

our Diocese

A monthly snapshot of Church of England life around Derbyshire

Bishop Alastair writes... Taking Time - The longer view

Time to Come

At New Year we are conscious of time, the future, of wanting to improve – hence the practice of making resolutions!

Choices

There is a well known distinction in Greek philosophy between pleasure – the desire of the body – and virtue – the agenda of the soul. These two elements confront us with a choice.

Pleasure

The daily needs and rhythms of our bodies put the present to the fore: food, senses satisfied – give pleasure. The danger of an undue concentration on pleasure is obesity, excess, struggle. We have an understandable need to give priority to the physical, the sensuous desire for satisfaction. Pleasure converts such basic need into something enjoyable, fulfilling.

Virtue

Virtue takes the longer view. Life is not just about the body – it is primarily about the soul. The body (or flesh as Paul calls it) will perish, decay. But somewhere deep inside is a spark of a different kind of life – the seed of eternity.

The Kingdom

Jesus knew that we need food and clothes and physical well being: but He thought that the most important thing was the Kingdom: knowing ourselves to be part of eternity. This puts human pleasure in a different perspective, a divine perspective.

Taking Time

For us in a new year – we should plan for our needs, our pleasures, our stewardship of the body – for ourselves and for others.

But this is only a small part of our 'time'. The greater part is a longer project – the spiritual discipline of schooling ourselves to acknowledge our Maker, follow our Redeemer and Saviour through this valley of the shadow of death; let that spirit of eternity grow within us.

To Pray

We need to develop practices and perspectives of prayerfulness. This is the life of virtue – the longer view. It puts pleasure in its proper place, and opens up the vista of eternity. It demands disciplines of reflection, proportion, priority for the agenda of eternity.

This is a pathway and an example we are called to pursue – for our own sakes, for the sake of others, and for the fulfilment of the Father's Kingdom.

Take time to take time seriously, and not just sensuously.

+ Alastair



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Lent Addresses 2012

St James, Barlborough and Derby Cathedral

The Bishop of Derby and Derby Cathedral have joined together to provide stimulus and inspiration for churchgoers and others with a series of speakers during Lent.

The Bishop of Derby will be hosting a series of addresses on "The spiritual Journey in a Scientific Age" each Sunday, and Derby Cathedral will host an array of national speakers each Monday evening.

The Spiritual Journey in a Scientific Age: A series of addresses by the Bishop of Derby

Sundays at 6pm, St James Barlborough

26 February: Faith as a Common Foundation

4 March: Faith and Clarity

11 March: The Need for Results

18 March: Moral Values and Vision

25 March: The Old and The New

Lent Addresses 2012 at Derby Cathedral

Mondays at 7pm. The text of each address will be available afterwards for others at greater distance. Each address will be preceded by Compline, an evening service sung by members of the Cathedral Choir. There will be refreshments after each gathering

27 February: Bishop Graham Cray "Freshly Expressed Church"

Bishop Graham Cray was appointed Bishop of Maidstone in 2001. In 2008 he was appointed to lead the Archbishop of Canterbury's Fresh Expression Team. He

has a national reputation for helping the church to think about new ways of worshipping and witnessing.

5 March: Dr Giles Fraser "Radical Church"

Dr Giles Fraser is a Church of England priest and was Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral until his recent resignation. He is a regular contributor to Radio 4's 'thought for the day' and has had a weekly column in the Church Times since 2004.

12 March: Bishop David Stancliffe "Worshipping Church"

Bishop David Stancliffe was until very recently Bishop of Salisbury. His work on liturgy and his chairmanship of the Liturgical Commission means that he is in a very strong position to tell us about the principles and practices of really engaged worship.

19 March: Professor David Martin "Established Church"

Professor David Martin is one of this country's most distinguished sociologists with a strong profile of publishing and speaking. He was an associate priest at Guildford Cathedral and is very much committed to the cause of Christianity in this country.

26 March: Dr Martyn Percy "Being the Church Today"

Dr Martyn Percy is Principal of Ripon College Cuddesdon and the Oxford Ministry Course. He is also Honorary Professor of Theological Education at King's College London and Professorial Research Fellow at Heythrop College, University of London. He is an Honorary Canon of Salisbury Cathedral and Canon Theologian of Sheffield Cathedral.

Going for Growth | Signs of God at work in Derbyshire

A New Year view from the Diocesan education office

Well, here we are, 2012. New Year is a time when many of us take stock of who we are and what we do and make resolutions to change. Gym memberships rise, and sports shops have a bonanza. This year, we tell ourselves, will be the one in which we finally stop biting our nails or the one when we actually manage to clear enough junk out of the garage to get the car in.

Setting high standards for ourselves is no bad thing in itself. We know our own strengths and weaknesses and most of us do aspire to turn weaknesses into strength. New Year resolutions, though, don't always lead to the changes we hope for. As fallible human beings we know full well that there will always be the temptation of 'just one chocolate biscuit' or 'it's just too cold and dark to go running tonight'.

It sometimes seems to me that even though we are all aware of our own fallibility, we are now living in a society that does not permit error, misjudgement or human weakness on the part of others, particularly in the 'professional' aspects of their lives. The media hounds cabinet ministers to take responsibility for all and any mistakes made in their departments; politicians private lives are often seen as far more important than their abilities; whenever an accident happens both journalists and 'victims' seem to be seeking out someone to blame before an investigation even begins.

In the world of education we are all too familiar with 'high standards'. I have no argument with the need to continually

strive for the very best for our children. Similarly, I have little sympathy for those who hark back to some mythical 'golden age' when children who were seen and not heard scaled the academic heights almost irrespective of what happened in classrooms. It does sometimes worry me, however that the continual talk of 'raising of the bar' and media assertions that the term 'satisfactory' might actually mean 'not quite good enough' might be having an unintended side effect. I think that we might be in danger of building up unreasonable expectations on the part of both ourselves and those we serve. In striving for the very best we run the risk of giving out the message that anything short of flawlessness is a legitimate cause for concern.

Children today are rightly viewed as unique individuals who have infinite worth. But they are also children – small and vulnerable human beings who are in the process of developing their skills, knowledge and characters. If we look back upon our own childhood we can all point to times when we have benefited from not getting our own way or when we have learned valuable lessons from our mistakes. If we try to wrap our children up in cotton wool are we really acting in their best interests? Yet pressure from league tables, OFSTED and others tells us that we must squeeze the last ounce of progress from each pupil. Parents, who rightly expect us to care for, nurture and educate their children, can make demands upon us that we cannot reasonably meet. The media are quick to condemn and their thirst for a good story

can sometimes get in the way of presenting a balanced view. In short, we are in danger of becoming a society in pursuit not of excellence, but of perfection.

The Bible tells us that, no matter how hard we try we can never be perfect. The highest standards of all are those set by God. The fact that the human beings that he created can never live up to them is the very reason that he sent His Son to earth two thousand years ago. God's offer of an eternal relationship with us is conditional not on how good we are at obeying all His rules, but on the sacrifice made by Jesus on the cross. It is by an act of grace that we can be forgiven our imperfections.

That, of course, is the key to the mission of our 110 Church Schools. They must be places where we strive to provide those entrusted to our care with the best possible education while, at the same time, modelling, explaining and living out the grace of God.

Perhaps, as we begin a New Year, we could not do much better than to reflect upon the words of Micah:

**He has showed you, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.**

Micah 6, verse 8

Phil Moncur
Diocesan Director of Education

Prayer of the month

Make us worthy, Lord,
to serve our fellow men and women throughout the world
who live and die in poverty and hunger.
Give them through our hands this day their daily bread,
and by our understanding love, give peace and joy.
Amen

Could you be a Street pastor?

Do you have a heart for young people and the City of Derby? Then perhaps you might consider becoming a Street pastor.

Street Pastors were set up as a response from churches to urban problems. Volunteers are trained in first aid, caring and listening, drugs and alcohol awareness and other skills. They work in teams of four patrolling the city centre from 10pm to 4am.

To become a Street Pastor you must be a committed Christian over 18 and of good health as it requires a lot of walking!

You should also be prepared to commit to 12 full days of training and 12 nights out in your first year.

You will also need the support of your church in this, both financially and in prayer and care for you.

If you are interested come and try a night out with the Street Pastors. We are recruiting in January 2012 and applications can be made by contacting Alasdair Kay by email Alasdair@derbycitymission.org.uk or telephone 01332 460346

Harvest Appeal 2011

Thank you to everyone who has participated in the Harvest Appeal 2011. Donations and cheques will still be accepted into the new year.