

All good gifts around us

Norah Anderson

What wonderful gifts the good Lord has bestowed upon us. How very varied these gifts are.

The scriptures tell us that at the time of Pentecost, God sent down his Holy Spirit. This is the greatest gift of all – without it we are but dust; with it we are given life. There was no life until God made it. Genesis tells us "*The Word was made flesh*". That was the beginning and so God freely bestowed many gifts.

First on the list come the gifts of our senses: Sight, hearing, and feeling. Consider the Frescos in the Sistine Chapel, the paintings of Michelangelo, the enigmatic smile of the Mona Lisa, the sculptures of Barbara Hepworth and Rodin's *Thinker*. What a feast for our eyes!

Our ears serve us well as we listen to music – Handel's *Messiah* where the chords of the Hallelujah Chorus soar to the rafters. On stage comes Pavarotti, a giant of a man. How glad we are that he left Italy to sing all over the world; his powerful voice filling the air even in vast spaces such as the Royal Albert Hall. On Sunday afternoons we watch and listen to *Songs of Praise* with Aled Jones, Katherine Jenkins and others singing the hymns so well known over the centuries.

Not to be forgotten is the gift of writing. So many figures have been talented in this way. I think of Anthony Trollope, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Tennyson, the Lakeland Poets, John Masters, Antonia Fraser, Harold Pinter and so many more. Some of us have even tried our own hands. We may not have produced a *magnum opus*, but it has been a very satisfying exercise!

To some has been given the gift to play a musical instrument. Yehudi Menuhin springs to mind, and not so long since, Ted Heath, the politician, had a great love of music. Yet there is another, more important gift; the

gift of human love. That of man and wife, parent and child, the warmth felt for our extended family.

The list goes on and on. It is impossible to record them all. In ending I sing:

All good gifts around us come from heav'n above,

Then thank the Lord, oh thank the Lord

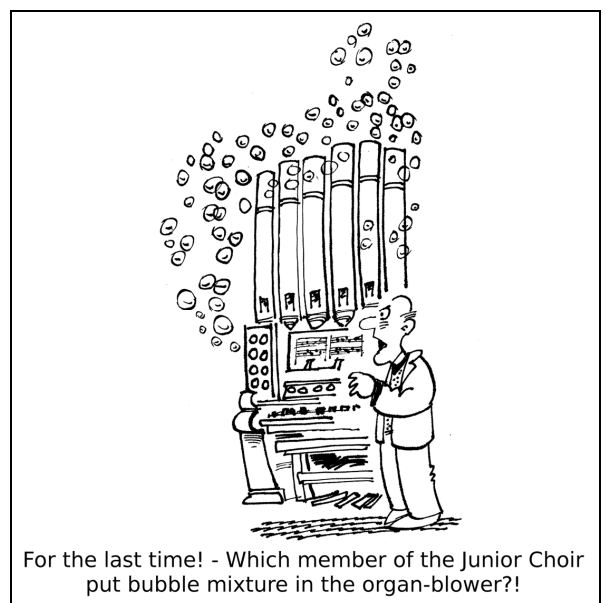
For all, all His Love

Ed: Norah celebrates her 90th birthday this year; there will be a special service to mark the occasion on Wednesday 2nd September at 11:00 am, led by Bill Kemm.

How it changes

A clergyman who had recently been made a bishop was the centre of attention at the 40th reunion of his old school. "How marvellous," said a former classmate. "Becoming so important hasn't changed you one bit!"

"Actually, it has," admitted the new bishop. "I'm now 'eccentric' where I used to be impolite. And I'm 'delightfully amusing' where I used to be a pain in the neck. And I'm 'a theologian' where they used to just tell me that my sermons didn't make sense."



For the last time! - Which member of the Junior Choir put bubble mixture in the organ-blower?!