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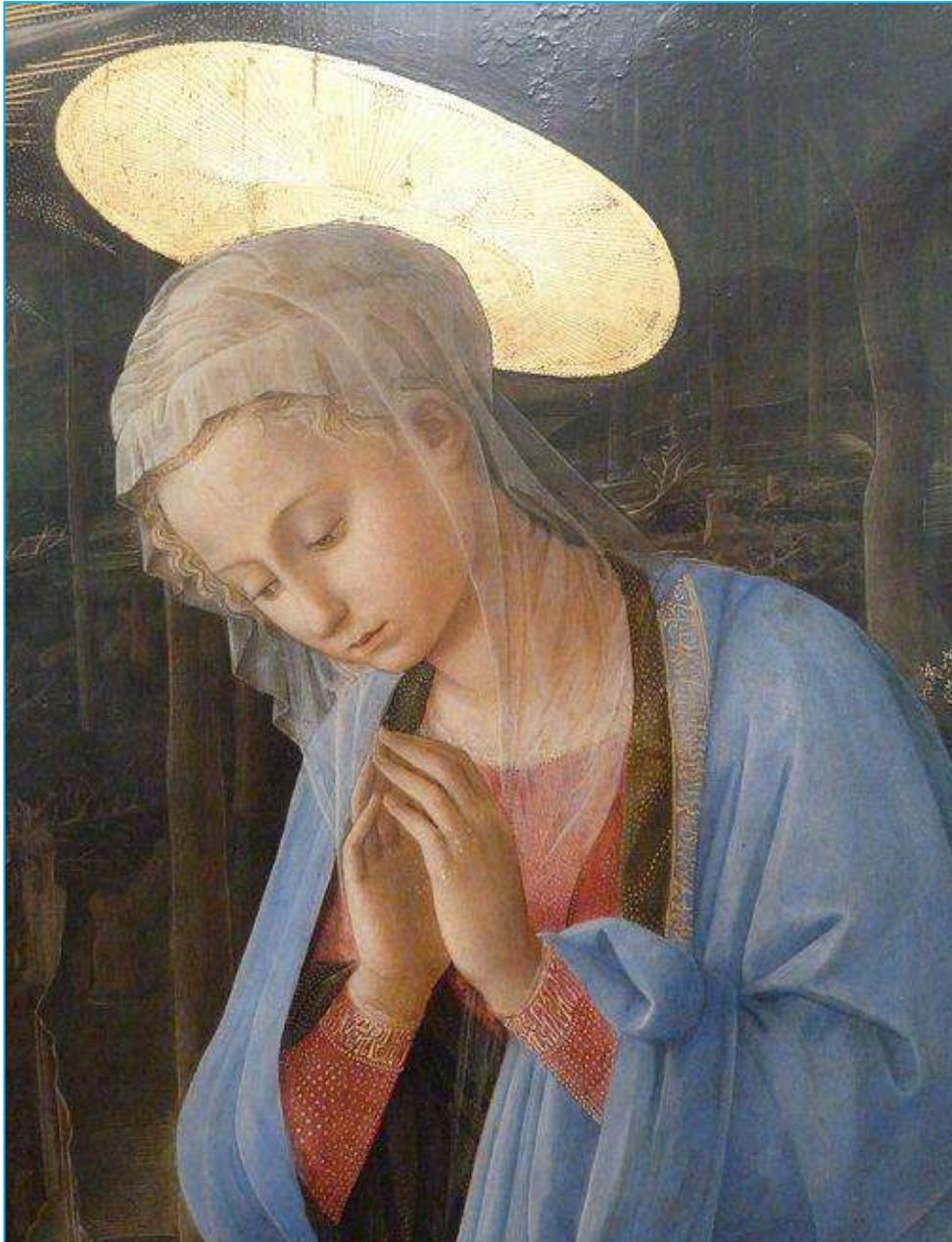
**THE LINK**

*Your Parish Magazine*

*August*

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*2020*



*Blessed Virgin Mary - 15<sup>th</sup> August*

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## CHANGING TIMES



*Behind Debbie Court you may just be able to make out some hazy, socially-distanced, meticulously- zoned figures taking part in the gardening efforts which she organised at St Augustine's Church in June and July to get the churchyard ready for the the return of services and normal life in general.*

*Below, we see Holy Nativity now starting a new era in its life as the focal point of the 'Gateway to Penarth'.*





## CONTENTS

<b>Changing Times</b>	2
<b>Editorial</b>	3
<b>Teresa Owen (1945 to 2020): A Wife, Mother and Friend</b> <i>by Jan Cullen</i>	5
<b>Admin Corner</b> <i>by Rachel Elder</i>	7
<b>PCC Report</b> <i>by Rachel Elder</i>	9
<b>A Sojourn in Sorrento</b> <i>by Judith Martin-Jones with an illustration</i> <i>by Tony Martin-Jones</i>	10
<b>Saint of the Month:</b> <i>Oswald, King of Northumbria</i>	13
<b>Book Review : Amazing Grace</b> <i>by Eric Metaxas reviewed by</i> <i>Christopher Williams</i>	16
<b>From the Archives:</b> <i>The Ministry of Women (from the 'Church</i> <i>Times' of August 20 1920)</i>	17
<b>Poem of the Month:</b> <i>Poem 437 - 'Prayer is the little implement ...'</i> <i>by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)</i>	19
<b>Faith in the News:</b> <i>Russian Perspectives on Prayer and Silence</i>	20
<b>From the Registers</b>	22
<b>Churchyard insects</b>	23
<b>Parish Directory</b>	24

# EDITORIAL



Observant and keen-eyed readers (is there any other kind of *Link* reader?) will have noticed already that this edition of our magazine does not begin with the customary article by Father Mark. He will provide his next leading article in September's edition of the magazine but, while we are still inside the coronavirus episode, he is concentrating on keeping open other channels of direct communication with all of us, most particularly the weekly letters and written sermons that have been distributed with the bulletins and, of course, the on-line, YouTube services and sermons from which I'm sure we have all benefited.

The website of the Church in Wales publishes an account of the general rules and the ways that individual churches may make stepwise progress towards the goal of full opening. The Welsh Assembly decided that churches could be open from 13<sup>th</sup> July "for individuals and for households" and this decision is the starting point of what seems to be a strategy of gradual, incremental progress towards the provision of the normal range of services. Rachel's report of the PCC meeting that occurred on 10<sup>th</sup> July tells us exactly what is happening at St Dochdwy's

and at St Augustine's as the first stage of the restoration.

Our magazine begins with a tribute to Teresa Owen which Jan Cullen has composed from the memories, thoughts and reflections of those family and friends who knew Teresa best.

The feature section of this edition includes an excellent piece of travel journalism from Judith Martin-Jones (with the added benefit of one of Tony Martin-Jones' illustrations).

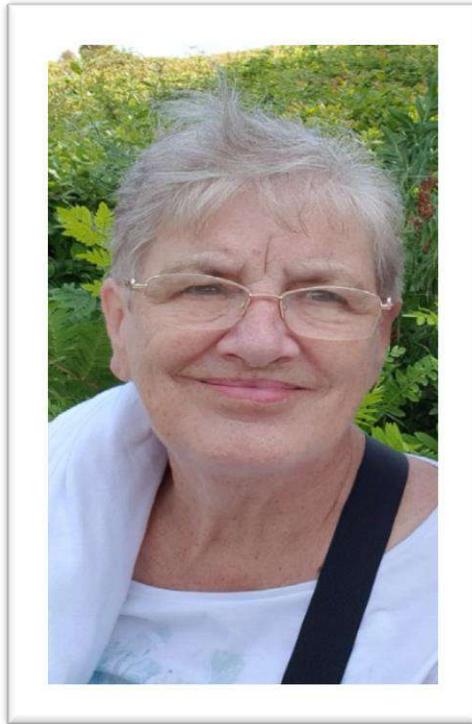
This month's poem is about prayer and so is the following piece about silence and prayer in Russia so these two – the editor hopes – are rather complementary. We also have what may be the first of many book reviews written by Chris Williams.

Our cover is made from a detail of *The Madonna of the Forest* which Fra Filippo Lippi painted in about 1460.

Please send all contributions (reviews, reports, personal reflections, articles, local church news of any sort, whatever you'd like to share) whenever you can!

*JK*

## **TERESA OWEN (1945 to 2020): A Wife, Mother and Friend**



Teresa moved to Llandough in April 1968 following her marriage to Roger and worked as a Staff Nurse on the Intensive Care Ward in Llandough Hospital until her retirement in April 2005.

She soon joined St Dochdwy's Church and became a long and faithful member. She was a Sunday School teacher and involved over the years in Mothers' Union, Ladies' Guild, social, fundraising and flower arranging activities. A friend recalls their joint involvement in the annual Christingle service – 'it was lovely to see the children process round the church with their lighted candles'. She was part of the church cleaning team and another friend recalls Teresa's satisfaction when dusting the cobwebs high up in the church's dark and forgotten corners.

Her passion for knitting, sewing and cross-stitch came to the fore when she organised the creation of new kneelers for confirmations and weddings and a commemorative pair for the Royal British Legion. She volunteered with others to make the numerous pew cushions which can still be found at St Dochdwy's and made a Noah's Ark cross-stitch for the Noah's Ark Children's Hospital.

Her son Gareth was born with a bilateral cleft lip and palate and the family's involvement with the Cleft Lip and Palate Association saw Teresa volunteer as a link with new parents coping similarly with feeding their babies; she became known as the "Teats and Bottles Lady" and was much appreciated by all those new mums.

When her daughter Bethan joined Brownies and then Girl Guides, Teresa became an Assistant Guider and even went to camp with them.

Her community activities included Thursday Club for over 40 years and Wednesday Club in more recent years. A Thursday Club trip to Torquay saw Teresa and friends don fancy dress as the Tiller Girls, resplendent in their swimsuits adorned with sparkle and tall feathered headdresses despite advancing years

Teresa was on the Llandough Fete committee and renowned for her corned beef pies! She was one of a group who set up the 'Tea Toast and Toys' in Llandough War Memorial Institute in 2006. She loved children and really enjoyed those Wednesday mornings, watching them have such fun.

Teresa enjoyed travel and visited America, New Zealand, Australia, Iceland and Russia. Close friends also recall much fun and laughter on visits to Christmas markets. They enjoyed the trip to Russia together but sadly Teresa's wish to cruise the coast of Norway to the Arctic Circle on the Hurtigruten Mailboat with Roger as a Golden Wedding present to each other was unfulfilled due to her illness.

Someone who had known Teresa for many years recalls their frequent bus trips to Abergavenny; they would visit their favourite coffee shop and wander round the flea market before lunching at Nichols. On one occasion they returned to Nichols for tea and cake before catching the bus home; realising time had flown they quickly left the shop and hurried to the bus station only for Teresa to realise that she had left her handbag. Waving the bus goodbye Teresa headed back to Nichols whilst her friend telephoned the cafe informing them that a lady in a white cardigan was coming to collect her bag- only to then realise she was left holding the cardigan! A smiling Teresa returned to say that arriving at Nichols she was told there was good and bad news; good that her bag was safe but bad that they had left without paying the bill. How they laughed all the way home.

Teresa and Roger and friends enjoyed many caravan holidays. The congregation at St Dochdwy's always benefitted from their trips to France when Teresa returned with delicious biscuits to share with coffee after the

Sunday service. She also made Simnel cake at Easter – people didn't just come for the cake of course but it was something to look forward to!

Her other passions were cricket and rugby. Her family founded Blackwood Town Cricket Club after WW2 and she was involved from a very early age. Her father followed Newport Rugby and she attended her first match at the age of 3; her interest continued when the Dragons were formed.

Following retirement Teresa volunteered for Cancer Research in Penarth working with friends Margaret, Dorothy and Clarinda. Her speciality there was books and a friend misses the exchange of books and discussion of them that she and Teresa enjoyed. Teresa knitted baby clothes for Ty Hafan and for premature babies unit Royal Gwent. She helped to knit the lovely Nativity scene used at St Dochdwy's each year.

Teresa became ill with bladder cancer in August 2018 and despite being given the all clear a year later sadly the illness returned and she passed away in Holme Towers on Mothering Sunday. Her funeral could only be attended by family but in time a Service of Remembrance will be held at St. Dochdwy's where she worshipped for over 50 years.

Roger, Gareth and Bethan have been comforted by the expressions of sympathy and kindness. She will be sadly missed by the many who knew her.

*This article has been compiled from the memories of Roger, Gareth and Bethan, Maureen and Keith, Dave and Margaret, Hilary and Peter, Angela, Veronica and Irene.*

*Jan Cullen*

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## **ADMIN CORNER**



The office may be quiet, but I'm still finding plenty to do, as we think ahead to re-opening our churches. Reading through the changing guidance takes time and last week I was finding out the cost of masks and gloves etc. Six months ago I scarcely knew what PPE meant, now it's become a part of everyday life.

Fr Mark and the Churchwardens have been drawing up plans of the churches to work out how many people can fit in and where they can sit to keep 2m apart. This is initially for private prayer times, but also for baptisms, funerals and weddings when they restart. Permission has just been granted to resume worship services. This won't happen straight away, but hopefully it won't be too long before our Sunday services can begin again, albeit in a slightly different form.

At the time of writing, the Hall is still closed until we get further guidance on what will be permitted. Some groups may be keen to restart; some may not be able to return for quite a while because of social distancing requirements. Others may not come back at all. This will all affect the Hall's income for months to come.

Arriving at the office each day, the first thing I do is check the postbox. It's been a lovely surprise to open the box and see several envelopes with planned giving and donation cheques. Your generosity is wonderful – and vital for keeping the parish afloat. Thank you so much.

*Rachel Elder*

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## PCC REPORT

The PCC met by Zoom on 10<sup>th</sup> July. The main topics of discussion were:

**Financial situation** - we currently have a surplus, thanks to people resuming their planned giving and also to a number of one-off payments. The diocese has given a refund of 25% of one quarter's Share payment. However, we cannot depend on one-offs to continue.

**New Treasurer** –Professional bookkeeper, Mr Gareth Hurman, has been approached to take on this role. Roger Owen had met with Mr Hurman and gone through the tasks.

However, it is hoped some aspects can still be carried out by members of the congregation which would save some money.

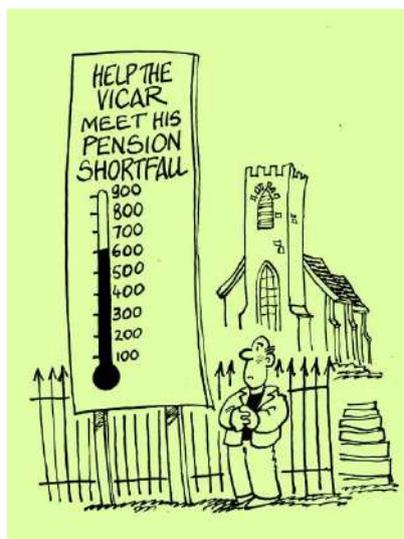
**Safeguarding Officer** – Irene Mallet, who is the organist for Holy Nativity and St Dochdwy's, has kindly offered to take on this role.

**Holy Nativity Works** – plans are being made for the next phase on the wall on the Plassey St side, plus a lot of landscaping. An estimate is also required for the new window guards for the church.

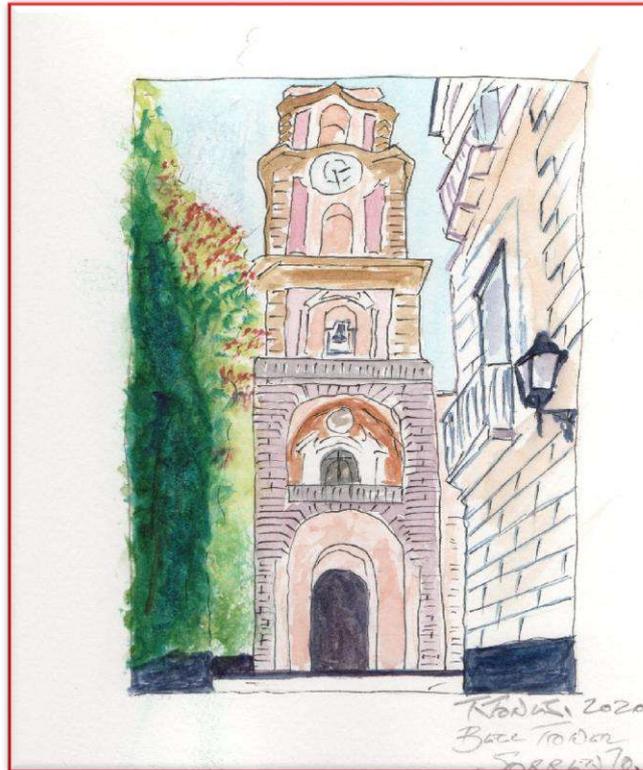
**Re-opening of churches for private prayer** – Linda Guilfoyle and Jan Cullen have done a lot of work preparing for this. St Augustine's will open Weds 10am-12pm and St Dochdwy's on Thurs 10am-12pm.

*Rachel Elder*

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## FEATURES



### A Sojourn in Sorrento

As we cannot and indeed do not wish to travel far this year we are drawing on memories of past holidays. In October last year we visited Sorrento, on the bay of Naples, and were keen to explore and find out about the area. The view from our hotel took in the profile of Vesuvius which dominates the whole area.

Our exploration began with the hotel itself. The Tramontano Hotel, (formerly the Villa Strogoli) with its charming gardens hanging off the shoreline has in fact been a hotel since 1812. Local legend suggests that the property includes the house in which Torquato Tasso was born. Something of the Italian Shakespeare, Tasso was an Italian poet of the 16th century, (1544 – 1595) best known for his poem *Gerusalemme liberata* (*Jerusalem Delivered*, 1581), in which he depicts a highly imaginative version of the combats between Christians and Muslims at the end of the First Crusade, during the Siege of Jerusalem. Tasso suffered from mental illness and died a few days before he was due to be crowned on the Capitoline Hill as the king of poets by the Pope. His work was widely translated and adapted, and until the beginning of the 20th century, he remained one of the most widely

read poets in Europe. A statue of Tasso sits in central of the eponymous square in the centre of Sorrento.

Sorrento and the Amalfi coast with their intrinsic beauty have been magnets to tourists for generations, and their abundance of Classical sites and antiquities, not least the remarkably preserved Pompeii and Herculaneum were on the route of the Grand Tour. It seems that previous visitors to our hotel included John Milton, Goethe, Byron, Scott, Shelley, Lamartine and Longfellow. Ibsen wrote his play 'Ghosts' here!

It is also claimed that in 1902 the popular song '*Torno a Sorriento*' was written at the request of the town's mayor and hotel owner and for Prime Minister of Italy who was staying at this hotel! Its intention was not the romantic one we might now assume but more an advertising ditty to continue to attract tourists!

The Cathedral of Sorrento dedicated to Saints Phillip and James was built in the 11th century and rebuilt in the early fifteenth century in the Romanesque style. Since then there have been multiple bouts of rebuilding and restoration up to 1924 when the entire façade was replaced. The campanile or bell tower is the only remnant of the original building. It is located in the centre of the town, but tucked away parallel to the main street, Corso Italia. Wonderfully decorated with painted ceilings and



marble pillars, its stations of the cross are uniquely made in marquetrie (see illustration left). It appears that this local speciality owes its origins to the technique developed by the Benedictine monks in the convent of St. Agrippino in Sorrento, during the VI – VII century. A marvellous museum in Sorrento exhibits a vast array of marquetrie of the highest quality, mainly from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, along with the original drawings for the work and tools of the trade.

Further exploration of the Amalfi Coast took us to the colourful town of Positano. Best viewed from the sea, the majolica-tiled dome of the church of Santa Maris Assunta is always visible and a romantic venue for weddings. The church is known for a 13<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine icon of the

black Madonna and child above the main altar supposedly stolen from Constantinople by pirates and smuggled west.

Further along the coast the town of Amalfi reaches right down to the shore and central to the panoramic view from sea is its Cathedral (see illustration right). Approaching this is not for the faint hearted – if we suppose the climb to St Augustine’s a challenge. After a steady climb through the narrow streets, sixty two steps, wide and steep, lead up to the main doors. These were cast in Constantinople before 1066. Another medieval bell tower typical of this part of southern Italy is part of the original building group and the most ornate example of its kind, decorated in tiling in Arab-Norman style.



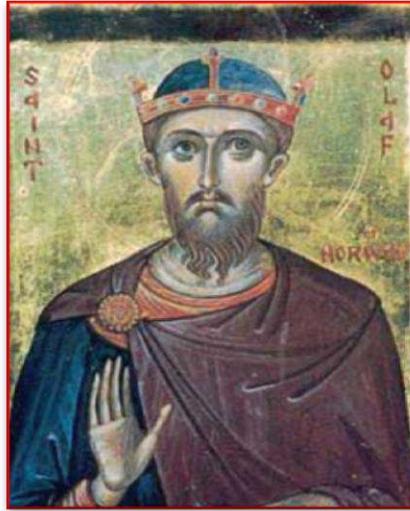
Higher again on this steep slope is the town of Ravello with its unparalleled view over the Amalfi coast from the Arab style gardens of Villa Ruffalo and another lovely church in its central square.

Returning to the harbour side we found an amazing shop specialising in the handmade paper produced in Amalfi (left). Apparently this skill using cotton and water was imported from China and one factory producing the highly absorbent rather rustic paper remains in the town. Naturally our resident watercolourist purchased some (*see the illustration of the Campanile at the top of this article*)!

*Judith Martin-Jones*

## SAINT OF THE MONTH

### Oswald, King of Northumbria



*'The most Christian king of the Northumbrians'* (Bede)

The main source for information about Oswald (604--642 A.D.) is the Christian monk and first great English historian, Bede, whose *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (731 A.D.) contains many references to our saint of the month. Bede, who was writing about a century after Oswald's rule, took the view that Oswald was a saintly and truly Christian king who through his energy and devotion established Northumbria as a powerful and Christian Anglo-Saxon kingdom and consolidated it as a unified political entity. Bede's positive view of Oswald is the one that has been passed down to us through the thirteen intervening centuries.



Ethelfrith, Oswald's father, originally brought the two north eastern kingdoms of Decia and Bernicia together as Northumbria, but about 616 A.D. lost the territory to another Anglo-Saxon king, Raedwald, of East Anglia. The picture on the left is of the fearsome-looking Sutton Hoo helmet which may (or may not) have belonged to Oswald's terrible foe, King Raedwald. Oswald escaped to Scotland. The escape proved providential, however, since his Christian education at the monastery of Iona changed what might otherwise have been a very different history of Northumbria,

to which Oswald returned as king at the age of just thirty after victory in the battle of Heavenfield, near Hexham. Before the battle, Oswald had a wooden cross erected, prayed, and asked his army to pray with him. Bede, who seems to be relying on inherited oral accounts of what happened, tells the story in his usual vivid style:

*'Oswald, when he was about to engage in battle, set up the sign of the holy cross and, on bended knees, prayed God to send heavenly aid to His worshippers in their dire need. In fact it is related that when a cross had been hastily made and the hole dug in which it was to stand, he seized the cross himself in the ardour of his faith, placed it in the hole and held it upright with both hands until the soldiers had heaped up the earth and fixed it in position. Thereupon he raised his voice and called out to the whole army, "Let us all kneel together and pray the almighty, everliving, and true God to defend us in His mercy from the proud and fierce enemy; for he knows that we are fighting in a just cause for the preservation of our whole race".'* (*Ecclesiastical History of the English People*)

His first action as King of Northumbria was to send to Iona for a bishop to guide him in his rule. Aiden (whose saint day is also in August and about whom we may hear more in a future *Link*) arrived and began his work of educating the Northumbrian nobility in Latin and Christianity. Aiden is remembered also for his founding of the church on the holy island of Lindisfarne (which was eventually destroyed in the vicious Viking raid of 793 A.D.) and for establishing churches throughout Northumbria, including at Bamburgh and Yeavering. Bede mentions that Oswald acted as Aiden's interpreter when the latter was preaching, since the Gaelic-speaking Aiden did not know English well.

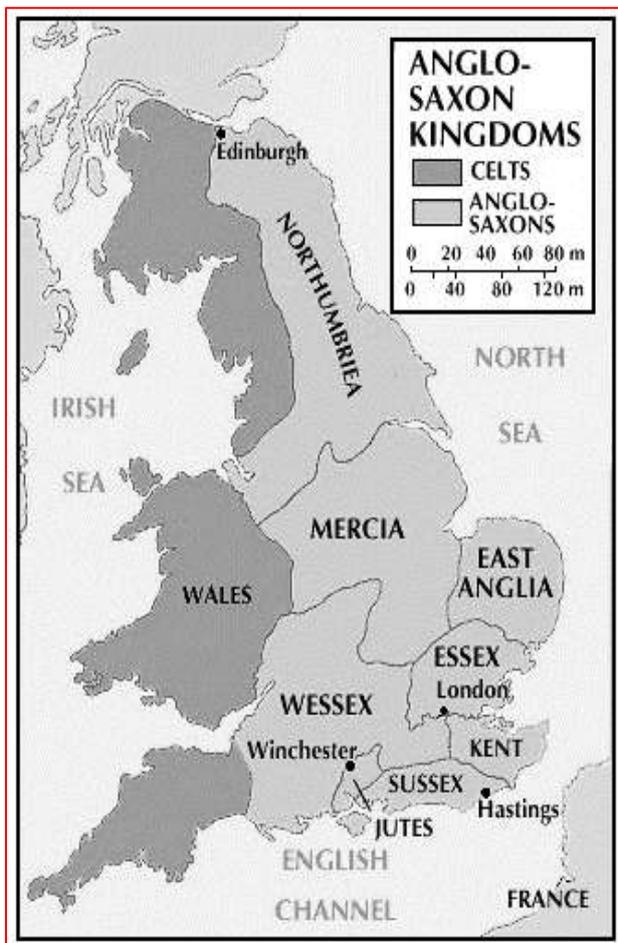
After eight years of rule, in which he was the most powerful ruler in Britain, Oswald was killed in 642 A.D. at the Battle of Maserfield which was the culmination of one of the many struggles for precedence among the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms at the time, this one involving Penda, a pagan king of the Mercians.

Maserfield was probably near the town we now know as Oswestry – the name of that town perhaps a corruption of Oswald's name joined with the Anglo-Saxon word for the tree by which he was killed. This traditional identification of the battle site with Oswestry, probably in the territory of Powys at the time, suggests that Penda may have had ancient British allies in this battle, and this is also suggested by surviving Welsh poetry

which has been thought to indicate the participation of the men of Powys in the battle. It has also been concluded that, if the traditional identification of the site as Oswestry is correct, Oswald was on the offensive, in the territory of his enemies. Oswald could be seen as a martyr because of his death as a Christian king in battle, and Bede always emphasises Oswald's saintliness as a king.

*'Though he wielded supreme power over the whole land, he was always wonderfully humble, kind and generous to the poor and to strangers.'*  
*(Ecclesiastical History of the English People)*

To illustrate this judgement, Bede recounts a story. On one occasion, at Easter, Oswald was sitting at dinner with Aidan, and had "a silver dish full of dainties before him", when a servant, whom Oswald "had appointed to relieve the poor", came in and told Oswald that a crowd of the poor were in the streets begging alms from the king. Oswald, according to Bede, then immediately ordered his food to be given to the poor and had the dish broken up and distributed. Aidan was greatly impressed and seized Oswald's right hand, stating: "May this hand never perish." Bede concludes the tale by writing that the hand and arm remained uncorrupted after Oswald's death.



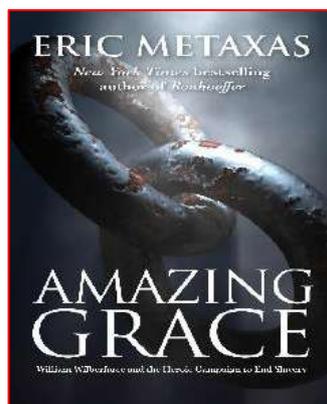
Oswald soon came to be regarded as a saint. Bede says that the spot where he died came to be associated with miracles: *'Oswald's great faith in God and his devotion of heart were also made clear after his death by certain miracles. Indeed, in that place where he was slain by the heathen fighting for his fatherland, sick men and beasts are healed to this day. It has happened that people have often taken soil from the place where his body fell to the ground, have put it in water, and by its use have brought great relief to the sick. The custom became very popular and gradually so much earth was removed that a hole was made, as deep as a man's height. Nor is it to be wondered that the sick are cured in the place where he*

*died, for while he was alive he never ceased to care for the sick and the poor, to give them alms and to offer them help.’ (Ecclesiastical History of the English People)*

Oswald had played an important role in the creation of the important Northumbrian kingdom and the establishment and integration of Christianity in these islands. His day of annual commemoration is August 5<sup>th</sup>.

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## BOOK REVIEW



*Amazing Grace*, written by New York based author and broadcaster, Eric Metaxas, is about the life of William Wilberforce. And what a life. If any one person brought an end to slavery, it was Wilberforce. He was a remarkable man: intelligent, funny, witty, gregarious, eloquent, compassionate and always driven by his deep Christian belief.

Having become an MP at the age of 21, Wilberforce decided to do what was then universally regarded as impossible. He was going to abolish slavery. Metaxas takes on a roller-coaster ride as during the next twenty years Wilberforce fought this fight. Eventually Wilberforce overcame all obstacles thrown in in front of him and prevailed.

He got the law changed so as to stop slavery. When the Parliamentary moment of triumph finally came, it was a riveting and dramatic moment. This book is the inspirational story of a determined, dedicated and Christian man who changed history.

*Chris Williams*

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## FROM THE ARCHIVES



### The Ministry of Women

*(Church Times, August 20, 1920)*

The encyclical letters from the 1920 Lambeth Conference which were published in the *Church Times*, as well as being communicated widely in the church itself, included one about the role and status of women in the Church.

It offers a benchmark in the development of assumptions about women in the church (and society at large, perhaps) and offers interesting points of

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comparison and contrast with our views today. Generally speaking, the encyclical seems to be driven by a desire to be as inclusive as possible and also by the Victorian and early 20<sup>th</sup> century general assumption that men and women were equal, but different (and complementary).

*The duty of preserving and strengthening the fellowship of the Church belongs specially to a smaller fellowship within it, the fellowship of the ordained ministry. The three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons have always been assisted in their ministry by many others who at different times and in different places have had different names and positions. In a wider and*

*more general sense these all belong to the ministry of the Church; for the special kinds of service which they have to do distinguish them - from the main body of Christians, who are commanded in general terms "by love to serve one another." Thus the great fellowship is throughout cemented by service, which is love in action.*

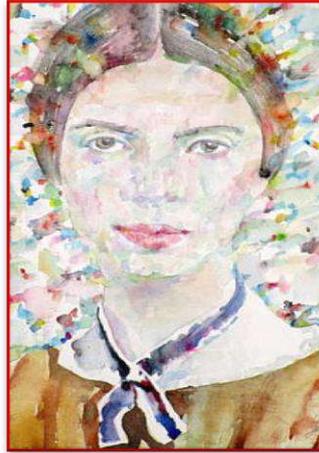
*There has been much discussion of late about the admission of women to share in the ministry of the Church, both in the wider and in the narrower sense of those words; and the Church must frankly acknowledge that it has undervalued and neglected the gifts of women and has too thanklessly used their work. We have thought well to give in a series of resolutions what we think to be the general mind of our branch of the Catholic Church at this time about this subject. We feel bound to respect the customs of the Church, not as art iron law, but as results and records of the Spirit's' guidance. In such customs there is much which obviously was dictated by reasonable regard to contemporary social conventions.*

*As these differ from age to age and country to country, the use which the Church makes of the service of women will also differ. But this use will be further determined by a more important consideration. It is those peculiar gifts and the special excellences of women which the Church will most wish to use. Its wisdom will be shown, not in disregarding, but in taking advantage of, the differences between women and men.*

*These considerations seem to have guided the primitive Church to create the Order of Deaconesses. We have recorded our approval of the revival of that Order, and we have attempted to indicate the duties and functions which, in our judgment, belong to it. We also recognize that God has granted to some women special gifts of spiritual insight and powers of prophetic teaching. We have tried to show how these gifts can be exercised to the greatest benefit of the Church.*

*The arrangements which we have suggested are not applicable to all countries alike. Yet everywhere the attempt must be made to make room for the Spirit to work, according to the wisdom which He will give, so that the fellowship of the Ministry may be strengthened by the co-operation of women and the fellowship of the Church be enriched by their spiritual gifts.*

## POEM OF THE MONTH



### Poem 437 by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Prayer is the little implement  
Through which Men reach  
Where Presence - is denied them.  
They fling their Speech 4

By means of it - in God's ear -  
If then He hear -  
This sums the Apparatus  
Comprised in Prayer. 8

---

Lyric poems show, or enact, the movements of someone's mind as it works its way through a set of problems, or ideas, or feelings. Emily Dickinson takes this about as far as it can go.

This poem seems to be about *gaps*. Specifically, it presents the gaps, or jumps, between each thought as she thinks her way through the topic of prayer intuitively, not rationally; it also refers to the bridgeable gap she perceives between a person and God.

Emily Dickinson does not make the poem in the style of a person recalling the experience of prayer later on, maybe while sitting in some kind of disengaged, calm retrospection, but as if the experience were happening as she writes, in real time, just then. The lack of all punctuation - except dashes to mark a moment's hesitation in the thinking process - helps her to

represent intuitive thinking. She keeps to an old custom of capitalising important words so they act as stepping stones in the crossing of each empty gap in her thinking and, together, convey us in sudden movements from the opening statement of what prayer is ('a little implement'), to the final assertion of what apparatus is needed - just a person and God - to make ready for prayer (7-8). But the existence of the apparatus doesn't mean that the act of shared communication is going to be sure and successful.

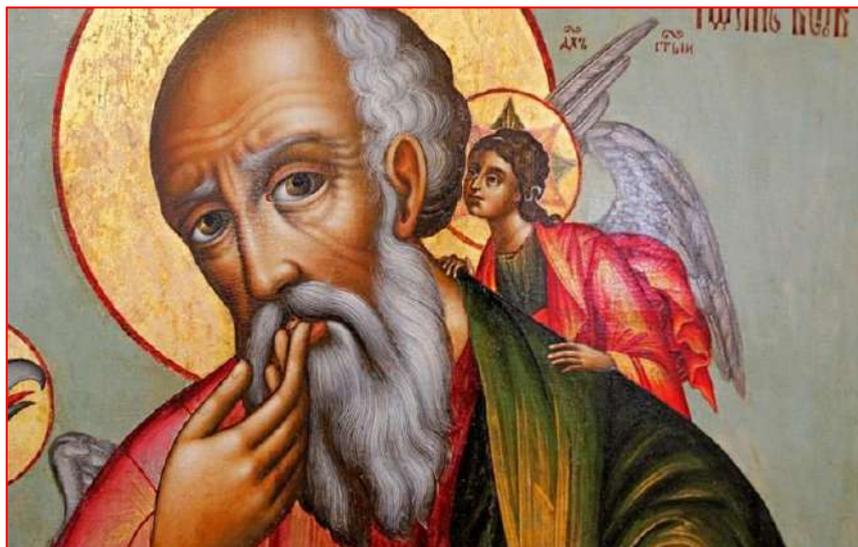
Actually, the writing makes us aware of the fragility of the process of prayer. This fragility is embodied in the bursts and pauses in the sequence of thought. Also, Emily Dickinson points to the gap between the speaker and the hearer - the supplicant is denied any comfortable assurance of a certain presence with God, so is forced to 'fling' speech (a chancy action of throwing something across an empty space) towards God. She doesn't think it is certain that God will hear that ribbon of language flung out in hope towards Him (6). But the 'apparatus' *is* there. That's something for sure, she concludes.

*JK*

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## **FAITH IN THE NEWS**

### **Russian Perspectives on Prayer and Silence**



In most religious traditions, people are invited to pray about their personal needs; but they are also called to bring before God all of humanity —

indeed, the whole created order. This seems particularly relevant when the world looks so fragile.

In the middle of the 20th century, a number of Russian thinkers talked about prayer in this broader sense, as part of trying to formulate a spiritual response to a world going through revolution and war. The philosopher S. L. Frank (1877-1950), who lived in exile after the Bolshevik revolution, was one of these. He believed that all external human activity is a fruit of what happens inside ourselves. In this context, he suggested that prayer, far from being an irrelevant solitary activity, is the “primary productive work” on which everything else depends.

Prayer feeds the forces of goodness within us: it is what we might now term a “capacity-building” activity.

It also illuminates our lives with a sense of meaning. Moreover, as we go deeper inside ourselves, we establish an invisible connection with other human beings; and, as we pray, forces of healing are released into their lives. Inwardly, there is space in our hearts for the whole world; Frank called the soul a “peculiar kind of infinity”.

Similar perspectives can be found in the thinking of the spiritual teacher Staretz Silouan (1866-1938), a Russian Orthodox monk who spent most of his adult life on Mount Athos. Silouan taught that prayer draws the mind into the innermost depths of the heart, and, in doing so, brings about personal integration. In the presence of the Holy Spirit, people learn to see, embrace, and love the whole of creation.

Silouan went as far as to say that the activity of prayer in some mysterious way holds the world together. “A monk is a man who prays for the whole world,” he said. He also emphasised that a true love for the world requires us to love our enemies.

The theologian and teacher Pavel Evdokimov (1901-70) was another who emphasised the influence of prayer on events, saying that all human action is ultimately dependent on the work of intercession. He also suggested that “the more one approaches the centre [i.e. God], the nearer the paths are to one another.”

There are dangers in explaining spirituality in terms of how it can help us to influence the world. Sceptics may suggest that prayer approached from this perspective could be motivated by an exaggerated desire to remain in control of events, and might even amount to a kind of magic.

But, for people such as Frank, Siluan, and Evdokimov, prayer is not the fruit of superstition, nor is it best understood as a way of acquiring power over the world around us. Rather, there is in it an element of letting go.

Faith is understood as not a possession to be attained, but a gift to be received. Such insights can be found in many faith traditions.

In the First Book of Kings, when the prophet Elijah is seeking spiritual inspiration, he finds a response not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire — symbols of what can be immediately felt or seen — but in the “still small voice”. In alluding to this, Frank wrote that it is difficult to detect this voice in the noise and bustle of life; for it is heard as “a whisper in the stillness”. Similarly, Evdokimov talked of God’s communicating with us in an unobtrusive way: his voice exerts a pressure that is “infinitely delicate and never irresistible”.

Where there is time in the weeks ahead, perhaps we ought to set aside space for silence. Times of interior stillness can make possible a deeper level of self-knowledge, as well as a greater appreciation of others.

Love for the world can grow in this setting. Initiatives emerging out of silence may, in the long run, prove more fruitful than a hurried activism. There is need for a politics informed by contemplation.

*Published originally in the ‘Church Times’ and written by Dr Philip Boobbyer who is a Reader in Modern European History at the University of Kent.*

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*The illustration at the beginning of this article is called ‘St John in Silence’. It is an icon from the Russian Orthodox Church, now in the Cherepovets Museum in Russia.*

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## **FROM THE REGISTERS**

### **INTERMENT OF ASHES**

9 July                David & Joan POWELL of Llandough at Penarth  
Cemetery

### **FUNERAL**

10 July              Barbara Alice Louise JONES aged 96 of Penarth at  
Vale Crematorium



Some of the insect life found recently in St Augustine's Churchyard

Top: Painted Lady, 7-spot ladybird Bottom: Tiger Moth, Soldier Beetle



## PARISH DIRECTORY

<b>Priest</b>	Revd Mark Jones revmarkjones@sky.com	029 20709897
<b>Parish Administrator</b>	Mrs Rachel Elder parishcommunityhall@uwclub.net	20708722 (Parish Office)
<b>Treasurer</b>	Mr Roger Owen	20702172
<b>Gift Aid Secretary</b>	Mrs Viv Liles	20712466
<b>Organists</b>		
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<b>Church Wardens</b>		
<b><u>St Augustine's</u></b>		
Mrs Linda Guilfoyle	linda.guilfoyle2019@gmail.com	20706309
Mr Andrew Davison	aswdavison@outlook.com	07704 049053
<b><u>Holy Nativity</u></b>		
Mrs Kath Williams (one vacancy)	huwandkath@hotmail.co.uk	20708554
<b><u>St Dochdwy's</u></b>		
Mr Roger Owen	drowen46@gmail.com	20702172
Mrs Jan Cullen	jan.cullen@ntlworld.com	20704926

**Parish Hall**, Albert Road, Penarth CF64 1BX - To hire, please contact the Parish Office

**Home Communion, Sick visiting and other pastoral matters:** Please contact Revd Mark Jones

**Baptisms & Weddings:** to make initial enquiries, please contact Rachel Elder at the Parish Office.

**Concerts at St Augustine's** – please contact Mr Robert Court

**Parish website:** [www.parishofpenarthandllandough.co.uk](http://www.parishofpenarthandllandough.co.uk)



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