

**2003**

We are apt to think that busy busyness is a recent phenomenon and that long ago there were quieter times. But if we look at the gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry, particularly St. Mark's repetition of the phrase "and straightway" as events tumbled together, we realise that Our Lord had a pretty relentless time. How did He cope with so many demands being made on him as a teacher, healer and miracle worker?

There are many references to Jesus going off to a quiet place to pray. Jesus advised his disciples to withdraw to be with God and when at the home of the sisters Mark and Martha He praised Mary for having chosen "the better part" – sitting at his feet and resting in his presence.

Since 1981, here at BPC, we have had a monthly opportunity to do just that – rest in God's presence. Our Meditation Group is now in its 22<sup>nd</sup> year. We meet in the Children's Chapel from 8 pm to 9 pm on the third Monday of each month, except in August, and we are led by a different person each time. Thoughts, guidance, music and prayer, often in three sections, are interspersed with times of silence. At the end we acknowledge the fellowship we have experience in the silence by saying the Grace together.

This past year or so an interesting phenomenon had evolved. Each month there are more "outsiders" than there are members of BPC! Busy folk in ministry at other churches – PAs, Readers, etc. find in our church an oasis of quiet. They use phrases like ..... "this group has saved my sanity" ..... "coming here each month enables me to keep going" ..... "I'm so glad I found you" .....

If reading this has whetted your appetite, do come along. If you want two monthly doses of "letting go and letting God" you will be interested to know that a Julian Group (named after Mother Julian of Norwich, the famous 14<sup>th</sup> century mystic) is starting up at St. Luke's Vicarage, 20 Bromley Common.

**So that's monthly:**

**1<sup>st</sup> TUESDAY****8 – 9 pm****St. Luke's Vicarage****3<sup>rd</sup> TUESDAY****8 – 9 pm****Bromley Parish Church –****Children's Chapel (enter by the Tower door)**

'Drop thy still dews of quietness  
Till all our strivings cease.  
Take from our souls the strain and stress  
And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of thy peace.'

Why not GIVE PEACE A CHANCE this autumn?

*Margaret Thompson*

**The following reports are those used in the Harvest Festival**

**India (Personal Safety)**

Ever since I was born people have cared for me. I have been protected from harm and taught to keep myself safe. I am protected by their love and also by the laws which govern our lives in this country. In some countries it is hard to be safe and secure even when your parents love you.

In India, Christian Aid runs a centre called Sanlaap, which provides counselling, medical and legal help, education and training, rescue and shelter for women and children whose personal safety and human rights have been abused. It campaigns for women and children, makes people aware of the problems that exist and asks the government and legal system to help change things for the better. They lift the burdens of abuse and exploitation and helps women and children to flourish with hope and in safety.

**El-Salvador (water)**

In the United Kingdom we do not often suffer from the extremes of weather, hurricanes, tornadoes, blizzards and earthquakes are very rare. Our homes may lose a few roof tiles or have a garden fence blown down but most often we still have shelter, clean water, light, warmth and food.

In 2001 two huge earthquakes and several small ones hit El-Salvador. One in every six people lost their homes and 1,200 people were killed. CORDES, a Christian Aid project has worked since then to rebuild homes. The new homes are built to resist earthquake tremors and have lighter roofs, which will do less damage if they fall and also help collect water. Kitchens are outside the main home reducing the risk of fire and toilets are at a small distance from the house with hygienic drainage. Now they have built most of the houses they are helping to ensure clean water supplies, to recycle used water to irrigate crops and make families self sufficient in fuel, water and vegetables, They give people back hope and water for life.

**Sierra Leone (trust)**

It has been a long time since there has been a civil war in this country. Although we do have wars and terrorism they often seem a long way from home and people I know. I feel safe in my home, my street and my neighbourhood.

In Sierra Leone there was a civil war for more than 10 years. Twenty thousand people died and two million people were left homeless, many fled the country to safety. People did not know who to trust and found it hard to forgive what had happened and to build new lives. The Methodist Church of Sierra Leone runs a Peace and Civil Education programme, providing community workers to help villagers overcome fear and mistrust. They use role-play, drama and football to address issues such as forgiveness, peace and human rights and civil responsibilities. They help to start community projects such as bee keeping, tree planting and goat breeding where people work together and share the harvest. They are giving people back hope and trust.

**Egypt (food)**

It is unusual to have to leave your home suddenly, taking with you only what you are able to carry. It is even harder if your food usually comes from the land around your home. It is hard to imagine what it is like to have no food and nowhere to go.

There is still a civil war in Sudan and many people have left their homes and all they own and fled to Egypt. There are no refugee camps in Egypt so there is often nowhere to stay, no access to healthcare, employment or education. People are hungry, frightened and often ill. The Joint relief Ministry is a Christian organisation supported by the Church Mission Society. They run projects for refugees with money, help to register officially as refugees, skills to help them earn a living, medical care including care for terminally and mentally ill and victims of torture.

They are giving people hope and food.

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