

## **All Saints Church – article in May 2016 Village Views (amended version)**

The church at East Garston has welcomed the return of two sisters, who spent much of their time as young teenagers, playing a prominent part in church festivals, services and events. Many will recall the Victorian Christingle production celebrating 125 years of the formation of The Children's Society, the girls singing Silent Night on Radio Berkshire's broadcast of our Nativity and many other occasions.

So it was such a pleasure when Jessica-May and Mollie now in their twenties, approached The Revd Martin Cawte to discuss the question of them being baptised and confirmed. On Easter Eve, 26<sup>th</sup> March at Reading Minster church, in a most memorable service, the Rt Revd Andrew Proud, Bishop of Reading, baptised and confirmed Jessica-May and Mollie along with candidates from different parishes, ages and ethnic backgrounds. Clergy presented their candidates and Martin was chosen to read the Gospel. The impact on all (including the congregation) of the ceremonial, the processions, the splendid robes and the beautiful candlelit church on this most significant point in the church's calendar will long be remembered.

The next morning - Easter Day, at our East Garston Holy Communion service, Jessica and Mollie took their First Communion. They were presented with their baptism certificate and their study book, Faith Confirmed, by The Venerable Christine Allsopp who officiated at the service. The congregation were strong in their support for the step that Jess and Mollie had bravely undertaken. There are now signs in the parish that others might follow suit.

It was wonderful to see and use once again our historic 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century chalices which had been withdrawn specially for the occasion from the Treasury at Christ Church Cathedral. The church was beautifully decorated for the service and we thank those who prepared the flower arrangements. Thanks also to Vikki Brooks who made and distributed posies for families to lay at the door of the tomb in the Easter Garden in the churchyard. It was a pity that the rain put a slight dampener on this ceremony which was led by Christine after the service.

**Bob Briant**