

The Chronicle Of All Saints Petersham

The Friendly Church

Rector: Rev. S. W. GISSING, Th. L.

The Rectory, 325 Stanmore Rd., Petersham, 2040—569-4735

FEBRUARY, 1979

OTHERS' PRAYERS

Father, help me not to despise nor attack when
I don't understand.

(William Penn)

God of all goodness,
You know what is needed to make me holy.

(Father Damien)

Christ Jesus, I want to be good; not because I want to feel
good, but because I want You to live fully in me.

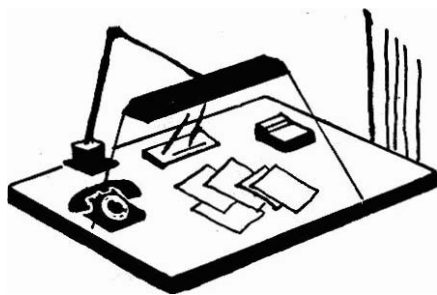
(Mother Teresa)

I was made for You, Lord:

and I shall never be truly satisfied until we meet properly.

(St. Augustine)

From your Minister's Desk



My dear friends,

My first desire in this first issue of 1979 is to express appreciation from my wife and myself to all those who kindly sent greetings at Christmas. To receive these assurances of affection made the festival richer for us both. Thank you.

During the last few months some thought has been given by the Parish Council to the possibility and advisability of combining the two morning services. The aim is to strengthen the fellowship of the church—to help us grow together in our ‘common-union’ as disciples of our One Lord and Saviour. In the last few weeks members of the Council have done some checking to see what worshippers reactions might be. No opposition has been apparent. However such a move must be a resolution of a congregational meeting. Thus a meeting is called for Sunday, 4th February at 9.30 a.m. This time has been chosen with the hope that it will prove convenient for members of both congregations (8 a.m. to 10 a.m.) to be present. This is a very important gathering and I urge all worshippers to make a strenuous effort to attend.

February is the month for annual meetings of our parish organisations. These should be chaired by the Rector as president *ex officio*, and the reports from the meetings are presented to the Annual Parish Meeting in March. Please support your organisation’s meeting.

This is my opportunity to extend to you my sincere wishes for a happy and satisfying 1979. First among our “good resolutions” let us put the intention of deepening our knowledge of God, and our fellowship with and encouragement of one another. Thus with His Will as our inspiration with our aim, we can look forward to a year of service and blessing together.

Your sincere friend and minister in Christ Jesus.

S. W. GISSING.

STEWARDSHIP:**A catchword to boost church funds?****Or a vital clue to our relationship with God?**

We've heard the word many times, usually in the context of a fund-raising campaign in the local church. Indeed, to many people, "stewardship" is just a polite word to soften the hard fact that the Church must raise money for staff and buildings, or go out of business.

But there's much more to it than that.

Stewardship is actually a very profound word—one that sums up the whole nature and purpose of our presence here on earth. It comes, of course, from the word "steward", and in the ancient world, a steward was one who managed his master's money and property. He didn't own any of it, but he was entrusted with it and was responsible for the way in which it was used.

So if we Christians are God's stewards, it means that none of our money and possessions really belongs to us at all. They belong to God—and we are responsible to Him for using them.

Now that's easy to say. Probably we've all said it a hundred times. But do we really believe it, deep down? Does it really shape the way we live?

The answer to those questions can be seen in our attitude towards money. If we genuinely take the Lord at His word, we'll be trusting Him to meet our needs, and investing His money widely and freely in His work. If we don't we'll be secretly afraid that, if we give too much to Him, we'll be left short and struggling. So we'll meet our own needs first, and then give Him some of what is left over.

A Spiritual Barometer

That's why our giving is a pretty accurate barometer of our spiritual health. And that's why an increase in our giving is always a blessing to us—because it's really a deepening of our commitment to Christ. It's a new venture in faith in His provision, and a further admission that what we have is not ours, but His.

The testimony of those who have gone further in giving than most is that God never stays in anyone's debt. There are no recorder cases of people being bankrupted by giving too much to God. In fact, as one article in this issue points out, He will, if we trust Him for it, give us the extra money to give back to Him!

The promise is quite clear in Luke 6: 38. "Give to others, and God will give to you: you will receive a full measure, a generous helping, poured into your hands—all that you can hold. The measure you use for others is the one God will use for you."

It's certainly true that Christ's work needs the regular, sacrificial giving of His people. That alone should be sufficient motive for our giving. But it's also true that we need to give, for our own sakes. It's essential for our spiritual growth. It's a measure of our faith in God's promises. And it's an expression of joy and gratitude for all the blessings He has poured out upon us.

Paul's Principles

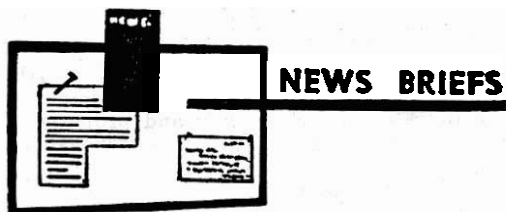
Here are some principles that Paul laid down for Christian giving:

2 Cor. 8:5: "First they gave themselves to the Lord"—and that's a vital first principle. True Christian giving, like every other part of the Christian life, can only come from true Christian commitment.

2 Cor. 9: 11-13: Our giving will glorify God, and be a witness to Him. He will enable us to be generous.

2 Cor. 8: 3: Our giving should be sacrificial, and of our own free will.

- 2 Cor. 8: 2, 9: 7, 12, 15: We should give joyfully, cheerfully, and with thanksgiving.
 2 Cor. 8: 4, 14: We should give to meet human needs, not just locally, but everywhere.
 2 Cor. 8: 10-12: Once we've started, we should keep it up.
 1 Cor. 16: 1-3: We should give regularly, systematically and in proportion to our income.



WOMEN'S AFTERNOON GROUP

The year opens with our Annual Meeting on Tuesday, 6th February at 1.30 p.m.

All members please make an effort to attend. The meeting will be followed by an Americano Party and then afternoon tea.

We hope you will join us and make this a happy afternoon.

IDA BARRETT, Hon. Secretary

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SENIOR PARISHIONERS CLUB

The first Club day of the New Year is Thursday, 25th, which will be over before most of you read this, so if you forget that date, don't forget the next Thursday, 1st February, and all the other Thursdays that follow. Our Annual Meeting will be at 1 p.m. on Thursday, 1st February. Please try to be there.

We hope to see all our old members and also some new ones. You don't need any qualifications at all, just come along if you want to spend a happy afternoon and a chat over a lovely cup of tea.

IDA BARRETT, Hon Secretary.

WALTERS & SON

FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Offices and Chapels:

433-35 NEW CANTERBURY ROAD, DULWICH HILL—560-9999

890 CANTERBURY ROAD, LAKEMBA—759-4044

You are invited to enquire about our funeral fund.

People of all ages are accepted without medical examination.

CHURCH FLORAL MEMORIALS

The floral tributes confirmed for February and March:

- February 4—Mrs. M. Willis in memory of Mrs. Sheriff.
 11—Mrs. A. Hall and the Lowe family of Harbord. in memory of Bessie Clarke.
 25—Mrs. M. Willis, in memory of Mrs. Cully.
 March 18—War Memorial (Anonymous).

Please confirm the date with the Rector of floral memorials in the Church. This needs to be done at least six weeks in advance of the chosen date. In this lovely way folk remember their loved ones and add to the beauty of the worship in our services.

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WOMEN'S GUILD NOTES

The first meeting for 1979 will be the Annual Meeting to be held in the Guild Room on Tuesday, 20th February at 1.15 p.m. On the Tuesday before the meeting day, 13th February, members of the Guild and any other interested womenfolk will meet at 1.15 p.m. in the Parish Hall and will then visit one of the local nursing homes to bring cheer to the residents. What about joining us on this occasion? We'd appreciate your company.

I received a letter recently from Mrs. Ellen Bosward, former Secretary of our Guild for many years, thanking her friends here at All Saints' for their greetings to her at Christmas time. She sends her best wishes for the New Year to her many friends and says that All Saints' is often in her thoughts.

BETTY GISSING, President.

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FILM REVIEW

'Born Again', movie version of the autobiography of Charles Colson, cabinet member, and close confidant of ex U.S. President Richard Nixon, premiers in Sydney this month.

The film traces the career and conversion of Colson, known as "The Hatchet Man". Colson—one of the inner-five of the Nixon Cabinet was jailed in the wake of The Watergate scandal.

He was well known for engineering "dirty tricks" during political campaigns, organised leaking of false and damaging stories about opponents to the press, and authorised the break-in to the office of the psychiatrist of Daniel Ellsberg—the man who leaked the Pentagon Papers to the Washington Post.

While he awaited trial, Colson was given a copy of "Mere Christianity" by C. S. Lewis and found that his intellectual objections to Christianity were demolished one by one. He comes to faith in Christ and finds new friendships among former political opponents.

This highly intelligent man finds that he must nevertheless pay for his wrongdoings. Christianity does not provide an escape. But he finds a new perspective in life so that he does not succumb to the dehumanising forces of prison life.

Instead of adopting the attitude of "keeping out of trouble and minding his own business" he takes the initiative, helping prisoners with their personal as well as spiritual problems.

Prison life gave Colson a new career. De-barred as a lawyer he has dedicated his life to prison reform and the welfare of prisoners in the U.S.

Charles Solson will be in Sydney for the film premier.



DO ALL RELIGIONS LEAD TO GOD?

It's an attractive proposition, isn't it. You know—take everybody's views, mix them all together, and come up with an Identikit picture of God. A lovely, tolerant, sentimental idea—but also one which is **foolish, illogical and impossible**. We're not being kind when we claim that all religions are basically one—we're being **cruel**; As Michael Green observes, it's like saying to a blind man sitting on the edge of a precipice, "It doesn't matter which way you move. All paths lead to the same goal."

In his book, **'You Must Be Joking'** Green asks "How can all religions lead to God when they are so different? The God of Hinduism is plural and impersonal. The God of Islam is singular and personal. The God of Christianity is the Creator of the world. The divine in Buddhism is not personal and is not creative. You could scarcely have a greater contrast than that. Christianity teaches that God both forgives a man and gives him supernatural aid. The goal of all existence in Buddhism is **nirvana**, extinction—attained by the Buddha after no less than 547 births. The goal of all existence in Christianity is to know God and enjoy him forever."

He makes the point that what we need is not a comparison between the chinks of light each of us may have grasped, but for the day to dawn. We don't need a **religion** but a **revelation**—which is precisely what Christianity claims to be. "Unlike other holy books, the Bible does not bring us the story of men in search of God; it tells us about the God who comes in search of men." And right here is the major contrast: while the Bible declares that nobody can save himself and make himself pleasing to God (try as he may), almost every other religion asserts that by the keeping of its teaching a man can be saved/reborn/achieve fulfillment/or whatever. "Nothing spells out this contrast more powerfully than the Buddhist story which starts off like the parable of the Prodigal Son. The boy comes home and is met by the father, and then has to work off the penalty for his misdeeds by years of servitude to his father. The principle of **karma** (cause and effect, paying off your guilt) is poles apart from **grace** (free forgiveness when you don't deserve it a bit)."

All roads may have led to Rome, but all religions certainly don't lead to God. "They lead to radically different goals," says Green. "Extinction or heaven; pardon or paying it off; a personal God or an impersonal monad; salvation by grace or by works. The contrasts are irreconcilable."

Available at The Parish Bookstall.



WHAT DO YOU STAND TO LOSE?

Many years ago a certain Atheist lecturer was parading up and down the countryside pouring out his verbiage against the very thought of God, and heaping ridicule upon all those foolish enough to believe in God and in the Bible as the Word of God.

On one occasion he addressed a group gathered in a large hall. His wordy eloquence stirred them to a high pitch and, deeming himself master of the situation, he hurled a challenge to Almighty God, if there be a God, he challenged Him to reveal Himself by smiting the lecturer to death. When God did not do this, the man turned to his audience and exclaimed: "See, there is no God!"

Whereupon, a little peasant woman, with a shawl about her head, arose to her feet. She addressed her remarks directly to the lecturer, as follows:

"Sir, I cannot answer your arguments; your learning is beyond me. You are an educated man, while I am merely a peasant woman. With your superior intelligence, will you answer me one question? I have been a believer in Christ for many years. I have rejoiced in His Salvation, and I have enjoyed my Bible. His comfort has been a tremendous joy. If when I die I come to learn that there is no God, that Jesus is not the Son of God, that the Bible is not true, and there is no salvation or heaven—pray sir, what have I lost in believing in Christ during this life?"

The room was very still. The audience quickly grasped the logic of the woman's question. Then turned to the Atheist, who by that time was swayed by the woman's simplicity. In quiet tones he made answer:

"Madam, you won't stand to lose a thing."

Hearing this, the peasant woman spoke again: "You have been kind and have answered my question. Permit me to ask another. If, when it comes time for you to die, you discover that the Bible is true, that there is a God, that Jesus is His Son, and that there is a Heaven and a Hell,—pray, sir, **What will you stand to lose?**"

Of course, the logic was so overwhelming that the crowd leaped to its feet and shouted in ecstasy. The Atheist was silent. **He had no answer.** But the Bible has: "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God" (Psalm 14:1). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life". (John 3:16).

—By Rev. T. De Courcy Rayner (Evangelical Christian).

**ANNUAL VESTRY
MEETING**

of all parishioners
MONDAY, 12th MARCH, 1979
at 7.30 p.m.
in the Parish Hall

HARVEST THANKSGIVING

on
SUNDAY, 18th FEBRUARY

at all Services

The 10 a.m. Service is the Family Service.

Gifts of fresh or tinned food as Thanks offerings will
decorate the Church and later be given to the local
Church hospitals.

**LENTEN MID-WEEK
COMMUNIONS**

Each Wednesday at 7.15 a.m.
from Ash Wednesday
28th February