



## Charlie Ordained Priest

The weekend of 2 and 3 July was a very special one for our curate, the Revd Charlie Smith, and also a busy one. On the Saturday in a service held at All Saints Church, Kingston in the morning, Charlie was ordained priest and then, the following day, the Sunday at St Mary Magdalene in the evening, she presided over her first Eucharist, which was on the Feast of St Thomas the Apostle.

Having completed a year at RTM as a deacon - and how quickly that year seems to have gone by - Charlie, with her fellow ordinands, went into a retreat in the week running up to the ordination, in order to prepare for this important event in their lives. Originally, the Bishop of Kingston, the Rt Revd Richard Cheetham, had been due to ordain the candidates but he was unable to attend, owing to covid, so sent special greetings to them. The Bishop of Southwark, the Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, stepped in to take his place. Special prayers were said for two ordination candidates who sadly, were also unable to take part in the service because of illness.

Charlie read the first lesson which was from St Paul's letter to the Romans 8:31 with the oft quoted passage 'If God is for us who can be against us'. The sermon was given by the Rt Revd Rob Gillion who had led the ordinands retreat. Rob is rector of Christ Church Streatham, also an honorary

bishop in the Diocese and since 2020, Bishop for the Arts. Some of us in RTM will remember when Rob was the vicar at St Matthias in the 1980s and having had a theatrical career before he became a priest was noted for using acting and mime to spread the teachings of Christ. In his sermon he urged the ordinands to love the church universal, and the body of Christ, and concluded by saying that 'God has called you to joy. Enjoy the priesthood'. Finally the ordinands knelt in turn before the Bishop for the laying on of hands both by him and by the priests connected with them including in Charlie's case Canon Wilma Roest.

On the Sunday at an evening service in St Mary Magdalene, Charlie celebrated her first eucharist as a priest. This was a real privilege for the congregation to share in and many people were in church from across the team. In accordance with tradition, during the dismissal hymn which was 'Tell Out My Soul, the



*Charlie, Wilma and Bishop Christopher after the Ordination Service*  
Revd Canon Wilma Roest

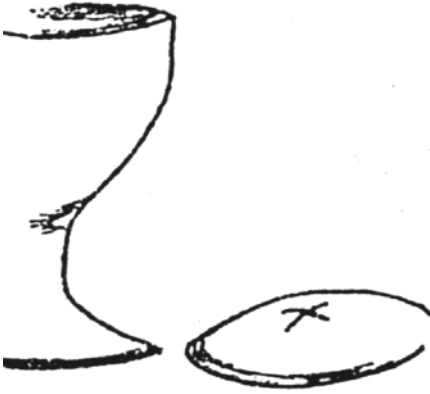
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# Reflections of a Fledgling Priest

by Revd Charlie Smith



I set out to reflect on my experience of priesthood thus far but, to be perfectly frank, it's not easy to put into words. I feel the need to pen it in. I can rather see why Jesus opted for a myriad of different metaphors and similes and parables for the Kingdom of God.

So, then, I will follow the example of my Lord, and give you several similes of my experience of priestly ministry so far in the hopes that together they build up picture enough.

## Deep breath

Priestly ministry is like...breathing more deeply than I ever have before.

During the first communion at which I presided I had the sensation of breathing impossibly deeply, as if air was flooding my whole body, and as though there were more air outside of me than I could ever hope to inhale.

My experience of priestly ministry, thus far, has been one of simultaneous fulfilment and longing. I have felt called to ordained ministry for half of my life so, in that sense, I do have a feeling of fulfilment associated with my ordination to the priesthood. I feel more fully myself than I ever have been before. However, there's no associated feeling of completeness. Instead, there's a feeling of vast horizons, both inviting and overwhelming.

Julian of Norwich writes about God as being the source and the satiation of all our desires: "I am the One who makes you desire," God tells Julian "I am the never-ending fulfilment of all true desires."

## Embodied

Priestly ministry is like... when someone reminds you that you have a tongue and you're very aware of it.

This sensation of breathing so deeply, and the whole experience of presiding, also makes me intensely aware of being embodied. I am aware of my feet and legs and arms and hands (and indeed, all the rest of my bodily bits.) I'm not sure how I feel about the concept of the priest *In persona Christi*, but when I preside, I am aware of my own body and of the body of Christ. It prompts me to reflect again and again on the miracle of the incarnation. My favourite of the prayers which priests say quietly during the Mass is as the water is added to the wine: "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in Christ's divinity who humbled himself to share in our humanity." I am aware of my humanity, and the glorious grace of God who emptied Godself and dwelt among us.

## Baby elephant

Priestly ministry is like... being a baby elephant, standing up for the first time.

I am doing something that I have never done before and, although my 'legs' are designed to take my weight I still feel a little unsteady.

The other day, I watched a video of a baby elephant being born in Chobe National Park. It turns out that, when that happens, the baby is surrounded by the whole herd until they can stand up.

At my first mass, I was so aware of being surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses: Our Lady, St Thomas, friends and family, everyone who was at the service, and everyone who didn't come and was praying. Thank you for your support as I find my feet in this new ministry. I am so grateful for you.

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## Charlie Ordained Priest - continued

greatness of the Lord, Charlie gave her mother some flowers and laid one on the high altar before the image of Mary, mother of priests. Team Talk congratulates Charlie on her ordination.

*Newly Ordained Priests with Bishop Christopher*  
Diocese of Southwark





# Welcare

The Richmond Team Ministry has been a generous supporter of the work of Welcare for many years and has kindly agreed to make a further grant from their Away Giving Scheme for the coming year

The mission of the charity is to work alongside parents in South London and East Surrey to give children secure and confident futures. This work is underpinned by its faith base and desire to respond to need with loving service. The support of the RTM and other Anglican churches in the Richmond & Barnes deanery and the Hampton deanery which supports the work to the south of the river Thames (in the diocese of London) enables the charity to continue to deliver a social worker managed, professional family support service for local children and families living in the London Borough of Richmond.

In this article Anna Khan who is CEO of Welcare and a worshipper at St Mary's Magdalene in Richmond provides an update on the work of the charity with children and families.

## Who We Are

Welcare is the diocese of Southwark's family support charity and it has been working with families in south London and East Surrey for 128 years. Today, Welcare provides practical and emotional support and advice for families with children up to the age of 13 who have experienced domestic abuse, relationship breakdown, behaviour problems and those with children who have special educational needs and disabilities.

## Responding to Need with Loving Service

Welcare works alongside parents and carers to give children secure and confident childhoods through providing individual one-to-one family support and accredited and evaluated group work programmes. All these interventions are designed to:

- Support families and children to develop resilience, confidence, and self-esteem
- Enable children and families to thrive within their communities
- Provide practical support and access to crisis grants and funding to meet immediate needs
- Work with families to prevent the need for statutory social work interventions
- Develop services to support children's emotional health and well-being



Welcare



The Staff of Welcare

Welcare

- Work collaboratively with schools to build children's confidence and self-esteem

## Meeting Evolving Local Need

Families have experienced unprecedented challenges during the last two years and Welcare staff who work in the borough of Richmond continue to receive an increased number of referrals where the stress of the Covid-19 pandemic, employment and health insecurity and fear of the cost of living crisis has exacerbated domestic abuse, parental conflict,

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## Welcare - continued



Welcare

mental health challenges and social isolation, particularly among first time mothers or those with children with special educational needs. Families who have never faced financial difficulties before are turning to Welcare for confidential advice about how to access emergency support. Welcare receives a grant of £2,500 from Richmond Charities enabling us to provide crisis payments for local families in need. Recent examples of grants include payment for a carpet and a man and a van to help a single parent and their children move into new social housing.

The Welcare team in Richmond are planning to relocate to space within the Castelnau Community Centre in Barnes during the autumn. This base will provide a confidential, safe space to meet parents and deliver group work programmes including the domestic abuse treatment and recovery programme, MySpace.

Readers of Team Talk will also be interested to know that Welcare staff work in partnership with local charity Skylarks based at the CrossWay Centre to deliver the accredited Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities Parenting programme. This is just one example of how Welcare works in partnership with other local charities and partner agencies to give skills and confidence to parents.

### Other Work within the Diocese

In other parts of London Welcare is working with Lambeth Youth Offending Team, with children who have been in trouble, and their siblings, helping them to rehabilitate and stay away from crime. This work was funded by the Youth Endowment Fund.

Family Support Worker, Nicola, supported a 12 year old boy and his family. The young boy had been arrested and subsequently excluded from school. The family needed support with education and housing. “We talk to the referring officer about the needs of the child and the family, and work from there”, said Nicola.

The Early Help Team had been involved as the children were out of school. “After the eldest child was excluded, Mum no longer wanted to send her youngest child to school alone. There were concerns of bullying, and she felt they wouldn’t be safe alone”, said Nicola. “We worked with Lambeth Children’s Services to find a suitable school for both boys – both have autism-spectrum-disorder, so they needed a specialist school.”

The family also faced issues with suitable housing. With both boys out of school, they were becoming frustrated at home, their behaviour was challenging, and their mother had become increasingly anxious.

Part of Welcare’s role involved identifying and coordinating various agencies to help meet the family’s needs. “As well as looking for schools, we were involved in ongoing communications with the family’s Housing Officer, we applied for a grant for a new cooker. For another family we applied for a Samaritan Grant from London Catalyst – most families don’t know what help is available. While working with a family we also connect them with the right organisations.”

### Responding with Generosity

Welcare is grateful for prayerful support and financial contributions. If you would like to support Welcare in its mission to support vulnerable children and families living in the Diocese, you can donate through the website at <https://welcare.org/getinvolved/donate/>

To sign up to the quarterly newsletter <https://welcare.org/news-listing/newsletter/> or, to hear more about Welcare’s work at [info@welcare.org](mailto:info@welcare.org) or call 020 7820 7910.

**welcare**  
*strengthening families since 1894*

# Goodbye to Peter and Thank You

*Peter Bowyer, the RTM Parish Architect recently retired from that post after many years of looking after our three churches, all architecturally distinguished – St Matthias and St John the Divine, both Grade 2 listed and St Mary Magdalene Grade 2\*. Team Talk spoke to Peter before he retired and asked him for some reflections on his long service to RTM.*

## How long had you been RTM Parish Architect when you retired?

37 years! I accepted the position following a meeting in 1985 with an interview panel comprising Canon Bruce Carpenter, David Gill, Eddie Carroll and Paul Velluet. I was still employed at the local architectural practice of Manning Clamp and Partners (both senior partners had been very involved with the Parish in their time), but when the major stonework repairs' contract at St Matthias took off a couple of years later, I left and set up on my own.

## What are the qualities that a parish architect needs to have (apart from a head for heights)?

Well, yes, a head for heights is essential, and considerable agility. At St Matthias, the 15-storey scaffolding did not have the double-railed balustrading and sheeting now required, and one felt distinctly vulnerable. I think the qualities are much the same as for any other client: empathy, ability to listen. You do need to get on with a much greater number of people, of course, endless committees (Parish, Diocesan and statutory bodies), and be respectful of the Church's mission. Endless patience also: private clients think "yesterday", church clients think "next year or so". Training in conservation is now 'de rigueur', but I think it important that church architects should be involved with the design of new buildings as well: the lessons of maintaining churches should be applied to new buildings, in my view - but that does imply a traditional approach to building, with a limited application in today's world. Church architects also need staying power: churches age slowly, and observation over a number of quinquennial periods is very helpful.



*View of St John the Divine church from Richmond Rail Bridge c1870*

LCF/2546 Richmond upon Thames Local Studies Library and Archive

## Has church bureaucracy e.g. the faculty system improved over the many years you have been parish architect?

The faculty system, with its Ecclesiastical Exemption from the Listed Building planning legislation, was devised to allow the Church to exercise control and care for its historic buildings and artefacts 'in house', with the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), comprising clergy (including the Archdeacon), and experts and representatives of the statutory consultees (Historic England, the Georgian Group, etc) to advise the Diocesan Chancellor. Sadly, now, these representatives are, or need to be, duplicated by national consultations, so one does wonder what is now the point of that Exemption. The Online Faculty System seems to divorce the architect from the bureaucratic process. (I used to submit the application to the DAC myself, on the Parish's behalf, so I knew what had been submitted, and what was happening.) On the other hand, online applications do mean that the days of huge bundles of paperwork being posted, in duplicate, and copied to various offices, are gone, though ease of delivery means that much more information can be submitted, and that does impose on the recipients the duty to open and study far more electronic files.

## Can you choose one favourite feature from each of the three churches and explain why?

Difficult...! St Matthias' was built largely as a unified whole, and the view along Friars Stile Road, with the Spire and West Front, is very photogenic in the sun. Internally, the church is rather over-powering: it needs a big congregation. But the view of the Chancel from the West end is very impressive, and the decision to leave open the heavy West doors and illuminate it at night was a good one.



*Nave and interior of St Matthias Church c1860*  
*Engraving by unknown artist*

LCF/2777 Richmond upon Thames Local Studies Library and Archive

St John's similarly, even though the conservation/redecoration of the Chancel escaped me, there is great potential, as there is with the Lady Chapel with better lighting. I enjoy the interior when sunlight pours through the South windows: that must have been so much more impressive before the offices were built next door.

And St Mary Magdalene? Clearly I might be biased here, but again it is to do with light: sunlight through the re-glazed windows; light reflected off the new Purbeck stone floor back up into the Nave ceiling timber work; and I

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## Goodbye to Peter and Thank You - continued

look forward to seeing the East end lighting when it finally gets the go-ahead: the austere stonework will be so much softer.

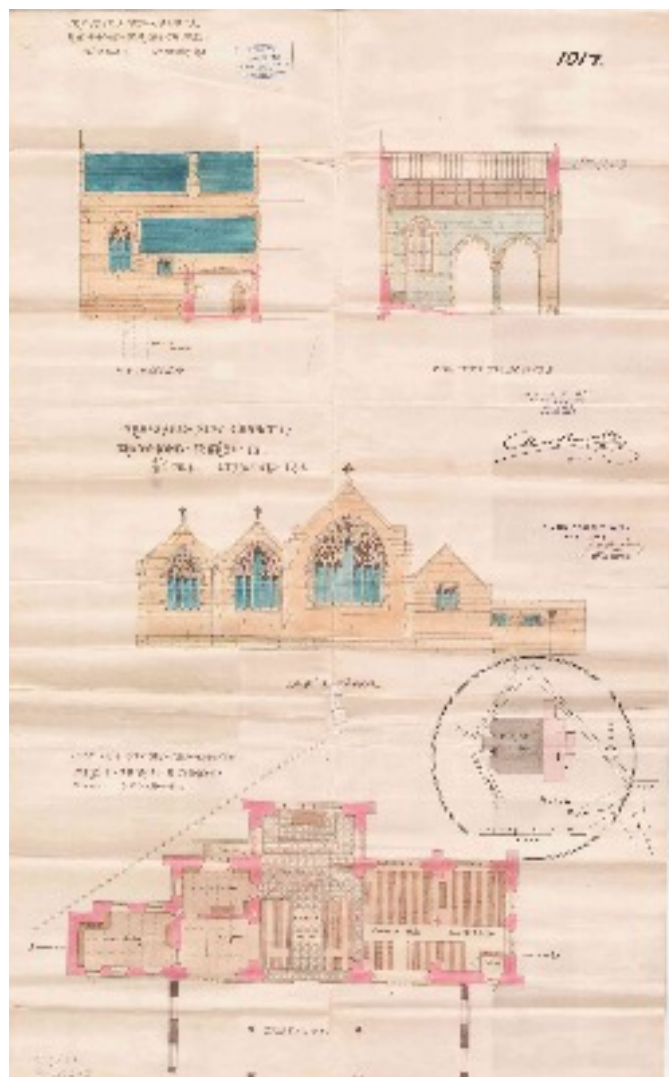
**You were very much involved in the research project for the 800th anniversary at St Mary Magdalene. What did you enjoy most about the work and researches?**

It was a very long time since I'd done any extensive research work, so it was good to get involved. I was monitoring the team – Elspeth Fearn and Ruth Jones - charged with researching the history of the church pre-1485, and given the challenges of sourcing ancient manuscripts, and then reading the Latin or Medieval English texts, I think we did pretty well. Sadly, we didn't find anything new in the early period, but a re-interpretation of the texts dating from the 1480's, combined with the archaeological work under the Nave floor, means I'm pretty convinced we proved that the pre-1485 church was under the Tudor building, as one might expect. We could probably have been able to attribute the design of the Tudor church to Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester from 1501-1527, but from 1485 a regular visitor to Richmond Palace as Principal Secretary, Lord Privy Seal and Chaplain to Henry VII - given time for further research, and more than a bit of luck. But, slightly out of period, the team proved the local historian AC Piper's account of the early history of the Parish Rooms to be inaccurate: that was satisfying.

**What will you be doing in your retirement and will you be keeping in touch with Richmond?**

Short-term, I still have professional commitments in SW London. But hopefully my regular trips down to Cornwall, and to Greece, will not be so rushed. I have to complete the refurbishment project on my house in Hereford, abandoned some 15 years ago when my father died, and family needs took over. A resumption of pottering around the UK as well. And then Hereford is a good centre for music and other cultural goings-on along the Marches: the Three Choirs Festival this year was in Hereford, for example. But, having worked in Richmond for nearly fifty years, and lived here on and off, the place is in my blood! I don't think of it particularly as "home", but it has provided me with many good friendships over the years, and that should be as good a reason as any to return, on the slightest of pretexts.

*We wish Peter all the very best for his retirement and thank him for all he has contributed to keeping and preserving our three beautiful churches for us now and for future generations of worshippers and visitors.*



*Plan of proposed new east end and chancel of St Mary Magdalene 1903, designed by G F Bodley  
PLA/07537 Richmond upon Thames Local Studies Library and Archive*



## Peter's Party

A special gathering was held at 6 pm on Saturday 25 June in St Mary Magdalene to say goodbye to Peter Bowyer as he retired from the post of Parish Architect. Friends from across the three churches came together for a very pleasant evening with refreshments, celebrating all that Peter had done for the Team over many years. Presented with thank-you gifts, Peter made a short speech reflecting on his time in Richmond and on being a parish architect. He had requested some musical entertainment if possible for the evening and the Dorman family duly obliged with a selection of pieces on various instruments, which were warmly received. Thanks go to Karl, his wife Amy and daughter Lilly for this little soiree which enriched the evening.

*Peter making his speech*  
Rev'd Canon Wilma Roest



# St Mary Magdalene Choir Visit to Maldon

by Julia Keddie

This was the second time the St Mary Magdalene choir has been invited to sing Evensong at the church of St Mary the Virgin, Maldon, famous for its salt, the Blackwater estuary, and a notable victory by the Vikings over Ethelred the Unready in 991, celebrated in the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Battle of Maldon*.

God allows us to be tested in this world and I am happy to report that we successfully passed the test of patience caused by the late arrival of the bus. On arrival we went straight into a short rehearsal with St Mary's choir, led by their Director of Music, Colin Baldy, ensuring we left plenty of time for the important task of sampling the amazing range of

homemade cakes that our hosts provided. Then came the service itself, and the always wonderful privilege of worshipping God through music. Karl and Barnaby got to try out the brand-new organ at St Mary's, while the joint choirs sang the Leighton responses, the Vaughan Williams Canticles in C, and *Saint-Saëns' setting of Ave Maria* before a small but appreciative congregation. Afterwards we made the interesting discovery that this church boasts a licensed bar for after service drinks. (A thought for St Mary Magdalene perhaps ...?)

After enjoying convivial conversation and the glorious views across the Estuary from the church yard it was time to return home with the sun setting behind us. A beautiful place to sing on a beautiful day. Many thanks to Wilma, Alex and Colin Baldy, for arranging everything.



Wilma & Colin Baldy, Director of Music, St Mary's Maldon  
Julia Keddie



The choirs relaxing after the service  
Julia Keddie

## Queen Elizabeth II - RIP

As this edition of Team Talk went to press we heard the sad news of the death of our gracious lady, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. We give thanks for her life, for her devoted service, fortitude, grace and deep Christian faith.

We pray for our new King, Charles III, as he begins his reign and assumes the great responsibilities of the monarchy.



*The Queen at the Coronation on June 2, 1953*  
Cecil Beaton/Royal Collection



Richmond  
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*St John the Divine*



*St Mary Magdalene*



*St Matthias*

## Our Churches