

# The Pilgrim

St Laurence's Parish Magazine, July Edition 2019



## Celebrating 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion & Confirmation

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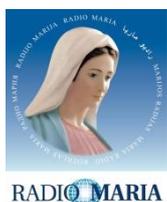
# Ordination Day, Norwich 6 July 2019



## What's New?

### Radio Maria England

#### Sarah Taylor and Maria Rosaria Piemonte



Since January 2018 a group of Catholics have been working to set up a new Catholic Radio station for England, to be based here in Cambridge. Radio Maria England will join the World Family of Radio Maria, which was first founded in

Italy and now operates 77 Radio Maria radio stations throughout the world, in 65 different languages. Radio Maria is a private initiative within the Catholic Church, offering people the opportunity to pray and celebrate with the Church, and working to bring about the gifts that flow from the evangelization of the gospel: salvation through Jesus Christ for every person.

Maria Rosaria was a teenager in Italy when her mother first began listening to Radio Maria. She explains, "During my teenage years I did not practice and would go to church occasionally, maybe at Easter or Christmas. One day my mum bought a small, grey portable radio and Radio Maria became a steady presence in our house. We were reluctant first, but over the time the words of the catechesis and those prayers began to have a resonance in my heart.

"With time, through Radio Maria, I discovered the prayer of the rosary. Live prayer is the core, the heart of Radio Maria. I did not know how to pray the rosary and remember with joy those moments when I and my mother Cristina would pray together the Rosary with Radio Maria. I was at university then, busy with exams but that time spent in the presence of God was the most precious. Radio Maria helped my mum and me to build a stronger relationship through prayer. Through the Holy Spirit, the eternal communication of love between the Father and Son, Radio Maria brings to every home not ideas, abstract morals but a presence, to remind us of His loving Presence in our hearts, in our daily lives."

Radio Maria England will work for the evangelisation of our country, and to promote and nurture the Catholic faith. The work is entrusted to Our Lady, and it is appropriate that the station should be founded as the Bishops of England prepare to re-dedicate our country as the Dowry of Mary in 2020.

Radio Maria has no commercial advertising. Its operations will be entrusted to Divine Providence, and the radio station will rely on charitable donations and on help from willing volunteers.

## Live streaming from St Laurence's Church

### Sean Martin and Ronald Haynes on behalf of the Parish Tech Group

After further testing and feedback, you can now watch live streaming of the sanctuary at St Laurence's by using the link: <https://www.saintlaurence.org.uk/live/>



This live streaming allows people who are unable to be physically present to participate at Mass or other activities held in the church. Parishioners who are housebound, ill, or in

care homes can thus continue to be engaged in parish life, even though they are not able to travel to the church. It will also be of benefit for relatives and friends unable to travel greater distances to baptisms, weddings, funerals and other special gatherings.

A suitable camera was installed by the Parish tech group, and the camera streams live video and audio through to YouTube, which is thus accessible from anywhere with a good internet connection. There are three views of the sanctuary: a regular view, a wider view also covering the Baptismal font area, and a silent meditative view. The tech group is working in conjunction with the SVP who are in touch with many in the Parish likely to benefit; we can lend a laptop where this is helpful.

Since the Parish also regularly has Masses and celebrations in several languages other than English, streaming provides access to remote and scattered community members of these traditions. We are able now also to publicise and stream Parish talks from the pulpit, and so extend sharing and outreach more widely. We are considering the possibility of recording special events, such as weddings, or other occasions, for the benefit of family members.

The project is well within the initial budget of £2000 and streaming to YouTube incurs no additional monthly cost beyond the cost of the broadband connection.

The tech group plan to meet every month and can offer advice and technical assistance to other Parish groups. If you are interested in joining the group or in working together on a project, please contact us by email at [techgroup@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:techgroup@saintlaurence.org.uk) . Of course, meetings of the Parish tech group may start with an intercessory prayer to St. Isidore of Seville who was declared by St Pope John Paul II as the patron saint of the internet.

## Features and Opinions

### Marriage Matters

#### Fr Bob Eccles OP

There are some pastoral issues that are impossible to air in church on Sunday. They belong to particular people after all, and a general discussion of the issues they raise can't altogether convincingly be disguised as a homily when the congregation is expecting to hear, let us say, about Jesus the Good Shepherd. I know I have nothing new to say. But I want to be faithful to the mind of the Church I serve. Of which I have always desired to be, take it from me, a priest in good standing.

In 1970 I was still in my salad days and a University Chaplain with lots of happy weddings of friends to go to, when my community asked me to be Chaplain to the group of Separated and Divorced Catholics who met in our priory, part of the society of that name, the ASDC. Today still going strong under the care of the Bishop of Salford, I was challenged and extended. They were all a lot older and often careworn compared with the happy, young people all around me. We became close as they allowed me to enter into their difficult situations: there were the ones for whom the love for their husband or wife was still alive, and there could be no-one else although their couple could never be restored; the ones who had sought or were seeking a declaration of freedom from the marriage tribunals; and those survivors of broken unions who were in confusions and difficulties, finding themselves in hard places. Then there were couples in new unions that could not be recognised by the Church. I found myself asked to accompany a succession of people seeking a declaration of nullity, something that continued endlessly. It has always been a revelation to discover the deeply caring and pastoral approach of the officials of the tribunals and their lay assistants. Of course, my shelves filled with the books of the pastoral theologians.

I found, and do find, myself thinking of all those heart-rending situations involving someone who is an innocent party in a divorce and who has been deserted against his or her will, who come to face the fact that a reconciliation is out of the question. And all those transitions with more or less failure and even guilt on the part of the person concerned. For some people the requirements of the Marriage Tribunal presented insurmountable obstacles, such as the question of expense and delay; finding the strength to return over the grievous and unhappy past and the wounds yet hardly healed; finding witnesses – including strangers not of the faith – still able and willing to give an account of the events of many years ago. Perhaps this

or that person had come to faith within a new union with a Catholic and wanted to be a candidate for the Rite of Christian Initiation. What of the parents in a new union not recognised by the Church, who present their child on his or her first Communion day, for the sacrament in which they can't share? The Eucharist is so central.

From the theologians I was learning the pastoral approach. St Alphonsus Liguori, the father of moral theology – he lived in the 18th century, this is nothing new! – speaks of *epikeia*, meaning that exercise of prudence that says, in this instance an unduly heavy burden is being imposed on someone, this can't be what the legislator intended. The question comes to your mind of course: What would Jesus do in this situation? People have to find a way that is not impossible. In 1972, I was reading the words of a German theologian reflecting on the possibility of a 'pastoral solution' to such difficulties: for a new couple to separate could be immoral (the effect it would have on their children) or impossible in practice (for the couple to be permanently celibate), he said. The theologian in question was the then Archbishop Joseph Ratzinger.

Also, the theologians spoke of *equity*. It means the effort to ensure justice when the literal observance of the law would bring about an injustice. The Canon Law itself mentions cases of possible error, in law or in fact, which the Church must resolve. From the Orthodox tradition, not that of the Latin Church but never ever held to be invalid by us, comes the concept of *oikonomia*, the bishop who is the *oikonomos* of the house of God, takes the problem before the Lord, 'he seeks how the Lord in his power would heal a wound, would address an injustice, would bring peace where it is needed'.

Let's be quite clear, in the face of misgivings, we sometimes hear expressed that nothing must ever be done that would weaken our teaching on marriage, its unity, its indissolubility, or be a cause of laxity or even scandal. But where people are in difficulties, and no two situations are ever the same, they are right to expect understanding and compassion in our communities. The English and Welsh bishops have always taken these things to heart, and some years ago now they asked the Redemptorist Fr Timothy Buckley to explore these questions in a report, published as *What Binds Marriage?* (Geoffrey Chapman, 1997). The matter of marriage breakdown and healing are fully and fairly explored there.

Much more recently Pope Francis called for a world-wide inquiry amongst the people of God into the way marriage is lived and experienced, with all the trials and difficulties. That consultation fed into the two-year

process of the Synod on the Family and eventually the post-synodal papal letter, a deeply pastoral and caring little book (it's very long!) *The Joy of Love* (Catholic Truth Society, £4.95). Chapter 8 has the intriguing chapter heading 'Accompanying, Discerning and Integrating Weakness'. He spells out a way. Also, Pope Francis has simplified the process of approaching the Marriage Tribunals. I often think of all those members of ASDC and the lesson they first taught me: the Lord is our Good Shepherd who never leaves the flock untended. It is He who leads us.

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## **Should there be Married Priests?**

### **Dick Wilson**

A meeting of St Laurence parishioners, with Fr Simon and Fr Bob, took place on 14th May, to discuss the presence and prospect of married Roman Catholic priests. We noted that in the early Church it was quite normal for priests to be married, starting indeed with the Apostle Peter, as well as Bishops mentioned in the New Testament and also in most Christian churches. In Eastern Orthodox Churches, it was regular practice for parish priests to be married before they were ordained and took office. Thus their calling was to the priesthood, and not to the ascetic practice represented by celibacy. In the Roman Catholic Latin Church continuous pressure up to the 11th century led to celibacy being required of all priests.

There is an important exception to this. In recent years, ministers of other churches who convert to Catholicism are often married, but none the less are quite often accepted and ordained to the priesthood. Therefore there is no general rule that, to be ordained, a priest is not only to have a calling to the vocation of priesthood but also have a vocation to celibacy. As things are in the Roman Catholic Church, they must be called to 'This State' to become a priest, the exception being the case above, that of having been a married non-Catholic minister.

In our discussion, we mentioned the value of celibacy as a committed service to the church and to the respect in which priests are held, following St Paul. We returned several times to the pressures on those who because of their call to the priesthood also had to conform to celibacy, something they were unable to respond to and perhaps should not have been asked to do as in some cases the end results were dire.

## **Continuing Christian Formation (CCF)**

### **Sue Price (Pastoral Outreach Coordinator, Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology)**

In many walks of life, there is an emphasis on Continuing Professional Development. To be able to maintain registration with various professional bodies a portfolio needs to be kept that can be submitted on demand, providing evidence of ongoing learning.

We don't have to produce such a portfolio to belong to the Church, thank goodness, but if we did, would there be any evidence to put into it? We are very lucky here at St Laurence's with the wealth of opportunities that are available to support our CCF. Fr Bob's talks, the various prayer and special events that are put on in the Parish, all contribute to this. However, this article is also a shameless plug to encourage people to look a little further afield and maybe consider taking a further step into ongoing Christian Formation.

Down the road (ten minutes by car, 20 by bike and 40 by brisk walking) is the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology. Several parishioners already know and treasure this Catholic powerhouse, part of the Cambridge Theological Federation, allied to the University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University. We have got lots of different courses and events on offer that can suit every level and encourage you to add to your CCF portfolio. We run Quiet Days – one will be coming up for Advent. You will have seen the advert in the newsletter about the Diocesan Certificate of Catholic Studies. We have just held this for the fourth year running. People have described this course as an opportunity for faith sharing in a deepening way. They have appreciated the way they have had a chance to discuss faith issues in a safe way and a chance to think about things differently.

We are starting the second year of the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. Although primarily for teachers in Catholic schools, it is also very helpful for anyone involved in catechesis such as Children's Liturgy, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. This academic year the modules will include Old Testament, Moral Theology and Children's Spirituality. You are welcome to attend just one module if there is something that you are particularly interested in and relevant to you. We are also continuing the Catholic Theology and Practice courses this year on a Thursday afternoon. This is a women-only space, with teaching in the afternoon, followed by Mass and supper. This autumn Dr Marian Machinek will be teaching on Sermon on the Mount and Sr Gemma Simmonds CJ will be teaching a course on Ignatian Spirituality.

For details of costs and how to apply for all the courses please see our website:

<http://www.margaretbeaufort.cam.ac.uk>

Or contact us by e-mail: [mbitadm@hermes.cam.ac.uk](mailto:mbitadm@hermes.cam.ac.uk)

For general interest, follow us on Twitter and you never know, you may find yourself drawn into something that is far greater, and infinitely more that you could ask for or imagine, as part of your Continuing Christian Formation.



## Cardinal Points – Virtue and Vocation

### Ronald Haynes (in honour of John Hobson)

*As a tribute to a dear friend, the late John Hobson, who created Cardinal Points, which he imbued with courage and humour, I hope to share with you, dear readers, a few curiosities and reflections.*

Virtues can be habit-forming – in fact, that is their whole point and how they are meant to be. As we know, there are the theological virtues (faith, hope, love – or charity) and the cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, courage – or fortitude, temperance). The term ‘cardinal’ here is from the Latin for hinge (cardo) and as C.S. Lewis suggests (in his book *Mere Christianity*) this is a word indicating something pivotal. Conversely, we might say that a life without sufficient evidence of these virtues would be a life unhinged.

The personal tragedies and scandal of abuses in the Church, and in other areas of our society, are where we see individuals and our community unhinged or disconnected. The deep pain of the victims, and the communal damage, is a pain that must be shared with loving support for the sake of all those affected. Somehow we must also care about the perpetrators and show that we care about those whose lives cannot be

happy ones, and who themselves may be former victims; this is not easy but it is a challenge.

The harshest words in the New Testament, are found in the combined welcome and warning which we hear from Jesus (e.g. in Matthew 18) and remembered for the powerful images included – that we need to change our lives and become humble like a little child to be ready for Heaven, and in welcoming such little children in His name we are welcoming Christ. However, if anyone harms such children, causing them to stumble in faith or morals, we are told that it is better that the offender had a large millstone hung around their neck and drowned in the deep sea.

This type of capital punishment would have had a special emphasis to those originally hearing Jesus’ words, since Greeks, Romans and others of the period seem to have reserved this punishment for the greatest criminals; and there was an extra horror added by the choice of the large grinding stone combined with the deep sea which would make sure that the body was not recovered, depriving the offender of both the proper funeral rites and of a burial. The inability to carry out these rites had painful significance for Classical beliefs, as it involved the passage of the spirit through the body and breath, into the eternal world.

This powerful imagery used by Jesus is another clear call to the virtuous life, rather than an endorsement for capital punishment. We should be in no doubt about how important it is to live the life Jesus continues to describe for all of us, and how dangerous it is if we live otherwise – and worse if in doing so we corrupt and undermine the attempts of others to live virtuously. Such effects multiply in our communities, which is why we say there are vicious circles as well as virtuous circles, and whether we choose to head into a vicious or a virtuous circle, how do we choose between the two?

Socrates reminds us that the unexamined life is not a worthy one. Along with our daily decisions we have long traditions encouraging us to listen for and discern the will of God, through the inspiration of the Spirit, which is ever present in our lives. Vocation is the simple term for the life-changing potential which comes from the call from God, as a guide and direction to our life. Many of us have wanted to have an experience like St Paul, temporarily blinded and thrown from his horse on the road to Damascus, only to find clarity of purpose and direction in his life. This enabled him make sense of his life, and turned him from a harsh oppressor of the new Christian communities to one of the enduring leaders and lyrical exemplars of love.

Perhaps it is time to start talking more about vocation, and to think again how we should treat this potent

subject. Too often we seem to hear vocation mentioned either as an exclusive area for the ordained priesthood or the vowed religious life. However, each of us has a calling, each is called by God and each with particular gifts which are intended for our good and for the good of the people around us. We ask is vocation a one-off event in our lives or an ongoing relationship in response to the call? Perhaps it is both, unless we believe that we can take a vacation from our vocation?

It would be a great help if we could have a single source of guidance and advice about the discernment of our vocations. Perhaps even an integrated Office of Vocations in our Diocese, to help point people in the right direction when considering a married or single life, a vowed religious life or that of an ordained priest. In general, each life path has very much the same concern in mind – what is God inviting me to do with my life, and what might best help clarify that invitation for me to try to follow?

This natural and necessary discernment is of special significance at key stages of our life, and especially as a young adult who is trying to figure out ‘what to do with my life’. Attempts to respond to this invitation authentically often involve some of the same processes – we express our interest in that particular person and way of life. We have a trial period of living at least some of the life that would be entailed by that life path, and we reflect and pray and share with others to assess whether the person and path in question are ones to which we are called. Jesuit spirituality is perhaps best known for practical approaches to such spiritual discernment, and the spiritual exercises include aids and regular reflection about whether our choices tend to bring more love and build up our closeness to God and others, or otherwise.

We have tended to focus more on the discernment process for priests and vowed religious. We should try to encourage something similar in couples who plan to get married. Yet, with the best intentions, marriages break down. Other vowed life choices do not always work out as planned. We find that at times we do not act as invited or required by our chosen life path. Sins occur, and we rightly believe that truth and reconciliation are essential to help communities heal and grow.

In the case of abuse in the Church, we have some difficult questions to consider, whether we have not always been discerning vocations very well, including when those in a particular vocation are not living up to the responsibilities and requirements of that life path. Discernment is especially needed early on, when those who are called to a particular vocation are not always ending up on the right life path. That can be both difficult and damaging, but also requires ongoing

discernment to recognise and address the problems which arise in such cases.

If we truly trust the guidance of the Spirit, and our active relationship with the Spirit and the processes we follow for the discernment of a vocation, we could perhaps move beyond some limitations which may impede some life paths. If, for example, someone feels called to a particular path, say to the ordained priesthood, then we should faithfully explore that vocation and sincerely trust the Spirit in the discernment process. It would seem possible to approach such a call on the basis of a sincere candidate putting themselves forward for the process, regardless of gender, unless we believe that we must be in charge of the Spirit.

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## **Catholic Vocations: Why East Anglia is Bucking the Trend**

**John Conlon**

When I first considered writing about a shortage of priests nationwide, I thought this article would be all doom and gloom. But there was a surprise around the corner. While there is clearly a problem outside this region, East Anglia is doing rather nicely when it comes to a production line of priests. More on that later; let me first explain what prompted my interest in the subject. It was my 88-year-old mother-in-law!

She is annoyed and upset. The church she has been attending for more than 50 years in south Lancashire, a building where I was married in 1985 and that merited a mention in Nikolaus Pevsner’s *The Buildings of England*, is in danger of closure. The elderly parish priest is seriously ill and unlikely to be replaced. The place of worship looks doomed and parishioners face the prospect of travelling a few miles to another parish for Mass. If the church does not shut, a visiting priest might be able to say one Mass a week. Whatever happens, my mother-in-law, like thousands of Catholics in the United Kingdom, is having to come to terms with a problem affecting the Roman Catholic Church worldwide: a shortage of priests. The sense of belonging to a local parish is being torn apart for many worshippers. How has it come to this and what can be done?

Statistics from the National Office for Vocations, an Office of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, tell us that in 2017 some 29 men were training in seminaries, a small increase on the year before but way down on the total of more than 150 in 1985.

After chatting to my wife's mum, I felt quite despondent. If an area of the country that used to be known as one of England's most Catholic regions, with churches sprinkled liberally around, is running out of priests, what hope is there for places like East Anglia?

And this is where I return to the good news I mentioned earlier. In fact, the Diocese of East Anglia has ten men studying for the priesthood at seminaries across Europe, the highest number for 30 years and amongst the largest contingents from all the English and Welsh dioceses, despite being one of the smallest. At the time of writing, five of them were due to be ordained at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich on 6th July, probably an unprecedented moment in the short history of the Diocese.

The vocations director keeping an eye on them is none other than St Laurence's former Parish Priest Fr Patrick Cleary. As Fr Pat told the diocesan newspaper *Catholic East Anglia*: "These days, it's common for applicants to approach the diocese in early middle life, having had some experience in the world of work, or indeed some experience of time spent in a religious order. The average age of our seminarians is probably in the 30s rather than the 20s. Each one, brings some particular experience to their vocation, which I'm sure will be beneficial to the diocese in the years ahead." In addition, Australian former Anglican vicar, Sam Randall, a married man, was ordained to the Catholic priesthood by Bishop Alan Hopes at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich on 15th March.

While researching information for this article, it has become clear that there are four reasons for the dearth of priests (outside East Anglia):

1. Celibacy: this became the norm after the 11th century. Before that time, it was quite common for priests to be married in the western Church. Currently, there are a limited number of married priests, i.e. former Anglican clerics who moved over to Rome and brought their wives and children with them. Some Coptic Catholic priests are married and there are married clerics in some Eastern Rite Catholic Churches. Pope Francis caused a stir in 2017 when he suggested the Church should consider lifting the rule on celibacy in areas desperate for a priest. He pointed out that celibacy was a discipline rather than a dogma, or an irreformable part of the faith, believed by Catholics to come from Jesus and the apostles. (It is worth remembering that St Peter was married and had his own mother-in-law to worry about!)

2. An ageing priesthood: as older clerics retire or die, their posts are not being filled by the small numbers of newly ordained coming through.
3. Smaller families: gone are the days when a regular supply of priests would be provided by large Catholic families in English cities or in Ireland. Economic circumstances have resulted in much smaller family units.
4. Sex abuse scandals involving clerics: not only have these disgraceful incidents turned many Catholics away from Mass and their religion, they have also negatively affected vocations. I am sure many men who were seriously considering becoming a priest were put off in case they were viewed with suspicion by the public.

How can bishops deal with shortages? Difficult decisions are being made. Parishes are sharing priests or merging, churches are being closed. Where possible foreign priests are being invited to take over parishes. A few years ago, I attended Mass in Llandudno, North Wales. The priest was African and at that time few parishioners could understand him but when I returned a year later, his English (with a slight Welsh accent) had improved considerably and his parish was booming. Priests from Poland too are making a big impact where Polish communities are strong, such as in Cambridge and London.

I would not say it to her face, but perhaps my mother-in-law needs to accept that she has been very lucky living in a region where, until in recent years, parishioners were able to attend Mass at a church within a short walking distance. That has not always been the norm for many in this country and overseas. The Holy Spirit moves in mysterious ways. When it comes to vocations, his favour rests currently with the East of England, not the North-West!

## The Sacred Earth – *And the Blind Gods*

Michael Allan

### *The Sun*

Judah al-Harizi

Look: the sun has spread its wings  
over the earth to dispel the darkness.  
Like a great tree, with its roots in heaven,  
and its branches reaching down to the earth.

Is Earth a sacred place for us, given by the hand of the Creator - or have we (long ago) lost sight of that?

Pope Francis, in the encyclical *Laudato Si'* (24th May 2015), shows the grave consequences of our blindness to the sacred, living earth: 'In the words of the beautiful canticle St Francis of Assisi, "Laudato si', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord", we are reminded that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. "Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs." This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth; our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.'

Have we become like tiny gods, exalted above the rest of creation, no longer mere creatures? Is Earth for us just a warehouse of dead matter and dumb animals, all our property? How can it be sacred when it is only a collection of things? This narrow, materialistic view of the earth can affect/infect both atheists and believers. We rational, modern people think we see the world clearly, but do we? The way we see the earth is revealed by the way we treat the earth – and humanity is now causing the sixth mass extinction of life on Earth. The blind gods are breaking the toys.



An Albatross chick (one of many) with plastic waste filling its stomach, unwittingly picked up from the ocean surface and fed to it by its parents, causing it to starve to death.

Photo by Chris Jordan.  
Reproduced with permission.

But our sister, the Earth, and our fellow creatures, are not things. They are our family, not property. They are not here to serve us. Not ours to destroy. We were called to be faithful and loving stewards of Creation, not masters. In the book of Genesis, God saw that the Creation was 'very good' – and commissioned us to nurture that goodness, not destroy it. (Genesis 2:15)

Earth belongs to Heaven, not to us. 'The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us,' writes Pope Francis. 'Rather, all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things.'

The Incarnate Christ marries Heaven and Earth; in the wedding feast of the Eucharist Creation and Creator embrace. Earth and Heaven are thus united in Christ – and to mistreat one is to despise both.

Can we finally open our eyes and ears to the beautiful, living Earth? For the Sufi mystic Ali al-Khawwas (quoted by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*): 'There is a subtle mystery in each of the movements and sounds of this world. The initiate will capture what is being said when the wind blows, the trees sway, water flows, flies buzz, doors creak, birds sing, or in the sound of strings or flutes, the sighs of the sick, the groans of the afflicted ...'

Animal populations worldwide have fallen by 60% since 1970, and now – due to climate chaos and destruction of habitats – one million animal and plant species are facing extinction within decades. This should shock us, but does it? Sadly, as has been said, 'we will not save what we do not love.' A loving attention to the living earth around us may be the first step back to sanity. Time to stop being destroying lords, come home to planet Earth, and be creatures again. When St Francis was dying he lay down on the earth so as to feel the soil on his naked body.

The writer Annie Dillard, with a lifetime of profound attention to the sacred earth, believes: 'The universe was not made in jest but in solemn, incomprehensible earnest. By a power that is unfathomably secret, and holy, and fleet. There is nothing to be done about it, but ignore it, or see. And then you walk fearlessly, eating what you must, growing wherever you can, like the monk on the road who knows precisely how vulnerable he is, who takes no comfort among death-forgetting men, and who carries his vision of vastness and might around in his tunic like a live coal which neither burns nor warms him, but with which he will not part.' (From *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*)

The Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins held that vision fast, even in very dark times. His journals are full of close, loving observations of the world: birds flying low over a river, the smell of cedar bark in the sun.

### *God's Grandeur*

Gerard Manley Hopkins

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?  
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;  
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the  
soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
And though the last lights off the black West went  
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright  
wings.



Watch the powerful film *ALBATROSS* by Chris Jordan at: [www.albatrossthefilm.com](http://www.albatrossthefilm.com)

## Trading on the attractiveness of Christ

### Fr Simon

One aspect of the clergy abuse crisis that has not received sufficient attention is the chronic misuse of the charisms and opportunities of priestly ministry which is a facet of most clergy abuse cases. Although there is no guarantee that a priest who is ordained for service in the church will be an attractive person in the physical sense, there are many elements of how a priest's personality is put at the service of his ministry that invariably lead to an inter-twining of his own positive human qualities and those that he enjoys when acting *in persona Christi*. From time to time a priest may have 'film-star' good looks – one priest of my acquaintance was dubbed "Father What-a-Waste" by some of the ladies of the parish. What is said here of priests must necessarily be all the more true of bishops or cardinals.

It was when I was watching the recent documentary about Michael Jackson, 'Leaving Neverland', that I realised just how engaging a human being can be when his whole persona has become everything and overwhelms the normal criteria of human judgement. In some senses one doesn't expect a child to have this sense of emotional distance, but their parents and other adults surely should. In the Michael Jackson case, his grooming of the parents was almost more intricate than the grooming of their children. This was also very much the case with Jimmy Saville and his *modus operandi*; and although one might say that priests are not 'media personalities' yet there is an expectation that a priest will use his own set of charismatic gifts in the service of his ministry. There was a phase in ministerial formation in my own seminary at Ushaw in the 1980's when the broadcaster Terry Wogan was held up as an example of being a 'fantastic communicator'. Priests, particularly when they are tempted to play at being 'larger than life' characters, tend to attract a kind of 'cult status'. I am for Paul, I am for Apollos, I am for Cephas; there is nothing new under the sun.

In an article in *Faith* magazine in 1992 entitled 'The Liturgy Vacuum', criticising some aspects of how our current liturgy is celebrated, Andrew Nash drew parallels between the role of the celebrant in our current liturgies and that of the 'anchor-man' in current affairs or news programmes. He pointed out that this person is always 'on your side', someone you would always trust, and is above all unfailingly *nice*. Does this actually place limits on how a priest can then expect to interact with his people? In a recent book *God is Not Nice* by Ulrich Lehner the author seeks to deconstruct false notions of a comfortable God, the dominance of what I call the culture of 'Cosy-God

PLC'. This theme was also addressed quite presciently by Arnold Lunn and Garth Lean in their 1965 book *The Cult of Softness*. The celebration of the liturgy in the vernacular and *versus populum* has made the visual appearance of the priest, the warmth and tone of his voice and the development of eye contact with the people far more significant than it ever was before. The long mirror in the sacristy has become an essential part of parish life.

There seems to have been a general presumption that priests are expected to be warm and compassionate human beings, always revealing the gentleness and mercy of Christ. This is indeed a foundational aspect of priestly ministry, but it can lead to a distorted expectation whereby Father is always going to be 'lovely' about anything that is run past him in the everyday business of parish life. Being a 'good priest' all too easily becomes a popularity contest (Father Ted with 'The Golden Cleric' hit a nerve here...). However, even a cursory reading of the Gospels will tell us that the Lord Jesus had a wide variety of responses within his emotional orchestra, and sometimes the bass notes of chastisement and challenge were very much to the fore. Perhaps one shouldn't even dare mention St John the Baptist.

There can be, however, and often are, situations where the priest's very attractiveness *in persona Christi* becomes unhealthily dominant, and the 'loveliness' of the priest becomes a cover for the initial stages of what we now refer to as grooming. A priest who was very much influential in the formation of my vocation was once criticised for being "Too much of a father-figure..." and his response was to say, "I believe in being a Father-figure; God the Father started it all anyway...". However, I can imagine that today even he would, with sadness, question whether the 'master-disciple' relationship is at all possible given the safeguarding principles that we are now bound to implement in parish and pastoral life. The Lord Jesus did indeed form his disciples, but we must be able to discern those elements of forming young people, whether towards religious life and ministry or not, that are acceptable and those that are inherently dangerous.

Many young people as they struggle to integrate their faith and sexuality are massively ambivalent about their image and their own self-worth. To be thought of as somehow 'special' or different by a significant adult can become hugely important and a driver of addictive behaviours and structures. In safeguarding protocols there is consistent advice for priests and teachers to avoid giving signs of favouritism, and this surely is just professional horse-sense that must be generations old. In many parish situations, however, such basic good sense can be conveniently ignored, and now that it is often young girls who stay on as teenagers to be

the experienced core of altar servers there can be occasions for dangerous favouritisms to develop. This can be further exacerbated by someone, male or female, being seen as a 'troubled soul' (often from a broken home) in need of priestly advice and counsel, whether this is within the sacramental forum or not.

In most 'Youth Club' 'Diocesan Youth-gathers' or similar set-ups today the laity are quite rightly involved in leadership roles, and the priest (or better several priests) may be an invited and welcome guest at their events whether these are sacramental or otherwise, but a basic healthy distance should be maintained. This, sadly, is not always the case, and the advent of social media has become a potential snare as a priest may or may not deal appropriately with 'friend requests' etc., and this can lead to different levels of inappropriateness in messages (their timing – late at night – and content) and shared images. It has become another considerable platform and vector for grooming that can lead to disastrous results, although in its initial stages it is not a visible reality unless a third party is monitoring mobile phone or e-mail messages.

In all of this, a young person who is aware that Father is meant to be celibate and chaste, even though they may not necessarily have those words to describe his situation, will be excited to think that 'he has acted differently towards me...'. This aspect of being tempted to taste the 'forbidden fruit' is a perennial facet of human emotional and sexual relationships, and the sense of being 'the one' for whom 'Father has broken the rules' is a powerful driver of feeling 'really special'. This can then, with a clear power imbalance, develop more or less quickly into serious boundary violations that all can recognise as being unprofessional, mortally sinful and mutually damaging in the longer term.

There are some chronic dangers when priests are relatively wealthy (compared to most students), have a decent car and some flexibility about days off and holidays. Priests tend to socialise easily around alcohol and can engineer times when they are going to be alone in their presbyteries. In addition to the ordinary priestly qualities, some have musical, culinary or other talents that give them a Pied Piper quality, and these are used, even subconsciously, as part of the grooming process. Younger clergy are often quite sophisticated in their tastes and interests, and this forms a part of their attractiveness. It may also be true of boundary transgressive relationships for priests (or for other professionals who trade on their status in general) that they might fall into a physical relationship with a much more attractive partner than would otherwise be the case on a level playing field.

Any priest, particularly when he is alone in a parish, can develop into being regarded as ‘The Special One’ (a term famously coined by José Mourinho), but the social and emotional dynamics or expectations that accompany such a role will be familiar to many parish priests whether they welcome such attention or not. In a time when the church is struggling for priests, the more dynamic and charismatic any priest is, the more welcome he may be, but there are always co-terminous dangers. The personality of any and every priest must be put at the service of Christ, and he should seek to reveal every facet of the Lord’s own personality, both his attractiveness but also his call to hear and live the truth. Above all, the Lord has a searing desire for justice and for the true care of all of our vulnerable young people.

It is just too easy for a priest, and perhaps *a fortiori* for a bishop or a cardinal, to use the warmth of the Lord’s own love, of which he is but an unworthy minister, to ingratiate himself with a young person and their close family. He may often, consciously or not, take up the role of the missing father and then callously abuse the trust with which he has been accepted and the real-time needs of the family to violate boundaries of behaviour and emotional attachment that should remain intact.

A priest must not trade, to his own emotional advantage, on the attractiveness of Christ.

*Fr Simon Blakesley was ordained a priest in 1990 for the Diocese of East Anglia. He is a trained canon lawyer and has processed several cases for imposed laicisation to be heard in Rome. He also advises his own Diocesan Safeguarding Commission on matters of canonical process.*

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## What does it mean to be human? (2)

### Dick Wilson

In the last *Pilgrim*, I noted some of the final steps by which a tiny scrap of self-reproducing material, hundreds of millions of years ago, began the evolution of all life. I jumped to human beings, *homo sapiens*, no more than a few hundred thousand years ago.

### Evolution – what does it involve?

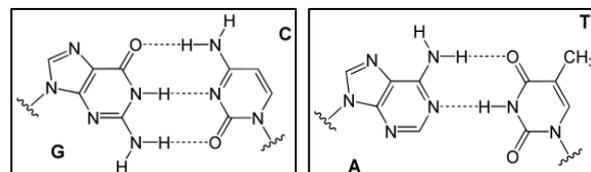
First, almost all living creatures carry the information for reproduction using DNA, the short name for a chemical called deoxyribonucleic acid. It is a long double helix consisting of pairs of molecules, each of the same length, and facing each other. (A molecule is a group of atoms bonded together, representing the

smallest fundamental unit of a chemical compound that can take part in a chemical reaction, like H<sub>2</sub>O, water.)



### The double helix

The familiar picture, from 1953, is based on a sketch by Francis Crick’s wife Odile, drawn as soon as Francis Crick and James Watson, with the aid of Rosalind Franklin’s X-ray photographs, passed to them by Maurice Wilkins, identified the double helix. Each cross line in Odile’s sketch represents one or other of two pairs of bases (non-acid molecules), as in the larger sketch below. These are also called nucleotides. They are named cytosine and guanine on the one hand, and thymine and adenine on the other, or simply C=G (with three hydrogen bonds) and T=A (with two hydrogen bonds). They are similar, and in each case are joined, one from each side, across the helix. They are joined together by hydrogen atoms, the hydrogen bond familiar to those who did chemistry at school. A sugar phosphate chain forms a backbone. The two strands of helixes run in opposite directions. And so we have the molecule DNA, usually immensely long, in every cell.



Images & description from Wikipedia

Above left, a **G=C** base pair with three hydrogen bonds. Above right, an **A=T** base pair with two hydrogen bonds. Non-covalent hydrogen bonds between the bases are shown as dashed lines. The wiggly lines stand for the connection to the pentose sugar backbone. As the diagram shows, G=C or A=T pairs can come in any sequence.

They serve as a code that enables a sequence of DNA in any living creature to be accurately reproduced, repaired, renewed or cloned. The final version is simply reproduced unless there is a mutation. A gene is a set of one or more units of the helix. The DNA is distributed amongst little packets called chromosomes, containing long stretches of DNA. A human being will have 20,000-25,000 genes, and 46 chromosomes in each cell (23 chromosome pairs).

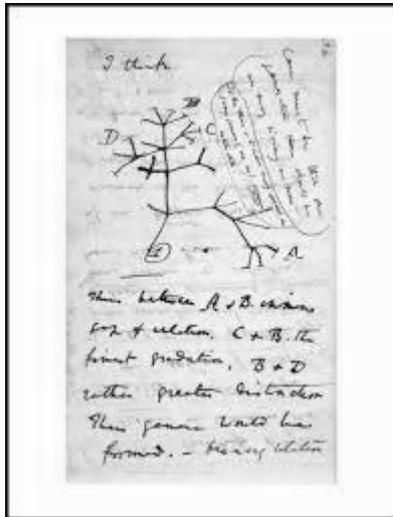
## The preservation of the genome

The DNA, and the living being derived from it in this way, are what makes it possible for species to go on largely unaltered for millions of years: for some crocodiles, little changed for three to five million years; our genus *homo*, two million years; but *homo sapiens*, only a few hundred thousand years so far.

## Mutations and the evolution of human beings

In the process of the reproduction of a cell, perhaps one in a thousand of DNA molecules is a wrong or misplaced one, but the cell has the ability to correct almost all such mistakes. However, if an error, or group of errors, gets past the filter, as it sometimes does, it may have a damaging effect on the cell as a whole, or even the living being itself, as in sickle cell anaemia. Or again, a wrong number of whole chromosomes can occur. A person with Down's syndrome has the extra presence of chromosome 21. Another source of mutations is when the genetic material is taken from outside DNA, and the mutation goes into the lineage. Again either with a small number of mutations, or alternatively over hundreds of thousand years, there is a regular build-up of DNA that is better suited to the changing environment. Then we have what can be called a new species.

### Darwin's 1838 'I think' notebook



The note below the sketch reads: 'Thus between A and B immense gap of relation. C and B the finest gradation, B and D rather the greater distinction. Thus genera would be formed bearing relation to ancient types with several extinct forms.' (The notebook is preserved in Cambridge University Library.)

## New species

Here Darwin is dealing with the longstanding belief that all species exist as they were at the creation and never go extinct. He sees that a new species will

sometimes oust another, or sometimes it will exist alongside it. All species eventually go extinct. The lineage breaks off, or it may change into something very different. *Homo sapiens* has been on the road and has remained largely unaltered for 400,000 years, or possibly for longer. But all the other members of the genus *homo* are extinct, like *neandertalensis*.

Round about 500 million years ago there was a sort of fossilised early fish *Metaspriggina*. The largest were about ten centimetres in length. From here evolution can be traced in outline from vertebrate fish like this, reptiles, mammals, apes and *homo*, of which we, *homo sapiens* are the only species to survive.

## Modern Theory of Evolution

When Darwin published *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 he used the term 'natural selection' as referenced in the complete title of the book (the phrase 'the survival of the fittest' was coined by the philosopher Herbert Spencer in response to reading *On the Origin of Species* five years after the first edition was published). Gregor Mendel explained the transmission of individual features, in his paper *Experiments in Plant Hybridisation* (published 1866), creating the science of genetics. In 1902, Theodor Boveri and Walter Sutton proposed for these the name of the genetic material, 'the genes' in the chromosomes. The chromosomal theory of heredity was established by Theodore Hunt Morgan in 1910 and in 1913 Eleanor Carothers presented the first clear cytological evidence for the independent assortment of chromosomes. In the 1920s mathematicians Roland Fisher and JBS Haldane led the analysis of the modern theory of population genetics. After the discovery of the double helix, Francis Crick went on to solve the code of C=G and T=A bases in DNA and brought into play the genes that drive and underly our birth, living and dying. Further development has led to a mapping of the whole of any human being's DNA and its widespread use in medicine and other science.

We can see that the science of the last two centuries has given us a very detailed knowledge of how our bodies, and the mind embodied in it, actually function. But besides this, in the next *Pilgrim* I would like to look at the same questions with the belief in mind that God created and sustains the universe, that he sent his Son to be with us and save us, and that God made the world, yet does not seem to fiddle with it much. There are no easy answers, but perhaps it is useful to ask how we can set about these questions.

## **Parish Organizations & Activities**

### **Hope where there was war: The SVP in Sudan and South Sudan**

#### **Monica King (Twinnage co-ordinator for the Parish SVP)**

*Anita Boniface, Senior Media and Communications Officer SVP, gives us an insight into the current situation in Sudan and South Sudan, and what the SVP are doing to help.*

Imagine your homeland being ravaged by war; fighting breaks out, violence, crime, lawlessness are everywhere. You flee your home and travel to a different country in search of safety. In that new country you are not allowed to receive status. You are forced to live and sleep in a makeshift tent, in dry barren conditions with little food, shelter or clothing. You are scared, tired, your soul has been destroyed. You keep in your heart the hope that one day you will be able to return to your home and country. This keeps you going, and one day, many years later, it does become possible. You gather together your small number of belongings and your children, and begin to make your way, filled with hope and trepidation, back to your home country.

This is what happened to 4 million or so people displaced after decades of civil war in Sudan, when the country was torn apart and became two separate countries: Sudan and South Sudan. Millions of people fled from South Sudan for the north and were forced to settle in the desert in makeshift tents in Sudan. A strict Sudanese Muslim government ruled the country and many of the children and young people became soldiers and joined the militia as a form of survival. When it became possible for these displaced people from South Sudan to return to their homes, they must have felt overjoyed. But when they returned they found their farms and houses had been burnt to the ground, the landscape was barren, the infrastructure had been destroyed so that there were no real roads or schools or hospitals and they realised that they had left one life of hardship for another.

There was hope, however. The SVP has been active in the whole of unified Sudan since 1939. The country had been divided by war from 1953, and in 1986 the SVP had set up help centres in the north. Baby feeding clinics still feed more than 10,000 malnourished babies and children every day. Health clinics run by the SVP employ staff and allow local people who cannot travel far to receive medical support near the camps where they are living. Medical help is crucial to any

community, but particularly where people are packed together in squalid conditions where the care is basic.

When the displaced people living in Sudan returned to the South, the SVP saw the need to replicate these kind of projects in South Sudan, to which they added microfinance loans and Vocational Training Centres, thus allowing people the means to rebuild their lives. The Vocational Training Centres train both young men and young women. The inclusion of women is essential because they are the hub of the family. The economic wellbeing of the family depends on the woman being able to purchase food and put food on the table for her husband and children if a woman's husband has a sickness or an addiction of some kind. Because women and girls now receive training they are more empowered to support their families, ensuring security for their children. Betram Kuol, Director of Projects in South Sudan SVP, describes how, "At one Vocational Training Centre women are even training in construction work, proving that old gender stereotypes are being broken down".

Today, in both Sudan and South Sudan, there are hundreds of agriculture projects – like those growing and selling medicinal plants – sewing and tailoring businesses, educational projects, and building and construction businesses being run by South Sudanese people allowing them to support themselves – all because of a microloan from the SVP which allowed them the initial money they needed to get started.

There is still a great deal of poverty and the SVP is still running some camps for Internally Displaced people outside the city of Juba. However, there is hope of a better life.

That better life for millions of Sudanese and South Sudanese people depends on the prayers and donations of members and the public in England and Wales which is twinned with Sudan and South Sudan. If you would like to donate to the projects the SVP runs in both countries, please visit [www.svp.org.uk](http://www.svp.org.uk), or contact your local Twinnage officer – at St Laurence's this is Monica King. Thank you. And support our monthly collections and other fundraising events for Sudan and South Sudan in our Parish over the next six months. Every penny brings hope.

## A new project at St Laurence's School



Our Eco-Committee Zero Heroes

Dear Mr Zeichner,

We are the Eco-School Committee at St Laurence and we are committed to making our school and community more environmentally friendly. We have recently heard about Cafod's Zero Hero campaign which calls on the government to commit the UK to a net zero target by 2045. We are showing our support to this initiative by all sitting in a zero!

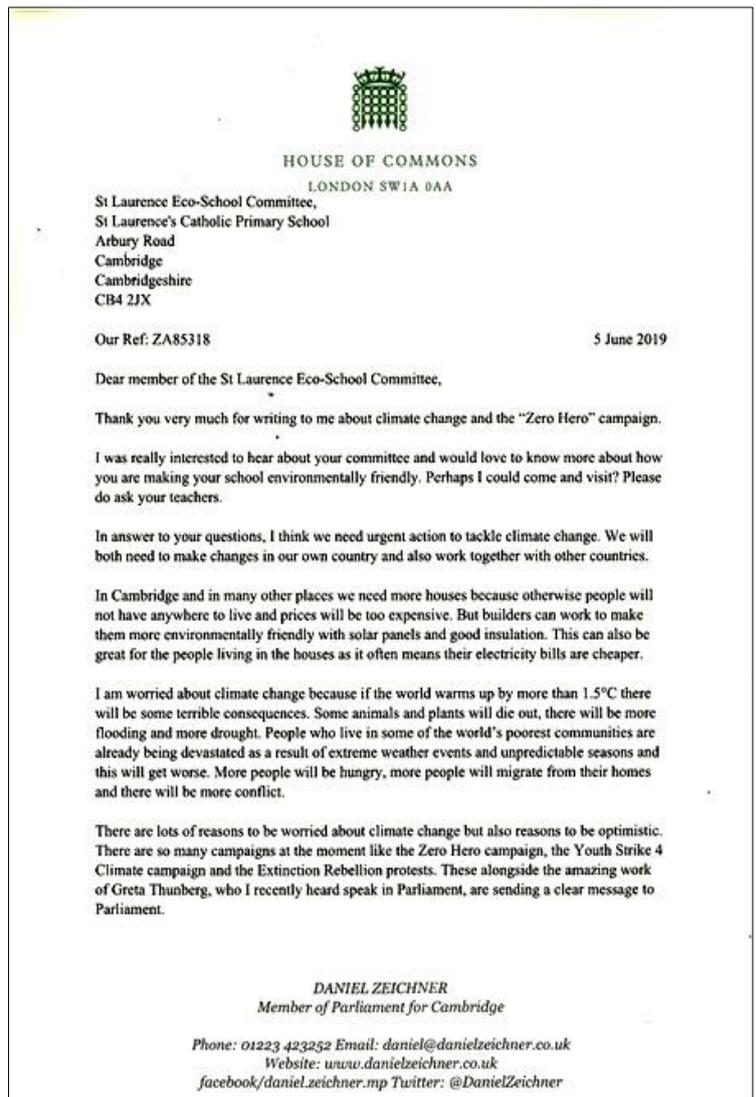
We came up with some questions to ask you. Thank you very much in advance for taking the time to answer them.

1. What are your views on climate change?
2. Is building more houses going to contribute to climate change? If you have to build houses, can they be more environmentally friendly e.g. solar panels?
3. Do you realise the consequences of letting climate change take over our planet?
4. Have you heard of the Zero Hero campaign? What are your views on this campaign?

Look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best wishes,

St Laurence Eco-School Committee



## Turning Concern into Action – St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) Mini - Vinnies

### Rachel Chalklin

Mini Vinnies, School Co-ordinator

Our Parish school set up the first primary aged Junior Vincentian group in our Diocese. ‘Mini Vinnies’ are children aged from 7 to 11 (or younger) who, with the permission of their parents and the support of the school, are encouraged to embark on their first steps as possible ‘Vincentians for life’. St Laurence School Mini Vinnies have been very busy since the last edition of *The Pilgrim* was published.

On Shrove Tuesday, the Mini Vinnies held pancake races for the whole school. The sun shone and each class took it in turn to dress up as chefs and race along the playground. The Mini Vinnies organised the races and everyone had great fun. The children paid a small amount to enter and raised money for the SVP’s twinnage project in Sudan and South Sudan.



Pancake Day Races raising money for Sudan and South Sudan

During Lent, the Mini Vinnies organised an Easter Bunny Café. For the two weeks up to the Easter holidays they sold bunny biscuits each break-time and raised further funds for Sudan and South Sudan.



On the last day of term, the Mini Vinnies spent their time visiting the residents of Buchan House, a nearby residential home. They made enough Easter gift baskets for each of the residents. It was an exceptionally lovely way for the children to spend their last afternoon before the start of the Easter holidays.

The children are always enthusiastic coming up with their own ideas on how they can fundraise and do other charitable works. Each week they set up their own meeting room with a focus on a small prayer table. The children are already planning many fundraising activities for the Summer term. It is great fun to work with such an enthusiastic and caring group of children. Well done St Laurence Mini Vinnies!

The Society of St Vincent de Paul has been engaging with young people and education since its earliest days. Today the SVP England & Wales is pleased to highlight its continuing strong links with young people, through the development of its ‘Mini Vinnies’ programme – a ground-breaking Primary Schools initiative, based on good work done in Australia, piloted in the Diocese of Shrewsbury, and which is seen as having, ‘the potential to significantly contribute to the future of our Society.’ <http://www.minivinnies.org.uk/index.php>

### Westminster Cathedral Special Mass celebrating the work of Mini Vinnies across the country



To recognise the fantastic work of Mini Vinnies from all over England and Wales a special Mass was celebrated at Westminster Cathedral on Tuesday 11th June. We left a wet Cambridge and travelled by coach to arrive in sunny London in good time for the special service. The cathedral was filled with over 800 young Vincentians who spoke about some of the wonderful activities they have shared to help support those in need.



**GIFT Growing in Faith Together**  
**St Laurence's Youth Group (11 – 18 yrs old)**

**Helena Judd**

St Laurence's Youth Group has had some exciting social events this past year. They have created their own shirts, made Christmas Cards and had a Catholic



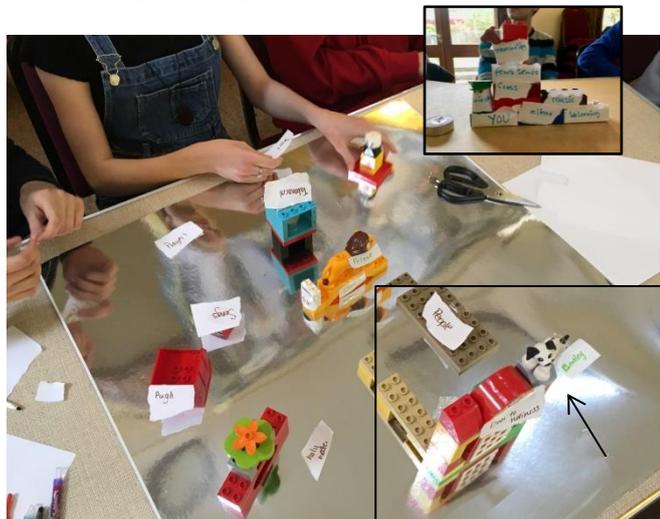
Quiz Night. Fr Simon joined in on the fun, but couldn't help beat a team of young women who were very impressive with their knowledge of the 10 plagues and able to name 10 different parables that Jesus taught his disciples.

The group also had guests from St Philip Howard and St John Fisher (Cambourne) churches join them for a special Stations of the Cross and Reconciliation Service during Lent.

The final session will be Friday, 19th July. The group will meet at the Cambridge Leisure Centre and have dinner and bowling to finish up the school year. The group has had fun getting to know each other and enjoying time to openly speak about their faith and pray with other Catholics. The group will have time off during the summer but will be back at the end of September.



**The children were asked to think about what makes a 'perfect parish'.....**



**Confirmation Group 2019**

This year's Confirmation class consisted of 14 candidates. These candidates have helped with the Ablaze Masses, the Children's Christmas Eve Mass, the Children's Stations of the Cross and CAFOD's Creation Appeal. The group invited different leaders from the Parish to present how they feel called to volunteer for the Church and to lead different social groups. The group travelled to Walsingham during the



May Bank holiday and attended the Ignite Festival where they enjoyed spending time with youth from the Diocese, growing in their faith and taking part in aspects of the Catholic Faith that they had not yet experienced. Several candidates hope to attend again next year and one candidate said, "I felt very holy afterwards."

The group will present to the Parish Forum some of the ideas they have on what makes a 'Great Parish'.



The Confirmation Ceremony took place on 24th June with Bishop Alan celebrating.



## CWL Update

Janet Scally



On Saturday 27th April the Catholic Women's League and Parish members of the St Vincent de Paul Society worked together to provide the annual lunch for the senior citizens of St Laurence's. This is how it happens! During the month before the lunch, members of the SVP ask around the Parish to find out who

would like to come. Then lifts are organised to enable the less mobile to join in the fun. On the day before the actual meal the CWL organise the big shop. One of the most popular puddings is apple crumble and custard so almost all Tesco's stock is cornered for the occasion! We all start work early, for example, in my house, vast numbers of potatoes have to be prepared before we load up and go to the church kitchen to start the real work at about 10.30am. In other houses cakes are being taken out of ovens, and collection timings are being reviewed. One of our ladies strips her garden of bluebells so that the tables are cheerfully decorated.

This year, about 40 senior citizens sat down to enjoy a meal together, (we haven't chairs or places for more than 50). All the workers, both SVP and CWL, love to work together and see happy smiling faces as we do our best to put food on the tables on time.



## Summary of the Parish Forum Meeting 2 July 2019

Present: Fr Simon, Fr Bob, Stephen Warde (Chair)  
Sarah Sykes (Minutes) and 18 parishioners

### Live streaming

Thanks were given to the Tech Group for all their hard work in completing the successful set-up and running of this new Parish service. It has been much appreciated by parishioners and their families living further afield for the ability to share in the Confirmation Mass, weddings and funerals as well as everyday Mass.

### WinterComfort

It was noted that WinterComfort are coming to the Parish on the weekend of 27th and 28th July to talk about the charity as suggested by Parish Forum member, Paul Simmons.

### Confirmation and Youth Groups presentation

Helena Judd, who organises the youth group, Confirmation preparation and is part of the Ablaze team, presented with Laura and Anya two parishioners who were recently confirmed. Helena begun by talking about the Confirmation programme. We have had 14 candidates confirmed this year. The candidates learned that being confirmed was not only about committing yourself to your Catholic faith but also about taking on responsibilities to the Parish, of being part of and contributing to it. Alongside a PowerPoint display, Helena explained how the programme has grown and developed and how it was often driven by the candidates own questions about their faith.

Laura and Anya then talked about what would make the 'Perfect Parish' in the eyes of the youth. They explained that things could be better for the youth. Learning about Mass and our Faith does not stop at a certain age. They asked us to consider whether there could be a type of Children's Liturgy for teenagers? They explained that the subject of Theology at school does not teach them about the Catholic Faith but about all religions which, while important, does not satisfy their need to understand Roman Catholicism. They also asked, when there is no Children's Liturgy, how can we encourage the younger children to keep focussed during Mass?

Helena then went on to explain her ideas for next year's Confirmation programme. She also proposed to start a junior youth group for 8-11 yrs to bridge the gap between the sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation, and to develop a young adult group

(post-university) for 25–35yr olds which would consist of talking about religion and sharing food. A Forum member recommended ‘Christus Vivet’ as a useful resource for this group.

Helena said that she would welcome suggestions for engaging parents to get on board with their children doing church activities, particularly with preparing for Confirmation. A Forum member suggested that sessions for parents ahead of the Confirmation programme would help them to see how they could support their children; answer questions they might have about the Catholic faith and give them confidence in talking about their faith.

The Forum was encouraged to hear of these plans and developments, the Chair offered thanks on behalf of the Parish to Helena and the whole Confirmation team for their work.

### **Buildings and Grounds**

#### **Parking**

Fr Simon reported on the new parking scheme, brought in without reference to the Forum due to nearby roads becoming residents only parking. He explained the system, which operates through the week but not on Sundays. For extra visits to church, parishioners either need to log their cars using the touch screen tablet at the back of the church, or ensure that they have been added to the permanent members list by Fr Simon. There is still a 30-minute grace period for those who use the car park to drop off/pick up children from the nearby school or nursery. People should still feel welcome at the church but understand that we need to keep our car park for our own use. Some Forum members felt that the signage was a bit excessive and unwelcoming. There was a suggestion to look at removing signs affixed to the church buildings.

#### **Church Roof**

The quote from Cambridge Roofers has been accepted by the Finance Committee, but because Fr Simon will be away from the Parish from 19 August – 19 September, work should start toward the latter half of September or the beginning of October when he will be able to supervise.

#### **Sanctuary**

Fr Simon showed pictures of some examples of Sanctuaries to help illustrate the work he wants to accomplish in our Sanctuary. These included the parish church in Newmarket which included a discreet screen/projector set up. The photos will remain on display in the Parish Room for a short while. The architectural technician is still putting together drawings, and these will be displayed as soon as they are available. It was suggested that if we have a screen

installed that it could be used to show the Liturgy of the Word and the hymns to help make the Mass better accessible for all.

### **Liturgy and Social**

#### **Creation Celebration and Parish Picnic**

This event will take place over the weekend of 13/14 July. It is hoped to be able to have a similar event in time for Pentecost next year.

#### **Sudan**

Tony King reported on behalf of the SVP that their appeal to help their work in Sudan and South Sudan was successfully launched on 22/23 June and thanked the Parish for its generous response. It will continue for the next 6 months with a monthly collection. It is hoped to raise awareness of the concept of SVP’s work abroad, known as Twinnage. He asked for the support and prayers of the Forum for the project.

#### **CAFOD**

Jeanette reported that she had attended the Climate Change Lobby in London recently where Cambridge had the largest MP attendance. However, it had been a fairly pointless exercise due to the overarching concern of Brexit. The Chair also read a brief report from Parish CAFOD rep, Serga Collett, who reported the final figure for the Lent appeal was: £1,382.84. The Parish will be visited by Jane Crone, CAFOD area manager, who will be reviewing the achievements of our CAFOD group so far this year and helping us to prepare for the Harvest appeal. All are welcome to join this meeting.

#### **AOB**

Dick Wilson asked whether the Parish Library could be made regularly useable. Although it is accessible when the church is open for Mass, it is not easily accessible at other times.

He also asked whether people would be interested in gathering information and interest from other diocese about the shortage of priests which could then be developed into a cross-diocesan conversation.

Rosina Abdulai enquired whether the Forum would be in favour of resurrecting the International Mass followed by an international bring & share. Fr Simon said he was happy to support this if people would like to organise it.

**A detailed report of the Forum Minutes can be found on the Parish web site or on the notice board in the Narthex**

**Next Meeting: Thurs. 10th October. 8pm**

# ABLAZE Mass



Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September, 5pm  
@ St Laurence's Church, Milton Road.

A joyful, lively and upbeat Worship  
For Youth and the Young at Heart  
With treats to share afterwards

## Personal Stories

### **Diamond Wedding Celebration**

#### **Anne Maddocks**

Anne and Peter Maddocks celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on Saturday the 30th March. Here are Anne's thoughts on this special day.



We were married on the 30th March 1959 (Easter Sunday) and now, on the 30th March 2019, we were here at St Laurence's to celebrate our Diamond Wedding. We began with Mass at 9.30am Mass during which we renewed our vows with Fr Simon's Blessing. This was followed by a reception in the Parish Room where there was a special cake and plenty of food and drink. Later the family and a few friends went out to dinner at La Pergola, an Italian restaurant.



Canon Eugene Harkness presented us with a Papal Blessing (what a surprise!) and Fr Simon had it beautifully framed for us (see photograph). We had a card from the Queen and 80 other cards plus presents and Mass Offerings.

We are so grateful and appreciate everyone's kindness especially the priests and deacons. Most of all we want to say a Big Thank you for joining us and making it such a wonderful day.

## **Some Thoughts from Pauline Gullick**

My late-mother was born in the Republic of Ireland. She and her five sisters all came to England during World War II and were nurses at the London Hospital. One of them became a Queen Alexandra (army) nurse and was sent to Burma.

My son, Paul, and lovely daughter-in-law live in the Irish Republic. Priscilla is Filipino and comes from the same place as Fr Jay! She says this: "God has plans for us, but it may not be our way." I think my late-mum would have been very proud of both of them. I was a patient in Addenbrookes hospital and the Filipino nurses were so kind. I spoke to one of them at St Laurence's. She is a Theatre Sister there.

When one goes through some trauma, it changes the way we think; the things in life we grumbled about suddenly become a luxury? I hope that you find what I have written interesting – everyone does not share the same opinion.

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### **They Think Not**

#### **Wally Moscuza**

When the evening is warm  
And young girls go for a walk  
They think not  
That the old woman passing by  
Once was young  
Now she goes to walk her dog, slowly  
She walks  
Looking at the crocuses  
Bending on one side to look at the last light  
Behind the naked hills  
That seem to complain  
For the lack of green  
While the silver poplar  
Standing all alone  
In the middle of nowhere.  
The Osprey on the edge of a cypress looks ahead  
It flew from the rocks  
Long winged  
It fishes off the American coast  
Catching its fish by flying low.  
She remembers...yet  
Not actually sure what she saw  
Either the fish Hawk or the coast  
All memories now diluted by time  
In the old woman's thoughts.  
Too many days, too many nights  
Love, delusion are still clear  
Heart beats inspiration and ideas  
With the certainty of an endless walk  
A determination possessed only by the young!

## Walking our way to Calvary – More than Just a Lenten Journey

### Mary Gullick

During Lent, many of us gave up something, whether it was our favourite chocolate spread or favourite food or something that we really enjoy and if we gave in to our desires then a donation of some kind would be made as a way to see good. This year somehow has been rather challenging, one that would leave a very big impression, not just on one person, but many people around.

Like a rock that you throw, into water, the ripple effect is felt long after that rock has been thrown. In many ways life has done that to so many of us within Lent. From the beginning of Lent we all started off, very different people with ideas and aspirations and goals for the coming year. I am sure that now you all are looking at life with a totally 'now' focus, a new purpose, all simply because that landscape has been redesigned. In perhaps a dramatic fashion, something unexpected, out of the blue, came up and blew the foundations of what you had known and expected to its core. You may still be trying to adapt in some way to situations that are new and in some ways are unexpected.

When others talk about it you can say something compassionate or caring or nurturing to ensure that they are safe and happy – but when your road to Calvary suddenly shakes and rumbles, and the earth quakes and feels uncertain something almost frightening but awakening happens. Life isn't dead or dying it is being broken down so a new, firmer foundation can be rebuilt on something built from the ashes. However brutal the journey, the pain and the anguish, and the restoration from the ashes is something to be joyful about, not fearful of. However uncertain the future is, when you learn to step back, take a breath, have faith in the process of the journey there is no better gift from God than the knowledge that we all will see those we love one day. I am certain of this because, I have faced my mortality on more than one occasion, seen death in more than one family member and looked into the eyes of my loved ones in heaven when facing my own death – I accept I have a life to live out as, in all honesty, my dad won't allow me to give up as I am too feisty.

I need more life experience before I can say my life's work is complete – I feel his energy always with me and it is a blessing there have been moments in my life when I wanted to give up on myself, my life and my faith, but God had a purpose for it all. All the heartache I have endured, the loss of my children, no family should endure pain on such a spectrum as this

but for those that do there is a resilience, a defiance to not look back in anger. My mother and grandmother always said whoever angers you, conquers you. I won't allow people or situations that ability. God gave me life, it is only he who decides when I can give my dad earache ;)

To the people of the Parish who have helped support me and my family – be it with emotional and practical support throughout the years – your kindness, love and generosity has never ever been forgotten. I hope you all had a wonderful Easter.

---

## Gila's Spring Concert, 3rd May 2019

### Nora Darby

On a wet Friday morning I made my way to the St Ives Free Church (URC) which dates back to the time of Oliver Cromwell, his statue is a few yards away! I was there for Gila Margolin's lunchtime concert. Many of us know Gila as a parishioner at St Laurence's, you can't miss her!



She was performing for her Peace and Reconciliation movement, The Little Sisters of Joy which she co-founded in 1999. We were greeted with a welcome cup of coffee and biscuits as we assembled in the beautiful upstairs Worship Space. Gila was moving around chatting to people as they arrived, among them were Councillor Sarah Gifford, Mayor of Huntingdon and Councillor Tim Drye, Mayor of St Ives!

The concert started with a short welcome speech from Rev'd Catherine Ball, Minister at the Free Church, then Gila began with 'The Wild Mountain Thyme'. She played and sang a variety of songs ranging from songs of the 60's by Bob Dylan, Tom Paxman etc, to some Scottish, Jewish and even a touch of French music. To her surprise and delight the audience joined in singing most of the songs. The concert ended with us all singing the Jewish 'Hava Nagila', and finally Gila singing Psalm 33, *Hinay ma tov uma naim shevet achim gam yachad*.

Catherine Ball thanked Gila and the audience for being there. I was joined by Gila and then photos were taken before we went our separate ways. For me, the music and company brought some sunshine into a wet, gloomy day!



# Walsingham 2019



## People I knew: Jean-Pierre, Zaire 1994

### Sr Pat Robb

*Sr Pat is a nun of the Congregation of Jesus Order. She lived and worked in our Parish for many years and is now living in York. She is a nurse/midwife by profession and spent many years working in Africa. She was working with the Irish aid agency, Concern, in Angola when the genocide erupted in Rwanda. She was asked to transfer to Tanzania to work in the refugee camps there, but a few weeks later transferred to Goma, Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo). Her special role was to set up a new unit for 1500 children, 1000 of them in need of daily medical care and feeding and the others in need of one meal a day.*

J-P belonged to a family of Hutus who had made their way in life. J-P was sent to a Mission School and went on to university where he studied Law and made his way up the ladder. His family had plenty and life was good.

What we can never know is how just J-P was in his work as a lawyer. Rwanda was a very unjust country with the minority tribe, the Tutsis, being discriminated against. When trouble flared between the two tribes in April 1994 we don't know what part J-P played. We don't know if his hands were bloodied and it is not our business. It is between J-P and God and a legal system that, in itself, may not have been just.

What concerned me, in Zaire in the early days, just a few months after hundreds of thousands of Hutus had crossed into the country, was not the background of the people I came in contact with. Our concern was to run nutrition centres for the children and adults suffering from malnutrition and there were many of them. Of course, we did our best to make sure help reached the really vulnerable – the old, the sick, the young and the pregnant. It wasn't easy. The mafia within the camp saw to that!

Setting up a feeding centre in a camp is usually done quickly, to enable food to be given to the children as soon as possible. There isn't much time to interview staff; it is first come, first served. But gradually, as routine is established, some staff go and for every person who moves on at least 100 apply for the place. Work, to earn a little to supplement the meagre refugee rations, is at a premium. When there is time to interview it is always more satisfactory. My principle was to try and take married men and women, especially women, in order to help a family, but often a young person would work just to give all the money he or she earned to their parents.

There was a vacancy for a latrine guard and cleaner, not a very exciting job! The very old, the very young, the well-dressed and the really poor turned up. A list was made and those who were known to have relatives already in a job were turned away; not a very reliable way to make a shortlist! We already had a woman as first latrine cleaner so it would be good to have a man to lift the sacks of lime. Some were too old, some mere boys. A married man with several children would fit the bill. The list narrowed down and then J-P spoke to me in English! "Please, please take me. My wife is pregnant and I already have five children and my parents to feed." Now, if a man spoke English he must be educated. Why had he come to ask for a job as a latrine cleaner?

To leave your home, your land, lose all your belongings is hard. Some argue that it is harder for those who had a lot to suddenly find themselves with nothing. Others would say it is harder for the poor or uneducated as they have no other resource to fall back on. Education and experience are things that give power. In one way I went against my better judgement giving J-P the job. He had resources, others did not. But in the end, it all worked out.

J-P went to work and did a good job. He was pleasant to all staff – rich and poor – and kind and gentle with the children. He seemed to be doing well.

Then I had to sack the man doing administration because he was found stealing. There was no need to look far for a replacement. J-P fitted the post very well. A very poor widower, with five children to feed, was found to replace him on latrine duties.

In-service training, new skills and an understanding of nutrition was learnt by ALL staff. Their keenness to learn, and even to do a test, was phenomenal. "When we go back to Rwanda," they said, "we will have another skill and a better chance of a job." TRUE – but they are still in Zaire, although the feeding stations are now closed. There is no malnutrition now and the staff have moved on to other work. J-P is teaching in schools and others have found some sort of work. Even those without jobs have from their time in the feeding centre learnt lessons valuable for their everyday life.

Sharing with these people, hearing their stories (and some of them were horrific), seeing and feeling their hope, growing with them, celebrating, grieving, recognizing the fear of violence – all these feelings and emotions have enriched me in a way I know I will never forget.

## Tailpiece

### **The delights of English spelling and pronunciation**

#### **Dick Wilson**

I hope this will be helpful to parishioners from abroad who have trouble with English spelling. My brother-in-law, Richard Matthew, has sent us this poem to help them.

There was an old fellow from Slough  
Who developed a terrible cough  
He imbibed half a pint  
Of warm rum and mint  
But sadly he didn't pull through.

He tells us that on the M4 the other day, approaching Slough, as in the poem, his SatNav directed him to 'Sluff'. He is looky not to be still lucking.

A neighbour of my grandmother was Mrs Brough, to rhyme with rough, not with cough. The name of the novelist and journalist Evelyn Waugh is obviously to be pronounced War (r not sounded, but indicating a long syllable), so that his reports of the invasion by Italy of Ethiopia in 1935 were headlined Waugh at War. He didn't like it.

In the early 14th century King Edward I, the Hammer of the Scots, seems to have got lost on his way north to Carlisle, the border town where I was born. Finding that the M6 suddenly stopped being the M6, or rather did not yet exist, he ignored the city's enticing slogan, 'Worth a Closer Look', turned sharp left and ended up on Burgh Marsh. He seems to have been confused when he asked where he was. He couldn't find Bruff in the Scottish Invaders Handbook. "Enough of this!" he cried and died. His monument is still there. The authoritative factual record of British history, *1066 and All That*, suggests that this actually happened at the nearby village, Burrow-in-the-Sands, better known locally as Burgh by Sands!

P.S. We do history classes as well.

Found on the internet, this piece was originally written with the word Lutherans at the start of each sentence, with a bit of tweaking this works equally well with the word Catholics!

1. Catholics believe in prayer but would practically die if asked to pray out loud in public.
2. Catholics believe in the bible but do not think bible study is for them after Confirmation.
3. Catholics feel that they learned it all in Confirmation classes until they have to teach at Children's Liturgy.
4. Catholics like to sing except when confronted with a new hymn or a hymn with more than four verses.
5. Catholics listen to sermons with great interest except when they are thinking of something else.
6. Catholics believe their priests will visit them in the hospital even if they don't notify them.
7. Catholics usually follow the official liturgy and will feel it is their way of suffering for their sins.
8. Catholics believe in miracles especially when trying to find a car parking space before Mass or trying to find a seat in church on Good Friday.
9. Catholics think that the bible forbids them from crossing the aisle when 'sharing the peace'.
10. Catholics feel that applauding for their children's choirs would make them too proud and conceited.
11. Catholics drink coffee as if it were the Third Sacrament.
12. Catholics usually want to sit in the back pews except when people are ushered out from the front after the service.
13. And lastly, Catholics believe it is okay to poke fun at themselves and not take themselves too seriously.

## Editorial Comment



Congratulations to Fr Simon Davies on his ordination which took place on 6th July shortly before going to print. Many people will remember him from his time spent in the Parish as a seminarian. We were able to be there in a packed St John's Cathedral. There were four other candidates with Simon, priests on the altar from many of the parishes in the Diocese, visiting Bishops, altar servers and a beautiful choir adding to a truly inspiring and holy occasion. Bishop Alan celebrated the Mass and welcomed each newly ordained priest into the Diocese. To be present on such a special day will be forever in our memory and something to thank God for.

Please remember all five new priests in your prayers.

Thank you for all who have contributed to this edition of *Pilgrim*. Please note that there will not be a September edition of *Pilgrim* this year. Write your articles and send in your photos for the Advent edition. No need to wait until the final submission date. We will happily collect articles and keep them on file ready for the next edition. We welcome interesting and original material for all sections, and are particularly looking forward to photos and articles on the Creation Weekend, new roof, new sanctuary, Parish Feast Day, and any other Parish group news and events taking place over the summer and autumn.

Wishing you all a happy, sunny summer break.

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The deadline for the next edition is **1 November 2019**  
for publication on 30 Nov/1 Dec 2019

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Features and Opinions	Carol Williams
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Parish Organisations & Activities	Susan O'Brien
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## Some Regular Events

**The Parish Forum** is where **ALL** parishioners can come together to discuss and debate Parish matters, and decide when and where things need to be done. The Agenda is planned in advance and the meeting is led by the chairman and Parish Priest. It meets every 3 months.

To go on the list to get the agenda in advance and the full minutes after the meeting, email [forum@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:forum@saintlaurence.org.uk)

*You can raise a topic at the meeting but it helps if you send a short note about 10 days before the next meeting, again, to [forum@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:forum@saintlaurence.org.uk), which can then be circulated.*

### The Pilgrim by Email

Away for the week-end? All copies taken? Don't miss the Pilgrim on publication day! You can receive a pdf version by email. Send a request to [pilgrim@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:pilgrim@saintlaurence.org.uk)

**Extra Pilgrim copies:** Do you know anyone who has difficulty coming to church but would like to receive the Pilgrim? Please feel free to take an extra copy.

### Pilgrim on the Web

The most recent back editions are now available on the Parish website  
<http://www.saintlaurence.org.uk/pilgrim>

### ABLAZE

The St Laurence Youth Mass is known as Ablaze. The Mass is designed to encourage our youth to build their confidence in running the Mass for the benefit of us all. It is held approximately once a month, is vibrant and fun. We encourage young readers, Eucharistic Ministers, budding musicians of all ages and the only requirement is enthusiasm for God. If you are looking for 'perfection' you won't find it here, so if you fancy it, pluck up your courage and join in.

## Upcoming Parish Events

CAFOD Harvest Appeal	
Fast Day	4 Oct
Collection	5 & 6 Oct
ABLAZE Youth Mass, Sunday 5pm	1 Sept, 6 Oct, 3Nov
Filipino Mass	28 July 2pm
Hungarian Mass	8 Sept 3pm
Zimbabwe Mass	14 Sept, 12 Oct 1pm
Rosary Group	Weds after 12.30pm Mass
Soulfood Prayer Group 1 <sup>st</sup> / 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tues: St Laurence's 2 <sup>nd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> Tues: OLEM Parish Hall	Every Tuesday 8pm
Parish Forum Dates for 2019	10 Oct 8pm



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# ST LAURENCE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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St Laurence's Parish is in the Diocese of East Anglia, and covers the area of Cambridge north of the river Cam including Arbury, Chesterton and King's Hedges, and also the villages of Histon, Impington, Girton, Cottenham, Milton, Landbeach and Waterbeach.

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## **Service Times**

Saturday 9.30am

6pm Vigil Mass (sung)

Sunday 8.00am

9.30am (sung) with children's liturgy

This Mass is held at St Laurence's School, Arbury Road.

During school holidays it is held at the Church.

11am (sung) with children's liturgy

Join us for coffee in the Parish Room afterwards.

Mon/Tues/Thurs 9.30am

Wednesday/Friday 12.30pm

*Check the weekly newsletter for changes to the above times*

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