



There but for the Grace of God go I



The 8th March saw the centenary celebrations of the International Women's Day and I was kindly invited to speak at the Southwark Muslim Women's Association (S.M.W.A) in Peckham. They were holding their own day of celebrations to mark three decades of women's achievements; being a woman born in this country I was asked to talk about my experiences of education and my career & studying opportunities since leaving school. I have always felt a strong sense of womanhood in my life and it was a real privilege to be asked to join my sisters on such a special day. There were about eighty women present and they were extremely welcoming, hospitable

and interested to hear my story; I in turn was fascinated to hear about their work there and the difference they are making to these women's lives.

I'm sure I'm not alone when I say that in the course of my daily life I hear prejudiced comments about people of other cultures, faiths and nationalities. These comments frequently hint towards an attitude that English-born people should have more rights than foreigners who have decided to settle here. Whilst I have an element of empathy for the older generation of indigenous people who have experienced great change in this country, I feel this must be tempered by the fact that the whole world has lived through a metamorphosis on a grand scale. On the whole, we in the West still live with many benefits and relative luxury compared to our brothers and sisters in developing countries. But for the grace of God, go any of us, any of us could have been born in very different circumstances and regardless of our birthplace I believe we are all pilgrims on this earth.

Sadly, parts of the media are responsible for portraying all Islamic people as fundamentalists and therefore capable of causing atrocities such as 9/11.

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As we approach this wonderful festival of Easter I pray that we will all grow in grace and understanding to follow Jesus' example and teaching, so that we will learn to value all our brothers and sisters as children of God regardless of their background.



Rev'd Heidi Huntley



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continued from front

A fear of the unknown is understandable; a resistance to discover more knowledge is not. One of the women at the S.M.W.A stated that until we get to know one another we will never understand each other, which is why I was so delighted to be invited to this community centre that I previously knew nothing about. Some readers may be wondering why Southwark Council is giving money to a Muslim initiative instead of supporting 'English' concerns. Well, whilst the centre does receive funding from the Council, the S.M.W.A is also a registered charity and thereby helps to support itself. In addition, the centre provides lessons in English and various courses to N.V.Q level; this encourages, empowers and enables the women to integrate in society and to find employment. A frequent accusation I've heard aimed at foreigners is that they sponge off the State, this centre provides the means for women to become independent; you don't often hear the media promoting that, which is why we need to look beyond our usual sources of information and be brave enough to have our opinions changed.

You may have heard that there are strong similarities between the major World Faiths and I would agree. Yet, I realise that we also have great differences, but I don't believe this has to be a problem. We live in such multi-cultural societies now that we exist with difference each and every day. The importance is that we should all learn to be tolerant and respectful of those differences, acknowledging we all have equal right to exist on this planet. This year the Christian festival of Easter will be celebrated on 24th April when we will commemorate the death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. One of Jesus' greatest instructions was to love God and love your neighbour as yourself. As we approach this wonderful festival of Easter I pray that we will all grow in grace and understanding to follow Jesus' example and teaching, so that we will learn to value all our brothers and sisters as children of God regardless of their background.

S.M.W.A Community Centre: Bellenden Old School, Bellenden Road, Peckham, SE15 4DG.
Telephone: 020. 7732. 8053. www.smwa.org.uk

Rev'd Heidi Huntley

Celebrating Church Schools

The one million pupils who attend Church of England schools will play their part in this year's celebrations to mark the founding of the Church of England's National Society in 1811 offering education to the poor in every parish - 50 years before the state joined in.

More than 15 million people alive today had the benefit of a church school education in England and Wales. The work of the National Society received the royal seal of approval in the Queen's speech to General Synod in November when Her Majesty spoke of its "impact on the life of the Church and the nation".

Today, more than 1,000 of the CofE's 4,700 primaries are small schools providing vital educational provision in isolated rural areas and working closely with their parish church to serve the local community.

The Church of England, through its dioceses, is also the largest sponsor or co-sponsor of academies under the first wave - the majority replacing vulnerable or failing schools and already showing a marked increase in academic achievement (latest DofE figures).

This year's celebrations will be marked by events in schools and dioceses across the country culminating in a special service at Westminster Abbey on October 14 (Full details are on the anniversary website www.natsoc200.org).

Hurrah for the NHS

a personal history by Molly Wickert

Whenever I hear anyone decry the state of the National Health Service I want to leap up and down and say it's fantastic and one of the best things about living in this country. I simply would not be here at all if it had not existed throughout my life.

When I was nineteen I started having chronic diarrhoea, which did not go away whatever I did or my doctor suggested or prescribed. It was vaguely called colitis but I was finally diagnosed four years later with Crohn's disease. This horrid disease is mentioned a great deal nowadays but forty five years ago most people had never heard of it, least of all me. I was horrified to hear that I would most likely have it for life as there was no cure. However, after trying steroids and various other medication to no avail, I was part of a blind trial at St. Bart's hospital in being given Azathioprine to treat the Crohn's, an immuno-suppressant drug previously used for people having organ transplants. This drug suited me very well.

For many years I was reasonably stable, occasional flare-ups being treated with short periods of steroids. However the disease continued to wreak damage to my bowel, particularly the small bowel (so-called for its small diameter though it is normally about seven yards long). I had operations in 1996-7 due to some of this damage and had long periods in hospital.

Just before Christmas 2009 I had a near blockage of the small bowel and an MRI scan told my consultant that I now had a stricture (a tight narrowing caused by scarring from the Crohn's) about four inches long which left me very vulnerable to complete blockage and this could only be removed surgically. I saw a surgeon at King's College hospital and was assured that this stricture could be removed very easily and would only require five or six days in hospital.

Greatly reassured, I went into King's early in May 2010, telling everyone I would soon be home and able to take up my many church duties and activities. However I had not taken into account the state of my poor insides and three major operations later found I was left with less than a yard of small bowel and only half my large bowel. The small bowel was taken out into my skin as an ileostomy with a bag to catch everything I ate and drank.

The small bowel's function is to remove all the goodness of the food eaten and the large bowel removes liquid and provides the hydration a human body needs. As my large bowel is not joined to my small bowel I cannot take in enough liquid to hydrate myself. It just comes straight out into the bag. Likewise my small bowel is too short to perform its major function and I cannot take in sufficient nutrition from anything I eat. I therefore, have to have all my necessary nutrients straight into my veins. This sustaining food in liquid form is called parenteral nutrition and I have to have it every night for twelve hours. It enters my body through a permanent line (a Hickman line) which goes through my upper chest and into the largest vein in the body, the vena cava, which runs next to the heart.

As you can imagine, when I first found out all the implications of what had happened to me, I was pretty depressed. I imagined my life was over and I would be a semi-invalid until I died. However as I recovered from all the surgery and grew stronger my mood improved and I started to see the positive things.

First of all, I wasn't dead!

I could still leave hospital and be independent. I could walk and exercise, though, sadly, not swim, my favourite sport, because of the risk of infection in the Hickman line. I could still live a useful and fulfilling life. I had only ended up in this condition in my late sixties, whereas many young people with Crohn's have all this sort of stuff to contend with in their teens or twenties. I have lived and had children and followed a teaching career until retirement. I now consider myself lucky.

I have spent so much of my life in hospital and most of it taking large amounts of medication. Without our wonderful health service I just would not have been able to survive. Thank you for all the marvellous skills and dedication of all who work in the NHS and for the people of vision who set up this often criticised organisation after the second world war. It has been there for most of my life and I hope it will not fail future generations by being slowly dismembered by present politicians.

The many visits from friends and family, get well cards and prayers had a major part in my recovery too. Thank you to everyone who helped me in this way.

Molly Wickert

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This month

Sunday@Six

There is no Sunday@Six children's Eucharist during April. The next one will be May 15th.

Holy Week and Easter

For Christians, our fundamental beliefs are focussed on this one week. We follow Jesus step by step as he brings his message to the seat of power and religion in Jerusalem. Familiar and contemporary themes of challenge, injustice and cruelty resonate with us as we move inexorably to his death. Then, surprisingly, suddenly, magnificently, it all changes and we are celebrating not a defeat but a victory, not a death but life as share in the great triumph of Easter.

You are welcome to all the special services which help us to complete this journey with Jesus.

Service times for St Bartholomew's

Sundays:

8am: Eucharist 10am: The Parish Eucharist
6pm: Evening Service or Sunday@Six
(Note: 6pm service is monthly, check for details)

Weekdays:

Morning Prayer: Monday – Friday 9am, Saturday 9.30am
Evening Prayer: Monday – Saturday 5.30pm
The Eucharist: Wednesday 9.30am, Thursday 12.45pm

The Year of the Bible Many of you will be aware that 2011 is being kept as the Year of the Bible because it is the 400th anniversary of the publication of the most famous translation of them all, the King James Version (KJV), otherwise known as the Authorised Version (AV). It was first published at the beginning of May that year, and so at all services in St Bart's on Sunday May 8th and during the following week the readings will be from the KJV. The sermon on May 8th will be about this remarkable work, and we are planning other events during the year. More details next time

Referendum The church will be in use as a polling station on Thursday May 5th for the referendum about the other kind of "AV" – Alternative Vote. As ever, the Church has no official view on this, but encourages people to exercise their democratic right to vote! Interestingly, PCC, Deanery and Diocesan Synod elections are "first past the post" but elections for General Synod use some sort of proportional representation system.

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A member of staff is available for consultation about weddings, baptisms etc on Saturday (10am-11am) in the church.
Vicar's day off: Monday.

Editor:

If you have a comment or contribution to make, please send it to

sydenhamlife@hotmail.co.uk

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Holy Week at St Bartholomew's

April 17th	Palm Sunday	10.00 am	Palm Procession and Eucharist
		starts at the vicarage and re-enacts our Lord's entry into the Holy City	
April 18th, 19th, 20th			8.00 pm said Eucharist with devotional address
April 21st	Maundy Thursday	8.00 pm	Eucharist of the Last Supper
		re-enacts the Last Supper, with washing of feet, followed by Watching with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane	
April 22nd	Good Friday	10.00 am	Children's Way of the Cross
		a way for children to enter appropriately into the Good Friday experience	
		12 noon	One Hour's Devotion
		1.00 pm	Way of the Cross
		2.00 pm	Liturgy of Good Friday
		including the veneration of the Cross and the complete Passion reading	
April 23rd	Holy Saturday	9.00 pm	Easter Vigil Service
		in which we kindle the new fire, renew our baptismal vows and	celebrate the first Eucharist of Easter
April 24th	Easter Sunday	10.00 am	Sung Eucharist with baptisms and First Communion
		Come and find signs of hope in an anxious world	

From the Parish Registers

Baptisms

March 20th David and Laura Bundu

We welcome them into the fellowship of faith

Weddings

March 19th Florent Doko and Ifeoma Obiekwe

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St. Bartholomew's Church parent & toddler group;

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