A Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration for the Life of

Canon John Oates

14th May 1930 - 25th May 2023

Friday 16th June 2023
at 2.30pm

St Bride's Church
Fleet Street
London EC4

RECTOR
The Revd Canon Dr Alison Joyce

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC
Robert Jones

ORGANIST
Matthew Morley

CHOIR
The Choir of St Bride's

SOLOIST
Claire Seaton

HEAD OF FINANCE & FUNDRAISING
James Irving

Organ

Fidelis – Percy Whitlock

Welcome & Opening Prayer

The Rector

Hymn

All things bright and beautiful

All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful,
the Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,
each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colours,
He made their tiny wings.

The purple-headed mountain,
the river running by,
the sunset, and the morning
that brightens up the sky.

The cold wind in the winter,
the pleasant summer sun,
the ripe fruits in the garden,
He made them every one.

First Reading

My faith – John Oates
Read by Jeremy Oates

I have many doubts about the Church which is not surprising since it is made up of people like me and you, with all our frailties. I was baptised in a Roman Catholic Church and Ordained Priest in an Anglican Cathedral. I love both Churches and long for the end of the pride and prejudice which keeps them apart.

I have no such doubts about God.

From my earliest remembrances, I have never felt alone nor doubted the Presence of God. Through schooldays, teenage, National Service, through the High Seas to Australia and through my entire life, he has been there, shielding me when I got things wrong; strengthening me when I looked like getting things right.

The Psalmist, writing over two thousand five hundred years ago, summed it up to perfection:-

"Whither shall I go then from thy Spirit
And whither shall I go then from thy presence.
If I climb up into Heaven, thou art there;
If I go down to Hell, thou art there also.
If I take the Wings of the Morning,
And remain in the uttermost parts of the Sea,
Even there also shall thy hand lead me
And thy right hand shall hold me"

Faith in the last ditch asserts; I would rather be wrong with God than right with anyone else.

Choir

I was glad – Charles Hubert Hastings Parry

Second Reading

Miss me, but let me go – Betty Millar
Read by Rebecca Luzi (née Oates)

When I come to the end of the road,
and the sun has set for me,
I want no rites in gloom-filled rooms,
why cry for a soul set free?
Miss me a little - but not too long,
and not with your head bowed low;
remember the love that we once shared
miss me - but let me go.
For this is a journey that we all must take,
and each must go alone.
It's all a part of the Master's plan,
a step on the road to home.
When you are lonely and sick at heart,
go to the friends we know,
and busy your sorrows in doing good deeds.
Miss me - but let me go.

Choir

Gaelic blessing – John Rutter

Third Reading

I Corinthians 13

Read by The Right Revd Christopher Lowson

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Choir

Laudate dominum – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Fourth Reading

The dash poem – Linda Ellis
Read by Alistair Oates

I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend.
He referred to the dates on his tombstone from the beginning... to the end.
He noted that first came his date of birth and spoke the following date with tears, 1930-2023
But he said what mattered most of all
Was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time that he spent alive on earth...
And now only those who loved him know what that little line is worth.
For it matters not, how much we own; the cars..the house..the cash,
What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.
So think about this long and hard - are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left, that can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough to consider what's true and real,
And always try to understand the way other people feel.
And be less quick to anger, and show appreciation more
And love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect, and more often wear a smile...
Remembering that this special dash might only last a little while.
So, when your eulogy's being read with your life's actions to rehash...
Would you be proud of the things they say?
And about how you spent your dash?

Hymn

Dear Lord and Father of mankind

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
forgive our foolish ways;
re-clothe us in our rightful mind,
in purer lives thy service find,
in deeper reverence praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard,
beside the Syrian sea,
the gracious calling of the Lord,
let us, like them, without a word
rise up and follow thee.

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.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still small voice of calm.

Fifth Reading

O Christ, the light of Heaven from *Shorter Morning and Evening Prayer*
Read by Jonathan Oates

O Christ, the Light of heaven
and of the world true Light,
You come in all your radiance
to cleave the web of night.

May what is false within us
before your truth give way,
that we may live untroubled,
with quiet hearts this day.

May steadfast faith sustain us,
and hope made firm with you;
the love that we have wasted.
O God of love, renew.

Blest Trinity we praise you
in whom our quest will cease;
keep us with you for ever
in happiness and peace.

Tribute

from the Zongoro Old School Association, Zimbabwe
Read by Jonathan Oates

Choir

What a wonderful world – Bob Thiele & George David Weiss
arr. Robert Jones

Address

The Rector

Hymn

Make me a channel of your peace

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.

Oh, Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood, as to understand,
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, only light;
and where there's sadness, ever joy.

Oh, Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood, as to understand,
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace.
It is pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving to all men that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Prayers
The Right Revd Christopher Lowson

Solo
Ave Maria – Johann Sebastian Bach/Charles Gounod

Blessing
The Rector

Organ Voluntary
Nun danket alle Gott op 65, no 59 – Sigfrid Karg-Elert

The family would be delighted if you would join them
in remembering John at a reception after the service at
St Bride's Institute, just around the corner in Bride Lane.

Donations in John's memory can be made to the Princess Alice Hospice which provided end of life care for both John and our mother Sylvia. The peaceful environment and love and care of their staff were an invaluable support to both our parents and our entire family.

Donations can be made online at www.pah.org. Please click the donate button and fill in John's name and postcode KT2 5ST or send cheques to Princess Alice Hospital, West End Lane, Esher KT10 8NA.

There will be a retiring collection towards the work of St Bride's Church.

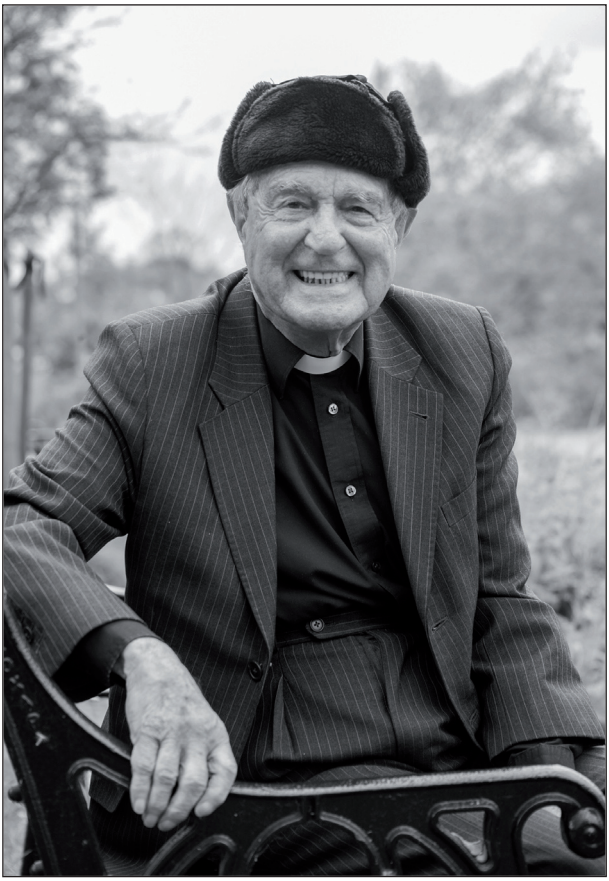

Photo: Lucinda Douglas-Menzies

ST BRIDE'S CHURCH

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