

## **It was Lent, so they took it back!**

That was the caption under a cartoon in the Church Times several years ago, the cartoon had furniture removal folk carrying a very awkward item of furniture through a church door.

Of course without you seeing the picture the joke isn't so good, you'll just have to believe how funny it was at the time and it still makes me smile now.

But it set me thinking, perhaps as we approach this season of Lent we need to take it back. Take it back to its origins and see if we can see the whole picture more clearly.

These forty days leading up to the great festival of Easter start on Ash Wednesday, this year on February 25<sup>th</sup>, and traditionally it has been seen as a season when we examine our own Christian faith a bit more deeply, hence the annual Lent Course – an opportunity for us to set aside a time, especially, when we can explore our Christian faith with others.

In some churches Baptism classes will be held, with baptisms taking place on Easter Eve, but for all of us Lent is a time to think about God, our belief in His Son Jesus, and how that impacts on our day to day living.

Might I suggest you try and set aside a few minutes each day to be still and realise the presence of God with you, sit yourself down, in a comfy chair away from the 'phone or T.V., maybe read a portion of the Bible, just a few verses each day - the Gospel according to Mark is a good one to start with, packed with theology and stories. It will set you up for the day, honestly.

No doubt Hot Cross buns will be in the shops before Lent even starts, let alone on Good Friday the day when they are traditionally eaten, and people will tutt tutt, saying its not like it used to be... but maybe we should thank the shops for keeping this reminder of such a Good Friday in front of our eyes for longer than just a day.

The ashes that will be placed on our heads, at the Ash Wednesday Services, will be washed off before the day has passed, and soon after we will be talking with our friends of giving up chocolate, doing that extra exercise to lose a pound or two and donating an extra pound of a different sort to charity.

Of course we could all follow the example of those furniture removal folk and take ourselves and the things that we carry, back into church. And here I don't just mean the church buildings, for you and me are the church in this place and we need to take ourselves back, share our faith and our doubts with other fellow Christians.

So keep smiling, identify that awkward item Lent to you, and bring it back.

Reverend Ann

from Page two of PAX March 2009

By the time you read this magazine Spring will have sprung, I hope, after the snowy days of February.

The old country saying that I mentioned in church, seemed to come true this year, about the weather and that of Candlemas day , ( 2<sup>nd</sup> February);

If Candlemas day be fair and bright,  
winter will have another flight,  
If Candlemas day be cloud and rain,  
winter has passed and will not come again.

During the snowy weather I put more food out for my birds in the garden, and as a reward I was entertained with their presence and song, these tiny birds have to spend so much of their time eating just to keep alive when it is so cold. Not so with us of course, for eating all day would soon put us in trouble with the dietician!

Vanity, vanity, all is vanity and a chasing after the wind, as the book of Ecclesiastes told me during the week following the snow.

In the hustle and bustle of life we can seem to be chasing after the wind, never quite getting to the end of the list of jobs to be done, and always pressurised to be busy.

This year the whole of the month of March falls in the season of Lent, and so I invite you to try and resist being so busy, find time to really be in the presence of God and notice that you are there. If you do, then before long those words of Ecclesiastes will speak to you, I know, for there is nothing new under the sun!

During the snowy weather, rather than keep driving to the shops and adding to my stock of food in the larder, I found some hidden treasures of jams and pickles and puddings locked away in the freezer and cupboard. It was good to have a bit of a clear out. Perhaps we should pretend it snows each day through Lent, and dig deep into the cupboards in our hearts, we may be surprised what treasures we find, and no doubt some things that need to be thrown away.

But we will only find time to do all this if we are not too busy.

Once a year we find time to spring clean our church building, once a year we ought to dust away the cobwebs in our lives so that we are free to spring into action when the Son comes.

So come along and be 'not busy' with me, you'll find its surprisingly hard work.

Happy Spring Cleaning.

Reverend Ann

## **ST. IPPOLYTS SERVICES FOR MARCH**

<b>Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March</b>	11.00am. 6.30pm.	All Ages Service Choral Evensong
<b>Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March</b>	8.00am. 9.30am.	Holy Communion Sung Eucharist
<b>Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March</b>	8.00am. 9.30am.	Holy Communion Sung Eucharist
<b>Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March</b> Sunday	9.30am.	Special Service for Mothering
<b>Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>6.30pm.</b>	<b>Joint Evensong for All Three Parishes</b>
<b>Weekday Services</b>		
<b>St. Ippolyts</b> Tuesdays to Saturdays	9.00am.	Morning Prayer
<b>First Wednesday</b> <b>4<sup>th</sup> March</b>	11.00am.	Holy Communion (Said)
Fridays 6 <sup>th</sup> , 13 <sup>th</sup> , 20 <sup>th</sup> , 27 <sup>th</sup> ,	11.00am.	Mums and Toddlers' Service

