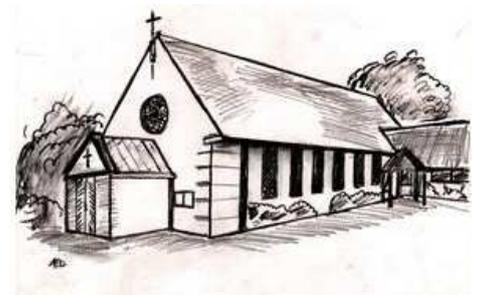


The Pilgrim

St Laurence's Parish Magazine, Lent Edition 2019



Contents

What's New?

Coming to St Laurence's	1	Final Update – Connect:2 Peru	16
On becoming a Deacon	1-2	CWL Update	16
Proclamations from the Pulpit....	2-3	Walsingham Association AGM	16-18
Deliverance and Exorcism follow-up	3	Summary of the Parish Forum	18-19
New Schools	3-4	Ablaze Mass	20
Care4Calais	4		

Features and Opinions

Further than Hoy	4-5
The bickering team problem	6
What does it mean to be human?	7-8
Books by their covers	8-9
Christopher Dawson, Christian Scholar	9
The Most Specialised Job in the Church	9-10

Personal Stories

Christianity and Islam	21
What a mental health diagnosis taught	21-22
The American Cemetery at Madingley	22
Freedom and Sight	22-23
Reflections of a Christmas in Columbia	23-25
Celebrating Peace and Reconciliation	25

Parish Organisations & Activities

GIFT – Confirmation – Ignite	10
Mini Vinnies	11
A prayer for the earth	12-13
Turning Concern into Action (SVP)	13
St Laurence's School Parable pictures	14-15

Focus on Lent

Tailpiece	
Getting on and off stage	27

Editorial Comment

28

**From *To be a Pilgrim*
– Cardinal Basil Hume**

*Life is a pilgrimage,
we are on the march,
and sooner or later we shall reach our
destination.*

*That destination we call heaven,
there we shall see God as he is,
and that experience will be
the cause of a happiness,
which will be complete
and have no end.*

We are made for that.

Sent in by Paul Simmons

What's New

Coming to St Laurence's

Fr Johane Nguluwe



My parents migrated from Zambia to look for work in Zimbabwe, and I was born in 1964 in Chinhoyi, a little town north west of Zimbabwe's capital, Harare. From 1964–84 when I went to boarding school I always stayed with my parents in Chinhoyi town. During my Primary, Secondary and High school years, science subjects were my favourites but Mathematics took the topmost position.

As a young boy, I felt attracted to the priestly life from watching my Parish Priest while serving Mass. I want to believe now that the prayers my daddy used to make inviting God to choose from among his kids those who would serve him as priests or religious, must have had a big influence. I studied for the priesthood as a diocesan candidate at Zimbabwe's Regional Major Seminary at Chishawasha, just outside Harare. I was there from 1987–93 when I was ordained a priest on 18th December. My first Church as a child was not easy as it was meant for a predominantly white community and I didn't understand English, the medium of communication. In contrast, my first parish as a priest was a big challenge, having in it people with different spoken languages coming together to worship in the same sacred space.

Coming to stay at St Laurence's Church here in Cambridge is my second time in the UK, having studied for a year at St Mary's in Chelsea, London (1997–98) while I undertook studies at Heythrop College, University of London. This time I am on a year's Sabbatical having just celebrated my Silver Jubilee last December. My Bishop, Raymond Mupandasekwa, asked a fellow bishop, Bishop Alan Hopes, for space to enable me to rest and also gain new experiences while away from my Diocese. My interest is in Pastoral ministry: how to shepherd the Lord's flock. So during my stay at St Laurence's, I will be fascinated to see how this takes place in a world vastly different from mine and hopefully be able to take insight/principles back home with me as I conclude my Sabbatical. Even as I rest, I hope my time at St Laurence's will provide me with ample opportunities for pastoral ministration in a different as well as exciting environment altogether.

On becoming a Deacon

Simon Davies

St Laurence's is fortunate in being a hub for visiting clergy, and a place where seminarians are often placed, some for months at a time. This is testimony to the importance of a Parish like St Laurence's in the training (formation) of priests. Formation doesn't all take place far away: these days, the Church takes 'pastoral formation' very seriously, since the primary purpose for the existence of the clergy – priest and deacon alike – is to serve the flock. As many of you may remember, I spent nine months in St Laurence's in 2017.



It's customary in England for seminarians to be ordained deacon in their seminary, rather than at home in their dioceses. And so I was ordained in Womersley by Bishop Alan Hopes in December 2018. Some readers may have been to an Ordination Mass, for others, the Ordination Rite may be a bit of a mystery. Essentially taking place during Mass, in between the Gospel and the Offertory, the candidates are called forward by name, and a priest – usually the Rector of the Seminary, or the Vicar General of the Diocese – testifies that the men to be ordained are appropriate candidates. The bishop then preaches to them, and to the whole congregation.

The men to be ordained make a promise of celibacy, before being asked certain questions by the bishop: the candidate affirms that they accept this sacrament of orders freely, that they will pray for the people, and work for them, and preside faithfully at the liturgy, continually modelling themselves on Jesus Christ. Then the candidates make a promise of obedience to their bishop, before lying prostrate, face down on the

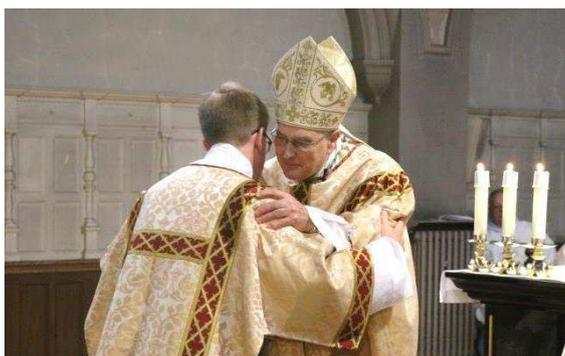
floor, while the congregation chant the Litany of the Saints.

Then the most important part follows: the laying on of hands, whereby the bishop places his hands on the head of each candidate, and then the Prayer of Consecration is sung. After this, they are dressed in the vestments of their order, in my case, a stole and dalmatic, and the Bishop handed me the book of the Gospels, saying: "Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practise what you teach."

Two related things in particular struck me during my ordination. During the laying on of hands and the prayer of consecration (for both of which I was kneeling), I was very nervous and was shaking. I was acutely aware that all of what was going on around me was a gift, and not a result of my own effort: a gift from God through the hands of the bishop. Of course, kneeling down I couldn't see anyone's face; a mystical moment. I've had a bit of a bumpy ride over the years towards this moment: sometimes I couldn't really see what was going on. I allowed myself to smile as I realised that the same was happening in the seminary chapel: the rest of my life, where I will go, who I will meet, experiences I will have, the struggles I will encounter, all of these are unknown to me right now. All I know is that I'm in the hands of God. And in a way that none of us really understand right now, He knows what He's doing, and why.

The second thing that struck me were the words: '...practise what you teach.' This is a powerful exhortation. I realised this many years ago, but the people to whom we minister are so important in keeping us on track. All that we do pastorally is ultimately in service of others: rightly, there is an expectation that we remain on Planet Earth, that we live good lives, that we are kind, generous and merciful pastors. Pope Francis meant this when he said that the clergy should 'smell like their sheep' (Bishop Alan preached on this subject during the Mass).

I'll remain in the seminary until the end of the academic year, and then, God- and Bishop-willing, will be ordained priest on 6th July (which, at the time of writing, is 142 days away: not that I'm counting).



Proclamations from the Pulpit....

'Kensitas' by Fr Simon Blakesley

As you know from my self-introductory blurb, I was born on the 10th August 1955 in the back bedroom of 92, Whyteleafe Hill, Whyteleafe, Surrey at 8.05 in the morning. My two older brothers, then aged six and three were outside the bedroom door joining in with the midwife in shouting "PUSH" "PUSH" at my poor toiling mother. My father recalls that he had to bring the afterbirth downstairs in a bucket and he burnt it on the coke stove in the kitchen! Was this the beginning of my life?

In some ways yes, but in other ways, no, certainly not. The context of my mother's pregnancy with me was a bit fraught. My father, years later, confided in me that he had real financial worries about a third child coming along. In tune with so many others in the baby boomer generation, two would have done just fine, but here I was, a month early to boot! My mother had always been a smoker. My early memories of life at home were of her smoking 'Kensitas' cigarettes so that she could collect the coupons and buy various things that were useful additions to the household. Our long car journeys in our Morris Oxford (9167 PF) were often accompanied by smoke coming from the front passenger seat where mum would be having yet another ciggy. Again, I was later to discover that she had 'cut down a bit' but hadn't given up smoking during her pregnancy with me. Whether this alone caused my 4 week prematurity will never be known; the careful analysis of my placenta might have yielded answers, but that too went up in smoke!

You are probably thinking that I am a bit odd to be drawn towards the eight months between my conception and my birth as a significant time in the genesis of who I am or have become as a person. In many ways I agree with you, but the Church teaches that the human soul exists from the earliest moments of human life, and therefore what happens to the corporeal person even as blastocyst, embryo and foetus is significant. You might be shouting at me by now "But you can't remember this time so why do you bother about it?" True I cannot remember in my everyday conscious mind, but what about my 'sub-conscious' or to use another coterminous prefix, my 'pre-conscious' mind?

In the early 1960's a number of psychiatrists used various techniques, including LSD, to access pre-natal memories. They soon stopped doing this when they realised how destabilising such tampering with the 'limbic gate' could be. Some memories are meant to stay forgotten. When in the everyday life of helping people with resolving their emotional contradictions, I

am certain that how their parents felt about their conception and how the emotional and physical health of their mother and father were during those nine months have a foundational impact on how that person has entered the world and how they feel about their lives. Not all memories are close to the surface.

If you are thinking to yourself, “I’m not touching any of this with a barge-pole...”, I respect your sense of self-preservation. If, on the other hand, you recognise some facets of your own story that could be illustrated more clearly by reflecting on the first nine months of your life, then I would be happy to accompany you on that journey. ‘From my mother’s womb, you have been my God’.

Follow-on from November 2018’s ‘Deliverance and Exorcism’ Mass & Talk

Sandy Hobson

How much do we know about what our Church has to offer to guide us through this world of ours? How much do we know about healing prayer and deliverance?

As a follow-on to the introduction of ‘Deliverance and Exorcism’ we had back in November, we are in the process of arranging a panel of three – Fr Simon, Fr Stefan from Clare Priory, and Fr Jeremy – to discuss the gifts of Deliverance and Exorcism, the Church’s teaching and the laity’s role within it, New Age pitfalls and much more, which will both enlighten us to what we have at our disposal, and dispel any way-off thinking. What is real and what is false? After the discussion, you will get the opportunity to ask your own questions. The organising of the event has not yet been completed, but please look out for more details, which will come up shortly.

Here is a little bit about Fr Jeremy and his wide experience in this field: Fr Jeremy Davies has been an exorcist for many decades. At one time he was London’s only exorcist. In 1987, Cardinal Basil Hume, then Archbishop of Westminster, asked him if he would take up this role. Fr Jeremy had been a medical doctor working in remote parts of Africa where he had come across many disturbed patients, some of whom were ‘possessed or troubled.’ His work there was an introduction to a world that was to become a central part of his priestly ministry.

He has been instrumental in the establishment of a network of exorcists known as the International Association of Exorcists. The late Fr Gabriele Amorth, Rome’s celebrated exorcist, and a friend of Fr

Jeremy’s, worked with him in founding this Association. The ministry is seen now as being part of the normal life of the Church and many more of our priests are being trained because of the recognised need for it in today’s world. We are hoping to bring the event to fruition later this year.

New Schools

Dick Wilson & Sarah Sykes

In recent years there has been an admission ‘cap’ on faith admissions to schools. This ‘cap’ had meant that no Catholic schools could be opened, because the Bishops Conference would not accept a Government imposed limit on the number of Catholics in Catholic schools.

The Faith Cap, also known as the 50% Rule in English Faith Schools, was introduced in 2010 and stipulated that where newly established Academies with a religious character are oversubscribed, at least 50% of their places must be ‘open places’. This means that they should be allocated without reference to faith. This rule only applied to new academies established under the Free School programme, not to maintained schools that have converted to academy status.

However, the Secretary of State for Education, Damian Hinds, has since announced that he would like to see new Faith schools being opened through the traditional voluntary-aided (V-A) route, where there would be no cap on faith admissions and therefore the Diocese of East Anglia has submitted proposals for three new Catholic primary schools. Two are in Peterborough, at Hampton East and Great Haddon. The other proposal is for a primary school at Northstowe, located five miles northwest of the city of Cambridge, in the area between Oakington and Longstanton.

The first stage of 1500 dwellings includes a primary school which was the Pathfinder Church of England School that opened in September 2017. A further stage of 3500 dwellings was agreed in principle in 2015. In a few years this will include a secondary school education campus, and three primary schools, one of which is hoped to be the Catholic primary school being bid for by the Diocese. Improved transport, with a new Guided Bus station and a new access road to the A14, must be completed in time for this stage in house-building.

The schools in Northstowe will be Maintained Schools. This is a general term for all schools that are fully funded, ultimately, by the State. Within this category the Northstowe Catholic School would operate under Voluntary-Aided School rules, where

the majority of Governors on the governing body are Foundation Governors, that is, appointed through the Church and there is no cap on faith admissions. I believe that it is a requirement that 10% of the building and equipping costs be found by the Diocese. Helen Bates, reports that: it is expected that the 10% will be paid for from funding provided by the housing developer, which is already part of a legal agreement between the developer and the local authority.

New Catholic Schools – the Diocesan update

Helen Bates, Assistant Director of the Schools Service - Diocese of East Anglia

On 1st February, the Diocese submitted bids to the Government for three new Catholic primary schools in Cambridgeshire, and at that time 734 expressions of interest had been received for the three schools. One of the bids is for a school in the new housing development in Northstowe. Current forecasts of pupil numbers suggest that this school could open in around 2022/23. Once full, this school is expected to have nursery provision and up to three classes in each year group, or 90 pupils per year group. It is unlikely that the school will start with all year groups being open.

We think the younger age groups will open straight away and then the school will grow one year group at a time. However, final decisions on all these matters will be made closer to the time of opening.

By the 1st February, the Diocese had received 230 expressions of interest in the Northstowe School. However, more are still needed to show the Government the strength of support there is for this new school. Expressions of interest can be made on-line at www.rcdea.org.uk/vaschools or by emailing vaschools@rcdea.org.uk. Copies of expression of interest forms are also available at your local parish church.

The Diocese expects to hear whether it has an ‘in principle’ agreement from the Government, by the end of March. Latest news about the bids will be posted on the Diocesan website www.rcdea.org.uk/vaschools

Care4Calais

Care4Calais is a UK charity which is working to support refugees fleeing to Europe. St Laurence’s Church recently became a Collection Point for the charity and donations can be left next to the new organ at the back of the church. You can find more information about their work and the kinds of donations that would be useful at www.care4calais.org.

Features & Opinions

Further than Hoy

Michael Allan

The wild, rocky island of Hoy sits at the edge of the group of islands known as Orkney, which lie north of mainland Scotland. Beyond Hoy surge the dangerous waters of the Pentland Firth, where the Atlantic and the North Sea meet. Orkney writer George Mackay Brown here looks further than Hoy, and further than death.

Song: Further than Hoy

Further than Hoy
the mermaids whisper
through ivory shells
a-babble with vowels

Further than history
the legends thicken
the buried broken
vases and columns

Further than fame
are fleas and visions,
the hermit’s cave
under the mountain

Further than song
the hushed awakening
of country children
the harp unstroked

Further than death
your feet will come
to the forest, black forest
where Love walks, alone.

from *The Collected Poems of George Mackay Brown*, reproduced by kind permission of Hodder and Stoughton/Headline Publishing Group

A voyage through the deep waters of life and death,
travelling beyond all horizons...

How do we live life, and (as part of life) how do we live with death – with the death of those we love, with our own death? When we die will we enter the eternal light and bliss of God, or a shadowy realm of punishment or purification, or is it into what we may really fear or expect – a dark nothingness?

“No sign will be given except the sign of Jonah.”

Jonah, the reluctant prophet, flees from the Lord across the seas. When the Lord sends a terrible storm after him, Jonah offers his own life to save the lives of the

sailors, telling them to cast him overboard, which in desperation they finally do. Down in the deep abyss of waters he is swallowed by a great fish – entombed in the dark belly of death.

“Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice. You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me. Then I said, ‘I am driven away from your sight; how shall I look again upon your holy temple?’ The waters closed in over me; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped around my head at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up my life from the Pit, O Lord my God.” (Jonah 2:2-6)

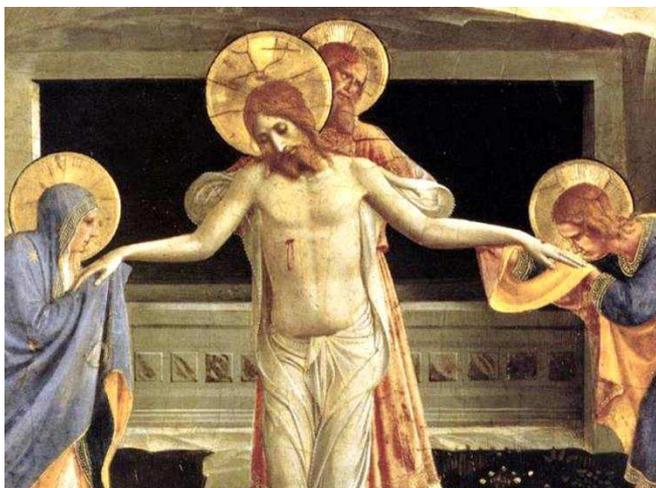
After three days and three nights in the belly of death, Jonah is cast up onto dry land. His cries from the deep abyss had been heard.

*Unless a grain of wheat
falls into the earth and dies
it remains alone
but if it dies...*

“After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), ‘I am thirsty’. A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, ‘It is finished’. Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out.” (John 19:28-32)

....it bears much fruit



Detail of *The Entombment of Christ* by Blessed Fra Angelico OP

Here is Good News: Jesus died. Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Man, died a real death, a cruel, painful death. He emptied himself out, to the utmost mark, descending into the darkness. Perhaps only the utter, inexhaustible folly of his self-giving love could fully enter the bitter finality of death, and thereby conquer it; could fill the deep abyss of nothingness – but only after draining the cup to the last drop.

“This monstrous, silent void,” writes theologian Karl Rahner, “which we experience as death, is in truth filled with the originating mystery we call God, with God’s light and with God’s love that received all things and gives all things.”

Christ has gone before us: he fills the dark abyss, the firstborn of all creation, the firstborn from the dead. He is God’s way to be human, the second Adam; who loves without limits, who pours out the blood and the water of life, who bears much fruit. Dare we follow him – into life, into death, into love?

The Cistercian monk Thomas Merton asks:

Why are we all afraid of love?
Why should we, who are far greater than the grain
Fear to fall in the ground and die?
Have You not planned for minds and wills
Their own more subtle biochemistry?
This is the end of my old ways, dear Christ!
Now I will hear Your voice at last
And leave the frosts (that is: the fears) of my
December.
And though You kill me, (as You must) more, more
I’ll trust in you.
For though the darkness and the furious waters of that
planting
Seep down and eat my life away
Yet my dark night both eats and feeds me,
‘til I begin to know what new life, green life springs
within my bones.

Water, that elemental mystery of creation, can bring death, but is also essential for life – the seed that falls into the earth and dies, cannot grow and bear fruit without it. In baptism we descend into deep waters to die with Christ, and rise up with him, reborn – borne on an abundance of water and the Spirit into the fullness of his life, death and resurrection.

Lord of life and Lord of death,
You go before us as a shepherd.
Lead us through the darkness of death,
Lead us into the light of your Kingdom.
There may we find You, and find ourselves,
Whole and complete as we were meant to be.

The bickering team problem

John Hobson

I am tired, so very tired, and on the brink of being quite dispirited. Our two main political parties are each at their own throats and tearing themselves apart in their failure to agree on virtually anything. Each of the party institutions and their key members need a good kick up the backside to get themselves sorted out and rediscover leadership and loyalty when things are tough or risky. Well, dear friends, our beloved church institution is no different and that is particularly worrying especially for dear Pope Francis and we should all support him with our daily prayers, the poor fellow.

Just a quick ramble through his troubles is enough to want to tear your hair out. Do you remember March 2016 and *Amoris Laetitia* dealing with divorced people and possible readmission to the sacraments? Well what a fuss this created and four cardinals rudely made a public written challenge of the Holy Father to provide clarification of his paper since they felt he had muddled the teaching of the Church. One of these chaps was Cardinal Raymond Burke and he crops up again and again as a tormentor of the Pope. Cardinal Burke of course has been disciplined by the Pope on various occasions and so is a thoroughly discredited nit-picker and complainer.

Then we had July 2017 when Cardinal Gerhard Müller had to be dismissed from being the Prefect for the Doctrine of the Faith (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) for having challenged the Holy Father's theological background! Chaps like these two are not in short supply, it is tiresome and we should pray for Pope Francis in his dealings with them all. Their names crop up again and again, storms in tea-cups are created and debated endlessly in the press and media and all to the detriment of our beloved Pope and Church.

This year (4th February 2019) we have a tsunami of print dealing with Pope Francis's joint statement with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed el-Tayeb (*Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*) which was primarily aimed at the sentence, 'Therefore, the fact that people are forced to adhere to a certain religion or culture must be rejected, as too the imposition of a cultural way of life that others do not accept.' The context of the whole piece is quite clear, it is about freedom but the Pope's critics have latched leech-like onto an earlier phrase in the piece, 'The pluralism and the diversity of religions, colour, sex, race and language are willed by God in His wisdom, through which He created human beings'. The awkward squad, vociferously aided and abetted by

Cardinals Burke and Müller, wish to interpret this as heresy, or bad theology, or flawed thinking, etc. and all those excited by their specialist interest have their moment of comment, and more controversy is raised for nothing. Yawn! I wish to scream 'Shut up you children', support the boss, understand the point he is making and overlook the out of context stuff.

Further still they should re-visit the teaching of Pope John Paul II when addressing 80,000 young Muslims in 1985 (*Address of His Holiness John Paul II to Young Muslims*, Morocco, 19th August 1985), 'We believe in the same God, the one God, the living God, the God who created the world and brings his creatures to their perfection...Christians and Muslims in general we have badly understood each other'. This is the same context of Pope Francis's joint statement during his trip to Egypt.

Moving on, also this year we have the publication of a scurrilous book – *In the Closet of the Vatican: Power, Homosexuality, Hypocrisy* – written by a rabidly fanatic French campaigner called Frédéric Martel. He spent four years and interviewed 41 cardinals, oh why would they? The book has been reviewed in *The Spectator* and you should Google the review which points out that the book is totally evidence-free and gossip and innuendo-heavy, which is all one could expect from such an author who was delighted to find that the Vatican had its share of gossipy queens – but sadly we already knew that. Publication was timed to coincide with the Vatican meeting with the Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences of the Catholic Church on the theme of 'protection of minors' (21st–24th February 2019) so this is clearly a touch of the self-advertising so loved by this sort of fellow.

Stand by to be assailed by the sensationalist media and chatterbox. Our beloved Church will suffer further public nonsense so we need urgently to pray, and pray frequently that Holy Father Francis and his agenda will prevail, that the team will rally properly around Peter and support and buttress his every effort. We need this Pope to clear out the stables of Rome. Pray that he does.

John died suddenly on 7th March. He was very keen that this article should be published in the Lent edition, which we do now in memory of him.

What does it mean to be human?

Dick Wilson

It was a coincidence that the day I sat down to write this article, my copy of the magazine *New Scientist* (26th January) came through the door, containing its own article on 'The End of Species'. That article claimed that the word species was used so loosely that it should be replaced by another word, such as the technical word 'clade', which means a single ancestor and all its descendants. This is a useful concept when you are tracing evolution. Then, along comes the 2nd February edition, with the article 'What is Life' pointing to the decisive use of DNA, carrying the information in all our genes, that is, our reproduction material or genome. This is of use in tracing the history and scope of a species. And behold, today's *New Scientist* (9th February) carries a long account of the findings of the archaeology of Neanderthal humans. Sometimes I get the feeling that someone is watching me!

All I can do here is touch on some of the questions that have been raised about human beings, and some of the attempts made to answer them, be they by the Church, or legislators and lawyers, or doctors and their patients, or scientists and archaeologists, and of course by individuals. What are the kind of questions we have to ask? We must say more than human beings are beings just like me, and I will always know one when I see one. So, we ask:

Is *homo sapiens* a species, that is, a distinct sub-division of the genus *homo*?

Yes, there are sufficient similarities (but also differences) for *homo sapiens* to be designated a species. Note that 'species' is not a precise term. It is a matter of judgment. The term 'clade' is used for all the past and existing descendants of a common ancestor.

The genus *homo* goes back between 1.5 and 2.5 million years. The species *homo sapiens* evolved in Africa about 300,000 years ago. 'Latest Mother of All' *homo sapiens* (Eve, if you like) lived 200,000 years ago. An Adam, a 'Latest Father of All', existed about 20,000 years earlier than this. Not a happy marriage in a Garden of Eden!

Were Neanderthals humans?

Yes. *Homo neanderthalensis*, so called from the Neander Valley in north Germany where it was first identified, were present throughout Europe from about 400,000 years ago, and survived in southern Spain till about 27,000 years ago. Professor Stringer considered that they had sufficient differences to make them a

separate species. They used fire, built shelters, buried their dead, and almost certainly needed to speak to each other to do all this. They are now extinct, and *homo sapiens* is the only survivor of the *homo* genus.

Were Neanderthal humans our ancestors?

No, they are a separate branch; our closest relative, somewhere along the line between *homo habilis* and *homo erectus*. But there is evidence from DNA examination that there was crossbreeding between *homo sapiens* and Neanderthal humans.

Where did these species come from?

These and associated species were found in northern Europe and northern Asia, as well as in East Africa and beyond. The recent discovery (2017) of a *homo* skull in Morocco shows that *homo sapiens* was evolved in Africa sooner than had been thought, and was widespread. The varieties of *homo sapiens* in Africa are numerous, as opposed to the one group that crossed to Asia and whose descendants populated the rest of the world.

When did this happen?

At least 65,000 years ago, this fairly small group of *homo sapiens* crossed to the south Arabian coast. These events may well have begun earlier, before the enormous volcanic eruption 79,000 years ago which devastated India.

Were all these species human?

Yes, from nearly 300,000 years ago at least. Construction of stone tools and controlled fire was used at least 150,000 years ago. It is quite likely that language goes back at least 200,000 years.

What about Lucy and Hobbit?

'Lucy' was the name given by the finders of much of the skeleton of a young primate (*Australopithecus afarensis*), who lived very much earlier, 3.2 million years ago, in Ethiopia. She was able to walk on two legs like *homo erectus*. 'Hobbit' was the name given to the small *homo floresiensis*, whose remains were found recently in a cave on the island of Flores in Indonesia. The Hobbit became extinct as recently as about 30-50,000 years ago.

This survey shows how far into the past we can trace the evolution of humanity. Up until the 19th century, the picture of how human beings are constructed, came from Plato and Aristotle, religions, including a material body and the Christian church. Then Darwin showed us how the history described here was driven

by the survival of the fittest, that is, 'natural selection'. Further scientific breakthroughs from Mendel and the scientist who identified the chromosome and the gene, the 20th century elaboration of genetics, and the discovery of DNA and the access it gave us to heredity cell data have opened up pathways to untold information about where our species has come from. So, if we ask the question above, we begin the answer with "A human being is a primate, a species evolved within the genus *homo*."

Books by their covers!

Serga Collett

Christmas 2018! Tired! I had just spent the night at the Homeless Project.

Cycling along the river to go to the 11.00am Mass. In front of me a Pit Bull-type dog criss-crossed my path. Suddenly the dog took off, snapping at and chasing the swans by the side of the river. He almost caught one of them... Beside me the dog's owner, a man in his late 20s, also on a bike, said nothing. I felt duty bound to say something,

"Please could you keep your dog under control", I said politely. "F**k off you old hag!" was the reply.

Turning towards me, he spat at me full in the face.

Completely taken by surprise, I cannot remember my reply, but it was along the lines of "Well, that wasn't very nice."

Both of us still cycling, he rushed towards me and pushed me off my bike! At that point he did actually call his dog and cycled off!

I was not hurt, well nothing more than my pride anyway, but it did make me think! How different had my experience of a few hours before with 17 homeless men and women been! I had spent the previous night sharing both the sleeping quarters and the confidences of 'persons experiencing homelessness'. (Note my choice of words here!) I felt very 'humbled' by some of the stories they told me and I would not say of one of any of them 'Hey, go out and get a job!' Indeed some of them do have a job, whether it is selling the *Big Issue* or as a kitchen porter or a fruit picker, etc. Each and every one of them has a reason for being there and a story to tell of why they are there... and it is only by the grace of God that I have a roof over my head.

I have tried to volunteer in some capacity most Friday nights/Saturday mornings this winter (excepting a few instances when I had to go abroad). I look forward to seeing their friendly faces; now greeting me with a ready smile and feel accepted. I hope that the feeling is mutual and I am able to give them some comfort too. I thought I was doing a 'good' deed when I started but actually it is a two-way relationship – I feel enriched by the experiences they share with me.

Some history about the Cambridge Churches Homeless Project

Eight years ago a number of city centre churches felt that there were many homeless men sleeping in their graveyards. This led to much discussion and after looking at various project models, it was felt Cambridge should follow suit and set up a homeless project. There were a series of meetings at the various churches and the Cambridge Churches Homeless Project (CCHP) commenced six winters ago.

The four month Winter Night Shelter aims to provide a warm welcome, a hot meal and a sleeping bag/inflatable mattress on a wooden floor to each individual. Over the years the number of persons experiencing homelessness using the facilities has increased and the project now has a total of 17 regulars, men and women (and the occasional dog) using their services. Every night on a rotational basis, one of the churches offers both premises and volunteers and OLEM (who offer support on Fridays) additionally offers a week of provision over Christmas. The project has a stabilising influence on individuals and last year had 42 different guests of whom 20 were housed by the end of the project.

Things you can do

1. Change your language and mindset; remember that each person is someone's son/daughter – they could be yours! There will be a reason why they are 'experiencing homelessness'.
2. Say 'Hi'. Make them feel they are valued, they are not any different from you and me and any kind of connection helps. You may be the only person they speak to today! Many people feel that because they are homeless, they don't belong to the community and they are often ignored.
3. Volunteer if you have the time. Prepare care packages, for example toothpaste, toothbrush, etc. and donate any items you no longer need to charities such as Emmaus (a homeless project that aims to get people back into the job market).

Remember that ‘experiencing homelessness’ can happen to any of us. Homelessness is usually situational and can be caused by many factors such as a relationship breakdown, loss of a job or health issues – none of us is immune to the risk.

So the moral of the story: I know who I would prefer to spend my time with: a young upwardly mobile man with a chip on his shoulder or a person experiencing homelessness often ‘perceived’ to be living outside the norms of society? Don’t judge books by their covers!

Christ said, “I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome.”

Christopher Dawson, Christian scholar

James P McQuillan

Before Vatican Council II, there was a famous English commentator of Christian theology and history, who was universally recognised here and in the United States of America (USA). Born on 12th October 1889 at Hay Castle, Herefordshire, Henry Christopher Dawson was the son of a Yorkshire-born soldier and explorer, and a Welsh mother, fond of Celtic myth and tradition. He was never a strong person and was raised mainly at home in an Anglo-Catholic ambience.

Influenced by a fellow student, he had a strong premonition of his later career in the Ara Coeli, Rome in 1908, on holiday from Oxford. He was received into the Church in 1914 and married a cradle-Catholic, Valery Mills, two years later. Refused service in the army, he began a life of writing, reviewing and advanced research. From his father he was influenced by Virgil and Dante, and it was St Augustine of Hippo, Doctor of the Church, who gave him that superior grasp of history higher than cultural collapse, that he described as ‘metahistory’. On this basis was Dawson to build his great survey of European civilisation from Ancient Greece to the present, and to befriend so many contemporaries within and outside Catholicism whom he met, or who read his works.

Whilst E.I. Watkin was his childhood Catholic friend, Frank Sheed, the Catholic theologian and writer, and Maisie Ward, were companions as owners of the publishers, Sheed and Ward. Fully convinced of the efficacy of education, for example in the monasteries, through the liberal arts and through the power of the Holy Spirit, Dawson wrote powerful book length tracts, the most famous being *The Judgment of the Nations*, 1942. He was plucked from editorship of the *Dublin Review*, a Catholic periodical, by Harvard

University, USA, to act as Professor of Roman Catholic Studies, 1958–62. Funded by an American convert, this post was a stunning honour for a mainly private person, living in Oxford and attending the same church as J.R.R. Tolkien, and knowing C.S. Lewis among so many other important figures of British authorship at that time.

His time in Boston was reduced by ill health, and he eventually returned to Britain where he died on the Feast of St Bede in 1970. In Bradley J. Birzer’s 2007 biography, he hails Dawson as a prophet and a saint (on page 271) and stated on page one that the Englishman was, ‘at the very centre of the Catholic literary and intellectual revival throughout the four decades preceding Vatican II.’

The most specialised job in the Catholic Church!

Fr Pat Cleary

This is how Mgr Anthony Philpot (RIP) described the role of the Parish Priest. Many of you may remember him as the Parish Priest of Our Lady and the English Martyrs (OLEM) during the 1980s and 1990s. His ashes are buried in the front garden of the presbytery at OLEM.

He was a fount of wisdom, a most charitable man, a wonderful speaker and preacher, and one who took on complicated tasks for the Church.

At the same time as he was Parish Priest of OLEM, he was Rural Dean for the Cambridge Deanery (a sort of area manager), Vicar General of the Diocese (the Bishop’s chief assistant) and the responsible person for a group of some thousands of priests worldwide called Jesus Caritas. These priests continued life as ministers in their own dioceses but joined together for prayer and spiritual exercises which included an hour of quiet prayer daily in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

On one occasion Tony invited me to join him in Rome for an international meeting of all the various branches of the Charles de Foucauld family. *Wikipedia* has Charles de Foucauld’s entry as:

‘Charles Eugène de Foucauld, viscount of Foucauld, born on September 15th 1858 in Strasbourg, died on December 1st 1916 in Tamanrasset, was a French cavalry officer for the French army, then explorer and geographer, then catholic priest, hermit and living among the Tuareg in the Sahara in Algeria.’

During the conference the Little Sisters of Jesus, (the Charles de Foucauld sisters) asked me if I would celebrate Mass with them on a weekday evening.

I felt it a privilege, but asked if I could use the chalice Charles de Foucauld used in his tent in the Sahara. I had spotted it in their little museum, they allowed me to do this and it was an amazing experience.

Although Charles de Foucauld has a huge following today, he died almost unknown; his story is a most inspiring one which you may like to follow up.

In a way, Tony Philpot was like Charles de Foucauld; unassuming, modest, committed to a vision of the Church which was concerned with fidelity to preaching and living the Gospel message.

Tony's gift for languages was phenomenal. He told me once that when he was 10 or 11 his bike chain came off and he didn't know how to put it back on. (A teacher on one occasion wrote on Tony's school report, "This boy will go through life pushing doors marked 'pull'!") Tony said his father was disappointed that his son was unable to put the bike chain back on the bike but remembers thinking at the time, "I could tell my father the word for 'bike chain' in every European language but I couldn't put it back on the bike!!"

I'm sure this kind of experience led Fr Tony to be the compassionate and understanding man that he was. He always saw people as valuable in the eyes of God and therefore fellow travellers on the way to the Kingdom of God. He hated pomposity and greatly admired those whose lives were simple and faithful.

In his last illness in a nursing home in Stoke Newington, his Romanian carer was struggling a little with English and so he said, "Don't worry, I'll learn Romanian" which he did!

An amazing simple dedicated follower of the Lord. May he rest in peace.



Parish Organizations & Activities

GIFT – Growing in Faith Together



Helena Judd

GIFT, is St Laurence's Youth Group for young adults from the ages of 11–18. We meet once a month and have social activities to help create friendships amongst the youth in the Parish. Nibbles are provided at each meeting. We meet in the Parish Hall from 6.30pm – 8.30pm. We ask for a £2 donation to help with supplies and food. The upcoming dates are:

Friday 15th March – Easter Cards and Cross Making
Friday 17th May – International Fun (Bring a dish from around the world)
Friday 21st June – Sports games / Trivia
Friday 19th July – TRIP OUT – River boat? Bowling?

Confirmation Group



Helena Judd

I am very excited about this year's Confirmation Class. We have some very talented and thoughtful candidates. We also have extra support this year joining the team. Claire and Joe are both helping Robert, GianLuca and Helena with the sessions. They are excited about the upcoming Ignite Festival in May.

For more details about GIFT and the Confirmation Group, please contact Helena@plai-theatre.org.

Ignite Festival

The Ignite Festival is an annual Catholic youth event for anyone Year 8 upwards run by the Ignite and Ignite Lite Team – both part of the Youth Service of the Diocese of East Anglia. This year it will take place on Saturday 4th May – Monday 6th May. A group will be going from St Laurence with chaperones and on a coach. Please contact Helena@plai-theatre.org if you are interested in your teen attending.

So, if you want to know Jesus better with hundreds of other young Catholics, then come and encounter Him at the Ignite Festival! Powerful talks / passionate prayer / live music are a few of the amazing experiences on offer, culminating with the option to participate in the Pilgrimage Walk to Walsingham on Bank Holiday Monday 6th May. More information can be found: <http://www.ignitefestival.co.uk>

Mini Vinnies

Rachel Chalklin

Mini Vinnies' School Coordinator



The Mini Vinnies group at our Parish school has continued to grow over the past three years. The group of extremely enthusiastic children meet each Thursday lunchtime. Sessions begin with a moment of prayer, the group pledge and a reflection on the importance of the Gospel. This is an invaluable moment as all the children at school take home the primary school version of the 'Wednesday Word' the previous day, giving families an opportunity to share the forthcoming Sunday Gospel at home focusing on the most significant word in the reading; the Mini Vinnies use the 'Wednesday Word' to consider how they can put their thoughts into action.

Our Parish school set up the first primary-aged Junior Vincentian group in our Diocese. 'Mini Vinnies' are children aged from 7 to 11 (or younger) who, with the permission of their parents and the support of the school, are encouraged to embark on their first steps as possible Vincentians for life.



Selling hot chocolate - November

Last term fundraising activities included selling hot chocolates to raise money for Children in Need. Our main fundraiser last term was our Winter Shop. The children worked extremely hard making and preparing items to sell both at lunchtimes and after school over several weeks in December. They raised £400 which they decided to share between the SVP, two local homeless charities and Missio. As well as helping others, the Winter Shop had the added advantage of helping the children to understand basic trading; applying their maths knowledge in a social context.



Winter Shop - December

The 'Mini Vinnies' also invited the senior members of our Parish to join us for the Key Stage 1 Nativity play, 'The Inn Crowd'. After the performance they served afternoon tea to our guests. It was a lovely afternoon everyone enjoyed sharing the homemade crackers the children had made complete with festive jokes.

The children are always enthusiastic coming up with their own ideas on how they can fundraise and do other charitable works. Each week they set up their own meeting room with a focus on a small prayer table. The children are already planning many fundraising activities for Lent and Easter starting with a whole school pancake race during Shrove Tuesday. Later in the term there will be an Easter egg hunt and Easter raffle as well as a shared lunch at a local home for the elderly.

It is great fun to work with such an enthusiastic and caring group of children. Well done St Laurence Mini Vinnies!

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

<http://www.minivinnies.org.uk/index.php>



A prayer for the earth: climate change and our faith

Serga Collett

Set yourself a challenge TODAY – how long can you avoid unwanted plastic – what will be the first time you are tripped up a sandwich with a plastic window, a coffee cup, your milk bottle Consciously examine how often TODAY you use one-use plastic? Put all the one-use plastic packaging etc in one bin bag. At the end of the day, see how much has accumulated! Then multiply it by the people in your street. Of the plastic we throw away, 55% is discarded (including dumped in the sea), 25% incinerated and 20% recycled. As yet we do not know whether plastics will ever decompose. Currently there is so much plastic in the ocean that it would circle the earth 425 times.

In addition to clogging up our rivers, seas and oceans and jeopardising animal life both on land and in the water, it has now been discovered that this unbiodegradable substance reacts to direct sunlight to produce harmful greenhouse gases, methane and ethylene.

There is only one way to limit the deleterious effects of this ubiquitous substance – we have to rein in our production and use of plastics. It requires EACH and EVERY ONE OF US to have an ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION.

So what of climate change, is it really that serious ... isn't it lovely to have glorious 15 degree sunshine during February half-term? The problem is that the effects of climate change are unequal. In mid-latitude regions of the world such as ours we would have to see a global climate change of 3 degrees before we are affected, whilst regions such as Africa, large parts of India and most of South America will see changes within 1.5 degrees. So what does this actually mean: drought prone areas will become drier and wet tropical regions will become wetter, they will suffer gradual sea level rises and stronger cyclones. Oxfam predicts that world hunger would worsen as climate change inevitably hurts crop production in those countries, and the number of people suffering from hunger may climb by 10–20%.

Many of you are so generous to our appeals and CAFOD is extremely grateful, as we work ceaselessly to alleviate poverty in the worst affected areas. However, these are stopgap solutions to the crises. We need to try and reduce the cause of the problem.

How can you as an individual reduce climate change? Pope Francis suggests that there is only one way: Radical Ecological Conversion! We have to change the way we think. Do we really 'need' that new sweater? If I buy that new sweater, what will happen to the old sweater? We have to consider the life journey of everything we buy; source, production, life span and disposing of the item. We need to really ask ourselves, do I 'need' that item? Many of us love a 'sale', but even if it is reduced, if you don't really need it, is it a bargain?

Of course, this is only one of the issues affecting climate change, so much to think about, but you can help in everything you do – little drops of water make the mighty ocean from small acorns will grow mighty oaks!

In the next issue, I will discuss other ways to halt climate change.

In the meantime let us place our trust in God; the following is a prayer for the earth:

All powerful God, you are present in the universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with your peace that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle, for justice, love and peace.

'A prayer for our earth' was published in Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*. It is for all who believe in God who is the all-powerful Creator.

Let us keep in mind these words from John 1:1-3

"In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came into being, not one thing came into being except through him."

Who are we to destroy that which HE has made?

And finally, my report on our plastic free Christmas..... well I must commend my husband who was supportive of the idea right from the start. He was the only one who managed to wrap all his presents in brown paper and string although he did complain how long it took him. As for me, as my carefully folded corners pinged off for the umpteenth time, I resorted to a gluestick! Everyone played their part, my daughter picked up the free-range chickens from the farm she passes on her way home and we cycled off to the market to get the vegetables from the market. However, it relied on everyone playing their part and investing TIME and making the effort. So maybe that is how our mindset needs changing: investing TIME in everything we do!

Turning concern into action – St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP)

Catharine Warren

Spring 2019 Update

The Giving Tree in Advent was very well supported by parishioners. Thank you.

SVP members distributed a total of 86 presents to Wintercomfort, Cambridge Churches Homelessness Project, Meals on Wheels, and children of families we visit. Also from the donations we received from St Laurence's and St Vincent de Paul, Fen Ditton, we delivered 10 large Christmas hampers.

The Bring and Buy Sale in January raised over £500. It was jointly organised by CAFOD and SVP and we shared the proceeds. Our SVP group decided to send the money to **SVP's Sudan and South Sudan appeal**. This is to help the groups there to 'continue running projects that bring hope and peace into lives torn apart by war.' These projects include medical centres, baby feeding centres and vocational training. Tens of thousands of people are in desperate need there and we plan to organise some more fundraising events for this appeal later in 2019. (More information about this situation is available on the SVP website: www.svp.org.uk/south-sudan)

Future events include:

- Senior Citizens' Eastertide Lunch with CWL providing the catering and SVP organising lifts,
- the SVP National Pilgrimage to Walsingham which takes place on Sunday 7th July.

More details will be in the Newsletter nearer the time.

SVP Summer Holidays for Children

The St John Bosco Centre, in the Essex countryside, provides an opportunity for over 350 children to have an exciting, activity-packed camping holiday. Brentwood Diocese SVP organises the holidays, with a large team of volunteers. Children live in tents in groups of seven or eight and the entire week is taken up with a full programme of planned and supervised activities. To find out more and to apply for a place for your child, go to: <http://www.svpboscocamp.org.uk>.

Dates:

27th – 3rd August: for boys 8 – 13

3rd – 10th August: for boys aged 8 – 13

10th – 17th August: for girls aged 9 – 12

17th – 24th August: for girls and boys aged 9 – 11

St Laurence's SVP can help with the cost of the holiday for up to 4 children, please email svp@saintlaurence.org.uk or ring me, Catharine Warren, on 07421 253100 for more information.

Do you need a Lift to Mass? Some people are given lifts to church by fellow parishioners who are neighbours – this is a great service. The SVP can also assist if you need help to get to Mass or other Parish events. If you need a lift please do not hesitate to speak to a member of the SVP, or email svp@saintlaurence.org.uk or ring 07421 253100. We will try and arrange for an SVP member or associate to give you a lift or we can book a taxi, including a specialist wheel-chair taxi. The SVP taxi fund was set up following a suggestion and donation by a parishioner and continues by using funds from *Alive in Faith* donations.

Thank you for your generous response to SVP appeals which enable us to befriend and give practical support to many individuals and families. SVP members are heartened to know we can rely on parishioners when we make various requests on behalf of people in need.

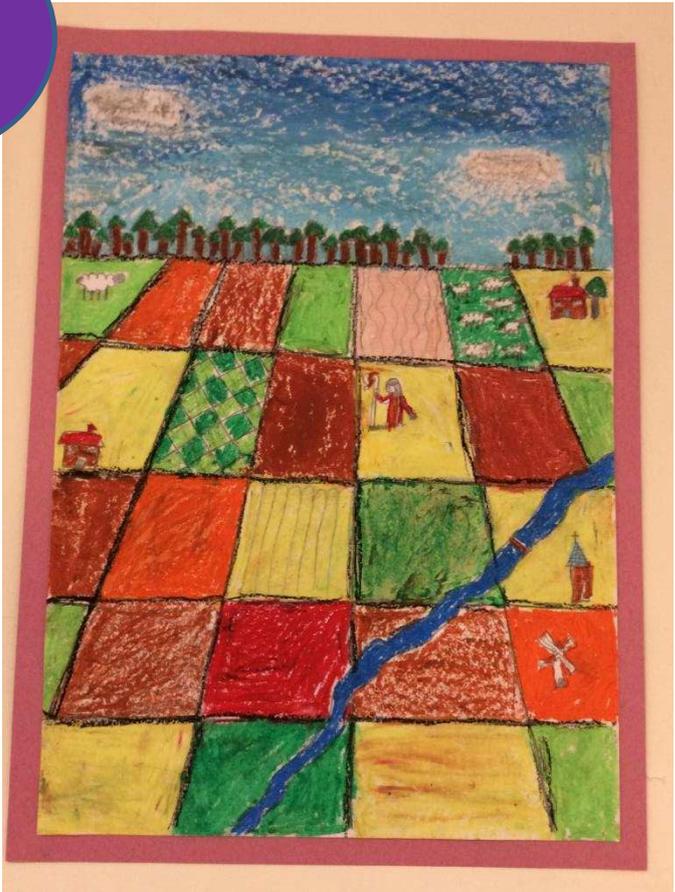
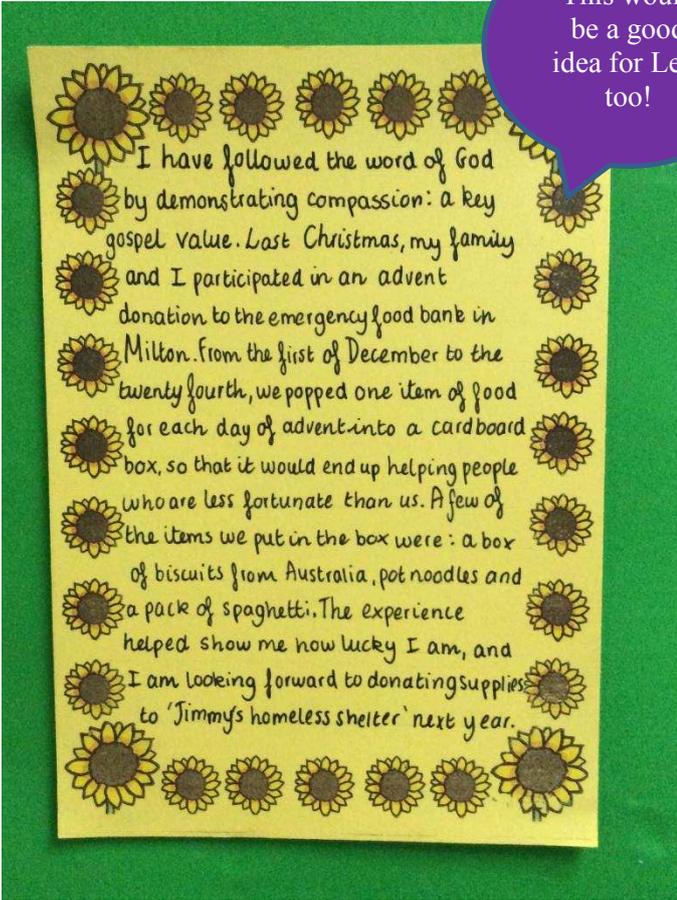
We are also appealing for new members to visit people, offer lifts and help run our SVP group. Please do think about volunteering. If you have a few hours a week to spare and may be interested in joining us/finding out more, please speak to any SVP member or contact me, on 07421 253100.

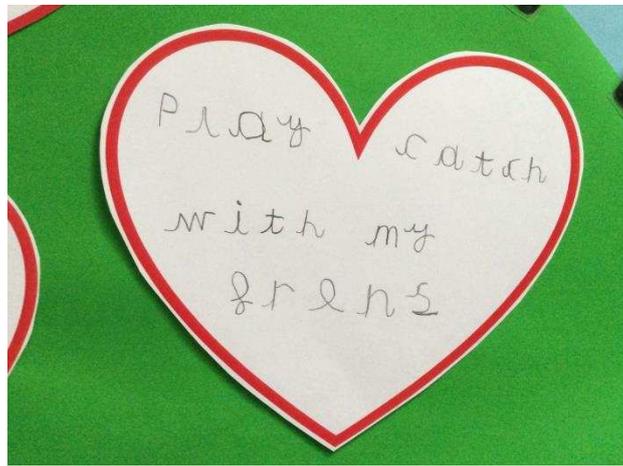


St Vincent
de Paul Society
England and Wales
Turning Concern into Action

Children at St Laurence Catholic Primary have produced colourful and striking displays depicting the various parables of Jesus. Each Year group chose a different parable and used the message of the parable to relate to their lives today.

This would be a good idea for Lent too!





Final Update CAFOD Connect2:Peru

Nora Darby

In January I put the following notice in the Parish newsletter and stated it would also be in the next edition of *Pilgrim*. There may be some of you who did not see it and might be wondering what has happened?

A decision has been made that we will not continue with the £1 for Peru collection in 2019. We therefore want to thank all parishioners for their generosity over the past two years. It has been wonderful to see the coins rattling into the buckets – we averaged over £300 each month. The two areas we sponsored were *Warmá Huasi*, which enabled women and children in a very poor area of Lima to do some amazing things in the school and surrounding area. Lake Páron in the mountains north of Lima was under threat but our contributions enabled the indigenous people of the area to fight off a large Canadian company who wanted to dam the lake.

There will be a presentation with more detail at the next Forum meeting in April and an update in the *Pilgrim*. Once again a huge thank you on behalf of the CAFOD team to everyone involved.

The presentation will go ahead at the next Forum meeting on Thursday 4th April at 8pm. Please join us we would be delighted to see you!

CWL Update

Janet Scally

Although the Catholic Women's League is a national organisation, we in Cambridge, are a small band of ladies who prepare a Parish lunch on the second Friday of every month throughout the year. We also organise weekly lunches for Advent and Lent. It is very successful, we love to see the Parishioners chatting to each other and enjoying time together. Usually around 20 people come and join us and all are welcome.

The donations we receive for these lunches are given to many and various charities. Some of our favourites have been our local Women's Refuge, Arthur Rank Hospice, and a special favourite is our own Diocesan Camps. Over this last Christmas we gave £100 to Winter Comfort to carry on the good work that Paul Simmons started, and Tony Ashdjian reminded us of

Jimmy's Night Shelter, so they received £50. We support our Parish with help whenever we are asked, doing such jobs as lunches for Senior Citizens together with the SVP, and Deanery meetings.

One of the traditional aims of the Catholic Women's League was to educate ourselves, so, although we can all read and write now, we were keen for a speaker from the Council to teach us how to stay safe from scams. These come through phone calls, knocks on our doors or through the Internet. It seems that as we age we become a more likely target for these crooks!

To join with the rest of the national CWL, some of our group plan to go to York in August on a pilgrimage to the birth place of our patron St Margaret Clitherow. Later in the year a few of us will go to the AGM of the whole League in the Midlands.

If you are free on the second Friday of the month, remember us and do join us for Mass at 12.30pm followed by lunch at about 1pm.

Report on the Walsingham Association AGM

Margaret Plumb

The Annual Retreat and AGM took place in Walsingham in November 2018. Those taking part in the Retreat gathered for Mass, celebrated by Mgr John Armitage, in the Annunciation Church on the evening of Tuesday 6th. This was followed by welcome drinks in the Claude Fisher Lounge prior to the evening meal. Later that evening, the Welcome to the Retreat and Night Prayers were held in the Annunciation Church, after which there was silence until after breakfast.

The theme of the Retreat, given by Fr Samuel Alabi, a priest of the Society of St Paul – a missionary society founded in Nigeria 40 years ago – was 'Deepening our Faith in Christ and Witnessing to Him in the World!'

Each day the Retreat commenced with Morning Prayers. After breakfast, a minibus took members to the Welcome Hall at the Basilica for the morning talk which took place at 10am, followed by coffee, then Mass at 12 noon in the Chapel of Reconciliation. On the Wednesday, we attended the Sprinkling at the Well at the Anglican Shrine and in the evening there was the Sacrament of the Sick.

On the Friday, some of us went to the Anglican Shrine for the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Revd & Rt Hon. Justin Welby. The Service took place on the Calvary Hill. The Priest Administrator,

Revd Kevin Smith SSC, welcomed all to the Service which started with the hymn 'Praise to the Holiest'. Pupils from the Pilgrim Federation of Schools – Walsingham Primary School C of E and Hindringham Primary School C of E – sang the hymn 'There is a Green Hill Far Away'. Prayers of Intercession were given by members of the Anglican Parish Church, Methodist Church, Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church, a pupil from the local primary school, and the Guild of All Souls Council.

In his address, the Archbishop said we should honour Mary in her house here in England's Nazareth. He welcomed the school children to the Shrine and said, "Mary is a mother; a real mother. Mary was special – she saw Jesus' suffering and purpose".

The Annual General Meeting of the Walsingham Association took place on the 10th November and members attending the AGM started to arrive on the Friday afternoon. A Mass for deceased members of the Association was held in the Annunciation Church that evening at 5pm during which the names of those who had died during the year were read out. The meeting on Saturday was held in the Welcome Centre at the Shrine.

It was reported that the Statue on the Dowry Tour is from the Slipper Chapel.

It is proposed to change the voting procedure to enable members to vote by post or email if unable to attend the AGM.

In the afternoon Mgr Armitage gave an update on what had been happening during the year and reported on some important developments. He explained that Governance is the way that the Shrine is run according to Canon Law and Civic Law. It is important that we have clear and straightforward structures and procedures concerning the running of the Shrine. It is also important that the responsibilities of the civic running of the Shrine are carried out by a qualified person and to that end, Zyg Rakowicz, an accountant who is experienced in both financial and legal matters, has been appointed as the Shrine Administrator. The job of the Administrator is to run the Walsingham Trust, which is responsible for the day to day running of the Shrine. The Rector, who has overall responsibility under Canon Law and is head of the Shrine, oversees everything and has pastoral responsibilities in terms of liturgical and pastoral work of the Shrine. He is answerable to the Bishops. The senior team of the Shrine is now: Mgr John Armitage as Rector, Zyg as the Shrine Administrator and Nick Clovis as Project Manager.

New Developments

Firstly, a little background history: Miss Charlotte Boyd bought the Slipper Chapel in 1896 and donated it to the monks at Downside, who passed it on to the Diocese of Northampton. When the Diocese was divided, the Shrine became part of the Diocese of East Anglia. The Diocese held the Shrine on behalf of the Bishops of England and Wales. All the property of the Shrine at present belongs to the Diocese of East Anglia, not to the Walsingham Trust.

The last 18 months have been spent drawing up a new Charitable Trust which will continue to be called the Walsingham Trust. The Bishops' charity, CaTEW, will be the main Trustee, and they will appoint other Trustees to run the Shrine on their behalf. The Bishop of East Anglia will be the Chairman.

In November 2017, Mgr Armitage consulted the Bishops' Conference and they proposed that the property be transferred from the Diocese of East Anglia to the new Walsingham Trust. The Diocese of East Anglia agreed to this proposal. In addition, the Bishops agreed a grant of £500,000 for the refurbishment of Elmham House – the guesthouse at the Catholic Shrine - and an overdraft facility to assist the Shrine with cash flow problems during the winter months.

Elmham House

A new Business Plan has been drawn up for Elmham House and any refurbishments are based on this.

The following is planned and will be completed by Easter 2019:

- Full disabled access to all new refurbished rooms where possible;
- Full disabled access to all public rooms;
- New en-suite single and twin bedrooms in newly refurbished rooms;
- A new Hostel for young people;
- A new lift to the rear of the building;
- Refurbishment to the Fisher Lounge and dining rooms, Library and Rimmer Lounge;
- A new meeting room in the old Laundry Room;
- Refurbishment and extension of Kitchens.

The Development of the Shrine

Mgr Armitage reported that to date approximately £2m had been raised since he was appointed as Rector. This has financed infrastructure work that has been carried out, i.e. internet installation, purchasing of a van and minibus, the Dowry House and temporary buildings. The Plans for the development of the Shrine are with North Norfolk Planning. Mgr Armitage thinks that it could take up to a decade for everything to be

completed – a timeline worthy of medieval Norfolk! The first stage of the planned development is to build a new candle sanctuary, tea room, restaurant and offices. It is hoped this will begin at the end of 2019.

The AGM weekend concluded with the Annual Dinner. On Sunday morning we attended Mass in the Reconciliation Chapel. This was preceded by listening to the Service from the Cenotaph in London and taking part in the two-minute silence.

Summary the Parish Forum Meeting 15 January 2019

Present: Fr Simon, Stephen Warde (Chair), Sarah Sykes (Minutes), Deacon Geoff and 20 parishioners

Matters arising

Sanctuary: Fr Simon gave a brief summary of the aim of re-ordering the sanctuary. He gave a ballpark figure of costs being around £40–50,000.

Lighting: improvements were being looked at with the Tech Group including plans to make light switches more accessible and which can be operated by remote control.

Windows: on the library side of the church to be replaced with double-glazed units. Cost to be covered by the library building works.

Projector screen: plans to install on a hinge to enable it to fold away against the right-hand side sanctuary wall, with a rear projector, at the cost of about £5,000.

Live streaming update: Ronald Haynes reported that a handful of testers have been watching the live stream. They have been using a private YouTube channel to do this. It has thrown up some tech issues which need work. He gave a short demonstration. Some concerns were raised about sound and vision being on 24 hours a day. Diocese have been consulted about safeguarding in regard to altar servers, and we have been informed that formal permission is not required, but as a matter of courtesy a letter will go out informing parents of the streaming and posters are up showing what can be seen online, so people can choose to sit out of camera shot. The Chair thanked the Tech Group for all their hard work.

Parish savings: Fr Simon reported that we had made a little over £1,000 in interest in the last year between Diocesan and general investments.

Garden plans: no further change, at present.

Liturgy

It was mentioned that more Eucharistic ministers are needed at the back of the church to distribute the host.

Lent: Fr Simon asked what events we would like to have running through Lent. He would be happy to do something on a Wednesday evening. Maybe an ecumenical venture? Would Fr Bob be running a Lent course?

Ronald Haynes representing Cambridge Justice & Peace group said that they regularly put together Stations of the Cross at OLEM and would happily do so at St Laurence's on at least one Friday in Lent. Would any other Parish groups like to do a week?

Sandy Hobson said that the organization Catholic Faith Exploration (CaFE) has a 4-week Lent course that could be shown.

Children's Stations of the Cross was discussed. It usually takes place on the morning of Good Friday, but it was difficult to fit in timing-wise with the Stations for adults also taking place. It was suggested that Stations of the Cross for adults could take place on the evening of Good Friday at 7.30pm. This might also suit those who are unable to make the 3pm Mass due to work commitments.

Finance

Parishioner, James Dore, introduced himself as one of the new co-treasurers for the Parish. He is joined by Joanne Kerigun, who also runs the Repository. They are currently going over last year's accounts. A report on these will be due at the next Forum.

Catechesis

Confirmation: Helena reported that we have 10 candidates taking the Confirmation course this year. We are currently awaiting a date from the Bishop.

First Holy Communion: The approach to those who are part of the Traveller community wanting to receive the sacraments of Confession, Communion and Confirmation, often without attending the catechesis classes, was discussed: we adopt an inclusive approach in this situation; however, it was agreed that efforts should be made to take a proper record of their details, so that in the future if they return for further sacraments, such as marriage, these records can be found.

Children's Liturgy: Jim O'Sullivan reported that they are trying to make sure that they come back into Mass more consistently on time but did not want to rejoin as part of the Offertory procession, particularly at the 11am church Mass, as it is quite difficult to move the children through the congregation seated in the Narthex, and timing can be difficult as sermon lengths often vary.

Buildings

Heating: several of the gas heaters in the church are not working and in general are difficult to turn on. Martin Avery volunteered to look at heaters which are currently out of action. Fr Simon will organize gas heating engineers to return.

Library building works: are due to be finished in May. There is no provision for parking and as part of the rental agreement for the flats, tenants will not be allowed a car. Potholes at the entrance to our car park were mentioned. Fr Simon will report them to County Highways using the online site.

Parking: Fr Simon would like a regular announcement to be made every couple of months reminding people to park considerately when attending Mass. Volunteers for a parking beadle welcomed to take on this duty.

Diocesan update

Bishop resignation: Fr Simon reported that Bishop Alan will be celebrating his 75th birthday in March and will, as is required, be resigning from his position as Bishop. He will remain in Norwich as Diocesan Administrator until a new Bishop is appointed.

Diocesan school bid: the Diocese is putting in bids to build Catholic primary schools at 3 locations in the Diocese. Of particular interest to us would be the bid for Northstowe. Parishioners are being asked to register their interest, before 1st February, in support of any of the bids and to spread the news to their neighbours, especially in the villages to the north of Cambridge, who might also like to register interest. You can do this through the Diocesan website: <https://www.rcdea.org.uk/vaschools/>

There is also the possibility that there could be a Mass Centre built in Northstowe. If this does happen, we might consider moving the Sunday Mass currently celebrated at St Laurence's School there.

Parish Groups

Pound for Peru: Nora Darby reported that she had taken on co-ordinating the Connect2 Peru collections for CAFOD at the beginning of the year. However, in the last week, it has been decided that we will bring the support of this project to a close due to other pressing causes in the world. We have consistently donated £300+ per month over the last 2 years. Nora proposed giving a short presentation to officially close the project at the next Forum at which time we hope to have the total amount raised from collections and other fundraising events from the Finance Committee.

CAFOD update: Serga Collett renewed her thanks for the Harvest appeal and reported on her attendance at the CAFOD conference on Ecological Conversion which took place in November. It focused on taking

care of our common home as we have been encouraged to do by Pope Francis. Serga plans to follow up on several action points arising from this and hopes to be able to put a monthly note in the Parish newsletter reminding us with ideas of what we can practically do to achieve this, updates in the *Pilgrim* and a relevant prayer in the bidding prayers each month.

Jeanette Milbourn will be reporting on her trip to Poland for CAFOD's Climate Change conference on the 1st Sunday of Lent. This will also be an opportunity to take part in the follow-up to the Global Healing film.

SVP update: Christine Knight thanked all who made contributions from the Giving Tree. 10 hampers were given out and also grocery vouchers. 39 gifts were given to children, 17 gifts to Cambridge Churches Homeless Project, 15 gifts to Meals on Wheels and 15 to Wintercomfort.

We are considering how we might support SVPs work in South Sudan where there is a difficult political situation, possibly by supporting the work of the medical centres which make sure children get a meal every day. Parishioner, Monica King is the person in charge of 'Twinnage' – the name SVP gives its overseas work and connections – for East Anglia.

AOB

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: runs from 18th January for a week. There will be an Ecumenical Worship Service on 20 January at 4pm at Great St Mary's.

Deacon Geoff Cook suggested that the Parish organizes an ecumenical get together at Pentecost inviting churches from the North Cambridge Council of Churches.

Serga Collett reported taking part in the Cambridge Churches Homeless Project. It is due to finish in March and she would like to give a report about it at the next Forum, which was welcomed.

Forthcoming dates for the next meetings

Thursday 4th April

Tuesday 2nd July

Thursday 10th October

All Meetings start at 8pm

ABLAZE Mass

7th April
12th May
2nd June
7th July



1st Sept
6th Oct
3rd Nov
1st Dec

1st Sunday of the month

(no May Day Mass, as we are all at the Ignite Youth festival, Walsingham Pilgrimage and Family day. No Mass in August)

Next Mass:

Sunday 7th April, 5pm

@ St Laurence's Church, Milton Road.

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

Personal Stories

Christianity and Islam: so near and yet so far

John Conlon

A short New Year trip to Istanbul, a few days after the great Christian feast of Christmas, brought home to me how much in common my religion has with Islam. Conflicts in the Middle East and terror carried out in the name of Islam can unfortunately blind us to the fact that there is a lot that binds us and we should not let evil acts prevent us searching for inter-faith friendship.

The huge, bustling city on the Bosphorus, where Europe meets Asia, was formerly known as Byzantium and, until 1924, Constantinople. The metropolis was once the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire before the Ottomans conquered it in 1453 and declared a caliphate. No doubt a spectacular place of worship within a short walking distance of my hotel played a part in my thinking. Just ten minutes away was Hagia Sophia, one of the globe's most jaw-dropping buildings. I wondered how many of the hundreds of devout Muslims from many nations queuing to get in knew it had been the world's largest Christian cathedral for 1,000 years before Islam claimed it as a mosque? So, while the long history of Istanbul is one of confrontation between two Abrahamic faiths, we should always remember there are commonalities too.

Let us check what the Catholic Catechism says about Islam: 'The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the creator, in the first place of whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day.' (CCC841)

In this light, I list below some common features:

1. Both faiths are monotheistic.
2. Islam says Jesus is a prophet, perfect and sinless, immaculately conceived.
3. Islam teaches that Mary is free of sin as the mother of Jesus.
4. Islam believes in angels. It says God's word was passed to Mohammed via Archangel Gabriel.
5. Islam believes in bodily resurrection, judgement, heaven and hell, charitable works and fasting.

There is no denying, though, that the faiths are a wide chasm apart on Christian belief in the Trinity and the divinity of Christ. Ironically, the Catholic definition of the Trinity was affirmed at the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD.

Istanbul, with its skyline of minarets, can be daunting for a Catholic used to seeing steeples and crosses in every town in the UK. Almost everyone is a Muslim and you can easily feel like an outsider. Yet, to its credit, Turkey, despite being a Sunni Muslim country, allows the few Christians and Jews to practise their faiths in peace (Saudi Arabia, please take note!).

I found the people very friendly and welcoming. I sense they realise how important Istanbul has been in the development of monotheistic belief and are proud of the fact. I hope Christians, while acknowledging major differences, will also focus on some of the Islamic beliefs that come close to our own. We are so near and yet so far in our faiths!



Copyright: Andrew and Heather sourced from Flickr through Creative Commons

What a mental health diagnosis taught me

Rose Cook

The day I felt marked the beginning of the troubles that would follow me for years to come is one I doubt will ever leave my memory. In a single moment, it was as if I had become more self-aware than ever before, and the folly of childhood and my care-free mind-set had been lost in an instant. At first, I passed it off as the 'welcoming' feeling of adolescence that everyone experiences, and so for a while, I let things settle. But I could never shake it off entirely, and most nights I found myself pondering on it. Because it never felt *normal*. For the best part of the year to follow, I walked around every day feeling trapped in a bubble that was shrinking; it was as if I was slowly losing strength fighting to stay afloat in a stormy sea. Any waking moment was a mixture of pure dread and terror, but not ever without confusion, because I just didn't understand what was happening. It wasn't until I was forced to look into things that I realised the severity of what was actually happening and, following a GP visit and a referral to CAMHS for an assessment, my worst fears were confirmed.

Reading the letter with the diagnosis of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) was, at the time, a life sentence. I saw myself doomed to an unhappy life in therapy combined with mind-bending drugs, but never

reaching the feeling of complete serenity and carelessness that I had taken for granted as a young child. That was when I fell into my deepest pit of depression. But because of how unwell I was when I first sought help, I began treatment almost immediately, which meant I had little time to really come to terms with it all. The treatment I had was cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), and it made for a very strange couple of weeks. I was given medication coupled with therapy, so for a while things seemed odd as I adjusted to them. The act of meeting weekly with a trained professional in an attempt to combat something so personal and troublesome seemed alien to me. But in all the time I spent in CBT, one of the first sessions I had, where my psychiatrist and I held potato crisps in our hands, was the most profound. My OCD was telling me my hands were dirty, and that touching anything to be later consumed with them would cause me and my family to get very sick. So rolling the crisp around in my hand and then eating it made me convinced I would die that evening. But that evening, I discovered for the first time that OCD was, and had been the whole time, lying to me. The vicious cycle I found myself trapped in so many times before could be broken, and every week I did break it. And it just got easier from there. And having come off the medication just about 6 months ago, I finally feel my OCD's grip has loosened on my life, and that the bubble I lived in for so long has fallen apart, letting me walk free again.

They say that life is filled with experiences both good and bad, and that as hard as the bad experiences are, there is always something good to be gained. And for me, my mental health issues have helped me to be wiser about understanding people. The vast majority of people today are likely to suffer some sort of mental health problem, so while we can all try to be understanding and try to get rid of stigma, I've found that what we lack is just having someone to listen to our problems. If everyone offered a helping hand to someone and was willing to listen, I think more people would end up getting help if they needed it. So now the New Year has come, I challenge you to reach out to someone and be willing to listen. You never know, you could be helping them in their early stages, or even at their most vulnerable.

The American Cemetery at Madingley

Pauline A Gullick

Numerous years ago our family visited the American Cemetery at Madingley. It was a very peaceful place, but sad, where over 3,000 American servicemen and women, who gave their lives in WWII, are buried.

A few months ago we revisited with my grandson, Kieran. We found that it hadn't changed very much over the years. It was still a very peaceful place. We all walked along the Wall of the Missing. Of the many names on the Wall, we spotted two famous ones; that of the late President John Kennedy's brother and that of the famous band leader, Glenn Miller. We made our way to the Chapel, again a very peaceful place. We sat for a short while, all of us with our own thoughts. We then made a long walk just to see the many graves. We all had our own thoughts as we walked in silence until we reached the Visitors' Centre. There we sat and watched some films. Kieran was very interested; it was like a history lesson. We thought about these servicemen's families in the USA and wondered how they were feeling. One sure thing, these servicemen buried here were at peace.

During our visit to the American Cemetery so many things passed through our minds. We picked up some leaflets for Kieran to take home with him. I hope that many of the readers of *Pilgrim* may visit the American Cemetery, Madingley.

Freedom and sight

Petra Tucker

On the afternoon of 14th February we walked around Grafham Water – 8 miles of Cambridgeshire scenery bathed in spring sunshine – and as we walked, various thoughts popped into my head.

That morning, I was in prison for my fortnightly Fine Cell Work group session and some of the completed pieces were the best I have ever seen, with craftsmanship to rival any professional. After this session, I left the prison (8 gates) to enjoy the rest of my day, while the men went back to their wings. Joe was waiting for me in the car park since we had decided to do something fun together on Valentine's Day. A sandwich lunch and drink at The George in Buckden was a welcome treat, with friendly staff and the atmosphere gently buzzy. There was even a wedding going on in the adjoining room.

Firstly, I thought about Brendon, who had seemed out of sorts and was particularly agitated by the way someone had spoken to him. Later on in the morning I asked him when his wife was next visiting him. "Oh, she Dear John'ed me during her last visit". He then told me that he has known her since he was 14, how they have been together for 30 years and how she has helped him get through his sentence. A huge matter for him to deal with when he can do nothing – being locked up. I asked about selling property etc. and he

has to trust his wife to be fair. Brendon is due for release in the next few months but his relief at getting to the end of his five years has been shattered by another historic allegation being made about him. For months he has been kept in suspense, not knowing whether the Crown Prosecution Service will prosecute. I can't imagine the stress this situation induces in someone. If he asks his solicitor then it could be construed that he has something to hide, so he just has to accept that he may be kept in custody waiting for a court hearing or that he could be released and then shortly afterwards be re-arrested. Perhaps his 'out of sorts' is coming more to the surface as his release date gets closer.

Then Robert came to the group to say goodbye to us since he was due to transfer that day to a D category prison where he will serve 18 months before release. He looked as nervous as someone going for an interview. He is cautiously optimistic about the move, but he also knows that there will be men there who will try to derail the remainder of his sentence plan so that his release is deferred. He hopes that he is strong enough not to experience problems like this. Robert has been the class representative for the last six months and taken his responsibility very seriously. He will be a loss to our group and we all wish him well.

The day before, I was with a mum and her beautiful dainty little daughter of 18 months. She was very upset as she had been told that her daughter would lose her sight. Caitlin was a happy little lady running around in her glasses playing with her mum and granny and so full of happy smiles and curiosity. It was hard to imagine what problems she would face in her life as she gradually lost her sight. Then another mum burst into tears as she realised that the best her five year old son could see (with his glasses on) was the second letter of the Snellen Test. For the first time she realized how poor her son's sight was and started asking for more information on what exactly what he could see.

Then my mind wandered back to the four nights we had spent in Istanbul at the end of January. A new place for us, which we hope to visit again. The Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia and Topkapi Palace were sights to enjoy, especially with smallish crowds. The Grand Bazaar and Spice Market were also wonderful to explore, even though haggling is not a sport I enjoy much. Our hotel was central and the breakfast room at the top of the building looked out over the Bosphorus Straits. While eating you could see the tankers moving at some speed across the horizon: a city full of colour and noise, with the call to prayer punctuating every day.

These musings kept my head busy as we walked in the sunshine – perhaps not random thoughts really.

Walking in such perfect weather and being masters of our own time made me reflect on the nature of freedom. Freedom to move at one's own will and for one's own purpose is something we shouldn't take for granted, as many people don't have such freedom. Then to see the glistening water of the reservoir in the sunshine, to see the green and brown fields and the trees beginning to wake up after the winter, to see the sun play through the trees of the woodland as we passed through these wooded areas makes one appreciate the gift of sight. To see the sights of Istanbul at dusk – a memory to enjoy over and again.

[All names have been changed to protect people's identities.]

Some reflections of a Christmas spent in Colombia.

Rob Beckwith

I believe in one holy, catholic Church.

The Universal Church – singing from the same [prayer] sheet, but to a different tempo.

It's 4am and already I sense the thundering lorries outside on the main road as I come to from my slumbers. The rush hour has started, but something else grabs my sleepy mind.

"Hello, Ines, can you hear me?"

"Hello, yes, but the line's a bit crackly."

"Loyola, please! Can you mute your microphone?"

"OK. Ready? Let's begin..."

...In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit..."

And so begins another morning with the online prayer group that starts at 3am. All of this, of course, is in Spanish – I'm in Cali, Colombia's third largest city, an hour's flight south west of Bogota – my wife, Liliana, is in the other room trying to co-ordinate and begin this morning's rosary; it's like herding cats! But it begins and the apartment is filled with *Ave Marias* and the free-form petitions to *Mi Señor, Jesús*.

I instinctively shower and dress, and soon we are rushing out the door to *San Pascual*, a warehouse-sized parish church in a not-so-good part of town. We arrive shortly before 5am and it's packed, not a spare seat to be had, standing room only at the sides and at the back.

This is Monday morning – Monday in the week leading up to Christmas. *San Pascual* holds a week of Advent 'rise with Christ' from 4.30am to 6am, Sunday

to Sunday at this time. Yesterday the Bishop of Cali celebrated the 5am Mass!



Today, it's praise and worship – *alabanzas* – with an emphasis on healing (*sanación*). Each day will have a different focus (family, reconciliation, the deceased, *familia, reconciliación, los difuntos*– the deceased), but the format is the same – sing, dance around to the loud music (everyone knows the words), arms waving in the air; the Holy Spirit oozes from every pore in the place.



At 5am the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for adoration. The priest offers long, energetic prayers, the congregation singing and shouting back their *Amens*, arms raised and waving, people in tears, in awe. The Sacrament is paraded around the place and no matter what square footage you're squeezed into, everyone kneels, many crying with anguish, with joy, with love. This Holy Hour is intense!

At 6am many leave for work; the rest stay for the Mass. We leave for another church where Lily is serving. It's a hectic rush, but we get to the *Sanctuario de Fátima* in time for the 7am Mass. But, remember, this is Advent and there's the *Novena de aguinaldos* to be performed...

Before, during, or after Mass during this week (the nine days leading up to 24th December), there will be the *Novena*: a series of daily prayers and readings and *Gozos*. The prayers and readings are standard Catholic fare for the nativity, but the *Gozos* are a series of acclamation verses read out and then an 'antiphon' sung accompanied by rattles, tambourines, clapping and as much noisy cheer as possible, while wearing Santa hats!

After Mass each day this week a different church group will host 'breakfast'. This consists of *buñuelos* (savory doughnut-like treats), *natilla* (a thick, blancmange-like sweet), *tortilla* crisps, *dulces* (sweets), coffee and *gaseosos* (soft drinks).



Today it's the turn of the *Madres y Padres que Oren* (a Thursday morning prayer group of parents who pray for their own and others' children). The weekly consumption of carbs rockets forever heavenward! By 8.30am all is over – the majority drift off to work, a core team cleans up and resets the scene ready for tomorrow, when it all happens again.

This week is crazy and full-on. Throughout the day and into the evening, we attend other Masses (all with Novenas, but thankfully not all with *buñuelos*!). My maracas and tambourine are permanently in my backpack. Each venue is packed – imagine the average size being St Laurence's multiplied by three, and full, full, full.

Over the years, I've spent a number of Christmases in Colombia and have got used to these ways. Everything is so much larger than life and vibrant. The decorations are magnificent: shops, houses, the streets are all picked out with tube lighting, Christmas trees decked with all manner of goodies. Each church has a *pesebre* (crib) which on average would fill the sanctuary area in St Laurence's. The lights alone can have more lumens output than the whole of the sad Cambridge street offerings.



"The Lord is coming, and we're going to celebrate it!"

So, each day this week we rise with Christ in *San Pascual* and each day we try to arrive a bit earlier to get a seat. By Friday we manage it!

In my conservative, English way, I feel a bit out of place here each morning. But, after the Bishop's Mass on the Sunday and Monday's engulfing experience, I felt the only way was to really join in. For the last year I have been suffering from a frozen shoulder and could hardly raise my right arm to shake your hand or put my coat on. But here, in that atmosphere, my arm went up and the pain receded. I was amazed. The Holy Spirit physio worked wonders where no meds or human had yet succeeded. Not all miracles need to be blinding lights and flash floods. I've experienced a number of micro-miracles in Colombia now, and it's one of the reasons that I'm persevering with the Catholic faith.

As our Church will surely testify, celebration of Mass, worship and prayer is varied all around the world. We are Universal, but we each have our rhythm and tempo. Enjoy your worship; be successful in your ministries in whichever way your Baptismal Vocation unfolds for you. Amen.

Celebrating Peace and Reconciliation: 20th anniversary of the Little Sisters of Joy

Nora Darby

Many of you will know Gila Margolin and will have read her articles in previous editions of the *Pilgrim*. She was born into an Orthodox Jewish family in 1951 and at the Easter Vigil in 1989 was received into the Catholic Church. In 1999 she co-founded the Little Sisters of Joy, open to all women of all Faiths to promote Prayer, Peace and Reconciliation.

On 20th January this year she invited a number of friends, including myself, to celebrate with her the 20th Anniversary of the Foundation. It also coincided with the Jewish New Year for Trees. This festival is about planting trees and bearing fruit: very appropriate for a foundation promoting peace and reconciliation.



We arrived at her flat to be greeted by Gila and a mountain of lovely food and drink. Other friends gradually arrived and we all chatted as we got to know one another, helped by wine and nibbles! Gila told us more of her life and how she gradually realised her dream of The Little Sisters of Joy and what

they have accomplished so far. We all had stories to tell which we did as we graduated onto the delicious array of food on the table. We prayed, we sang, we listened and then it was time to cut the magnificent anniversary cake. Gila's attempts at doing this caused a great deal of hilarity from everyone present, she laughing most of all which made the operation even more difficult!!



For me it was a memorable afternoon meeting some very interesting, lovely ladies, different faiths / religions but we all had one thing in common – our love of God. Thank you Gila!

If you would like more information about The Little Sisters of Joy visit www.littlesistersofjoy.com

STATIONS OF THE CROSS AT ST LAURENCE'S CHURCH



Every Friday evening through Lent

FOCUS ON LENT - Sarah Sykes

Ash Wednesday

Why do we put ashes on our heads on Ash Wednesday? It is a tradition with Jewish roots, which we find in the Old Testament.

Ashes have several symbolic meanings.

Firstly, they represent our mortality:

You are dust and to dust you shall return.
(Gen. 3:19)

Secondly, they are a symbol of prayer and supplication:

... seeking the Lord by prayer and supplication with fasting, sackcloth and ashes. (Dan. 9.3)

Thirdly, they are a symbol of penance and mourning:

They fasted that day, put on sackcloth and sprinkled ashes on their head. (1 Macc. 3:47)

Prayer – Almsgiving – Fasting

In St Matthew's Gospel, Jesus speaks about the three aspects of Lent – almsgiving, prayer and fasting. He expects that his followers will do these things on a regular basis. It is not a question of if, but when. It was a common practice in 1AD and would have been well-recognised by the Jews, in fact so much so that Jesus was asked why his disciples weren't following the fasting practice of John's disciples and the Pharisees.

Lent is not just about abstinence, we are called to increase our prayer, intensify our fasting and increase our giving.

- We fast to overcome attachment to our desires
- We give alms to overcome attachment to possessions and money
- We pray to grow closer to God, to put him first and overcome our self-love.

Why 40 days?

The 40 days of Lent is also symbolic, it represents a long period of time, usually of testing or trial which we see this represented in the 40 years of the Jewish people wandering in the desert preparing to enter the Promised Land and Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness, being tempted and preparing himself spiritually for the task ahead.

Through our lenten spiritual disciplines we prepare ourselves for our own spiritual battles as individuals and as the Church as a whole.

God set the Jewish people free from slavery. However, when it came to the time to enter the Promised Land, the people weren't ready to put their trust in God. During the time in the wilderness they learnt how to trust God, how to be free people and how to be God's people.

Through our baptism we are led into freedom but we still need to fight our own battles against sin and a fallen world. God wants us to face these battles as the Jews had to face theirs. Let's practise our spiritual disciplines, train ourselves to fight our weaknesses and trust in God and to become God's people.

.... Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation. (2 Cor. 5.20)



Pray



Fast



Give

Under A Burning Sun

Wally Moscuza

The sun in the sky, and rain that falls
A blessing for nature as it grows and man, yet
Not always the rain comes, droughtiness
And misery in the forgotten land...

A crucial thought as a seed it grows
While the crying mother at the pool
Dried yet purged like a bleeding wound
A sea of mystery from far beyond.

In a continent at large where man's will
Is of no regard, taken away to mortify, for
There are no trees on the arid ground, only
Pain, lost ambitions, in the forgotten land.

No freedom of will to live – Nature
Cannot help, like flowers drawn by light
Man has no freedom to choose
In the parched land burning under the sun.

While unheard is the cry of the child
Confused as he walks alone for miles
And his tears are sucked dry
By a cavalcade of starving flies.

No choice of Will
No love or sympathy
No grass or conifer trees
– No freedom to die with dignity.

A wizard at work who decides, unconcerned
For wealth, power and décor – there
Where compassion is put aside
In a land where the earth has dried.



Copyright: ;arturii! sourced from Flickr through Creative Commons

Tailpiece

Getting on and off the stage

Dick Wilson

It was at the Nottingham Playhouse that we watched a ballet during which, at some point, most of the cast dressed as butterflies and danced across the stage, round the back curtain and round again, ensuring a continuous flow of butterflies. A stagehand came from behind another curtain and joined the butterflies. She quickly noticed what she was doing and shot back. Half the audience were delighted and laughed loud. The other half had no idea what was going on and were very puzzled.

Every year, at our school, there was a chance to see or take part in one of the plays set for the English Literature O-Level exams (= GCSE). The stage at our school was about a quarter of the size of that of the ADC theatre. I recall the despair of our English master, who produced the plays, when the set book turned out to be Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. "How can I get two armies on to that stage at once?" he said.

The sixth form performed another play, written by ourselves, a sort of parody of *Faust*. Goodness knows why this choice. The only exit from the stage was a short staircase behind a curtain, at the side of the stage. Reginald Hill (afterwards the creator of the Dalziel and Pascoe crime novels) played Faust. In the play he had to murder me and drag the corpse off the stage. He set off for the wrong side. My corpse lost its cool, cursed, expostulated, and cried, "The other side, you fool." He, and the audience, started laughing, and the corpse was left to crawl off across the whole stage.

For a climax, Reginald went up a ladder to sit on a beam, ten feet up, hidden behind a long curtain. The idea was that he would lower himself with the aid of a rope and a pulley into the hands of Mephistopheles and his demons, howling for him. Great theatre, we thought. We had not rehearsed this properly.

"Faust, descend!" cried the demons.

Two legs appeared from behind the curtain and then were withdrawn.

"Faust, descend!" cried the demons

"I can't, I'm stuck," cried Faust.

It took some time to release him, an interlude which the audience, mostly of pupils and their families and members of staff, enjoyed very much.

Editorial Comment

Shortly before his sudden death, we received an ‘urgent’ email from John Hobson, asking for a second article to be published in this edition instead of his usual Cardinal Points. Over the past few years we have enjoyed all John’s contributions whether amusing, controversial, fun or factual and were happy to include this piece on a subject he felt strongly about.

John was one of the new editorial team recruited by Dick Wilson in 2013 when the Pilgrim was revived after a break in publication. When he no longer had time to be on the production team he continued to write a column for every edition. We will miss his support and contributions.

The eagle-eyed among you may have spotted that this edition has come out a few weeks later than usual. This is because Easter is at its latest point. Consequently, the summer edition of Pilgrim will be published in July rather than in June and we will enjoy a long summer break and recommence with the Advent edition – sorry to all of you who will miss the September edition, but it will give you lots of time to write some more great articles!

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 **14 June 2019** for publication on 13/14 July 2019

The production team:

Editors

Nora Darby and Sarah Sykes

Sub-editors

Alex Dias

Carol Williams

Susan O’Brien

Sarah Sykes & Nora Darby

Sarah Sykes

What’s New?

Features and Opinions

Personal Stories & Experiences

Parish Organisations & Activities

Tailpiece

Commissioning Editor

Nora Darby

Leonie Isaacson

Caroline O’Donnell & Sarah Sykes

Sarah Sykes and Nora Darby

Cover

Proofreader

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

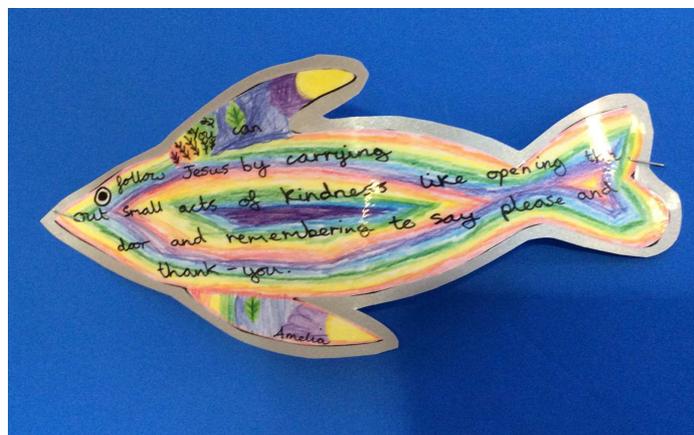
The St Laurence Youth Mass is known as Ablaze. The Mass is designed to encourage our youth to build their confidence in running the Mass for the benefit of us all. It is held approximately once a month, is vibrant and fun. We encourage young readers, Eucharistic Ministers, budding musicians of all ages 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.



Follow St Laurence's on Facebook:
{ [HYPERLINK](#)
"<https://www.facebook.com/stlaurencecambridge>" }

Upcoming Parish Events

Holy Week	
Maundy Thursday	18 April 7.30pm
Good Friday:	19 April
Stations of the Cross for Children	10.30am
Mass	3pm
Stations of the Cross	8pm
Easter Vigil	20 April 9pm
Easter Sunday	21 April Usual times
Lent Confession at Stations of the Cross	12 April 7.30pm
Early Risers Mass	Friday 7am through Lent
Stations of the Cross through Lent	Fridays – variable start time – check newsletter
Lent Light Lunches (CWL)	Fridays after 12:30pm Mass
Chrim Mass, Norwich – coach leaves at 4.15pm	16 April
Lenten Meditation on St John's Gospel – led by Fr Bob	Weds 7.30 – 9pm 8 – 29 March
ABLAZE Youth Mass, Sunday 5pm	7 April, 12 May 2 June, 7 July
Walsingham Pilgrimage – coach leaves at 8.30am	6 May
First Holy Communion	11/12 May
Confirmation Mass	Mon 24 June, 7pm
Rosary Group	Weds after 12.30pm Mass
Soulfood Prayer Group	Every Tuesday 8pm
1 st /3 rd Tues: St Laurence's 2 nd /4 th Tues: OLEM Parish Hall	
Parish Forum Dates for 2019	8pm Thursday 4 April Tuesday 2 July



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 390060
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:

James Dore & Joanne Kerigun
01223 704640
treasurers@saintlaurence.org.uk

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

Mrs Clare Clark

Address

St Laurence's School
Arbury Road
Cambridge
CB4 2JX

Telephone

01223 712227

Email

office@stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk

Website

www.stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk