THE EPISTLE

The Anglican Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf
St. Paul’s Anglican Cathedral, Nicosia

Volume 1 / Issue 1 (Michaelmas 2016)
WHO’S WHO AT ST PAUL’S

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Parish Office: (Monday-Friday 9am-11am) 22 445221

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PLEASE NOTE Dean Jeremy’s day off each week is Friday
Revd. Kent’s day off each week is Thursday
Kent Middleton has more Christian names than I do but I'm proud that my first is Michael. Thank you, Fr Kent, for asking me to write for the magazine of St Paul’s Cathedral Nicosia as it is relaunched - at Michaelmas.

Michael is a saint, but an angel-saint; indeed an archangel. Most people bear the name of a saint who was human and mortal, but we Michaels, along with a chosen few Raphaels and Gabriels, are invited, by the name we carry, to enter imaginatively into the heavenly realms. “Therefore with angels and archangels,” we say with particular affinity in the eucharistic prayer every time the eucharist is celebrated.

Talk of angels is talk of the outpouring of the presence and glory of God. There have been and are religions whose understanding of God is of a remote being, by definition impossibly different from us, and not only different but distant. But that’s not how the Christian faith has come to know God. From the Hospitality of Abraham (who with Sarah entertained angels unawares) through Jacob’s Ladder (“angels of God ascending and descending”) to the miraculous deliverance from prison of St Peter (“suddenly the angel of the Lord stood there and the cell was filled with light”), we sense that God, as it were, just can’t help outpouring himself, communicating with us, being alongside us and for us. In the beginning was the Word, meaning “God speaking himself”, and the Word became as humanity is, where humanity is: here. In Jesus Christ the Son we have seen, and see, the glory of the Father. So the heavenly realm touches the earthly realm, and its light – the light of God-in-Christ - pervades us, if we do but let it.
Talk of angels is symbolic of that touching and transforming of the things of this life by the things of eternal life. That touching is hope. The poem *In No Strange Land* was written by Francis Thompson in the 1880s. His life was extreme: the son of a doctor, he became a drug addict and rough sleeper and died of tuberculosis in his forties. Out of his extremity, he grasped and celebrated the core of Christian revelation.

*O world invisible, we view thee,*
*O world intangible, we touch thee,*
*O world unknowable, we know thee,*
*Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!*

Does the fish soar to find the ocean,
The eagle plunge to find the air –
That we ask of the stars in motion
If they have rumour of thee there?

Not where the wheeling systems darken
And our benumbed conceiving soars:
The drift of pinions (would we hearken)
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

*The angels keep their ancient places:*  
*Turn but a stone, and start a wing.*
*Tis ye, tis your estranged faces*
*That miss the many-splendoured thing.*

But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)  
*Cry! – and upon thy so sore loss*  
*Shall shine the traffic of Jacob’s Ladder –*
*Pitched betwixt heaven and Charing Cross.*

*Yea, in the night, my soul, my Daughter,*
*Cry! – clinging heaven by the hems;*
*And lo! Christ walking on the water*
*Not of Gennesareth, but Thames.*

+ Michael Cyprus & the Gulf
The Day of Saint Michael the Archangel, also known as Michaelmas, is an important feast day in the liturgical calendar. The Archangel Michael has enjoyed a surprising prominence in all three of the great world religions of the West—Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. It was a day of particular importance among the feast days of the liturgical calendar of the Medieval Christian church, thereby obtaining the common name of Michaelmas, where ordinations often take place in the Anglican Church. Of the three Archangels mentioned in the canonical writings none has enjoyed more popularity or had as many Churches and Chapels dedicated to him, as Archangel Michael. His popularity and presence in the mystical dimension of the human psyche eventually forced the Roman Catholic Church to include him in their theology as a Saint.

The legends including him in the Christian tradition stems primarily from the story of his fight with the dragon in the Book of the Revelation of St John. "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. And there was a war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was there a place for them found any more in heaven."

Many of the legends about St. Michael the Archangel relate to the mystery of the Holy Grail and the tradition of the Cathars, which flourished in the area of France from which these stories sprang. Wolfram Von Eschenbach's Grail romance is one that brings together most effectively the mythical imagery related to Michael. In the War in heaven, the Archangel Michael, brandishing his sword, strikes an emerald out of the crown of the Devil. It falls to earth, and from this one great emerald is fashioned the Holy Grail. According to a similar French legend, this same Holy Grail was guarded by the Cathars, its custodian being Esclaremonde, the Countess of Foix. Throughout history, the Devil and his archons strive to retrieve the emerald for his crown and to destroy its guardians. To keep it safe from the human minions of the Archon, St Michael strikes the top of Montsegur with his sword. A great cleft opens in the rock, into which Esclaremonde casts the Grail, and which closes over it to keep it from harm or theft. The story recounts that after her death her Cathar friends secretly buried her in the same place where the Grail lay, that she might guard it even in her death. The legend goes on to foretell that one day she will awaken from death and bring the Grail back with her.
One ancient Biblical Text, not part of the canon of Scripture is attributed to Enoch, Noah’s great-grandfather who describes this role of the Archangel Michael: "The holy Michael, another holy angel, one of the great holy ones, was sent to raise me up. And when he raised me, my spirit returned, for I was incapable of enduring this vision of violence, its agitation, and the concussion of heaven."

Such an ascent and raising up is again described in the Sufi story, Mohammed in the Golden Valley: "Over against the valley I saw an Angel in meditation, perfect in Majesty, Glory and Beauty. When he saw me he called me to him. When I had come close I asked, ‘What is thy name?’ He said, ‘Michael. I am the greatest of the Angels. Whatever difficulty thou conceivest, question me; whatever thou desirest, ask of me.’ I said to him, ‘To come hither have I undergone many toils and sufferings. But my purpose was this: to attain to gnosis and the vision of Truth. Show me the direction that leads to Him, so that perhaps I may attain the goal of my desire, and receive a portion of His universal Grace.’ Then that Angel took me by the hand, he made me enter and led me through so many veils of light that the universe I saw had nothing in common with everything I had previously seen in these worlds." (Avicenna)

In both of the preceding stories, St. Michael assists the supplicant in rising towards transcendence and union with the Light. There is a particular direction of the soul that leads to our transcendent interaction with angels and archangels. Angels and archangels are the messengers and servers of the ineffable greatness that transcends human intellect and desire, so their interaction focuses on the spiritual dimension of life and they accompany those who direct themselves towards the highest divinity. The image of St. Michael with the sword and scales symbolically shows us his role in aiding us in transcending the clash of opposites in the lower worlds to achieve the unifying experience of God. The sword is double-edged, dividing the world into a duality of opposites, the right and the left, light and darkness, good and evil, yet the hilt by which he holds the sword ends with a perfect orb for its pommel, a symbol of perfect unity and transcendence of the opposites. As the archetypal warrior and defender, from what does St. Michael defend us? The name Michael is the Hebrew for "likeness of God." His name is a reflection of that Divine Light to which our own divine spark is also akin. Michael is our guide and guardian back to the Light from which we came. Archangel Michael can defend us from the spiritual evils of the midst as we continue on our long journey.

May St. Michael's strong hand uplift us and guard us in justice and strength.

The Very Reverend Jeremy Crocker
Dear friends,

Many of you already know that I belong to a monastic community however, some might be wondering what it means to live as an Oblate of this particular Community. On Tuesday, 6 October 2015, I made my formal and public Oblation within the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield, West Yorkshire.

This monastic order is very close to my heart, as they were very involved in South Africa in previous years. The CR Fathers built many of our church schools, funded our seminary, served as university Chaplains, helped out during parish interregnums, and were actively involved in the fight against Apartheid.

It has been for me a nine year discernment process to get to this point of commitment. At first I thought God was calling me to full-time religious life, but through prayer and the counsel of others I came to discern this calling to be a parish priest living out a religious life within the parish context.

The CR Oblates adopt a Rule of Life that governs the daily rhythm of praying the Offices, participating in the Eucharist, observing a Eucharistic and Lenten fast, setting aside time for contemplative prayer and Bible study, making use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession), giving of alms, and making an annual retreat within the monastery.

At all times, Oblates are to remember that living this Rule is part of their witness to Christ within the world.

CR Oblates are also required to take upon themselves the monastic vows of celibacy, poverty, and obedience.

So what does it mean to be an Oblate of the Community of the Resurrection?

Just as brethren of the Community through their dedication to the Resurrection are called specifically to public, prophetic witness to the Christian hope of the Kingdom, so too the Oblates commit themselves to offer in social and missionary concern the fruits of their life, prayer and worship to the Father, that they may proclaim the world made new in Christ.
In the gospel we are called to live under the authority of Christ. Oblates work together to build up a common life in the various communities, groups and families to which they belong.

**The vow of celibacy**

Some God calls to the celibate state. This is a gift from God in which those who are so called are to follow Christ for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Through the consecration of their celibacy they seek to follow the Lamb with an undivided heart and to look with a single eye to God’s glory, seeking His will in all things. Those therefore who seek to be celibate for the sake of Christ and the Gospel are not choosing a life of self-concern or of isolation, but are seeking rather to build community and life in the body of Christ.

**The vow of poverty**

The Oblates of the Community are called to a stewardship which witnesses to our dependence on God. Such voluntary poverty does not imply contempt for the present world, but a transcending of it in anticipation of the world to come. As a reminder of their desire to live simply at all times, the Oblates have a rule of self-denial for Fridays and in Lent. They observe the Eucharistic fast and the church’s days of fasting, and abstinence according to conscience. They are to give the Superior or his representative an annual general account of their income and expenditure and to give alms according to their means.

**The vow of obedience**

Obedience is an essential part of the following of Christ, who came not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. The Oblates make their oblation in the same spirit of obedience to the will of God that they may uphold His honour and proclaim the dominion of His majesty. They shall seek to respond generously to those who have authority over them.

Please pray for me as I continue to strive to live out God’s call upon my life.

May God bless you, as you continue to be a blessing to others.

The Reverend Father Kent Middleton, Obl CR
WEEKLY SERVICES

SUNDAY
  0930 : Holy Eucharist
        (Sunday School in the Hall)
  1800 : Evening Prayer (BCP)

MONDAY/TUESDAY/THURSDAY/FRIDAY
  0830 : Morning Prayer

MONDAY/WEDNESDAY/FRIDAY
  1630 : Evening Prayer

WEDNESDAY
  1030 : Holy Eucharist

SATURDAY
  1000 – 1200
       Bookshop and Thrift Shop Open

FIRST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH
  0930 : Guild of St Raphael
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| Harvest Sunday  
10am Eucharist  
12.30pm Harvest Lunch  
6pm Evensong | 9.30am (Guild of St Raphael) | 7.30pm WFG Quiz Night | 7-9pm Alpha | | | |
| **09** | **10** | **11** | **12** | **13** | **14** | **15** |
| 9.30am Eucharist  
6pm Evensong | | | | | | 7-9pm Alpha |
| **16** | **17** | **18** | **19** | **20** | **21** | **22** |
| 9.30am Eucharist  
6pm Confirmation | | | | | | 2.30pm-5pm Car Boot Sale |
| **23** | **24** | **25** | **26** | **27** | **28** | **29** |
| Bible Sunday  
9.30am Eucharist  
6pm Evensong | | | | | | 7-9pm Alpha |
| **30** | **31** | | | | | |
| 9.30am Eucharist  
6pm Evensong | | | | | | 7-9pm Alpha |

*** WFG = Women’s Friendship
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HARVEST FESTIVAL

The Alpha Course seeks to introduce the basics of the Christian faith through a series of talks and discussions. It is a wonderful opportunity to explore, with others, the meaning of life.

Please let the Cathedral Office know if you would like to attend this course.

stpauls@spidernet.com.cy
(tel) 22 445221

LIFE IS WORTH EXPLORING

St Paul’s and NIC

This course is free and will include light refreshments

In St Paul’s Cathedral Church Hall

3 October 2016 – 5 December 2016
Every Monday: 7pm – 9pm

3 October
LIFE
Is this it?

10 October
JESUS & CROSS
Who is Jesus and why did He die?

17 October
WORD
Why and How do I read the Bible?

24 October
PRAYER
Why & How do I pray?

31 October
FALL
How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?

7 November
SPIRIT
Who is the Holy Spirit & what does He do?

14 November
FAITH
How can I have faith?

21 November
FOLLOW
How does God guide us?

28 November
EVIL
How can I resist evil?

5 December
HEALING
Does God heal today?

12 December
CHURCH
What about the Church and telling others?
PRAYER REQUESTS

Please remember in your daily prayers those in our Cathedral Community who have asked for our intercessions:


Pray also for our Prayer Partners:

St Christopher’s Cathedral, Bahrain: together with the Dean, The Very Revd. Christopher Butt, and all the faithful.

St Andrew’s Cathedral, Thika: together with the Provost, Father Joseph, and all the faithful.
Within our Diocesan Prayer Calendar please pray for:

23 – 29 October: St John the Evangelist, Deryneia

“Dear God, we thank you for your presence in our worship, fellowship, and service. Please use us, each day, to build your Kingdom; that your name might be glorified and that many would come to know and serve you in this place; through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

30 October – 5 November: St Luke, Ras Al Khaimah

“God our Father in Heaven, pour out your Spirit upon us that we may bear witness to your love to all people of Ras Al Khaimah. Amen.”

6 – 12 November: Mission to Seafarers, Dubai

“We thank God for His faithfulness towards and protection of seafarers who endure a stressful and dangerous life as they seek to provide for their families.”

13 – 19 November: The Diocesan Retreat Ministry

“Lord, we give you thanks for every individual who has heard and responded to your voice through the Retreats Ministry. May your Spirit continue to resource your people in this Diocese and Province to live and work for your praise and glory.”

20 – 26 November: Sovereign Base Areas of Cyprus

“Almighty God, protect all who serve in H M Forces and the UN; strengthen them in danger and temptation; give them courage and loyalty, that they may remain true to the highest traditions of their profession; and keep them steadfast when faced with the perils of action in war. Amen.”
Three new priests and a new deacon were ordained at St. Paul’s Cathedral, Nicosia on Saturday 25 June 2016.

The Revd. Geoff Graham (priest)
*St Helena, Larnaca*

The Revd. Christine Goldsmith (priest)
*St Barnabas, Limassol*

The Revd. Kent Middleton (priest)
*St Paul’s Cathedral, Nicosia*

The Revd. Harry Ching (deacon)
*St Mark, Famagusta*
During the month of June, the Cathedral hosted the service, **Songs of Praise**. Join us on **Sunday, 6 November 2016 at 6pm** for the next **Songs of Praise**.

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**Benedictine Retreat**

St Paul’s Anglican Cathedral  
Nicosia  
**Saturday, 5 November 2016**  
1.30pm – 5.30pm

Following the daily rhythm of Benedictine Spirituality, our Retreat will provide opportunity for prayer and reflection, along with the desire to listen to the gentle voice of God.

Please let the Cathedral Office know if you will be attending.  
sipaulo@spalnet.com.cy  
22 445 221

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Afternoon tea/coffee will be provided and following the Retreat, supper will be served in the Deanery.

Led by:  
The Revd. Kent Middleton, Obl CR  
(Oblate of the Community of the Resurrection)

**Seeking God**
The Dean taking a turn at leading the Sunday School

The Cathedral presenting its donation to the Room for Hope charity

The Cathedral recently hosted a very successful Pastoral Care Course led by Canon Paul Maybury and the Dean

The Cathedral presenting its donation to the Alkionides charity

The Cathedral presenting its donation to the Hope for Children charity

The Women’s Friendship Group annual Supper Party
REGULAR ACTIVITIES OF OR AT THE CHURCH DURING THE WEEK

SUNDAY

1500 to 1700 Nicosia Kids Church (Joint venture with NIC)  
Contact Person: Dean Jeremy 22 677897

MONDAY

1930 1st Monday of each month, St. Raphael Healing Service  
1600-1800 Counselling/Psychotherapy Sessions  
1600 to 1800 Afternoon Babies and Toddlers Group  
Contact Person: Dean Jeremy 22 677897

Sue Lartides 99 622504  
Cunera Socrates 96 744794

TUESDAY

1930 Home Group Bible Study  
Contact Person: Jeanne/Nigel 22 334090

WEDNESDAY

0930 to 1130 Babies and Toddlers Group  
0900-1300 Counselling/Psychotherapy Sessions  
1500 to 1600 Rainbows: 5-7 years  
1500 to 1630 Brownies: 7-10 years  
1630 to 1800 Guides: 10+ years  
1630 to 1800 (fortnightly) Senior Section  
Contact Person: Charlotte Creasy 97 772233  
Sue Lartides 99 622504  
Amanda Eliades 99 663553  
Ellie Hart 96 693884

THURSDAY

1830 to 1930 Choir Practice  
1515 & 1730 Slimming World in the Hall  
Contact Person: Tim Lewis 99 717086  
Christiana 95 124271

FRIDAY

1000 ‘Women of Worth’ Bible Study Group  
1800-2000 every last Friday of the month ‘Kids Movie Night’  
Contact Person: Linda Vrahimis 99 870654  
Dean Jeremy 22 677897

SATURDAY

0900-1400 Nicosia Kids Church (in the Cathedral and grounds)  
1000 to 1200 Book Shop and Thrift Shop  
Contact Person: Dean Jeremy 22 677897  
Agnete Cleave 22 675082