

# intouch

NEWSLETTER

Benefice of Clothall, Rushden, Sandon,  
Wallington, and Weston

## Welcome to In Touch

Well times are getting busy and they are changing yet again – the new normal being yet another version of the new normal. We are gradually gaining more freedom with shops, pubs and now gyms and swimming pools being made accessible. I am, once more, being lulled to sleep by the planes landing at Luton airport and the wildlife which had been happily invading our gardens has retreated from the noise of humans about their daily tasks. Of course, many are still not out and about as they are shielding, and I empathise with their frustration. But with new freedoms come increased responsibility to act sensibly and caution should be the watchword for us all as we meet and greet. I hope these times are good for you and your families as you meet up once again – what a lot you will all have to catch up on! *With blessings Fiona*

## St James the Least of All On the perils of leaving the pulpit

The Rectory  
St James the Least

### My dear Nephew Darren

When the churches reopen for public worship (whenever that is!) I hope you will come and take Evensong one Sunday. But, thinking of your visit last August, I would prefer you used the pulpit when preaching. How could Colonel Brockle complete 'The Times' crossword and Miss Balmer her knitting with you constantly walking up and down in front of them? They found it most disconcerting, as out of politeness, they were obliged to listen to you. It was a unique experience they do not wish to repeat.

Those few who defy Anglican tradition and sit at the front of the church were also placed in the dilemma of trying to decide whether they should keep turning in their pews as you paraded down the nave and then rotating back to the front as you re-emerged up the side aisle. It did Lady Plumtree's vertigo no good at all. It also allowed people to see that you were wearing suede shoes. For many of our worshippers, the most appalling of heresies are as nothing when compared to brown shoes under a cassock.

I appreciate you made heroic efforts and got your sermon down to 30 minutes, but that is

still 20 minutes longer than they anticipated and 29 minutes longer than their attention span.

No, use the pulpit in future; that is the reason why stonemasons 600 years ago put twenty tons of marble in our church in the first place and it would be a shame to disappoint them. It also means that from a distance of 100 yards and a height of 20 feet, no one can tell that the glass of water I use liberally while preaching is in fact a gin and tonic.

I concede that our pulpit has its dangers. I have known several bishops come to grief as their robes wrap themselves around the newel post as they ascend the steps. One, unable to untangle himself, was obliged to preach while half-way up the steps and with his back to the congregation, while our verger was dispatched to find a pair of scissors.

Perhaps, before your next visit, we may install a mechanical floor in the pulpit, so that after 10 minutes, it slowly lowers you into the crypt while the congregation can get on with singing the last hymn before getting home in decent time.

**Your loving uncle, Eustace**

## LIGHT UP TANZANIA

with

THE BISHOP OF ST ALBANS'  
HARVEST APPEAL 2019

JESUS SAID, 'I AM  
THE LIGHT OF  
THE WORLD'  
(JOHN 8:12)

A wonderful £68,000 was raised last Autumn  
across the diocese for the Bishop's Harvest  
Appeal 2019

## Blame the Vicar by Sir John Betjeman

When things go wrong it's rather tame  
To find we are ourselves to blame,  
It gets the trouble over quicker  
To go and blame things on the Vicar.

The Vicar, after all, is paid  
To keep us bright and undismayed.  
The Vicar is more virtuous too  
Than lay folks such as me and you.  
He never swears, he never drinks,  
He never should say what he thinks.

His collar is the wrong way round,  
And that is why he's simply bound  
To be the sort of person who  
Has nothing very much to do  
But take the blame for what goes wrong  
And sing in tune at Evensong.

For what's a Vicar really for  
Except to cheer us up? What's more,  
He shouldn't ever, ever tell  
If there is such a place as Hell,  
For if there is it's certain he  
Will go to it as well as we.

The Vicar should be all pretence  
And never, never give offence.  
To preach on Sunday is his task  
And lend his mower when we ask  
And organize our village fêtes  
And sing at Christmas with the waits  
And in his car to give us lifts  
And when we quarrel, heal the rifts.

To keep his family alive  
He should industriously strive  
In that enormous house he gets,  
And he should always pay his debts,  
For he has quite six pounds a week,  
And when we're rude he should be meek  
And always turn the other cheek.

He should be neat and nicely dressed  
With polished shoes and trousers  
pressed,  
For we look up to him as higher  
Than anyone, except the Squire.



## José Clemente Orozco: Modern Migration of the Spirit (1932-4)

The resurrected Christ, an undefeated warrior, stands over the cross he has chopped down and left smashed on the ground. The wounds of his suffering gape wide in his feet but he sheds his old skin from top down to reveal a dazzling newly enlivened body. Behind him a mountainous junk heap, obsolete artillery, defunct tanks and other weaponry, rises skyward, with the detritus of fallen empires scattered below.

For José Clemente Orozco the cross is not an object of devotion or the means of personal

salvation, but a torture machine, a means of punishment imposed by an invading power. It is to be triumphed over, not worshipped. Christianity is sometimes caricatured as 'crosstianity', fixated on the cross and sacrifice. If we never move beyond the cross to consider what resurrection means in life and society this criticism has force.

Orozco was one of a group of artists inspired by the overthrow of dictatorship in Mexico in 1911 to encourage through mural painting the creation of a new society free from oppression in which all might receive proper reward for their labour. This panel comes near the end of his major series, *The Epic of American Civilization*, painted for Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. An earlier panel depicts the conquistador Cortés landing in Mexico bringing fire, sword and the cross to his 'New Spain', an awkward reminder of the way Christianity and territorial conquest have often marched together to impose themselves on others. This was never the way of Jesus.

Orozco was passionate about the ideals of the Mexican Revolution, though its immediate sundering into violent factions left him disenchanted. His anger at the subjection and exploitation of his country and its people might well have led him to repudiate the Christ Cortés had brought with him. But instead he sees Christ as the channel of spiritual 'migration' from the old to the new. He understands the cross in the classic manner of the early Christian Fathers as the decisive moment in the great cosmic battle between good and evil, the instant in which evil is defeated. So the rubbish of war is scrapped, outworn ideologies discarded.

This uncompromising painting poses uncomfortable questions, for the battle continues. Is the Christianity of our times migrating to a new age in which it will stand out more courageously against evil and live wholeheartedly the humility of spirit preached by its founder? If so then it will need to take care that its desire to 'make disciples of all nations' does not become a new imperialism of the spirit intent on the enslavement of hearts and minds.

### Smile lines

#### Multiply

Noah opened up the ark and let all the animals out, telling them to "Go forth and multiply!" He began to close the great doors of the ark when he noticed that there were two snakes still sitting in a dark corner. Concerned, he said to them: "Didn't you hear me? You can go now. Go forth and multiply."

"We can't," said the snakes sadly. "We're adders."

#### Who's right for which job?

Does your company struggle with the problem of properly fitting people to jobs? Here is a handy way to decide.... Take the prospective employees you are trying to place and put them in a room with only a table and two chairs. Leave them alone for two hours, without any instruction.

At the end of that time, go back and see what they are doing.

If they have taken the table apart in that time, put them in Engineering.

If they are counting the cracks in the floor, assign them to Finance.

If they are screaming and waving their arms, send them to Manufacturing.

If they are talking to the chairs, Personnel is a good place for them.

If they are sleeping, they are Management material.

If they are writing up the experience, send them to Technical Publications.

If they don't even look up when you enter the room, assign them to Security.

If they try to tell you it's not as bad as it looks, send them to Marketing.

And if they've left early, put them in Sales.

### A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus

Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy.  
Sustain and support the anxious,  
be with those who care for the sick,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may find comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us  
from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

If you would like to donate to any of our churches in the current crisis - details are below. We would be very grateful in your help to keep our churches going.

Thank you.

#### PCC OF RUSHDEN

LLOYDS BANK: 30-94-30 A/C 01845350

SANDON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL  
BARCLAYS BANK: 20-73-26 A/C 53610802

PCC ST MARYS CHURCH WALLINGTON  
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WESTON PCC  
BARCLAYS BANK: 20-41-12 A/C 40946850

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### Psalm 121

#### A song of ascents.

I lift up my eyes to the hills-- where does my help come from?

My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot slip-- he who watches over you will not slumber;

indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

The LORD watches over you-- the LORD is your shade at your right hand;

the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.

The LORD will keep you from all harm-- he will watch over your life;

the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.