

The Pilgrim

St Laurence's Catholic Church Magazine, Advent 2015



Our very own Fathers' Pat and Bob meeting Pope Francis in Rome back in October 2015

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Some Regular Events

The Parish Forum

The objective of the Forum is “to facilitate the active participation and collaboration of all parishioners in supporting and developing the life, worship and witness of the Parish community, building up the Body of Christ and fostering pastoral and missionary action, as well as working with, supporting and advising the Parish priest in his responsibilities.

It is a regular meeting open to all who worship at St Laurence’s and all parishioners are warmly encouraged to attend.

The meetings are held at approximately 3 month intervals at 8pm in the Parish room.

ABLAZE

The St Laurence Youth Mass (formerly YAYA) is now known as ABLAZE and is an opportunity for youth in the Parish to come together and celebrate Mass. It is held at regular intervals on Sunday evening at 6pm in the church, followed by a shared supper. The next Ablaze Mass will be on 6 December.



Upcoming Parish Events

Christmas Week Masses	
Christmas Eve - Children’s Mass:	5.00pm
Midnight Mass (with carols before):	11.30pm
Christmas Day:	9.00am 11.00am
Mass for Pre-school Children and their Parents/Carers;	3 Dec 12.30pm
ABLAZE Youth Mass	6 Dec
Advent Home Masses	7 Dec 14 Dec
Penitential Service	17 Dec 7.30pm
Carols by Candlelight	20 Dec 4pm
Holy Hour	Every Weds 6-7.00pm
Bible Study	Every Weds 7.30 – 8pm
Soulfood Prayer Group	Every Tuesday 8pm
1 st / 3 rd Tues: St Laurence’s	
2 nd /4 th Tues: OLEM Parish Hall	
Next Parish Forum	4 Feb 2016

St Laurence finances for the period Jan 2015 – June 2015

Set out below are the parish accounts for the six months to June 2015. This is the first year that half year accounts have been prepared, but to enable comparison, half of the full year from 2014 are set out alongside the 2015 half year numbers. The full year account for 2012, 2013 and 2014 are also shown. Note that the offertory collections are sometimes collected in one financial year and paid out in another, hence the amounts in and out do not always match.

St Laurence accounts	2012	2013	2014	2014 half	2015 Jan-Jun
Income					
Offertory collection - Gift aid	56,641	57,861	66,575	33,288	29,069
Offertory collection - not gift-aided	47,109	39,752	34,250	17,125	16,453
Candles, flowers, repository, papers etc	5,698	8,082	6,192	3,096	3,131
Christmas and Easter offerings	6,041	6,267	5,998	2,999	-
Interest on cash held/investments	2,816	2,491	2,130	1,065	-
Other things (room hire, donations etc)	4,258	5,551	4,635	2,318	2,279
Second collections to pass on			9,032	4,516	8,667
Total income	122,563	120,004	128,812	64,406	59,599
Expenditure					
Church and hall maintenance	18,082	29,552	10,499	5,250	2,374
House maintenance	771	876	1,575	788	551
Council tax and utilities	8,587	10,441	8,913	4,457	6,239
Insurance	1,252	1,319	1,293	647	-
Christmas and Easter offerings	6,066	6,267	9,462	4,731	-
Stipends and payments to priests/deacon	7,579	8,141	7,607	3,804	5,140
Salaries and housekeeping	15,835	16,010	15,747	7,874	9,989
Office expenses including stationery	2,869	4,320	5,633	2,817	4,299
Car expenses	4,673	4,636	4,616	2,308	2,311
Candles, flowers, repository, papers etc	6,891	11,335	4,637	2,319	1,394
Levy from diocese, school etc	33,423	36,265	33,539	16,770	-
Liturgical costs	5,782	5,725	6,659	3,330	4,276
Other costs	7,957	9,953	4,631	2,316	2,682
Second collections passed on	2,891		8,170	4,085	8,255
Total expenditure	122,658	144,840	122,981	61,491	47,510
Net income/(spend) during the period	(95)	(24,836)	5,831	2,916	12,089

ST LAURENCE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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

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Deacon: Rev. Geoffrey Cook
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Secretary: Pat Cook
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Sunday Masses

Saturday 6pm Vigil Mass (sung)

Sunday 8.00am
9.30am (sung) with
Children's Liturgy

11am (sung) with
Children's Liturgy

This Mass is usually held at St Laurence's School,
Arbury Road. During holidays, it is often held at the
Church.

Coffee is usually served after 11am in the Parish
Room.

Usual Weekday Mass times

Monday 9.30am
Tuesday 9.30am
Wednesday 9.30am
Thursday 9.30am
Friday 12.30pm
Saturday 9.30am
6.00pm Vigil Mass as above

Check the weekly newsletter for temporary changes of time or location

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What's New?

The fishing net.

Fr Bob



St. Peter exchanged his fishing-net for another occupation; Pope Francis told the Synod on the Family, he became a fisher of people and, when we found ourselves listening to Pope Francis on a sunny October morning outside St Peter's, he said the same thing. The Church of God too, he told us, has to discover how to fish, and the best net she has at her disposal is the family. I think of the family as a cell of the Church, and this is where we see the Church's life as so attractive and inviting.

Pope Francis says, the family in which we care for one another pray together and care for justice and truth, the family that cares for the environment and aims to be good neighbours, is the best advertisement the Church has. Proselytising, ramming religion down people's throats isn't a bit of use, he said already in *The Joy of the Gospel*: people will only become Christians when they see how joyful the life of faith of the family can be. We weren't in Rome to meet the Pope, between us we had lots of people to see and good moments of exchange to have. But as it happens we did meet the Pope. We managed to tell him how much *Laudato si'* means here and we carried away a blessing for the sick and the memory of a warm handshake and a smile. We had conversations with the people who see a lot of him.

They told us what we can guess from reading his talks and homilies, that his life is a challenge to those around him and to all those who will listen: the doors of our

churches have to be open, we have to practise a fraternal simplicity to possessions and care for one another.

I think of what he said to the U.S. Congress about the family:

"I want to call your attention to those family members who are the most vulnerable, the young. For many of them a future of countless possibilities beckons, yet so many others seem disoriented and aimless, trapped in a hopeless maze of violence, abuse and despair. Their problems are our problems, we cannot avoid them. We need to face them together, to talk about them and seek effective solutions....a nation can be considered great when it defends liberty as Lincoln did, when it fosters a culture which enables people to 'dream' of full rights for all their brothers and sisters."

The Pope spoke of Americans who in their day gave a wake-up call, Martin Luther King, Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton. We can't wait to see him in Britain. Meanwhile may he continue to inspire us to good dreams!

Work in Progress: The Report of the 2015 Bishops' Synod to the Pope

Dick Wilson

This report was presented to the Pope at the end of the Synod. Authoritative quotations in English have appeared in Catholic journals and news websites, but the only complete copy I have found was on the website of a parish in Belfast, translated, I would guess, by Google – all by himself. It is useful, but largely unquotable.

It was agreed at both Synod assemblies that no attempt should be made to change any Catholic doctrine. The Synod's debates and the report reflect this. The report of the 2014 Synod laid great emphasis on the role of the family in the evangelising task of the Church. The opening pages of this report give a wide ranging account of the present social contexts and the pressures, in many countries, on marriage and those contemplating it, and for others (widows, the unmarried, migrants, people with special needs, the dying), who do not now share family life in the same way. The response called for from the Church is given a basis in Jesus' teaching, scripture, religious practice and pastoral care. From a Christian marriage, founded on the grace of God in the sacrament, can spring the ability to provide a model for marriage everywhere.

A detailed basis is given for the oneness of the partners in marriage, openness to new life, the indissolubility of marriage, preparation for marriage, the support of the church in the various stages in marriage, and bringing up children. It covers what the Church should do in regard to civil marriages, marriages carried out before becoming Catholics, and mixed marriages. It asserts that in the case of broken marriages the duty of priests is “to discern situations”, e.g. who was at fault, or the possible invalidity of the broken marriage, and “to accompany the people concerned on the way of understanding according to the teaching of the Church and the guidelines of the Bishop”. A cautious view was put on the practice in some cultures of cohabitation as part of preparation for marriage.

There is no discussion of the application of this understanding of marriage and the family to homosexual people. It is pretty clear that this was because a sufficient vote was not to be had, and it was dropped.

The hope for the Synod was that it would help to equip the Church, families and all, for the urgent task of displaying and proclaiming the gospel message to the world. Within the constraints laid on it from beginning, this is what it sets out to do. But a great deal of its content has been concerned with the contentious issues about marriage breakdown. Others, such as the widespread use of artificial contraception, are hardly mentioned.

Where do we go from here? The admission to communion of remarried Catholics has been tolerated and even welcomed on a wide scale in some countries, regardless of whether there has been an annulment. It is difficult to see how a determined use of “natural” contraception to avoid pregnancy can be different from condoms or the pill. Before the Synod, Pope Francis initiated changes in the determination of nullity after a marriage has broken down. The paragraph encouraging the path of discernment in these cases was passed by only 1 vote – a massive two to one majority, but only just enough to reach the necessary two thirds. Pope Francis made it clear that in his view changes are still needed. The job is far from complete.

Bishops and priests should not have to discern what is right in a given case in the knowledge that, Catholic doctrine apparently holds that they may not. Gay and lesbian people should not have to be told that the love they are born to enjoy is a disorder, and if given and received, excludes them from communion. Theological issues like this have to be discussed in the open and decided. Is this what Jesus intended to follow marriage breakdown, even if it was right for the Church in very different societies? Is a love that comes naturally really not part of the natural law?

It is Pope Francis’ great achievement, that he has opened this kind of discussion. It is a necessity for our main tasks, to speak as one, to evangelise, and to live, defend and spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. “For if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” (1 Cor.14.8).

I hope parishioners will put their views to the Pilgrim and perhaps in discussion groups, even while getting on with the job of preaching the gospel.

News about Milton Road Library development

Many thanks are due to you good people, for you have played a big part in encouraging the County Council to modify its proposals for the redevelopment of the Milton Road Library site next door to St Laurence Church.

That your prayers have helped is certain: also your willingness to sign the Petition against the original proposals – 266 signatures in all!

The Council recently approached Fr Pat as part of their consultation process.

They acknowledge that we would lose much light as a result of the increased height of the Library building and so are offering to provide 4 skylights in the church roof, with electronic blinds so that they can be opened and closed at ground level with a simple light switch. Also the render on the external wall is to be of a material that reflects light without glare thus considerably increasing the light available to the church.

They have also modified the design. There will still be three floors in the new plan with a total of 10 flats in all. However now only 1 flat will face directly towards the church, 4 will be at the corners of the wall next to the church and 5 will face Ascham Road. The flats will have triple glazing which considerably reduces the risk of noise.

The agreement with the tenants will be that they are not allowed to use St Laurence’s car park at all.

The County Council realises that this is a church and that at Christmas and Easter we use the building up to and even after midnight and that we sing then. They also assure us that if the tenants are noisy during Sunday morning mass they will do something about it.

Lastly but not least, the Library will be flexible so that it can be used as a community space as well- something we surely very much like.

Thank you for your support – and thanks also to the County Council for listening to us.

New evangelisation meeting held at Newmarket on Saturday 31st October, 2015

Virginia Bird

The theme of this meeting was, becoming a welcoming church.

We had been asked to do some homework prior to the meeting which involved looking up a parish website and noting how useful and welcoming they were. Many websites are not really welcoming, or even useful, e.g. the ones that say "Mass times on the notice board". One American site gave special areas for people who were new, "I'm new" and then provided useful information. Also "You haven't been to church for a time - welcome!" How lovely this would be to read if you found yourself looking to see if you could come back, or which local church to become a part of.

Rebecca Bretherton, one of the two leaders, gave a very amusing but thought provoking description of being the "secret Mass attender". Her stories included people gossiping about others in the congregation within earshot. Would you want to go to a church where you knew really bitchy remarks were being bandied about which in time could be about you? Churches where you had to shove your way through tables full of stuff, untidy unwelcoming porch areas. Overzealous welcomers like the one who greeted her beautifully, realising she was new and offering her a Mass card, her response being that her missal was in her bag thank you. He then came over to her in her seat giving her a Mass card and saying that she'd better have one as the Mass words changed a few years ago and she wouldn't know them! Then the lovely welcome in the Caribbean where, at the end of a very long Mass by European standards, people having birthdays were greeted, then visitors and as the only European she was covered in confusion at having to stand and introduce herself - a cultural difference.

Rebecca talked about making the porch/entrance to the church a welcoming place and described how her parish had totally reformed their porch in what started as a tidying up effort. This involved tidying notice boards, plastering the tatty walls, relocating the font so that it, and lovely flowers, greeted you rather than 'tat'.

We were reminded that we should welcome one another, as Christ welcomed each of us, for the glory of God. (Romans 15:7). Glory is a word from Hebrew originally meaning the weight of an object by which we value that object. We can't see God but he is known to us by his "weightiness" that is the glory of God. The warmth of our welcome will show the weight of God's presence in our parish.

However, we tend to shy away from greeting people we don't know. We shy away as they are from different backgrounds from us; we feel that we are relatively new ourselves and that therefore it is not our responsibility or perhaps we would be out of order; we feel it is someone else's job, whereas it is the responsibility of everyone; we are shy and we feel it is an activity that is beyond us; we are overworked, having a bad day etc. We convince ourselves we will do it next time.

In The Rule of St Benedict, all guests must be welcomed as Christ with proper honour (rule of St Benedict 53:1).

We were encouraged in small groups to look at how we could advance our welcome in our own parishes. Among the ideas were home visiting teams, using a parish database, advertising for volunteers, giving a phone call of welcome to new parishioners who have registered and possibly to invite those people to a social gathering were considered. Several of these things have been discussed at St Laurence's but without being carried through.

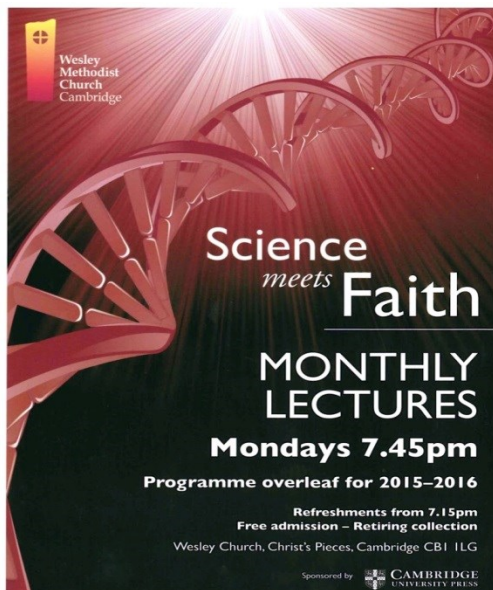
In the afternoon the diocesan Ignite team gave an excellent presentation of their way of bringing the Gospel to the people we meet; they stressed that the Church exists to evangelise. I wondered if the people who run the Ablaze Mass have thought of inviting the Ignite team to join them one month.

Finally we looked at the various things happening within the Diocese for us to access. In this Year of Mercy parishes and individuals are invited to visit the Holy Door. We have two in this Diocese as we have a National Shrine as well as a Cathedral. We are asked to visit as individuals, as parishes and to bring someone with us who might not be able to experience this.

We have the Posada statue to pass round the parish families during Advent. The Year of Mercy Starts in December. How can we use and celebrate this?

The Ignite celebration in the Cathedral painted an Icon which will be travelling the diocese. Prepare to use this. The date on which each parish receives the Icon will be forthcoming soon. Those it visits in January will have less time to prepare so we should start to prepare from now in case it is us. Further New Evangelisation programmes will be happening.

Science meets Faith 2015-16



14 December 2015

“Evolution and the image of God: Can we believe that creatures bear a likeness to God after Darwin?”

Dr Andrew Davison - Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge

11 January 2016

“The Case for Beauty”

Dame Fiona Reynolds, DBE Master - Emmanuel College, University of Cambridge

8 February 2016

“The ethical challenges of stem cell biology: A Christian perspective”

Prof Paul Fairchild -Co-Director of the Oxford Stem Cell Institute, University of Oxford

14 March 2016

“The God of small things: Nanotechnology, creation and God”

Prof Russell Cowburn, FRS - Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge

11 April 2016

“Why conserve wild nature? Environmental ethics and Christian faith”

Dr Hilary Marlow - The Faraday Institute, University of Cambridge

9 May 2016

“God and DNA”

Prof Keith Fox- Centre for Biological Sciences, University of Southampton, and Associate Director, The Faraday Institute, University of Cambridge

13 June 2016

“Towards a theology of science – what is science for?”

Prof Tom McLeish, FRS, Department of Physics, University of Durham

Features and Opinions

Fr. Alvan: Worry less & praise God more

“Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” Eph 5:19-20.

Beloved, you are about to hear something that may sound so absurd and unimaginable to you. Well, for the ordinary man, it will be so funny to listen to, but for the man or woman of the spirit, it is factual and works out perfectly. We are all called, as children of God to be men and women of the spirit because it is only a man or woman of the spirit that can understand spiritual things. For St Paul says in 1 Cor 2:14 ***“The man without the spirit does not accept the things that come from the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”***

Now listen, the word of God coming to you now is this, “no matter how difficult, hard, painful, pitiable, unbearable or impossible things may have become for you, **WORRY LESS ABOUT THEM, BUT PRAISE GOD EVEN MORE.** Instead of making the situation worse by worrying too much or sinking into depression, the best option you have, is to keep praising and thanking God even when it seems very difficult for you to do so. St Paul says, ***“Always giving thanks to God the father for everything.”*** Eph 5:20. It sounds funny, right? I know someone will ask how possible this will be. A woman without a child after many years of marriage will ask why she must thank and praise God. Is she praising and thanking God for not giving her at least a child of her own? Is she thanking God for allowing her to pass through such a painful experience of seeing her mates walk around with their own kids, while she has not had even one? A man who just lost his cherished job for no just cause will ask why he should praise and thank God. Is he praising and thanking God for allowing him to lose his job, knowing full well that he is the breadwinner of the family? A man that just lost both parents in a ghastly motor accident will ask you the reason why he must praise and thank God. A man or woman who has been told by the doctors that he or she is suffering from a terminal disease and has few months to live, will ask you why he or she must praise and thank God. I wonder also what that couple whose only daughter (about 3 years old) was diagnosed with cancer will say about this. It won't sound funny I suppose. Someone who has laboured so much for many years only to see what he laboured for vanish within a twinkle of an eye, may not see any reason to thank and praise God.

There are so many situations or conditions that can really make it very difficult for us to give God the praise he demands of us. When we feel down, you may find it difficult to give thanks. ***“Take heart beloved, in all things God works for our good if we love him and are called according to his purpose.”*** (Rm 8:28) Thank God, not for your problems, but for the strength he is building in you through the difficult experiences of your life. You can be sure that God’s perfect love will see you through.

There is power in praising God. Praise brings down the glory of God, as the scripture says, ***“God dwells in the praises of His people.”*** Praise brings God into our situations, no matter how bitter it may be. When we praise God, we are glorifying Him, and because He can never share His glory with anyone, He comes down to receive His glory. When He comes down, great things must surely happen. That’s the secret of praising God in the midst of our ugly situations. All God wants us to do is to praise Him no matter how difficult our situations are, then allow Him to show himself a faithful God. Invest the time you waste worrying about your situation into praising God and you will see Him move mountains for you.

Praise brings about deliverance. Many in the scriptures were delivered from troubles through praise, and God has not stopped acting on behalf of those who take out time to praise Him even when it is very difficult to. In Acts 16:22-25, He delivered Paul and Silas from trouble. They were stripped, beaten and placed in the stocks in the inner cell. Paul and Silas, who committed no crime and who were peaceful men, were put in stocks designed for holding the most dangerous prisoners in absolute security. Despite the dismal situation, they praised God, praying and singing as the other prisoners listened. No matter what our circumstances may appear to be, we should praise God. The right attitude should be that of praise and not worry. There is power in praise. There is deliverance in praise.

Paul and Silas, instead of getting worried or asking God series of questions, started praising God. And in Acts 16:25-26, scripture says; ***“About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open and everybody’s chains came loose.”*** So while they were still praying and praising God, He sent an angel and they were delivered. Imagine this great deliverance that came not from a natural strength but that of the supernatural. That is what praise can do for us. Instead of worrying too much, keep on praising God. Praise is expressing to God our appreciation and understanding of His worth.

When our lives and hearts are filled with praise and thanksgiving, worry is a weed that will die from lack of attention. Praise acknowledges the very character of God and thanksgiving recognizes the work of His hands. Together they are very powerful tools against worry and help us grow.

Beloved, do not be sad or upset. Do not lose hope in God, your praise means that you trust Him despite that situation; you are telling Him you understand that it is by His power and grace. The stumbling block of today will be the stepping stones of tomorrow’s glory. Our praise should not be optional or determined by our circumstances. It is a demonstration of trust and confidence that God is more than able to release us from any ugly situation. When we choose to praise God, we choose to trust Him and when we choose to trust Him, we choose to win over every worry.

Instead of worrying about your problems beloved, go into praising God who has the power to calm every stormy wind in your life. Only He can make that heavy burden light (Matt 11:28-30). Why not stop worrying about that problem now, and instead start praising God who alone has the power to give you victory over that problem? God loves you so much.

True Education

Karen Rogers

Educational commentators are abuzz with the latest round of upcoming changes to the exams system and once again the question is being asked from the practical viewpoint as to whether it would not be better to just pick a system and stick to it and at the deeper level whether we know where we are going with all of this anyway.

So at the weekend I saw the children playing... the 13 year old with the 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7 and 2 year olds, their relationships the fruit of over a year's worth of reliably regular sessions spent together engaged in a common project... their interactions expressing that depth of relationship on which true, possibly lifelong, friendship, community and hence academic achievement is built... and I reflected on relationships, community and what it takes to formulate an educational approach which actually helps children grow and learn.

I've worked as a teacher in secondary mainstream and special schools and have now been co-ordinating home education groups for over 7 years in Cambridge. I've observed many parent-child interactions and seen what works and what does not work when it comes to helping children build the social, psychological and ultimately

the academic and intellectual structures which they need not only to survive in the adult world but also, far more crucially and fundamentally, to discover who they are and who they were meant to be, what they can do and what they are meant to do in life.

Masanobu Fukuoka, the ground-breaking biologist, farmer and philosopher, on being asked to define his greatest life achievement gave an interesting and perceptive answer. He said, you could look at it in two ways; either he had spent several decades growing truly nutritious food or you could say that his real legacy was several feet of extraordinarily fertile topsoil on what had previously been a barren mountainside. Either way, his achievement rested on three things; discerning what needed to be done, inspiring others to join him and investing commitment in building a community around the project.

Permaculture is a concept which is as relevant to education as it is to farming. A child's education is like a cathedral; it takes a very long time, a great project plan, a team effort of committed, reliable, skilled and loving people, deep, deep foundations, quality materials. Only in this way will the structure raise a tower to reach towards heaven. Instead we throw up a series of prefabs and wonder why they fall down and often crush the occupants, and the constructors, in the process.

Instead of stone, we build on sand.
Each year a different, smarter brand.
And then watch in bemused dismay,
as the tides of fashion wash all away.

The key constructors of a child's education, its master builders, are loving parents, and any educational approach worth its salt needs to acknowledge this fundamental truth. Whatever their educational background, they understand that child better, and are more committed to his or her well-being, than any other person. They also have a unique channel for passing on enthusiasms and communicating with the child which is the parent-child relationship. They home educate that child from birth to adulthood, whether or not he or she attends a school.

What they need to do the really excellent job they are hard-wired to do better than anyone else is:

- *the full range of information about possibilities
- *no pressure from anyone... whether it be from government bodies or other parents or self-appointed "experts" to adopt one approach or another or to join any particular group or institution

*time to digest the options and to discern the correct course of action at each stage

*the opportunity to talk through the different options with other parents both one to one and in a group (whether this be face to face or online) in a thoughtful way without being harassed, silenced or intimidated

*access to good resources via the Library service and museums etc. Schools, where they recognise the special role of parents as primary educators, can be part of this process, if parents invite them to participate.

*A clarity about and determination to avoid having our time and energy sucked away by the quicksand which is the kind of relationship ebbing and flowing around casual meetings

*the commitment to building the reliable, long-term relations with other Catholic families which are the stone buttresses and foundations of a true education.

*a network made up of key adult Catholic mentors, crucially these must be chosen by the parents (not by any self-appointed committee or by an institution) for their qualities, especially their reliability, and general suitability as role models for their unique child, to work together with the parents. They need to give the child opportunities for what St Thomas Aquinas termed "discovery" and also to spot those teachable moments which are the fruitful soil for instruction. These mentors must be both able and willing to commit to investing time each week or at least month in building up that genuine Catholic community in the context of which a child develops confidence in the reliability, quality and sustainability of his or her relationships and hence in him or herself as a valued and loved member of our society and Church. It is only in this way that children will feel confidence in developing their particular God-given talents and most fundamentally of all that they will feel valued and loved for who they are.

Respect for the unique and guiding role which loving parents play in their child's education, access to information and the full range of options, no-strings-attached support, the freedom, time and space to discern what is best for their child and other adult Catholics prepared to commit to supporting the parents in what is probably for most the most important project of our lives; as Catholic parents we need all of these things.

The key question is: "are we as members of the wider society, fellow parents, neighbours, colleagues, teachers, doctors, prepared to give the commitment and support and genuine respect to other parents which builds the kind of Catholic community on which the education of our own children depends?"

St. Andrew's, Chesterton

Nick Moir. Vicar

Chesterton is in the Domesday Book. It was a vill (parish) with 25 householders, including a priest. The old heart of the village was where St Andrew's is now and for most of its life, its prime livelihood has been farming. The enclosure of its field system in 1840 led to a rapid selling off of land and development so that early in the 20th century the old village was absorbed into Cambridge.

The riverside area that had been manorial grazing land became industrialised as William Pye (a churchwarden of St Andrew's) expanded his business from his home to building a major factory that became one of the largest employers of the region. Old Chesterton became a rather industrial area and the old and historic houses were not much desired. The Manor House was demolished by the council in 1970, the grounds of Chesterton Hall were tarmacked to create Elizabeth Way and the large roundabout, (the Hall itself turned into council flats), and most of the early terraced houses were bulldozed.

The decline of Pye (and the shift from manufacturing to high tech) left Old Chesterton ripe for redevelopment and the old sites have been progressively filled with houses and flats. Fifteen years ago the population of St Andrew's parish was a little over 7,000; now it's more like 9,500. Seven years ago the new cycle and foot bridge was built and that brings a steady stream of traffic over the river and through the old village.

St Andrew's has found itself once more at the centre of a popular and vibrant residential area and has been very much at the heart of Chesterton, developing new community facilities and activities. St Andrew's Hall was built on a site donated by developers. It is run by a management committee made up of both church council members and local users and residents' groups. We employ a full-time Hall manager who not only ensures that the facilities are well used but is also able to help build wider community activity. With partners from the other local churches (St George's and Chesterton Methodist Church), the Browns Field Community Centre (council-run), Hundred Houses (which provides much of the local housing) and the Community Association, we have helped to establish an annual Chesterton Festival and a quarterly community newsletter delivered to the whole of East and West Chesterton.

The church is blessed with a diverse congregation with a thriving Junior Church and youth group. We have a strong musical tradition that includes a children's choir and 'New Voices', a group that is able to sing a

challenging repertoire of church music for our monthly Sung Eucharist and other choral services. We are constantly welcoming new people into our congregation and we keep the church open during the week for the steady stream of visitors that come to pause a while, pray or simply enjoy our lovely medieval building.

St Andrew's is essentially an old village parish church that has found its surroundings greatly changed over the years – but we are encouraged that we can still be at the heart of life for many who live in our part of North Cambridge (or, should I say, the village of Chesterton).

Discussing Laudato si', - from paper to practice

Martine Walsh

Over the course of four weeks in September and October a group of us met to read and discuss Pope Francis's encyclical Laudato si'. We were blessed with a regular turnout of at least a dozen and were joined by some members of St Philip Howard and OLEM, some of whom had attended a similar reading group on Evangelii Gaudium about a year ago. Thanks must go to Virginia Bird, who organised and facilitated the sessions. Aside from the prospect of tea, biscuits and like-minded company, the motivating factor for most attendees was to actually read the document that had attracted so much coverage in the press. We followed a group reading guide by Bill Huebsch that offered questions for reflection and discussion after each major section or chapter.

The full title of the encyclical is Laudato si' - On Care for our Common Home and the care Francis urges us to show is not exclusively about ecology and care for our planet. We are challenged to consider how we use advances in technology for the common good. Are the ways in which we use such advances driven purely by economics or by a desire to better the lives of all in our society? And, what of politics? Do our politicians take decisions that lead to the improvement of people's lives, especially the lives of the poor, or are they driven by other imperatives such as future elections, industrial lobbies or short-term, popular gains? Decisions taken in the realms of politics, economics and technology are often to the detriment of the poorest in society, only widening the gulf between rich and poor.

There is much wisdom in Laudato si' and questions to challenge Christians and all people of good will. For me one of the recurring questions raised by our discussions was what difference our faith makes in living an ethical life. But where did our wide-ranging discussions lead us and how can we integrate the teachings of Laudato si'?

into our everyday lives? We spoke about some of the small steps we could take in our daily lives and in our local community. These tiny steps ranged from thinking twice before throwing a broken appliance in the bin instead of getting it repaired*, writing to our local supermarket managers to check what they are doing to reduce food waste, rethinking how we choose to 'control' our gardens with chemicals, through to ways in which to 'green' our parish. At Mass you may notice that the bidding prayers now include one specifically about care for our planet. This encyclical gave me great food for thought and I encourage anyone to read it, believers and non-believers alike. Look out for talks** and initiatives in the parish and diocese as people unpack the riches of *Laudato si'*.

*Look out for the regular Cottenham Repair Café and find others ideas under the 'resources' link at <http://cambridgecarbonfootprint.org>

** On Saturday 5 March 2016 a one-day conference on *Laudato si'* will take place at the Von Hügel Institute at St Edmund's College, led by Dr Augusto Zampini Davis, theological advisor to CAFOD.

Cardinal Points

John Hobson

Have you taken advantage of all the wonderful recent opportunities to be fed by a little bible reading. Oh you should. Give it a go why don't you. Just have a quick look in the book and try to relate things to our current times and be amazed, it needn't take long.

As I write this the Synod on the family is meeting which brings to mind some of my favourite texts from the Gospel of Luke and particularly his fantastic Chapter 7. Remember Luke's gospel is written more from a feminine view than the other evangelists and in lots of ways really shows the earliest equal opportunities narrative. How can Mother Church be seen to behave as institutionally misogynist with texts like this? Anyway pick up the good book and read Luke's Ch.7 slowly. It is only a couple of pages and it deals with the healing of the Roman Centurion's slave ("...Lord *I am not worthy that thou should enter under my roof...*"), the raising of the widow's son thus saving her from penury, the pardoning of the sinful woman, the treatment of debtors and also Christ's attitude to forgiveness and Pharisaic governance. What better reading for our synod fathers when trying to identify how to apply God's love and mercy and how He makes Himself available to others.

Our own Fr Bob on his Wednesday sessions has unzipped some of the mystery of the Book of Revelations/Apocalypse and has clarified for us the

extensive use of symbolism and allegory throughout the bible - a literary style of extended metaphor, in which objects, persons, and actions are equated with meanings that lie outside the narrative itself. What an eye opener. So we learn that the number four signifies the world, six imperfection, seven is totality or perfection and the "harlot Babylon" is really Rome in early Christian times. Amazing!

Soon it will be the Christmas season and it is Luke's Gospel again which really captures the time for us with the beautiful narrative used in all nativity plays complete with star, shepherds, kings and angels. However, it is Matthew's Gospel commencing with Christ's genealogy which fills the air. Matthew wrote as a Jew and for Jews. The necessity therefore was to illustrate that the birth of Christ was a fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies and that Christ was "of the house of David". It was also perhaps to illustrate that Christ was of an authentic teaching line reaching back to Abraham. The 42 listed generations of the genealogy are split into three sections of 14 generations each. Why 14 generations per section? Well apparently the Hebrew letters in the name David have a total numeric value of 14. Dan Brown's *DaVinci Code* has nothing on this. Anyway, Jewish genealogies were predominantly male orientated and rarely, if ever, listed females. Not so of Christ's genealogy in Matthew's Gospel though. We have five very important, unusual and remarkable women listed; listen out for them at Christmas. We have Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth and the wife of Uriah, Bathsheba. What's so special about these four then? They each bore their sons through unions that were in varying degrees strange and unexpected. Check them out in the Old Testament. We then add the supreme irregularity of the fifth woman, a virgin mother giving birth to our Saviour. If ever you needed an illustration of how God's ways are not our ways then there you have it.

We don't have to understand it. In fact I dare say we can't understand it at all, we accept it. If the fathers of the Bishops' Synod, or you, need inspiration regarding how to accept different family constructs read Matthew's Christmas genealogy leading to our Saviour's incarnation and check out the girls' stories in the Old Testament. Only after that should you turn to discover Christ's merciful and loving nature in Luke's Ch.7 and of course John's Ch.4 about the Samaritan woman at the well, a mere two pages (how I wish this had been in Luke's Gospel instead). All this helps us to realise that our family constructs and difficulties have always been strange and varied but also totally understood by our loving and merciful Creator. You will also see that He always makes Himself available to the needy, the unjustly treated, and the contrite of heart. Read and meet Him.

Personal Stories and Experiences

Working at the Vatican Library

Sean Martin

Some of you may know that I have visited Rome several times this year. I had been invited to help staff at the Vatican Library with a pilot project concerned with showing some of their digitised manuscripts on the World Wide Web.

A manuscript, or other item, is digitised by taking a photograph of each of its pages, and then these can be shown in sequence to recreate the experience of reading the original. However, the resolution of such a photograph is far greater than the ability to display the image on a screen. Hence if a complete image is shown then the fine detail can be too small to read or even see. Recent techniques, such as zoom and pan viewers, allow one to zoom into more detail and then pan across to view other parts of an image. As I had worked previously with this type of viewing technology, I was asked if I could help the Library show, for the benefit of their staff, ten digitised Vatican manuscripts. These were diverse in nature and included examples in Greek, French and Chinese. Some were highly illuminated in bright colours, while at least one looked somewhat dull with many handwritten notes.

Also one can show additional commentary, which can take a variety of forms. One of the curators provided around 20 detailed comments and explanations about regions of a single folio (the term used for a manuscript page). These are shown alongside the portion of the digitised image currently being viewed. The text of another was transcribed to be easily readable alongside the image of the original handwritten medieval French.

One particular merit of these techniques is that one can view an image from one work alongside images from different works, even when such works are from different institutions. The author of the French manuscript held at the Vatican Library was quoting from an earlier manuscript held at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris. These two manuscripts were viewable alongside each other as part of this pilot project. Scholars are particularly interested in such relationships between works.

If you have visited the Vatican you will have probably been to St Peter's Basilica and the Vatican Museums. However, I would like to recommend a visit to the Cupola (or Dome) of St Peter's Basilica. It is 500 steps to the top, but the view of the Vatican and Rome is magnificent. I went at 8.00am while the queue to enter St Peter's was short and there was space to enjoy the

view from the top. The crowds were building up as I was making my way down around 09.30 am. The Vatican Museums are often very crowded; however, I would highly recommend a tour of the Vatican Gardens. There are typically only five tours a week for around 30 people each, hence booking several weeks ahead is essential. It is a two hour gentle walk around the interior of Vatican City. There are numerous fountains, paths and open spaces, including the Papal heliport. Also it gives much more perspective on the size of St Peter's, the Sistine Chapel and other prominent buildings.

The Vatican was recognised as an independent state following the Lateran Treaty with Italy in 1929 hence it is not subject to Italian regulations and taxes. There are around 800 residents within the Vatican (with a gender and age imbalance) and several thousand staff. Popular destinations include the Vatican supermarket where residents and staff can buy milk and cheese from the Papal farm. There is an extensive selection of wine, so this is obviously popular, as are the bakery and the selection of fine Italian biscuits. However one other attraction, especially for staff living in Italy, is the Vatican petrol station which does not charge Italian taxes on fuel.

It was an interesting experience working for a few days within the Vatican, as I was often in areas not open to the public. Also I was taken on a tour of the library which has its own Sistine hall – this features many frescos each of which has a literary connection.

The pilot project was deemed successful and it is hoped that there will be a successor project to apply the techniques which were demonstrated to a much wider range of publicly available content.



Dr Paola Manoni and Sean Martin in the courtyard of the Vatican Library

Camino reflections

Joe Tucker

Peregrinos (pilgrims) make the *Camino* (journey), just as bees make a beehive. While divided by language, age and fitness all are bound together by a common goal - to reach Santiago.

In May, we saw vineyard workers in ones and twos, skilfully trimming the plants which stretched in perfect rows to the horizon. In September we saw teams of workers picking the grapes and transporting carefully labelled crates to ancient wine presses. Clearly a cycle which has continued unchanged for many years – "Fruit of the vine and work of human hands."

The standard greeting between *peregrinos* is "*Buen Camino*" and this is also used by locals when we pass by just as soon as they see the shell hanging from your rucksack.

It's so easy to be dissatisfied with our journey: if the path is dead straight then we long for a change, if it's twisty we fear losing the way, if it's uphill then we groan at the extra effort, downhill and we complain at losing height. Surely every step which brings us closer to our destination is a good step?

Every small town has a *Calle Real*, *Calle Mayor* or *Calle Iglesia*. If the church is locked you can get a stamp at any bar or cafe. Many stages finish by crossing a beautiful medieval bridge into the town, a poignant reminder that there is no life without water.

Every day there are thousands of footsteps across the hills and plains of northern Spain. The more my body aches, the stronger my solidarity with pilgrims past. Hard to imagine that they walked back home!

In our culture, 'dead and buried' implies 'out of sight' but here the graveyards are mostly above the ground and very much in view. It's common for a family to have a stack of four, only part occupied.

For some, visiting the famous Gothic cathedrals are the highlights of their Camino and they are certainly impressive monuments to human devotion and ingenuity. However for me the occasions when we were greeted warmly in tiny rural chapels, built for this very purpose, were the most special.

Wow factor: before the days of high-tech showbiz, the sight of a 5ft incense burner swinging in a 200ft arc (at the Cathedral de Santiago de Compostela), missing the ceiling by inches, must have been one of the great spectacles anywhere in the world.

Walking the French route – St Jean Pied de Port to Santiago

Petra Tucker

In the summer of 2014 we watched the film *The Way* telling the story of one man walking the French route of the Camino de Santiago. Having spent many years walking on the Isle of Arran we felt ready for a new challenge. We booked our flights and then found accommodation that divided the 775 km route into 30 parts, roughly following the stages described in John Brierley's book *A Pilgrim's Guide to the Camino de Santiago: St Jean – Roncesvalles – Santiago* (12th edition). Due to constraints placed by both of our employers we planned for 15 days in May 2015 then another 15 days in September 2015, thereby avoiding the crowded summer period.

We flew to Biarritz then took a minibus to St Jean from where, the following day, we set off up the hill towards Spain, with Joe carrying his rucksack and me carrying a small day sack, leaving Jacotrans to transport my rucksack to the next stop.

Throughout the journey, we each carried only two outfits – one on our body and another in our rucksacks. Non-essentials were limited to a book and a pair of sandals for the evenings. Navigation was simple – keep looking for the next shell or yellow arrow, which could be set in the pavement or painted on any wall, post or sign.



You developed a sixth sense for seeing even tiny signs - in the big cities there might be road works or re-development which obliterated all signs whereupon guesswork was needed. The guidebook was useful for reading about places of interest but really you could do the whole walk just following the signs and/or other *peregrinos*.

Each day we hit the road at 7.30 am and walked for a couple of hours before stopping for breakfast: “*Dos tortillas y uno café Americano y uno café con leche, por favor*”. We don’t speak Spanish but we learnt a few phrases where food and drink were concerned, which was a lifesaver when going through villages where no English was spoken. After breakfast we would continue to our destination and have a late, lazy lunch then unpack, shower, wash clothes and take a siesta. By the evening we were ready to explore the village or town, looking for a nice place to eat and maybe a pilgrim Mass. Our evening meal was usually from the ‘*menu del peregrino*’, where you get three courses for ten euros including a basic bottle of wine between two people.

There was a wonderful freedom in getting up each day, knowing that all you had to do was walk. We had fantastic weather for 29 out of 30 days – our ponchos did a good job of keeping out several hours of torrential rain. The average distance was 25 km per day apart from the three days when we did a ‘marathon’ of over 40 km.

We walked through huge vineyards and enjoyed watching the grape harvest - in Villafranca an open doorway revealed a small wine press, the design of which hasn’t changed for hundreds of years. Also we saw fields of sunflowers, maize and wheat. Our first mountains were of course the Pyrenees, which provided spectacular views under clear blue skies. Later we climbed 600 m before entering Galicia, with terrain that reminded us of the Isle of Arran. In May there were a few days when the temperatures hit 37 degrees.

All along the route we got stamps for our pilgrim record (provided by the con-fraternity of St James) so that we were able to receive the Compostela when we reached Santiago.

On the Camino you talk to many kinds of people, all with a common goal but walking for different reasons. Jan was an extremely fit 62 year old man from Holland who, by the time he reached Santiago, would have walked 3,300 km with his black Labrador, Liam. He had taken six months off work, while his partner Hanneka joined him at St Jean.

In a tiny chapel 2km out of Astorga a very old and very small woman was stamping pilgrims’ passports. We looked around the chapel, which was beautiful in its ornateness. On the walls were some old photos, which we looked at. She came over and gestured to us that one photo of a couple was of her parents on their wedding day. We gestured back that she looked like her mum. A huge smile came across her face; we had a big hug and then left with her wishing us, “*Buen Camino*”.

Pilgrims walk with shells on their rucksacks and when you meet a fellow *peregrino* or overtake them you wish each other, “*Buen Camino*”. As we entered Leon through the ancient city wall we passed by a group of small children walking with their teachers. A tiny girl looked at us excitedly and we heard the word ‘*peregrino*’ after which she shouted at us, “*Buen Camino*”.

The wildflowers were beautiful and I took photos of the many different kinds. The cows wore bells so their music played as you walked by them. A small town was celebrating a fiesta with a procession of enormous flags. We didn’t always know where the church was, but the bells ringing would lead us to Mass.

We began our final walk into Santiago at 6.30 am in the dark with our torches as we walked through a eucalyptus forest with its wonderful smell. As dawn broke we could see Santiago in the distance. We arrived at the steps of the cathedral as the bells chimed 11.00 am, very tired but very happy. It took us an hour and a half of queuing to get our Compostela which is all very official with checks made that you have walked either the last 100 km of the walk or cycled the last 200 km. We’d done slightly more! In 2014, over 200,000 pilgrims received the Compostela.



We enjoyed a very lazy lunch indeed that afternoon and then went to the pilgrim Mass at 7.00 pm in the cathedral where we were lucky enough to see the giant incense burner (thurible) – “*Botafumeiro*” – in action. It takes eight men to swing it from one end of the aisle to the other on a rope that must be at least 30 metres long. We spent two nights in Santiago, as we really wanted to have a day off and to explore the city a little. Many pilgrims carry on walking to Finisterre, which is another 87 km. We will walk this short distance at a later time.

There are multiple ancient routes to Santiago and we are planning to start the *Vía de la Plata* (Silver Way, 1000 km) in 2016 which we reckon can be walked over three lots of 15 days. This starts at Seville and is the longest of the Spanish routes.

Time in Toronto

Gila Margolin

For most of September this year, I had the great privilege of being in Toronto. Mainly I went to attend another book launch of my memoir *Where the Woods meet the Water*, which covers my life and my work for peace between 1999 and 2009, but I love the city and spent much time making new friends and associates on a personal level as well as for The Little Sisters of Joy (an ecumenical Foundation for Prayer, Peace and Reconciliation).

The build-up to the launch was interesting – strolling the streets in the Spadina area (which means ‘high place’ in one of the Native Canadian languages) and visiting the university nearby, with its fabulous libraries, including the John R. Robarts Research Library (the main humanities and social science library). Right across the street is the Newman Centre, home to the Catholic chaplaincy, where I was welcomed by the Maltese priest and went to Mass several times. I had the privilege of meeting the Jesuit Director of Regis College and Sr Gill Goulding, a religious Companion of Jesus Sister, who is a Professor of Theology.

On the night of the launch, which fell the day before the Jewish New Year, it poured with rain, but we had a small enthusiastic group who joined in the singing and who were from the Jewish, Christian and Native Canadian communities. I sang my usual range of Hebrew and North American melodies and apparently was quite inspired when I sang *Eli, Eli* about the transcendence of God. This haunting melody, which I sang at Auschwitz in 2001, was made known by the composer Hannah Senesh (Szenes) from Hungary who, just before she died in World War Two, wrote, “The souls of those who have gone before us light up the way for the rest of mankind.”



I finished on an upbeat note with a song dedicated to an elderly bishop, Bishop Michael Pearse Lacey, who had taken me under his wing in 2008 and invited me into his home.

Fr Pearse, as I fondly knew him, was a gifted artist and received many into the Church, as well as overseeing Vatican II at St Michael’s Cathedral in Toronto. He was one of the 80 Canadian bishops who received John Paul II when he visited Toronto in 1984. Fr Pearse passed

away just after I visited him last in June 2013 but, knowing he would be smiling down on me on that night, I sang with feeling the lovely Tom Paxton melody *Ramblin’ Boy*, fitting I thought, as Fr Pearse had been such a treasured companion to me along the way.

After the launch, I travelled to a beauty spot near Niagara Falls called Niagara-on-the-Lake, well known in North America for its vineyards and fabulous sweet grapes. A little town steeped in history. Again I made friends and sold some books as I ventured along the way. I spent some time sitting by the lake and enjoying the natural beauty – Lake Ontario stretches all the way back to Toronto.

NB: A comment on the names – Niagara means “the land between the waters” in the Mohawk language. It is hard sometimes when a place has been overlaid with colonialism to see the trace of the original landscape and those we now call First Nations, but they are ever present and I was particularly privileged to share some of their stories in and around the Native Canadian Centre in Toronto.



Miracle of the Rosary

Patricia Etim

We are all sinners. “No one is good but God alone”, said Jesus (Luke 18:18-19). My prayer always is, Lord I am a sinner, “Do not rebuke me in your anger nor discipline me in your wrath” (Psalm 6:1). No matter our mistake and weakness in life; be it sickness, troubles, failures in business, trials and persecution, remember the words of our Lord Jesus, “Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). We don’t obtain God’s favour because of our might or

righteousness but by special grace from God. One of the most powerful prayers that I have come to discover as a Catholic is saying the Holy Rosary. I read of so many apparitions of our Blessed Mother when she appeared to different Faithful. One of the messages she often left behind was, “say the Rosary for the forgiveness of sins and for peace in the world”. Some churches in Africa unlike here accused Catholics of worshipping our Mother Mary. This is wrong. We are not worshipping the Blessed Mary but honour and praise her as the Mother of our Lord Jesus. If God has shown her such a favour as to be the Mother of our Saviour through whom salvation came into the world, who are we to oppose God?

For me as a Catholic, the Rosary is my best prayer. I love to recite it first thing in the morning (except in extreme and unforeseen circumstances). The Rosary is a beautiful prayer with many biblical quotations like the message of the angel (Luke 1:26-38) or the message of St Elizabeth, the mother of St John the Baptist (Luke 1:41-42). This is followed by our request, “pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death”. There are other important and complementary prayers said during the Rosary, including the Lord’s Prayer, the Glory Be Prayer and any one of the mysteries, the Joyful, Sorrowful, the Glorious and the Light. I can see the beauty and richness of the Rosary and how efficacious and rewarding it would be if one had the spare time to say the Rosary at least once a day.

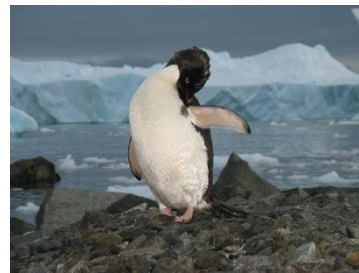
Finally, I wish to share with you my experience about the miracle of the Rosary. I left Nigeria to travel to London on 16th February 2004 after my daughter’s wedding when the incident happened. On that fateful day, everything appeared to be going well. We departed in the morning and the flight was smooth. I felt relaxed as I knew it would take six hours to get to London. The incident started about one and a half hours into the flight. It was just like a dream even though I did not know from the start what exactly had happened nor did I hear the announcement that the plane was facing severe turbulence in the air. One might say that I fell asleep but I was still conscious of the gentle voice that called me with a message, “Patricia, where is your Rosary?” I showed very little concern about the message as I knew there was no familiar person on the plane with me. Not long after, the voice came again with a different message, “Patricia, take up your Rosary”. The third voice came simultaneously repeating the second message, “Patricia, take up your Rosary”. At this time I made up my mind to look for the Rosary that was in my handbag. The handbag was on the floor under my seat so I stretched my hand, picked up the bag and brought out the Rosary but when I raised my head I noticed there was a commotion in the plane as some passengers were screaming and some praying “blood of Jesus, blood of

Jesus”. Some passengers were walking up and down the plane and a few others had been flung off their seats onto other passengers’ seats. I was terrified as I did not know how it had all started. I was just holding the Rosary and the lady sitting by my right hand said, “Mummy you brought out the Rosary at the right time”. The lady who sat in front of me who had been flung on top of another seat came down and as she saw me with the Rosary, she took it from me and started to pray. The pilot then made an announcement that the turbulence was over and appealed to all passengers to go back to their seats. Fortunately, no one was hurt. The two ladies who were close by me did not notice that I was not part of the commotion until I narrated my story to them and then we all thanked God together for His mercy and protection. Also I found it very surprising that the three of us who were sat very close together were all Catholics.

One may ask why I have told this story now after so many years. It is because I think that it is a mistake not to give testimony on the little signs that God reveals to us and I have regretted not making this testimony public before now.

A rather cold job

Tom Lachlan-Cope



I first worked for the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) when I got a job as a wintering meteorologist in 1977 after I had finished a Physics degree. To a certain extent this was a family job as my

grandfather had taken part in one of Ernest Shackleton’s expeditions. I travelled down to Antarctica by ship, stopping in Florida and travelling through the Panama Canal on my way to the Antarctic Peninsula. This is the part of Antarctic that sticks up towards South America from the main part of the Southern Continent. The Antarctic Peninsula is the most beautiful, photogenic part of Antarctica. It has snow covered mountains, penguins, seals and whales and more manned bases than anywhere else on the continent. However during my first trip I did not stop long on the Peninsula; after helping to restock one of the British bases we moved on to what many consider the real Antarctic – Halley Research Station where I was due to spend the next two years.

The Halley Research Station was set up by the Royal Society in 1956 and was built on a floating ice shelf. The

shelf is several hundred metres thick and formed as the thick continental ice sheet flows out from the continent over the sea. The base, the third since 1956, had been built on the surface but by the time I arrived it was ten metres below the surface and had to be accessed through shafts. Halley is the most southerly and most extreme of the British bases. In the winter temperatures are regularly below -40°C and even in the summer the temperature rarely goes above zero. When I wintered it had never rained. I spent two years at Halley with 17 other people and then left to spend a final Antarctic summer on a sub-Antarctic island called Signy replacing an anemometer – or at least so I thought.



The summer I spent on Signy Island was a very bad year for sea ice and by the time the ship came back to try to pick people up the ice was too thick for it to reach the island. This meant that I was stuck for another winter. This

was a completely different place to Halley. We lived in huts, one of which looked, from the outside similar, to that used by Captain Robert Scott (during his expedition) and another, made of plastic, which was rumoured to have been originally a telephone exchange for the tropics. The island itself was covered with bird life, penguins, shags and giant petrels and the seas around were teeming with life – a complete change from the sterile snow at Halley.

I was eventually picked up from Signy Island and came back to the United Kingdom to settle down with a real job. I took an MSc degree, worked as a weather forecaster and then took a PhD but in the end the call of the cold was too strong and in 1988 I went back to work for the BAS. No more wintering this time but I have been south for 11 summers – of course I was married by then so these extended trips away were not always popular, but it is true that Antarctica does have a hold on the people who have visited it for any length of time. My



next trip south should be in November this year going back to Halley for the first time in 35 years to study clouds, and it is possible it may be my last trip – although I hope not.

Parish Organisations and Activities

St Vincent de Paul – who he was

Christine Knight

The St Vincent de Paul Society (or as it is often known - the SVP) is an international Christian voluntary organisation dedicated to tackling poverty and disadvantage by providing practical assistance to those in need – irrespective of ideology, faith, ethnicity, age or gender. The Society is a lay organisation initially formed in Paris in 1833 by Blessed Frédéric Ozanam and his companions, and active in England & Wales since 1844.



Blessed Frédéric Ozanam

Placed under the patronage of St Vincent de Paul, the SVP is inspired by his thinking and works. It seeks, in the spirit of justice and charity, to help those who are suffering poverty in whatever form.

Vincent de Paul was born around 1576 in the French countryside, near the Pyrenees, to a poor family. He was a shepherd as a child and one of his first recorded charitable acts was to give away some of his father's money to a beggar, realising that the beggar was worse off than he and his family were. He clearly continued in that vein throughout his childhood, because he was sent to a Franciscan Friary to study at the age of 18. He was ordained a priest a few years later and then moved around for a few years; by 1611 he was a priest in Paris. He took confession from a dying man with a troubled soul. Fr. Vincent de Paul asked God to transfer the man's troubles to him and the man died in peace. Vincent then fell into a deep depression and introspection for some years and only recovered once he took the decision to dedicate his life to the poor.



St Vincent de Paul

He moved to a village as parish priest and the locals were inspired by him to repent their sins, attend Mass and confessions regularly and many went in for priestly training. In 1617, Vincent de Paul moved to another village, again converting many to Catholicism, and increasing the faith of parishioners. One day he asked the parishioners for help for a poor family and was overwhelmed with the response. As there was suddenly too much food for the poor family, he managed to persuade some rich ladies of the area to set up collection centres and distribute food to others in need. These ladies had time on their hands but wealth did not diminish their desire to live a Christian life, helping others. This was the start of what later became a huge movement, providing shelter, food and, equally importantly, spiritual development to those in need. The Congregation of the Mission was established to teach people about God, focusing on the poor and uneducated. The Daughters of Charity was set up by him - along with a cow-girl who later died after offering her bed to a girl who was infected with the plague - to continue the work of the wealthy ladies, which now included visiting the sick in hospital.

St Vincent de Paul said that serving the poor is serving Christ, and that service should be joyful, enthusiastic and consistent.

Inspired by St Vincent de Paul's work, we help individuals and families in any form of need to have hope, together with a sense of dignity, worth, well-being and peace of mind. Our work is wide ranging and as well as visiting and befriending, nationally we run charity shops, furniture stores and support centres.

If you would like to find out more about the SVP – either seeking help or to support our work or become a volunteer, please contact one of the members via the office or a priest, or contact Christine on C.423823 or crigluk@yahoo.co.uk

Greening the parish? Putting Laudato si' into practice

Mary Watkins and Veronica Bird



Some of us from the parish went along to one of the Diocese's Learning Together Days held in Ipswich on the 24th October. We spent the time reflecting on Laudato si' the Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis on "Care for Our Common Home", assisted by Henry Longbottom SJ, an environmental lawyer who is training for the priesthood.

The focus was on practical action we can take having digested the message of the Encyclical and so was an excellent follow up to the study sessions already held in the Parish.

Henry's interpretation of the Encyclical is strongly influenced by Ignatian theology. Among much else he noted that Pope Francis has moved on from the idea of stewardship to focus on care for creation and suggests that if we are going to undergo the type of "thinking faith" that Laudato si' calls us to embrace, it is going to be driven by a desire to become better, more compassionate people, rather than by a feeling that we *ought* to do our bit for the environment.

Henry notes the use of "Mother Earth", not as a pagan idea, but one rooted in God the Creator and suggests thinking of ourselves as in a Trinity of Relationships - three circles overlapping: our relationship with God, our relationship with Creation and our relationship with others. Pope Francis talks of a "technocratic problem" which Henry sees as a breakdown of these relationships in which the intrinsic value of both human and non-human life has been forgotten. Care for the planet and care for people are two sides of the same coin. Social

justice and ecology are inextricably linked so that when one deteriorates so does the other. You can read more about Henry's ideas at: <http://greenjesuit.org/>

In one of the discussion groups we looked at the helpful checklist provided by the eco-congregation organisation and concluded that the Live Simply campaign already embraced by the Parish incorporated these ideas but that there was more to be done!

See here for eco-congregation materials: <http://ew.ecocongregation.org/> and for more on Live Simply go to: <http://livesimplyaward.org.uk/>

We looked at suggested examples of those undergoing ecological conversion: Sr. Dorothy Stang, who died defending the rights of indigenous people in South America and Fr. Edwin Gariguez, a priest from the Philippines known as the 'accidental environmentalist'.

In our afternoon discussion groups we looked at how to implement Laudato si' i.e. bring about our own eco-conversion, in the diocese and in our parishes.

The key was felt to be to undertake a parish audit of what was already being done and what still needed to be done in the short and longer term. Such lists are readily available from eco-congregation:

<http://ew.ecocongregation.org/resources>

and are part of Live Simply:

<http://livesimplyaward.org.uk/make-a-plan/>

Plans need to encompass policy, building, maintenance and use of church buildings and grounds as well as to be included in preparation for the sacraments and RCIA and the liturgy (bidding prayers, school assemblies, particular feast days e.g. St Francis, Cafod Harvest Fast Day).

It was noted that the Live Simply programme already encompasses all this and should be more widely promoted.



Parish Forum, 22nd Oct 2015

Photocopier: choice down to two. A single machine will be chosen and will be leased. High quality means the Pilgrim can be produced in colour, and the weekly Bulletin (Newsletter) in A3 or A4 as needed. Fr Pat agreed we go ahead; it has first to go to the Finance Committee. Thanks to Richard Birkett were recorded.

Database: the software is just about ready for testing. Thanks to Richard Birkett, to Stephen Warde and to Dick Wilson.

The New Evangelisation: the programme continues as reported in the Pilgrim, Sept 2015. The Diocese has a new website <http://rcdea.org.uk>. This has a calendar and will list or display activities, courses, groups etc. from each parish, so that good things other parishes are doing are available to us and vice versa.

There will be a further diocesan meeting at Newmarket on 31st October. Rosina Abudulai and Virginia Bird will attend and Monica King is joining the group.

We now have a Facebook page. The address will be on the Bulletin with the phone numbers etc. Another rather similar page is people who were married at St Laurence's. Check you use the right one?

Liturgy: the Christmas liturgies will be as usual.

The next Forum will discuss investing in a new matching set of chalices, slightly larger than the assorted ones we have at present. Two chalices have been missing since the beginning of the year.

The new arrangements for distributing Holy Communion at the 11.00am Mass will be as follows: priest or minister with the host and one with the chalice will distribute to all the servers on both sides of the sanctuary and the musicians while other clergy and ministers with the host and another with a chalice will go down to distribute to the elderly and disabled, assisted by a member of SVP. Then the general distribution will start. It was suggested that at the 9.30am Mass the priest and a minister go forward to give Communion to the disabled before anyone else, rather than leave this always to two Eucharistic ministers.

Finance: the parish has received two very generous legacies: £20,000 from sisters Mrs Joan Cook and Miss Kathleen Taylor, and from Mrs Pauline Kynoch, 5% of her estate.

Social: a performance of Menotti's opera for children, 'Amahl and the Night Visitors', will be given in the Church on 29th November.

Catechesis: Christine Brierley is starting the Confirmation course in the New Year. The Bishop has given us a date in April.

The First Communion programme continues to be much appreciated.

Buildings: Chubb has given the Parish three quotations for slightly different levels of fire alarm and emergency lighting costing from about £4000 to £5000. This omits the Presbytery. Fr Pat and the meeting agreed that we will go ahead with the best level of protection but get the Presbytery included. Carbon monoxide alarms should be fitted as well. This will be paid for from the legacies mentioned above.

One of the Church windows has been replaced and Fr. Pat suggested that part of the legacies should be spent on further windows, probably 6 or 7 more, with acid engraving in memory of the ladies whose legacies had paid for them on two of the windows.

The firm which made the porch doors has given a suggestion on replacing and improving them. At present the automatic arm has been disconnected to ease access and to test them without it. It is agreed that these doors need gentle automatic closure and with pressure pads to open and close these doors for disabled access. The main outside porch doors will be replaced by two glass doors to match the internal doors but of differing sizes with the smaller door usually kept locked. The other larger door will be big enough for wheelchair access, opened either manually or with pressure pads, the outside one being on an arched frame taking it just clear of the door when opened. Both the door and the pressure pad will be within the line of the disabled parking bay. The City Council disability officer is visiting to give advice. Pauline Brown, the Parish disability adviser, who has limited sight, has demonstrated that the narthex doors also need pressure pad opening. The sill to the main outer porch doors slightly trips older members, noticed by Rob Beckwith, and the door firm will be asked if this can be improved.

Two Cambridgeshire County Council officers visited as part of the consultation process on the Milton Road Library rebuild. They agreed that the church will lose light from the building. To compensate for this they offer four roof skylights with electronic blinds activated by a switch. Only one of the five flats on the church side of the building will have windows looking directly into St Laurence's. Residents will be forbidden to park cars in the church car park as part of their tenancy agreement. With regard to noise, both from St Laurence's during Christmas midnight Mass and from the flats during

church services, tenants who are too noisy will be penalised. The flats will have triple glazing and with the Church's new double glazing noise will be considerably reduced. Paul Simmons was thanked for initiating the examination of the development. Plans will be available in the current library. It was suggested that the council be asked if they can help finance replacement double glazed windows as the legacies are not enough to complete the work. Thanks to those who signed the petition (see article on page 2).

Fr Pat and Virginia Bird have discussed replacing the single outside notice board with a board at each end of the front wall, at an angle so that people passing in either direction can easily see the information. The trees need trimming on the undersides to make cycling etc. easier.

School: Martin Avery is looking at getting radio microphones for use at the school Mass, one for the altar and one for the lectern, as well as the music-based mike.

AOB: Martine Walsh suggested running a group exploring different tradition of praying, and that participants of the Week of Accompanied Prayer and others might like to attend. She was asked to look into organising this.

Sarah Sykes asked if the enlarged Bulletin could include hymns used at 9.30am Mass not in the hymn book.

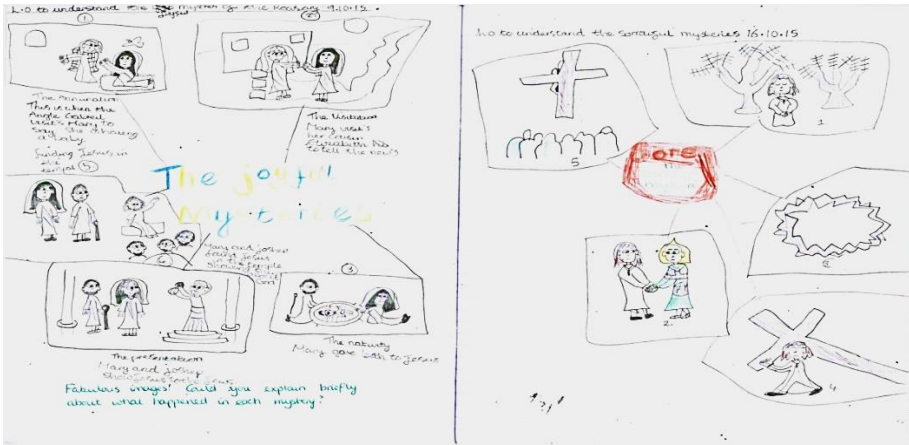
Future Forums

Thursday 4th February, 2016
Monday 18th April, 2016
Thursday 21st July, 2016
Monday 17th October, 2016

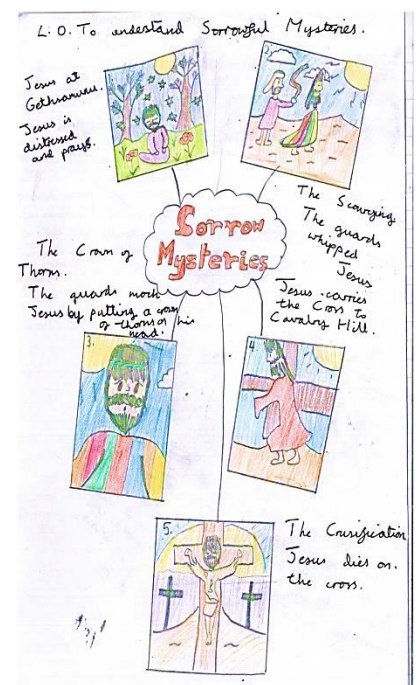
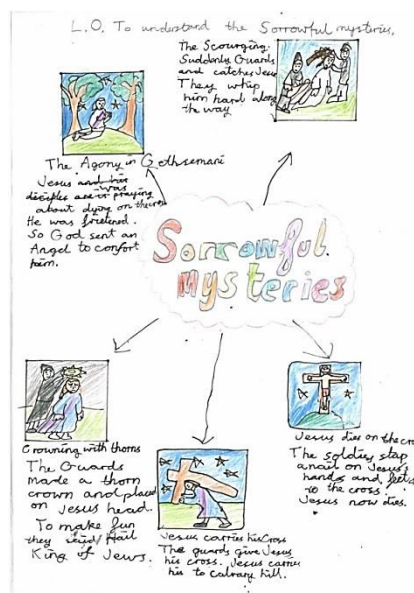
Studying the Rosary

Owl Class at St Laurence's School and Barbara Quail

For all 'Strictly' fans, you might be interested to read about Yr 5's letter of support to Jeremy Vine in the Cambridge News (7 Nov). Jeremy had received an unpleasant message and the class sent messages of encouragement. Jeremy responded by sending them a video thanking them. <http://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/Strictly-Come-Dancing-s-Jeremy-Vine-send-special/story-28128842-detail/story.html>



Our class has been studying the Rosary. We reflected on each of the mysteries and read passages from the bible. We then drew pictures to represent each mystery and explain what happened in each one. As part of our class worship, we sang hymns which are linked to the Rosary such as 'Servant King' and 'For God so loved the world' and discussed what they taught us about Jesus.'





Seasonal



Jeanette's Fair Trade Christmas Cake

©Jeanette Milbourn 2015

Ingredients

8 oz (225g) organic butter (or dairy free margarine)
 8 oz (225g) Fairtrade Molasses or dark Muscavado sugar
 4 large free-range eggs, lightly beaten (or use Organ egg replacer)
 10 oz (275g) Doves Farm organic fine wholemeal flour (or gluten free flour)
 2 teaspoon Fairtrade mixed spice (Sainsbury's do this)
 1 teaspoon Fairtrade cocoa
 1 teaspoon Fairtrade instant coffee
 1 desert spoon organic black treacle - haven't found a Fairtrade source of this yet
 2 oz (50g) Fairtrade ground almonds (Traidcraft/Zaytoundo, whole almonds you can grind in a food processor).
 These can be left out if you have a nut allergy.
 1 Fairtrade /organic lemon zest and juice
 1 Fairtrade/organic orange zest and juice
 8 oz (225g) Fairtrade raisins (Traidcraft)
 8 oz (225g) Fairtrade sultanas (Traidcraft)
 8 oz (225g) currants – haven't found a Fairtrade source of these yet
 8 oz (225g) Fairtrade chopped dates eg Suma organic pitted dates and chop them
 2 oz (50g) undyed cherries - haven't found a Fairtrade source of these yet
 2 oz (50g) mixed peel - haven't found a Fairtrade source of these yet. If you want to be more authentic you can buy preserved lemon and orange caps and chop them yourself. Available from Daily Bread/Suma/Arjuna.
 2-3 tablespoons Cherry Brandy/whisky (optional)

2 lb (1 kg) natural marzipan -- haven't found a Fairtrade source of this yet. Apricot spread if using marzipan.
 2 lb (1 kg) fondant (roll-out) icing or make royal icing using 2lb (1 kg) Fairtrade icing sugar
These are the ideal ingredients but you can use ordinary supermarket brands for a cheaper cake.

Cake tin 8" (20cm) round, 3" (7cm) deep, heavy cake tin. A thin, light-weight tin can be used but the cake may dry out/burn at edges before centre is cooked. You can also use a 7" (18cm) square tin.

Oven temperature 140 °C, (125 °C if using fan oven)
 Gas Mark 1, 275 °F

Cooking time 4-6 hours, maybe less if using fan oven

Portions: 8 portions per 1 lb (500g) finished un-iced cake. Therefore, if cut into wedding cake sized pieces this cake will do approximately 30 people. Fewer if you like bigger pieces 😊

Method

Ideally start the day before you wish to cook the cake, but this is not essential.

Weigh out raisins, currant, sultanas and cherries. Place in a colander and rinse under cold tap until water runs clear. Place a clean, dry, tea towel on a tray and pour out washed fruit onto it. Spread out to dry. Leave overnight if you have time. If not, just rub fruit around in tea towel to remove excess water.

Pre heat oven to 140 °C, (125 °C fan oven), gas mark 1. Line tin with baking parchment or greaseproof paper. Mix sugar and butter/margarine until light – you can do this in a food processor. When mixed, turn into a very large mixing bowl.

Using a wooden spoon, add lightly beaten eggs, one a time, with a tablespoon of flour to prevent curdling. Don't worry if the mixture does curdle. It doesn't seem to affect this cake detrimentally. If using egg replacer just add water at this point with a tablespoon of flour, and mix the egg replacer with the flour.

Add orange and lemon zest, mixed spice, coffee, cocoa and black treacle and stir in.

Add flour and ground almonds and stir in.

Add washed fruit, cherries, mixed peel and dates and stir in carefully until well mixed.

Add orange and lemon juice and stir in.

Tip mixture into the prepared tin and smooth the surface with the back of the wooden spoon. Make a small indentation in the centre and you will (hopefully) have a flat surface to ice after the cake is cooked. Another tip to help keep the surface of the cake flat is to place a roasting tin containing one pint (500ml) of water on the shelf underneath the cake for the first hour of cooking. Place the cake in the centre of the preheated oven for 4-6 hours. It may take less time if using a fan oven.

The cake is cooked when a metal skewer comes out clean after insertion into the middle of the cake. If the cake looks done on top but is still sticky in the middle, cover the surface of the cake with a piece of baking parchment/greaseproof paper cut to size.

When the cake is cooked, remove from the oven and leave in the tin in a safe place to cool. Once cold, turn out cake on to a wire rack. At this point you can feed the cake if you wish. Prick the bottom of the cake with a sharp fork or skewer and drizzle 2-3 tablespoons of cherry brandy (or whisky) evenly into the cake.

Once the cake has absorbed the spirits, wrap in greaseproof paper, then foil and store in a cool dry place for 3-4 weeks before covering with marzipan and icing. You can miss out the storage stage if you don't have enough time.

If you do not like/want to use marzipan, then I suggest you use fondant (roll-out) icing as this will stick to the fruitcake more easily by itself than royal icing. Decorate as you wish, but it's nice to use a nativity theme. You can buy or make cake decorations.



Enjoy 😊

Celebrating the Feast of St. Nicholas

Terry Taylor-Crush

St Nicholas, the patron saint of sailors, merchants, archers, repentant thieves, brewers, students and children, was born 270 years after the birth of Jesus, in Asia Minor, which is called Turkey nowadays. His parents, who were wealthy, died when he was young and he was brought up by his uncle who was a Bishop. Nicholas wanted to follow God, and obey Jesus, so he gave the money he had inherited from his parents' money to the poor and sick. When he was a young man Nicholas became a Bishop. He was known for his generosity, for secretly giving gifts, his love of children and his concern for sailors. It is thought that he went to the First Council of Nicaea and signed the original Nicene Creed which we still say each Sunday at Mass.

One story that is told about St Nicholas goes like this:-

A man had three daughters, but he was very poor, and didn't have enough money for a dowry, which is the money a wife brings to her husband when they get married. Without a dowry his daughters wouldn't be able to get married. They would probably have to be sold into slavery. However, at three different times a bag of money was secretly thrown through an open window into their home, landing in a stocking or shoe that had been left by the fire to dry. This money was enough for the dowries for each of the daughters.

This story that has led to the custom, in some countries, of children leaving out a shoe on the feast of Saint Nicholas, in the hope that he will leave a gift for them.

Last year, on the eve of December 6th, we left a shoe out for St Nicholas, and in the morning we found some chocolate Bishops!



Advent begins with the Sunday nearest to the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle (30th November) and embraces four Sundays. The first Sunday may be as early as 27th November, and then Advent has twenty-eight days, or as late as 3rd December, giving the season only twenty-one days.

The Advent wreath is shaped as a circle which symbolizes God the Father and eternal life. The three purple candles are lit on the first, second and fourth Sundays and represent: hope, faith and peace. On the third Sunday (Gaudate) the rose-coloured candle is lit and represents joy.

On Christmas Day a white candle, which represents Jesus Christ, is placed in the centre of the wreath and lit.

Reviews

The Orthodox Church. Timothy Ware (Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia)

Review by Dick Wilson

New edition, Penguin 1997. ISBN-13: 978-0-140-14656-1

We were very fortunate to have in the last Pilgrim an article on the Orthodox Church by Fr Armour of St Ephraim's Parish, which worships at Westcott House. Like Fr Rafael, Bishop Kallistos Ware is English, converting to the Orthodox faith in 1958. Since it first came out in 1963, his book *The Orthodox Church* has been the introduction to Orthodoxy for many English speakers.

The first part of the book is devoted to the history of the Orthodox Church and its shared origin with all other Christian traditions at the first Pentecost, as portrayed in the New Testament and the works of the early Church Fathers. The story is taken through the thousand years of the continuing Byzantine Empire in the East, to the emergence of the Church from persecution at the end of the 20th century.

The second half of the book covers less familiar ground, the beliefs, organisation and worship of the Orthodox Church. Tradition and the seven great councils of the early Church guided it. The Catholic Church in the West, outside the Empire, and the Eastern Orthodox, within the Empire, until its fall in 1453, went their different ways.

Bishop Ware discusses in some depth the tragic breach of the unity of the Church, the difficulties of the past and the present, and the hope of reunion.

If you want to know more about the Orthodox Church, and hope for reunion, this is the book for you.

The One-Straw Revolution

ISBN-13: 978-1590173138

by Masanobu Fukuoka

Mentioned in Karen Rodgers' article 'True education' on page 5, Masanobu Fukuoka's book about growing food has been changing the lives of readers since it was first published in 1978. He perfected his so-called "do-nothing" technique, a way of farming that seeks to work with nature rather than make it over through increasingly elaborate-and often harmful -methods. His farm became a gathering place for people from all over the world who wished to adapt his ways to their own local cultures.

Youth

Learn to be contented: *Letter from Fr Alvan to the youth*

My beloved friends in Christ, it is a pleasure to be writing to you again in this Advent edition of the Pilgrim. Advent is a time of joyful expectancy as we await the coming of the Saviour of the world, our Lord Jesus. It ushers in the Christmas season in which we rejoice and celebrate the birth of our loving Saviour. I know it is a time which we just can't wait to come. I remember those days how it used to be back home once Christmas is around corner. It is indeed a joyful time.

In the last edition of the Pilgrim, I wrote to you about how important it is for us all to have in our consciousness that we are specially made by God. It is only when we have this at the back of our minds that we will be able to appreciate whoever we are and whatever we have. To be aware that you are special and unique will make you learn to be pleased and satisfied with yourself. That is what it means to learn to be contented.

Sometimes we prefer to look outside of us, instead of inside, to discover how much God has blessed us. If we look into ourselves, we will see that there is something God has given us which is special to us and the other person we want to be like does not have. When we remember that we have something special which God has given us then we will be contented and not trying to be like another person.

The great philosopher Socrates once said, "S/he who is not contented with what s/he has would not be contented with what s/he would like to have". Oprah Winfrey has this to add, "Be thankful for what you have, you will end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough".

I want to share these few stories with you, maybe they will speak more to you about what it means to be satisfied and fulfilled with whatever you have.

There was a boy who was always asking his dad to buy him new pair of shoes. It's not actually that he has not got any shoes, but just that he felt he needed to have new shoes to at least be like his friends. Every day he kept on pestering his dad to buy him the shoes and his dad would always tell him to be patient since he has not received his pay for the month. The boy felt that the only thing that would make him happy would be getting the shoes he was asking for. Because of this he was not happy even when his dad kept telling him to have patience. One day, the boy was playing with his friends outside when he saw a boy of his age being pushed in a wheelchair by his dad. The boy had had an accident which had led to the amputation of his two legs. This boy couldn't believe what he saw. It was the first time he

had seen such a young person like him in such a situation. He stopped playing with his friends as he continued looking at the boy and his dad. One thing that startled him was that notwithstanding the boy's condition, he was very happy. The boy said to himself, "All this while, I have been hassling my dad for shoes, but here is someone who has got no legs to even wear the shoes." When he went home that day, he told his dad about his experience that day and asked him not to worry about getting him the new shoes.

"Happiness," says an author, "doesn't start when this, that or the other thing is resolved. Happiness is what happens now when you appreciate what you have."

A blind man was walking along the road when it started raining. Fortunately for him, a woman helped him to enter a place where he was able to wait until the rain stopped to avoid being drenched. There were other people there as well for the same purpose and among them was a crippled man. The blind man in thanksgiving to God said, "I just thank God for giving me legs to at least run away from the rain". The crippled man looked up to heaven and said, "Lord I thank you for the eyes you gave to me to at least see when the weather changes in order to escape fast before the rain starts to fall." A young girl, who had been complaining about her physical appearance and had been contemplating having cosmetic surgery, was touched by these statements coming from those whom Society sees as being unfortunate. She went home that day a changed human being having been taught by these less privileged men the lesson of contentment.

My beloved friends, be original, be yourself. In trying to become like someone else, we are compromising our own self being. If we are not satisfied with our own self, we cannot find satisfaction anywhere. We should learn to keep our own self happy and remain happy under all circumstances in life. The key to being happy is a non-insisting mind, non-complaining mind, and a pure mind. St Paul in his letter to the Philippians 4:12 writes, "**I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.**" In the letter to the Hebrews 13:5-6, the word of God says, "**Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'**" So we say with confidence, "**The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?**"

How then can we learn to be content? Strive to live with less rather than desiring more; give away out of your abundance rather than accumulating more; relish what you have rather than resent what you are missing. We become content when we realize God's sufficiency for

our needs. St Paul in Philippians 4: 19 says, "**And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.**" When we as Christians become materialistic, we are indirectly saying by our actions that God can't take care of us, or at least that He won't take care of us the way we want.

Are you content in any circumstances you face? St Paul, as we heard from his letter to the Philippians, knew how to be content whether he had plenty or whether he was in need. The secret was drawing on Christ's power for strength. Do you have great needs, or are discontented because you don't have what you want? Learn to rely on God's promises and ask God to remove that desire and teach you contentment in every circumstance. He will supply all your needs, but in the particular way He knows is best for you.

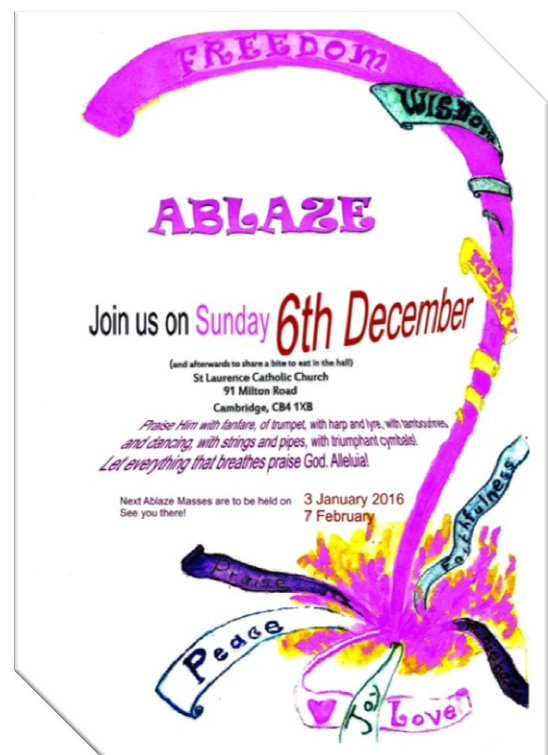
I pray that God will give you the grace to always be contented in every circumstance in which you find yourselves and to always rely on Him who is able to supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

God bless you all and see you in the next edition.

I LOVE YOU ALL.

Fr Alvan Ibeh SMMM.

[\(Fralvanibe@yahoo.com\)](mailto:Fralvanibe@yahoo.com)



Tailpiece

Sent in by Dick Wilson:

Dangerous country, Wales



Wood- or Ward -worms? Thirsty worms?

Once, when I still lived in Carlisle, I had occasion to buy a wardrobe. I got it for a very low bid at an auction. As I came to take it away, I noticed holes at the back with tiny heaps of sawdust below them. There didn't seem to be many. I said to the auctioneer's man, "This wardrobe has woodworm. How do I get rid of them?" He replied – and I can only hint at the dialect – "Why, you get a bowl of watter, and put it down beside the wardrobe, and when the wurrums come out for a drink at night, you shift the wardrobe."

Have you ever seen a toad mug?

My father showed me one, from the great era of practical jokes about 100 years ago. It was an ordinary drinking mug, but at the bottom was a pot toad, so placed, as you drank, to rise above the liquid and look you straight in the eye. There are not many still in existence.

Mysterious donations!

I called on a fellow member of the Labour Party to discuss a donation to the election fund. None of us had ever seen him but his membership subscription came in regularly every year. I introduced myself to the person who came to the door.

"Why," she said, "we are the second people who have lived here since him. He died and the house was sold."

We have never yet found out how he paid for his membership.

Sent in by John Hobson:

Just rewards

A priest woke up early one Sunday morning. It was a glorious day and he wanted to play golf instead of saying

Mass for the parish. So he rang the curate asking him to take the service as he himself was ill and then he set off to the golf course.

Up in heaven a disapproving angel asked God what he was going to do to punish this man. God said nothing.

Back on earth at the golf course the priest took out his club and the first shot was perfect. The ball went straight into the hole.

The angel said to God: "How could you let him do that? He's got a hole in one! That's rewarding him for bad behaviour!"

God smiled and said: "Think about it. Who can he tell?"

Cemetery humour

Harry Edsel Smith of Albany, New York:
Born 1903--Died 1942.

Looked up the elevator shaft to see if the car was on the way down. It was.

=====

In a Thurmont, Maryland, cemetery:
Here lies an Atheist, all dressed up
and no place to go.

=====

On the grave of Ezekial Aikle in
East Dalhousie Cemetery, Nova Scotia:
Here lies Ezekial Aikle, Age 102.
Only the good die young.

=====

In a London, England cemetery:
Here lies Ann Mann, who lived an old maid
but died an old Mann. Dec. 8, 1767

=====

In a Ribbesford, England, cemetery:
Anna Wallace
The children of Israel wanted bread,
And the Lord sent them manna.
Clark Wallace wanted a wife,
And the Devil sent him Anna.

=====

In a Ruidoso, New Mexico, cemetery:
Here lies Johnny Yeast.
Pardon him for not rising.

Sent in by Ieuan Jones:

How does a penguin make his house? 'i-gloos it all together.

Editorial

The Pilgrim Magazine

We are now celebrating the second anniversary of the return of Pilgrim in Advent 2013. The team has worked hard to produce a magazine which continues to improve and enlarge.

A big thank you to all who have contributed material and made this possible.

There are a few changes in “Who does what” within the team. Dick Wilson has retired as General Editor and this position is now shared by Sarah Sykes and Nora Darby. Therefore all contributions should be sent directly to pilgrim@saintlaurence.org.uk not to Dick. He will continue to gather and commission material and will still do some sub-editing. We all would like to thank Dick for the tremendous amount of work he did to renew and revitalise the Pilgrim.

The production team:

Editors

Sarah Sykes and Nora Darby

Sub-editors

Alex Dias

What’s New?

Nora Darby

Features and Opinions

Carol Williams

Personal Stories and Experiences

Dick Wilson

Parish Organisations & Activities

Sarah Sykes

Youth

Nora Darby

Reviews

Sarah Sykes

Tailpiece

Leonie Isaacson

Cover (contents etc)

Caroline O’Donnell

Proof reader 1

Sarah Sykes and Nora Darby

Layout (preparation for printing)

Dick Wilson

Obtaining and Commissioning materials for publication

Melanie De Souza

Proof reader 2

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

We thank all who have contributed to this edition and hope to welcome interesting and original material for all sections in forthcoming editions.

We would also welcome some new team members, if you would like to join us either as sub-editors or proof readers please contact the above email address with your name and contact details. Thank you.

The deadline for the next edition is 29 January 2016