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LA COTE ANGLICAN CHURCH COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

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Message from the Chaplain

Someone encouraged me the other day to take the journey from the head to the heart. From thinking to feeling. From objectivity to subjectivity. From study to experience. I nearly did – but not quite. I always find that head/heart image somewhat confusing since all our emotions originate in the mind. But in confessing this I prove once again - I am still far too rational!

This notion has stayed with me over the past few weeks. And then recently one of our number asked me about postmodernism. From the 18th Century onwards modernism was the great idea that through science, democracy and rational thought we could solve society's ills and create a better world. Postmodernism emerged after the two world wars as people realised that things had gone horribly wrong, and that life was far more complex. It accepts that there are various world-views that often collide; that people need faith and experience – not just gadgets and jobs. The revival of religion throughout the world is a demonstration of postmodernism. We have found our own corners; we have retreated from an all-encompassing ideal. And, most importantly, we have moved from reason to experience; the head to the heart.

So am I out of step? A disillusioned modernist who cannot accept the post-modern language of emotion? I shall argue of course that I believe in a dialogue between the two.

So many people claim to have had an experience of this, that or the other. They proclaim boldly the meaning of their experience. A decade or two ago there were a lot of people who claimed they had seen UFOs. Bright lights in the sky; flying saucers. There was a rash of films and TV programmes that raised questions about government secrets. Is there something they are not telling us? Following the first Gulf War, however, with TV footage of Stealth fighters taking off from US air bases, we have seen and heard very little more. These strange looking space age planes seemed to explain quite a lot, especially as their development over the years had been shrouded in mystery.

People are also quick to claim things about their religious experiences. If they are charismatic, they may refer to speaking in tongues. If they are evangelical they may talk of their conversion. If they are Catholic they may have been healed at Lourdes or seen a statue bleed. They may have seen visions, or heard voices, or recognised God in a set of circumstances. Our post-modern world allows space for all this. Woe betide the cynic. How dare you question someone else's experience!

Interestingly, theology has also moved on by the same means. People have enjoyed the ministry of their first women priest; they now believe women should be ordained. People have found in the openness of their gay friend a challenge to their moral certainties; they change their minds. Friends all around are divorcing and remarrying; how can we take a hard line? When people confront the experience of someone else, they have to respond. Their perspective is changed and their views adapt. There is not often a clear train of rational deliberation. Science has clearly opened people's minds to many more possibilities than would have been the case in the past, and post-modernism has given permission for diversity of belief.

Some religious people find this whole business too uncertain to be true. Why would God leave us so confused; so dependent on making sense of our experience? Has God not left us with the answers? So they establish their own universal world views based on face value readings of the Bible, the Koran or some other basis of certainty. Science is rejected as belonging to out-dated modernist fantasy. Real truth lies in the revelation of God as understood exclusively by them. Meanwhile, modernists throw their arms in the air and predict a return to the dark ages.

I wish we could allow thinking and feeling to be more complementary. I wish that science and faith could talk more positively together. Neither discipline needs to be afraid of the other. God is in both. Knowledge without experience is dry and unfulfilling for most people. Feelings unleashed beyond all rationality lead people into all sorts of strange choices. Perhaps the word 'wisdom' carries with it a better integration of these dualisms. We should learn wisdom; the knowledge that draws from experience but also informs subsequent feelings. In fact, the Old Testament expectation of Christ was framed in the notion of 'Sophia' rather than 'Logos' – the ongoing wisdom of God that emerges over time rather than the immediate revelation of God's word and action.

At Christmas we celebrate the word made flesh, the revelation of divine wisdom in a baby who became a man. In seeing God come close, we recognise the character of revelation; that it is bundled up in flesh, not distinct and above it. Objectivity experienced in subjectivity. Knowledge and experience interlocked. Advent will prepare us for this joyful celebration. Let us use it to reflect and then to engage. To anticipate and then participate. For only in both will we find the wisdom of God.

A merry Christmas to you all.

Paul Holley

Communion Preparation Course

Two years ago, we prepared a number of children to receive communion. This is a tradition which is increasingly popular in the Church of England. We are at liberty to offer communion to children from age 7, and then to leave confirmation until their later teens. It may be that there are now a number of families whose children have not been through this course. We could get a course going after Easter. Please would you contact Paul if you would like your child to be part of this process. We can then plan ahead and ensure we give a good grounding to all those who would like.

Musicians Wanted!

Calling all musicians! We would like to put together a small group of players to accompany the carols on Christmas Eve. Keith will be playing at the Cathedral service. Or if you know of an organist/pianist? Please contact Paul.

Boughs and Holly Needed to Decorate the Church for Christmas

Christine Carey will be decorating the church on Saturday 11 December and she is looking for donations of Christmas/conifer tree boughs and holly to decorate both inside and outside the church.



If you can provide a little or a lot please telephone Christine Carey at 022 361 7528.

At The Inn of King David

This year's Nativity Play takes place at the Inn (the Church) on 19 December - and the guests are ... your very own selves! Come and be part of the scene that unfolds to reveal the traditional Nativity tableau - and, if you can, help create the ambience by dressing up as a traveller to Bethlehem taking part in the census. No obligation! Come anyway - meet the cheery-but-slightly-stressed Innkeeper (you can even heckle!) and see the Sunday Club in action! The play will form part of our traditional Christmas service with carols and will be followed by mince pies and mulled wine up at the Stand de Tir. All offers of mince pies or other Christmas goodies gratefully received!

Bossey Day – 22 January 2005

We are delighted that Peter Hawker has agreed to join with us for our annual day of reflection and fellowship. He will lead our morning session and join me for an open panel question and answer session in the afternoon. Peter was until this summer our Archdeacon of Switzerland. He was very supportive in the various stages of development of La Côte, and is certainly counted as a dear friend of the congregation. We meet at Bossey Ecumenical Centre near Céligny on Saturday 22nd January, 9.30am until 3.30pm. The cost will be CHF20 for adults which includes morning coffee and lunch. Children go free. Paul (PJ) and James will run a children's programme. There will also be a crèche available. This community day has always proved popular, inspiring and fun. Do come and join us. Let Paul (the big old one!) know.

Confirmation Preparation

On Sunday 22nd May we shall host a confirmation service. Bishop Frank Sargeant will join us to welcome candidates from Holy Trinity, Emmanuel and La Côte. I have 2 adult candidates so far who wish to be confirmed. There may be others. Preparation will begin in the New Year. If you have not yet been confirmed, why not take up this opportunity? If as an adult you have not yet been baptised, then this also would be a great opportunity to take that step. Contact Paul to talk more about this.

At the moment I am reluctant to encourage young people below the age of 15 to come to confirmation. This is because the Confirmation Service often proves to be the last church service young people ever attend – particularly if they are 11 or 12 at the time. Also, with a preparation course for children to receive communion, and continuing Sunday Club teaching, I believe it is wise for young people to wait until they have struggled with the meaning of their faith before taking up the next step. However, I am prepared to talk openly about this with parents if they feel differently.

EGM Report

And so it was, that on the tail end of a quiet Sunday afternoon, La Côte Anglican Church adopted the full constitution of a Church of England chaplaincy. Hip, hip, hooray! And what a party we had – cakes, wine, a nostalgic song, a snappy ditty, balloons and raspberry blower things...

My congratulations and commiserations to the following, who bravely accepted the push to responsible positions:

Austin Ball and Liz Bramley – wardens

Ted Talbot, Philippe Chambeyron, Francis Titley, Steve Rawcliffe, John Tracey, Olivier Van Bunnan, Jean-Paul Jeanrenaud, Gino Lannutti – Church Council members

Jenny West and Val Geschonke – Archdeaconry representatives

Gail Farrell – Child Protection Officer

Now that wasn't so bad was it?

Hymn Books

We had a discussion about music at the EGM. Someone in the congregation has offered to buy a complete set of hymn books, as we are running short. The meeting approved the notion of new hymn books, and agreed to spend some time looking at the alternatives. There are 3 options on the table. One is to top up our Mission Praise collection. The other is to buy a set of The Source – a hymn book with a number of add-ons. The third option is to buy the Complete Anglican edition Hymns Old and New. Over the coming weeks there will be copies of The Source and Hymns Old and New available for members of the congregation to look through. In one way or another – at a meeting or by ballot – we shall make a choice together and put in the order. An additional opportunity in this process will be for people to buy books for themselves and for the Church, perhaps to dedicate one in thanksgiving for a loved one, or as a gift. Details will follow.

December Services at La Côte Anglican Church

Sunday 5 December Lay-led Service
(Advent 2)

Sunday 12 December Bilingual Joint Communion Service with our host parish of
(Advent 3) Gingins. Fruits, nuts and wine to follow in the Parish Room

Sunday 19 December Carol and Nativity Play Service. Mulled wine and mince
(Advent 4) pies to follow at the Stand de Tir

Friday 24 December Christmas Eve Christingle Communion

Sunday 26 December Boxing Day Holy Communion



All of the services will be held at 4pm

A Message from Martha

Dear Paul,

Thank you, as always for including me in your newsletter mailing. I hold the "Gingins" community among my dearest friends and it is a great joy to hear of the continued work of the Holy Spirit in and amongst you all.

I want to thank you particularly for your own reflection on the U.S. Presidential election and the very deep concerns it raises about the direction we are heading as a country. There are many people of faith here who, of course, do not support the current administration's policies nor the conservative morality being translated into policy. The ones who will suffer the most as an outcome are clearly poor people, ethnic minorities, women, gay and lesbian people. A vibrant and challenging Gospel 'morality' of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, welcoming the outcast and stranger, turning swords into ploughshares, living out the kingdom's policy of inclusion, needs to be born again in our hearts and minds and way of doing things. Thank you for clearly and bravely sharing your thoughts and giving direction.

Much love to all.

Martha

N.B. For those who don't know Martha Clark, she is an American Episcopalian Priest, who regularly held services at Gingins during her time in Switzerland in the late 1990s. Her contribution to Gingins was much appreciated and she encouraged the congregation to move to services on a weekly basis in 1999.

News from Taizé

The following is an extract from the latest Taizé Newsletter:

Back from Faluja

Two of the brothers took part in prayers in many cities in Germany throughout nearly the whole of November. After the prayer in Hanover, a woman doctor shared this story. "I've just arrived today from Faluja, Iraq. I accompanied a seriously wounded American soldier. After these very difficult weeks in Iraq, I wanted to see something beautiful: a concert, a theatre performance, or something in a church. During the flight I asked the pilots what was on in the city this evening. They told me there would be a prayer with songs from Taizé. I have never been to Taizé. These last weeks I have been working as a doctor in the emergency service in Faluja. One day during the fighting I had to operate on a man who would probably need to have both legs amputated. During that difficult operation I heard a melody with words in Latin. I didn't understand, for I had to concentrate on the operation. The song became louder and louder; it sounded like a chorale; my colleagues - French, British, American, German and Iraqi - were singing together. Carried by the melody, I calmed down, and could even see a chance of saving the man's legs. And finally, we succeeded. After the operation was over, I heard the French doctors saying that it was a song from Taizé. I had never heard of Taizé until then. From then on, the Taizé songs often accompanied me during operations and I felt protected by God in very dangerous circumstances. This evening, I discovered that the song I heard for the first time in Faluja was 'Laudate omnes gentes'. And there were others that we sang back there too. I am so grateful."

The Newsletter Team wishes everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful New Year!