

St Mary's Church Newsletter

May 2018



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ViaMedia.News | Rediscovering the Middle Ground

By Emrys Lloyd-Roberts | May 2018

The vicar has given the following link to an article he has recently published

[After IICSA: Facing Up to Clericalism](#)

Editors Notes

By Emrys Lloyd-Roberts | May 2018

Editor's Notes

It is good to be back home at St. Mary's. We returned in time to attend Easter service with you. What a joy!

I was especially struck with the preaching both on that day, by Leslie and later by Simon during a Sunday service when there was a baptism. Leslie reminded us that the resurrection gives us the promise that we will never be abandoned, that we will live forever with God even if we have to say that we don't know how. Simon reminded us that it is not who we are, but whose we are that ultimately matters; through faith in Jesus Christ, we are given a new identity that transcends and renews all the other ways we understand ourselves, Jesus is now our identity. Although I am always blessed by hearing their sermons, I was particularly inspired by those. I know that my spiritual life is enriched by the preaching at St. Mary's and I thank God for the excellent quality of the sermons.

I am also aware of the close family that is the essence of St. Mary's. We need to know who our family members are. In this edition, there is a short bio by our Organ Scholar. I am planning (with the co-operation of those involved, of course) to have bios of all office holders in subsequent issues, as well as all of those on the electoral roll, so don't be surprised if I approach you. I have discovered that there is not one person living who is not worthwhile, and that all life stories are important. I am looking forward to hearing yours.

In addition, I am really eager to have feedback from readers about the newsletter. Especially doing it from a distance, as I have done for over two of the four and a half years I have been editor, it is difficult to judge whether people find it meets their expectations or needs. Specific feedback is really helpful, even positive criticism. Please let me have your thoughts and opinions. I would like to produce the best newsletter for this congregation, but I need your help to do that.

Praise God!

Emrys

Summer in the Square

By Jazz Wilson | May 2018

St Mary's loves Summer. We also love Battersea Square. Put those two things together and the excitement is almost too much. Yes, it can only be **Summer in the Square**: the event that JMW Turner would have wished to paint and about which William Blake would surely have written endless prose.

Summer in the Square (**happening on Saturday the 15th of September!**) is a chance to bring our community together, to enjoy ourselves and one another. We do it because we would like to enjoy our life of faith together and because we think this is something worth sharing with others.

St Mary's has some special people in it. Some of us have special talents, some of us have great connections around the community, and some of us have a lot of energy and would just like to help! However you see it, whoever you are, you are most welcome to get involved.

We would encourage everyone to stay around after the 11am service on **Sunday the 13th of May**, when we will share our vision for the day and hopefully inspire others to participate. We need lots of help to make this work, and we already have a fantastic team of people. We promise it will be fun and rewarding! You don't have to wait until the 13th - contact Jazz Wilson at jarrett_wilson@hotmail.com if you would like to get involved, or just talk to Simon.

Battersea Welcomes Refugees Project - Invitation to help

By Serena Cox | May 2018

There are 22.5 million refugees in the world today and a quarter of them come from a single country, Syria. Most of the world's refugees, are sheltered in poor, developing countries which are struggling to cope with a huge, extra burden they are ill equipped for and Syria is no exception. More than 5 million displaced Syrians have fled to neighboring countries. Turkey alone has taken 3.4 million and in Lebanon, nearly one in four of the population is now a refugee.

The sheer scale of human suffering is almost impossible to grasp. As Christians we want to help all refugees from every country but this morning I am going to concentrate on the plight of Syrian refugees in particular. Why Syrian refugees? Not just because of the huge humanitarian disaster but because in pre-conflict Syria, Christians and Muslims lived side by side sharing many of the same

sacred sites and have found it relatively easy to integrate into a non-Muslim host country. In the next few minutes, I am going to talk about three different initiatives, and I hope that they will inspire you to become in some way involved in alleviating the suffering. Members of several different Battersea churches have been desperate to help but have felt isolated, ineffective and powerless. A year ago, an open deanery meeting to look at community sponsorship turned into **Battersea Welcomes Refugees**, when some of us came together determined to pool resources, explore what was already happening in Wandsworth and work together to do something effective. The first meeting was almost exactly a year ago today and Libby Bradshaw, Sarah Bryant and I were present from St Mary's. **Battersea Welcomes Refugees** became passionate about promoting a particular project which we felt made a real difference: The **Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme**.

The **Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme** was set up in 2015 when images of three year old Alan Kurdi's tiny body, washed up on a Turkish tourist beach, shocked the world and there was huge public demand for governments to do more to rescue families from the hellhole which Syria had become. The UK pledged to take 20,000 of the most vulnerable and traumatized from the vast refugee camps on Syria's borders and resettle them in Britain by 2020.

There are a whole spectrum of ways in which you can support the **Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme**. These range from giving your time to help welcome them into the community, to giving your skills to make properties ready for them to move into. Libby has put together an online questionnaire to help you identify how you might be able to help. You can find it in the next St Mary's newsletter. It is very user friendly and takes 2 minutes max to complete. With it you will find a link to a gift list for furnishing a home for a refugee family. Just like a wedding list, it has items for every budget, from beds to washing up bowls. Now the UK is a crowded island and there is already a shortage of social housing, so the government decided that if British people genuinely wanted the country to take in these refugees, they would have to work together with their local councils to make it happen. Private landlords would need to be willing to rent out two or three bedroom flats at slightly below the market rate for a couple of years. And although the rent would be paid for from a special government fund, councils would still have to supply a support package to the family. The Local people who had demanded that the government take action, would need to furnish the accommodation and help to integrate Syrian families into their community.

The response from councils has varied. 46 local authorities refused to take any families at all. Yorkshire and the North East, two of the poorest regions in England have been incredibly welcoming as have some of the most isolated parts of Scotland and the Western Isles. The feedback we have had from neighboring London boroughs has been overwhelmingly positive, Kingston which resettled 26 families. Lambeth, which originally agreed to take 20, now has 23 and is looking forward to welcoming more. Wandsworth pledged to accept 10 but so far only two have actually been found homes.

However, I am delighted to tell you that two of the churches, which form part of **Battersea Welcomes Refugees** have sourced properties. One couple from St Peters on the Winstanley Estate, who are temporarily relocating to Cambridge have offered their two bedroom flat and members of the congregation at St Michaels, near Wandsworth Common, have actually bought a three bedroom

property off Battersea park road, specifically to rent out to refugees. Both should be ready to welcome Syrian families in the next couple of months.

It is a challenge in a wealthy area like Wandsworth, where rental income is greater than housing allowance, but we desperately need more landlords! Perhaps this is something you might like to consider.

The second initiative, which I would like to share with you is the work done by **Refugees at Home**. Not many of us have spare properties but you may have a spare room you would be willing to offer a desperate refugee or asylum seeker. The UK charity **Refugees at Home** matches up generous hosts with potential guests. You can have someone to stay for as few or as many nights as you choose. The hosts I have spoken to each began extremely nervously by offering one person a room for one night but then found it one of the most fulfilling things they have ever done and have gone on to have a succession of refugees to stay ever since. You can find some of their stories in the display area.

Why is there such a desperate need for short term accommodation for refugees and asylum seekers? All sorts of categories of people are fleeing to this country to escape conflict and persecution and there isn't time now for me to go into all their differences or the complexities of the UK asylum and refugee process, though I am happy to talk about it later, however I can assure you that anyone you help through **Refugees at Home** or any of the other charitable initiatives I mention today will have been through the lengthy beaurocracy of government checks and will be genuine and legally entitled to be here.

There are a host of grassroots organisations in Wandsworth working to help refugees both here and the Middle East. Katherine Low Settlement which St Mary's sponsors, hosts some of them and the third initiative I would particularly like to draw your attention to is Love to Learn which takes place at KLS on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 4 to 7. This is a homework club for children from refugee backgrounds. There are a whole host of countries of origin: from Iraq to Iran, Afghanistan to Eritrea. Each child is paired with an adult mentor and once homework is over there are lots of activities. This year they have ranged from learning Capoeira to building electronic circuits. Each week the older children in the Wednesday group have a mini master chef competition, where two children take it in turns to budget, cook and clear a two course meal for 20. Girls and boys, Christian and Muslim work and play together. I volunteer at the Wednesday session and am lucky enough to mentor a super 12 year old Somali girl from a devout Muslim family. She has black belts in karate and judo, is a talented footballer, loves boxing and is in the top set of her school for every subject. She was one of six Battersea children selected to visit Oxford University in the hopes that one day they would be inspired to apply there. All the children are inspirational and I can guarantee that anyone who volunteers there will both enjoy it and have their world view expanded. If you are coming to the lunch afterwards, you can meet Sandra who volunteers at Love to Learn and also runs art projects for refugee children in Greece.

In summary, there is a huge selection of ways through which you can get contribute to refugee

welfare. If you love baking you could raise money by selling cakes after a service. If you have spare time you could volunteer at Love to Learn, the South London Refugees Association or one of the many other Wandsworth refugee organisations. If you have a spare room you could host a refugee guest for a night or two. You could even become a refugee landlord. Fill in Libby's questionnaire and let it inspire you!

Questionnaire:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScZNI7eCEH-0sO8X2axqyAFXwpzdTI7dsKwg0mMgDkxvqxI9g/viewform?c=0&w=1>

We at St Mary's are already a hugely generous and giving community. I feel passionately about the plight of refugees and I hope that in some small way I have passed on some of that passion to you and in doing so you will feel a wish to become involved and send a message to those who feel utterly despairing, abandoned and lost, that there are people out there who care.

Thank you.

Battersea Welcomes Refugees Project - Questionnaire

By Libby Bradshaw | May 2018

We are currently working towards welcoming our first refugee family in Battersea Deanery and are looking for help in preparing for and welcoming them. Please would you complete this form to let us know how/if you may be able to help.

If you have any questions or would like further information please contact Libby Bradshaw at libby.bradshaw@ursa.me.uk or phone 07956 655037

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScZNI7eCEH-0sO8X2axqyAFXwpzdTI7dsKwg0mMgDkxvqxI9g/viewform?c=0&w=1>

Wedding Bells

By Canon Simon Butler | May 2018

This year is a big year for weddings in our church family. We kick off with the wedding of Ellie

Cooke and Alexander 'Todd' Todd on Friday 4th May at 1.30pm. Members of St Mary's are very welcome attend the service. Ellie has been a member of the church throughout her life.

Later in May Edd Carlton and Lily Cox marry at their old school chapel at Bloxham in Oxfordshire.

We offer Ellie & Todd, Edd and Lily our warmest congratulations and our prayers for their married life together.

Later in the year Darya Igder and Mike Kiunisala marry at St Mary's on 18th August at 11am and Jazz Wilson and Lizzie Gray marry in church on 26th October at 2.00pm.

Finally, they were married 60 years ago in Battersea:



Callum Anderson

By Callum Anderson | May 2018

I was born in Hong Kong in 1996. I then lived in Malaysia from 1998-2003, moving to London

afterwards.

I heard Saint Saens Organ Symphony when I was very young and wanted to learn the organ after hearing it. I started learning the piano when I was six and then the organ when I was fourteen. It was at my school, Bedales, where I first came in to contact with the organ. It isn't a religious school but it had a digital organ in the assembly hall for musical purposes and the director of music taught me. It was during my years at the University of Bristol where I started to play the organ in a liturgical environment.

I was Organ Scholar at St. Mary Redcliffe from 2014-2015 and then Organ Scholar at St. Paul's, Clifton. I was drawn to St. Mary's Battersea as it is close to where I live now in London (Fulham), it is a beautiful church, the music making is very good and the people are lovely to work with.



Callum Anderson

I am a confirmed Christian but I don't come from a particularly religious family, nor have I had a very religious upbringing. I believe in life after death and the spirit world. I try to put faith in myself and others around me.

I consider music as my hobby as well as my life, although I would consider composing music a hobby. I have a particular interest in history, and I have had many obsessions with particular historical events such as the sinking of the R.M.S. Titanic. When I was 12, I drew a metre long picture of the ship which hangs on my bedroom wall today. I also have a strong interest in conspiracy theories.

I am going to study a masters Historical Performance at the Royal Academy of Music this coming

September, with the harpsichord being my main instrument of study. It is from this that I would like to have a career in historically informed performance.

Callum Anderson

News from the bell ringers.

By Caroline Prescott | May 2018

Just to let you know we are joining in with a National Bell ringing campaign to recruit 1400 new bell ringers. We currently have 4 new learners so we are doing our bit.



Alan Regin MEB compiled a roll of Honour of all the bell ringers who lost their life during the First World War. He details name, age, and where in the country they rang along with any other special details with regards to their ringing careers.

We hope all those who are learning will be up and running to ring unaided by the 11th November 2018 to join in National Remembrance.

Wish them well.

I have added a link for those interested to see the National Programme of teaching bell ringing currently under way.

<https://cccbr.org.uk/2017/12/22/ringing-remembers-project-update/>

Caroline

The Mumbai Stop-Gaps Choral Ensemble

By Newsletter Admin | May 2018

The Mumbai Stop-Gaps Choral Ensemble

Sacred Heart Trott Street

Sunday 20th May at 5pm



The Mumbai Stop-Gaps Choral Ensemble

Sacred Heart Church, Trott Street are hosting a concert by this long-standing Choir from Mumbai, India. Originally founded after the floods of 1972 in Chennai the Stop-Gaps came into being to raise funds for those most affected. Bringing together people across the cultural, class and religious divides, hence the name Stop-Gaps, the Choir gathered every Christmas to perform Carols and other seasonal music. After falling into abeyance, the Stop-Gaps eventually resettled in Mumbai and has been packing out venues since then, even performing for Pope John II.

Members of St Mary's are warmly invited to join this concert of sacred music.

A Happy Life

By Gladys Ikeme | May 2018

The joy of the Lord is my strength (Nehemiah 8:10)

I have read several books on happiness. Unfortunately, I have not come to a conclusion as to its real meaning. No one has accepted having lived a happy life without some ups and downs. However, I do believe that earthly happiness can be achieved by believing God and worshipping God with all that we have.

I believe that a happy life also involves friendship, tranquillity, simplicity and moderation to set us on the right track. According to the Greek philosopher, Epicurus, nothing satisfies the person for whom enough is too little.

Life can be very uncertain and demoralising due to a variety of issues such as poverty, climate change and depressing news. A woman I know said to me that she had never been happy in her life. I wondered if this could be possible. However, her answers to a few questions I asked her, made me believe she must have had a great problem which made her go from one life crisis to another. I wanted to introduce her to St. Mary's where there is great happiness, but she only replied that she would let me know. I wanted to share with her that she has to touch heaven and let God prevail in her life. Maybe one day I will succeed.

I have discovered that happiness is not related to economic growth. Many people seem to have the concept that happiness is created by financial achievements. It seems to me that wealthy people do not appear to be any happier than others.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a report in 2013 which stated that for the second year in succession, Australia is the best country for quality of life. In addition to income, OECD looked at housing, education, personal relationships, health, work/relaxation balance and the quality of government. Australia was placed top, although it is by no means the richest country in the world. The U.K. then was about the world's 5th largest economy, but we were ranked 10th for quality of life.

Other studies, which have been done for longer, consistently rank Scandinavian countries, especially Denmark, as the happiest in the world. Since 1973, The European Union has published a 'happiness barometer' and Denmark always comes out top. There is clearly more to happiness than just money. Denmark scores highly for three reasons: 1) A high level of trust in their society 2) The people feel empowered to make change and 3) People do not pass judgment on their neighbours so people are left to live life as they see fit. Happiness seems to be more about social cohesion and being in charge of one's life than merely about finances.

It is a sobering thought that when we compare ourselves to others below us in the socio-economic scale, we feel happy, but when we compare ourselves to others above us, we feel miserable. We react this way regardless of what we actually have. I am reminded of the verse in 1 Timothy 6:6 which says, 'Godliness with contentment is great gain'.

As for me, I wish you the happiness of taking your shoes off after a hard day; the happiness of an elaborate scratch; the happiness of a good stretch; the happiness of good friends to share your laughter, your victories and your troubles. And finally, may you always choose the path that leads to

the greatest happiness in Jesus, who will guide and protect you now and forever. Amen

Gladys Ikeme

(Child of God)

Temples Earthly and Heavenly

By Sue Whitley | May 2018

TEMPLES EARTHLY AND HEAVENLY

Shortly after the assassination of Indira Gandhi in October 1984, my husband Christopher and I found ourselves marooned in Goa. India was in lockdown, so there were very few tourists around, and in any case it was not safe to travel. These strange days coincided with the exposition of St Francis Xavier, which takes place every ten years in Old Goa, the capital of Portuguese India since 1510, but long since abandoned. Normally it would have been crammed with visitors, but on this occasion the pilgrims were largely local. As the mummified body of the Saint was processed from one massive colonial church to another - the domed Church of St Cajetan, inspired by St Peters in Rome, the monumental Se Cathedral, with its ornate chapels and bell tower, the Basilica of Bom Jesus, where St Francis's body normally reposed - we followed. And all around us the jungle encroached on these vast and empty temples, as if to remind us that nothing made with human hands can last forever.

We only have to look around us to recognise how important buildings are and always have been to people of faith. 'I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord' sings the author of Psalm 122, one of many psalms that tell of King David's plans for a permanent site for a temple in Jerusalem: a place to serve as a tabernacle for the Ark of the Covenant, a sanctuary for the Ten Commandments, and the ultimate focus of worship for the Jewish people. David's vision was eventually realised by his son Solomon, and what a vision it was, heroically conceived and lavishly realised - a splendid rectangular edifice, raised on what became the Temple Mount, the place where Abraham had reputedly built the altar on which to sacrifice his son, Isaac. It had two courtyards, the inner one of which contained a bronze altar. There was an immense basin for ritual washing, and two detached pillars, known as Jachin and Boaz, stood at the entrance to the building itself. This First Temple was completed in 957 BC and during the next four hundred years or so the treasure accumulated in the 'Holy of Holies' attracted raids not only by foreigners but also the kings of Judah themselves, until, in 586 BC the Babylonians razed it to the ground.

In 571 BC, the Prophet Ezekiel had a vision of 'the new temple', based on Solomon's original, but the building of this Second Temple had to await not only a decree from the Persian King, Cyrus the Great, but the return of the first wave of exiles from Babylon in 538 BC. Zerubbabel, then leader of the tribe of Judah, laid its foundations, but the building languished, and it was not until Haggai prophesied that 'the glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord God of hosts' that it was eventually completed. Poor old Zerubbabel's name is never mentioned again in connection with the Second Temple - perhaps because the Jews were disappointed by its lack of grandeur: it was rather smaller than Solomon's temple and no longer contained the Ark of the

Covenant. But it lasted for even longer than the first one - 500 years - long enough for the Messiah to be presented there and, as a man, to walk in its courts, so perhaps Haggai was right after all.

Needless to say, the Second Temple was never good enough for King Herod. He had grandiose plans of his own to develop it which he put in train in 19 BC - plans that were still being carried out when Jesus was born and were not completed until 64 AD. They included an outer court for public debate and for money-changing: the riches of the temple treasury were kept in the coinage of Tyre, which was odd, because even though it was the most stable currency at the time, it bore the representation of a Phoenician god, Melkart, the god of traders and a particular favourite with Hannibal. It was here where, towards the end of his short life, Jesus expelled the money-changers in an unusually violent scene: John's gospel tells us that he made a scourge with which to drive everyone out, down to the last sheep, ox and dove, saying 'Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.'

Almost immediately afterwards come those few verses on which, it could be said, the whole of our Christian faith resides - Christ's promise that if the temple were destroyed, he would raise it again in three days. The Jews, ever literal, pointed out that the temple took forty-six years to build. It was only after Jesus' death that they realised what he meant: that the temple to which he was referring was himself; the destruction of it, his crucifixion; and the raising up, his glorious Resurrection.

The impulses that feed the building of places of worship have never been straightforward. Temples and churches have been built to the glory of many gods, but they have also been built as monuments to power, to money, to ambition, and to curry favour with whatever deity requires attention. Those who dreamed up the cathedral in Seville, once the largest in the world, are on record as saying: 'Let us build a church so immense that people will say we are mad.' And the temple of Solomon, in Sao Paulo, which was designed as an exact replica of the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, was welcomed by Bishop Edir Macedo with the words: 'We are not going to build a temple of gold, but we will spend tons of money without a shadow of a doubt.' This temple, which was inaugurated in 2014, seats 10,000 worshippers, and is 55 metres tall - the height of an 18 storey building. Its central altar is an exact replica of the Ark of the Covenant - entirely covered in gold leaf. It also boasts a helicopter landing pad.

There are churches which bind us to our past: the cathedral at Chartres is a soaring building with some of the most beautiful stained-glass windows ever made - windows not designed to blind the worshipper with colour but to tell them the stories they could not read for themselves. There are baroque churches in Spain which are like theatres telling the greatest story ever told. There is - my favourite I think - a tiny Anglo-Saxon church in a field near Burford, which, with its simplicity and its washed-out wall-paintings, reminds me that God in all his glory is also to be found in emptiness, stillness and solitude. Places of worship - as we know at St Mary's - are, at their best, places of community, safety, reassurance and faith - refuges in which to discover our own hearts and souls. But we must never forget that they are products of human frailty and weakness as well as love and strength, and, like us, they are not immortal.

I have not forgotten that Mrs Gandhi's assassination took place as the result of an attack by the Indian Army on the Golden Temple at Amritsar. I have not forgotten taking refuge, the night after it happened, in the British High Commission compound and seeing terrified Sikhs being herded in to take refuge with us. And I have not forgotten those great empty monuments in Goa, monuments to a faith we share, with the jungle closing in on them.