



IN TOUCH

A Magazine for the Parish of Paignton

No. 8 – April 2024

Welcome to the April Magazine. We greatly appreciate your feedback, and are always delighted to receive any items from you for publication.

From Father Harry

Our English words 'martyr' and 'martyrdom' originate in New Testament Greek words, which referred to 'witnesses' and the 'testimony' witnesses bore. For example:

"This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses" (Acts 2:32) "And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus..." (Acts 4:33)

However, the meaning of words can sometimes evolve, in certain environments. By the beginning of the Second Century it appears that, among Christians, these words evolved from simply referring to a witness (or the testimony they bore) to being used to describe a Christian who was killed for his or her witness; that is, for their professed faith in Jesus Christ. This is how the words have been received into the English language. A Christian martyr is someone who has been killed for his or her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Martyrdom is, then, the ultimate physical experience of Christian persecution. In the New Testament the first Christian martyr (using the definition, above) was Stephen, who was stoned to death by a Jewish mob (see Acts 6:8 – 7:60). Others followed. Down the centuries history records many martyrdoms of Christians who, in the face of opposition and threat,

maintained their faith in Christ and who continued to proclaim the gospel of God's grace in Christ alone – eventually paying the ultimate price for doing so.

In a number of places in our world today the martyrdom of Christians continues. In the past two decades the West African nation of Nigeria has seen an appalling catalogue of killing of Christians by various Islamist groups. In India Christian pastors and other leaders have been killed by Hindu nationalists seeking to silence their proclamation of the gospel. Also sadly, the war in Gaza continues to see thousands of Christians in the cities and Christian communities of Palestine, in serious risk of losing their lives as this awful conflict continues.

From Stephen our first Christian Martyr right up until today, our world is a place where no one can truly be safe. Those who have the power and influence in the Middle East to bring all this to an end must do so, for if we fail, then the consequences are unthinkable.

May God through our Saviour Jesus Christ, bring us through this Eastertide to peace in Palestine and the Holy City of Jerusalem, The most holy of places to Jew, Christian and Muslim in our world.

May God bless us all.

Date for your Diary

Saturday, 13th July – Glastonbury Pilgrimage. 12 noon Mass in the Abbey Grounds, BA6 8BS

See Father Harry or Joyce if you are interested.

Juliet explores Women in the Bible – No. 2, Martha: A Woman of Faith and Service – a lesson we can all learn.

In the pages of the Bible, amidst the narratives of faith, courage, and redemption, Martha emerges as a figure whose story resonates with many. Often overshadowed by her sister Mary, Martha's character is a testament to devotion, hospitality, and the complexities of human nature.

Martha, along with her siblings Mary and Lazarus, shared a close relationship with Jesus Christ. Their home in Bethany became a place of solace and welcome for Jesus during his earthly ministry. Martha's first appearance in the Gospel of Luke portrays her as a diligent hostess, bustling about to ensure that everything was in order for Jesus' visit.

Her deep sense of responsibility and commitment to serving others is evident in the account of Jesus' visit to their home. While Mary sat at Jesus' feet, Martha was preoccupied with the preparations, leading her to express her concerns to Jesus, saying, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." (Luke 10:40, ESV)

Jesus' response to Martha's plea is both gentle and profound, as he lovingly reminds her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:41-42, ESV) In this moment, Jesus does not diminish Martha's acts of service but emphasizes the importance of prioritizing spiritual nourishment and communion with God.

If you want to know more about women in the Bible, talk to Juliet or Joyce.

Martha's journey is one of growth and transformation. In the Gospel of John, we encounter Martha once again, this time in the midst of grief following the death of her brother Lazarus. Despite her sorrow, Martha displays unwavering faith in Jesus, declaring, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." (John 11:21-22, ESV)

It is Martha's steadfast belief in Jesus' power and authority that leads to one of the most profound displays of his miraculous works—the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Through this miraculous event, Martha's faith is affirmed, and her acknowledgement of Jesus as the Messiah is solidified.

Martha's story serves as a reminder of the significance of both service and faith in the Christian journey. Her willingness to serve and her unwavering trust in Jesus exemplify the qualities of a devoted disciple. As we reflect on Martha's narrative, may we be inspired to emulate her spirit of hospitality, dedication, and, above all, faith in the One who offers eternal life.

In a world filled with distractions and busyness, Martha's example urges us to prioritize our relationship with Christ, recognizing that true fulfilment and purpose are found in Him alone. Let us heed Jesus' words to Martha, choosing the "good portion" of seeking His presence above all else, knowing that it is the key to a life transformed and sustained by His grace.

An Evening with Aled Jones, from Joyce Cappello

The Evening of Easter Day was very wet, but inside the Palace Theatre, it was very warm and heartwarming. It was a delight to meet Aled and find out so much about his family, friends, singing, and charity work. Juliet and I were able to talk to him after the show and it was just like a family gathering.

Thank you, James, for alerting us in the first place.



April Quiz – General Knowledge

1. What does KFC stand for?
2. On which street does the British prime minister live?
3. In what year did the Berlin Wall fall?
4. Jimmy Page formed which rock band?
5. On what date is Independence Day in the USA?
6. What is a female donkey called?
7. What is the currency of Denmark?
8. Arachnophobia is the fear of what?
9. Alastair Cook plays which sport?
10. Who is Liverpool Airport named after?

March Answers

1. Holly Willoughby
2. Fiona Bruce
3. Jeremy Clarkson
4. Clare Balding
5. Helen Skelton
6. Dermot O'Leary
7. Naga Munchetty
8. Davina McCall

Audrey Strachan – A Life

Our thanks to Jane Easterbrook for this article.

I was born in 1936 and looked after by my Granny who used a washing basket as my cradle.

At school we used chalk to write on our slates. We learned to read stories in turn around the classroom, to keep our concentration, up to the age of seven. Schooling was up to the age of fifteen: I had to get my Mother's permission at the age of thirteen to go to a "Technical School" which was for three years to the age of sixteen. We learned various trades, dressmaking, bedroom dressing table curtains, cookery and diets.

On leaving I went to work for six months in Wigmore Street, London. Then at seventeen, I moved to Harrods Department Store where I worked for two years in rooms with heating but no air-conditioning, using my sewing skills.

From 1955 to 1959, I attended the "London College of Music" learning Piano, Singing and Harmony. Afterwards, I taught music to pupils aged 11 to 15 at a local school where the headmaster was more interested in the boys doing their Football and Boxing. I also gave two music lessons a week in the lunch hour, where some of the mothers learned the Recorder together with their children.

In 1963, I also taught music to the Junior school with ages 5 to 11 and started training pupils to enter the Bedford Music Festival with classes for 5 to 9, 9 to 13 years and 13 to 18. I might have thirty to forty pupils entered, who performed individually and then in twos, threes and fours. In 1977 I moved to another school and later retired. During the 1970's and '80 I examined at Festivals.

In 1992 I moved to Paignton to look after my mother who attended St John's Church - I for a change attended St Boniface Church instead.

In 2002 after my mother died, I started entering The Torbay Music Festival and took on music pupils. I personally won the "Perpetual Cup" for four consecutive years 2002 to 2006 and on other occasions. My pupils won cups and awards over the years for Singing, Piano and the Recorder, both individually and in Duets, with the recorders playing in larger groups of four and five.

I am still giving Piano lessons aged Eighty-Eight.



A photo of Audrey with all the Paignton Festival cups that she won in one year.

GIVE TO GO GREEN

The Give to Go Green Grant initiative was a pilot project launched in Exeter and Leeds Dioceses offering matched funding to any Parish which had an investment project to reduce environmental impact. Our Parish applied and we were offered a matched funding grant of £3,500 toward replacing the lighting at the Parish Church to reduce our electricity usage and costs. The challenge was to raise our £3,500 between 14th February and 16th March.

Donations, sponsorship, and fundraising events were needed. A **Virtual sponsored walk to the Holy Land (2,936 miles in total)**, a **Quiz**, and of course in Devon, we had to have a **Cream Tea**.

All of the events raised valuable funds to the total and thank you to all who helped, attended any of the events, sponsored and donated.

It was so pleasing to see the support from the entire Parish congregation and others who live in the Parish get behind the initiative of our Virtual walk to the Holy Land. With, literally hours to spare on the deadline, we collated the mileage travelled and it was great to see we had done it together and were part way back!

Thanks to Father Neil for planning the 3 Parish Walks which formed part of our Virtual walk. A great chance to explore the local area on foot, to places some of us had never been to. The walks created an opportunity for fellowship, exercise, the odd fall over in the mud, and of course a chance to raise funds through sponsorship. A big shout out to Debbie Hosking, who travelled the furthest, raised the most sponsorship and challenged one of two of us to travel further than her! Not that we did travel further, although some of us gave it a good try! It would be great to see more Parish Walks, so if anyone wants to volunteer to plan the next one please contact the churchwardens.



Having now completed the fundraising, and received our matched funding in full, we must arrange for the work to be done, so it is not over yet. The Parish will reap the benefits of this investment in lower energy bills and the payback should be as quick as 4 years. Well done to all, and thank you. (More stories, pictures and information are available on the Parish Website)

USEFUL CONTACTS

Parish Office and Administrator: 07915 736169 (9am – 12 noon Monday-Friday)

Email: office@paigntonchurch.co.uk

Father Neil Knox: 01803 551866. Email: rneilknox@gmail.com

(Please note that Father Neil's rest day is Monday)

Parish Magazine: email magazine@paigntonchurch.co.uk or by post to Margaret Twitchings/Joyce Cappello, 34 or 9 Homebourne House, Belle Vue Road, Paignton TQ4 6PT.

And finally

There was a preacher who fell in the sea, and he couldn't swim. When a boat came by, the captain yelled, "Do you need help, sir?" The preacher calmly said "No, God will save me." A little later, another boat came by and a fisherman asked, "Hey, do you need help?" The preacher replied again, "No God will save me." Eventually the preacher drowned & went to heaven. The preacher asked God, "Why didn't you save me?" God replied, "Fool, I sent you two boats!"
