

Dear People of God:
Greetings in the name of our Lord.

In this letter I wish to chat about three things in the life of the parish. These are Admission to Communion and Confirmation, our AIDS Project and our search for a Musical Director.

Admission to Holy Communion and Confirmation:

Many years ago now, the Parish of St John's opted to allow younger children to receive Holy Communion before they are confirmed. Children wishing to receive Holy Communion were asked to undergo a short course and were then formally admitted to receive Holy Communion. This permission to receive was granted on the understanding that the children continued to be regular communicants and that they would in time be confirmed. The fact that younger people were to receive Holy Communion was in no way to negate the necessity for these people to be confirmed in due course.

Some of the theological thinking that was responsible for the decision to admit younger people to Holy Communion, before being confirmed was based on the understanding that through faith and baptism and having been grafted into Christ, we have been incorporated into Christ and into His Church. It therefore seems good that all who are members of Christ and His Church should be admitted to receive the body and blood of Christ. I am very glad that the decision to admit younger people to Holy Communion was made. It enables younger people and children to feel more part of the church.

It appears that many younger people, having been admitted to Holy Communion, feel that confirmation is no longer important. This situation concerns me. Confirmation IS very important. For those who were baptised as children, Confirmation is the opportunity for an adult decision to be made to serve Christ faithfully. It is an opportunity for people to confirm the promises that were made for them by their parents and Godparents at their Baptism. It is an opportunity to stand up as an adult witness to renounce the Devil and evil and to publicly confess one's faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Equally it is important, as it is an opportunity for us to lay hands on people so that they may be equipped for ministry by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is interesting that the first disciples, although they loved Jesus and had given their lives away for Him, had to be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit before they began to spread the good news of Jesus to others. We too desperately need the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to live out our lives in service to Jesus. Not to being continually filled with the Holy Spirit is like trying to drive a motorcar without filling up with petrol. The Holy Spirit not only empowers us but also equips us with gifts and ministries.

St Paul in his letter to the Ephesians says, "But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift", (Eph 4:7). As hands are laid on us the Spirit inspires each one of us to serve. Confirmation is like lay ordination. Every Christian is a priest in the priesthood of believers. We receive our commissioning as priests through the laying on of hands at Confirmation. Thus, Confirmation is crucial if we accept that Christ calls us to

serve Him and that we need equipping for the ministry as the priesthood of believers.

I would ask any young people, who have been admitted to Communion, who are over 15 and who have not been confirmed, to seriously consider this very important commissioning. It is one of the Sacraments of the Church and all who are admitted to Communion made a promise that they will eventually come to Confirmation. If there are any parents who have children in this predicament, please would you encourage them to be confirmed. You could ask one of the Clergy to visit them if you feel that it would help.

The AIDS Project: I wrote an article that was included in the pew leaflet on Sunday 20th June concerning our AIDS ministry at St John's.

For some time the AIDS Committee has realised that for the work to grow we needed a full-time person working on the project. We shared this with the Parish Council in May. In June I shared with the Executive the idea of trying to 'seed' such a ministry by providing funds for a period and then hoping that the project could fund itself. The Executive were very supportive of the idea and Parish Council proposed that we set R 20 000 aside for the 'birthing' of the project. It was also proposed that Mrs. Pat Brooker be asked to serve in this capacity. It was proposed that a Non Profit Organisation be established to make fundraising possible.

Since the Parish Council meeting, God has been very good to us. Pat Brooker has been offered a teaching locum post at the New Germany Primary School and this means that she will do the AIDS work in the afternoons. It also means that the finance will be able to stretch further as the 'seed' finance will not have to be used mainly to cover a stipend for Pat.

An Indaba of all involved in the AIDS ministry in the Parish will be held on Saturday 31st July 2004. Details about this meeting will be forthcoming in the pew leaflet.

A Musical Director: Just to let you know at what stage we are in the matter of a Director of Music.

Many of you have enjoyed the services at which Mr. Christopher Cockburn has played the organ. We especially enjoyed the Ordination service with its superb music. Christopher has taken a new appointment at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal and feels that because of his workload he cannot take on the role of Musical Director in 2004. He may, however, be in a position to take on more work after 2004. What we need to do is to pray very hard about this matter. He may possibly be open to playing on Sundays after he returns from the midyear holiday.

As far as music goes, I need to tell you that I have agreed to be Chaplain to the Royal School of Music in Kwa-Zulu Natal. I am excited about serving in this capacity.

Finally just to thank you very sincerely for welcoming Jane Kustner into the life of our Parish. She has written an article that appears in this issue of the Lantern.

May God bless you all
Yours sincerely in Christ - John Green

MESSAGE OF THANKS FROM YOUR NEW DEACONS

Sue Britton and Vivienne Pyle

To our dear Parish Family:

Thank you all for your love, support and prayers over the months and for your good wishes, cards and gifts.

Thank you for providing a 3-day pre-ordination retreat at Mariannahill Monastery, a time for us to draw apart from everyday life to be with the Lord, and to be spiritually and physically fed. We were led by Archdeacon Rob Taylor to reflect on the work of a pastor. Thank you for your very generous gift towards our deacon's stoles. The white stoles worn at our Ordination were lovingly made by Anne Pitout at Jubilate.

Thank you for the truly magnificent Ordination service, those who celebrated the evening with us or contributed in any way.

✘ the clergy and worship leaders who prepared and led the Ordination service

- ✘ the choir and Christopher Cockburn – organist, for leading the music and anthem
- ✘ the Miriam dancers
- ✘ the flower arrangers
- ✘ those who produced service booklets
- ✘ everyone who provided refreshments and poured tea
- ✘ our families, for being present and helping us at the time of ordination

A very special thank you to John, our Rector, for his encouragement and loving support through this whole process, and to Caroline, Mary and Anthony for walking alongside us.

To God be all thanks, praise and glory!

GOD INCIDENCES

A contribution from the Revd. John Freeman

After the Sept. 11th terror attack on the Twin Towers in New York, USA, one company invited the remaining members of other companies who had been decimated by the attack to share their available office space. At a morning meeting, the head of security told stories of why these people were alive.....

- ✘ One senior executive got in late that day because his son started kindergarten
- ✘ Another fellow was alive because it was his turn to bring donuts
- ✘ One woman was late because her alarm clock didn't go off in time
- ✘ One was late because of being stuck on the highway because of a motor accident
- ✘ One of them missed his bus
- ✘ One spilled food on her clothes and had to take time to change
- ✘ One went back to answer the telephone
- ✘ One had a child that dawdled and didn't get ready as soon as he should have

The most poignant incident was the experience of man who put on a new pair of shoes that morning, took the various means to get to work but before he got there, he developed a blister on his foot. He stopped at a chemist to buy a Band-Aid. That is why he was late for work that day.

So when you are stuck in traffic, miss a bus, turn back to answer a ringing telephone – things that might otherwise irritate you – ponder that perhaps this is exactly where God wants you to be at that very moment. Allow Him, in His greater plan for His Creation, to work things out as He knows best!

NATIONAL ARBOR WEEK – 1st to 7th SEPTEMBER

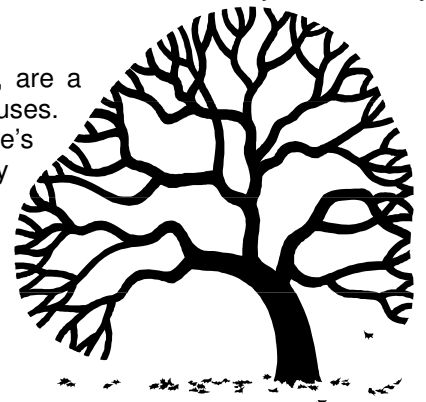
Delise Coad

Arbor week is a special week that has been set aside for the planting and caring of trees. Arbor Day originated in Switzerland during the 15th Century in an attempt to raise awareness amongst people about the importance of trees. In South Africa, Arbor Day started in 1983 and in 1997 it was extended to Nation Arbor Week and coordinated by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Total South Africa and Food and Trees for Africa. The dates vary from country to country and in South Africa Arbor Week falls in the first week of September.

People have depended on trees through the ages. They offer shelter and shade, are a source of food, fuel, medicine, timber, and also have numerous other regional uses. Trees are essential for replenishing our oxygen supply and taking in the atmosphere's carbon dioxide, a pollutant that causes global warming. They prevent soil erosion by binding the soil with their roots and add nutrients to the soil with their leaf litter.

Arbor Week celebrations intend to:

- ✘ Promote a better understanding of trees, in particular indigenous trees
- ✘ Encourage the planting of trees and greening activities within communities
- ✘ Highlight the importance of trees for a sustainable future
- ✘ Raise awareness amongst South Africans about greening initiatives.



COMMON SENSE

Morton du Preez

OBITUARY

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend by the name of Common Sense who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such value lessons as knowing when to come in out of the rain, why the early bird gets the worm and that life isn't always fair.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies ('don't spend more than you earn') and reliable parenting strategies ('adults are in charge'). His health began to rapidly deteriorate when well intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place.

Reports of a six-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.



It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer aspirin to a student; but could not inform the parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Finally, Common Sense lost the will to live as the Ten Commandments became contraband; churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims did. Common Sense finally gave up the ghost after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot, she spilled a bit in her lap, and was awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents,

Truth and Trust, his wife, Discretion; his daughter, Responsibility; and his son, Reason.

He is survived by two stepbrothers; My Rights and Ima Whiner. Not many attended his funeral because so few realised he was gone.

THANKS FROM OUR COMMUNITY CLERGY

Mary, Caroline and Anthony

We were completely overwhelmed by the offering that we received after Pentecost Sunday. Thank you indeed for your generosity and kindness and for your constant love and concern for us in our ministry amongst you. We are so blessed in belonging to the family of St John's and count it a privilege to serve you through the distinct gifts of ministry that our Lord has blessed us with. May God continue to bless this special family of St John's.

PASSIONATE SPIRITUALITY

Vivienne Pyle

Spiritual Direction

The 13 weekly training sessions in Spiritual Direction, under the tutorage of Sister Susan Rakoczy at Cedara Theological Institute, are now completed. This course, which included lectures, study and practical workshops, assisted those already engaged in Spiritual Direction, and enabled others to offer themselves in this ministry. St John's now has a team of people equipped and willing to walk with others as a soul friend on their spiritual journey.

Labyrinth Walk on Environment Sunday – 6th June

A meditative Labyrinth walk was held at Koinonia, giving thanks to God for the beauty of the earth and for recent legislation that seeks to protect the environment. Our mission of healing and reconciliation must include combating all pollution and resisting the spirit of greed that seeks to dominate and destroy what God has made. The care of creation and its responsible use is entrusted to all people in every generation. In obedience to God's commission, as the people of God we committed ourselves:

to care for the earth as central to our Gospel message
to develop eco-sensitive prayers, preaching and teaching
to collaborate with other local environmental groups
to simplify our lifestyles
to ensure food security for all and to enhance the soil's fertility

to celebrate the environment in our regular liturgies
to resist pollution and deforestation wherever possible
to encourage indigenous vegetation
to promote good stewardship of church property
to establish environmental groups in our congregations

After a time of reflection, we walked the Labyrinth in prayerful silence.

Foundation Course in Deepening Prayer

This six-session experiential course explores "what happens when I pray." We are introduced to various forms of prayer and Christian meditation. At each session we reflect on the prayer practice and deepen our ability to listen to God, as we share with one another, and seek to find God in day-to-day experience. A team of presenters and facilitators will lead the course which is as follows:

- 24 July: Stillness and Awareness: Practice in different methods of prayer.
- 7 Aug: Image of God and Self: Exploring our images of both, where they come from and how they affect the way we pray.
- 21 Aug: Review and Reflection: Ways to deepen our experience through reflecting and writing / journalling.
- 4 Sept: Feelings and Discernment: Feelings are partners in decision-making and an aid to guided choices.
- 18 Sept: Distractions and Resistance: A positive look at what may be a valuable aid or a permanent block to deepening prayer.
- 2 Oct: Faith-sharing and Images: Ways of acknowledging my own and others' symbols and images through story.

Retreat - Lyndhurst

Caroline Beech will lead the retreat at Lyndhurst from Sunday afternoon 22 August-25 August.

Centering Prayer

A weekend Retreat led by Richard Hawkins, focusing on Centering Prayer, will be held at Coolock House 6-8 August.

A team of three presenters from Contemplative Outreach USA, will be visiting Durban 18-23 October. It is proposed to hold a series of teachings, workshops, and a Day of Renewal on Saturday 23 October. The venue will be the Glenmore Centre, Durban.

A group meets for Centering Prayer on Mondays at 5.30 pm in St Andrew's Chapel. Please join us!

For details of the above events, please contact Vivienne on (083) 278 7008 / 767 1085 (h) or through the church office.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SUNDAY
20th June 2004
Some notable points

- ✘ Nothing on earth will ever satisfy you except God
- ✘ I have a purpose and a reason for living
- ✘ To examine the relevance of tradition as it impacts on youth is not a sin
- ✘ 50% of today's youth will die of AIDS and related diseases by age 25
- ✘ God doesn't give out kiddie portions of the Holy Spirit
- ✘ Be sure to hand on the baton when the time is right
- ✘ Our journey is from Christ and back to Christ on the road to restoration
- ✘ Find yourself in Father God your Creator
- ✘ 'I have redeemed you, I know you by name. You are mine' Isaiah 43:1

LANTERN DEADLINE

The deadline for material for the next edition is **Sunday 5th Sept. Please support your publication and submit articles to Anthony Castleden.**

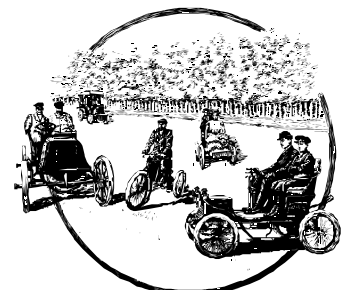
ONCE UPON A TIME.....

One Sunday, a pastor told the congregation that the church needed some extra money and asked them to prayerfully consider giving a special offering in an extra collection. He said that whoever gave the most could pick three hymns. After the offering plates were passed, the pastor glanced down and noticed that someone had put in five R200 notes clipped together. He was so excited that he immediately shared his joy with his congregation and said he'd like to personally thank the person who placed the money in the plate.

A little old lady in the back row shyly raised her hand. The pastor asked her to come to the front. Slowly she made her way forward. He told her how wonderful her gift was and gratefully asked her to pick out three hymns. Her eyes brightened. She looked over the congregation, pointed and said: "I'll take him and him and him"

St JOHN'S SHOULDER BAGS

Don't be stuck with your old 'on-its-last-legs' carry bag which might not 'carry' for much longer! The parish has a stock of durable shoulder bags with the parish 'church' logo printed on them. Useful to keep your 'goodies' together, they can carry lots of different things and will manage A4 sized files! They are available from Helen in the office at an excellent price of R40.



HOW TO SURVIVE A HEART ATTACK WHEN ALONE

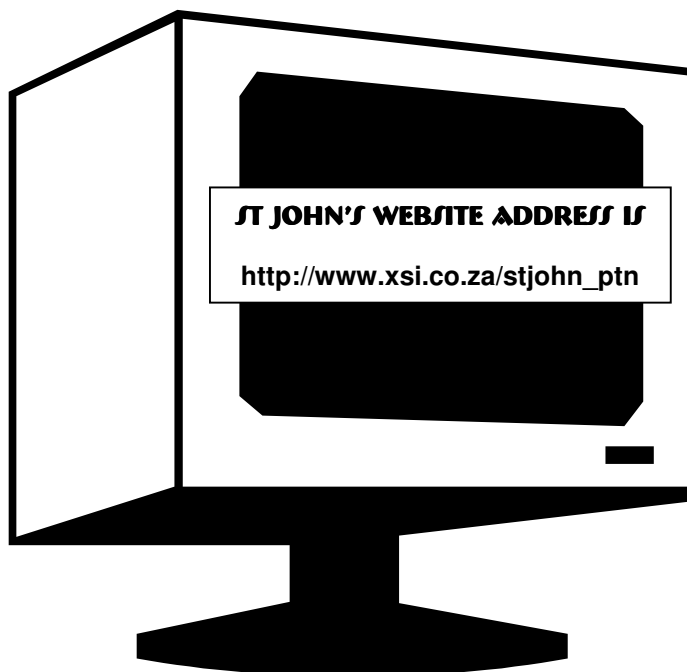
LUISE JOUBERT

Let's say it's 6:15 p.m. and you're driving home (alone of course), after an unusually hard day. You're really tired, upset and frustrated. Suddenly you start experiencing severe pain in your chest that starts to radiate out into your arm and up into your jaw. You are only about five miles from the hospital nearest your home; unfortunately you don't know if you'll be able to make it that far. What can you do? You've been trained in CPR but the guy that taught the course neglected to tell you how to perform it on yourself. Since many people are alone when they suffer a heart attack, this article seemed to be in order. Without help, the person whose heart stops beating properly and who begins to feel faint, has only about 10 seconds left before losing consciousness. However, these victims can help themselves by coughing repeatedly and very vigorously. A deep breath should be taken before each cough. The cough must be deep and prolonged, as when producing sputum from deep inside the chest. And a cough must be repeated about every 2 seconds without letting up until help arrives, or until the heart is felt to be beating normally again. Deep breaths get oxygen into the lungs and coughing movements squeeze the heart and keep the blood circulating. The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it regain normal rhythm. In this way, heart attack victims can get to a hospital. Tell as many other people as possible about this, it could save their lives!

YOUR BRAND-NEW PARISH WEBSITE !!!

BARBARA McALPIN

No one is more surprised than I am that I have taken the job of looking after the Parish Website!. If you had asked me this time last year what my role was at St Johns, I would have replied without hesitation: "I'm a Sunday School teacher". Sunday School defined my life for pretty much 20 years, and I couldn't imagine doing anything else. However at the end of 2003 I felt burnt out, too old to continue and give the youngsters what they needed from me, and with the changes in the Sunday services I found myself becoming a "7-o'clocker". For almost 6 months I was lost, for the first time in 20+ years I had nothing to do in the life of the church. I knew there was a need for someone to up-date the website, but had no knowledge of how this was done. Then the company I work for decided I should be responsible for maintaining the new website they are designing, and that I should go on a course to learn about web design! God does indeed open doors for His work to prosper! So I chatted with Anthony, and between us we have come up with a new, and I hope, useful and informative design. The success or failure depends to a large extent on you, our congregation,



who I hope will keep us supplied with lots of information to make this website interesting, inspiring and entertaining. In this way we can reach many people, not only at St John's but all over the world. I look forward to a long and rewarding task!

One or two points to note: We will not publish personal contact details or addresses on the web – remember this is open to the WHOLE WORLD! We will rather give the parish office contacts and any enquiries will be re-routed from there. Anthony and I will edit what is published, so if you have

anything you feel will be of benefit to others (I am thinking here particularly of testimonies for our proposed Testimony page) don't be put off by thinking that you can't express yourself well in writing or your spelling isn't very good, or whatever. We will sort out those details, it's the content we need from you. You can send your contributions to Anthony at castled@iafrica.com or to me at mcAlpin@mweb.co.za, if you have e-mail.

Otherwise a written note put in my pigeonhole at the office is equally good - I am expert at interpreting all kinds of handwriting.

If you have any photos of the church or events that you think might be

nice for the website, please put them in my pigeonhole at church and I will scan them and return them the next Sunday. Or if you have digital photos, please e-mail them to me at BMcAlpin@revertex.co.za (the PC at home is too slow for downloading photos!)

I will announce the launch of the new website as soon as it is published, hopefully later in July. Then please will everyone who is able, log on and let us have all your thoughts, good and bad, so that we can make this truly OUR website.

HOW BEAUTIFUL IS GOD'S CREATION

Pastoral Letter of the KwaZulu-Natal Church Leaders' Group for World Environment Day, 5 June 2004

We live in a Province of great natural beauty and wide cultural diversity. In celebrating World Environment Day on 5 June 2004 we give thanks to God for our natural environment and for the legislation we now have that protects the environment.

Environmental degradation and its effects

However, we see growing signs of environmental degradation:

- ✘ The loss of precious topsoil which hampers food production;
- ✘ Many people living in unhealthy conditions, with lack of access to clean drinking water and inadequate sanitation;
- ✘ Industrial air pollution causing respiratory and other life-threatening diseases, particularly evident in the South Durban area;
- ✘ Dwindling indigenous forests, particularly on our coast;
- ✘ Destruction of the habitats of other species of flora and fauna;
- ✘ Changing weather patterns, accompanied by both floods and droughts.

And it is those who are poor who suffer most from the effects of the destruction of the environment.

Why is the environment being threatened?

While some people are genuinely unaware of their own impact on the environment, others are unconcerned. We acknowledge that the political violence that has torn our Province apart in the past has left deep scars on our people and the land itself. The struggle for power, human greed and selfishness continue to destroy much of our natural heritage. We recognize too that economic policies perpetuate the unequal distribution and ownership of natural resources and contribute to environmental destruction.

The response of the church

Our biblical heritage and theological traditions, our belief in God as creator and Jesus as redeemer of all life awaken us to our environmental responsibility. In rediscovering that care for the earth is central to our gospel message we are moved to a deep respect for the integrity of creation and all forms of life and a firm commitment to ensure the full human development of all people according to their inherent human dignity. As human beings it is important that we view ourselves as integral to the community of life. Our very survival depends on maintaining a healthy environment and protecting the biodiversity that maintains our ecosystem.

The need for environmental justice

During the apartheid years our prophetic voice was raised in support of the struggle for freedom. Now our struggle is also to liberate all of creation: to nurture and foster life and to resist the many forces that threaten it. In responding to the cry of those who are poor we must not be deaf to the cry of the earth.

With the high rate of HIV and AIDS in our Province now more than ever we need to promote a healthy environment, to enable the production of nutritious food to ensure food security for all. We have grave fears about the introduction of genetically engineered crops in our Province in terms of their safety for human consumption as well as their effects on the rest of creation, including the ability to grow healthy food crops.

Our mission of healing and reconciliation must include cleaning our polluted rivers, purifying the polluted air, and challenging the spirit of greed that seeks to dominate and threatens to destroy all that God has made. We need to ensure that the gifts of God are distributed justly. We recognize land as one of these gifts that has been entrusted to our care and responsible use.

Steps the church can take

As we observe World Environment Day there is much we can do to celebrate our environment and prevent its destruction. This includes:

- ✘ encouraging an appreciation and enjoyment of creation
- ✘ including environmental concerns in the celebration of our liturgy
- ✘ incorporating biblical teaching on the environment in our church education programmes
- ✘ conserving precious resources like water and promoting the reuse and recycling of resources generally
- ✘ encouraging the planting of indigenous trees and other indigenous vegetation
- ✘ ensuring responsible use of land, particularly our church land
- ✘ encouraging our congregations to read about and discuss local environmental issues
- ✘ collaborating with local environmental organisations that share this quest.

We are committed to taking our Christian responsibility towards the environment seriously and encourage you to do the same.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT ON TITHING AND COMMITTED LIVING

Below is an extract from the eulogy given at my maternal grandfather's funeral. He was an Anglican priest of the type described, in Port Elizabeth in the late 19th and early years of the 20th centuries. It's one view of perhaps why Anglicans don't have a culture of tithing and sacrificial giving!
Mary Allen

Let us think for a few moments of the English clergy of the Nineteenth Century. The bulk of them were the younger sons of the landed gentry or of the new-rich manufacturing families who were building up their own traditions. They had been educated at the great public schools, which in the Nineteenth Century reached their heyday, and at one or other of the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge. Though their education was nothing like as specialised or as thorough in theology as that, for instance, of the Roman clergy, it was infinitely broader, and in their culture and education, in the true sense of the word. They probably represented the best-educated ministry that any Church has ever produced at any stage of its history.

The majority of them were blessed with private means. Many possessed considerable fortunes, and while as Christians we deprecate the pursuit of money, we must recognise that, these men had no financial worries. They were able to be educated at no expense to the Church, and to receive a full and complete education, which was not skimmed or hurried in any way. Moreover they had not entered the Church with any hope of gain; they were never a burden to their parishes. In fact the burden was too little as it now appears. Above all they were men who were

above bribery and could stick to their opinions and beliefs without any fear of the consequences. Moreover, the influence of the Evangelical revival and then of the Oxford Movement had begun to affect those clergy of the latter part of the Nineteenth century. The hard-drinking, worldly parson of the Eighteenth century who believed in little or nothing was largely a thing of the past.

It is not surprising that such traditions and background produced an outstanding group of men whose strong and independent characters made rather to direct than to be directed. They were men brought up with the idea that they were there to serve others without fear or favour, and endowed with a strong sense of duty. They were men who frequently poured their private means into the Church. Brought up in an environment where everyone they met was a member of the Church of England, they were sure of their position and that the teaching of the Church of England was right and not to be apologised for. It is not surprising also that such men frequently spoiled the parishes, thinking that it was for the best. They got these parishes into the habit of not paying the priest's stipend and allowing the priest himself to act as provider and dispenser of all parish charities.

MY TESTIMONY

Carlo Gordon

I have been asked to share my testimony with everyone about how I have become a disciple of Jesus, our Saviour.

Well, it all started about last year sometime when I can say I was going through a change in my life, whereby friends were influencing me to believe that worldly things were more important than going to youth on Friday nights. But then, there were always people like Father John and Caroline who were encouraging me to become a server but I always thought that this type of "thing" was not for me, or I could not do that type of thing. At the beginning of this year, Father John invited me to come to a Server's braai and from that day, I never looked back. I started to read God's word and pray everyday. Today it is great to be a Server in God's house and also to go to youth on Friday nights. I would just like to thank Father John and Caroline for being a good support system and Andrew, for being a good friend and mentor and lastly, I would like to thank my mother for also playing a key role in bringing me back to God.

Lastly I would like to leave something with you from Proverbs Chapter 16 v3: "Commit to the Lord whatever you do and your plans will succeed". This verse has so much meaning for me because in trusting God, whatever your plans are, they will indeed be successful through Lord Jesus, our Saviour. Finally, don't let anyone hinder you from becoming close to Our Father.

A MESSAGE FROM JANE KUSTNER

Dear friends at St John's:

It is not long before I return to St Stephen's House in Oxford to continue my studies for the priesthood. In the 6 weeks I have spent with you, you have welcomed me with open arms and hearts - making me feel part of your family. I feel privileged that you let me loose on your congregation - showing great trust in someone you did not know. During my time with you I have interviewed a number of members of your church about its work and worship. I have listened to their stories, I have visited townships, hospitals and leafy suburbs and I have thoroughly enjoyed myself so I hope that my feedback is a useful contribution to the growth of the church.

You allowed me to preach to you about St Martha and St Mary and you shared your plans for developing the vital work with victims of AIDS, both sufferers and families; this is an example of St Martha and St Mary in action in a powerful way! Thank you for your faith in God, your passionate and lively worship and generous hospitality. When I return to the dreaming spires of Oxford I shall miss the mountains of Africa. Next June I shall be ordained deacon and then spend 3 years as a curate before ordination to the priesthood in 2008. I do not know what God has in store for me but wherever he sends me there will always be a piece of my heart in Africa.
Ngiyabonga, Thank you, Dankie