

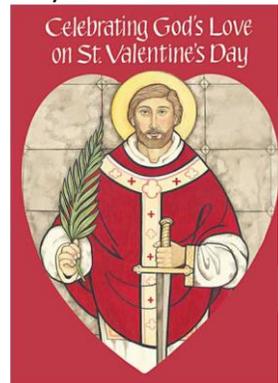


Revd. David O'Brien January 2018
February: The Month of Love

In February our thoughts may turn to Valentine's day as an example of true love. Thinking about this I found a very useful article by Father Frank O'Gara of Whitefriars Street Church in Dublin, Ireland. He tells the real story of the man behind the holiday—St. Valentine.

"He was a Roman Priest at a time when there was an emperor called Claudius who persecuted the church at that particular time," Father O'Gara explains. "He also had an edict that prohibited the marriage of young people. This was based on the hypothesis that unmarried soldiers fought better than married soldiers because married soldiers might be afraid of what might happen to them or their wives or families if they died."

"I think we must bear in mind that it was a very permissive society in which Valentine lived," says Father O'Gara. "Polygamy would have been much more popular than just one woman and one man living together. And yet some of them seemed to be attracted to Christian faith."



But obviously the church thought that marriage was very sacred between one man and one woman for their life and that it was to be encouraged. And so, it immediately presented the problem to the Christian church of what to do about this."

"The idea of encouraging them to marry within the Christian church was what Valentine was about. And he secretly married them because of the edict."

Valentine was eventually caught, imprisoned and tortured for performing marriage ceremonies against the command of Emperor Claudius the second. There are legends surrounding Valentine's actions while in prison.

"One of the men who was to judge him in line with the Roman law at the time was a man called Asterius, whose daughter was blind. He was supposed to have prayed with and healed the young girl with such astonishing effect that Asterius himself became Christian as a result."

In the year 269 AD, Valentine was sentenced to a three-part execution of a beating, stoning, and finally decapitation all because of his stand for Christian marriage. The story goes that the last words he wrote were in a note to Asterius' daughter. He inspired today's romantic missives by signing it, "**from your Valentine.**"



As well as Valentine's Day February 14th is also Ash Wednesday. The Gospel for the day is **John 8.1-11** which is the account of the woman caught in adultery.

If Valentine is an example of laying down your life for your Christian principles John's Gospel is a reminder

of the heart of all true love; grace. In love God chooses to forgive us. True love is therefore sacrificial and full of grace and forgiveness. Not just in the month of love but all year round.

Bless you, Revd David.



Alyson Bradney

Churchwardens' News



Neil Harris

As Churchwardens we are now nearing the end of our 12-month term of office. Perhaps this is a good time to reflect on what has happened in that time and what needs to be done in the future. We have seen changes in the Old School Hall with the toilets being refurbished and other improvements taking place. In the Church we have had a new organ installed which has made a great contribution to our worship. We have also seen a new door installed which allows people to see into the church and is more welcoming.

Looking to the future, the Wardens are responsible for the fabric of the church and graveyard, although the Council do maintain the grass cutting and some minor repairs. During this year the Wardens will have to ensure that the graves are safe, do an annual inspection and keep them tidy. This entails organising groups to tend graves, paint fence panels, repair brickwork, keeping gutters free of debris. This list is endless. The interior of the Church is beginning to show its age and sometime soon we need to redecorate throughout. This is an expensive job as only certain paints can be used, and scaffolding is required for the high parts. This is where you can play your part. We need to raise money for this and other projects and you can help by suggesting fund raising ideas and perhaps organising events to achieve this. We are always glad to receive ideas to raise funds and make the Treasurer smile.

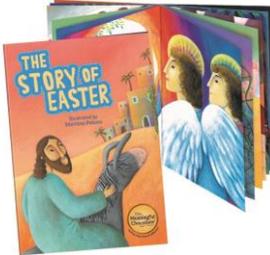
Thank you for your support over the last 10 months

Alyson Bradney (850429) and *Neil Harris* (357174)



The Real Easter Egg

The Egg That Shares 'The Easter Story'



Out of the 80 million Easter eggs sold in this part of the world every year, 'The Real Easter Egg' is the only one which has a copy of the Easter story in the box, is made of Fairtrade chocolate and which supports charitable projects. From 2010 more than one million eggs have been sold with 750,000 of these sent through the post directly to churches and schools. To take advantage of this lovely offer from

The Meaningful Chocolate Company it would be wonderful if you could place your order on the form at the back of church. Thanks for your support.

Clay and Wax

(Submitted by Stanton D'Arcy)

I have a piece of china, a pretty porcelain vase.
It holds such lovely flowers, captures everyone's gaze.

But don't we all cry when pretty things are broken.
Don't we all cry at such an awful loss?

But Jesus will dry your tears as He has spoken
'Cause He was the one broken by the cross.

My life was just like china, a lovely thing to me,
Full of porcelain promises of all that I might be.

But fragile things do slip and fall as everybody knows
And when my life came crashing down, my tears began to flow.

But Jesus is no porcelain prince, His promises won't break.
His holy words hold fast and sure, His love no-one can shake.

So, if your life is shattered by sorrow, pain or sin
His healing love will reach right down and make you whole again.



Contact Details:

Rev. David O'Brien, Oxon Vicarage, Shelton Gardens, Welshpool Road, Shrewsbury, SY3 5AG
Email: vicar@oxonchurch.co.uk Tel: 01743 231 427 Website: oxonchurch.co.uk