



This week at St Mary's Sunday 6 January 2019

4 BULLET HOLES IN A PAINTING

St George's Cathedral in Beirut, along with countless other buildings, was badly damaged during the Lebanese civil war. Now restored and repaired, except for 2 wall paintings. Both feature scenes from the last hours of Jesus Christ's life.

The first shows the Garden of Gethsemane where He prayed, in agony, aware of what was about to happen. In this painting, Jesus and the angel, who was strengthening Him, are peppered by bullet holes. The other painting shows Jesus, with gold halo, in a pink red robe before Pontius Pilate. Here, the gunman was more accurate. The handcuffed, stationary figure was hit twice on the arm, twice the chest, although one bullet hole shows he managed to miss as well.

These are images almost bound to evoke a reaction. Desecration! Deliberate and wilful violation of a sacred image! Rude words come to the lips to describe the perpetrators – the so and sos! On further reflection, a different reaction?

Jesus' life ended, pinned to a cross to die, rather than 4 bullets in an undefended body. Much as we'd prefer a different ending, it's how the life of the Baby born in Bethlehem ended. The focus of Christmas is, of course, the birth of Jesus. In one of the great Christmas readings (from John 1) there are the words, "the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it" – it never will. This Baby's life would be lived in a dark world, just as our lives have to navigate darkness in its many forms – war, fractured relationships, our internal darkness, sickness (mental and physical) and addiction in its many forms.

There are no greater words of hope than "the light will never to be overcome by the darkness". The obedience of this One Man opened the way for God to show us the prototype of His new creation. This new life is His gift to ALL of us. This restored church in Beirut with the bullet holes left in these paintings I find an arresting reminder that God's Light defeated the darkness and because of that, the darkness I see and know is defeated, and will be seen to be.

Tom Gillman

WEDNESDAY 8.30am COMMUNION. This is to be **suspended** pending Tom's hip operation, ie no early service now until further notice.

BISHOP PAUL will be preaching and presiding at St Mary's on **13 January at 10.45.**

EPIPHANY PROCESSION – Sunday 13 January 6.30pm. The service will bring together the three great Epiphany stories – the Coming of the Magi, the Wedding at Cana and the Baptism of Christ at the Jordan, of course all within the context of wonderful music. There will be opportunity to renew Baptismal Vows.

NOTTINGHAM WORKPLACE CHAPLAINCY *INSIGHT* meeting
SAVING LIVES AND SPEEDING RECOVERY.

Wed 23 January 2019 12-1.30pm – hosted at BioCity on Pennyfoot Street NG1 1GF
Dr David Boocock, Group Leader of the Clinical Proteomics Group, will be giving us an ***INSIGHT*** into the work of the dedicated and world class scientists at the John van Geest Cancer Research Centre, a purpose-built facility on NTU's Clifton campus. The Centre incorporates state-of-the-art technologies for discovering the genetic basis of the disease and developing new methods of diagnosis and treatment. As a buffet lunch is provided please email: **lensimmonds@aol.com** to confirm your attendance.

ARCHDEACON SARAH CLARK – Downing Street announced she is to become the next Bishop of Jarrow. She will be consecrated a Bishop at York Minster on 27 February and there will be a farewell service for her in Southwell Minster on 14 Feb at 7.30pm. The Bishop writes that she *'has been an inspirational colleague and friend to many across the diocese, serving with energy, spiritual vision, deep compassion for people, and above all such an evident love for Jesus. We will be very sad to say farewell to Sarah but know she will be a tremendous blessing to the Diocese of Durham, bringing immense experience and insight from her years of mission in different parts of our diocese.'*

VESTRY REDECORATION. Thanks to a generous legacy, the decorators (Doug and Phil Beckwith) will be coming early in the New Year. Minor repairs were recently completed to the roof and masonry. We look forward to this very beautiful room having a new lease of life, and intend to use it for a young children's group on Sunday mornings, as well as for other meetings.

CHANCEL CARPET. Thanks to another generous gift we will be replacing the Sanctuary carpet early in 2019. Having taken a few soundings a like-for-like colour and style is proposed. Comments welcome (to Paul Sibly.)

SILVER SMARTIE APPEAL Tubes of Smarties are available for members of the congregation to collect 20p pieces in aid of the Overseas Committee support of Five Talents, CARF, and our CMS partners.

VOLUNTEER STEWARDS WELCOMED This coming Wednesday there is an *opportunity* to potter around and find joy in the warm glow of this beautiful space (along with short term regular Wednesdays following Tom's op). Please see Di or Duncan or call the office.

MANY CONGRATULATIONS...to Leah and Jonathan on the birth of Nerys on 20 December and also to Julia and James on the birth of Elliot on 23 December. Wonderful news!

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**Please continue to pray for**

Estelle Barks

Debbie Butler

Daniel Hanson

Pauline Miller

Harry Palmer

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This Week's Services

Sunday 10.45am Sung Eucharist

Sunday 6.30pm Evensong

Wednesday 6.15pm Choral Evensong

Thursday 1.15pm Holy Communion



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