

# *An Occasional Newsletter*

**W**elcome to Issue 12 (Spring/Summer 2018) of our Occasional Newsletter. Please feel free to photocopy this for distribution amongst your congregation.

## **“MEET THE NEIGHBOURS” hosted by The Jesuit Church of the Immaculate Conception (Farm Street) 114 Mount Street LONDON W1K 3AH on Monday, 12th March 2018**

Following the 6pm Mass, Fr Dominic Robinson, SJ (current Superior of the Mount Street Jesuit community and a member of the CTiW Executive) opened the evening by warmly welcoming everyone present. Fr Andrew Cameron-Mowat SJ, Farm Street Parish Priest, then spoke about the church today, remarking how works of social outreach have become more significant in the past few years. These include the Night Shelter, visits to the housebound, St Vincent de Paul, refugees and migrants, major fundraising for Bakhita House for victims of human trafficking, ecumenical work (including with CTiW), social issues, worshipping and socialising together, and relationships with other organisations in Mayfair.

Archivists Sally Kent and Mary Allen gave a presentation on the history of Jesuits in both London and Britain, taking us back to the foundation of Farm Street Church in 1849, and its subsequent history as an important city centre church during the times of increasing religious freedom in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Mary also looked back to the time of Catholic persecution when many Jesuits such as Thomas Campion SJ were martyred for their faith.

We heard how this splendid building, now almost 160 years old, has recently benefitted from a number of restoration projects, the latest of which is the High Altar. Others include the Stations of the Cross located around the church, and the Sanctuary, whilst the new and improved lighting leaves the nave clear of any hanging lamps, allowing the beauty of this Victorian/early 20<sup>th</sup> Century church to be seen in all its splendour.

The work of the Mount Street Jesuit Centre was described by Fr Chris Pedley SJ. The Centre, which through courses and talks engages in adult theological education and faith formation, also trains people to be Jesuit Spirituality prayer guides and directors. London Jesuit Volunteers work especially amongst prisons and detention centres. The young adult ministry is blossoming, averaging 80 young people aged 25-40 every Sunday evening for Mass followed by socialising, and they also have a full programme of retreats, pilgrimages and fund-raising events.

The evening closed with ecumenical praying of Vespers in the Roman Rite for Monday in the 4<sup>th</sup> Week of Lent, led by Fr Dominic and accompanied on the organ by Fr Andrew. Rev'd Ruth Gouldbourne read the short reading. All then adjourned to the Hall for refreshments and to socialise.

Over 50 people from more than a dozen churches attended what was once again a very informative and successful “Meet the Neighbours” evening. Our sincere thanks to everyone at Farm Street/Mount Street for their hospitality, and to all who attended.

Further details about this church can be found at <https://farmstreet.org.uk/>

## Issue 12 Spring/Summer 2018

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### Contact us

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## **Our 2018 CTiW Ecumenical Pentecost Service took place at 3pm on Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> May, and was hosted by the Regent Hall Salvation Army Church at “The Rink” in Oxford Street**

As always, CTiW received a warm welcome from the Salvation Army when we joined with them for Ecumenical Sunday afternoon worship led by Major Richard Mingay. During the course of the afternoon we enjoyed music from the Junior and Senior bands and the choirs, and we even got the opportunity to join in the spirited singing ourselves!

In conversation with Maj Richard, Rev'd Jonathan Evens shared a little about his life and ministry at St Martin-in-the-Fields, and the Bible Reading and Sermon were given by Fr Dominic Robinson SJ, Superior of the Mount St Jesuit Community. (*See next article*). Prayers were led by Maj Richard.

Churches Together in Westminster would like to thank Majors Richard & Caroline Mingay and members of the Regent Hall Salvation Army Church for their kind hospitality in inviting everyone to join them, and for hosting this Service.

## **Text of CTiW PENTECOST SERVICE SERMON given on Sunday, 20 May 2018 at Salvation Army Regent Hall by Rev'd Dr Dominic Robinson SJ**

A few years ago when I was a Jesuit novice on placement in Soweto, South Africa, I was invited to take a day out with one of the staff in the school where I was working. On the face of it it was an exciting prospect. We were going to get out of Soweto for the day, see a bit of neighbouring Johannesburg, and in particular, that evening visit friends of his in one of the suburbs. His car would take us there or at least that was the idea.

It started out well - a trip into Johannesburg - beautiful day - lunch - wander round the city - and as it got cooler head off towards the suburbs for a barbecue - a barbecue which it turned out never happened, as we managed - the Jesuit community did not believe our stupidity - to spend the next 3 or 4 hours trying to find our destination, we and our trusty South African road map. That map I can tell you became the butt of much frustration that evening, as did the South African motorway system, which took us for 10 miles at a time in the increasing gloom before we arrived at an exit which this time we were determined was the right one. One by one we took them: exit 12, 13, 14, 14a, west, east, etc., all we were sure this time was the right road. Suffice to say it wasn't a very pleasant way to spend the evening in a dangerous city like Johannesburg - not a place to get more and more lost as our stomachs rumbled on, the petrol gauge got low, and exit after exit took us further away from anywhere remotely resembling home. We got more and more panicky, thought of 'phoning the police, or at least finding a petrol station.

And then eventually, suddenly, out of the night sky, we both realised we were on a road we knew. Yes - there was that funny-looking house, and that cinema. Yes - this was a road which we knew in 15 minutes or so, provided

we took the right turnings, would get us home. And - come to think of it - just to rub it in - we'd been on this road twice before that unfortunate evening, only in our panic and fear we hadn't recognised it but thought it led somewhere else altogether.

So what's the point of this story? These last weeks of the Church's cycle of worship in the Catholic, Anglican and other traditions, is all about being lost and found. The disciples have been through the twists and turns of life, got lost, think they've found the way again, and it's been a long journey, through thick and thin with the Lord: passion, death, resurrection appearances with the doubting it really was him, then the jubilation he was alive, and of course the betrayals - Judas, Peter - and the obvious doubts as to whether it was all worth it. They're trying to discern what God's plan really is. Jesus is about to leave his disciples behind, to leave them orphaned. Maybe it's like the experience of a break-up of a relationship or leaving work sent to a new mission - I know that happens in the Salvation Army. Yet he is telling them not to be afraid. He invites them constantly to trust in the power of love, to a greater trust indeed than they have ever needed. God has shown his love for us in his victory over death. The event, the moment, the reality of the cross is in a sense behind us. It is history. The tomb, Easter morning, the resurrection appearances. Suspended in time. And now God will show us the depth of his love in how he will be with us not just at a point in time suspended forever but now for all time. The Father will send the Holy Spirit into the Church. And the Holy Spirit will help us to know that love, will remind us who are left behind of everything the Lord taught us. Will in fact teach us how to live out his mission of love in the world. As we continue on our journey. And as Jesus walks ... /Cont'd

/Cont'd... through the doors to show himself to his disciples he can give them his peace, now sealed in the Holy Spirit, which will always be with them, gifting them to bear fruit in their mission to evangelise, to bring him to others.

But this is not a call to them or even to us now just as individuals but to us as the family of God, to a unity of Christian witness which Jesus called us to pray for. As we continue on our journey to make his presence known in the world, to love as he loved, to share his Spirit, as St John puts it. If you've ever been badly lost in a strange place you might begin to share the panic of the first apostles, the searching, the exasperation and then the jubilation at that moment of realisation of where we are now, closer than we realised to the Lord's presence. As on our South African journey we found, or was it so much as we found purposefully or that our destination actually crept up on us around a bend in the road; that it somehow found us at our wit's end. So they do not find Jesus through their well-planned, expertly-thought-out, manuals, which like even the best road maps tell us the way, but still we get hopelessly lost. No, Jesus finds them.

One of my keen theological interests from the time I was a student at St Andrews has been the Reformation debates on justification, predestination, grace. And I was particularly fascinated by the question "how are we saved"? It was indeed the key theological factor for the schism in the Reformation. Yes, we can point also to questions about authority – papal infallibility etc – and certainly to the way the Church had in many ways become corrupt over the last centuries; and issues of politics in the Reformation where different theological battles to some extent reflected the different cultural realities and political battles over the role of religion in society. But the key question in Christian Doctrine centres around how we understand the nature of salvation. That question "how are we saved", however, has for me become more and more redundant. Why? Because the search for God, the desire to name God, to encounter the Messiah, is far more adequately addressed when we turn it all round: "How did Jesus find us?" "How does Jesus find us?" The God whose goodness, mercy, unconditional love, welcome, is assured, if we only notice his presence in our midst. Under our noses. God in our midst. In all people and in all things. His spirit present among us, giving us his peace, leading us forward in service and mission.

Like every human being – called, lost, found, we will not find Jesus, we will not find the fulfilment of our lives, we will not get to heaven on earth or in the after-life on our own steam. But if we stop, if we realise our frailty but have courage, if just every now and

again we manage to calm ourselves when we've got it wrong again both individually and as the Christian Church we will as the first disciples find a place of rest or rather we will allow that place to find us, and so we may realise how Jesus is closer to us than we think.

St Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of my religious order the Jesuits, as many of you will know and have experienced, wrote a manual called the Spiritual Exercises – but it's not a manual in the usual sense – indeed perhaps that was why he was treated with suspicion in post-Reformation Europe. Four weeks which take us through Jesus' life, death and resurrection and inviting us to place ourselves in these scenes, asking ourselves where God meets us, accompanies us, and calls us forth as disciples in our own lives. And in the 1st week we are called to know I am a sinner yet loved by God. This indeed has become Pope Francis' personal motto. The humility to know I can do nothing – absolutely nothing on my own – but as a flawed but graced human being I am made in God's image and likeness to love and serve him and to bring his kingdom on earth. It's no surprise Ignatian and Jesuit spirituality breaks through ecumenical barriers. We are all surely on the same page here – theologically, spiritually, practically, singing from the same hymn sheet of God's wonderful glory to create us in his image and likeness and to love us so much that he gave us his son in whom we are reborn through his death and resurrection. Thank God – whether through Ignatius or not – we are realising this as churches together, breaking through any arrogance there may be within our churches to miss this as a fundamental starting point – that we are sinners – that the churches themselves have sinned institutionally through dividing, condemning, abusing trust – and hopefully realising that God meets us where we are because he has won victory over sin and death and wants to bring us new life together. God is so much greater than all our petty squabbles of the past. God is infinitely greater.

May we work together for reconciliation, dialogue, understanding between faiths and religions as Christians together. May we work together as Christians whose life is based on hope, based on a God who saves, rooted in Christ, the human face of God right here in our world in all its flawed and graced splendour. May we live our lives together as Christians based on our conviction it is Christ who is our hope as he expresses the heart of God himself and he wants to renew us again with his Spirit for the good of all. He calls us forward in service, in mission. Together. United in diversity. In an imperfect yet real communion. For he never stops calling us to see him in those around us. He never stops finding us because he wants us not to be lost in fear but together home in peace.

## CTiW ADVENT SERVICE

The Annual CTiW Advent Service will be held on **Sunday, 2nd December** (Advent Sunday). Details of time and venue to follow.

- **“Meet the Neighbours”** - If your church is interested in hosting a future event, we should be very pleased to hear from you. See also our Guidelines for Hosts on <http://ctiw.london/meet-the-neighbours/> As well as being happy, sociable events, they are excellent Ecumenical opportunities for the hosts to showcase their church and for everyone to visit other congregations, join with them in prayer, and learn more about their church organisations & activities.
- **“Join the Neighbours”** - If you are holding a special event, Patronal festival etc to which you would care to invite people from other CTiW churches, please do let us know and we will pass on the invitation.

## NEWS FROM THE CTiW EXECUTIVE

We are pleased to welcome new members Fr Matthew Catterick, Gillian Dare, and Rev'd Canon Anthony Ball to the Executive.

To lessen the burden of monthly meetings on busy people, it has been decided that the Executive will now meet approximately five times a year for “themed” meetings, and that when necessary smaller “task groups” will be set up to work on specific projects such as special seasonal or other worship events, organising elements of the AGM, etc.

The Executive would like to thank everyone for their continuing support of CTiW.

### CTiW 2018 Executive Members

**Andreea Gherman** - Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church (CTiW Treasurer)

**Rev'd Canon Anthony Ball** - Westminster Abbey

**Rev'd Matthew Catterick** - St Saviours, Pimlico

**Gillian Dare** - All Saints Margaret Street

**Rev'd Jonathan Evens** – St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square

**Rev'd Roderick Leece** – St George's Church, Hanover Square

**Major Caroline Mingay** – Salvation Army, Regent Hall

**Major Richard Mingay** - Salvation Army, Regent Hall

**John Plummer** – St George's Church, Hanover Square

**Rev'd Dominic Robinson SJ**, - The Immaculate Conception, Farm Street

**Administration & Communications – Rosa Postance**