

Session I

High Altar Reredos. and The Children's Chapel

'Do not neglect your gift, which was given you'. I Tim 4. 14



Introduction:

In 1934 work began on St Thomas' thanks to the vision of the Diocese and people of St Thomas' Portman Square who allowed the sale there church to fund the building of this church. This was a fresh start for a new and growing community in this part of London, but two fixtures came from that old church and were placed in this church: High Altar Reredos, and the Organ.

The Object: *The High Altar Reredos*



On the Reredos the central figure is Christ as the Great High Priest. The figure on the left is St Thomas (holding a square the symbol of the patron saint of architects). The figure on the right is St Paul (holding his symbol, the sword). St Paul writing to Timothy said,
'Do not neglect your gift, which was given you'. I Tim 4. 14

Discussion:

On the North/East Porch wall there is a plaque which says,

Remember those who in years past worshipped in the Church of Saint Thomas Portman Square London W. May we in this church of Saint Thomas be faithful to the trust we inherit. 4th Sunday of Lent 1934.

They left a spiritual, as well as material, heritage.

Can you share one or two 'gifts' given to you which have informed your personal faith and devotional life?

[These may be physical gifts (objects), or teachings, or practices, or prayers.]

If you could leave a spiritual gift for a future generation what would it be?

Gifts in the Bible

There are different types of gifts referred to in the Bible. For example

Symbolic e.g. The Magi – Gold for a King, Frankincense for God, Myrrh for death.

Worship e.g. sacrifices, Eucharist

Thanks e.g. Queen of Sheeba

For Service e.g. Spiritual Gifts in Paul's Letters

St Paul, whilst encouraging the early Church, talks about gifts and how to exercise them a lot.

Read: Romans 12. 3-8

³For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. ⁶We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; ⁸the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Discussion:

What does this passage tell us about gifts?

Is the body metaphor helpful, and if so how?

Read: Ephesians 4. 11-16

¹¹The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. ¹⁴We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. ¹⁵But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

Discussion:

What does this passage tell us about gifts?

How is different from the Romans passage, and how is it similar?

Is the body metaphor helpful, and if so how?

What practical advice does it give about exercising gifts, and leadership?

Having thought about gifts in the early Church, let us think about gifts in St Thomas'.

What parallels do we see in our church and the churches St Paul was writing to.

How do we see these gifts used in our church, and its worshipping life (the community aspect is coming up next!)?

What they say about us?

The Object: *Children's Chapel Reredos*



The artist Elizabeth Starling has filled this scene with lots of images.

Discussion:

What 'jumps out' at you from the picture?

What connections are being made here between the church and the story of faith, and the place of the church/faith within a community?

What gifts do we have to offer the community?

What are the challenges in sharing this story compared to say 1934?

This session has been all about gifts given. Gifts given by our forebears and by God. Some of these gifts are for the Church and others are personal. With that in mind, the session closes in prayer.

The Closing Prayers

Leader The Lord almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end.

All **Amen.**

Leader Our help is in the name of the Lord

All **who made heaven and earth.**

All **Most merciful God, we confess to you,
before the whole company of heaven and one another,
that we have sinned in thought, word and deed
and in what we have failed to do.**

**Forgive us for the times when we have not exercised our gifts
and heal us by your Spirit and raise us to new life in Christ. Amen.**

Leader O God, make speed to save us.

All **O Lord, make haste to help us.**

All **Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Reading I Corinthians 12 *one or two people may read the following.*

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. ⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁸God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.

Time of prayer and quiet reflection *For few moments reflect on the gifts God has given you and the Church (nationally, in the Diocese, and locally). Give thanks for them. Then in silence pray for the person on either side of you, giving thanks for the gift they are to St Thomas' and the world.*

The period ends with:

The Collect

Leader Let us pray.

Visit this place, O Lord, we pray, and drive far from it the snares of the enemy;
may your holy angels dwell with us and guard us in peace,
and may your blessing be always upon us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Conclusion

Leader Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

All **Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.**

Leader Keep me as the apple of your eye.

All **Hide me under the shadow of your wings.**

Leader Abide with us, Lord Jesus,

All **for the night is at hand and the day is now past.**

Leader As the night watch looks for the morning,

All **so do we look for you, O Christ.**

Leader Come with the dawning of the day

All **and make yourself known in the breaking of the bread.**

Leader The Lord bless us and watch over us;

the Lord make his face shine upon us and be gracious to us;

the Lord look kindly on us and give us peace.

All **Amen.**

The Dreaded Homework!

- a. Read: John 18.1 to 19.end (it can also be found as the Pasion Narrative for Good Friday on: http://www.stthomashanwellchurch.org.uk/media/resources/Bible_Readings_from_16th_Sept_2012_to_20th_April_2014_ii.pdf)
- b. Have a close look at the Lady Chapel Statue and Stations of the Cross

Session 2
Lady Chapel Statue
and
Stations of the Cross.
'We preach Christ crucified'.
I Cor 1. 23



Introduction:

At least two works have been especially created with St Thomas' in mind. They were produced to reflect the style of the surroundings and the best devotional art available. The first was the statue of the Madonna and child was commissioned by Lady Maufe (the Architect's wife) and was placed in the Morning Star Chapel and thus, re-'dedicated' as the Lady Chapel. The second work or works (the Stations of the Cross) came as a result of an approach by the artist himself – John Pelling ARCA.

Both works serve as a powerful reminder of two key unique features of Christianity: the incarnation and the cross.

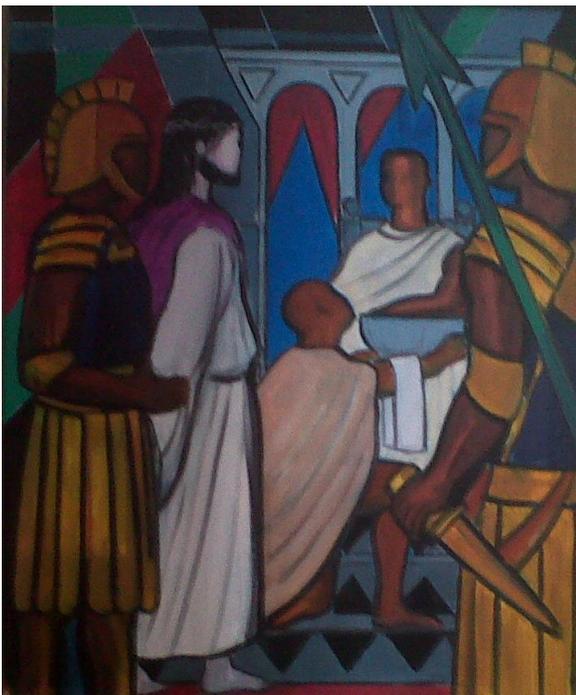
This study will examine the two in parallel.

Initial Discussion: John 18.1 to 19.end

As part of the homework and preparation for this session (hopefully!) you read John 18.1-19.end and looked at the Stations and the Statue.

Before looking at the reading and objects in detail were there any features in the reading or objects which 'jumped-out'.

If so make you may like to spend a few moments recording them and chatting about them.



Station 1: Jesus is condemned to Death

Read John 18. 29-19.22

Discussion

What was/were the charges brought against Jesus?
How do you think Pilate felt?

The Nicene Creed (381AD) we say on Sunday says Jesus: *was crucified under Pontius Pilate!*

The blame is thus laid at Pilate's door by the Early Church. So bad was he that legend has it that when his body was thrown into the River Tiber even the waters rejected his body because of the evil spirits it contained. Although his wife, Claudia Procula, is venerated as a saint in Eastern Orthodoxy.

Is Pilate given too hard a press, is he redeemable?
What could Pilate's actions be a metaphor for?



Station 2: Jesus receives his Cross & Stations 3, 7 & 9: Jesus falls under its weight

Read John 19.16-17

Discussion

Several times in the gospels Jesus tells his disciples to take up their cross and follow him.

What do we think he meant by that?

What do we think the disciples made of that command?

What does it mean for us?

A common phrase is 'this is my cross I have to bear'. Yet, Jesus instruction to his disciples to do something deliberate i.e. take-up. The modern usage suggest something that is done to.

Can the two understandings be reconciled in light of this story?



Station 4: Jesus meets his mother & The Statue of the Madonna and Child

Read Luke 2. 22-35

Discussion

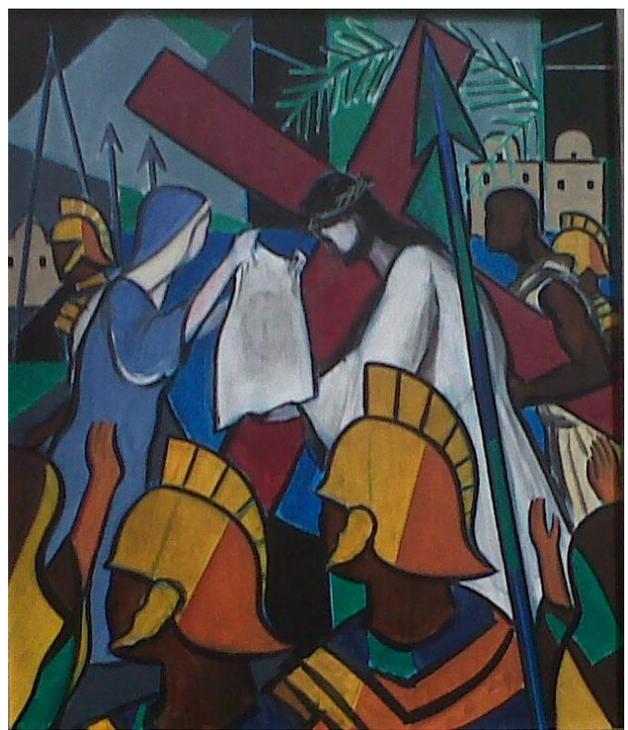
In the Mel Gibson film about Jesus, 'The Passion' there is a moment when Jesus falls under the weight of the cross, and she gets a 'flash-back' a moment when he fell as a small child. The she could comfort him, but now...

As you think about the 4th Station and the Lady Chapel Statue, what can we say about Mary's experience?

What does she as a role and 'icon' offer the world and our parish today?

Many Christian's say the prayer, 'Hail full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb Jesus...'

Does that prayer feel hollow against this story, or is there something that can be taken from it?



Station 5: Simon of Cyrene takes up the cross & Station 6: Jesus' face is wiped by Veronica

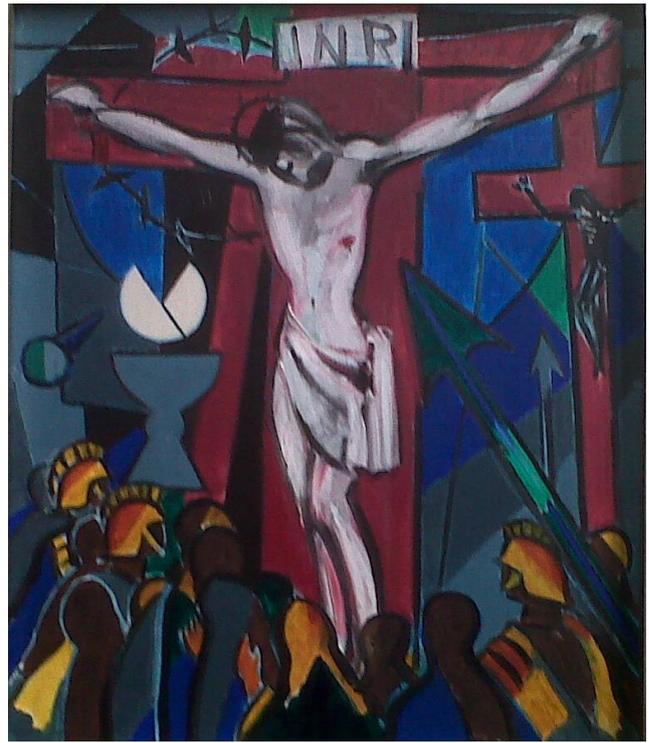
Read Matthew 27. 32: *And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.*

St Veronica is not mentioned in the gospels, but is referred to in the apocryphal *Acts of Pilate*. Despite the absence of any proper biblical record her story was adopted very readily by the early Church.

Discussion

What do the actions of both Simon and Veronica point us to today?

In what ways is our parish another 'Simon' or 'Veronica'?



Station 10: Jesus is stripped & Station 12: Jesus dies on the cross

Discussion

Crucifixion was intended to be an exercise in complete humiliation. Thus, those crucified were, there was no discreetly positioned loincloth as appears in most pictures (including ours!)
 What does this scene offer a world that continues to suffer?

Read John 19.28-30.

'It is finished.' The Greek word St John uses is: *tetelestai* literally means 'it has reached its goal'. This word was also used in markets for 'paid in full' or settlement of an outstanding debt.

Discussion

What does this phrase tell us about 'the cross', and why we should, as St Paul says, 'preach Christ crucified'?

The Conclusion

Leader Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

All **Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.**

Leader Keep me as the apple of your eye.

All **Hide me under the shadow of your wings.**

Leader Abide with us, Lord Jesus,

All **for the night is at hand and the day is now past.**

A few moments of silence now follow, as the attendees reflect on what has been discussed. The all say:

We adore you O Christ, and bless you.

Because by you holy cross you have redeemed the world. Amen

The Dreaded Homework!

Think about a building (preferably a church!) that inspires, and why it inspires. It would be great if you have a picture to show the group next week.



Introduction:

Last week we looked at the Stations of the Cross and statue in the Lady Chapel. We also considered the passion narrative of St John's Gospel.

Before looking at this week's theme are there any questions from the previous weeks' studies?

Initial Discussion.

As part of the homework and preparation for this session you thought about a church or place that has been or is special to you.

Hopefully people will have a picture to show but if not don't worry.

Go around the group and ask them to:

Describe the church or place, and

Why it is so important to you?

Are there themes, elements, or words, which a number of the group share?

If so why might that be?

Places, buildings and land have always been important to people. God's covenant to his people was to give them a land and make them a nation. Often as Christians we get rather embarrassed about talking about building, and immediately retort: "the Church is the people *not* a building". Although this is theologically 100% true, as complete human beings we are attracted to, and find security and peace in places as well as with people. God seems to have understood this reality and made provision for people by giving land, homes, and occasionally temples.

Read: I Chronicles 22.1-6

Then David said, "Here shall be the house of the LORD God and here the altar of burnt offering for Israel." ²David gave orders to gather together the aliens who were residing in the land of Israel, and he set stonecutters to prepare dressed stones for building the house of God. ³David also provided great stores of iron for nails for the doors of the gates and for clamps, as well as bronze in quantities beyond weighing, ⁴and cedar logs without number - for the Sidonians and Tyrians brought great quantities of cedar to David. ⁵For David said, "My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorified throughout all lands; I will therefore make preparation for it." So David provided materials in great quantity before his death. ⁶Then he called for his son Solomon and charged him to build a house for the LORD, the God of Israel.

Discussion *King David (died c962BC) and Solomon (died c922BC)*

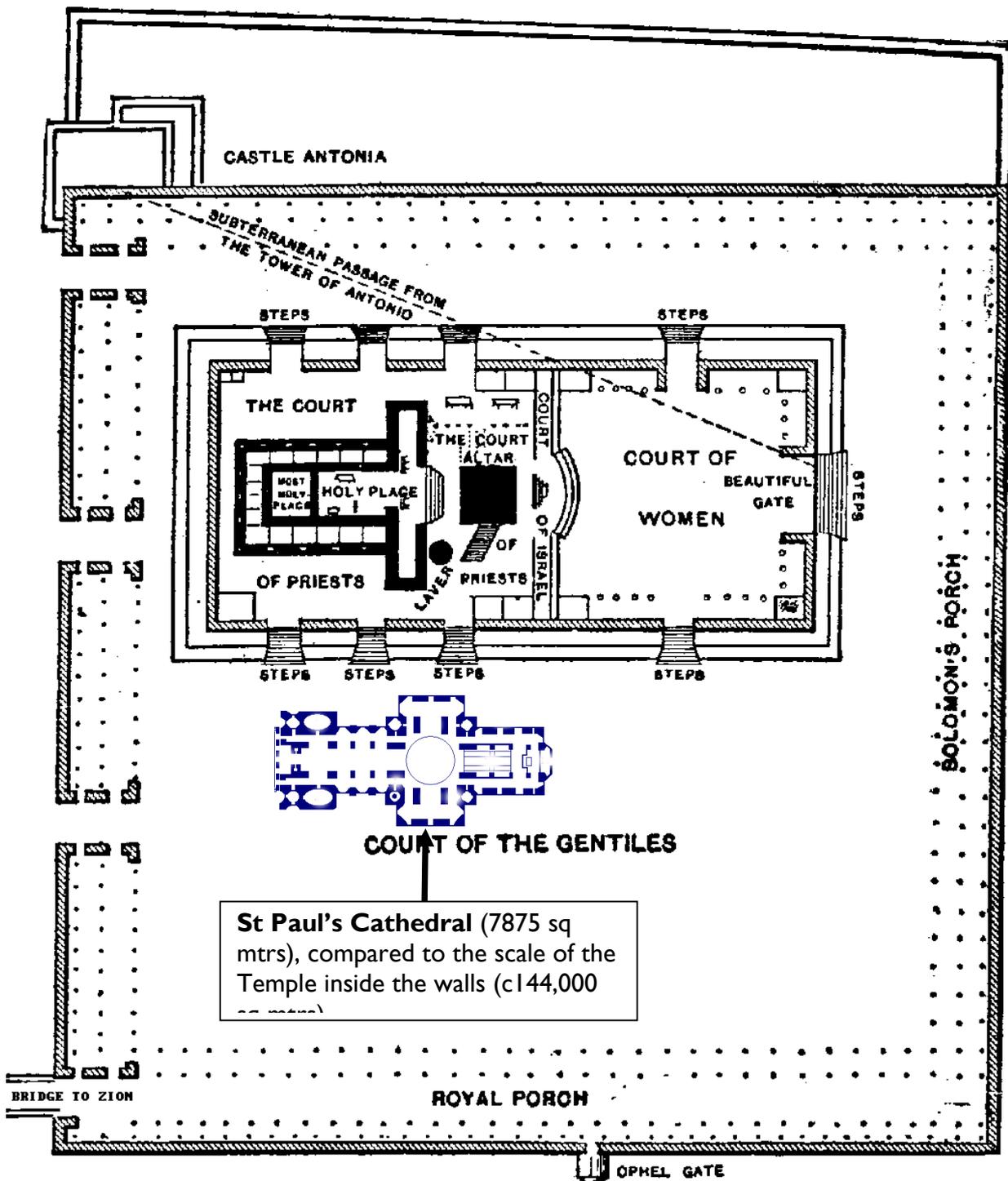
What do we find out about the activity of the temple?

Who was the temple for?

What this tells us about how temple worship was understood?

Solomon's sumptuous Temple, but destroyed by the Babylonians, and a second temple built in 515BC. However, after centuries it crumbled, and was demolished by the Herod the Great (d

4BC). He then built the next great temple in 20BC and was finished in 64AD. This is the great temple which Jesus visited (Luke 2.41-50) and whose downfall he predicted (John 2.19) Here is a plan of that temple (144,000 sq mtr):



St Paul's Cathedral (7875 sq mtrs), compared to the scale of the Temple inside the walls (c144,000 sq mtrs)

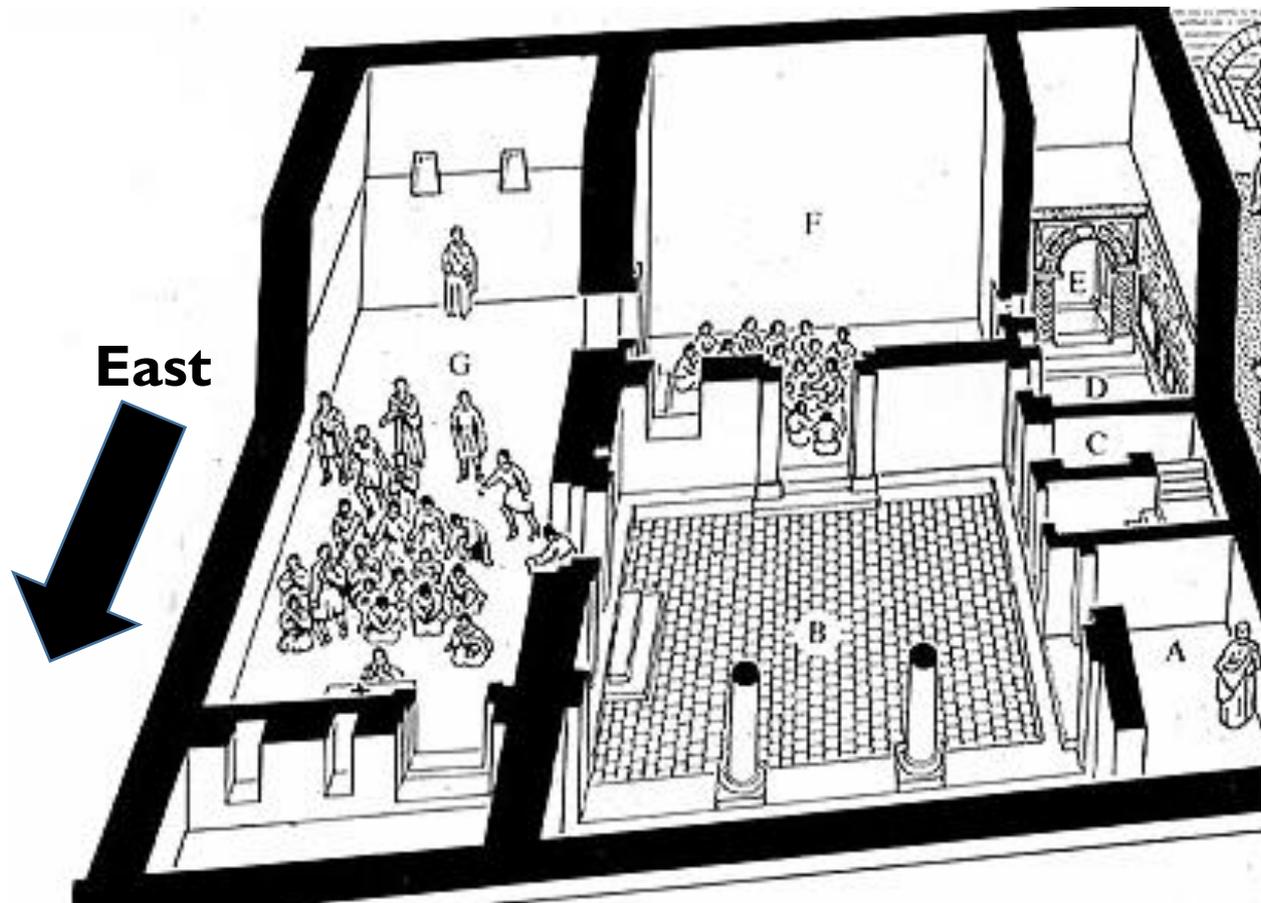
Discussion

Looking at the plan of the Temple in Jerusalem what does its layout and contents tell us about how the worshippers understood their faith and worship? What went on in the Temple?

It should be noted that the Temple in Jerusalem was the exception and not the rule. The Talmud Menahot 43b, says, 'A man is obliged to recite 100 benedictions each day'.

This demand means prayer and praise must take place in places other than the temple else nothing would ever be done.

The earliest Christians continued to go to synagogues to worship, and meet in homes especially in order to celebrate the Eucharist. These houses were sometimes adapted to allow for the celebration of the Eucharist and Baptism (see below: The house at Dura Europos, Syria c230AD). As persecutions began to happen they were compelled to go, quite literally, 'underground'. The worshipped and met in the catacombs, a place no self-respecting Jew or Roman would go to.



- A = Entrance Doorway
- B = Courtyard
- C = Stairs to Upper Floor
- D = Baptistry
- E = Font / Baptistry
- F = 'Sunday School'
- G = Assembly Room (the Altar is at the East End)

Discussion

What does this House Church tell us about worship?

What does it show us about the Christian Faith?

What elements in this building do we recognise, and what are different?

After Emperor Constantine (d. 303AD) made Christianity the 'established' faith, the buildings rapidly moved from the domestic setting the bespoke buildings called Basilicas which is the Greek word for 'hall of the king'. These Basilicas would be familiar to us today (see below). However, as

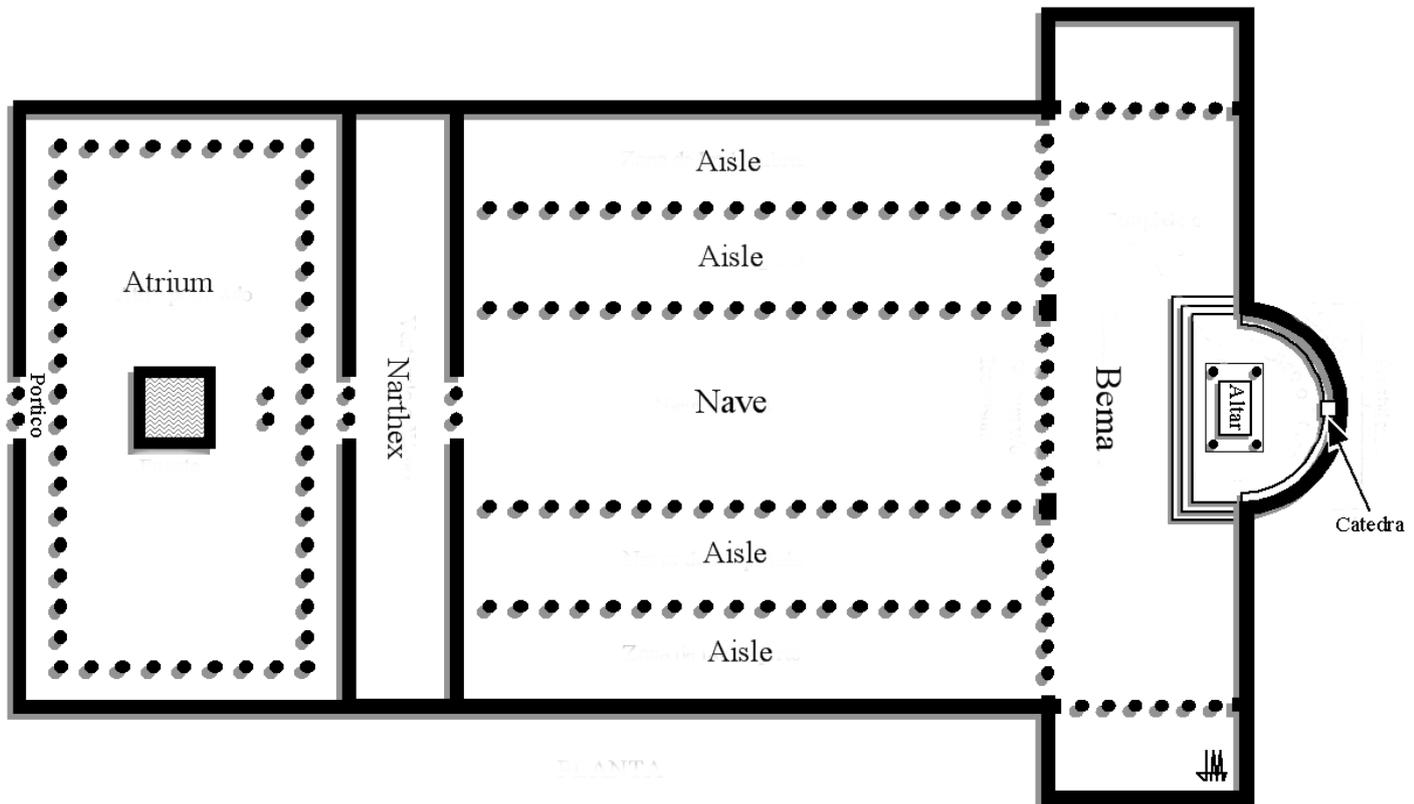
the buildings became established so too did the rise of the Religious i.e. the 'professional' Christian be they priest, monk, nun etc.

Discussion

Do you think there is a correlation between the formalisation of the buildings, and the Religious Life, and the more formal (staid?) worship of some churches?

How does our building affect our worship?

What particular parts of St Thomas' 'speak' to us?



Plan of the old St Peter's Basilica, Rome c320AD

The Bema is an elevated platform, similar to our Chancel. The font was in a separate building outside the Basilica.

There is always a difficult balance between formality and informality in the places where God is worshipped.

Read the following and **discuss** what they are 'saying to us'?

Matthew 21.12-15

I Corinthians 11.18, 20-26

I Peter 2.5,9: ⁵Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁹You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Tonight's Worship is on a separate Sheet

The Dreaded Homework!

Come with your favourite hymn, or piece of Church Music. If you have it on a CD please bring it, if not don't worry. You will not be expected to sing it! Just say why it inspires you.

Session 4

The Organ & Music

'Speak to each other with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; sing and make music to the Lord in your hearts'. Eph 5. 19



Introduction:

Last week we examined the place of buildings in our faith journey, and the life of the historic Church.

Before embarking on this week's theme are there any questions from the previous weeks' studies?

Initial Discussion.

Last week's homework and preparation for this session was to decide on your favourite hymn or piece of Church music.

Go around the group and ask them to:

Read out their favourite hymn, or

Play their favourite piece of Church music

Questions:

Why it is so important to you?

Are there themes, elements, or words, which a number of the group share?

If so why might that be?

At St Thomas' Choral music is a key part of our life together. We have a campaign to raise funds to repair an organ which was in St Thomas' Portman Square, which is a sign of this heritage, but far more importantly an investment in the future.

As Church design had a clear echo with the Jewish tradition, the musical tradition of worship has the same connectedness.

Read the following passages:

Ex 15.1 Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord: 'I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea. ²The Lord is my strength and my might, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. ³The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name. ²⁰Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. ²¹And Miriam sang to them: 'Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.'

Judg 5. ³ 'Hear, O kings; give ear, O princes; to the Lord I will sing, I will make melody to the Lord, the God of Israel.

I Sam 18.6 -7 As they were coming home, when David returned from killing the Philistine, the women came out of all the towns of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments. ⁷And the women sang to one another as they made merry, 'Saul has killed his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.'

1 Chron 6.31-32 31 These are the men whom David put in charge of the service of song in the house of the Lord, after the ark came to rest there. ³²They ministered with song before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the Lord in Jerusalem; and they performed their service in due order.

1 Chron 15. 16 David also commanded the chiefs of the Levites to appoint their kindred as the singers to play on musical instruments, on harps and lyres and cymbals, to raise loud sounds of joy. [There were singers (v19); a Director of Music (v22); people who played: bronze cymbals (v19); harps (v20); lyres (v21); trumpets (v24)] ²⁷David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, as also were all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the leader of the music of the singers; and David wore a linen ephod. ²⁸So all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting, to the sound of the horn, trumpets, and cymbals, and made loud music on harps and lyres.



King David playing his lyre

Discussion:

What elements of worship (including style) are present in these extracts?

What connections with the Church do we see?

What is the connection to worship and historic events?

The New Testament has over 20 references to music/singing. Here are just a few to **read**:
Acts 16.25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

1 Corinthians 14.15 & 26 ¹⁵What should I do then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the mind also; I will sing praise with the spirit, but I will sing praise with the mind also.

²⁶What should be done then, my friends? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

Ephesians 5.19 As you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts.

Colossians 3.16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.

James 5.13 13 Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise.

Revelation 14.1-3: Then I looked, and there was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion! And with him were one hundred and forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; the voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, ³and they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the one hundred forty-four thousand who have been redeemed from the earth.

Discussion

In what ways are these texts similar to the Old Testament references?

In what ways are they different?

Any other thoughts?

From this foundation music within worship began to develop. However, within a short time issues began to arise. The following were the key issues to affect the early Church:

a. Formulae v Spontaneous.

The music/singing within the Church always seems to have been a mixture of written down works and spontaneous/ extemporary moments. However, rather like buildings, the trend increasingly favoured written down set pieces which also combated various heresies that were arising. For example the use of the Gloria patri (Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost...) was a combat Arian heresy (the denial of Jesus' and the Holy Spirit's divinity).

b. Scriptural v extra-scriptural poems. There was a tussle to decide whether only scriptural songs should be sung, or whether it was permissible to write devotional/new works. The eastern Church has retained the former and the western Church the exploration of the latter.

c. Links to Hellenistic music v trad Jewish. There was a similar struggle as the early Church explored Hellenistic philosophical and poetic approaches. An example of this would be Phil 2.6-11. Eventually the styles and psalm tradition of the synagogue began to win the day. In past 200 years this has changed.

d. Vocal v Instrumental. Former was found in synagogues, and thus, acceptable from an early stage. The latter was associated with theatres, circuses etc and so more 'difficult'.

e. The rise of monasticism and ecclesiastical chant. After St Augustine there developed a tradition of ecclesiastical/extra-liturgical (i.e. not words of the Eucharist) chant developed West quickly, whereas the East stood still. By the 4th century there were at least 350 hymn texts.



Medieval image of Monks singing

Discussion:

Share thoughts about those 'issues'.

Are any familiar to us at St Thomas' today, or in the wider Church?

Brief notes on development.

- ✘ By 600AD the roles of the choir and the people was clearly defined.
- ✘ c9th century music appeared as 'Gregorian chant':



The role of the Choir:

i. 9th to 15th development of polyphony and role of choir to express the heights of religious expression.

ii. Reformation stressed role of people therefore the function of the choir was to lead congregation.

Two functions of choir present in cathedral music.

Key 'Lesson': Important to appreciate the two aspects.

The development continues:

Some reformers metrical psalms, others thought choral was fine as long as it was 'simple'. After the Restoration (1660) gallery musicians at west end of the church (minstrels gallery). The quality of music within the local church dropped. This was believed to be addressed by the (re)introduction of pipe organs, and robed choirs in parish churches.

The hymns were equally 'mixed' in terms of quality. By 1872 there were 269 different hymnbooks in use in the Canterbury Province! In 1861 *Hymns Ancient & Modern* was designed to ensure quality and soundness could be widely experienced. However, this too was criticised in terms of quality. Martin Shaw (later appointed by Percy Dearmer as Organist and Choirmaster at Dearmer's church) said that A & M was a 'dull compromise, and as such compromises will, it fell flat. It was certainly not the new hymnbook that the new century needed.' By 1906 the *English Hymnal* (ed. Percy Dearmer and P. Vaughan Williams) was produced which included versions of ancient liturgical hymns and texts.



The 'Modern Worship Band' (guitars n drums!). The Minstrels from St Mary's Beverley in the 15th century.

Discussion

The Anglican Church takes very seriously the ancient adage: *Lex orandi, lex credendi* ('what say or pray we believe'). How important is this as a consideration for hymns? Of his *Missa Solemnis*, Beethoven said:

"He who truly understands this music will be freed thereby from all the miseries of the world"
Should church music free us from all miseries or be a way in which we engage with everyday life?

In 1957 a Report of Archbishop's Committee called *Music in Church* said that church Music:

- ✘ should be a fitting expression of the words; words matter most
- ✘ should be good music
- ✘ should be in keeping with the spirit of the liturgy
- ✘ should be fitted to the conditions existing in the church for which it is required.

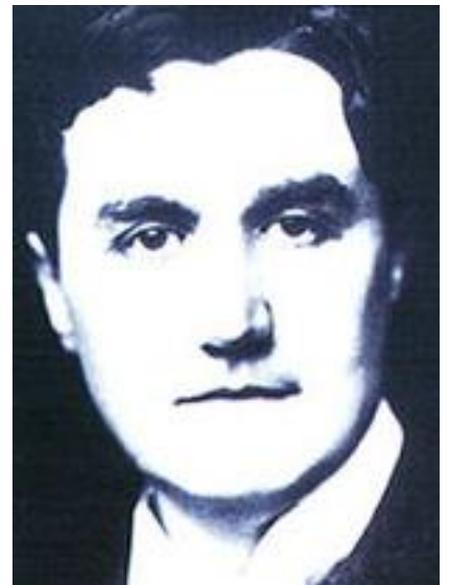
Further Discussion

What do we think of the conclusions from that 1957 report?
Can Christian music be written only by convinced Christians, or those with an upright life?
Is it better to sing something, anything, than nothing at all?
How can the unmusical play a part in church worship?

Tonight's Worship is on a separate Sheet



Rev'd Percy Dearmer



Ralph Vaughan Williams