

## St Paul's Knightsbridge

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### The Vicar

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## SERVICES THIS WEEK:

### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

2 July 2017

Family Mass at 09:00

Sung Eucharist at 11:00

Missa in simplicitate – Langlais

Maria, mater gratiae – Fauré

O quam suavis – Alain

Preacher: Bishop Michael Colclough

### THOMAS, Apostle: Mon 3 July

Morning Prayer at 09:00

Mass at 18:00

### Feria: Tue 4 July

Mass at 08:00

### Feria: Wed 5 July

Morning Prayer at 09:00

Wednesday Evening Service at

18:45

### Feria: Thu 6 July

Morning Prayer at 09:00

Mass at 18:00

### Feria: Fri 7 July

Morning Prayer at 09:00

Mass at 18:00

### Votive of the BVM: Sat 8 July

Morning Prayer at 09:00

Mass at noon

### FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

9 July 2017

Family Mass at 09:00

Sung Eucharist at 11:00

Missa brevis in d K56 – Mozart

I was glad – Purcell

## Earthen vessels

One thing the Scriptures constantly remind us of is our earthly origin. "Remember, you are dust..." The ancient legend in Genesis about God's making clay and breathing life into it is as poetic as it is primitive – but modern-day organic chemistry is the study of carbon compounds, and so our dustiness is a scientific fact too! St Paul describes us as 'earthen vessels', formed of that dust to which we will return.

But the Bible also tells us that within this earthen vessel we hold a hidden treasure. Within the crock of clay there lies a precious jewel. Neither St Paul nor any other Biblical writer thinks of this jewel as part of our natural constitution, or as anything which we hold in our own right. Rather is it something given to us, something with which we are entrusted, and which we must therefore guard and cherish above everything else in the world. What is this jewel? St Paul himself describes it variously, but all his descriptions come to the same thing. Sometimes he speaks of it as the Spirit within us, sometimes as Christ within us, but here in this text he gives it a fuller description – '*the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*'. Listen to the whole passage: *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

St Paul's great concern is that we will neglect or lose this treasure – or, to use another favourite metaphor of his, that we will quench or extinguish the flame of that life which alone sets us apart as children of God – that flame without which everything is but dust and ashes. The gift of God's life in us is, in truth, the only ultimately precious thing we possess – our spiritual life.

Rather to my astonishment I was reminded that it was 25 years this week since I was ordained in St Paul's Cathedral as a deacon and set to work in Acton. Reflecting back on those 25 years in ministry, one can't help but be reminded of the earthiness of much of what one expected would be a spiritual vocation! I am convinced that few realise that so much of the ordained clergy's time is spent formatting text, fixing photocopiers and shifting chairs – or simply dealing with the dustiness of human life and experience which often seems to have only the most tenuous link with the proclamation of the gospel. Talking to my fellow clergy, I know I am not alone in this assessment!

But woven through all of it – and only partly because of a desire to do so and often, thank God, because it has been expected and demanded – has been the regular practice of daily prayer, the daily reading of Scripture, the corporate worship of God, and the reception of the Blessed Sacrament. Long ago a wise old priest convinced me that in the clerical life this was the only way to protect the treasure that lies within the very earthen (and sometimes cracked and leaky) vessels that are ordained lives. And he was right. There is no other way. Only thus can we rise above the clay, and stir up the gift of God which is in us, and fan the Spirit's flame. For helping me to do so for more than sixteen of those twenty five years, thank you.

Fr Alan Gyle

## THIS WEEK: we welcome Bishop Carlos & friends

On **Tuesday** we look forward to welcoming Bishop Carlos and around 20 pilgrims from the Diocese of Lebombo, our link diocese in Mozambique to St Paul's Knightsbridge as part of their pilgrimage to London.

There will be a short service of Evening Prayer at 18:30pm followed by supper in the Vicarage. Please put this date in your diaries and plan to join us.

## In brief ...

Today at 13:00: **PARISH LUNCH** in the Vicarage Garden.

Pilgrims going to **Wales** in September are invited to a gathering in the upper room of the Star Tavern in Belgravia on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July at 19:00pm for a briefing over drinks.

The next **Prayer Branch** meeting takes place on **Tuesday, July 18<sup>th</sup> at 18:30** in the home of one of our congregation. Its purpose is to provide an informal space for intercessory prayer, reflection on biblical passages and fellowship. Please ask one of the clergy for more details.

The Parish Garden Party will

date! It's a wonderful opportunity to come together again after the summer break and to welcome our friends and neighbours from the local community. Please speak to Caroline Docker if you have suggestions for raffle prizes.

## Walking the Labyrinth – the next Explorations meeting

July's Explorations gathering is an opportunity to experience the ancient practice of the labyrinth. It is a path known to have existed for over 4000 years. The twists and turns on the labyrinth path mirror the twists and turns in our lives. Following this path offers the restless mind an opportunity to be inwardly observant, to pay attention to feelings, to explore challenges and be open to fresh insights and ideas.

Walking prayerfully is very much part of the Christian tradition and is known to have been embraced by Christians since the fourth century.

We will meet at the **boat house in Hyde Park** on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> July at 10:00am before walking to where we will set up a temporary labyrinth.

Please email Fr Louis if possible for some preparatory information (although this isn't essential so still come if you decide at last minute) at [louis@spkb.org](mailto:louis@spkb.org) to register your interest.



## Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July

Please join us on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July for a unique and special concert. Clare McCaldin writes: An opportunity Stephen Dickinson has written a new group of songs for me entitled *A Shakespeare Quartet*, which we will be premiering together on Sunday 16 July at 3pm. The songs are settings of speeches from four different female characters in Shakespeare's plays: Rosalind's teasing of Orlando (*As You Like It*), Viola to Duke Orsino (*Twelfth Night*), Gertrude's description of Ophelia's watery death (*Hamlet*) and Hermia's dream (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*).

Stephen will be accompanying me in these new songs, as well as in a duet he wrote last year for baritone Paul Sheehan and me, setting Prospero's closing speech from *The Tempest*.

Stephen has also written a new *Benedictus* duet for us, commemorating the death of his great-uncle Oxley Jones Frost, who was killed in action on 17th March 1917 aged 24. This will be performed alongside a *Pie Jesu* which Stephen wrote in 1997.

Paul will also be performing Finzi's *Let Us Garlands Bring*, accompanied by Michael Papadopoulos, and the three of us will open the concert with three duets by Schumann: *Tanzlied*, *In der Nacht* and *Ich bin dein Baum*.

The concert is at St Paul's Church, Wilton Place, Knightsbridge at 3pm on Sunday 16th July, and lasts an hour without an interval.

## Please pray for...

**We pray this week for:**  
all recently ordained, their training incumbents and congregations; all exploring their vocation in the diocese; all recovering from addictions; Westminster City Council; EU citizens living in the UK.

**Among the sick and those in need:**  
Patricia Dopheide; John Watson; Francis Faber; Sue Ko; Ian Powe; Brenda Young; Ann-Marie Dyas.

**And we pray for the recently departed:**  
Liam Dickerson; Martyn Hett; Geoffrey Rowell, bishop, Joy Taylor, Nick Walker, Patricia Knatchbull.

**And on their year's mind:**  
Archibald Cooke 6/7  
Peter Moore 6/7

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[www.spkb.org](http://www.spkb.org)

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