

# All Saints Alive

## VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

### Which way are we going?



Dear Friends,

Never before have Christianity's two great churches had new leaders within days of each other: a new pope, or Bishop of Rome as he referred to himself, Francis I who was enthroned on March 17<sup>th</sup> and a new Archbishop, Justin Welby, enthroned on March 21<sup>st</sup>. And never in living memory have they faced such turbulent times. The new leaders need to heal the rifts within the churches and also find ways to reach out to sections of society for whom religion has little or no place in their lives.

Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, 76 is the first Latin American pope. As he stood on the balcony of St Peter's Basilica in Rome, just after his election, he came across as humble, genuine, and holy. His background in Argentina shows that he has been passionately committed to the gospel of poverty, and at his election he called for "*fraternity, love and trust among us*". His choice of name - after St Francis of Assisi - suggests that he will embrace simplicity, and has already given up certain papal privileges, and could well become a beacon of Franciscan poverty and simplicity.

Archbishop Justin, 57, the 104<sup>th</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury, said:

*"To be nominated to this post is both astonishing and exciting. It is something I never expected. It is exciting because we are at one of those rare points where the tide of events is turning, and the church nationally, including the Church of England has great opportunities to match its very great but often hidden strengths. I feel a massive sense of*

*privilege at being one of those responsible for the leadership of the church in a time of spiritual hunger, when our network of parishes and churches and schools and above all people, means that we are facing the toughest issues in the toughest place."*

Archbishop Justin is said to be a person of grace, patience, wisdom and humour. He brings both a rich pastoral experience and a keen sense of international priorities, for the Church and the world, because of his background in finance and the oil industry as well as his ministry in the Church.

We have heard where the leaders have come from and they have shown something of the direction in which they would like to lead. Don't we warm to people who show humility and a concern for others and we also look for visionary and discerning leadership which will help and inspire the Church to follow Christ and grow in faith?

The Easter Story reminds us all of the hope of Resurrection but we also know that this hope does not come without a great price, the cross. The disciples, who were walking along the road to Emmaus, felt confused and fearful by the recent events that they had heard about from others and they didn't know what to think. Jesus walks with them, listening, and then discussing with them the true meaning of Easter and then breaking bread with them. This style or model of listening, guiding, teaching and sharing is surely what we also look for in these people of God.

They can't do this by themselves: they have asked for our prayers, and they will need their people to join wholeheartedly in working together as disciples of Christ.

During this Easter season, the challenge is for us all to look at our own lives and responsibilities. Do we listen to God? Do we listen attentively to others? For the challenge is to have a Christ-like care and simplicity, as we engage lovingly with this complex world. The Resurrection teaches that we are people of hope, following a Master who brings new life, and we can all share God's love in this broken and fractured world.

Love,  
Jo

## The Annual General Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> April

I do hope that you can join us at the meeting after coffee after Church on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April. We hope that you have filled in an electoral roll form so that you can have your say on church affairs and vote for Parochial Church Council members. If you haven't been able to do this yet, it isn't too late to join and you can still vote on who is to be the next church warden.

The annual general meeting allows us to hear about the past year but also plan ahead for the next year. We hear about the accounts, Colin always explains these in a very clear way, we receive reports from the Church Wardens and Vicar and the committees and various organisations which are part of All Saints and this gives us a picture and also a very real sense of belonging.

We are looking for members to join our PCC and there is even a possible opening for Church warden and deputy warden! If you would like to know more about this, please ask Jo, Andrew or Janet!

## Finance in 2012

The good news is that in 2012 our total income, at £117,876 was higher by some £10,000 than in 2011. Unfortunately our total expenditure was, at £129,026 some £20,000 more than 2011. As a result we had a deficit of £11,150 compared to £1,529 in 2011.

Some £5,860 of the deficit arose through having to pay for repairs (despite some £7,000 spent on the Kemp window being covered by specific donations), principally to the organ and the Vestry windows.

The rest of the deficit arose primarily because of steep rises in the cost and utilisation of gas, which now costs us £15,000 a year (in 2005 the total cost was less than £3,000). The PCC has authorised us to join the newly set up Church of England Energy Basket which should help us control this cost to some extent from next year.

We cannot significantly reduce our four major costs – the parochial ministry, utilities, music and insurance. If we are to manage through these difficult economic times we have to increase our income through increased giving, better use of the church building and so on – our general funds stand at £32,067 so we can't stand many more years like 2012. This challenge is one that we all need to think about – certainly it has to be high on the new PCC agenda.

*Colin Bird*

