, thereby retaining its purity. Both occur 'quia sic omnipotens voluit', 'because the Almighty so willed it'. \*

The biblical quotations are from the *Authorised Version*

\* Southern and Schmitt: *Memorials of St Anselm* (1969): page 303

The other quotations come from my books and sleeve notes.

## Stations of the Cross In Progress

Local artist, Jonathan Hutchins has kindly volunteered to create a Stations of the Cross series for St Mary's. Jonathan is Chair of Harrow Art Society and a leading expert in the work of David Jones. He regularly exhibits at the Harrow Arts Centre. Jonathan aims to complete 12 stations of the cross paintings and hopefully a triptych of the crucifixion and a painting of Jesus being laid in the tomb.

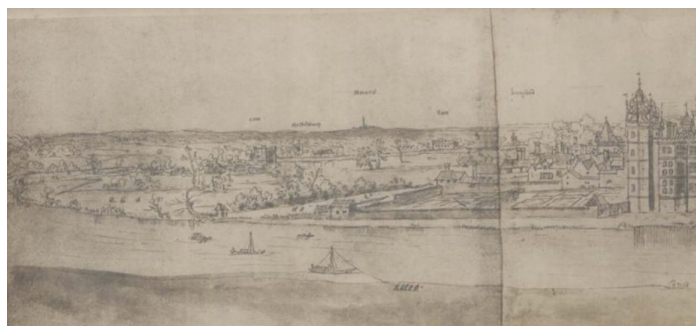


## Heritage Open Day Festival Theme 2024!

**Dates:** 6-15 September

**Theme:** In our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year we will be encouraging you to explore the history of **routes, networks and connections**. As ever we look forward to seeing where you take this, be it local links like inter-faith walks, exploring global trade routes or focusing on the story of a key item like the postage stamp!

Judith Shepherd is already starting to plan some local trivia snippets for next year—please let her know if you have any ideas for this theme! Meanwhile—we thought you would love this early picture of the North Circular!



## Wyngaerde, Antonis Van der *Richemont (Richmond Palace from across the Thames) 1562*

Orleans House Gallery Orleans Rd Twickenham TW1 3BL

The remarkable view in shows that 500 years ago Saint Mary's church was an incredible part of the local skyline. The highest point in the centre is St Mary's church spire, labeled "Haravil", by the Dutch artist. It is a scene from Richmond, and we can see how rural the landscape looks, and how remarkable it is that St Mary's rises above this rural landscape. Judith Shep-

herd has arranged to visit Orleans House Gallery on the morning of Feb 7<sup>th</sup>—please let her know if you would like to come along.



## New Year's Honours!

Doug Milsom picked up the following—Martin White, who was Organist and Choirmaster at St Mary's from 1963-1968, before his appointment as Director of Music at Armagh Cathedral, was awarded a BEM in the New Year's Honours list for "Services to Music in Northern Ire-

Martin was quite young (22 - two years younger than me!) when he came to St Mary's in 1963, replacing Henry Doughty, who had moved to Truro to teach music at Truro School and subsequently becoming organist at Truro Cathedral.

### CONGRATULATIONS TO CANON MARTIN WHITE BEM

On behalf of the Cathedral family, I would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Canon Martin White on the news that he has been awarded the British Empire Medal in the King's New Year Honours. The announcement of this award will be received with much joy on the Hill of Armagh as Martin's work and service, particularly in regard to his devotion to church music and the life of the Cathedral, are recognised in this way.



Martin was Organist and Master of the Choristers in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, from 1968 – 2002 and was made a Lay Canon by Archbishop Robin Eames in recognition of his service to the church. He maintained and developed the choir of men and boys through the worst years of the 'Troubles' and inspired countless generations of young people through his work with the Music Service, as well as at the Cathedral.

Martin is an accomplished musician and composer, a true gentleman, and a humble and faithful servant of Christ, who is a worthy recipient of this honour. We are all delighted for him and send our very best wishes to both Martin and Noreen.

The Very Reverend Shane Forster  
*Dean of Armagh*



I think that Martin had just left The Royal Academy of Music, and soon after joining us he passed his FRCO examination (I think that he was top in his year). I remember the choir buying his FRCO hood. He was teaching music at Lascelles Secondary Modern School (now Whitmore High School). While at St Mary's he entered the St Albans International Organ Festival, reaching the final stages. I believe that he was in the top three of the improvisation class, and (possibly) 5th overall (memory is a bit hazy, however!).

He was an inspirational choirmaster with an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Psalms. (In those days, we sang full choral Mattins and Evensong every Sunday.) He also introduced us to the organ music of such composers as Olivier Messaien. His performance of Dieu Parmi Nous from *La Nativité du Seigneur* as the voluntary after the Christmas Eve midnight service drew crowds around the organ console! There was never a dull moment, and Martin has remained a good friend for life, although we mostly communicate on Christmas cards!

During the "troubles" in NI, he told me that the clergy and music staff at the two Armagh Cathedrals were on very good terms, including exchange of pulpits and organ consoles.

When Clair and I were on holiday in Malta some years ago, we discovered

land". The notice from the Cathedral summarises his important work there.

that Martin also conducted the Armagh Choral Society, In the pro-cathedral there, we were talking to a couple from Armagh who sang for him there!



## **The Order of St Mellitus**

The Order of St Mellitus is conferred upon a person who has made a substantial contribution to the Christian life of London or to building up overseas links with the Diocese of London.

The Diocese itself was established in the Roman era but reverted to paganism after the Saxon invasions.

In 604, St Mellitus was consecrated bishop and sent by St Augustine to be a missionary bishop to the East Saxons with London as his headquarters. He was driven from London by the heathen sons of King Sebert of Essex, because he refused to give them the sacramental bread unless they consented to be baptised. He fled to Gaul, but was recalled by St Laurence of Canterbury, upon whose death, in AD 619, he succeeded to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, and died in AD 624. Of the last years of his life almost nothing is known.

Speaking at the 1400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Diocese, the previous Bishop of London, the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Lord Chartres, said, "The future is unseen but we can see the way we have come. In the past 1400 years there have been many Christian visions of the holy city and how the Church can anticipate and be an agent of the future that God intends. London in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a world city in the midst of rapid transformation. At such a time, how can we best serve together to express the love of God in Jesus Christ for all the citizens of London? Contemplating past visions and responses helps to give us a greater sense of our room for choice and the need for decision.

"It is as if we were sculling on a great river. As the boat moves forward, we cannot see the way ahead. The future seems to flow from behind our back into view. We can, however, see the way we have travelled and that gives us confidence in God who has protected and guided us as a Church in London for more than 14 centuries."

Lord God

We give you thanks because your servant Mellitus  
proclaimed the Gospel to the people of London.

Through his life we are given encouragement  
to be faithful to the Gospel and in our communion  
with him and all the saints we share the unity of your kingdom.

In the name of Christ

Amen.

+Sarah Londin.



**The Order of St Mellitus**

**The St Mellitus Medal**

**presented to**

*Pauline Chandler*

**in recognition of**

*over 20 years of unstinting service at St Mary's Harrow on the Hill as Churchwarden, Vice-Chairman of the PCC, Eucharistic Minister and Secretary of the Bell Ringing Guild; in addition to leading the programme for school visits, explaining the function of a parish church to young people who often hold a different cultural heritage; and her quiet, sincere and robust commitment to Mission and Evangelism*

**Given under our hand this  
3rd day of December 2023**

+ *Sarah Mullally*

.....  
**The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE  
Bishop of London**

St Valentine's Day in mind, I offer you two of my love poems this month with the idea that along with the wonderful words, 'I love you,' which we all long to hear, the devoted showing of love conveys the same message. May we all know both.

Though they appear to be about building a snowman, and assembling the ingredients for a pie, they are of course both portraits of a marriage.

Dorothy Pope

### The Snowman

Untroubled, indeed unaware  
of covertly staring  
middle aged children  
and neighbours uncertain how to react.  
The couple built their snowman.

Though older, he could dig and bend  
so he wrought the lower half.  
Then she played her part  
complementing sleeking sides and  
fashioning shapely shoulders, neck and head.

In practised co-operation they worked on  
engrossed, enjoying  
a one hour holiday.

'Let's make a snowman,' she had said.  
He'd set aside household accounts  
to balance more important books  
of granting his wife's wish.

No carrot nose for this important snowman.  
He moulded her a real nose out of snow,  
then, hunting, found a curved smile on the ground,  
and matching eyebrows, all of alder mast,  
and sets of stones for buttons and for eyes,  
letting her tie on the long blue scarf.

A matron of habitual scowl,  
painfully walking the dog she had grown old with,  
stopped. He barked in disconcerted validation,  
she smilingly admired with friendly words,  
returned with camera,  
immortalized the snowman, and his sculptors,  
who then retired and put the kettle on.

With frozen hands  
he drew off her boots and socks.  
She served him tea  
in finger-warming mug.

A same-day thaw came fast.  
No snow remained next morning  
in all the road  
save one persisting man-sized column,  
lingering vestige of blissful hour  
of sexagenarian lovers.

### Cherry Pie

The cherries must be hand-picked from that bough  
in Evesham on a Sunday afternoon  
by sweethearts, newly in the then and now  
of joy, their borrowed bicycles hedge-flung,

from orchard ladder, feeding each the best,  
dropped in her aproned skirt, then in his shirt  
to ride them home. As to the flour it must  
be milled corn from that sun-bright kissing field

where grew the cornflowers later manifest  
as sapphires on her fingers once made cool  
in Shakespeare's Avon, dipped from rowing boat,  
cool as for sifting pastry mix to bake a cherry pie