



# Saint Michael's Messenger, Newsletter, May 2016

**The Eucharist is celebrated every Sunday at 10.00 am followed by refreshments**

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:**

Sunday	1st May	10h00 Eucharist Feast of Saints Philip and James 11h45 Danish Lutheran Service
Thursday	5th May	12h00 Eucharist Ascension Day and Memorial for Vance Johnson followed by refreshments
Sunday	8th May	10h00 Eucharist Sunday after Ascension
Sunday	15th May	10h00 Eucharist Pentecost & Baptism
Sunday	22nd May	10h00 Eucharist Trinity
Saturday	28th May	18h00 Vigil Eucharist Corpus Christi
Sunday	29th May	11h45 Danish Lutheran Service

## **FATHER'S NOTES...**



There is a story told of a Jewish man who was shipwrecked on a deserted island. He prayed to the Lord that if he could be granted food and water to live, and materials to build a house for shelter, then he would work extra hard to also build a Synagogue where he could praise and thank the Lord. Time went by and eventually a ship arrived and spotted what seemed to be a settlement on the island. A shore party landed and the sailors asked about the settlement. The Jewish man proudly pointed out the house he had built, and then the Synagogue he had built, and then two other buildings, also synagogues. The sailors were impressed but wondered why he had built three synagogues. The man said, 'It's because I only go to that synagogue there; the other two are the synagogues I don't go to!'

Such is human nature that we can always find, even in good things, something we don't like. Christians can be very selective about the churches they prefer to go to and also about the kind of services they wouldn't want to attend. Perhaps that's why the Lord, knowing our human nature, has enabled the Church to be so varied, and that each of us can make a free choice as to the church and services we attend.

Immediately after our Easter Eucharist one man, whom I had never seen before and have never seen since, told me he didn't enjoy the service because it was too Catholic and wasn't very Anglican! At Saint Michael's we celebrate according to Church of England liturgy (which can be very similar to Catholic) but an Anglican liturgy, if one exists as such, may well include Evangelical and more Protestant forms of worship as well.

The point is, none of the forms are invalid or wrong but have evolved over time to provide a variety of ways for Christians to access the grace of God through his universal Church. We are not all meant to be the same, except in the image of God and in the imitation of Christ, which is more to do with how we behave towards one another, not how we worship.

St Paul spoke many times about the freedom of following Christ: where the Spirit is ...there is freedom (*2 Corinthians 3:17*); for freedom Christ has set us free (*Galatians 5:1*); for you were called to freedom, brethren (*Galatians 5:13*). We see the good exercise of that freedom all the time within the one Church, but we so often deride people for being different and argue that they should be the same as us and do the same as us.

The secret to unity, whether between faiths or denominations or within our own church community, is to realise our unity is much greater and deeper than what divides or makes us

different – it is God himself.

If we can acknowledge, respect and celebrate the fact we are and can be different and at the same time share and rejoice in our union with Christ, then the Holy Spirit will have done its work. We may still have many synagogues and churches, some we go to and others we don't go to – but it won't matter anymore!

**Fr Tony**

### **'THE VIEW FROM THE PRESBYTERE...**



Last week I made a flying visit back to the UK, out one afternoon and back the next, much to the amusement of some of my friends! However, with such a short amount of time I made sure I packed every minute with something productive. The highlight though was catching up with old friends from our army days. As we swapped news and shared the highlights - and lowlights - of recent months it was obvious that the miles between us and the months that had slipped by were inconsequential. The camaraderie we'd shared as the 'army family' and the strength of the bonds we'd secured, were still very much alive and kicking.

Although many of our congregation here at St Michael's are scattered to the four winds, we too nevertheless share a bond as we come together in worship, be it regularly, periodically or in spirit across the miles. On a Sunday morning when I'm sat listening to the music that calls us to settle in preparation for the service to begin, I use those quiet few moments to reflect on all those I've come into contact with during the past week, both personally or remotely, and I consider how my words or actions may have impacted their lives. The truth of the matter is, we never really know, but the best we can hope for is that we have been kind and generous in all we've said and all we've done and that we haven't been careless in our regard for others.

Today, Tony took an hour away from the computer to have lunch at the beach with me. Whilst there I received a real blast from the past - a text message from the Regimental Welfare Officer from our last posting. Completely out of the blue! He wanted me to know that one of the families I'd been supporting, and who had been walking down a terribly hard road for such a long time, had at last reached a very happy and secure place. He also said some very generous things about the work I'd done for him, which seemed totally incongruous with the roughie-toughie soldier I knew him to be. A silent prayer of thanksgiving went up right then and there. His short message soundly reminded me that we don't always know how we touch the lives of those we come into contact with. What we can be absolutely sure of however, is that whatever we do and whatever we say to people will always have an impact. I believe it is our Christian duty to speak kindly, go gently and act fairly. In striving to do so we all are doing our bit to make the world a more caring and just place to live.'

**Fiona**

### **Who's who?**

#### **Sarah Thompson**

Welcome to our newest member of the Church Council, Sarah, who kindly shares some of her background. 'My husband, Charlie, and I were married on June 13, 2015 and eight days later left for Charlie's new job in Monaco! Although we have done our fair share of traveling, most of our life has been spent in Wisconsin, located in the Midwest of the United States. Back in the States I was a special education teacher specializing in working with students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorder. This provided me with a variety of experiences working with students from all different backgrounds. I miss the work tremendously, but am grateful for this break to research, enjoy the sunshine, and spend time with my husband in the Riviera. We are blessed to have found St. Michael's and can't thank those in the parish who have welcomed us enough.'



## Obituary: Christina Gorna

We were very sad to learn that Christina Gorna passed away on 4<sup>th</sup> April in hospital in Nice at age 79. Her funeral was held on 28<sup>th</sup> April at the Holy Redeemer & St Thomas More Church in Chelsea and she was laid to rest at Brompton Cemetery. A Memorial Service and Eucharist was held at St Michael's on the same day led by Fr Philip.

Christina was a long-standing member of the congregation of St Michael's and a former member of the Chaplaincy Council. She loved her home in Villefranche to which she had retired after a long, colourful and varied career. Having Graduated from Manchester University, and with a Diploma in French Civilisation from the Sorbonne, she was called to the Bar in 1990 and embarked on a very successful career as a barrister. She became Head of Castle Chambers in Exeter and also published several books on Company law.

Her second career was in broadcasting where she appeared in a huge range of radio and television programmes as presenter, panellist, reviewer and critic. In these she drew on her wide knowledge of the Law, Arts and French culture.

Above all Christina was a colourful and magnetic character and could be excellent company. As a Grande Dame in every sense she also knew her own mind and was not afraid to speak it. Such characters seem few and far between and she will be sadly missed.

**Hugh**

Many people offered stories and accounts from her rich history. I have published a few lines from Sarah Blundred's kind tribute given on the Sunday after Christina died. On a personal note, I met Christina on my first day at St Michael's where she jabbed me with her finger and ousted me from my seat, claiming it was her pew. After this inauspicious start we became firm friends as long as I left her 'that seat'. She was exceptionally kind and generous and introduced me to all her friends, helping me navigate my way through life on the Riviera - I shall miss her.

**Ed**



*Sarah wearing one of Christina's hats whilst paying tribute*

Christina was an exceptional lady, a truly Grande Dame of our time, the likes of which we are not likely to see again. If you knew Christina, then you KNEW Christina. Once a bright and brilliant Criminal Barrister, Christina never lost her intellectual superiority and quick tongue. You could never be in any doubt about what Christina's opinion was on almost any matter, well, in fact on EVERY matter, as long as it interested her. If it didn't interest her then Christina would wait impatiently to change the subject and regale you with another one of her hilarious stories. Villefranche was both her spiritual home and her real home in her twilight years. The place she loved best in the world surrounded by an abundance of friends who loved her the best.

Christina, my friend, my inspiration, rest in peace, free from the shackles of ill health, and may you find everlasting happiness in the life hereafter, reconciled with those you love, especially the love of your life, your husband, Ian.

**Sarah**

## Birthdays

Larry Elliot celebrated his **90th** birthday on April 21, sharing his happy day with Her Majesty the Queen.

'Happy birthday Ma'am and Larry' from all of us at St Michael's .



*Larry, flanked by Tricia and the Ed*



## 'TO BE A PILGRIM' Part 2

Josephine Attar continues her spiritual odyssey from Lourdes to Jerusalem, via Lisieux and Rome: this month focusing on her visit to Lisieux. Thank you Josephine for sharing your journey.

### Lisieux

The landscape of Lisieux in Normandy is far less dramatic than Lourdes but it was here that another great French saint, Thérèse of Lisieux, lived and died at the age of 24, in a Carmelite convent. She did not seem to do very much apart from being a terribly good girl who died with courage from tuberculosis but her writings, discovered after death, are accepted as among the most significant, spiritual writings. I first read her 'Journal d'une Âme' in the 1980's in Villefranche-sur-Mer where the rather jolly cure Père Lorenzoni gave it to me. The little Carmelite was proclaimed a Doctor of the Church in 1997. The large basilica in Lisieux, dedicated to Thérèse is impressive but far better is the small convent where she lived and died where the nuns still work, pray and sing. I like the fact that, before entering the convent, Thérèse was rather "coquette" and wore the most lovely shoes with silken bows. Her beautiful, long, fair hair (shorn when she took her vows) hangs in a glass case in a most interesting exhibition. The school mistress in me marveled at her impeccable handwriting! The saint once stayed in Nice, at the Hotel Beau Rivage, on the Promenade des Anglais where a plaque on the wall bears witness to her visit to the Côte d'Azur. She wrote about being entranced by the light on the water here. Just like us !

**Josephine**



*Saint Therese of Lisieux as a girl and as a nun*

*Plaque at the Hotel Beau Rivage*

### Want to get in touch?

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