

The Pilgrim

St Laurence's Parish Magazine, Advent 2020



**Wishing you all peace, health
and happiness this Christmas**

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What's New

Booking for Christmas Masses

For the Christmas Masses a percentage of seats will be bookable, probably about 75-80%. This will be done using the Eventbrite website, a link to which will be put on the Parish website. Please see the inside cover of this magazine for expected Mass times and check the newsletter for up-to-date information on times and how to book your place. You can also contact the Parish Office by email or phone to make reservations.

The Carol Service will take place on Sunday 20th December at 4pm and will be a livestreamed service only. Also, it will not be necessary to book for Boxing Day Masses (see back page for Mass times).

Extra volunteers needed

We will need the following positions covered at each of the six Christmas' Masses:

3 stewards, 2 eucharistic ministers, 2 readers

If you wish to volunteer for any of the above please contact the office (office@saintlaurence.org.uk) with:

- your name
- email address and telephone number
- which Mass you will help at
- which position you are volunteering for

Children's Liturgy Returns to St Laurence's

Leonie Isaacson

Our children are a vital part of the Parish community and we want them to feel part of the Mass celebrated at St Laurence's and to be given an opportunity to explore the Gospel reading at their own level. Therefore, we are delighted to report that Children's Liturgy returned to the Parish in October at the 9:30am Sunday Mass. The sessions take place at the beginning of Mass, centre around a child-friendly version of the Gospel and last approx. 15 minutes. The sessions are participative and fun, starting with the opening song, which as we cannot all sing along, involves actions that the entire congregation (and hopefully those listening at home) join in with. Two Children's Liturgy volunteers lead each session, and after reading the Gospel, lead a discussion or activity with the children based on the Gospel reading.

We have had some great help from children with lighting the candles, holding the 'extended' roving mic to enable everyone to hear a child contribute from the pews, and in reading the bidding prayers. When the

Children's Liturgy finishes, this leads straight into a homily delivered by Fr Simon/Fr Bob. Children remain seated with their parents and we encourage families to sit in the front pews.

Colouring-in and activity sheets related to the Gospel reading are available, just inside the church entrance, for use during the remainder of Mass, or to take home. Clipboards are provided, but we ask that families bring their own colouring-in pens and pencils. Children coming to 11am Mass may still be able to pick up some of the sheets, so do look out for them as you come into church. We welcome all families to join in. Stewards will try to find you somewhere to sit near the front. For those families who are not currently able to come to church, you can still join us via the live streaming of the Mass. Whilst the plan is to continue delivering Children's Liturgy in this way to the children of this Parish, **this will only be possible if we get more volunteers!!!**

Cambridge Churches Homeless Project

Petra Tucker

Unfortunately, the project will not be running the winter night shelter this year for rough sleepers on the streets of Cambridge. Government advice is that pop-up shelters like ours are very difficult to make safe for our guests in terms of infection control. Initially the local council in Cambridge housed the homeless in temporary accommodation during the first period of lockdown. It was then decided that the people housed could stay in the hotels and guest houses they had been put in. Since then, the council have been working very hard to find permanent housing for them. This has been successful for a good number. The trustees have discussed how we can support what is going on this winter in Cambridge. We have decided that where there is a particular need for someone, we will fund help for them if we are able to do so. This year we will not be asking for volunteers. If people would like to donate to the work of homelessness, then the following links might be useful.

Cambridge Churches Homeless Project

If you go to the homepage then there is a link to donations. This will then give you a link to Virgin Giving where you can donate.

Wintercomfort

Has a COVID19 Emergency Appeal – the details of which can be found on their homepage.

Jimmy's Cambridge

There will always be rough sleepers on our streets. Some people are just unable to live at a fixed address. For this reason, it is likely that CCHP's winter shelter

will be needed again – just that we are not able to provide this service this winter. Please continue to remember all those who are homeless in your prayers as well as those who work with them.



Parishioners of Saint Laurence featured on Radio Maria England

Helena Judd

Radio Maria England is a Catholic radio station based in Cambridge and has really built an amazing set of programmes over the summer. The station broadcasts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and includes live streams of Mass from the Dominican Priory of Saint Michael the Archangel in Cambridge (Blackfriars), the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Norwich and the National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. They also broadcast original programmes on a wide range of themes such as family, the catechism, Church history and traditions, and even music playlists.

Radio Maria England is based on volunteers, many of whom come from Saint Laurence Parish. Lucia Watson and her family feature weekly on the **'CAFOD's Children's Liturgy'**, a fifteen-minute reflection on Sunday's gospel. Chioma Ubajaka and her family present the **'Children's Rosary'** and **'Bedtime Blessings'**, a guided nightly prayer for the family. Nessa Tjinakiet helps with the LIVE **'Rosary'** on weekdays at 2pm. And Claire Storey has been featured as a guest on **'Encounters with God Through Music'**, where she shared a personal song that helps her focus while praying.

There are many more Saint Laurence Parishioners working behind the scenes, such as Sarah Sykes who helps lead the social media team for Radio Maria England. You can see her many posts on Radio Maria England's Facebook page. Charles Wilson is the president and has been leading the station's growth and reaching listeners across England. Gail Osman also helps write and present for **'Women Together'**, a programme that looks at scripture and discusses how women can reach their full potential with God. Radio Maria England can be found on DAB and DAB+ radios as well as through the internet at www.RadioMariaEngland.uk or by downloading the Radio Maria World Family mobile app. You never know when you will be listening and hear a familiar voice!

If you would like to volunteer for Radio Maria England (currently looking for presenters, people to help with 'live' broadcasts of Masses, people to pray and admin support), please email:

volunteer@RadioMariaEngland.uk

'Questions of Faith' and other programmes on Radio Maria England

Sarah Sykes

Wouldn't it be great to have a Catholic priest or religious person available to chat to for an hour and ask any questions you like about the Catholic faith and anything related to the Church in the world today?

What would you ask a priest if you had his undivided attention? What questions do you puzzle over? Would you like to know what the Pope's Encyclicals are about in plain English? Is there a tricky Bible verse or chapter that you would love some light thrown on? Are your children driving you crazy with so many WHY questions?

Well, if you send these questions to questions@radiomariaengland.uk, Fr Sam Randall will attempt to answer them!

'Questions of Faith' is broadcast live on Friday mornings from 11am – 12noon and repeated during the following week on Monday at 9pm, Tuesday at 9am and for you night workers and night owls at 2am.

A little help with prayer?

Do you find it difficult to switch off and really focus on God when you take time to pray?

Margaret Mary McFadyen, a specialist in the **'Lectio Divina'** method of prayer, is on Radio Maria England on Mondays at 8.30pm, Tuesdays at 1am, Thursdays at 2.30pm and Saturdays at 6.30am. Whether you like to pray morning, noon or night there's a slot for you to join her as she picks one Bible verse a week to focus on. She gently quiets the mind, leads you into prayer and as you contemplate and listen for God he welcomes and refreshes you.

And for those who like to use their imaginations, Margaret Mary also presents her **'Contemplative Prayer'** programme on Sundays at 6.30am, Tuesdays at 2.30pm, Wednesday at 8.30pm and Thursday at 1am. Close your eyes and imagine the sights and sounds around you as you contemplate a scene from the Bible and let this scene lead you into a meditation on the scripture.

Features and Opinions

The Vacillating Roman

John Conlon

Since the time of the Apostles, Christians have recited his name every day in countless languages and churches around the world. He is not an Apostle, an early disciple, a Christian, or a holy man of any kind, yet has a central place in our liturgy. We know almost nothing about his early or later life. He rose to become a middle-ranking official in the eastern Roman Empire yet has a claim to be the most famous ancient Roman of them all. This man is remembered today for two acts: he sentenced Jesus Christ to death by crucifixion and then washed his hands of the decision. I am talking, of course, about Pontius Pilate. The sentencing and hand washing would have meant little to Pilate, but it is fair to say they changed history of humankind.

I have often wondered at Mass why Pilate's name has been left in the Creeds. Perhaps to provide historical proof that the events he was involved with did actually happen. Let's look in a little more detail at what we confidently know about him. He was Roman procurator during the time of John the Baptist and Jesus. On top of his role as financial administrator, Pilate had supreme power judicially. A fiscal procurator was the chief financial officer of a province and worked alongside the imperial governor but was not his junior.

As procurator, Pilate was of equestrian rank. His name Pontius tells us he was from the Pontii family of central-southern Italy. His cognomen was Pilatus. A cognomen was the third name of a citizen of ancient Rome, under Roman naming conventions. Initially, a cognomen was a nickname, but lost that purpose when it became hereditary. Pilatus might mean 'skilled with the javelin', but it could also refer to the 'pileus' or Phrygian cap given to freed slaves.

His official residence was the palace of Herod at Caesarea where there was a military force of about 3,000 soldiers. These soldiers came up to Jerusalem at the time of the feasts, when the city was full of strangers, and there was greater danger of disturbances. So it was that at Passover Pilate had come to Jerusalem for his encounter with Jesus in 30 or 33 CE. The main sources on the trial and crucifixion of Jesus are the four canonical Christian gospels. It is generally assumed, based on the unanimous testimony of the gospels, that the crime for which Jesus was brought to Pilate and executed was sedition, founded on his claim to be king of the Jews.

Pilate is mentioned as having been involved in the crucifixion in both the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed. The Apostles' Creed states that Jesus 'suffered

under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried'. The Nicene Creed states, 'For our sake [Jesus] was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried'. Pilate is the only person besides Jesus and Mary mentioned by name in the Creeds.

Pilate's washing his hands of responsibility for Jesus's death in Matthew is the origin of the English phrase 'to wash one's hands of (the matter)', meaning to refuse further involvement with or responsibility for something. Parts of the dialogue attributed to Pilate in the Gospel of John have become particularly famous, especially quoted in the Latin version of the Vulgate. These include John 18:35 ('Am I a Jew?'), John 18:38 ('What is truth?'), John 19:5 ('Behold the man!'), John 19:14 ('Behold your king!'), and John 19:22 ('What I have written, I have written').

The tendency in the canonical gospels to lay stress on the efforts of Pilate to acquit Christ, and thus pass as lenient a judgment as possible, led in later years to the claim that he actually became a Christian. In fact, the Abyssinian Church regards him as a saint for this reason. The gospels' descriptions of Pilate's role in Jesus's trial has left Pilate with a reputation as a vacillating, indecisive person unwilling to make a big decision. Pilate's hand washing in the gospels is meant to signify that the procurator thought Jesus was not guilty and therefore symbolically washed Jesus's innocent blood from his hands.

Pilate's role in Judea was brought to an end through civil trouble that arose in Samaria, leading to many killings. Pilate was summoned to Rome to explain his tough handling of the disturbance, but little is known about him after that. Was he punished or did he retire? We do not know. He faded away, yet has never been forgotten.

Hand washing has become central to all our lives during the COVID era. Next time you wash your hands in an effort to stay healthy, cast your mind back 2,000 years to a certain procurator in Jerusalem whose hand washing had a completely differing meaning.

Sources: Catholic Encyclopaedia and Wikipedia

A Time for Fasting, a Time for Feasting

Dr Sue Price

Acting Principal, MBIT

As we continue to learn to live with this virus and the necessary fasting from so many things, I am amazed at the amount of feasting that is also taking place. I struggle with the fasting required in church, where I have to sit alone, and yet, there is a quiet sense of community which I am learning to relish. I am aware of

the fasting required by so many who cannot physically come to church, and yet there is the feast brought about by the many more who are able to join in via the internet, who would never have got to know our communities if it had not been for the lockdown. There is the fasting of not being able to share a meal with friends in the usual way, but there has been the feast too of sharing with friends and family using the internet where it has not been possible before.

The same fasting and feasting has been happening for us at Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology. We have had to fast from our usual gatherings as we moved all our teaching online and need to continue to do so for the foreseeable future. That has been at a cost, as for some who have enjoyed being part of our community of study, research and prayer, the online offering has been problematic. However, for others, it has been a rich and varied feast. We have been able to have people from all over the world join us for our teaching and prayer sessions – from Honduras, the States, Ireland, the far-flung corners of Scotland. We have been blessed by Sisters in enclosed communities joining us as part of their formation programme. We have been able to offer a coffee morning retreat to 30 women in the States. The feasting has been great and I would like to invite you to come and join the feast that is on offer over the winter.

Why not try a Study Day – join Fr Dominic White, OP and the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies students on 16th January 2021 looking at the nature of the Church and its mission in the world today? Or work with Dr Rosalie Moloney for the afternoon of 10th February 2021 and explore ‘The Hidden Treasure: The Bible in Liturgy, Lectionary and Life’. Our study days are open to everyone.

Or why not consider the Catholic Theology and Practice modules, a learning space for Catholic Women. The next module is ‘Catholic Morality: Its Ups and Downs’. Led by Dr Anna Abram and Dr Beth Phillips, the course which runs on Thursday afternoons, 21st January to 11th February, will consider what do we mean by ‘sin’, ‘conscience’, ‘how do we get moral knowledge’, and recent developments in ‘ecclesial ethics’. Dr Adrienne Dengerink will be leading the next module looking at ‘Faith in Art: Transcendence and Embodiment’, and how art can be the bridge leading to the spiritual and transcendental. This will be on Thursdays from 18th February to 11th March 2021.

For more details and costings please see our website: <http://www.margaretbeaufort.cam.ac.uk/> or our brochure: <https://wakelet.com/wake/MuXaW23jaRRCKYwLJeDHi> or e-mail mbitadm@hermes.cam.ac.uk to register your interest.

Looking forward to welcoming you to the feast.

The Polish Community in the Parish of St Laurence in Cambridge

Fr Waldemar Niewiński

The beginnings of the Polish Parish in Cambridge date back to the end of World War II. The first Polish community consisted mainly of soldiers and airmen who were preparing across Great Britain for combat or fighting against the Germans where they remained until the end of the war. Following this, their families joined them along with many prisoners of concentration camps and exiles to Siberia. This was made possible by Allied Forces who helped them reach the Britain. Many arrived here after a long journey through Siberia, Iran, even India and Africa. Many of them lost everything during the war, even their loved ones. Poland was left devastated and, despite regaining freedom, power fell into the hands of the communists. As one regime fell, another came into place. This made it difficult for Poles to return to their homeland and they remained overseas.

However, wherever they were, they wanted to cultivate Polish traditions and nurture the faith of their ancestors. Often, it was on the initiative of lay people that parishes were established, and the already existing communities of compatriots sought a priest. This was the case in Cambridge. The Polish parish in this city has existed since 1948, and since that year Mass has been celebrated in Polish at The Church of Our Lady and the English Martyrs. The current priest, Fr Waldemar Niewiński, is the twelfth parish priest.

After many years of efforts, in 1972 a house on Chesterton Road was purchased which became a focal meeting point for Poles while the converted loft became the residence of the parish priest. On the first floor there is a chapel dedicated to the Blessed Mary, Queen of Poland, where Mass is celebrated in Polish on weekdays. Other devotions in the chapel include The Way of the Cross, Rorate Mass and the Rosary. In addition, on the ground floor, there is the ‘Polonia’ restaurant which serves traditional Polish cuisine. There is also a Polish library. In the past, lessons at the Polish Saturday School took place here. To this day, the ‘Wiwat’ folk dance group practise here. Every year, different types of social and cultural events are organised like New Year’s Eve, St Andrew’s Feast Day and carol services. From the very beginning, this house has been teeming with life, it is a place where Poles can meet for prayers, for meals and for conversation.

‘Polonia’ House is located in the Catholic parish of St Laurence. This church on Milton Road whose current parish priest is Fr Simon Blakesley, is very welcoming to the Polish community and it is there that First Holy Communion, Confirmations, weddings, funerals and other Feast days take place. During the coronavirus lockdown, Mass in Polish was live streamed from there

and since July, thanks to the generosity of Fr Simon and his parish, Mass in Polish has been celebrated every Saturday at 7.30pm.

On behalf of the whole Polish community, I would like to express great gratitude for the warm hospitality and assure you of our prayers for all the faithful of St Laurence.



Polonia House, Chesterton Road

Opera and Christian Morality

Riq Willitts

Opera does not at first sight seem to be a good source of moral teaching. Indeed, opera and theatre have a long history of censorship, though the motivation has more often been political rather than the protection of morals. Operas are full of murder, mayhem and forbidden sex, yet the best are deeply illuminating on how we behave in these circumstances.

Many operas fall into one of two categories. Firstly, the individual struggling against society, and secondly, the individual consumed by passion, jealousy or revenge. Each has a moral lesson for us.

In the first category we find Christian martyrdom, but also heroes and heroines rejected by society for failing to conform. The music elicits our sympathy for their plight.

Dialogues of the Carmelites (Poulenc) – about the nuns being persecuted during the French Revolution – raises the issue of whether it is right to seek martyrdom deliberately. Blanche struggles to choose between seeking refuge with her family and joining the other nuns on the way to the guillotine.

Theodora (Handel), of noble birth, rejects the world of money and trusts in God by refusing to worship the Roman gods. Her example converts the Roman Didymus to Christianity. The Roman population are amazed at their willingness to die for each other. But the inflexible law condemns them both.

Peter Grimes (Britten), who may or may not be responsible for the deaths of his apprentices, is shown as trying to establish himself and to marry. But prejudice is against him and he is driven to suicide.

In the second category, the principal characters are consumed by passion, do many terrible things, and almost never live happily ever after. Yet we see them as hardly responsible for their actions.

Elektra (Strauss), seeking revenge for the death of her father Agamemnon, is acting out a Greek tragedy where individuals are in the power of their gods. In the opera we see the events unfold with the participants unable to choose any other course. We should reflect on how we can get caught up in a popular movement to wage war or seek revenge – we do actually have free will, however hard it may be to go against the stream.

In *La traviata* (Verdi) the heroine is not entirely blameless, but is unjustly rejected by society. Violetta, a high-class prostitute, tries to build a proper relationship with Alfredo, but his father breaks it up to save the family's honour. Acceptance comes too late as Violetta dies in poverty.

The pregnancy of the unmarried *Jenůfa* (Janáček) is unacceptable in a small village. The baby, born in secret, is drowned by the stepmother in an attempt to maintain the family honour. When the body is discovered, *Jenůfa* is accused of the murder, but the stepmother admits her guilt, leaving *Jenůfa* free.

In *The Marriage of Figaro* (Mozart), the Count and Countess, after the Count's infidelity is exposed, are reconciled to some of the most moving music Mozart ever wrote. On the other hand, *Don Giovanni* (Mozart again) is deservedly sent to Hell, though he almost wins us over with his charms on the way.

Carmen (Bizet) dies at the hands of her jealous lover, Don José. Is this the tragedy of a woman who tries to manipulate men once too often, or is Don José too weak-willed to heed either Carmen's warning or Micaëla's pleading?

Many operas end in suicide. This can be merely a convenient plot device, or it may be more significant. In *The Rape of Lucretia* (Britten), set in ancient Rome, the virtuous Lucretia, raped, commits suicide as the honourable thing to do. The opera makes this seem so appropriate that it is quite discomfiting for a Christian audience. In *Dido and Aeneas* (Purcell), the suicide of Dido after the departure of Aeneas is even more disturbing, particularly as it is accompanied by one of Purcell's best tunes. Without suggesting that suicide is ever morally right, we have to sympathise with those who are driven to it.

The Coronation of Poppea (Monteverdi) is a fairly unusual example of the triumph of evil. This was Monteverdi's last opera, written when he was 75 – certainly not the wise and balanced view of life that age might have brought. Poppea persuades the Emperor Nerone to put aside his wife Empress Ottavia. Seneca, who advises Nerone against it, is commanded to commit suicide. But the music is so expressive of the variety of human emotions that this work is considered to be Monteverdi's masterpiece. Here, perhaps, we should not look for morality but rejoice in the revelation of the many sides of God-given human nature.

So we learn more about ourselves, how badly we behave, and how this behaviour often ends disastrously. Yet we see parallels with life today, both private and public, and are inspired to do better.

Buckfast Abbey: some history

Nora Darby



Buckfast Abbey, 1931, under construction

In the last edition of *Pilgrim* my friend and co-editor Sarah talked of her visit to Buckfast Abbey. We had quite a few favourable comments about this piece which led to my having a chat with Margaret Plumb, a parishioner since St Laurence's was a tin hut in Chesterton! She told me she had some old photos of the Abbey, taken by her father before building was completed, and would Sarah and I like to see them? Yes please, was my answer and so she gave me some photocopies labelled 1931. She explained her father had been in Devon on holiday and was interested to see the Abbey, this was before Margaret was born! A few weeks ago, I asked if I could see the originals and maybe scan them for inclusion in *Pilgrim*. I saw pages of wonderful black and white photos, very typical 1930's style and fashion, in Margaret's amazing photo album. As you will see from the photos of the buildings there is

still scaffolding in place. Look at the clothes of the people also.

This incident led me to look more into the history of Buckfast. The first Abbey was built by the Benedictines in 1018 during the reign of King C'nut, (Canute). Yes, he was the one who turned back the waves, if you know your history? In 1134 it became Cistercian and a stone building on the present site was built in 1137. The Abbey became very rich, but over the years did not prosper. By the time of Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries in 1539 there were only ten monks. The last Abbott, Gabriel Donne, surrendered the Abbey, which enabled him to have a large pension of £120 per year. He surrendered to Sir William Petre, Secretary of State to Henry VIII. (*When I saw this name, I knew there was another connection which I will come back to later*). Sir William took 1.5 tons of gold, silver and gilt from the treasures of the Abbey to the Tower of London. To me that seems to say that the building itself was a treasure trove?

The building fell into ruins and was used as a stone quarry. In 1800 the site was purchased by local mill owner Samuel Berry, who demolished the ruins and built a Gothic style mansion house and woollen mill on the site. The only pieces of the former Abbey to escape were some of the outer buildings which were used as farmhouses (one of these can be seen in Margaret's photos), and the tower from the former Abbot's lodgings which, too, still remains today. Over the next eighty years the Buckfast site changed hands four times before being bought by Dr James Gale in 1872. After ten years he decided to sell and was keen to offer it to a religious community. It was advertised in *The Tablet*, and within six weeks of the sale monks were already living there.

In 1882 it was bought for £4,700 by Benedictines who had been exiled from France. A temporary church was built, the present abbey church being built between 1906 and 1938, mostly on the footprint of the original Cistercian monastery. Construction methods were primitive; only six monks were working at any time, with wooden scaffolding tied together by rope. No hard hats or Health and Safety?? Work continued throughout the First World War. Buckfast was formally reinstated as an Abbey in 1902 with Anscar Vonier as Abbot and was consecrated in 1932, although building was not completed for some years as shown in the photos taken by Margaret's father. The last stone was laid in 1937 and work finally completed the following year.

In 1968 Dom Charles completed the huge east window in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.



The East Window of the Abbey

The Abbey has visitors from all over the world. Among its many treasures is the hair shirt of St Thomas More now preserved in a side chapel.

What I find so interesting is the fact that the first monks of Buckfast in 1018 were Benedictines and, despite all that happened over the intervening years, they returned in 1882 and are still there. Moreover, from that first wooden monastery building each consecutive building has been on exactly that same site.

In my second paragraph I highlighted the name of Sir William Petre, and here is the reason why. Another parishioner at St Laurence's is a lady who some of you will know; her name is Ann Hales-Tooke and her maiden name was PETRE! Ann is in her nineties now and was coming to Mass until the first lockdown. I got to know her when she wrote some articles and did book reviews for Pilgrim. She told me she was writing a book about her family and we had some interesting conversations about them. In 2017 her book, *'The Family That Flew'*, was published under the name, Ann Petre. I had a copy and reviewed it for Pilgrim. I would definitely recommend reading it, an amazing story.

In the book she goes back to her early ancestors, one of whom was the same Sir William Petre, Buckfast was surrendered to in 1539.

Sadly, I have had to change the final paragraph of my article as Ann died on 6th November. Her son said, "She died peacefully and was lucid to the end." A fitting epitaph for a very special lady.

Cardinal Points – Myth and Meaning

Ronald Haynes

'All this Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable.' We hear this pivotal emphasis in Matthew's telling of the Gospel (Matthew 13:34), just after a series of unforgettable

stories to help understand the kingdom of heaven – the parables of the Sower and the Seeds, of the Weeds among the Wheat, of the Mustard Seed, and of the Yeast. We also hear why Jesus is always conveying vital truth by telling tales, 'This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet (Isaiah): "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world."'

Traditionally, we also refer to stories by the Greek reference – myth. Myths and mythology sometimes get bad press, largely due to misunderstandings. Like any story or myth, there are ones which uniquely help convey deep meaning, help us get closer to the truth, and some which can distract from what is real and true – and so much depends on the tale and timing and those who are telling it. The Wisdom tradition represented in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) includes a hinted warning about this: 'An ungracious man is like a story told at the wrong time, which is continually on the lips of the ignorant.' (Sirach 20:19)

It is worth wondering why is it we tell stories, and Jesus spoke in parables, and what happens within them? One writer suggests that, when a parable is working well and is fully engaged, then the 'spectators become participants' (*Speaking in parables: a study in metaphor and theology*, TeSelle). The power of parable and the potential for persuasion is such that we need to discern and be sure we hear the right words and follow the right path – which is why the passage from Sirach warns about the ungracious and untimely teller, and about the impact of those of us who do not know the difference continuing to spread this unhelpful message. Does this perhaps sound at all familiar in a contemporary context? In terms of the teller, and those whose message we hear and spread, we might briefly consider what makes a heroine or hero special – what makes them, well, heroic? Is it in the way they act, the kind of person they are, or is it all in the telling of their tale – and whether their tale might inspire or in some way include us? No doubt all of these are true of the heroic people in our memories and imaginations.

As long as humans have been around, it seems, and especially since our ancestors started telling tales, marking walls, and eventually writing things down, there have been heroic stories to share, and wondrous deeds to convey – to those living at the time, and increasingly addressed to other people in the future. Story in some ways becomes history, and helps provide accounts of the past, but stories also help immortalise great characters and larger-than-life deeds, whether by accounts of god-like abilities (like the strength of Samson or Hercules) or in depictions of seemingly supernatural events (like the lone ship of survivors of a great world flood, or the virgin birth of extraordinary people).

These are some of the many aspects of myths, of stories we tell, with the very act of storytelling seeming to be one of the special features of what defines human beings. To call something a myth is not, as sometime is assumed, to automatically call it false, but rather to say that something is being conveyed in the form of a story – which can provide anything from great deceptions through to the highest truths. A five-year-old telling stories about a monster may not give you reasons to contact the officials, but is conveying personal concerns from their perspective which calls for responses of comfort, sensitivity, and encouragement.

This approach bears some relation to how Jesus and other spiritual leaders try to convey something beyond the limits of our reasoning, to help encourage and build up the listener. For instance, so many of Jesus' parables begin with 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like' or similar, and whether it is a merchant or a king or a shepherd, we are meant to focus more on the meaning of the story, and what it says and asks of us – individually and communally – rather than simply picking over the pieces of the story on their own.

As noted, parables have power, and moving stories and well-told tales affect us and stay with us, sometimes even in otherwise seemingly ordinary contexts. You may have heard that the popular 'Mr Men' children's books were inspired by the author's young son wonderfully asking him what a tickle looked like – which led to the famous round, orange character with long, bendy arms.

The long-running Shipping Forecast on BBC radio has embedded itself so much in memory and culture that it features in poem and song, including ones by Seamus Heaney and Carol Ann Duffy, Radiohead and Blur. The Guardian's radio critic said of it 'these forecasts, with their place names, terms (veering, backing) and weatherly detail you never hear in the rest of life, and their hypnotically formulaic progression (area, wind direction, strength, precipitation, sea conditions, visibility), have a talismanic, haunting power'.

Ever since we have added words to images, we have expanded both our imagination and our terms, enabling us to convey deep meaning but, soberingly, also providing the ability to corrode and convey major deception. Our words, whether in speech or writing, can inflame or inform others (and ourselves) and are an essential aspect of our conceptual and communal life. The Cambridge mathematician/poet, William Empson, famously presented a case for there being different types of ambiguity (*Seven Types of Ambiguity*) – in which we express the most profound truths, the drollest of puns, or the most pernicious of untruths (including perhaps some fake news). How we choose our words, how we express ourselves, must have something to do with how we live, how we feel and show respect – to ourselves and to others.

A great quote from the 20th century French Jesuit scientist and spiritual writer Teilhard de Chardin helps flip a common view of ourselves, 'We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience'. This superb reversal of common expectations and understandings, much like the constructive purpose of so many religious parables, echoes similar thoughts by Meister Eckhart and related spiritual guides.

This invitation to a positive about-face, a spiritual awakening and change of perspective, also fits well with many parables told by the 19th century Danish philosopher and spiritual writer Kierkegaard, including a most memorable one called 'The Cellar Tenant' (from *The Sickness Unto Death*), in which he conveys concern for 'the sorry and ludicrous condition of the majority of men' (sic), and wonders '*To what shall we compare our persistent spiritual self-rejection?*'. It seems suitable to end with a story, and the following key excerpts share some of the wit and wisdom, along with indications of hopeful alternatives (eg available to the listener, as appropriate):

In case one were to think of a house, consisting of a cellar, ground-floor and *premier étage*, ... so arranged, that it was planned for a distinction of rank between the dwellers on the several floors; and in case one were to make a comparison between such a house and what it is to be a man ... The soulish-bodily synthesis in every man is planned with a view to being spirit, such is the building; but the man prefers to dwell in the cellar ... And not only does he prefer to dwell in the cellar; no, he loves that to such a degree that he becomes furious if anyone would propose to him to occupy the *bel étage* which stands empty at his disposition – for in fact he is dwelling in his own house.

A visual aid for *Fratelli Tutti*?

Joe Tucker

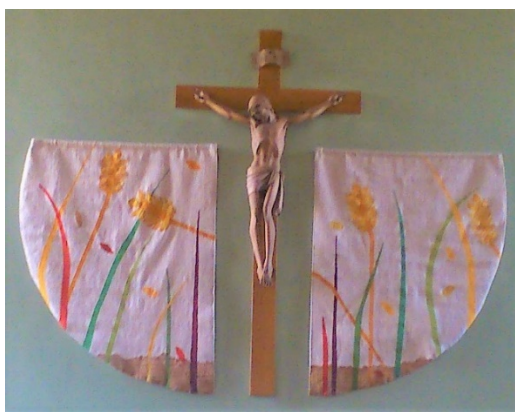
For many years, I had issues with the parable of the Sower and the Seed, as it appears to give a resounding thumbs-up to spectacularly fruitful people and a thumbs-down to the rest of us. Given that our fruitfulness has continual ups and downs, how does this make sense – unless you are a fan of Calvinist pre-destination, which is surely one of the worst ideas ever to catch on in Christianity. Then I realised that (particularly in Mark's gospel) it's simply the basis for all the other parables! For example, the Good Samaritan parable is a hard-hitting illustration of how Jesus expects his followers to behave.

Pope Francis' latest encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, is a challenging exploration of what the Good Samaritan means in current times. Here are a few extracts, to give a flavour and encourage everyone to read the complete text:

- appreciate and love each person [1]
- God has created all human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity [5]
- we need to think of ourselves as a single family dwelling in a common home [17]
- discarding others can take a variety of forms [20]
- Isolation, no; closeness, yes. Culture clash, no; culture of encounter, yes [30]
- our lives are interwoven with and sustained by ordinary people [54]
- love does not care if a brother or sister in need comes from one place or another [62]

So, what would make a good visual aid for such a wide collection of themes?

The tapestry in St Laurence's Church is primarily an interpretation of the Sower and the Seed parable (which, let us remember, is about people, not agriculture!), designed to be viewed together with the Cross. The gap between Cross and tapestries reminds me of our imperfect relationship with Christ with the white background symbolising His resurrection, pouring light and grace into the world.



To my eyes, the artist has created a striking image of our Parish community, living close to Christ, and striving for fruitfulness, while caring for each other and sharing the limited resources of a fragile planet.

I would claim that it is these last two points which make a strong link to the Good Samaritan story and Pope Francis' vision of a world where we stand together, and everyone is valued.

Finally, a quote from a leading writer on the craft of tapestry: 'Weaving is the great classic symbol of coming together and the intermeshing of separate threads to make a new integrity'.

Focus on Pope Francis' comments on civil union submitted by Fr Simon Blakesley

As you will be aware, Pope Francis has recently courted some controversy by mentioning that those in civil unions are also children of God, but this was spun out of control by the pressure groups that seek to manipulate the public face of the Church into supporting, if only tacitly, their chosen moral agenda. Bishop Philip Egan of Portsmouth immediately issued a very helpful statement which I now quote in full:

'Last week, there was a media frenzy over remarks made by Pope Francis in a new documentary, *Francesco*. In it, he stated, "Homosexual people have the right to be in a family. They are children of God. You cannot kick someone out of a family, nor make their life miserable for this. What we have to have is a civil union law; that way they are legally covered." In response, Archbishop Cordileone of San Francisco recalled how last year, during the audience with the Holy Father that was part of the *Ad limina* of the bishops from his region – the visit diocesan bishops make every five years to the Vatican – the topic of civil unions had come up in the conversation. The Pope clearly differentiated between a civil arrangement which accords mutual benefits to two people, and marriage. The former, he said, can in no way be equated to marriage, which remains unique. Then he said: "I would add that a civil union of this type (one which is not equated to marriage) should be as inclusive as possible, and not be restricted to two people of the same sex in a presumed sexual relationship. There is no reason, for example, why a brother and a sister, both of whom are unmarried and support each other, should not have access to these kinds of benefits. Marriage is unique because it is the only institution that connects children to their mothers and fathers, and therefore *is* presumed to be a sexual relationship. Indeed, the sexual relationship that marriage is presumed to involve is the only kind by which children are naturally made. The nature of marriage, the place of sex within a virtuous life, these great teachings of the Church come to us from God, are illuminated by reason, and do not change".'

It has become more important than ever to 'humanise' the Church's teaching on sexuality as it is all too easy to present a caricature of it with the obvious inference that such doctrine is cold and unsympathetic to significant numbers of people who are 'claimed' by the LGBTQ lobby and therefore purportedly 'condemned' by the Church. When this issue is discussed and rehearsed among the faithful, and particularly by those from the evangelical and scripturally consonant faithful, the more specific warnings of St Paul are often thrown to the fore, and that is understandable. There is however a very important Gospel text that needs to be carefully read and understood to put the discernment of our human sexuality in context.

It comes from St Matthew chapter 19:9–12, and you may ask why we have not heard it as our Sunday Gospel in recent weeks as we are in Year A (the year of St Matthew) and the reason is that the compilers of the Lectionary left the whole of chapter 19 out for reasons best known to themselves. It reads: ‘But I say this to you, whosoever divorces his wife, except for a case of fornication, and marries another, commits adultery: and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. The disciples said to him, “If that is how it is between a man and his wife, it is probably best not to get married in the first place”. But he said to them, “It is not everyone who can receive what I have said, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs that were born that way from their mother’s womb: and there are eunuchs that were made eunuchs by others: and there are eunuchs that have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Whomsoever is able receive what I have said, let them receive it”.’

There is a footnote in the Jerusalem Bible translation that construes the latter half of verse 12 as the Lord’s invitation to his followers to embrace a life of celibacy, but this is, in my view, a clumsy exegesis of the text. What the Lord is saying is that a faithful and functional marriage between two people is a freely given gift of grace that both partners must be open to receive individually and mutually. There are always going to be those, however, who, for whatever reason, cannot accept this grace because something in their early life experience, whether before birth or after it, has made them into eunuchs who find it impossible to receive the grace of marriage. In this context to be a ‘eunuch’ is not understood in a limited anatomical sense as the absence of functional genitalia, but as a broader incapacity to establish and nurture a conjugal relationship which is in and of itself open to the gift of life. The development of the discipline of ‘Depth Psychosomatics’, has greatly helped us to understand how early trauma can make a person have a deeply rooted psychosomatic distrust of an intimate conjugal relationship. This pioneering work was initiated by Dr Frank Lake (1914–1982) in his work *Clinical Theology: a Theological and Psychiatric Basis to Clinical Pastoral Care* but has been further elaborated by the research of Dr Terence Dowling.

Giving any accurate percentages of those who are ‘capable’ or ‘incapable’ of receiving the gift of marriage is most probably a fool’s errand, but what we do need to realise and take with us into our understanding of human sexuality is that a person’s individual capacity to accept and to live out a ‘normal’ conjugal, heterosexual relationship can be strongly determined by early influences that are by their very definition deep-rooted.

If a person cannot live in a heterosexual symbiosis, it does not mean that their native yearning for a companionate relationship or capacity for friendship is extinguished. The problem from a moral point of view

is when such relationships are promoted as humanly equivalent to marriage when they do not and cannot share its biological and reproductive potential. It should also be noted that there are many ‘normal’ heterosexual couples who embrace the human institution of marriage but they have *a priori* rejected any human potential towards fruitfulness. Of course, within the Church’s canonical definition of marriage such a firm intention *contra bonumprolis* invalidates the contract between a man and a woman. It appears to be part of this tragic complex that such individuals who themselves have had a traumatic experience in their own formative years therefore they either radically limit or eschew completely their own reproductive potential.

Therefore, in our world, there will be relationships between two individuals who are not husband and wife in a heterosexual relationship who yet require some recognition of their *de facto* status as a pair-bond stably established in a mutually self-supporting way. It is this phenomenon that Pope Francis has recognised and has therefore seen civil-law measures to protect and foster such social stability as acceptable. He has spoken of the right to be ‘in a family’ and not to ‘have a family’ and although many may say this is too nuanced a distinction when dealing with matters of such evident moral gravity, we cannot accuse him of saying something that he has not said.

Of course, we would wish that everyone could ‘receive the gift’ of faithful marriage, but the Lord himself recognises that this gift cannot be accepted by all and almost universally through no fault of their own as this has been a reality from ‘their mother’s womb’ or because they have been made so by others. Even though such a human condition is involuntary we should also avoid a facile determinism that then regards human sexual attraction as following inexorably the metaphor of polarity or binary ‘orientation’. Such a limited psychological model does not recognise the fact that some people may tend to avoid relationship altogether while others may crave it insatiably and are perpetually disappointed never to find ‘the right one’.

Let us be clear, nobody wants to be a eunuch, but some people may arrive at a point where they accept their wounded genital sexuality and conjugal incapacity as the cross the Lord has invited them to bear. The great Scottish theologian Dr Peter Taylor Forsyth (1848–1921) spoke of those who need to accept the ‘conversion and sanctification of wounds incurable’. It is to such as these the choice lies open to become a ‘Eunuch for the sake of the Kingdom of God’, and eunuchs have a legitimate need to be in a family too.

FROM THE HOLY SEE VIA BISHOP ALAN HOPES:

In the last few days, some statements contained in the documentary *Francesco* by the director Evgeny Afineevsky have given rise to various reactions and interpretations. We

are making available to you some points we hope you will find useful to help people understand correctly what the Holy Father said.

In an interview he gave more than a year ago, Pope Francis answered two separate questions at different times, but they have been edited and published as a single answer, without being put into context in the way they should have been, and this has created confusion. In the first place, the Holy Father had made a *pastoral reference* to the need for homosexually oriented sons or daughters not to suffer discrimination within their own families. That is what these words refer to: 'Las personas homosexuales tienen derecho a estar en familia. No se puede echar de la familia a nadie ni hacerle la vida imposible por eso' (Homosexual persons have a right to be part of a family. You cannot throw someone out of the family or make his or her life impossible for that).

The following section from the Post-Synodal Exhortation *Amoris Lætitia* on the family can shed some light on these expressions: 'During the Synod, we discussed the situation of families whose members include persons who experience same-sex attraction, a situation not easy either for parents or for children. We would like before all else to reaffirm that every person, regardless of sexual orientation, ought to be respected in his or her dignity and treated with consideration, while 'every sign of unjust discrimination' is to be carefully avoided, particularly any form of aggression and violence. Such families should be given respectful pastoral guidance, so that those who manifest a homosexual orientation can receive the assistance they need to understand and fully carry out God's will in their lives' (§ 250).

A later question in the interview was related to a local law ten years ago in Argentina on 'matrimonios igualitarios de parejas del mismo sexo' (equal marriages of same-sex couples) and the then Archbishop of Buenos Aires' opposition to it. Pope Francis said about this that 'es una incongruencia hablar de matrimonio homosexual' (it is inconsistent to speak of homosexual marriage) and he added that, in precisely this context, he had spoken about these people's right to be covered legally: 'lo que tenemos que hacer es una ley de convivencia civil; tienen derecho a estar cubiertos legalmente. Yo defendí eso' (what we need to have is a law of civil partnership; they have a right to be covered by the law. I defended that.).

The Holy Father said this in an interview in 2014: 'Marriage is between a man and a woman. Secular states want to justify civil unions to regulate different situations of people who live together, driven by the need to regulate financial matters between persons, for example ensuring health care. It is about agreements on various kinds of living together, of which there are so many I would not be able to list them. We have to look at different cases and evaluate them in all their variety'.

It is clear, therefore, that Pope Francis was referring to particular state arrangements, and certainly not to Church doctrine, which has been re-stated various times through the years.

No room at the inn? The inn has been removed!

Arn Dekker



Today, 12th Nov. 2020, The Good Shepherd Collective reported that Israel has demolished another home in the embattled community of al-Walaje,

Bethlehem. It leaves another family homeless, just as winter sets in. Israel has demolished 717 Palestinian structures so far this year, displacing 876 people, most of them children.

The Israeli military busies itself delivering 96 hour final demolition orders when it has been decided that a home is an obstruction. It doesn't matter, apparently, that the house is built on land that has been illegally occupied by Israel. The UN have more than once declared Israel's actions against the law and even a war crime.

Although not all demolition orders are acted upon exactly at the end of the 96 hour period, the military will return at some time to carry out the demolitions. Unless the homeowners have the means and the desire to extend their legal battle through appeals to the Israeli court system and have the ability to contact a lawyer to do this immediately, they will lose their homes and any money invested in them.

It is true that a home may have been built without building permission having been obtained, but from experience they know that it is never granted by the occupying Israeli State.

Palestinian olive groves too are under attack from Israelis. Usually armed inhabitants of, under international law, illegally built Israeli settlements will try and disrupt the annual olive harvest, they will beat up farmers and landowners and they try to burn down olive trees.

The Israeli military will not protect the Palestinian farmers. These actions seem to be intended to chase them off their land so that Israel can use it to build further settlements.

Will Palestinians receive more justice and better treatment now that there is a new president in the USA, a president who does not automatically take Israel's side in any dispute? We shall have to wait and find out. In the meantime, we may want to remember the Palestinian people in our prayers.

St Laurence Catholic Primary Reflections on the Autumn Term Mrs Veronica Harvey and Mrs Elizabeth Bennett Joint Heads of School

A normal return to school in the Autumn term is a busy time for parents and staff. Buying uniforms, meeting new teachers and generally getting back into the morning routine!

Autumn 2020 has brought its own unique issues to the usual 'busyness' – risk assessments, bubbles, cleaning routines, staggered starts and an awareness that this is not normal.

But, somehow through this, the teachers and the school staff have made it normal for the children. The children were welcomed into their classes with joy. It is so lovely to have the school back together after the lockdown of the Summer. The new routines have been explained in a way that is not intimidating or scary and the children's wellbeing has been a continuing priority.

We still have challenges, often ones that require creative thinking! The whole school coming together for collective worship has not been possible, which means we have become experts at delivering Zoom assemblies and taking the opportunity to have a whole school prayer during a fire alarm test!

Fr Simon was able to host the start of term Mass via the Parish YouTube link and we have been fortunate to have him visit us for Class Masses and the Welcome Liturgy for our new Reception children.

The planning for Advent has begun, the greenery for the Advent wreaths has been collected, the Nativities are being rehearsed (these will be recorded for parents to watch – thanks to our PTA) and the Nativity figures are being dusted down, ready to take centre stage for our Carol Service (which will take place in bubble groups).

What this term has reinforced is the importance of our Community: our parents, the children, our Parish Priest, the teachers, the school governors, and the well-wishers from the Parish, all of whose kindness, flexibility and camaraderie are seeing us through. It really has brought home the school's mission statement *A Community growing in understanding and knowledge*.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has kept the school in their prayers as we have kept you in ours.



The Reception class have started to look at the Christmas story in their RE topic 'God's Family'. They listened to the Godly Play story of the Angel Gabriel meeting Mary and telling her that she had been chosen to have Baby Jesus, and how important it was that Mary said "Yes!" to God's message.



The children made Angels in the creative area and wrote Yes! to show how important the answer was.



Parish Organisations and Activities

Gift Aid

Jim Scally

During lockdown many of our parishioners have changed to making their donations by bank transfer. This is easy and convenient for both of us. If all of these donations were also to be Gift Aided, it would allow the Parish to reclaim a further 25p for every £1 donated.

You must be a tax-payer and have signed a Declaration Form.

Want to know more? Contact the Parish Office or e-mail giftaid@saintlaurence.org.uk

Catholic Women's League

Janet Scally

Although we have not been able to meet, we are lucky in having our little group of friends to chat to by phone or email whenever we like. The Mass for the Annual General Meeting of the countrywide League was held this month, so most of us watched it on Zoom, a strange but good experience. We were asked to vote for the usual resolutions at our AGM and one of our members said she would vote for anything that kept our League going, so that, at the end of all this virus problem, we would be able to help others and still be together. Our National President responded that this was a great comfort and support to her in these hard times.

Contact: Janet Scally, 01223 365330

Saint Laurence's Confirmation – BACK ON!

Helena Judd

I was extremely happy to see the Confirmation candidates again at the Ablaze Masses at Saint Laurence's.

During lockdown, the Confirmation group disbanded as families worked on their new routines, schedules and comforted one another. The group did meet once and received a blessing from Father Simon. But now – I am so, so, so incredibly happy to be back. We have had our first in person small group meetings and a large group meeting at the beginning of November. We have got November set with Zoom sessions and are excited to meet again at the beginning of December.

Hearing from the candidates from last year who will now be confirmed February 2021, I was amazed by how much they have grown and how much they have developed in their relationship with God. I don't know if it was the pandemic, time with their amazing parents, or what – but they have certainly impressed me so far by their maturity and love for their peers.

If you or your young adult would like to be confirmed this year, please email me at

Confirmation@SaintLaurence.org.uk

We would love to have you!

Update from St Vincent de Paul Society

Catharine Warren

The SVP is organising the Parish Christmas Giving Tree, but it will be a little different in 2020! In previous years there has been an actual Giving Tree at church and school with gift tags for you to take. This year we ask you either to donate a hamper item of your choice or visit the Parish website to pick a gift from the online wish list.

The gifts and hamper items you donate will be distributed to the following:

Wintercomfort, for homeless people.

Meals on Wheels, service for elderly people.

To local children, families and parishioners known to the SVP within East Anglia.

All gifts and hamper items should be returned to church by **13th December** at the latest. SVP members can collect items from your doorstep if that helps. Just email svp@saintlaurence.org.uk or phone Catharine Warren on 07421 253100 to get details. Thank you for your continuing donations of money and goods to SVP. We need your donations to support people with practical assistance, both here and overseas.

Recent activities made possible through your generosity include:

- delivering a large number of donated items to several families including clothes, toys, TV, lawnmower, furniture and a bicycle
- helping three families buy school shoes for their children
- assisting an individual moving home to purchase bedding and kitchenware
- support for a family new to the area, to get children equipped for school with warm coats and backpacks.

Overseas support, through SVP Twinning schemes includes:

- sponsoring two Indian students to undertake courses in vocational and technical training. One is studying General Nursing and Midwifery and the other is taking a diploma in mechanical engineering. The cost is £70 per student per year for three years.
- Part-funding a project to provide milk cows to 15 families (1 cow each, affecting 70 – 85 individuals) in St Paul's Conference, Baijhal – a remote, rural part of Gajapati District, Odisha, India. Our conference pledged £200 towards the £920 needed. The rest was contributed by three other SVP conferences in East Anglia.

Donations to the SVP can be made by bank transfer:

Acc. no. 46077618

Sort code 60-60-04

Acc. name E060102 ST LAURENCE

Please contact me if you have items that you think the SVP could use to assist others. Unfortunately, we can't take everything as we have no storage facilities and can only accept those things that we know one of our beneficiaries currently needs.

Members also get things done that don't need money but take time and energy. We continue to keep in touch with people we were visiting before the first lockdown. Three members have helped a young mother get to grips with her garden by doing some socially distanced gardening and clearing. Also keeping abreast of local charitable initiatives has resulted in a family obtaining computer equipment from an application to a Cambridgeshire charity working to reduce digital exclusion.

Please do contact us if you or someone you know needs help with any difficulty or would like a confidential chat. If you need a laptop for live-streaming Mass, or perhaps an extra laptop so it is easier for your children to do school work at home, you can contact me, as the Parish Tech Group has donated laptops available.

Call me on 07421 253100 or email:

svp@saintlaurence.org.uk

Thank you for your continued support and prayers for the work of the SVP.

Your help in rebuilding lives around the World – a CAFOD thank you!

Serga Collet

It has been a traumatic year for most of us, something that this time last year, I would have said was 'the stuff of horror movies'. Living with coronavirus, has for all of us, near and far, been a steep learning curve and we

have all learned to keep a safe distance from each other, wearing masks is the norm and we wash our hands often. Whilst traumatic, it has also been a time to restore faith in human nature, we have come together, and many have shown extraordinary strength in supporting each other. Many have done their best to support their own communities but also those far away – the support you showed in your response to the CAFOD Harvest appeal was **amazing**. THANK YOU so much for your generous giving – we raised an astonishing £1,096.70! This is a fantastic total as of course attendance at church was limited due to the pandemic and I am sure that many of you gave to CAFOD directly via the website. Sadly, we are not able to include this in our total, but it all goes to the same wonderful cause.

So here are some of the ways in which your money been used:

* In **Zimbabwe** to provide one nutritious meal a day for students who otherwise would struggle to get enough to eat during the coronavirus lockdown. Your money also funded a face mask for every child so they can continue to come and collect their food parcel, plus buckets for handwashing.

* Caritas **Niger** is distributing hygiene kits and raising awareness of good handwashing as part of CAFOD's coronavirus response. Through the network of local experts, you are also supporting 36 health centres run by the Catholic Church.

* Through the work of local experts in **Liberia**, you are raising of awareness of coronavirus in remote communities, as well as with vulnerable groups in more villages and towns. This programme is making a difference – distributing hygiene materials and encouraging people to regularly wash their hands is helping to reduce the spread of the virus.

* In **Zimbabwe**, CAFOD and Caritas Australia funds have provided equipment including gloves, masks, glasses, aprons and sanitiser to protect frontline staff as they keep the people they serve safe during the crisis.

* In **Sri Lanka** where packages included rice, sugar, vegetables, soap and face masks, outreach workers spent time raising awareness with the families who came to collect them on the importance of hand washing, social distancing and use of face masks.

* In **Sudan** outreach workers are working alongside local organisations within nine refugee camps for those fleeing violence in South Sudan. As well as providing coronavirus prevention advice, CAFOD have set up handwashing stations and provided PPE for outreach workers to do their jobs safely.

And there are many, many more ways which you are able to read about on the CAFOD website: suffice it to say, your help has been immeasurable. THANK YOU. On Harvest Fast Day, we prayed the following prayer together, please may I ask you to continue doing so,

there is nothing more powerful than prayer for our brothers and sisters:

*God you call us out of darkness,
 May we hear your voice
 In the cry of our brothers and sisters in crises.
 As you walk alongside us always may we walk beside
 one another
 Listening and responding in love.
 Shine the light of your compassion through us,
 Dispelling chaos, fear and despair.
 Breathe hope and courage into all our hearts
 As we work together to rebuild once more.
 Strengthen us, Lord, and keep us steadfast
 Bring healing and comfort to all
 And lead us renewed into your marvellous light.
 We ask this through Christ our Lord.
 Amen*

THANK YOU – your prayers and your help have NEVER been so important as now!

So what of the future: Christmas is coming!



Normally we would be distributing the CAFOD World Gift Catalogues in November, however, under these circumstances, please

may I ask you to look online (worldgifts.cafod.org.uk): these useful and unusual virtual presents for your friends and family WILL make a difference to people living in poverty.

You may wish to help with CAFOD’s pandemic aid, for example:

A Keep clean kit: At £6, this gift is perfect for a Secret Santa or stocking filler! This gift of soap, reusable facemasks and washing detergent can give a family the opportunity to be safe as they go about their lives. For many living in poverty, access to these essentials can be difficult, meaning people are unable to go out and safely buy food, to work or attend school.



Or if you are feeling more affluent £50 can provide vital support with Emergency food. After a crisis, access to food is always vital and often hard. During the pandemic, any crisis will be even harder to deal with and these basic needs even greater. This £50 gift can help provide

a supply of emergency food when someone is most in need.

Or you could send love with a Listening Centre. This provides medical and psychological support and can help women to heal after the trauma of sexual violence. Plus, they teach practical skills that can help them earn an income and support for their children to be educated.



Of course, there are many other practical world gifts as in other years, such as the goat, emergency water and shelter and many others, to suit all pockets. Please look online or collect a brochure when lockdown is over from church.



Join the St Laurence’s CAFOD Craft group!

Not everyone has money to spare at this expensive time of year: however, maybe you can give your time instead! You can help by joining the **St Laurence’s CAFOD Craft group** to make Christmassy **face masks** (pattern provided) which will be sold in aid of CAFOD when lockdown is over. Not good at sewing? Maybe you can provide the group with Christmassy material or Christmas coloured sewing thread.



For further information about any of the above please contact: collettserga@gmail.com or tel:07474724042

NB Due to the lockdown CAFOD will not be selling Christmas cards this year, however, you will still be able to obtain them direct from Traidcraft www.traidcraftshop.co.uk

Summary of Parishioner's Open Meeting 20th October 7.30pm

**Present: Fr Simon, Deacon Geoff, Stephen Warde
(Chair), Sarah Sykes (Minutes)**

Parishioners at start of the meeting: 18 rising to 21

Updates following the last meeting

Children's Liturgy

Jim Infield reported that there have been three sessions of children's liturgy at 9.30am Mass since the last meeting, and that they have gone well. He offered thanks to Martin Avery and Andy Diston for providing the music. He reported that there had been good engagement from the whole congregation and that the children have not been shy to put up their hands to answer to questions. The use of a roving mic has helped. Jim asked for feedback or questions from the Meeting.

Catharine Warren said that she had enjoyed the sessions. She felt that it was good to have a new approach, and that Jo Cullen, an older member of the Parish, had told her that she had enjoyed seeing the children taking part at the Mass.

Jim and Mary-Jane O'Sullivan had attended via livestream and got a good impression that it was working well and that, although children were not visible, it was obvious that there was a good deal of interaction.

Five volunteers are currently leading the sessions in pairs, so it would be nice to have another volunteer to round up the volunteers to three pairs of two.

The Chair expressed thanks and congratulations to the team who have got this up and running and Jim appreciated the support of the Meeting.

Building update

James Dore reported briefly that a quote for work on the presbytery heating has been accepted and someone was coming to start work on this in a couple of weeks. Also, a couple of quotes for the roof work have been received and will be progressed.

Current and future Mass arrangements, and Christmas planning

Following the appeal for stewards we have had several new volunteers and held an update meeting for all stewards, and also updated our guidelines, to reflect changing rules and the strengthening of our own procedures. It was noted that stewards had noticed that the QR and test and trace cards can be a bit time consuming and cause a delay for getting people into the church. It is planned to update the QR codes in the porch and place one in the outside noticeboard. It should also be remembered that the test and trace paper forms and

the St Laurence QR code can be completed once seated in the church. Other ideas were to create a numbered register; include the test and trace form in the newsletter.

Ron Haynes suggested that for those who didn't have access to smart phones, that a key fob could be designed and produced which could be used to scan the QR codes. It was also suggested that people could be encouraged to take a couple of test and trace slips to complete at home ready for the next Sunday.

There were fears that we are getting lax on ventilation of the church. The church needs to be well-aired to stop the spread of droplets. We have more recently had the windows open at the front of the church only, as opposed to having all windows open.

Fr Simon asked whether the Parish would be happy for the 5pm Mass to become a permanent fixture and added to the Parish's record in the Diocesan Yearbook for the coming year.

Christmas planning

Fr Simon proposed that as the family Mass on Christmas Eve is usually oversubscribed, he would like to have two Masses in its place – one at 4pm and one at 6pm. He would plan to draft in more support from Blackfriars to cover up to 7 Masses over Christmas Eve and Christmas Day,

To manage the anticipated demand for places in church, it was suggested that the Masses over these two days should be ticketed, with 80% of the available seating being booked by parishioners online and 20% of seating being kept as first come first served on the night. This would help manage expectations and plans for attending Mass, especially for families with younger children.

It was felt that if you had reserved a seat online, then you would need to have arrived and be seated at least 10 minutes before the start of Mass,

Fr Simon agreed that it would be possible to use the Parish Room as an overflow area, as a one-off occasion.

Planning for Stewards, Eucharistic Ministers and Readers is needed well in advance. There was also some discussion of the need to make people, who are as yet unable to attend in person, feel more involved in the Masses. We should also put together a provisional plan for the possibility of full lockdown over Christmas.

For those parishioners who are part of the traveller community, Fr Simon said he would pass the message via contact, Shaney, at the Cottenham Drop-in Centre to try to let them know not to turn up in large numbers for the Christmas Masses as places are limited.

Fr Simon would like to continue the tradition of the Carol Service on the last Sunday of Advent, and it was suggested that it could be held as a virtual event.

Fr Simon has also been in touch with Stephen Chapman who co-ordinates the altar server ministry, but he is unable to return for the time being.

School update

Joint head of St Laurence's Primary School, Veronica Harvey, reported that the school is fully open and everyone is attending as normal. A welcome back to school Mass had been held in the church with year 6 pupils present and the rest of the school joining in via Zoom. The children are working and playing in 'bubbles'. School and church have agreed Mass times at the school for school 'bubbles' in the run up to Christmas and the plan is to also have a Penitential Mass for the older children during Advent. Zoom is also used for school assemblies. However, there are some limitations in the usual running of school activities, and this has meant that the Mini Vinnies group and CAFOD club have not been able to restart and it unlikely that they will re-open before the Spring, but the school has been organising collections for Foodbanks.

The children who had been planning to have their First Holy Communion in May have now all done so over the start of the new term, and teaching for the next group of about 20 children has started.

To help strengthen the links between school and Parish, Veronica suggested that parishioners consider an 'adopt a class' scheme where parishioners could be linked to a class which would then include them in their daily prayers for example. Fr Simon suggested that, for those adopted parishioners, there could be a prayer session between them and the classes on Zoom.

The school Nativity plays are planned to go ahead as usual but again without live singing. There will be music, but the children will be learning to sign the words rather than sing them. 'Bubble Masses' will also be held at the school. Co-chair of the Governing Body, Mary-Jane O'Sullivan said that the governors have been very impressed with the way the school has managed the re-opening and day to day running of the school and offered thanks on behalf of the governors.

Parish groups update

SVP update

Catharine Warren reported that the group were planning how to safely manage to run the Giving Tree initiative within the COVID regulations. They plan to start the scheme in mid-November and to offer the opportunity to choose a gift online. They will need to receive the gifts earlier than usual so that there is time to quarantine and distribute the gifts before Christmas. This will also

give time for those who are still shielding to be able to order a gift online and for the SVP to arrange collection.

Pilgrim Update: Nora Darby reminded the Meeting that the next edition of the Parish magazine would be published on the first weekend of Advent and encouraged everyone to send in articles by 6th November.

Chair of the Parish Open Meeting

The current Chair, Stephen Warde, said that the current term of the position of POM Chair has expired. Fr Simon then asked Stephen if he would consider continuing in position for the moment and see if someone might step up in the spring/summer. Stephen agreed to do this, although he expressed that it is good to have a regular turnover of people in this position.

Date of next meeting

Tuesday 1st December at 7.30pm via Zoom. Meeting details would be sent out in the usual way in the Parish 'Keep in touch' email and the newsletter.

Full details of the meeting can be found on the Parish website.

ABLAZE MASSES

See back cover for dates



1st Sunday of the month
Lively & upbeat worship for youth & the young at heart

Poetry & Prayer

At a time when more of us are living 'in' so to speak, many doing this on their own, I thought that you might find this prayer appropriate and comforting; I know my mother did during her ten years as a widow.

(Mike Dimambro)

GOD IS WITH US

I live alone Dear Lord, stay by my side.
In all my daily needs be thou my guide.

Grant me good health for that indeed I pray
To carry on my work from day to day.

Keep pure my mind, my thoughts, my every deed.
Let me be kind, unselfish to my neighbours' need.

Spare me from fire, from flood and malicious tongues,
From thieves, from fear and evil ones.

If sickness or an accident should befall
Then humbly Lord, I pray thou hear my call.

And when I'm feeling low and in despair
Lift up my heart, help me in my prayer.

I live alone Dear Lord yet have no fear
because I feel your presence ever near.

Amen

A Poem in Case of Advent

Teresa Brett

I've written a card to a man who is dead.
I'm glad because I wanted it said
That we love him, miss him and want him to know
How much. How far does that card go?
Who can know?
Maybe if he's with God he can glow
In that most gentle and generous flow of God's love.

What is God like? We haven't a clue
Except clues that suggest an unseen ewer
Pouring out faith, hope and love.
God above.

Does that feel hard or soft, dark or light?
What is the colour of infinite might?

Newborn in fierce pain and no sleep to sustain
His poor mother. Woken and hurried away.
Feeding him on a bumpy track,
Clutching the back
Of a donkey.
He is our key

He keeps going,
Not knowing
Where or why or how.

Give us the grace, God, to bow
And keep saying yes
This is my guess.
We must be trussed
In Advent trust.
We have to have You
Only You will do. Amen

We all know, and many of us love, the carol *In the Bleak Midwinter* by Christina Rossetti. She is regarded as one of finest poets of the Victorian age. Her Christian faith seems to have been the fundamental bedrock of her life. It informed her love of nature, her passionate belief in the rights of women, and her opposition to slavery, imperialism, and military aggression.

This poem, Advent Sunday, celebrates the coming of the Bridegroom, come to wed His Beloved. In the often oppressive darkness of the times we live in, and in this bleak midwinter, we can rejoice and go out to meet Him, the Love who comes to meet us, to be born of us.
(Michael Allan)

Advent Sunday
by Christina Rossetti

BEHOLD, the Bridegroom cometh: go ye out
With lighted lamps and garlands round about
To meet Him in a rapture with a shout.

It may be at the midnight, black as pitch,
Earth shall cast up her poor, cast up her rich.

It may be at the crowing of the cock
Earth shall upheave her depth, uproot her rock.

For lo, the Bridegroom fetcheth home the Bride:
His Hands are Hands she knows, she knows His Side.

Like pure Rebekah at the appointed place,
Veiled, she unveils her face to meet His Face.

Like great Queen Esther in her triumphing,
She triumphs in the Presence of her King.

His Eyes are as a Dove's, and she's Dove-eyed;
He knows His lovely mirror, sister, Bride.

He speaks with Dove-voice of exceeding love,
And she with love-voice of an answering Dove.

Behold, the Bridegroom cometh: go we out
With lamps ablaze and garlands round about
To meet Him in a rapture with a shout.

Tailpiece

Lockdown Clear Out – you never know what you might find!

Parishioner Terry Taylor-Crush sent us this copy of a St Laurence's Newsletter dating from the 1970s. There have, of course, been a few changes over the years. Some of you may remember the Youth club which used St Laurence's school Hall to meet and was called 'Teen Group'. Who remembers curate, Fr Francis Selman? His sister, a current parishioner, will! Mass times were a bit different too. The school Mass took place on Sunday evenings at 5pm, a forerunner of our new 5pm lockdown Mass slot. Fr Dick Wilson was the Parish priest and the big news was the sudden death of the newly elected Pope John Paul.

ST. LAURENCE'S PARISH, WESTERTON Telephone: 54700

NOTICES FOR WEEK COMMENCING: SUNDAY, 1st OCTOBER 1970

26th Sunday of the Year : Page 65 Preface : Sundays VI (page 10)
Eucharistic Prayer III Acclamation : Christ has died

SUNDAY MASS TIMES: 8 a.m.; 9.30 a.m.; 11 a.m.; 6.30 p.m.
10.30 a.m. St. Joseph's, Waterbeach
5 p.m. St. Laurence's School, Arbury Road

MONDAY Guardian Angels : Mass 7.30 a.m. and 9.30 a.m.; 8 p.m.
2nd OCT. S.V.P. after Mass at 8 p.m.

TUESDAY Feria : Mass 7.30 a.m. and 9.30 a.m.
3rd OCT. :

WEDNESDAY St. Francis of Assisi : Mass 7.30 a.m. and 9.30 a.m.; 3 p.m.
4th OCTOBER: 2.30 p.m. Jubilee Club with Mass
7 p.m. Rosary and Benediction
8 p.m. Prayer Group

THURSDAY Feria : Mass 7.30 a.m. and 9.30 a.m.
5th OCT. Toddlers' Club : 9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.
Teen Group, 7.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.

FRIDAY St. Bruno : Mass 7.30 a.m.; 8 p.m. For John Paul I
6th OCT. :

SATURDAY Our Lady of the Rosary : Mass 7.30 a.m. and 10 a.m.
7th OCT. Confessions: 10.30 a.m. to 11 a.m.; 7 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

"THE LIFE AND DEATH OF EACH OF US ..."

There must have been a tremendous shock last Friday at the news of the sudden death of the Pope. His initial impact has been so great that Christians must feel a great sense of sadness and disappointment. I am not qualified to assess the effect on the Church on his brief pontificate. No doubt others equally unqualified will do so. I can write on the effect on individuals though. The Holy Father died suddenly. He must many times in his life have prayed that he be spared "A sudden and unprovided death." Perhaps too he prayed that he might have a sudden and peaceful death (Pius XI certainly did). A sudden death is a blessing indeed to those who (like Pope John Paul) have lived lives freed from bitterness and hostility, and who are aware of the Fatherhood of God. Are we so provided? I knew a man who was rushed to hospital with a suspected massive heart attack. An associate, who frankly couldn't stand him hurried to his bedside, begging his forgiveness for past hostility and in turn doling out forgiveness. The symptoms of indigestion can be mistaken for those of a heart attack. The two former enemies found themselves red faced friends, united by dyspepsia ... "The life and death of each of us has its influence on others" wrote St. Paul. Pope John Paul's life was an example of dedication, humour and humility. His death is an encouragement for us to make our peace with God and man without waiting for the advent of medical symptoms. He lived humbly; he died peacefully. May he rest in peace. HW

FAMILY FAST DAY: next Friday, 6th October - the savings made from one simpler meal on this day can be handed in an envelope in next Sunday's collection. The money goes to Cafed.

HARVEST FESTIVAL MASS: Next Sunday, 8th October at 11 a.m. We would be grateful if anyone would like to offer home grown/made produce or other food for our Harvest Thanksgiving Mass. Please bring to the Presbytery. There will also be a Mass for the Sick on Saturday, 28th October.

BUILD WITH YOUR FEET: a sponsored walk in aid of Fr. Liam Ludden's hall in Tanzania (our 3rd World Project), 15th October 2.30 p.m., round Wandelbury Camp. Suitable for the whole family. Sponsorship forms will be available in Church Porch.

LADIES GUILD: Decorating Demonstration on Thursday, 4th October, 8 p.m. in Parish Rooms. Bring a friend as well. Mrs. Keester will be the guest speaker. The Christmas Dinner will be held on 7th December. Details Mary Procter (823 3611) and Pam Baker (823 2786)

DISCO: Friday, 6th October "Formula 4" 7.30 p.m. to 10.30 p.m.

JUBILEE CLUB: are having a special Mass for Ann Rudmose-Brown at 3 p.m. this Wednesday. All are welcome to this Mass.

AYLESFORD: A pilgrimage from St. Laurence's is being organised for Saturday, 21st October leaving 8.45 a.m. Fare £1. Return in Cambridge 8 p.m. Bring packed lunch. Please put your name on the list in the porch.

FRENCH EXCHANGE: A French mother, Mme Morival, seeks homes for her three daughters aged 12, 13 and 14, while she attends a course in Cambridge next August. The girls prefer to be in the country and like horse-riding. Strongly catholic family. Mme Morival would prefer exchange. She offers her flat, which can sleep six, in her home town, Briançon in the French Alps, near Italian Border. The whole family is known to Fr. Selman personally. Please contact him. Mme Morival would also like separate digs for herself.

VOCATIONS: The Diocesan Vocations Director, Fr. Anthony Shryane (Thetford) is coming to talk on the priesthood on Sunday afternoon, 15th October at 2.30 p.m. to everyone interested (14 years and over).

GIRTON: There will be Mass in St. Andrew's, the Parish Church on 5th October, Thursday, 8 p.m.

BIBLE STUDY GROUP: Tuesday, 3rd October 8 p.m. in Parish Rooms

ST. BEDE'S FETE: next Saturday, 7th October. Donkey Derby

PLEASE PRAY FOR: Joseph Layton and Albert Webber whose anniversaries occur this week. May they rest in peace.

READERS NEXT SUNDAY:

8 a.m.	B. Jones	11 a.m.	S. Cracknell
9.30 a.m.	M. Dimambro	6.30 p.m.	K. Taylor

COLLECTIONS: Envelope : £130.98 Loose : £113.29

GOD BLESS YOU ALL

R. WILSON F. SELMAN

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your spirit and they shall be created. And thou shalt renew the face of the earth. O God, you teach the minds of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit. Grant that by the gift of the same Spirit we may be always truly wise and rejoice in the radiance of his presence.



12 days of Christmas Wordsearch

L F S W F A X O A S C I P S N
 Z O A D L R B K N T V R E E P
 K M R D R E Z E X M P L A V K
 M G C D C I H U L D K T R O B
 G F O T S H B G I L O G T D Z
 R O O S C Q Z G B B F P R E H
 S H L N C M G V N D G V E L D
 W R E D P A R T R I D G E T O
 Z R E R R Q O U M Z L S F R E
 F E L P R I M P C B N L Z U S
 O Y M G I M N N A A V W A T E
 X D P E E P I G W Y F T S C E
 Z V V R R P N S S E I D A L G
 H J S M A I D S W I K G K F K
 N C Q R K R R T W J K G R K K

Partridge in a pear tree symbolises Christ on the Cross

Turtle doves represent the two testaments, Old and New

French hens are the Trinity of three persons in one

Calling birds are the four evangelists

Gold rings refer to the first five books of the Old Testament

Geese represent the 6 days of creation

Swans are the seven sacraments

Maids a-milking are the eight Beatitudes

Ladies dancing are the nine Choirs of Angels

Lords-a-leaping are the 10 Commandments

Pipers are the eleven apostles (minus Judas)

Drummers are the 12 beliefs in the Apostle's Creed

The words of the 12 days of Christmas were written as a secret code to help Catholics remember the doctrines of the Church during the time of Elizabethan England when believers were persecuted. Read about the hidden meanings and find the words in **bold** in the Wordsearch.

Correction

The Editors

Tony King, avid reader of *The Pilgrim*, wrote in to let us know that a quote supposedly from Pepys, reproduced in September's Tailpiece, was not after all accurately attributed. Apparently it originated from the pen of [@PepysDiaries](https://www.pepysdiaries.com/), who is chronicling our current times in a style reminiscent of the great diarist!

Firstly, it goes to show what a good job [@PepysDiaries](https://www.pepysdiaries.com/) is doing in replicating the original Pepys' style. And secondly, it goes to prove you can't rely on everything you find online! It seems a lot of people have believed it to be an original quote. If you are interested on reading more about this mistaken identity: <https://londonist.com/london/books-and-poetry/samuel-pepys-quote> .

Nora Darby reports, former *Pilgrim* editor, Dick Wilson, is making the most of the quiet roads in a local Parish village during the second lockdown. Fellow parishioner Nikki Searle is doing all the hard work as she took him round the village visiting many friends and acquaintances including the editor who took this picture!!!



Editorial

Writing from the editor's desk in late November, we wonder what Christmas will bring. In these uncertain days we cannot look too far ahead, but we do look forward to the season of Advent when we hope lockdown will have ended and the churches reopened.

As we say farewell to the church year with Christ the King, we also say farewell to a well-known parishioner who is currently studying to becoming a Deacon. GianLuca Savini has recently moved from our Parish to OLEM as he relocates within Cambridge. We wish him well with his studies and future plans. He will be missed at St Laurence's.

Now a little bit of good news! Our former Parish Priest, Fr Pat Cleary was recently installed at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist as a Canon of the Diocese by Bishop Alan Hopes on 21st October 2020. We think he looks rather splendid in his 'mozetta'



You can read more details on the Diocesan website: <https://www.rcdea.org.uk/fr-pat-cleary-joins-the-diocesan-chapter-of-canons/>

Also available on the Diocesan website is the Diocesan Yearbook for the forthcoming year full of information about the Catholic Church in our Diocese including key diary dates, parish directory, Catholic schools, the calendar of feria and feast days. It can be downloaded here: <https://www.rcdea.org.uk/diocese-of-east-anglia-2019-liturgical-calendar-now-online/>

Wondering where to send your article, photos or drawings? Our email address is at the bottom of the page, and you'll also find it every week on the front page of the Parish newsletter. Thank you to all who have contributed to this edition. We welcome interesting and original material for all sections in the forthcoming edition.

The deadline for the next edition is

5 February 2021 for publication on 6/7 March

The production team:

Editors: Nora Darby, Sarah Sykes

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Commissioning Editor: Nora Darby

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Layout (preparation for printing): Sarah Sykes, Nora Darby

All members of the Pilgrim team can be contacted at pilgrim@saintlaurence.org.uk

Some Regular Events

The Parishioners Open Meeting (formerly 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.

The meetings for 2021 are still to be determined and will be publicised in the Parish newsletter. Meetings commence at 7.30pm and currently are held online as a Zoom meeting and should not last any longer than an hour. To register your request to be sent the Zoom link, please e-mail Stephen Warde at openmeeting@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 Stephen Warde at openmeeting@saintlaurence.org.uk, which can then be circulated.

The Pilgrim by Email

As with the previous edition there will be some printed copies for those who requested one last time and anyone else who is unable to access Pilgrim via email or the Parish website. You can receive a pdf version by email. If you are not already on the distribution list, send a request to pilgrim@saintlaurence.org.uk.

Extra Pilgrim copies: Do you know anyone who might appreciate a copy of Pilgrim at this time, but does not have online access?

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 Ablaze Mass is designed to encourage our youth to build their confidence in running the Mass for the benefit of us all. It is a vibrant and fun Mass. 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

Advent Giving Tree – Donate a hamper item of your choice or pick a gift from the online wish list: <https://www.saintlaurence.org.uk/ministries/svp.html#giving-tree>

Christmas gifts will be distributed to:

Wintercomfort, Meals on Wheels & SVP

All items to be left at church by 13th December

Advent – Parish Carol Service Live-streamed only	Sun 20 Dec 4:00pm
Christmas Week Masses Christmas Eve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Mass • Children's Mass Mass Midnight Mass	4.00pm 6:00pm 10:00pm 12:00am
Christmas Day	8.00am 9.30am 11.00am
Boxing Day	11.00am 6:00pm
ABLAZE Youth Mass (1 st Sunday of the month) 5pm	6 Dec 3 Jan 7 Feb
Reflection on Advent – Pope Francis's Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship, run by Cambridge Justice & Peace Group. A series of 4 x 1 hr sessions. The last two: Session 3: A better kind of politics Session 4: War & Peace https://tinyurl.com/fratelli-tutti-cam	7 Dec 14 Dec
Parishioners Open Meeting	Dates for 2021 to be confirmed



Follow St Laurence's on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/stlaurencecambridge>



ST LAURENCE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Email: office@saintlaurence.org.uk

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

6:00pm Vigil Mass

Sunday 8.00am

9:30am

11:00am

Mon, Tues, Thurs 9.30am

Wed, Fri 12.30pm

Check the weekly newsletter for changes to the above times

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