

THE PARISH WEEKEND

On Friday, January 21, about 23 members of the parish assembled at Stoke Poges to consider "Mission and service in the parish."

We started after dinner with a talk by the Archdeacon of London, the Venerable Martin Sullivan, who in this excellent introduction to our weekend made the following points:—

- (1) We must realise that we can in no way separate what we sometimes call the secular from what we sometimes call the religious. Jesus was very much a man, who really suffered and died. God must not be separated from our life on earth. If we are going to understand the "religious" world it must be interpreted in the world in which we live.
- (2) The Laos (insufficiently interpreted as the Laity) must not be split into groups. The Laos are the people of God; all of us comprise the Laos, including the Vicar and our bishops. How can the ministry of the church be left to a few full time agents? We all, as the people of God, have responsibility in this.
- (3) Let us all strive to make ourselves better informed about our beliefs and increase our understanding of great Christian truths. Let us all read our Bibles more, but whatever we do let us not leave this land barren and infertile. We may be able to achieve this by meeting in small house groups for short periods of discussion and study.
- (4) If we want lively services then it is up to each one of us to contribute more to the service. Dreary services result from dreary congregations. Do we all sing? Do we all make a lively contribution? Or do we sit there and look religious?
- (5) We must as the people of God care and offer our services to the people in our parish. We must bring the love of Christ in somewhere. Perhaps into the world of commerce, politics, industry, or wherever we have the opportunity and wherever there is a need.

The whole of Saturday was devoted to two topics

(1) Service in the Parish

(2) Mission in the Parish

and our ideas may be summarised within the following questions.

What is service? It is an appreciation that there are needs in the community; that we have our parts to play and are willing to perform them. It implies a love of God and a love of Man. Through love the needs of others may be pursued without any idea of reward. Though not a Christian monopoly it is a practical expression of Christianity.

We are not here concerned with a wider sense in which almost everyone qualifies as giving service to the community in some way and in balance gains his due reward as a member of the community.

How are these Community Needs being met in Our Parish? Some voluntary organisations giving free service are:— The Young Wives' Group, the Mothers' Union, the Old People's Welfare, the Choir, the Sunday Schools, the Y.P.F., the Parish Council and Church committees, the Hampton Hill Association, the Parent-Teachers' Association, Scouts and Guides, the Prayer Circle with spiritual activity. Many people work independently of organisations:— all who cheer the lonely; or break down the insularity of others; those who show friendliness without strings attached.

Is what we are doing effective? It is effective but insufficient. We could improve our effectiveness as follows:— Fill the need for further sick visiting; hospital visiting; visiting new people, new homes, closed communities, etc. Also to break down the class image of the Church by better mixing. We should operate a street-wardens scheme, and cooperate with the Old People's Welfare Committee in this.

What ought our Mission to be today? We should continue to spread the Gospel, i.e. bring God to the people; alternatively put, we should wean the people back to God. We should teach people to love and serve God and their neighbour as themselves. The power of God in dealing with individual and world problems is to be demonstrated. Modern conditions do not call for any change in the principles of mission, but in our methods we should move with the times.

How should we achieve our Mission? Full spiritual commitment is a prerequisite to mission. We need to get attuned to the minds and feelings of others. We need to set good examples as Christians, and display friendship both within the Church and outside. Our conversation should not hide the fact that we are christian.

On Sunday we considered everything that had previously been discussed and studied the following questions under the heading "The Parish Plans for Action."

(A) How can WE attain a spiritual deepening?

- (1) By increased bible study both individually and in groups — but group study should be limited to short intense periods, such as a lenten course.
- (2) Personal discipline in prayer through a simple rule of life.
- (3) Seek our true vocations.
- (4) The congregation to make a real contribution in all services.
- (5) We should read christian books.
- (6) Encourage a wider membership of the Prayer Circle.

- (7) Obtain help and teaching about how to pray.
- (8) Hold quiet periods before meetings.
- (9) Get greater fellowship by meeting together at weekend courses and at Parish breakfasts, etc.

(B) Can we see a lack of unity in the Body of our Parish?

Yes! We can see disunity, but as we deepen our personal commitment to Christ and realise that we all have our parts to play in the Body of the Church any disunity will lessen and disappear.

(C) What are the next steps in Mission and Service in the Parish?

- (1) To form an assessment of resources and priorities, and to channel all help and ideas through the Stewardship Committee, with the M.R.I. Committee joining forces on specific tasks.
- (2) To introduce a road-warden scheme.
- (3) To send a personal letter to all newcomers as they arrive, indicating services, facilities and activities within the Parish; and to hold a special service from time to time to welcome them.
- (4) To instruct would-be helpers in methods of approaching the aged, the infirm, and the unbalanced.
- (5) Those who have discernible vocations, setting aside all modesty, to be invited to help in particular fields.
- (6) To encourage regular visiting of the lonely, widows, old people, and insulated families.
- (7) To rekindle the Church's power as a healing and caring Church through prayer.

The weekend was adjudged to have been a success and an event that could profitably be repeated. In further development we should perhaps guard against being too inward looking, and bear in mind the problems of the world at large.

L.M.

THE ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING AND PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

The PCC have been giving much thought to its own composition and that of its committees. The problem centres round the procedure adopted hitherto whereby the six committees reporting to the PCC have been drawn fully from PCC members. This has resulted in both a rather large PCC and too little 'spread' on the committees. The field has been further narrowed by a poorly attended ACM.

This year, the ACM itself will be preceded by a social half hour during which attractive refreshment will be provided by the Social Committee. No official charge will be made, although a contribution plate will be suggestively positioned for those who would like to help towards the cost of their meal.

To save time at the ACM itself, committee reports will not be given by the respective chairmen, but will be circulated previously. Questions on them will proceed as usual.

There may be big changes in election procedure, and an attempt to form committees with many non-PCC members on them.

One system suggested will, in future years, limit the PCC to its six officers and twelve other members in place of the present twenty-six. This year, however, the number must remain at twenty-six as constitutionally, no change can be made until next year, and then of course, only after ratification by this year's ACM. Assuming that agreement is reached, it will still be necessary to elect seven members 'over the top.'

Please turn up to the ACM. Too many willing people have not done so, through, it is felt, fear of being lumbered with more duties than time allows them. It is hoped that the proposed new system will remove these forebodings.

J.L.F.

PARISH CONCERT

Representative members of the Church organisations successfully produced their second Grand Concert in the Parish Hall on Saturday, February 19th. Skits, songs and dances together with a mimed melodrama and a short play written by a nine-year old author were presented to a packed hall—standing room only for late comers! The indefatigable compères were Jack Ford and 'Smoke' Maddox, and interval refreshments were served by Mrs. Gostling and a team of willing helpers.

G.C.

CHRISTIAN AID

On Wednesday, March 16, at 8 p.m., the Teddington Choral Society will give a performance at All Saints' Church, The Avenue, Hampton (Conductor: Mrs. Lisette Brooks). The soloists will be Jean Middleton, Irene Brayham, Kenneth Evans and Harvey Rathbone, with Jeffrey Bowyer, F.R.C.O., at the organ. The programme will consist of Faure's Requiem and Parry's Blest Pair of Sirens, with excerpts from Bach, Handel and Mendelssohn.

The society is well-known in the Thames Valley and further afield for its charity concerts of light music, and for its performances of religious works in churches and chapels of many denominations. On this occasion the proceeds will be given to CHRISTIAN AID and for this reason the concert should have a special appeal to all lovers of church music in Hampton and around.

J.W.

STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship Committee is now at work planning the introduction of a "Time and Talents" scheme. Under this aspect of the Stewardship programme, which will complement the present financial arrangements, parishioners will be invited to give more of their time or to use their various abilities to a greater extent in the service of the Church and in helping their neighbours in the parish. It is comparatively easy to draw up a list of ways in which people can help, but it is less easy, in some cases, to make sure that any help offered can be used. This is our immediate task. We are, for example, circulating those in the parish with young children to discover whether they would welcome offers of baby-sitters to enable them to go to church and to attend social functions. We would also like to know, however, whether there are elderly people or invalids who would like to be offered lifts to church or other outings, either in cars or, where appropriate, in wheel-chairs. It will be some months yet before we can complete our arrangements, but we should be grateful if those who would appreciate assistance of this sort, or anyone knowing of such people, would contact Mrs. Rockliffe, 40, Gloucester Road, Teddington (TED. Lock 4909); Mrs. Leatherdale, 18, St. James's Road (MOL. 6999) or Mrs. Severn, 4, Ormond Drive (MOL. 1954) or any other member of the Committee, as soon as possible. M.L.

THE YOUNG WIVES' GROUP

Mr. Watson's talk on Astronomy proved a most instructive evening—although it was too overcast to look at the sky with a telescope. He had prepared many slides to illustrate his talk, and really impressed us with the millions of stars and the significance of the phrase "light years." There was something to interest us all from the formation of the solar system and our methods of exploring it to the fact that there still remains evidence of a Star of Bethlehem. K.B.

BAPTISMS

Feb. 20.—Alan Michael Bonfield, 60, Princes Road.
.. 20.—Tracey Ann Glassup, 1, Sheffield House, Park Road.

LENTEN STUDY GROUPS

Course I—"Believe and Live": 8.15 p.m. on Mondays at 30, St. James's Road; on Tuesdays at 14, Cardinal's Walk; on Wednesdays at 40, Gloucester Road, Teddington; on Thursdays at 52, Park Road.
Course II—"Prayer is my life": 2.30 p.m. on Wednesdays at Wayside; 8.15 p.m. on Wednesdays at 35, St. James's Avenue.

OTHER DATES TO NOTE

- Mar. 14.—2.00 p.m. Editorial Board (52, Park Road); 8.00 p.m. Properties Committee (36, St. James's Road); Hampton Council of Churches: Prayer and Discussion Group — "Holy Communion" (All Saints' Church).
- „ 15.—8.00 p.m. Social Committee (21, St. James's Road).
- „ 16.—8.00 p.m. Stewardship Committee (106, Park Road).
- „ 20.—Mothering Sunday: 11.00 a.m. Parents welcome at Sunday School open morning.
- „ 21.—8.00 p.m. Deanery "No Small Change" Course VI — Tomorrow; The "Do-it-yourself" Liturgy (St. Mary's Hall, Twickenham).
- „ 23.—8.30 p.m. ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING, preceded by a Reception and Social Gathering from 7.45 p.m. onwards (Hall).
- „ 25.—The Annunciation: 10.30 a.m. Holy Communion: 4.00 p.m. Holy Communion in St. Anne's Chapel at the Lady Eleanor Holles School.
- „ 27.—Passion Sunday: No Parade & Family Service at 11.00 a.m. as hitherto on fourth Sundays; instead, the uniformed groups, Sunday School children and parents are warmly invited to attend Parish Communion at 9.30 a.m. and the Parish Breakfast (coffee and hot rolls served) at Wayside immediately afterwards.
- (N.B. A creche for younger children is now available at Wayside on most Sundays from 9.25 a.m. onwards, but parents who intend to make use of it are advised to check on this a few days previously).
- At 7.00 p.m., immediately after Evensong, an augmented choir hopes to present an Oratorio by Arthur Somervell—"The Passion of Christ". (If not possible on this Sunday, it will be presented on the following one, Palm Sunday).
- „ 30.—8.00 p.m. Young Wives' Group: Elizabeth Arden demonstration (W); 8.00 p.m. Hampton Hill Association: Public Meeting and Social Gathering (Hall).
- Apr. 3.—PALM SUNDAY.
- „ 4-7.—Holy Communion daily — on Monday at 9.00 a.m., on Tuesday, Wednesday and Maundy Thursday at 7.30 p.m.
- „ 8.—GOOD FRIDAY: Children's Service at 10.00 a.m.; the Three Hours' Devotion begins at noon — this year the theme will be the Passion of Christ according to St. Mark, and members of the congregation may find it helpful to bring their Bibles with them; the United Service sponsored by the Hampton Council of Churches will be held at the Wensleydale Road "triangle" at 3.30 p.m., and it is hoped that we may be able to form a procession of witness to this leaving St. James's at 3.5 p.m.
- „ 10.—EASTER DAY: Holy Communion at 7.0 a.m., 8.00 a.m., and 12.10 p.m. Parish and Family Communion at 9.30 a.m.; Parish Breakfast at Wayside at 10.45 a.m.; Children's Service at 11.10 a.m.; Evensong at 6.30 p.m.
- „ 11.—6.00 a.m. Members of the Young People's Fellowship leave the church for their Easter holiday in Scotland.