



The Lion

A Monthly News Sheet for St. Mark's Church, Basford

www.stmarksbasford.co.uk

April 2017



When in Rome...

Terry reflects briefly on his recent visit to Rome

A blue and cloudless sky, the streets bathed with watery sunlight and at this early hour, an atmosphere devoid of its more usual hustle and bustle. Thus was the scene at 6.45am as I set out from my hotel towards the Vatican for the General Audience with Pope Francis.

During the previous day I had visited the Venerable English College (a RC seminary for UK priests-in-the-making) just off the Piazza Farnese where the porter had handed me an envelope, marked for my attention, containing a ticket. Last year Tunstall born Bishop David McGough of the RC Diocese of Birmingham was made an Ecumenical Canon of Lichfield which means, this means that our paths generally cross on St. Chad's Day when I'm invariably at Lichfield cathedral for the meeting



of its College of Canons. Having mentioned to him that I was going to Rome and would dearly love to attend the Audience, he immediately offered to arrange a 'good' ticket for me with the Vatican authorities. This was a very gracious offer and the ticket was indeed 'good' as it positioned me no more than 20 yards away from Pope Francis.

The atmosphere was really electric and became even more so at the fanfare announcing the Pope's arrival in the square for his usual time of mixing with the faithful, receiving gifts and blessing children held aloft. This corporate expression of adoration and love towards Francis promoted a wonderful sense of wellbeing and belonging. The energetic outpouring of honour and respect towards the chief pastor of the Christian world was a reminder of the tremendous legacy of St. Peter and the apostles. The Church and its faith, despite how it may sometimes feel otherwise, are very much alive and witnessing to the glory of God.

Pope Francis greeted the assembly comprising representatives of so many nations and there followed a

Bible reading. Afterwards came a short homily on God's love and the usefulness of Lenten disciplines before he led us in the Lord's Prayer (in Latin, of course – usefully printed on the reverse of each ticket). The spoken word, initially in Italian, was repeated in several major languages to allow participation.

All too quickly in one respect, yet mercifully in another, as the crowd has no shade and the sun had gained considerably in strength by 10.30am, the audience was concluded as attendant cardinals were received by Francis before he departed in the fashion in which he had appeared. The crowd lingered for a good hour with singing and music whilst the Swiss Guard controlled the exodus.

From St. Peter's I walked to the Vatican museum and spent a few hours lost amongst its many treasures. Museum entrance permits access to the Sistine Chapel where Michelangelo's masterpiece can be studied in sufficient leisure once you've learned how to focus whilst getting jostled by an ever-moving crowd.

I decided to return the next day to experience the inside of St. Peter's Basilica. It was unexpectedly free to enter though there was a one hour queue to get in. Having anticipated this, I had wisely taken a book to read whilst in line so the wait didn't seem so long. The inside of the basilica can only be described as breathtaking. The scale and intricacy of everything is beyond words yet the glorious truths to which it points are not masked by its splendour. I found a side chapel (as big as some churches) on the south side where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed; this allowed for 20 or so minutes of peace, prayer and reflection before moving on. Michelangelo's *Pietà* (pictured opposite) is the first artistic form you come across as you enter the basilica – no saving the best till last here! The



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C17th high altar with its 95' tall bronze canopy designed by Bernini draws your attention even as you stand at the extreme west end of the nave. Strategically, the altar stands directly above the ancient site of St. Peter's tomb.

Recognising that there is far too much to see in Rome for any relatively short visit to facilitate (mine was 5 days) meant that I carefully paced what I did. After all there was some desired reading to do and rest to take. I guess this means that another visit, *Deo volente*, is a possible plan for the future.

A busman's holiday for a busy priest to spend a break in churches? – maybe; however, I'm so glad that I made the effort to fulfil this particular aspiration I'd had for some time. Furthermore, my present track of theological reading was greatly enhanced by doing some of it in the city where much of it was worked out. Rome simply oozes spirituality and I found my faith strengthened and refocused. I shall now approach this Easter with renewed vigour and a wider perspective; Rome's witness to our faith and that global gathering's reminder of the universality of the hope we have through Christ's resurrection will empower me. Should you ever get an opportunity to visit Rome, go; it won't disappoint!

Blessings
Terry

Worship Services during April

2 nd	PASSION SUNDAY	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	Family Worship (with HC)
		4.30pm	Evensong
5 th	Wednesday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
6 th	Thursday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
9 th	PALM SUNDAY	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	Holy Communion
		4.30pm	Evensong
11 th	Tuesday of Holy Week	7.30pm	Devotional Film (Lady Chapel)
12 th	Wednesday of Holy Week	8.00am	Morning Prayer
		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		7.30pm	Stations (at St. Margaret's)
13 th	Maundy Thursday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
		7.30pm	Holy Communion & Vigil
14 th	GOOD FRIDAY	10.00am	Morning Prayer (BCP)
		2.00pm	1 Hr Meditation on the Cross
15 th	HOLY SATURDAY	8.00pm	Vigil, HC and Party Celebration
16 th	EASTER DAY	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	Family Worship with HC & Bap
		4.30pm	Holy Communion
19 th	Wednesday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
23 rd	2ND OF EASTER	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	Holy Communion
		4.30pm	Evensong
25 th	★ St. Mark	7.30pm	Holy Communion and Party
26 th	Wednesday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
30 th	3RD OF EASTER	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	Holy Communion
		4.30pm	Wholeness and Healing

Christian Aid

This year's walk is to be on Saturday, 8th April. Although registration takes place from 9.15am onwards and the walk officially commences at 10.00am, we normally register and start immediately.

Christian Aid
We believe in life before death

SANCTUS

Our monthly collection for the SANCTUS Project will focus on the usual two standard requirements, viz... (i) size '6' nappies and (ii) sanitary towels. The third requirement is for men's shaving materials.

Some Diary Dates for April

1 st	Saturday	9.00am	N/S Men's Fellowship's Visit to CR - Mirfield
		2.00pm	Messy Church
		1.00pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club
5 th	Wednesday	1.00pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club
		7.30pm	Lent Group
8 th	Saturday	9.15am	Christian Aid Walk at Tittesworth
11 th	Tuesday	7.30pm	Devotional Film (see below for details)
12 th	Wednesday	1.00pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club
13 th	Thursday	11.00am	Chrism Mass at Lichfield
18 th	Tuesday	10.00am	Little Oaks Nursery Visit to Church
19 th	Wednesday	1.00pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club
24 th	Monday	7.30pm	Men's Fellowship Mass – Wolstanton
26 th	Wednesday	1.00pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club
		7.00pm	APCM - Basford

Early May...

3 rd	Wednesday	1.00pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club
10 th	Wednesday	1.00pm	CAMEO Luncheon Club
		7.00pm	Archdeacon's Visitation – St. Giles

100 CLUB

There are vacancies in the 100 Club at the moment if you wish to support St. Mark's financially in this way. Have a word with Ann Lewis of Beryl Silvester for more information.

Devotional Film

This year's devotional film for Tuesday of Holy Week will be screened at 7.30pm in the Lady Chapel.

A UNITED KINGDOM tells the inspiring true story of Seretse Khama, the King of Bechuanaland (modern Botswana), and Ruth Williams, the London office worker he married in 1948 in the face of fierce opposition from their families and the British and South African governments. Seretse and Ruth defied family, Apartheid and empire - their love triumphed over every obstacle flung in their path and in so doing they transformed their nation and inspired the world.



Holy Saturday

If you have never joined us on Easter Eve at 8.00pm for our Vigil, Holy Communion and Party Celebration, make this a **MUST** in your diary this year!