

# Letters from the Churches

**T**here is a bird pole just outside the patio doors of the Manse and, I suppose like most people, we enjoy watching the birds as they feed. Regulars are a male blackbird, a collared dove and the occasional blue-tit, but by far the most frequent and prolific visitors are sparrows. Indeed we could rename 7, Humber View, Barton Upon Humber, DN18 5QZ 'Sparrow Haven'.

Sparrows are, in our human eyes, somewhat 'ordinary' garden birds, with dull brown plumage, 'two a penny' as we read in Matthew's Gospel Chapter 10 verse 29. 'Are not two sparrows sold for a penny...' but reading on we find Jesus continues 'Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father' showing us that in God's eyes sparrows are as significant as the rarer, more colourful species that are eagerly watched for, and recorded, at the nearby nature reserve, Waters' Edge. Jesus follows His remarks about sparrows by saying, 'And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.' Such attention to detail about you and me helps us to realise how much we mean to God...

Life on the bird pole can be quite frantic with birds pushing each other aside in order to access the nuts, fat and seed, not unlike the rush when the doors of a shop open at sale time! However for you and me there is a place, our perfect 'sparrow haven', where we never need to queue, push to the front or go short, a place of ready access and generous provision 24/7 right into eternity. If you would like to find that place contact me with your details and I will send you a free copy of 'Steps to peace with GOD' as an Easter 2009 gift because Jesus says to each of us, 'So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows'.

God bless, Gillian

*Reverend Gillian Belford*  
*01652 632148*

**S**t. George (whose Feast Day is April 23rd) is probably England's most successful immigrant. Although he is our Patron Saint, we hardly know any provable facts about him other than he was not English! It seems he died a martyr's death around the year 303 when Roman Emperor Diocletian was trying - and failing - to destroy Christianity. And that's about it. But of course, we all remember him as the knight who courageously slew the dragon, and rescued the princess from a grisly death.

The actual story of St. George and the Dragon dates back to the Middle Ages when the use of a dragon in literature or drama was commonly used to represent evil, so it's an excellent tale of good triumphing over evil. And such is the power of myth and legend, that he is not only the patron saint of England, but of at least six other countries and many organizations around the world, including the Scouting and Guide Movement.

Like St George, most of us too, have our own dragons to slay. Maybe there's something you've been dreading doing. Perhaps it's an addiction or a lifestyle habit you know you should conquer. Are you courageous enough to take on your dragon? The challenge for many right now is just to weather the financial storm that the world is going through.

I recently read that the Chinese language character for the word 'crisis' is the same as that for 'opportunities'. So, in every crisis there lies great opportunities to develop and better ourselves. That which is perceived as a crisis today could well furnish the beginnings of new things in our lives, but the foundation of that future has to be laid today. Jesus told a parable about wise and foolish builders. One built his house on foundations of sand, the other on rock. When the storms came only one house remained standing. He wasn't, of course, simply advocating sensible building practices as much as prompting his listeners then (and to readers now) to ask "on what is my life founded?" On the solid rock of faith in God? On a foundation of hope in the salvation Jesus offers?

If not, this is a good opportunity to rethink the basis of your life and to make the most important decision that you will ever make. Make Jesus Christ the Lord of your life and his word the firm foundation for that life. You will then be prepared for whatever comes your way. You will thus be prepared for all seasons, ready to meet all challenges and not be overwhelmed - just like St George in fact!

*Reverend John Girtchen*  
*01469 530357*