

The Pilgrim

St Laurence's Parish Magazine, Advent Edition 2018



**Welcome Fr Simon & Bentley
Goodbye to Fr Jay**

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What's New?

Greetings from your new PP!

Dear Parishioners of St Laurence's



Over the next few days and weeks (months and years....) I am sure I will be having many 'getting to know you' conversations with you all. In the past, on moving parish, I have found it useful to put out a 'potted history' of my life so that many of the more obvious

questions can be answered from my part so that I do not repeat myself any more than I already do!

I was born on 10th August 1955 (at home) in Whyteleafe, Surrey, the third child of Roger and Peggy Blakesley who were originally from the Woodford Green area of Essex. They had moved 'south of the river' after my older brothers, Paul (Sept 1948) and Stephen (Dec 1952), had been born. I was baptized at the Church of the Sacred Heart in Caterham. I then went on to make my first confession and first Holy Communion there. I was also confirmed, and later said my first Mass, in that wonderful church. I do know what it is to love one church as a spiritual home!

We grew up in Whyteleafe until we moved, in 1960, to Caterham where I attended St Francis Primary School. My father, who had been commissioned in the Royal Navy during the war, was in the paper manufacturing business (APM), and was the London sales rep for two specialist paper mills in Scotland. In 1963, I started at Laleham Lea Preparatory School in Peaks Hill, Purley where we were successfully crammed with the requisite knowledge to pass the 11-plus and enter the John Fisher School, a diocesan run grammar school for boys. Half the staff were diocesan priests of the Diocese of Southwark, so I had regular contact with some very ordinary, and indeed some extraordinary priests. It was here that the germ of the idea of becoming a priest emerged, partly because, whatever else I did in life, I had promised myself that I would never commute on a passenger train between the London suburbs and the City – those carriages, in my daily Caterham to Purley journey, were filled with the antithesis of joy and I vowed to escape such drudgery!

Under the influence of some motivated and strongly principled priests I began to take an interest in Theology and as my A-levels were not particularly inspiring me – Geography, Economics and French – this led me to apply to the Diocese of Arundel &

Brighton to study for the priesthood. I don't recall all the details of the application process, but I was accepted at the age of 17 to study at the Venerable English College in Rome and arrived there in early September 1973. The English College was a heady mix of bright sparks and ordinary young lads such as myself, but the cultural and gastronomic richness of the city could not be doubted. I did reasonably well with the first two years of Philosophy, all taught in Italian, but as Theological Studies started I think that my relative immaturity began to show and, in May 1977, I agreed with the seminary staff that I should leave formation for a time, and, as one of my spiritual advisers at that time put it, 'cut across country'....

So I arrived back in England around the time of the Queen's Silver Jubilee, visited friends at university in Cambridge and tried to work out what to do. I was accepted to read Philosophy at Edinburgh but found that I was no longer eligible for a mandatory grant as I had been in Higher Education for over two years even though the course in Rome was not recognised, or paid towards, by Surrey County Council. Therefore, I found some work in a volunteer role with Sister Mary Garson's Nursing Home at Cross In Hand in East Sussex. There was a lay community of volunteers called 'Shalom' and I worked there for eight months while making an application to train as a nurse. I was accepted at the Middlesex Hospital and started training there in Autumn 1978. General nursing in a well-respected London teaching hospital was a very challenging experience but there are many great stories to tell; most of them nearly respectable. My idea had been not to give up on becoming a priest, but to do something that would lead to a solid qualification in three years and keep me independent of my parents and able to live my own life.

I qualified as an SRN in September 1981 and I was awarded the Fardon Bronze Medal for Nursing for that year – somebody had to come third! After staffing for eight months on a vascular surgical ward, I moved to a post-surgical ITU in Southampton. From there I went on to do a Joint Board of Clinical Nursing Studies course in A&E Nursing at St Peter's Hospital in Chertsey and, after a short spell doing night duty back at the Middlesex, I found a Staff Nurse's job in the A&E Department at the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading. After a year there I was promoted to Charge Nurse (ie Sister level), but I had been making tentative enquiries to return to a seminary. My original diocese of A&B was unwilling to take me back, so I touted myself around several bishops before arriving on a wet February afternoon at Archbishop's House in Westminster to see Bishop Alan Clark who was at a hierarchy meeting there. We found a cramped photocopying room in the bowels of the offices and he agreed to send me, selection conference willing, to

seminary for a trial year to see if I had grown up (in a nutshell!). So, in September 1986, I arrived at Ushaw College, Durham and was put into Year Three which already contained 26 students, mainly from the North of England. I managed well, being recruited, unsurprisingly, as the infirmarian, and managed the theological studies much better than before and made steady progress.

In the Spring of 1989, as I was approaching Ordination to the Diaconate, I received a letter from Bishop Alan asking me to go to St Paul University in Ottawa, Canada, to study for the two-year Licentiate in Canon Law. I remember being taken out for lunch in Cambridge by a very young Fr Eugene Harkness who told me what to expect in wintry Ontario. I found that I took well to the studies and again met some extraordinary priests who are sometimes quoted in my homilies. Sadly, however, both my parents were failing in their health while I was across the Pond and, after my Diaconate Ordination in Ushaw in June 1989, they both started to require treatment for cancer (They had both been heavy smokers...). I finished the first year of Canon Law studies at the end of April 1990 and returned to England to organise my Ordination to the Priesthood at Our Lady & the English Martyrs (sorry) for 2nd June 1990. That was a really great day, but my mother was already showing signs of cerebral mets and her sister was shocked to see just how ill she was. Dad was also suffering, but was staying strong for Mum. I was appointed to help out in Bury St Edmund's with Fr John Drury for the Summer of 1990 but was often piling around the M25 back to Caterham to see Mum. She died on 30th August, and on the day of her funeral, I went with Dad to see the GP who told him that he had widespread bony mets. Not the best day of my life. So, although I had returned to Canada to study later in September after Mum's funeral The University Faculty were superb in not docking me any credits....) I returned at Christmas to spend that with Dad. He collapsed shortly before I had to return in January and was admitted to a care home, I nevertheless returned to Canada, but was called home at the end of January as he had been taken into hospital. He spent his last days in a Marie Curie Nursing Home, just a few hundred yards away from home in Caterham, and died on 25th February 1991. So, the first two funerals I conducted as a priest were my mother's and then my father's. I don't recommend it.

I managed to get back to Ottawa for March and April to complete my 'Comps' – the Comprehensive Oral Examination – at the end of the Licentiate (equivalent to a Master's degree) in Canon Law. I returned to the Diocese in May 1991 and took over from one Fr Pat Cleary in Thetford as he went to South America to study Spanish so as to be able to work for the Missionary Society of St James. Déjà vu! I was only

there for the Summer and went in October to St George's Church in Norwich to be second curate – yes, I do remember when some parishes had three priests. I was there with Fr Philip Shryane and Fr Laurie Locke until 1995 when Bishop Peter Smith appointed me to St Benet's, Beccles, a Benedictine parish that need a Diocesan priest to care for it. After various uncertainties, I stayed there until 2003 when I was moved to Diss in Norfolk.

In Diss, I saw the opportunity to build a complete new church, essentially by selling the existing site for development and buying a plot of land on the outskirts of the town on what developers call an 'exception site'. Progress was rather slow, and not helped by the vocal opposition of some parishioners who were loyal to my predecessor who had retired next door to the presbytery.... We did finally get planning permission on 10th August 2007, the very day Northern Rock went down, heralding the financial crisis which changed the whole dynamic of our project considerably for the worse. We persevered, however, and in July 2012 I moved into the new church of St Henry Morse in Diss.

In the Summer of 2013, after ten years of stress – even though it was successful stress – in Diss I asked Bishop Alan for a move and was happy to accept the Parish of Newmarket & Kirtling. The theory was that while there I would build new accommodation for the priest, using my experience of the planning process and of building projects. However, when I arrived I saw the possibility of building more than just a house for the priest, rather several units including two flats for retired priests. However, I was never able to persuade Bishop Alan of the vision I had and we continued to disagree – for four years. In June this year, Bishop Alan asked me to see him and explained that he wanted to offer Fr Pat a smaller parish and would I take over the reins in the larger parish of St Laurence's? I was very happy to agree and therefore you have me now.

I should also explain about my extended role in the Diocese as I have, with my Canon Law degree, been running the Marriage Tribunal since 1994 which involves one or two days a week at the offices in Poringland, although I can work from Cambridge for some of the interviews. For the last 15 years I have been elected Chairman of the Council of Priests and I am a member of the Cathedral Chapter. I have also been involved for over 30 years with the Catholic Association Lourdes Pilgrimage, of which East Anglia has always been a part, and in fact after the Diocesan Synod 'Together' held at St Bede's in 1987, I was 'dragged to Lourdes by the Balls' – Colin & Julie Ball of Great Shelford to be precise – to work as a nurse, and I fulfilled that role for three years before going as

a Deacon in 1989. I am now the Pilgrimage Director and am really keen to take as many parishioners of ALL AGES to Lourdes in 2019. We will be going from 23rd to 30th August (check TangneyTours.com) – please ask Margaret Plumb about her experience....

My other posts are: Chairman of Trustees of the Diocesan Dependent Priests Fund. We manage a fund worth approximately £2,000 to help care for our priests in need; a Director of the Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (which means that I already have a strategic role in the future direction of St Laurence's Primary School), and a member of the Executive Committee of the Canon Law Society of Great Britain & Ireland, which involves some meetings away as well as the annual conference in May. I also have a deep interest in human development, and the impact of pre-and perinatal influences on the growing psychosomatic whole which is us!

So, what do I do if and when I get a chance to draw breath? I have my faithful Labrador, Bentley, who is six and loves a muddy river. I enjoy a pint (or two) of Adnam's bitter (but not Greene King IPA). I do not drink bottled beers as these are completely, almost ontologically, different to draught cask ales. I do the cryptic crossword in the Telegraph. I also play Bridge to a dubious standard, but haven't done so socially for years. I like good food and wine, and if you are wondering what my favourites are I prefer white wine (but not Sauvignon Blanc) – is this man FUSSY or what? In recent years, my holidays have taken me on the Camino de Santiago and, between 2015 and 2017, I walked from Toulouse to Santiago (ie in three goes), which is about 1,400 kilometres.

Of my remaining family, my oldest brother PAUL lives in Melbourne Australia, and my middle brother STEVE is a retired teacher living with his wife and dog and two cats in Rhosesmor, North Wales and they have two grown-up children living not too far from Cambridge, so you might see them around.

I hope that this has given you enough to be going on with. Looking forward to hearing your stories!!!

Deacon John Steel

Deacon John Steel, our recent Parish Treasurer, has died aged 75, after bravely fighting cancer for a number of years, his funeral took place at St Etheldreda's Church, Ely on 31st October where he was Deacon.

John, from County Durham, was born on 14th March 1943, and had a variety of managerial jobs throughout his life, including Managing Director of Stagecoach Cambus Holdings Ltd.

He was married in 1964 and leaves behind his wife Margaret, as well as two sons, John and Michael, and five grandchildren.



John was ordained a Deacon in East Anglia in 1996 and served in various parishes over the years, including St Laurence's. From his management experience, John was also asked to work in the Curia

Office and became the Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator for some years.

In 2014, John retired and moved to Ely. He sadly had cancer and was treated with chemotherapy. He recently contracted pneumonia and pleurisy.

May he rest in peace.

[With thanks to www.rcdea.org.uk]

An Inspirational Prayer

sent in by **Monica King**



Do not look forward to what may happen tomorrow;
The same everlasting Father who cares for you today
Will take care of you today and every day.
Either he will shield you from suffering or
He will give you unfailing strength to bear it.
Be at peace then. Put aside all anxious thoughts
And imaginations and say continually:
The Lord is my strength and my shield.
My heart has trusted in him and I am helped.
He is not only with me but in me, and I in Him.

Francis de Sales



Comings and Goings or Goings and Comings?

Nora Darby

Farewell to Fr Pat

In August this year Fr Pat told us that, after eight years in the Parish, he would be leaving us. Later we learned that he would be moving to Wymondham, Norfolk, and that Fr Simon Blakesley would be coming to St Laurence's from Newmarket. The move took place on 10th September and plans had to be quickly made for a suitable farewell to Fr Pat. He decided that his final Mass would be the Ablaze Mass on the 9th September, with a party afterwards.



As we know the Ablaze is the Parish Youth Mass, and is somewhat different to our regular services. It is youth-led, with them providing music – instrumental and sung – the reading of

the Lessons and active story telling with the children taking parts. A very different but still holy, more relaxed atmosphere which Fr Pat was very much a part of. He was joined on the altar by Fr Bob, Fr Jay and Deacon Geoff and many of the altar servers.



As Mass ended with the rousing hymn, 'Sing of the Lord's Goodness', everyone moved to the Parish Room and the party. Many more parishioners also began to arrive to swell the numbers and say goodbye. A wonderful feast prepared and presented by the CWL team and contributions of food brought by the arrivals ensured enough for everyone. The bar in the corner provided plenty of wine and soft drinks manned by Jim Scally throughout the evening.



So many people came and fortunately we were lucky to have a warm, dry evening which enabled the crowd to spill out into the garden which was also the venue for Fr Pat's presentation – a large cheque! Speeches from Deacon Geoff, Fr Bob, Fr Jay and Stephen Warde on behalf of the Parish were followed by grateful thanks and a speech from Fr Pat, which, of course, included a few of his humorous stories, before going indoors to cut his cake. A toast was proposed and given with a lot of cheers to our Fr Pat. It was a sad and happy occasion on which to say goodbye to a very popular priest who had looked after us spiritually and in many other ways.

Welcome Fr Simon and Farewell Fr Jay

Fr Simon our new Parish Priest arrived on the 10th September, accompanied by his beautiful black labrador, Bentley – definitely a scene stealer? Then on 24th September, Fr Jay slipped away quietly to become assistant priest at St Edmund's Church in Bury St Edmunds. We had known that he would be leaving us, but hadn't known when. The general consensus was to have a belated farewell party at a later date.

All Parish Priests have to be inducted into their new Parish by the Bishop. Fr Simon would have to wait for a suitable date and time when this could take place. Fortunately, Bishop Alan was to be in the Cambridge area on 28th October and it was decided that this would be a suitable time for Fr Simon's Induction. The Parish thought it should also be followed by a party and, Fr Simon thought it would also be a good time for Fr Jay's belated farewell.



At 5pm on the 28th, before a packed congregation, Bishop Alan celebrated Mass during which Fr Simon's Induction took place. On the altar with Bishop Alan and Fr Simon were Fr Bob, Fr Jay, Fr Minh, Fr Pdraig and Deacon Geoff. When Mass ended the party began.

A wonderful Hog Roast prepared and served by our Filipino parishioners, their families and friends, a whole pig, ears to tail was laid out on a large table. Our amazing CWL team were once again there and had everything in place, a wide variety of food to complement the hog! Jim Scally was also on bar duty again making sure nobody was thirsty! Everyone, including Bishop Alan, tucked into the feast and enjoyed themselves. Lots of happy chatter to be heard until hush was called for. At this point Fr Simon and Fr Jay cut into their individual named cakes amidst lots of cheers and laughter.



A fitting good bye and thank you to Fr Jay and a warm welcome to Fr Simon.

The Flowering of Love & Eckhartian Spirituality

Ronald Haynes

The Eckhart Society invites you to attend a reflective day to consider *The Flowering of Love & Eckhartian Spirituality*. This will include shared reflections on:

- Friendship and the Flowering of Love (Ronald Haynes)
- Empathy and the Flowering of Love (Roswitha Jarman)
- Desire and the Flowering of Love (Valentin Gerlier)
- The Flowering of Unconditional Love (Rebecca Stephens)

We will share periods of silence, reflection, and discussion through the day.

Saturday 8th December 2018 – Arrivals 9:30am, Programme 9:50am, Close 4:00pm.

Hosted by Robinson College Chapel, Cambridge, CB3 9AN
www.robinson.cam.ac.uk/conferences/contact/directions

Pay as you feel – suggested donation £20.00 (to support the work of the Society). Tea, coffee & biscuits provided – Café on site or bring a packed lunch.

Bookings can be taken via the Society website, or e-mail: hilary.monaghan@turpinsacs.co.uk

The Eckhart Society www.eckhartsociety.org is a registered charity dedicated to the study and promotion of the principles and teachings of Meister Eckhart. Eckhart (1260-1327) is a medieval philosopher and mystical theologian, a fellow Dominican leader and contemporary of Thomas Aquinas, both of whom were twice Professor of Theology at Paris. His radical use of language, both in his German vernacular and in Latin, and his profound concern for authentic living make Eckhart an engaging and useful guide for many people. Eckhart's teachings have an appeal beyond the Christian tradition in which he is rooted.

For more information about the Eckhart Society, please contact Ronald Haynes via e-mail RonaldHaynes@yahoo.com.



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BOOKINGS via the website, or to: The Administrator, The Eckhart Society, 4 Turpins Green, Maidenhead SL6 4QE -- Email: hilary.monaghan@turpinsacs.co.uk

Registered Charity Number: 1042199 www.eckhartsociety.org

Features & Opinions

2018 Synod on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment

Susan O'Brien

The Synod of Bishops on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment closed on 28th October after almost a month of meetings in Rome. It was the 15th general session of the Synod of Bishops, but it was the first one ever dedicated to an exploration of young people and faith - and the first Synod to invite a group of Catholics under the age of 30 to join the Bishops in dialogue.

The Synod of Bishops, established in 1965, is advisory to the Pope. It is described in the Church's Code of Canon Law as 'a group of bishops who have been chosen from different regions of the world to meet together...to promote the close relationship between the Roman Pontiff and the Bishops, by their counsel to assist the Roman Pontiff'. The Pope can call a meeting of the Synod of Bishops on any subject at any time of his choosing. When he does so, he always presides over the assembly, although a synod is a collegial body whose method is 'to walk together', which is the original meaning of the Greek word. To date Pope Francis has chosen to make use of the resources of three Synod assemblies; the first two to reflect on marriage and the family (2014 and 2015) and this most recent one on young people and their vocational callings in Christ, subjects that concern all Catholics in very direct and immediate ways. Moreover, he has recently made the 'walking together' more inclusive of lay people, by giving a new ruling which makes detailed consultations of the laity an official part of the synod discussions before the bishops actually meet.

The 30 young people who participated in this Synod had an awesome responsibility. Drawn from across the world they were asked to speak for the large number of young people who had participated in consultations at diocesan level and contributed to the reports from their own Bishops' Conferences that in turn went into the working document (*instrumentum laboris*) used as the basis for discussion at the Synod. More than 200,000, for example, had completed an online questionnaire. Those present at the Synod were asked to witness through personal statements about their own faith journeys and longings.

But beyond personal statements they engaged in extended dialogue with the bishops. Because the Synod had been structured around small, language-based discussion groups, these young people found themselves in deepening conversation with senior clerics over three weeks. Since the Synod had also been set up with a brief to listen, the young people

were listened to attentively. As one of the religious sisters representing the Union of International Superiors General of women's religious orders reported afterwards, 'We were asked [by Pope Francis] to listen differently than we have ever listened before.' What that produced from all accounts was a very lively and life-giving Synod for its 300 or so participants. As one bishop said, there was 'no downplaying, no sugar-coating.'

Although, as Pope Francis remarked at the outset, the goal of the Synod was not to produce a document but to make concrete pastoral proposals, like all Synods this one worked towards the production of a Report for publication. A final draft was put before the voting members of the Synod for approval paragraph by paragraph and in its entirety. The agreed Report has 167 paragraphs covering a wide range of topics: migration (which particularly involves young people), suffering, violence and persecution of Christians, art, music and sport, education and seminary formation, the art of discerning and the formation of conscience, the digital age, the crisis of sexual abuse in the Church, synodality, women in the Church, sexuality.

Perhaps the least foreseen element of the Synod was the way in which clerical sexual abuse issues ran through it, forming part of the context for conversations between participants. The Synod opened amid fresh revelations about decades of sexual misconduct and cover-ups in several countries: the Cardinal McCarrick case in the USA, cases in Germany, India, England, Chile, Belgium. One of the English language groups noted that in the final Report on the Synod 'it cannot be skimmed over tangentially in a few short sentences'. Synod members from affected countries spoke of the shattered trust, the trauma and suffering of survivors, the catastrophic failure in case management, and young people spoke of the impact on their confidence to speak for their faith. Three paragraphs in the final Report confront the issue and Pope Francis has convened a meeting of the Presidents of all Catholic Bishops' Conferences on the subject which will be held in Rome in February 2019.

In a discussion about both how the Church can better serve young people as they face a host of new challenges in the 21st century and how the Church itself might change to make room for more diverse and youthful leadership, the lack of women's leadership in the Church received a good deal of scrutiny from the young people present. As a consequence, a call for, and a commitment to, change in relation to women in the Church is strongly represented in the final Report which states that 'young people are asking with great force' for a reflection 'on the condition and role of women in the Church'. 'Women', the Report says, play 'an irreplaceable role in Christian communities',

but are often shut out of ‘decision-making processes’. The Synod embodied its own vivid instance of this reality. In contrast to the position of the two lay male superior generals (religious brothers) present at the Synod who had the privilege of voting despite not being ordained, none of the small number of women religious present, even those who were the superior generals of their orders and congregations, were permitted to vote. After the Synod senior representatives of the international men’s and women’s religious orders agreed to meet to put a proposal for change to Pope Francis.

It is still early days to reflect on the significance of this Synod and on anything in the Report that was agreed by its voting members (only available in Italian at the time of writing) but it may be the process itself, with its emphasis on attentive listening and authentic dialogue between and across the usual lines of age and status, that will prove to be influential. It is not incidental that Pope Francis described the Synod as ‘a place of discernment, a protected space, so that the Holy Spirit can work’.

Power Repositioning

Fr Jay

The world has always been reinventing itself. From global warming to the Strictly Come Dancing farce it will, and will always be, packaging and repackaging itself.

When we think of the words from Ecclesiastes – ‘nothing new under the sun’ – they subtly warn us that things happening in the present are just shadows cast long before. There are some truths in it, considering that some of the things we are experiencing now are upgrades of what was happening before. From the pursuit of order, beauty, and goodness to man’s inherent capacity to find his meaning, all indicate his ability to adapt in order to live and not just survive.

We realise that in the long run the priorities of day-to-day living change, brought about by the massive technological overhaul in aspects of life. There are positive outcomes as these are oriented to uplift the dignity of humanity to live in a convenient way. In other words, as the cycle of life continues, it does not stay the same. There are changes and inevitably humanity must learn and equip and harness its technological skills in order to stay relevant in a world where even the word ‘relevance’ could not be relevant. With this, power shifts and begins to be repositioned.

Countries which have the advanced technological know-how like Japan, Singapore and the like have the economic advantages. For one thing, it speeds up economic activity and is able to manoeuvre positive results.

The same also with career selection, the demands of computer-related jobs are on the rise. For one, it pays handsomely, and second, it is everywhere. Power now belongs to the individuals who have the technological expertise of almost anything.

However, not all things need to upgrade. The big Truth, Jesus Christ, stays eternally the same. As we are about to enter the season of Advent then, we turn our attention to the very message of Jesus about truth and power, translated into the gift of the self for others through service. We remember that the very source of power and truth Himself was born in the lowly manger, and that is true power, not new yet ever fresh.

Cross+Talk – a bit of Philosophy in the Pub!

Ronald Haynes

Cross+Talk is an open, lay-led group that tackles topics of mutual interest, held in a friendly and convivial atmosphere – connected with Cambridge Catholic parishes (OLEM, St Laurence’s, St Philip Howard), but welcoming people of any faith or none. It is for anyone interested in an informal yet sincere exchange of views on a variety of vexed questions ... matters of faith and morals and the great range of issues that present themselves to us in the Scriptures, in Society and in our Selves.

There is something to interest everyone so if you or someone you know would like to join us sometime, do come along when you can. Meetings are most **Thursdays from 7:30pm** – in The Carlton Arms. The pub has good food, is easy for travel, parking and conversation. It is a divided pub, and we meet on the left-hand/restaurant side (entering via the fenced off beer garden area in the front).

Occasionally there will be a pause for holiday, Holy Day or other special liturgy on a Thursday, so please check www.theseecretnote.com/crosstalk for updates, or for further information contact Ronald Haynes on Tel.: 07954 436393, or e-mail RonaldHaynes@yahoo.com. Hope you can join us soon!

Cardinal Points – Nabataeans

John Hobson

The Magi, bringers of soup or stock cubes, no, don't think so. Three kings? Three fortune tellers? Three star-gazers? Three wise men? It seems you can take your pick and tell your tale from there. The tale is amazing and different in several respects in various parts of the world. What we do know however is that what is common across the tellers of the whole nativity story is that the nativity was announced by the deliverers of heavenly messages, the angels, first of all to whom? Poor workers, that's who. Not to royalty, or Reuters or the local *Jewish Chronicle* – which at the time was maybe called Papyrus Points! No, it was to the shepherds, the great unwashed toilers in the hills. Also we know that the first warmth from the outside world that baby Jesus received – after his Mum – was from God's great animal creations too; so we can see that the poor, the meek and the lowly and the animal kingdom were the first greeters of the nativity – but after Mary and Joseph of course.

Who came along next then? The Gospel of Matthew is the only one that tells us it was the Magi. Luke is the only other Gospel that even records the nativity event but he omits any reference to visitors to the manger except the shepherds. Matthew refers to the Magi as 'three wise men from the East'. As a result of following a star they arrived in Jerusalem first, not Bethlehem, and it is they, not the angels, who tell the news to King Herod, before continuing to follow the star to Bethlehem. I have no idea who converted these chaps into being kings by the way, do you? But we are happy to have the Christmas Carol *We Three Kings* anyway.

At this point it is maybe wise to tip our hats to both the Health and Safety, and Equality, lobbies and explain that travel was mega dangerous at this time in history and so the wise ladies of the world at large very wisely stayed at home. Where were we? Oh yes, back to the Magi. Up-to-date science and archaeology is revealing more and more to us on this topic every year. Archaeologists even dig all around every piece of roadworks today and a planning application, even for a garden shed, compels the employment of an archaeological dig. All terribly expensive and potentially boring but in the Middle East new and exciting discoveries have been unearthed.

What's the news then? News to me anyway. Well it seems to be all about a people called the Nabataeans. 'They're not playing in the World Cup or the Olympics' I hear you shout. Well no, they aren't and there is no real written record of them as a coherent nation but in the last 100 years excavations have

unearthed their temples and found that the temples were in the configuration of the planets and the stars – they were, amongst other things, a people of star-gazers and living to the east of Jerusalem. Fancy that!

Furthermore they had linguistic links to Aramaic, Jesus's language of course, and their royal family had links with King Herod – his wife was one of their princesses. All in all some historians (and they all argue anyway), believe these Nabataeans were part of the Babylonian Jewish exile (now roughly the Iraq area) several hundred years before Christ, and had, over time, been absorbed into the Roman Empire. Nonetheless one of their royal princesses was the wife of King Herod.

OK, what have we got so far, an early sort of pre-Christian soap opera script! The Nabataeans with a Jewish literary and Aramaic linguistic heritage, planet-orientated temples and a royal family with links to Herod in Jerusalem and a people who are committed star-gazers. Well, knowing that the stars were foretelling a great event, and knowing from their Jewish heritage that the Old Testament writings predicted a new king of the Jews, and hearing that one was born in Judea, why wouldn't three diplomatic star-gazing ambassadors set off to visit their royal kinswoman and fetch some royal-type gifts for her husband Herod. Herod has had a justifiable bad press throughout all this but I reckon he could have been part of the early Christmas gift exchange arrangements and maybe passed on the gold, frankincense and myrrh, brought for him by the three wise men, so they could be offered to the new king when they found him. We can't be 100% sure of all the detail, can we? Not really. What we can be sure of is that in His divine person, this child king, was born and we believe in Him. The detail we have placed around the three wise men is just fine, or not, but when subjected to my 'so what if it's not all true' test this detail is not critical to the nativity event; so don't worry over it, just enjoy it, or adapt it.

Have a happy and holy Christmas, choose and enjoy your Epiphany feast with the script of your choice and be a very wise star follower and follow Mary, Star of the Sea, who will lead you to Jesus anyway.



God in Darkness and Light

Michael Allan

Lux Perpetua

A star for a cradle
Sun for plough and net
A fire for old stories
A candle for the dead

Lux perpetua
By such glimmers we seek you

The writer George Mackay Brown, a native of Orkney (a group of islands in the far north of Scotland), with its long, almost unending summer days, and short, contracted winter days, knew much about darkness and light. Orkney winters are indeed very dark; by the time of the winter solstice, the sun is above the horizon for just six hours, with a weak, grey light.

In the middle of the main island of Orkney, known as Mainland, there is a Neolithic tomb called Maeshowe, probably built around 2800 BC. Its secret is revealed only in the darkest depth of Orkney's winter: there is a long, low corridor leading to a dark central chamber, and this corridor is so positioned that at the winter solstice (and only then) are the last rays of the setting sun allowed to steal along it and enter the chamber. (The Newgrange tomb in Ireland has a similar alignment with the winter solstice sun.) George Mackay Brown describes here this strange meeting of light and death:



‘The winter sun just hangs over the ridge of the Coolags. Its setting will seal the shortest day of the year, the winter solstice. At this season the sun is a pale wick between two gulfs of darkness. Surely there could be no darker place in the be-wintered world than the interior of Maeshowe.’

The chamber of the Maeshowe tomb lit up by the last rays of the setting sun at the winter solstice. (Copyright Charles Tait)

‘One of the light rays is caught in this stone web of death. Through the long corridor it has found its way; it splashes the far wall of the chamber. The illumination lasts a few minutes, then is quenched. Winter after winter I never cease to wonder at the way primitive man arranged, in hewn stone, such powerful symbolism.’

In dead

of winter

ray of light

reaches in

to touch

**The darkness
Of death**

From humanity's earliest times have glints and glimmers of the Divine been seen in the darkness?

We often seek to flee from darkness and pain. The levels of suicide and depression, of violence and hatred, of over consumption and despoiling of the planet, though they may have different causes, and affect different people, all show how hard it can be to be at peace with ourselves, with each other, with our fellow creatures, and our common home. Sometimes people feel separated from life, perhaps even from God; alone in a cold, meaningless world – leading to despair or escape. But the ‘God’ we may feel separated from, and many no longer believe in, is a false God. It is the strange, wounded God who is close in the darkness.

‘Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you’ and after he said this, he showed them his hands and his side.’ (John 20:19-20)

‘By his wounds we were healed.’ (Isaiah 53:5)

Peace comes from the wounded one; new life from the dark tomb.

The wound is where the light gets in, and the place of the wound is the place of healing. Although dark and painful, our wounds are where we are healed, if we want it.

For the Cistercian monk Thomas Merton, love seeks us out in the darkness:

Who holds the homeless light secure
In the deep heart's room?

Midnight!
Kissed with flame!
See! See!
My love is darkness!
Only in the Void
Are all ways one:

Only in the night
Are all the lost
Found.

(From *The Night of Destiny*)

Sometimes we need to try and stay with our pain and not flee from it. To be a compassionate witness of that pain and darkness, and no longer a victim of it. To sit in silence with the One who loves us, in the midst of the dark night – the same One who took the Easter light into the dark world of the dead.

The poet Rainer Maria Rilke had a dark, disturbing childhood, in which he felt ‘infinitely forsaken’. But later he came to a different experience of darkness, one in which he found a spring of new life and the presence of the divine. “I love the dark hours of my being”, he wrote, “for they deepen my senses. From them I’ve come to know that I have room for a second life, timeless and wide.” Here he hints at this ‘second life, timeless and wide’, flaming above our troubles:

Overflowing Heavens

Overflowing heavens of squandered stars
flame brilliantly above your troubles. Instead
of into your pillows, weep up toward them.
There, at the already weeping, at the ending visage,
slowly thinning out, ravishing
worldspace begins. Who will interrupt,
once you force your way there,
the current? No one. You may panic,
and fight that overwhelming course of stars
that streams toward you. Breathe.
Breathe the darkness of the earth and again
look up! Again. Lightly and facelessly
depths lean toward you from above. The serene
countenance dissolved in night makes room for you.

George Mackay Brown also knew much pain and darkness. Tuberculosis affected his life and health profoundly, to the extent that a normal working life was not possible for him. Also he skirted close to an escape into alcohol. (One of his closest women friends did escape, or descend, into alcohol, and died from it.) Depression, sometimes suicidal, was part of his family history and of his own life. Eventually, with help from others, including fellow Orkney poet Edwin Muir, and from his own Catholic faith, he found his vocation in life: writing poetry, novels, short stories, nonfiction and plays.

He lit candles in the darkness to illumine the abiding presence of Love.

Lighting Candles in Midwinter

Saint Lucy, see
Seven bright leaves in the winter tree

Seven diamonds shine

In the deepest darkest mine

Seven fish go, a glimmering shoal
Under the ice of the North Pole

Sweet St Lucy, be kind
To us poor and wintered and blind.

Light of Light
Darkness of Darkness
Guide our feet
Through the bright fields
And dark woods
Of our lives.

Acknowledgements:

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Come as You Are

Chioma Ubajaka

Come as you are to the PTA,
Come as you are and have your say.
Come as you are and give and share,
Your gifts, your time, all that you are.

The PTA is one in us,
The PTA is all of us.
Come as you are if not for you,
Then for the kids, or they’ll be blue.

We need your head, your heart, your hands,
We need your fa-mi-ly and friends.
We need everything that is you,
To do something worthwhile or two.

We need you here to build and grow,
We need you for the school disco.
Panto, photos – make some dough,
You are special, just so you know.

Come as you are, oh don’t delay,
Come as you are and save the day.
Come as you are to the PTA,
Come as you are and make our day.

For more information about how you can help or join the St Laurence’s Catholic Primary School PTA please contact: stlaurenceschoolpta@gmail.com

A response to the abuse crisis – Homily 25/08/2018

Fr Bob OP

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Catholic Church in this country is living through a nightmare; but also in Australia, the United States and other places. You are telling me every day of your horror, shame and resentment at what was done by men of consecrated life at Ampleforth, Buckfast and Ealing – and was hushed up and swept under the carpet with no recognition and no redress – to innocents who suffer to this day. The facts themselves are not ones that can be mentioned in a holy place and during a sacred action. They have been published for all to read. They are impossible to exaggerate; whoever doesn't sense the enormity must have his head in the sand. It is desperately difficult to talk about but unless we can share our feelings these sorrows can only weigh heavier. This is what drives people from the Church and makes new Christians lose heart.

I will speak and write and discuss, but I have no comfort to offer; I can only weep with the Church and with the Mother of Sorrows whose children we are. The Holy Father in his letter addressed last Monday to the People of God writes of crimes that inflict deep wounds of pain and powerlessness not only upon the victims, but also – of course, in not so grievous a way, but still really – upon the community of believers, and of non-believers too. 'No effort to seek to beg pardon and to repair the harm will ever be sufficient,' he writes, 'the pain of the victims is also our pain.' It will take some time for that to come home to us.

I'm a senior Priest (I had to give up being a young maverick a few days ago). I was for many years by profession a prison chaplain with the duty of accompanying many, many offenders in this line – and trying to understand them. This offence is common as muck; it goes on everywhere in all walks of life. But we have to do here with a class of habitual offenders that included immature and needy personalities who preyed on innocents, who abused their power and who inflicted mental and physical pain in a compulsive way and who were fixated, mostly unable to change much, and so a permanent danger. For Christians and anyone who speaks the language of conversion, change of heart, redemption, this has been so difficult to grasp. Again and again, the pious offenders were not suspected because they showed outwardly as gentle, charming and persuasive but were in fact devious and manipulative. Again and again once detected abusers have been given a second chance, spirited away to new places and cast their net again.

Why do such people become priests and monks? A youth may join a tried and tested way of life seeking a way out of temptation, but still be immature and with his problem unresolved. Celibacy, he may think, will solve everything. But celibacy without conversion of heart, fraternal life lived generously, poverty and faithfulness to a rule of holy living, amounts to nothing but a shackle. Clerical life becomes a niche occupation protected from interference, a charmed circle. Then he is thrown together with minors who rely on him and whose care offers an outlet for his emotions. What happens next – well, it is in the public sphere. In the holy places we may not speak of it.

Why did abusers thrive in schools and parishes? People loved their priests and stood in awe of them and willed them to have prestige and authority. Yet Christ is among us as one who serves, and he who wants to be first among us must be least of all and servant of all. Under the cloak of the Lord who is the Servant, abusers made slaves of their victims. How much did they profit from the protection of the lay people who could see no wrong in them and could not credit the rumours and the confidences made them? They held all the strings and the victims had nowhere to turn, no way out, were not believed and found no redress. Only in places that were rotten with clericalism. The Pope writes, 'clericalism nullifies the character of Christians, it diminishes and undervalues the baptismal grace that the Holy Spirit has placed in the hearts of our people. "No" to abuse (means) "no" to all forms of clericalism.'

What can stop it happening again? When institutions have attempted to set their own house in order this has always been a failure. They put their reputation first and the child last. These are crimes, these are criminals and their victims must have justice. In fact, in the monastic schools it was outside agencies – doctors, compliance people – who detected and reported the offences, and the police secured convictions. Since the Church acted to implement the Nolan recommendations, proper safeguarding has been in place for 17 years now. Briefly, the institution and its good name takes second place, the victim comes first. Once offences are discovered, each of us has a duty to go straight to the police – not the safeguarding officer but the police. Those precautions can act retrospectively. So what happened at the monastic schools in the 20th century has been largely recovered from the dustbin of history and has led to convictions and to lasting changes. Now the failed schools have still to satisfy the Department of Education, the Charity Commissioners, the Headmasters' Conference and the safeguarding system. Well, let them try. Don't hold your breath! But for the rest, our parish schools, our churches, our Catholic societies and activities should be safe places. Teachers, priests and workers

are vetted and fit for purpose and no respecters of persons. Only, we must all know what safeguarding involves and work on it together.

Finally, to turn again to St Paul – *Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself to make her holy, by washing her in water with the Word. The Church is his body, and we are its living parts.* In St Paul's vision everyone has a part to play in building up the body of Christ, everyone has a gift to bring in a ministry of service to one another and to the wider world. There is a glorious many-faceted pattern of ministries in the New Testament and in the teaching of the Councils of the Church, not a domineering clerical caste that rules over all. A priest or bishop is not one who possesses every gift but one who brings out the gifts and qualities of everyone for the service of the gospel of God. His must be inspirational, not bureaucratic or autocratic leadership. Many people are asking for a reform of the structures, including the opening of ordained ministry to other than single men.

But in the meantime, the Holy Father has demanded a reflection on ourselves and how we want to be. Be in prayer for this wounded, hurting Church of ours. Be in prayer for the survivors of abuse. Ask the Lord to cleanse his Church as once he cleansed the Temple at Jerusalem. Help us together find a way. Work for a more fraternal church. Don't let go.

The Season of ADVENT!

Rosina Abudulai

What is the meaning of Advent to each of us? Does the period of Advent automatically place us in a spirit of anticipation of His coming?

Here in Cambridge, the intellectual powerhouse of everything that is, with its high theologians, scholars and intellectuals, there is nothing new to be written about or defined. The chances are that it has all been done, dusted, and finely researched! The 'we' of Cambridge can be rather intimidating on the world stage! Quite apart from the people, even the paved streets of Cambridge and College lawns appear to have some intellectual capacity and knowledge! If one looked at these and listened carefully, one might just see and hear, or be drawn into some innovative debate or research topic!

That said, Advent, a word derived from the Latin word *adventus*, translated as 'coming' and also defined as 'the arrival of a notable person or thing', challenges us

all, especially we Christians. It invites us to look closely at our own interpretation and expression of Advent. How do we set out individually to make a collective and substantial statement which gives the season of Advent its true meaning?

Advent, which starts off the season of the Church's liturgical year, is marked by those four special Sundays and weeks. It is a season of joy. During this period, we as the people of God, the faithful, prepare ourselves towards His coming. His nativity. The coming of the King of kings. The four traditional Advent candles, principally, purple and rose, with an additional white, the Christ candle (now five), each represent a historical part of salvation history to the time of the birth of Jesus. As well as leading us through the journey of Advent, these colours tell us a story. Purple, a symbol of royalty and penance, leads us from darkness, through hopeful expectation, as we light each candle, into the light of Christ, the Incarnation. By the third Sunday – Gaudete, Rejoice Sunday – when the rose candle is lit, the faithful would have entered into the fullness of pure joy; the joy which signifies the visible end of our expectation. The white candle is soon to be lit!

As a people of the human society, however, this journey can be fraught with human challenges. How do we maintain the momentum of Advent, this joyous season, infuse others with it, and keep our focus on this particularly grand occasion – the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ – without being overly distracted or totally caught up with its side events of a secular nature? To hold these two together in tension and in check, is perhaps to try to embark on another route this Advent; a much simpler one in its material sense. A route that leaves behind the paved streets and all its ensuing chaos of activity. A road that is woven with the wreath of the poverty of spirit, and the simplicity of heart. One that frees us from much of the material burdens, (and its associated strains of the period) and leads us to the cradle of Nativity.

May this be the Advent when we join hands on a journey with the poor, for whom the season of Advent, culminating in the birth of our Lord and Saviour, is enriched with the simplicity of heart, access to basic needs, and an overwhelming spiritual readiness and unexplained joy! The joy of excited anticipation. This, hopefully, should lead us to say, "My heart is ready oh Lord, my heart is ready – O Come Emmanuel, come!"



Parish Organisations & Activities

CAFOD Update Connect2 Peru

Mary Watkins and Nora Darby

Here is the latest update on how we at St Laurence's are helping others through our monthly Connect2 Peru collection.

In this update, we're looking back at how your prayers, support and solidarity have made a difference to children in Lima, and to the people of Cruz de Mayo.

Through the 'Warmi Huasi Children's Project' in Peru's capital, Lima, you have worked with vulnerable children and young people who list poverty, domestic violence and unsafe neighbourhoods as their main problems.

"I have been so inspired by the amazing work that the children's organisations have done," comments CAFOD's Barbara Davies. "The children have been able to lobby the local council to improve services for them. This has really boosted their self-esteem – knowing that they have valuable ideas and the right to participate."

Eight safe spaces have also been created for and by children, for homework, reading and play.

Lives you helped change:



LUZ first came to the 'Warmi Huasi Children's Project' in Lima to learn First Aid. She was so impressed that she now works there, helping with the Saturday Reading Club and the Children's Council. The Council gives children a voice in decisions that affect them. Thanks to the project, children in San Benito now feel they are being heard.

Key moments on our Journey

WARMI HUASI 2016

- The members of the San Benito Children in Action organisation get a derelict and unsafe park turned into a safe and colourful space to play.

- The group lead a neighbourhood clean-up campaign with their own posters.

- The children's group in Lima becomes the first legally registered organisation in Peru run by children for children.



2017 / 2018

- Warmi Huasi and the children hold meetings with local authority officials to push for children's organisations to be legally recognised and allowed to take part in decision-making processes.

- Officials, convinced by the importance of involving children, approve laws allowing them to participate.

- Children from five organisations present 15 proposals to the local authority, calling for an end to child abuse and violence, for safe places to play and study, and for improvements to the environment.

Five proposals are already underway.

- For the first time ever in this district, 76 girls and 81 boys are taking part in the participatory budget process.



- By the start of 2018, the project has directly reached:
 - 1,513 children (738 boys, 775 girls);
 - 34 teachers;
 - 25 mothers in leadership positions;
 - 128 wider family members;
 - 10 local government representatives.

It is indirectly benefiting 118,000 people.

You have supported the people of Cruz de Mayo through the 'Lake Parón Water Project' in the Andes, who have learned to monitor and protect the lake on which they depend, and are better equipped to take decisions together with the government water authority and hydroelectric company.

Lives you helped change:

DORA from Cruz de Mayo is taking part in workshops on women's rights, literacy and coping with the effects of climate change. Traditionally, women have had little say in how the community is run. "The workshops are good," she says. "Now I know about my rights and that I have the right to participate in the community."

Key moments on our journey

LAKE PARÓN WATER PROJECT 2016

- Local people who depend on the water from Lake Parón achieve peaceful talks with the hydroelectric company and National Water Authority about managing the level of the lake.
- A local task group is formed to negotiate water use. The community successfully lobbies to reduce and regulate the amount of water taken from the lake.
- The hydroelectric company now consult the community on all actions concerning the lake.

2017 / 2018

- 110 secondary school students learn to monitor lake water and study the impacts of climate change. (Peru is the third most vulnerable country to climate change worldwide.)
- CAFOD's partner organisation has analysed the economic opportunities for the region, and proposes ways to market farm produce and create a sustainable tourism plan.
- A lawyer has been contracted to review community rights around land tenure and water.



• Women are being trained about their rights and are now included in making plans for their community. A chapter on women's rights is included in the new community statutes.

- Women are attending workshops on literacy, and have learned to make radio broadcasts to share information.

SVP help people in need in East Anglia

Sent in by SVP member, Christine Knight, originally appeared in Diocesan News

When the police found Larry on Cromer Pier, they called an ambulance. When they asked him if there was anyone they should telephone to ask for help, he said no; the last place that he had called home was a hundred miles away, he had been sleeping rough for months, and he had lost all contact with family and friends.

One of the paramedics suggested calling the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) in North Norfolk, which responded by offering Larry a listening ear and finding somewhere for him to stay until he could sort himself out.

People find themselves suddenly homeless for all sorts of reasons, including illness, family breakdown, unmanageable debts, and domestic violence. When the North Norfolk SVP came across others sleeping rough, sofa-surfing or living in cars or tents, it helped them connect with the services and benefits to which they were entitled.

Then another Christian charity offered the SVP temporary use of a house, and the parish of Our Lady and St Joseph provided *Alive in Faith* funding to employ a part-time manager, who worked with the local authority to provide additional short-term emergency accommodation for the temporarily homeless.

In 2017, the project housed, cared for and helped find permanent accommodation for 11 families, 17 single adults and a couple. North Norfolk's SVP Conference President, Michael McMahan, says that the project provides more than just a roof over people's heads. He describes the house as a hub of friendship and moral support.

"We look after our residents in the same spirit that SVP members care for the people they visit," he says. "We share their journey. We signpost them to them appropriate agencies, help them find the funds to move to permanent accommodation, and help them get furniture and carpets when they do."

The licence to use the house expired in April of this year, so the SVP is taking steps to purchase a house of its own to continue its work.

If you would like to help people in East Anglia like Larry, you can help the Society purchase, adapt, furnish and equip a house by contacting a member of

the SVP here at St Laurence's via the Parish Office or call Christine on C.423823. You can also contact the SVP nationally – Rachael Crooks (0207 703 3030, RachaelC@svp.org.uk) or to support the project financially, send a cheque made payable to SVP England and Wales, with 'House East Anglia' written on the back, to St Vincent de Paul Society, Romero House, 55 Westminster Bridge Road, SE1 7JB.

Thank you for your ongoing prayers and support for all sorts of SVP work in our Parish as well as further afield.

All that glitters is not gold



Serga Collett, Parish CAFOD rep

Jesus told his disciple to leave their nets and follow him. It's a funny thing but I do get it, the more possessions you have, the more you are weighed down by caring for them. When I am on holiday in a rented cottage, I sometimes ask myself why I feel so free – its not just the fact that I am on holiday, but the realisation that I don't have to look after my goods and chattels.

So, this Christmas, don't be taken in by the global consumerism of shiny lights, glitter and heart-warming adverts: before you buy/ask for that Christmas present, question yourself do I/the recipient really need it and is this a replacement of a perfectly good item? Where will the discarded item go? ** Have I/the recipient already got something similar?

And just a few practical Christmas tips: don't use Sellotape and you will be able to recycle your wrapping paper, use a ribbon or glue instead. Use large containers you already have rather than special gift boxes and bags. Remember your reusable bags when you go shopping. Don't use glitter (microplastics), cut up coloured paper instead.

And if you haven't bought a rooted Christmas tree which you can always plant out in the garden – mine has served for four Christmases now and saved me lots of money. I sink it in the soil in the garden in its pot every year – don't forget to have your Christmas tree recycled. The Arthur Rank Hospice Charity will collect for a small donation. Check online whether they cover your postcode.

**** In January, SVP and CAFOD will be holding a combined 'Recycle Your Unwanted Gifts' stall for all those unwanted gifts and goods no longer needed (good condition only), which have been replaced by another item this Christmas.**

And we wish YOU a Merry Christmas!

We will all sing this well-known song this Christmas but do we really mean it?

What you are really singing is 'We wish the WORLD a merry Christmas'. Are you really doing this?

This year, I am going to attempt the seemingly impossible. With the agreement of my family, I will try wishing the World a Merry Christmas by attempting a plastic free Christmas!

I don't expect you to follow my 'challenging' example, but here are a few things you may wish to do this Christmas.

Christmas ideas your family will love and will have a much greater impact than that cute furry Christmas teddy/elf/toy (that will soon be discarded after Christmas).

The goat that gives: a goat provides nutritious milk (around 12 pints a week) to supplement a basic diet and it also produces free fertiliser which can be used to help grow crops: £28

Water for a family: a supply of clean, safe water in their homes for drinking and cooking. Using a water pump also means families can wash in clean water, keeping everyone safe from infection: £33

A happy queen bee for a hive. The queen brings more bees to the hive, and more bees mean more delicious honey to eat and sell! Families can boost their own diets and start their own honey making businesses. Honey is highly nutritious, and can help fight infections: £4

The net that protects is a real life-saver! This simple, treated mosquito net can keep families and babies safe. Emergencies and wars can mean people are living in temporary shelter, increasing their risk, but this net offers protection from deadly diseases: £7

More gift choices are available from <https://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk>

If you send Christmas cards (a much more environmentally friendly version is, of course, the digital Christmas card), then choose Traidcraft, available at church after Masses in December, or online. And, in the spirit of Christmas for your own little ones (and not so little ones too!): The Divine Chocolate Advent calendar has a nativity scene, surrounded by cocoa farmers with 24 doors hiding a milk chocolate heart and part of the traditional Christmas story.

Parish Groups focus



On Saturday 29th September, the groups of the Parish put on a display for Fr Simon to give him an overview of what goes on at St Laurence's.

Each group had a section to display information and everybody took a turn at giving a short presentation about their groups.

It was a very enjoyable and informative afternoon. Here are a few of the group contributions



The Role of Welcomers

Teresa Campbell

I thought about the role of Welcomers and its importance in the life of the Parish, as an introduction for the session about Parish Groups that was held for Fr Simon, when he had newly arrived. However, I feel that it is a role that every parishioner could take part in. When I came to St Laurence's for the first time, I was welcomed and invited for coffee by two people who recognised that I was new to the Parish and were generous enough to spend time with me. I felt it was an indication of the goodwill and warmth at St Laurence's. This is the role and we are always looking for new people to join us at all the weekend Masses.

"For I was a stranger and you invited me in." Matt. 25:35

The Bible has several verses relating to hospitality and making people, especially the stranger, feel welcome. Our Welcomers extend the hospitality of our community to all who pass through the doors of the church.

Welcomers play an important role in Parish life and are integral to the smooth running of Mass. Their role is to ensure that everyone who arrives at the church for the weekend services is warmly greeted and made to feel welcome and a part of the community at that particular Mass. They are sensitive to the needs of those with either physical or mental disabilities, to parents with small children and to guests and newcomers.

The role of the Welcomer:
As part of a 5/6 week rota:

- They arrive half an hour before the service to sort out and get ready the newsletters, Mass books, hymn books and or hymn sheets and anything else that needs to be handed to each person for that service.
- People are greeted with a friendly smile and given whatever is needed, in the porch, on their way into the service.
- They help people to find a seat in the church, if needed.
- After the service they collect up any sheets, newsletters, hymn and Mass books that have been left on the benches and tidy everything away in the porch.

If you feel that you would like to do this as a service to the Parish then please get in touch via email: welcomers@saintlaurence.org.uk



The Bidding Prayers at St Laurence's

Shauna DeWolf (on behalf of the Bidding Prayers Writing Group)

The Bidding Prayers (also known as 'The Prayer of the Faithful' or 'The Universal Prayer' feature in most Masses – just after the Creed and before the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins. At St Laurence's the Bidding Prayers you hear at Mass are written by a small group of parishioners. You will hear them read out by Deacon Geoff at 11 o'clock Mass and by one of the Readers at other Masses.

According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (which is the detailed document governing the celebration of Mass since 1969), 'The intentions announced should be sober, be composed with a wise

liberty and in few words, and they should be expressive of the prayer of the entire community' (#71) and should usually include prayers for : 'a. for the needs of the Church; b. for public authorities and the salvation of the whole world; c. for those burdened by any kind of difficulty; d. for the local community.' (#70)

The Bidding Prayers Writing Group was formed back in 2010 when a small group of parishioners, through the Parish Forum, sought permission from Fr Pat to take responsibility for writing the Bidding Prayers each week. This request was inspired firstly by wanting to support the Parish Priest practically, but also by a wish to find a way for the laity to be more closely involved in the Liturgy. Fr Pat welcomed the idea and the original group formed and wrote the first set of prayers for Mass on 9th January 2011. The group has provided weekly Bidding Prayers since that date, three of the founding members of the group remain, and others have joined and left the group in the years since.

The current group has six members and meets once every 5–6 weeks for an hour or so to review and edit the prayers we have written individually beforehand. Prayers may reflect on the Readings and the Gospel for the particular Sunday, the needs of the world and our own Parish intentions and aspirations. We always include prayers for the sick and the dead. We also refer to the Church's 'Cycle of Prayer', which divides the year into six periods – three of these being the principal liturgical seasons of Advent/Christmas, Lent and Easter and the other three periods being divisions of Ordinary time (Winter, Summer and Autumn). (Refer to the Liturgical Calendar – www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar for further details about the 'Cycle of Prayer') We always try to respond to world events, such as major natural disasters or terrorist attacks, which often means adding prayers at short notice. We use a Cloud-based document store (Google Drive) to access, edit and archive prayers. Members of the group value the mindful, regular discipline of reflecting on scripture and shaping prayers which, hopefully, are representative of the thoughts and intentions of the wider Parish community.

We value feedback and comments from the Parish and would welcome new members joining us at any time. No prior experience required.
Contact: biddingprayers@saintlaurence.org.uk



Parish Tech Group

Ronald Haynes

The group was set up in response to discussions at the Parish Forum earlier this year when the decision was reached to organise live video and audio streaming over the Internet, for Masses and other liturgies.

The idea is to help reach those who are ill, or immobilised, or whose relatives are living at a distance at times of family gatherings, for weddings and funerals and other special occasions. We have stories from another Parish which has implemented similar live streaming systems, and for instance, they found that a mother confined to her home in Poland, and unable to travel, was able to virtually attend her son's funeral in the UK.

The Tech Group has been developing the live streaming project, with a brief demonstration at the Parish Forum in October, with an aim to carry out some live testing with parishioners who may be away or unable to get to liturgies during Advent. In the New Year we hope to have the live streaming available through the Parish website.

Along with the live streaming, the group is open to helping in other areas, for the Parish and wider community. Such projects provide good opportunities to share and learn together, by working with fellow parishioners, and by applying technology for the common good.

The group's current members include: Christine Knight, Gianluca Savini, Martin Avery, Richard Birkett, Ronald Haynes, and Sean Martin. If you are interested in the work of the group, or if you have any questions, please contact the group via e-mail at: techgroup@saintlaurence.org.uk



Pianist needed
from
the New Year

to join the 9.30am Music Group

Contact: Sarah at
music@saintlaurence.org.uk
or after 9.30am Mass

An advent calendar for OUR WORLD:



Serga Collett

It is not just the carbon footprint of plastic that affects climate change ... It is our way of life, eating meat, driving our car, heating our homes It's time for a change in our way of thinking, so this Christmas, I have put together an advent calendar, that may get you started.



1. From today, ensure that every item you throw away is put in the correct waste bin and wash out your recycled items. Attempt to have your black bin at least ½ quantity less than your green/blue bin!
2. Today buy a fairtrade/traidcraft item, the producer of the item will have been paid a fair wage for it.
3. Today buy a locally produced item (check that your food is not produced miles and miles away if there is a more local option, eg eggs).
4. Walk/cycle don't drive if your journey is less than 1–2 miles, it's great for your health.
5. Today have a vegetarian day, the carbon footprint of producing meat is far greater.
6. Don't buy that plastic bottle (eg coke) but buy it in a can instead and recycle it.
7. Today buy a reuseable water bottle – don't buy a one way drinks bottles. If your family insists on 'pop' (not so great for your teeth) – make sure you buy a large bottle not the small ones.
8. Better still, buy a soda stream and buy refillable gas bottles (if you have a sweet tooth you can flavour these too), I have worked out that mine has so far saved me over 1200 plastic bottles and is still going strong.
9. Today make an effort to slow down, eg driving at 50 mph uses 25% less fuel than 70 mph.
10. Turn your central heating down by 1 degree and put on a jumper (I have to convince my other half to not walk around in just a t-shirt in the middle of winter!)
11. From today take a shower, not a leisurely bath, to save water.
12. From today, don't run water wastefully and don't pre-rinse dishes.
13. Today, and in the future, make sure to re-use your containers – some shops eg Daily Bread refill your shampoo, shower gel bottles, even Asda do soap refills etc or use a soap or shampoo bar.
14. Wrap gifts this Christmas in fabric and use a pretty ribbon.
15. From today refuse plastic carrier bags and don't use fruit/vegetable plastic bags – do you really need them just to carry the item from the stand to the till?
16. Replace your sandwich bags with paper bags or wrap your sandwiches in greaseproof paper. Use only degradable plastic bags, ie in your rubbish bins, dog-poo bags etc.
17. If you are going Christmas shopping today, check your item's carbon footprint – has your item been shipped half way around the world?
18. Today play a game with your children (or do it yourself with a partner/friend if no children) in the supermarket – can they spot the most locally produced item, eg carrots from France or from UK.
19. Today buy 'happy' items – yes free-range eggs, free-range bacon etc– they have greater long-term sustainability.
20. Make your own: Christmas cake, biscuits, bread etc – its great fun. (When I ask my children these days, they remember the good times we had eg baking biscuits, not the gifts they received).
21. If you are buying a gift, choose the natural option: wood vs plastics, natural fibres, eg wool, have less environmental impact and will biodegrade whilst synthetic fibre will be in your landfill site for many years to come.
22. Check your providers e.g bank, services etc. Co-operative Bank and Ecotricity (gas and electricity) have ethical credentials.
23. If you are going Christmas shopping today, check your item's carbon footprint – has your item been shipped half way around the world?
24. Make the effort to make your own sandwiches, soup etc, not only will they be much healthier and tastier but reduce packaging – making your own sandwiches will only take you 5-10 minutes extra in your day.
25. Just remember when you DO shop this Christmas, shop with the wonderful WORLD which God has given us in the back of your mind and don't be tempted by the frills and fancies of commercialism.
26. Well done – this is the way to wish all our brothers and sisters around the world a very

MERRY (sustainable) CHRISTMAS!



A very big THANK YOU!



Serga Collett

10 years of CAFOD so ably led by Mary Watkins – so many initiatives, so much money raised – Mary you have been AMAZING and given so much of yourself. You will be a very hard act to follow and I hope you will still be there to share your love and care when I stumble!

This Autumn, I have officially taken over as Parish representative from Mary and will be your CAFOD contact. Many of you will already know me as a St Laurence's parishioner with a variety of hats over the years and I have, of course, led the last few Lent and Harvest appeals.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your STUNNING contribution to this year's Harvest Fast Day appeal, which currently stands at over £1400 with the school's contributions still to come. Every penny means that more families around the world will have what they need to survive and thrive, now and into the future.

A big thank you also to the CAFOD 'team' of volunteers and occasional helpers. We have lots of fun at the various events that we organise and we know that what we do will change lives! That's a great feeling! I hope that many of you may wish to join us.

Whilst fundraising for overseas development is of course essential and central to my role as CAFOD representative, I also believe that CAFOD plays a role in the sustainability of this planet and looking after GOD's wonderful creation (CAFOD's One World) as how we live our lives has a direct impact on the lives of our brothers and sisters around the world.

Over the next year, we have a variety of fun events planned for both fundraising and awareness raising. Please feel free to approach me with ideas and contributions. I would love to hear from you.

Summary of Parish Forum Meeting, 8th October 2018

Fr Simon Blakesley, Stephen Warde (Chair), Sarah Sykes (Minutes), 30 Forum members

Fr Simon opened the meeting with a prayer. Chair, Stephen Warde, welcomed him to his first Parish Forum and thanked Serga Collett for her past services as minute-taker. He thanked Sarah Sykes for taking on

the job of minute-taker and asked for other volunteers to share the job.

2. Matters Arising

Stephen reported that Fr Pat's leaving Mass and party, and the 'Meet the Parish Groups' event had taken place successfully. The Forum expressed thanks to all who helped, with a special mention to the CWL for providing the refreshments.

Fr Simon then confirmed that the Bishop will come to St Laurence's on Sunday 28th October to officially install him as Parish Priest. Mass will be at 5pm followed by a Hog Roast Party. Fr Jay to be invited to the occasion, a joint celebration of Fr Simon's installation and a farewell party for Fr Jay.

Fr Bob mentioned that Sr Pat is now living with her Order in York. He suggested that it would be a good idea to acknowledge her work over many years in the Parish, including her work with refugees and links with the Justice & Peace Group in Cambridge. Sr Anna Hawk, who is based at OLEM, regularly visits York and could take a card and gift.

GDPR & Parish database: still to be followed up.

The matter of Parish savings was raised. Finance Committee member, Christine Knight, confirmed that we get a fixed return of 0.5% on our reserves, which are held by the Diocese. This was felt to be a low return. The Diocese retains any difference between this and the return that it receives from investing the money. Fr Simon is open to investigating alternative arrangements – eg moving to a high street bank if a better rate of interest could be found and the Finance Committee are in agreement.

3. Tech Group – presentation

Following a Forum request to look into streaming our Masses across the internet, the Tech Group was formed and investigated companies currently providing systems and went to look at other churches which are already streaming their Masses. They decided that with in-house expertise they would be able to set up our own streaming capabilities keeping set-up and running costs minimal and keeping the control in the Parish's hands. The camera is set above the rose window and focusses directly on the Sanctuary area.

4. Building and Grounds

Fr Simon – initial impressions and thoughts on the Sanctuary:

Fr Simon talked about the Sanctuary and his ideas for redevelopment, he proposed we use natural stone instead of re-carpeting the floor. It is easy to clean and wax spills are easy to remove. He would like to set up a working party and proposed getting in touch with

Iriel McGinley, parishioner, who had been involved in the church buildings previously. He explained traditionally, altar and lectern match each other. Rough sketches and plans would be put together before commissioning an architect. He asked that parishioners for suggestions of what would be good or bad on a new sanctuary layout. The church in general needs redecorating!

Fr Simon also mentioned use of paraffin candles which emit a lot of soot and smoke. They will eventually be replaced.

There were a number of comments from members on various aspects of Fr Simon's discussion, these can be read in the full Forum minutes on the Parish website or the printed version on the noticeboard in the Narthex.

Finally Fr Simon also said he would be caring for the living stones of the Parish! He wished to know of people in the Parish, who need home visits for Communion or other needs. Everyone should remain a part of the body of Christ even if unable to get to church.

Gas heaters It was agreed that the gas heaters would benefit from guards installed around them as they get very hot, this could be dangerous if people touched them.

Garden There is some general tidying and maintenance needed in the grounds and garden, this is being worked on and will be dealt with.

5. Finance

Deacon John Steel has recently resigned from his position as Parish treasurer due to ill health. Prayers were asked for him and his wife, Margaret. A new treasurer is being sought. There are two volunteers so far but we would like a third person. Parish in good shape financially. It would be good for people who are new to the Parish to be aware of **Gift Aid** and **Alive in Faith**, as both can accept new members at any time.

Contact: gift.aid@saintlaurence.org.uk

6. Liturgy

Christmas services: Midnight Mass will start at 11.30pm with Carols and Readings. Christmas Eve Mass for families confirmed, after some discussion, for 5pm. The Carol Service will be on 16th December at 4pm followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

Fr Simon is considering moving a weekday Mass (possibly Wednesday) to an evening slot – feedback on this suggestion is invited. The Forum attendees felt it was a good idea.

7. School

Fr Simon mentioned that St Laurence's School is considering whether it should become a member of a Multi-Academy Trust. He also said that he was not

able to be on the governing body of the school as he is already on the board of the Multi-Academy Trust.

To encourage stronger ties between Church and School, a school-led Mass is being considered. Once a term the school would lead the 9.30am Mass at the Church. This would be a regular event in addition to the School's contribution on Education Sunday.

8. Parish Groups update

CAFOD Serga Collett has recently taken over from Mary Watkins as the Parish CAFOD representative. Mary will however continue to run the Connect2 Peru initiative, which she has applied to extend for another year. Serga reported on this year's Harvest Appeal which has raised £1,226 so far, for which many thanks were expressed. We currently have a small group of core helpers which she is looking to expand. If you would like to join an active CAFOD team or if you have ideas about what CAFOD should be doing in the Parish then please contact Serga, (cafod@saintlaurence.org.uk)

Fr Bob asked for feedback on the Peru communities that we work with. There was an update in the last edition of Pilgrim magazine, but maybe more direct feedback would be good.

SVP – Christine Knight on behalf of SVP expressed thanks for help received from the Parish and for the work of all the volunteers. Mass for the Sick will take place in December. SVP will run the Giving Tree for the benefit of both the SVP and charities around Cambridge. She is happy to report there are now SVP members at all Masses, apart from the Ablaze Mass.

9. AOB

Could the Children's Liturgy look at the timing of bringing the children back into Mass with the Offertory?

Karen Rodgers – May Crowning: flowers and prayers lovely. Singing not so great. She suggested preparing 5–6 hymns to Our Lady during the year that could be used at Mass so we are ready for next year's May Crowning. It was also suggested that children in Children's Liturgy could learn one simple hymn. Words for hymns should either be provided on a sheet or using hymn books on the day.

Serga Collett – suggested using sign language a bit more in Mass especially for the children.

Dates for 2019

Tuesday, 15th January

Thursday, 4th April

Tuesday, 2nd July

Thursday, 10th October

All meetings start at 8pm.

Personal Stories & Experiences

Contemplating litter

Tony King

One afternoon last winter, I found myself gridlocked on the A10 and was reminded of a Sunday sermon given at St Laurence's some weeks before. The celebrant, Father Pat, had used the analogy of a traffic jam as the starting point for a homily on spiritual self-reflection. There I was in a long queue of cars, heading towards Cambridge. A few drivers up ahead had already demonstrated their impatience by doing forceful '3-point' turns and accelerating back in the opposite direction. Thinking of Father Pat's sermon, I proceeded to examine my conscience.

What came to mind, however, was not a review of any personal shortcomings but a reflection on the countryside's defence against the detritus of modern life. Within a radius of only a few metres on the verge to my left, I noticed one plastic bottle, a crushed tin can, a faded carton, still clutching its 'bendy' straw, a 'six-pack' binder, a torn crisp bag, a food container and somewhat ironically, a discoloured toothbrush missing most of its bristles.

Now this little miscellany was visible from my vantage point. What if a similar assortment lay near other vehicles and across the road too? Extend the scenario exponentially; count myriad rural roads throughout the country and the numbers reach cosmic proportions. I reflected that it wasn't only the tons of plastic being dumped into the oceans that we should be alarmed about. The amount of litter lying at our very feet (or in this case at our tyres) must surely take its toll too. Imagination running wild, I was plunged into a dystopian nightmare of waste, where bulldozers cleared pathways through mounds of roadside rubbish, to allow vehicles to reach a shoreline that edged a 'Sargasso Sea' of floating plastic. I was greatly relieved when the snail of traffic ahead suddenly chugged into activity. Brake lights flickered and slowly the motorcade was on the move again. The coast ahead was clear and we were homeward bound.

The nightmare image of unrestrained roadside garbage didn't leave me so easily however. My job takes me frequently into the rural areas of the county and for weeks afterwards, I was prone to spot litter. Almost imperceptibly, it became something of a fixation. How does it get there? Wind dispersal, of course, has its part to play but mostly, drivers and their passengers would be the culprits. The evidence is clear at many intersections, where vehicles wait at minor roads to

join traffic passing on the highways. Lay-bys are also significant. Litter at these locations is noticeably greater and often seems to attract more litter, especially when bins are overflowing. On a personal level, I pleaded 'not guilty' but reflected why people can't just keep the stuff in their cars? Was there some compelling need to jettison the can?

Several incidences of excessive dumping stood out, but my annoyance finally peaked one morning, a few metres along a rural road. I had just turned in when the sad, unsightly mess of an overnight fly tip glared up abusively. I slowed down and swerved to avoid the heaped shambles of domestic castoffs that even included an old settee. The stark reality of the deposit stunned me. By any measurement of decent behaviour, it was off the scale. Not for the first time I began to think of littering as a sinful act.

As the winter of my discontent progressed, the landscape took on a dreary countenance and one road became my bugbear. There on a straight section of about 4 miles, my spirits often fell, as I witnessed the downside of motoring life. In two polluted lay-bys and all along its length, dirty scraps of polythene fluttered forlornly like gloomy distress signals, low in the hedges. The frequent sight of the bloody, battered carcass of a badger, bird or fox, lying in the mucky verge or being pulverised to atoms on the tarmac often saddened me further. "Have faith," I thought, "things will change." I recalled the opening lines of Psalm 24 which I had learned off by heart at school: "*The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof – the world and they that dwell therein ...*" Despite these whispered prayers, however, my mood remained stubbornly pessimistic.

From this low point, hope arose quite unexpectedly and dramatically, just a few weeks later. It was in the shape of Highways Maintenance. One day, just like any other, the traffic slowed to flashing warning lights and road signs. Lo and behold, there along the valley of my tears, a multitude of orange and yellow 'Hi-Viz' jackets adorned the shoulders of workers busy gathering litter. As we passed along the cordoned section, the product of their labour could be seen neatly laid at intervals, in bags, for later collection. They were for me, reproving buoys to our blatant disrespect of the environment. My gloom was instantly lightened. I was grateful and offered a prayer of thanks that someone had taken accountable action.

Waste management is a very complex business; this I clearly know. Seen globally, it has enormous implications for life on Earth. Thankfully, science and technology are being harnessed seriously to address the issues and the world at large, slowly perhaps, appears to be taking notice. My personal attitude has

changed and I have begun to see the matter in a new light. We have a collective responsibility that can't be shirked. Our blue, green & black bins lined along the boulevards have become to me sentries of good practice. The flashing lights of the municipal refuse lorry is no longer a traffic obstruction to be moaned at but a symbol of responsibility and care for the environment. Its attendant workers to whom we should extend every courtesy are public servants committed to a cleaner world. I say a prayer for the elderly lady with a satchel, often seen picking garbage along the road. A dog walker with a captive bag, caring for his pet and picking litter along the path is to me a citizen of goodwill.

I'm careful too when out and about, to keep my own sweetie papers in my pocket, to bin things responsibly and to re-cycle at home (as best we can). Some doomsday sceptics might imply that it is of little consequence, juxtaposed with the bigger picture of a world that is choking itself to death. Maybe so, but then I think of the parable of 'The Widow's Mite' and I am confident that it is these small things that count, ultimately.

A Sad Story

Ann Hales-Tooke

I am 93 years old. Thirty years ago I worked as a teacher in a school for children with multiple disabilities. I still occasionally see children who went to the school. A boy who was one of our most able pupils works as a shop assistant in a local Co-op. I see him sweeping up.

There was a little boy in another class who had an obsession with collecting sticks in a bag when he was in the playground. A teacher tried to 'cure' him of the habit without success. As a teenager he was still doing the same thing. He left the school and I retired. I caught sight of him one day lately as I waited for a bus on a Cambridge street. There he was on the other side of the road carrying a bag of sticks and what looked like a loaded rucksack. On another day I came upon him lifting sticks out of a skip on the pavement. His rucksack looked heavy.

I thought about him as I waited for my bus. He always looked sad. He looked like Christ carrying his cross. So was he predestined to do this? I remembered he had a 'normal' twin brother. Something had gone wrong with his development.

I felt the sadness of the situation and then I wondered about his part in the redemption of us all, especially Cambridge, in which he had been born and lived. He

looked as if he was suffering. Was life was a burden for him? He did not look as if scavenging for sticks and other bits of wood carried any joy for him. What I wondered did he do with the wood he had collected?

I worked out he must be forty. All those years following this extraordinary obsession. These thoughts were sad.

If you want to pray for him, I would suggest you call him Simon, like Simon of Cyrene.

The Acrobat

Wally Moscuza

From the altitude under a textile sky, he glides
Between swings, ropes and trampolines he performs
A soul down to his knees flies to win.
Fighting knowledge and fear, his inner strength.
A painting above the wood fire in the Jacobean room
The logs from the old oak under which he used to sit.
Purple-blue flames flickering into nothingness
As a black hole that lives on and is part of space.
Two wings fluttering together, in hell for ever...No
Repentance. She was there by the mantelpiece, a queen
Tall aristocratic in look, a reflection of time!
Coco Chanel, Karl Lagerfeld a display of fashion
Parading along the Champs-Elysees.
But afar between the stars an eye-satellite
Spies and decides the future of man
By intercepting communication and ready to attack.

Across the valleys an orchard not far from the woods
There he was the acrobat who flew from tree to tree.
As a child he had a dream that the sky was
untouchable
Because he thought it was His...
He had words of hope, words of love
But the cross was His reward.
The blood that fell seeded the earth
A sweet incense to purify the imperfection of man.
A thorn on his flesh, for
He thought that time had sucked him dead.
An empty container in an old porcelain vase
To store, preserve and safeguard
All man's sorrows and aims since the world began.
Shredded lives, lost in the process of living—
A child, the hope of man: The bird's long journey
In Autumn for Spring has yet to come.



View from the other side of The Pond

Gila Margolin

God has graced me once again, with my eleventh visit to Toronto, from 25th August until 18th September. Usually the season changes from Summer to Fall around that time of year, but it was 26 degrees almost each day. This time I went to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the founding of *The Little Sisters of Joy*, which has become a vehicle for Peace and Reconciliation through Music, Friendship and Encounter. To mark the occasion, I gave a concert and book launch at the Spadina Theatre in Toronto, part of the *Alliance Française*, which of course has a branch right here in Cambridge.

My close friend and associate, Françoise Barber, had translated the second memoir into French, so I decided to be brave and sing a couple of well-known French songs along with my usual Hebrew and Songs of the 60's. The blood, sweat and tears of the practice paid off and on the night the audience told me that they had enjoyed the Jacques Brel and also the original French version of 'Autumn Leaves' the best! My Native Canadian friend from the North West territories was there, smiling in the front row, alongside a young Catholic teacher I had known for some time, who said '*your joy is infectious...*'. We all enjoyed French red and Canadian Niagara white wine at the end.

I had only been to Ottawa extremely briefly about 11 years ago and it was March and bitterly cold; I could see a frozen Lake Ontario from the train window. This time it was balmy with cooler days. I made for the Cathedral on the first day. As I walked up the little hill, from where I could see the top of the Parliament building with the silver domes of the Cathedral beginning to appear on the other side, I began to feel a sense of happiness and peace. And I wasn't disappointed once I got inside...I just caught the 5 o'clock Mass, which was being celebrated in a lovely mixture of French and English. The decorations of the Cathedral were quite sumptuous, but somehow not with that feeling of slight pretentiousness in the Cathedral in Montreal. There was definitely an air of humility about the place.

I was told that there was a lot of healing to be done, to atone for the Residential Schools, in which for 100 years churches of various denominations, including the Catholic Church, in North America deprived Native children of their families, identity and culture. In this Archdiocese they are certainly trying to do their best. St Joseph's Parish, situated right in the heart of the university neighbourhood, is striving for reconciliation

with the Indigenous People as well as an Outreach to the homeless.

I enjoyed supper each evening at the Earl of Sussex pub, where the cottage pie was delicious together with the local ale. One day I hope to return to Ottawa, and make the symbolic walk across the bridge over the Ottawa River into Quebec.

Which every day object gives you joy?

Karen Rodgers

There it sat on the shelf of the supermarket, drawing my eye, gleaming invitingly. Normally I try to buy only things which are both necessary and healthy and I was not sure this was either. However, there it sat. I could almost hear it.

"You remember me" it seemed to say. "I used to sit and glow an autumn harvest red and gold on the breakfast table on Saturday mornings when your Dad made a fry-up. Remember that fried bread? The white pudding? Oh and of course the toast? The white bread from the local bakery in thick, slightly uneven slices, the oodles of butter... the crunch and the simultaneous sweetness and bitterness of the orange, the texture of the candied peel on your tongue? The after-glow over a cup of milky tea?"

Well I bought that jar of Robinson's orange marmalade. Unchanged by the passage of nearly 50 years, except that the mascot now, for understandable reasons, is not the friendly old gollywog whose smart enamel badge I saved tokens for, but Paddington Bear... a most worthy heir to the title with his sandwiches under his hat and his kindly smile.

The jar sits on our kitchen table and as the sunlight streams through covering our table with its gloriously encouraging, kindly, warm red and gold glow, I remember my Dad waking me on autumn mornings with his customary recitation of Keats:

'Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cell.'

Which every day object gives you joy?

Seminarian's Pastoral Experience

Peter Wygnanski

As part of formation at the Venerable English College, Seminarians are encouraged to pursue pastoral experience in a radically different culture, and when his time came, ex-St Laurence's pupil, Peter, chose the Diocese of Malolos, Philippines. Here is how he got on:

When observing a conference at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, I was deeply impressed by a talk which presented various projects of aid and economic development which the Diocese of Malolos undertakes. I was delighted then, when the delegate from Malolos I met at the conference, now a dear friend, replied to say that I would be very welcome to visit. The city of Malolos is the capital of the province of Bulacan, to the north of Manila, and the diocesan statistics are simply astonishing. There is a catholic population of 3.6 million, many of whom live below the poverty line, but only 108 parishes and 200 priests.

One parish I visited had 90,000 parishioners, nearly two thirds of the Catholic population of East Anglia, but only two priests. My three weeks were spent visiting several projects, however my base was the Jubilee Sheltering Programme, a complex of housing for nearly 1,000 climate change refugees. These were families whose traditional land had become uninhabitable due to rising sea levels and more frequent and severe weather events, but did not have the financial resources to relocate. The welcome I received from the residents, the poorest of the poor, was simply humbling, and the ease I felt so far from home is a testament to their hospitality and generosity. Truly no one is so poor they have nothing to give and no one is so blessed they have nothing to receive.



My time in the Philippines ended with an overnight visit to a remote parish in an impoverished fishing

community, reachable only by a 30-minute boat journey. The island and the surrounding area will be long remembered as some of the most beautiful scenery I have ever seen. But I can think of no better image, than the juxtaposition of a community struggling to survive in the shadow of high-rise buildings just across the bay in Manila, for the

economic inequality that goes unchecked around the world.

An exemplary project run by the Diocese purchased fish from the poorest independent fisherman at an honest price, which was then processed and bottled for sale by residents of the Jubilee Sheltering Programme, thus providing people in two communities with the dignity of a living wage. In my view, this is precisely the sort of activity Pope Francis calls us in his encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium*, which is the opposite to the “economy of exclusion”, to strive to end poverty and to share prosperity. Catholic Social Teaching calls us to holistic solidarity that embraces all peoples and that integrates the economic, social, and environmental challenges facing humanity. I will be ever grateful for my experiences in the Philippines, and the lessons learnt which might inform and inspire my own, God-willing, future priestly ministry in East Anglia in this light.

With thanks to www.rcdea.org.uk

Let me Love as You Love

Based on 1 Corinthians 13

Chioma Ubajaka

My One True Love...
Teach me to love each and every day.
With Your Grace, Love and Mercy,
My Love will love as You Loved.

Breathe Your Love into my soul, and
My Love will be PATIENT,
My Love will be KIND,
My Love will be HUMBLE,
And TAKE ACTION!

With Your Power within me,
My Love WILL FORGIVE, and FORGET all
wrongs,
My Love will REJOICE in the success of
others,
My Love will always SEE the good,
My Love will always speak the TRUTH.

Your Light is within me; so
My Love will PERSEVERE in the darkest of
moments,
My Love will SHINE bright wherever I go,
My Love will be a beacon of HOPE,
My Love will NEVER DIE.

May my Love, love as You loved,
The Lover of my Soul.

ABLAZE

Mass



Sunday 2nd December , 5pm
@ St Laurence's Church, Milton Road.

A joyful, lively and upbeat Worship
For Youth and the Young at Heart

And for the New Year
6th January 2019
followed by an Epiphany Party





Thanking Sr Pat

Sr Pat left the Parish earlier in the year due to ill health. She is now with her Order at St Joseph's Convent in York. Following the Forum request to acknowledge her contribution to Parish life and work in the community, this plant arrangement was sent to her to let her know that our thoughts are with her and we appreciate all she did, not only for us, but for the many causes she supported.



Blessings

To give as the angels give

Join us for a **Quiet Day of prayer and reflection**

Saturday 8th December 2018

10am to 3.30pm

With Kate Scotland and Mari Kelly-Gross
led by Ged McHale

Suggested donation £10 to cover costs (payable on the day)

Bring your own lunch

Hot drinks will be provided

Venue: 12-14, Grange Road, Cambridge, CB3 9DU
To book your place please email Ela Wolbek: ew263@cam.ac.uk

Tailpiece

Poster found in a church in France
(translated):

When you enter this church it may be possible that you hear 'the call of God'.

However it is unlikely that He will call you on your mobile. Thank you for turning off your phones.

If you want to talk to God, enter, choose a quiet place and talk to Him.

If you want to see Him, send Him a text while driving.



Adam and Eve:
First ones to ignore
Apple terms & conditions



Maybe people in glass houses should not throw stones? But we couldn't resist a couple of clippings from other church newsletters, which could have benefited from a little rewording or proofreading!

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community.

The senior choir invites any members of the congregation who enjoy sinning to join the choir.

The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

Some primary school children wrote the following statements about the Bible. They were asked questions about the Old and New Testaments. Their responses have not been retouched or recorrected.

The Jews were proud people and throughout history they had trouble with unsympathetic Genitals.

Samson slayed the Philistines with the axe of the Apostles.

Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.

Jesus enunciated the Golden Rule which says to do one to others before they do one to you.

Editorial Comment

2018 has been a year of anniversaries – the Church’s 60th, the School’s 50th, Fr Bob’s 50th and, as it draws to a close, Deacon Geoff’s 40th.

The year has also seen the departure of Fr Pat and Fr Jay and the arrival of Fr Simon and Bentley. It is quite a change to see a large black Labrador wandering around the house and garden!

The presentation of Parish groups as an introduction for Fr Simon proved to be an interesting time for all to see what goes on in our Parish.

Fr Simon has brought in a few changes one, which has been unanimously praised, is the preaching of his homilies from the altar steps using no notes, speaking directly to the congregation.

We welcome him and pray that he will be happy in our Parish.

Thank you to all who are preparing to celebrate a more eco-friendly Christmas. All good wishes and prayers for Peter as he progresses to the next stage of his training for priesthood.

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

**The deadline for the next edition is 22 February 2019
for publication on 23/24 March**

The production team:

Editors

Nora Darby and Sarah Sykes

Sub-editors

Sarah Sykes

What’s New?

Carol Williams & Susan O’Brien

Features & Opinions

Alex Dias

Personal Stories & Experiences

Sarah Sykes & Nora Darby

Parish Organisations & Activities

Sarah Sykes & Nora Darby

Tailpiece

Commissioning Editor

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Caroline O’Donnell & Sarah Sykes

Proofreader

Sarah Sykes and Nora Darby

Layout (preparation for printing)

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

Some Regular Events

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

To go on the list to get the agenda in advance and the full minutes after the meeting, email forum@saintlaurence.org.com

You can raise a topic at the meeting but it helps if you send a short note about 10 days before the next meeting, again, to forum@saintlaurence.org.com, which can then be circulated.

The Pilgrim by Email

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

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

Pilgrim on the Web

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

ABLAZE

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

CAFOD

Connect2:Peru retiring collections will take place usually on the first weekend in the month. These monies go directly to the projects CAFOD is supporting.

Upcoming Parish Events

| | |
|--|---|
| Advent – Parish Carol Service | 16 Dec 4pm |
| Christmas Week Masses | |
| <u>Christmas Eve:</u> Children's Mass Midnight Mass, with carols and readings before | 5pm 11.30pm |
| <u>Christmas Day:</u> Both Masses in church | 9am 11am |
| <u>Boxing Day</u> | 11am |
| ABLAZE Youth Mass | 2 Dec 5pm |
| SVP Mass of Anointing | 8 Dec 3pm |
| Deacon Geoff 40th Anniversary celebration | After 11am Mass on 9 Dec |
| Hungarian Mass | 9 Dec 3pm |
| <u>Advent Giving Tree</u> Choose a tag from 1 st Sunday of Advent. Christmas gifts to: Wintercomfort, Meals on Wheels, SVP | Gifts to be left at church no later than 11am Mass 3 rd Sunday of Advent |
| CWL Lunches Monthly on 1 st Friday | After 12.30pm Mass |
| Holy Hour | Every Weds 6-7pm |
| Rosary Group Every Wednesday | After 12.30pm Mass |
| Soulfood Prayer Group 1 st / 3 rd Tues: St Laurences 2 nd /4 th Tues: OLEM Parish Hall | Every Tuesday 8pm |
| Parish Forum Dates for 2019 | Tues 15 Jan Thurs 4 April Tues 2 July Thurs 10 Oct 8pm |

Follow St Laurence's on Facebook:

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



ST LAURENCE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

91 Milton Road, Cambridge CB4 1XB

Tel/Fax: 01223 704640

Email: office@saintlaurence.org.uk

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

Parish Priest:

Fr Simon Blakesley

07946 390 060

pp@saintlaurence.org.uk

Assistant Priest:

Fr Bob Eccles O.P.

01223 741265

robert.eccles@english.op.org

Deacon:

Rev. Dr Geoffrey Cook

01223 351650

Secretary:

Patricia Cook

01223 704640

office@saintlaurence.org.uk

Treasurer:**Safeguarding Coordinator:**

Petra Tucker

petratucker@gmail.com

Service Times

Saturday 9.30am

6pm Vigil Mass (sung)

Sunday 8.00am

9.30am (sung) with children's liturgy

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

During school holidays it is held at the Church.

11am (sung) with children's liturgy

Join us for coffee in the Parish Room afterwards.

Mon - Thurs 9.30am

Wednesday/Friday 12.30pm

Check the weekly newsletter for changes to the above times

St Laurence's School

Head Teacher

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