

March 2008 Newsletter

S. CLEMENT'S CHURCH

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The Rev'd Richard Wall, *Curate*

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From the Rector

My dear People,

At the beginning of April, our Grand Auction will begin. Most of the items donated will be posted on our website, so that anyone may bid on them, no matter where they live. This means that friends of S Clement's and indeed complete strangers can make offers on all the items displayed.

We already have an intriguing mixture of things: paintings, objects d'art, antique furniture, meals in restaurants, etc. For stamp collectors we have some rare First Day Covers from the UK; for autograph collectors, a Carnegie Hall program signed (beside their pictures) by both Martin Luther King Jr and James Baldwin. One lot, which is sure to be popular, is a seat in the organ gallery of the Wannamaker Organ in Macy's during a recital followed by dinner. Some members of our Choir have also offered to give a private recital of music at a dinner party or special occasion.

So, as you can see, the Auction will attract quite a variety of bidders.

But it will not be all geared to the internet. At the end of a month, we will hold a Grant Auction Evening in the Parish House, when our own congregation and friends can bid. They can better any bids made online, but they will also have the chance to bid on a variety of items, which will

appear only on the evening. The date is Saturday, 3rd May, beginning at 7 pm. It should prove to be a very enjoyable time, as well as profitable for our funds. The proceeds will go, as usual, half to the Church Renovation Fund (for the work on the north wall specifically) and half to the Outreach Work (St Mary's Soup Kitchen, Trinity's winter shelter, Fr Julius Jackson's Prison Ministry, etc).

Soon I will be gathering together a group from the parish to plan the auction night itself. We shall need people to welcome visitors, people to look after the catering, people to manage the financial arrangements for paying for items.

All this will involve hard work for some of us, but I believe it will also be great fun. And the money that is raised will do great things.

It is not often that one writes a parish letter in February wishing people a Happy Easter in March, but that is what is happening this year. I hope Lent has been a time of spiritual growth for you and that the Easter season will be one of new life in the Church.

Affectionately, Your friend and Rector,

KALENDAR

March 2008 – *S. Joseph, Spouse of Our Lady.*

- 1 Sa S David, B.C. *Of the feria. Fast.* [The Church in Wales]
- 2 Su **Lent IV.** *S Chad, B.C.* [Parish]
- 3 M S Katherine Drexel, V. *S Ælred, Ab. Of the feria. Fast.* [Those who work for the poor and marginalised]
- 4 Tu S Casimir, C. *S Lucius, P.M.* Of the feria. [The Servers' Guild]
- 5 W Feria. *Fast.* [That we may keep a good Lent]
- 6 Th Ss Perpetua & Felicity, MM. *Of the feria. Fast.* [The Friends of S Clement's]
- 7 F S Thomas Aquinas, C.D. *Of the feria. Fast & Abs.* [Catholic teaching in Universities & Colleges]
- 8 Sa S John of God, C. *Fast.* [Those in the health care professions]
- 9 Su **Passion Sunday.** *S Frances of Rome, W.* [Parish]
- 10 M Forty Holy Martyrs. *Of the feria. Fast.* [Those who are persecuted for the Faith]
- 11 Tu Feria. [Growth in the spirit of penance]
- 12 W S Gregory I, PCD. *Of the feria. Fast.* [Pope Benedict XVI]
- 13 Th Feria. *Fast.* [March Chantry List]
- 14 F Compassion BVM. *Of the feria. Fast & Abs.* [The Society of Mary]
- 15 Sa Feria. *Fast.* [The Living Rosary of Our Lady & S. Dominic]
- 16 Su **Palm Sunday.** [Parish]
- 17 M Monday in Holy Week. *S Patrick, B.C. Fast.* [The Church in Ireland]
- 18 Tu Tuesday in Holy Week. *S Cyril of Jerusalem, B.C.D. S. Edward, KM. Fast.* [The Church in the Holy Land]
- 19 W Wednesday in Holy Week. *Fast.* [For a recollected and devout Triduum]
- 20 Th **Maundy Thursday** *Fast.* [Thanksgiving for the Institution of the Priesthood]
- 21 F **Good Friday.** *Fast & Abs.*
- 22 Sa **Holy Saturday.** *Fast & Abs.* [Preparation for our Easter Communion]
- 23 Su Easter Day. [Parish]
- 24 M OF THE OCTAVE. [Thanksgiving for the Resurrection]
- 25 Tu OF THE OCTAVE. [Church of the Resurrection, New York City]
- 26 W OF THE OCTAVE. [College of the Resurrection, Mirfield]
- 27 Th Of the Octave. *S John of Damascus, CD.* [The Orthodox Church]
- 28 F Of the Octave. *S John of Capistrano, C. Abs.* [Oppressed Christians in the Balkan countries]
- 29 Sa Low Saturday. [Those baptized this Eastertide]
- 30 Su **Low Sunday.** [Parish]
- 31 M **Annunciation BVM.** *transferred* [Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham]

Agenda:

- 2 March **Lent IV – Rose Sunday. Eucharistic Quiet Day** beginning with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at 10.15 am; the First Address at 10.30 am, then High Mass in the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament Exposed at 11 am, followed by a Silent Lunch in the Parish Hall. The Second and Third Addresses will be at 2 and 3 pm. The Day will conclude with Solemn Vespers & Benediction at 4 pm.
- 7 March Stations of the Cross & Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, 6.30 p.m.
- 8 March Time change—set clocks ahead one hour this evening.
- 9 March Annual Meeting of the Corporation of S Clement’s Church in the Parish Hall following High Mass.
- 14 March **Compassion of Our Lady.** Low Mass, 7.00 a.m. & High Mass, 6.30 p.m.
- 16 March **Palm Sunday.** Blessing of Palms & Low Mass, 8.00 a.m. Palm Ceremonies (Blessing & Distribution of Palms and Procession) and High Mass, 11.00 a.m. Solemn Vespers & Benediction, 4.00 p.m.
- 19 March **Wednesday in Holy Week.** Tenebræ (recited), 6.30 p.m.
- 20 March **Maundy Thursday,** High Mass, Procession to the Altar of Repose, Stripping of Altars & the Maundy, 7.00 p.m. Watch before the Blessed Sacrament at the Respository until Noon on Good Friday.
- 21 March **Good Friday.** Tenebræ (recited) 7.00 a.m. Mass of the Pre-Sanctified & Veneration of the Relic of the True Cross, 12 Noon.
- 22 March **Holy Saturday.** Tenebræ (recited) 7.00 a.m. Easter Vigil & First High Mass of Easter, 4.00 p.m.
- 23 March **Easter Day..** Low Mass, 8.00 a.m. Procession & High Mass, 11.00 a.m. No Solemn Vespers & Benediction to-day.
- 31 March **Annunciation BVM** (transferred). Low Mass, 7.00 a.m.; Procession & High Mass, 7.00 p.m.
- 1 April **S. Joseph, Spouse of the BVM** (transferred). Low Mass, 12.10 p.m. High Mass, 6.30 p.m.

Music for the Month – March 2008

2nd March, Lent IV:

Ordinary: *Claudio Monteverdi*, *Messa á 4 voci*

Motet: *Monteverdi*, *Laudate pueri*

Organ: *Maurice Duruflé*, *Prelude & Fugue on the name 'Alain'*

Herbert Howells, *Rhapsody No 3*

9th March, Passion Sunday:

Ordinary: *Maurice Duruflé*, *Mass*

Motet: *Roger-Ducasse*, *Crux Fidelis*

Organ: *Louis Vierne*, *Adagio*, from *Symphony III*

Johann Sebastian Bach, *Von Gott will ich nicht lassen*

16th March, Palm Sunday:

Antiphons:

Thomas Weelkes, *Hosanna to the Son of David*

Giovanni Croce, *In Monte Oliveti*

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, *Pueri Hebraeorum*

Tomás Luis de Victoria, *Pueri Hebraeorum Oliveti*

Faux-bourdon, *Ingrediento Domino*

Ludovico Viadana, *Missa 'L'hora passa' (Sanctus)*

Ordinary: *Alonso Lobo*, *Missa 'Petra Ego pro te rogavi'*

Tract: *Samuel Wesley*, *Psalm 22*

Passion: *Victoria*, *S. Matthew Passion*

Offertory: *Palestrina*, *Improperium exspectavit*

Motet: *Francis Poulenc*, *Vinea mea electa*

Organ: *J.S. Bach (transcribed C.M. Widor)*, *Mattheus-Final*

Johannes Brahms, *Herzlich tut mich verlangen*

20th March, Maundy Thursday:

Ordinary: *Josquin des Prez*, *Missa 'Pange Lingua'*

Gradual: *Felice Anerio*, *Christus factus est*

Motet: *Carlo Gesualdo*, *O vos omnes*

Antiphon: *Duruflé*, *Ubi caritas*

Organ: *Bach*, *O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig*

21st March, Good Friday:

Passion: *Victoria*, *S. John Passion*

Motets:

Victoria, *Reproaches*

Francis Poulenc, *Vinea mea electa*

Carlo Gesualdo, *O vos omnes*

22nd March, Easter Even (Vigil, 4.00 p.m.):

Tract: *Palestrina*, Sicut Cervus

Ordinary:

Plainsong, Missa 'Lux et origo' (Kyrie)

Charles-Marie Widor, Messe Solenelle

Motet: *Edward Bairstow*, Sing ye to the Lord

Canticle: *Charles V. Stanford*, Magnificat in C Major

Organ: *Louis Vierne*, Allegro, from Symphony No. 2

23rd March, Easter Day (*with orchestra*):

Ordinary: *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*, Krönungsmesse, KV 317

Sequence: *Tomás Luis de Victoria* Victimæ Paschali

Motet: *Bairstow*, Sing ye to the Lord

Antiphon: *Pietro Mascagni*, Regina cœli

Organ: *Herbert Howells*, Sarabande for the Morning of Easter

Widor, Toccata [Symphony V]

30th March, Low Sunday:

Ordinary: *Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina*, Missa 'Lauda Sion'

Motet: *Palestrina*, Quid vidisti me

Antiphon: *Cristobal Morales*, Regina Cœli

Organ: *Frank Bridge*, Allegreto Grazioso

Percy Whitlock, Toccata

31st March, Annunciation BVM (transferred):

Ordinary: *Maurice Duruflé*, Messe cum júbilo

Motet: *Christopher Tye*, Salve Regina

Organ: *Alexandre Guilmant*, Ave Maria

Jehan Alain, Litanies

Some Principles & Practices of the Spiritual Life

by Basil W. Maturin, *Mission-Priest of the Society of S. John the Evangelist, Oxford*

VII. The Presence of God.

THE supreme work of life is the perfect development of character, having ever in view the Will and purpose of God, the development of all that God has given to us in relation to Himself, and the harmonising of all the various gifts and powers with which we are endowed, so as to form one perfect whole. Each has to develop his own personal life, and to resist all those manifold conflicting claims and forces that are constantly trying to interfere with it and to hurt it.

It is scarcely possible for anyone to live a single day without finding that someone or something has been intruding upon him in a way that, if he does not resist it, will more or less injure him.

Other lives and interests cross ours. We may allow ourselves to get entangled by a thousand claims and occupations which are not really any concern of ours. Things constantly press forward and solicit our interference, in which no duty compels us to interfere. On all sides multitudes of things, sometimes the veriest trifles, sometimes matters of greater moment, seem arrayed against us, for no purpose apparently but to dissipate our powers and prevent the concentration and growth of our life.

It is not, indeed, easy for the most conscientious always to know where to draw the line, or to see what is an intrusion and what is a duty; when to hold aloof and let things of interest pass by, and when to take part in them; what is the claim of charity, and what is the mere fussiness of pride.

It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that we should know how to protect ourselves from all these distractions, and how to deal with the various

circumstances with which we come in contact, in such a way as to force them to help and develop our true life, not to hinder it.

There are, however, two dangers which we must be on our guard against, two wrong ways of meeting these difficulties.

1. No one will ever develop his best self by always watching himself. There are some people who go through life wrapped in a kind of garment of spiritual self-consciousness. They never for a moment forget themselves and their own spiritual state; they are so afraid of being hurt by life, that, in their effort after self-protection, they inflict a fatal injury upon themselves which puts a stop to any healthy growth. They become morbid, introspective, timid, scrupulous; there is nothing spontaneous, nothing inspiring in their lives. They hold themselves back from all those experiences through which alone it is possible that life and character should develop, seeking to protect themselves sometimes at the expense of definite obligations. They fail to see that in neglecting to be responsive and sympathetic they leave the richest side of their own nature stunted and maimed. For God has so ordered it that our lives are bound up with one another, and in neglecting the claims of charity and the calls of duty we injure ourselves. All these duties and interests have their danger, no doubt, but in timidly shrinking from the dangers that duty involves, we fly into greater danger, for a life that has turned in upon itself and is always watching its own growth, or lack of growth, has already contracted a deadly disease. No, the atmosphere of spiritual self-consciousness and introspection is not the shelter

which the soul is to find against the distracting interferences of life.

2. But there is another danger. We must not, on the other hand, let ourselves go with undisciplined freedom. There are those who delight in feeling the play of life's many interests and sympathies upon them. With them there is no reserve, no self-restraint, but a constant outpouring of sympathy and activity; rightly revolting against the narrow, inexpansive self-consciousness of some so-called religious people, they go into the other extreme, and pour themselves out upon everyone and every thing that interests them. Everything leaves its mark upon their impressionable natures. Finally we feel that it only needs time and sufficiently strong influences to destroy every marked token of individuality in such people, and to exhaust all the gifts with which they began life. Character certainly does not ripen to its perfection in an atmosphere of general benevolence and undisciplined sympathy, nor will the soul find its shelter in such a self-forgetfulness as that.

Shall we, then, tell the former class of persons that they must get out of themselves by throwing themselves in a spirit of self-abandonment into the lives and interests of others, and the latter that they must hold themselves back and check the outgoings of their sympathy, and try to harden themselves against that sensitive appreciation which exposes them to so much danger? Undoubtedly they must do this to a certain extent, but they will not find in such an endeavour the real remedy for their fault.

No, there is a better way; let each try to live in that atmosphere which will at once protect and develop his life; enabling him to keep the balance between the twofold claim from within and from without, yielding himself to the circumstances and influences that demand his sympathy, yet never losing hold of himself, and living the inner life

without self-contemplation or the fear to go forth wherever and whenever duty calls.

The earth in its orbit round the sun passes through many thousands of miles, yet those who live upon it are not conscious of any sudden and great changes, for it bears its own atmosphere about with it. And as we pass from one place and occupation to another, we need to carry our own atmosphere with us to protect and develop our lives. How shall we do this? What kind of atmosphere should we be wrapped in? How shall we pass from prayer to pleasure, from silence into crowded places, without jar or loss? How shall we practise watchfulness without becoming morbidly introspective, or large-hearted and generous charity, and sensitiveness that both feels and begets sympathy, without wasting ourselves? How shall we be able constantly to go in and out and find pasture; to shelter ourselves from the rude intrusions that would spoil our lives, and yet never fail to go forth with our whole nature alive to every proper claim of the ever-widening world that asks our help.

There is one sure way. By living more and more in that atmosphere which draws out all the powers of the soul, which necessitates its growth, and in which at the same time it finds protection from every breath that would blight or stunt it, which intensifies all its sympathies, and enables it to see all things in their true proportion. And that atmosphere is the Presence of God.

The soul that has learnt to shelter itself in that Presence has gained the protection which it needs, from itself on the one hand, and, on the other, from the crowding appeals of life. In that Presence there can be no morbidness, for it is the very Truth; no stagnation, for it is the Fountain of Life; no timid holding back from the true claims of life, for that Presence itself bids the soul go forth to work and action. Nor, on the other hand, can one who lives in that Presence fritter away his life upon things

that have no claim upon him, for it ever holds back as well as sends forward. He who lives beneath its shelter knows full well that the light and protection is limited to the sphere of duty and right, and that if he goes beyond that he must leave it; but within that sphere he is safe amidst all the noise and distraction and wearying strain of life. "Thou art a place to hide me in; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Thou shalt hide them privily in Thine own Presence from the provoking of all men; Thou shalt keep them secretly in Thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues!" In proportion as we gain the sense of God's Presence we are safe in the very tumult of life, in the very thick of the strife of tongues. For this Presence protects our own individuality; it protects us so that we do not lose ourselves, and become, as we are often apt to do, almost a mechanical part of the world and the society in which we live; sinking into a routine in which we lose more and more the sense of responsibility. We certainly need this, a clear and ever-deepening sense of our own separate and solitary individuality, with all its consciousness of personal responsibility and the dignity of personal life. And the first thing that the realisation of God's Presence does for any man is to deepen this sense of his own personality and responsibility. He lives in a Presence which is stronger than all the influences round him; that Presence isolates him, frees him from the tyranny of the standards and judgments of the little coteries which make his world, and gives him new standards to judge himself by.

Many of those who have the capacities for influencing others, if only they could stand a little apart and be firm, are simply carried hither and thither by the babel of opinion in which they live, and give themselves no time to pause and ask what it is all worth, and what is their own duty; they have formed no clear idea of themselves, no notion of something definite which they were intended to be and to do. Having no strong convictions, they

are borne hither and thither by the society in which for the moment they may happen to be.

And when such a person awakens up to realise the Presence of God instantly there follows the quickened sense of his own personality and responsibility; he is wrapped around and stands alone in that Presence which forces him to pass judgment upon himself. He sees himself in the Presence of One who knows him, and has been the silent witness of all he has ever said or done; he is compelled to gather himself out of the multitude, and the full recognition of his own personal responsibility is forced upon him. There has come upon him something stronger than any of those influences which hitherto have acted upon him, robbing him almost of all sense of personality, and now he is able to stand alone, and to withstand what before seemed impossible. "Thou art a place to hide me in; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance."

There is something very wonderful in the way in which the thought of God at once awakens up the dormant or half-lost sense of one's own personality and the responsibilities that it involves. We cannot come near to Him without realising more deeply ourselves. When Isaiah saw His glory, his first words were, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" Made as we are in the Image of God, there is an instinctive rising up to compare ourselves with Him who is the source of our life and our Archetype.

This realisation of God's Presence is the power that gives such an intense personality to many who naturally would not be strong enough to stand alone. Encircled by this Presence, they present that wonderful combination of sensitive timidity and moral courage which belongs to the Christian alone. This is the way men and women who are not by nature strong or independent, but who cling

much to others and depend much upon other's judgment, yet when occasion demands are able quietly to go and do their work in the face of adverse criticism and misunderstanding, for their lives are strong and self-possessed, living in the Presence of Him to whom they are responsible. Amidst all the pain which they may have to suffer, they verily have a joy which no man taketh from them. The Presence of God is thus a shelter and protection for those whose duties compel them to live amidst many distractions and much variety of circumstances. It is as when one goes into a crowded room, and on all sides one hears a babel of voices and sees a multitude of people, one feels oneself lost in the presence of so many; and there amongst them you see one who is very dear to you, and as you draw near to him and hear his voice it seems as if you were leaving all that noisy crowd in the distance, and the tones of his voice at last so absorb you that they silence all else, and the tumult has ceased, and you and he are alone. Thou shalt hide them privily in Thy Presence from the strife of tongues; and this the Presence of God can do for us. We can withdraw ourselves at any moment when we feel ourselves getting lost, as it were, in a crowded life, and rest under the shelter of His Presence.

In this way we may protect our life from dissipating its powers, and from losing itself amidst the distractions into which duty or pleasure may call us. The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe.

But, on the other hand, the practice of the Presence of God will be the remedy for those whose danger is to hold aloof from duties and to become spiritually self-centred.

For the Presence of God at once lifts one out of oneself, yet not in such a way as to leave one in ignorance of one's faults; one sees oneself indeed, one knows oneself in a far truer way than by any amount of introspection, but one sees oneself

without self-contemplation and without self-depreciation. Living in a constant spirit of self-watching and self-analysis, one may be quite possibly measuring oneself by false standards; perhaps by the ideal one's own pride has drawn for one, perhaps by the standard of some other's life, one may be striving after what God never meant and never gave one the power to attain. But as we learn to live in the Presence of God all this becomes impossible; in the Presence of the Truth we are forced to be true, and it is astonishing to see how those whose aims were very lofty and very unreal, and who had got into an altogether false method of weighing the value of spiritual things, gradually, as they strove to live more in God's Presence, took a wholly different and truer estimate of life, and thought less and talked less about their own spiritual life. "Thou requirest truth in the inward parts, and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly." They unconsciously gained another standard as they lived more simply before God. They grew out of a timid life of self-analysis into a strong life, in which they saw themselves as God would have them to be. Yet their self-knowledge became, in fact, far deeper and truer.

Certainly, if we need protection from life's many distractions and calls, we need perhaps even more protection from that ever-present atmosphere of self-consciousness which clings around so many like a damp fog; and not by any means the least dangerous form is spiritual self-consciousness. And we cannot get out of this by merely struggling with it, as we might struggle with temper or pride; such efforts seem often only to rivet the bonds more tightly upon us. We can only get out of it by losing ourselves in another, and there is but one other whose Presence we can always have and never weary, and who will never harm us.

But we must not expect that we shall be able to gain such a protecting sense of God's Presence in a moment. It will be the result of much prayer and

mental discipline. We must not be discouraged, therefore, if after a long time we still find that we have made but little progress. "In His Presence is the fullness of joy; and at His Right Hand there is pleasure for evermore." The fullness of joy and such lasting pleasure are not to be easily gained; they are to be won only by those who work hard and suffer much for it.

A few suggestions may be helpful to those who are beginning the practice of the Presence of God.

1. The mind must be kept in a healthy state; if it becomes overstrained, it will never be able to attain to the power of resting in God's Presence. The realising of the Presence of God is not to be by a straining of the mind, or by a forcing of the imagination; the soul must grow into it gradually; it must be a rest, not a weariness. Any time, therefore, that the mind feels strained or wearied, it should be relaxed; we should turn to something else, and give it rest. We may test our progress by the growing sense of liberty, the facility and freedom from scruple or anxiety with which the mind rests itself when it feels the danger of strain or weariness; scruple and fear and a burden of rules will make advance in this practice impossible.

2. Do not be anxious to grow too fast. If you are impatient and overtax your strength, you will fail altogether. To live in God's Presence means to be very holy, and, therefore, to grow in the sense of His Presence means growth in holiness. It is one of the chief fruits of a holy life, and we cannot see that fruit except as the life grows and deepens. One part, so to speak, of the spiritual life cannot outstrip all the rest; be patient, therefore, and be content to grow slowly. It is good, indeed, never to forget the Presence of God for a moment, but it

would be fatal to begin by even trying to keep the mind always concentrated. When I was a child I thought as a child. Begin by recalling the thought of God's Presence at certain times, by ejaculation, by setting apart a few minutes once or twice in the day to remain quietly wrapping yourself round with the thought, and be content with this till you are spiritually able for more. The evil results of lack of prudence, which is often lack of humility, will not be healed by grace.

3. In work that should occupy the mind give your mind to it. Offer it to God when you begin and when you finish it. But while at work you must seek to glorify God by using all the powers of your mind in what you are doing. Therefore do not try to realise God's Presence at such times, except it may be in a moment's pause, but let the conscious thought of His glory stimulate you to do your best.

4. Build the practice of the Presence of God upon the indwelling Presence of Christ. Let each communion remind you what you are as a Christian, a Member of Christ, fed by His Life. Let each communion intensify the realisation of that ever-abiding Presence within you, and let the thought of each communion remain with you till your next, even if through no fault of yours a long period intervenes. Some may seek to place themselves in the Presence of God as in an atmosphere of holy light wrapping them round that luminous shadow of the Almighty of which the Psalmist speaks; but it will be perhaps an easier, certainly a surer and a quicker road to holiness to turn within, and to rest oneself upon that heavenly light that burns in the inmost depth of the soul, radiating forth upon all its powers and faculties, the Shekinah of the Divine Presence. "In the secret place of His dwelling shall He hide me, and set me up upon a rock of stone."