**Bertie interviews Mary Cassidy re the Quiet Day**

Bertie: I don’t think I need to introduce you, Mary … you’ve been busy in the parish longer than I have … PCC Secretary, PMC leader, server… and now organising a Quiet Day on Tuesday 16th November! I have some questions about that!

Mary: I’m very happy to answer questions

Bertie: Important things first – will there be cheese?

Mary: That will depend on the contents of the packed lunches people bring with them! Biscuits or pastries will be served with the coffee at the start, but lunch is the responsibility of each individual.

Bertie: Hmm, no cheese … disappointing! Where will lunch be eaten? (I’ll need to choose a good spot … so I can help keep things tidy, you know!)

Mary: The Rapsey Room and the Carpenter Room over in the Parish Rooms will be available for lunch, or maybe a bench in the churchyard. Hot drinks can be made in the kitchen.

Bertie: So then, what *is* a Quiet Day? Most of my days are quiet, unless a visitor brings a dog in.

Mary: This is a bit more intentional than a lack of company! Each person is choosing to set aside a chunk of time (yes, TIME, not cheese) to be inwardly still and quiet with God. That doesn’t mean just sitting gazing into space. There will be times for communal prayer and reflection, ideas for activities to occupy the hands, suggested points to ponder… just not much talking!

Bertie: So you mean everyone has to be really quiet?

Mary: As you may have seen from the poster, our theme is a verse from Psalm 46: “Be still and know that I am God”.

“Excessive noise and visual stimulation make it hard [for us to find God] in the midst of our moments. Yet [He] is always nearby – as near as a whispered prayer. … When [we] shut out distractions to focus only on [Him, He] awakens our souls to the joy of [His] presence. This increases our love for [Him] and helps [us] stay spiritually alert.” ( from *Jesus always: embracing joy in His* *presence*, by Sarah Young).

We hope that through this Quiet Day people will discover (maybe not for the first time) that stilling body and soul enables us to hear more clearly that “still small voice of calm” from God and focus on it. Silence is nothing to fear – every good relationship grows through just BEING together as well as talking and singing and doing things together!

Bertie: But I can sit comfortably in my cosy mouse hole and focus on God and not have to come out and sit on a hard pew…

Mary: Indeed! BUT, if you are anything like me you would find so many things that need to be done (“I’ll just pop the washing in before I settle down..”, “I’d better see who’s at the door – the girls may be expecting a parcel” , “Just look at that cobweb!” …, etc) that the day slips away with very little stillness and not much awareness of, let alone focus on, God.

Bertie: Surely the hard pews are a distraction?

Mary: Anything can turn into a distraction, believe me! The pews need not be – people can bring a cushion or sit on a kneeler, and, as I said already, we won’t all be sitting in one place all day! Listening for God’s voice and drawing near to Him through a walk in the churchyard (or inside the church) will be an option too!

Bertie: Can people just turn up on the day and join in?

Mary: We need to know how many people are coming so that we can be sure to have enough coffee and tea, cups and biscuits, as well as enough programmes, craft and prayer resources for everyone. So no, people shouldn’t just turn up without booking.

Bertie: How do they book?

Mary: A simple email to me (mary.cassidy@spauls.org.uk ) is all that is needed. B**y midday** on **Saturday 13th November,** please, so that we can do the necessary shopping and copying.