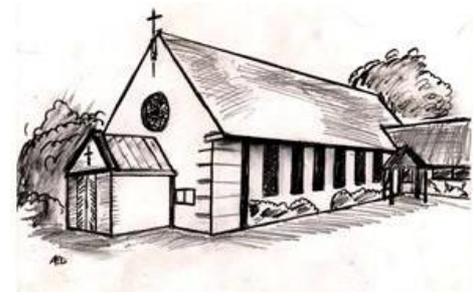


The Pilgrim

St Laurence's Parish Magazine, Lent Edition 2025



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Stop Press

Inside cover

STOP PRESS

Nora Darby



Yesterday, 4th March, we had a surprise visit from Bishop Peter, he came to celebrate the Vigil Mass. There was a flurry of activity in the Sacristy and on the Altar but promptly at 6pm the bell rang and Mass commenced with the first hymn (At the name of Jesus). Bishop Peter con-celebrated with Fr Robin and Fr Alex, as well as Deacon Geoff and a number of Altar Servers.

The Bishop gave us a thoughtful Homily based on the Gospel reading of the prodigal son. He then turned to welcome Fr Robin and Fr Alex to St Laurence's and to the Diocese. He thanked them, as Adorno Fathers, for making the long journey and for their commitment to the Parish which he hoped would be long and fruitful.

It was a memorable celebration of the 4th Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday) with beautiful music and Readings as part of the Mass.

**The deadline for the next
edition is 20 June
for publication on 19/20 July**

Wondering where to send your article, photos or drawings? Our email address is below and you will 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. Anything you send should be your own work in your own words and a maximum of 2,000 words.**

The production team:

Editors: Nora Darby, Sarah Sykes; **Sub-editors:** Carol Williams, Sarah Sykes, Nora Darby, Alex Dias;
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What's New?

Letter to the Parishioners of St Laurence

Fr Teodoro O. Kalaw, CRM

“Walking humbly with the Lord in Faith and Hope”

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

May the **peace and grace of our Risen Lord** be with you all.

I write to you today with a **heart full of gratitude and hope** after having the privilege of participating in the **Parish open meeting**. It was truly a **blessing** to listen to your voices, to hear your concerns, and to witness your **love for St Laurence Parish** and your deep desire to see it flourish.

I cannot agree more with **Pope Francis** when he describes the **Synodal Way as a journey of hope** – a path that allows the Church to **listen, discern, and walk together as one body in Christ**. What I have seen and heard in our conversations assures me that **the Holy Spirit is at work among you**.

Who Are the Adorno Fathers?

Many of you have raised important and valid questions:

- **Who are the Adorno Fathers?**
- **What are their plans for St Laurence's?**
- **What changes will come?**
- **What do they expect from our Parish and community?**

I do not want these questions to remain unanswered, and I wish to **reassure you** that whatever changes may come, **they are not for the worse, but for the best**.

We are the **Adorno Fathers**, officially known as the **Clerics Regular Minor** (*Clerici Regulares Minores*). Our Order was founded in Naples, Italy, on **1st July 1588**, by **St Francis Caracciolo, Venerable Augustine Adorno, and Fabrizio Caracciolo**.

We are **religious priests who live in community**, bound by the vows of **chastity, poverty, and obedience**, as well as a **fourth vow – not to seek ecclesiastical dignities**. Our charism is centered on **the imitation of Christ in His Paschal Mystery – His suffering, death, and resurrection**. We strive to **lead people into a profound encounter with the Risen Christ** through the celebration of the **Eucharist, Eucharistic Adoration, and acts of charity**.

Our mission is **not to take away from what is already good** but to **support, nurture, and strengthen the faith life of the people entrusted to us**.

A Future Filled with Promise

I know that with any transition, there may be concerns, questions, and uncertainties about what will change. But let me assure you: **whatever changes may come will be for the good of this Parish and its people**.

1. **You will have more priests available to serve you**. No longer will the pastoral care of this Parish rest on one priest alone. You will now have a **community of priests**, ensuring that there will **always be someone available to administer the sacraments, celebrate Mass, and respond to your spiritual needs**.
2. **Our presence will extend further into the Parish**. With more priests serving here, we will now have the opportunity to **reach out to areas that have not yet been visited**, ensuring that **the pastoral care of St Laurence extends to all corners of this community**.
3. **The liturgy will be enriched**. With our presence, we hope to **enhance the beauty and**

solemnity of the liturgy, ensuring that together, we offer our best to the Lord in worship. This will be a collaborative effort, where **both your traditions and our contributions** come together to glorify God.

4. **The Holy Spirit will lead us to new and exciting ways to serve.** Change does not happen overnight, but as time unfolds, I believe that **the Lord will reveal many beautiful and fruitful opportunities for this Parish.** We may not yet see the full picture, but if we allow the **Holy Spirit to guide us**, He will bring forth **abundant blessings** that we may not have even imagined yet.

Let us remember the words of the Lord in **Jeremiah 29:11**:

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

We trust that **this future for St Laurence is one filled with God’s grace and guidance.**

A Commitment to Stay and Serve

As an **Order**, we intend to remain here for as long as we have priests to serve you. The Adorno Fathers are not here as temporary visitors, but as a religious family that seeks to make St Laurence Parish our home.

Your priests **will live in your presbytery, not alone, but in community.** This is a fundamental part of our religious life – **we do not live in isolation but in communion, as brothers bound together by our sacred vows.** Each of our religious houses is guided by a **local superior**, who ensures that the priests assigned to your Parish live faithfully according to our Rule and Constitution.

This is not only a structure of governance but a **living testimony** of what we preach: **that communion with God and with one another is not only possible but essential.** In a world that often promotes division and isolation, we strive to show that **a life of unity, love, and shared faith is not only desirable – it is the path to holiness.**

As **Psalm 133:1** says:

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!”

An Invitation to Welcome and Support One Another

My dear friends, I ask for your **openness and kindness** as we begin this new chapter together. **We have not come to change what is already good, but to serve, to strengthen, and to build upon the faith that is already alive in this Parish.**

Your synodal spirit of **inclusion and hospitality** has deeply moved me. You have expressed a desire to **welcome all who come through these doors – not just into your Church, but into your hearts.** I now ask you, **as a father speaking to his beloved children in faith**, to extend that same spirit of welcome to **Fr Robin and to Fr Alex Francis [who will soon join him].**

Let us recall the words of **Jesus in Matthew 25:35**:

“I was a stranger, and you welcomed me.”

Please do not only make space for them in the presbytery – **make space for them in your hearts.** I know that **with your support, your kindness, and your patience, they will serve you with all their hearts.** And not just **Fathers Robin and Alex**, but **all of us, your new family – the Adorno Fathers.**

Walking Together in Faith and Hope

Our **founders, St Francis Caracciolo, Venerable Augustine Adorno, and Fabrizio Caracciolo**, intercede for us, together with **your patron, St Laurence the Deacon.**

The Lord has promised:

“I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding”
(*Jeremiah 3:15*).

Indeed, **the Lord provides shepherds for His people.** Let us, in turn, **pray to the Lord of the harvest to send more laborers into His field (Matthew 9:38).**

I thank you, I bless you, and I **look forward to walking with you** in faith, hope, and love. **May this time of transition be filled with grace, understanding, and mutual support, so that together we may build a parish that truly reflects the love of Christ.**

I pray that this letter **answers some of your questions** and gives you a better understanding of **who we are and what we hope to bring to this beloved Parish.**

With regard to **administrative matters**, I defer to **His Lordship, Bishop Peter Collins**, who, as your shepherd, will guide you according to the pastoral vision of the diocese.

May **the Risen Christ** fill your hearts with **joy, faith, and love**, and may you **encounter Him in every event of your life.**

Ad Maiorem Resurgentis Gloriam!
For the Greater Glory of the Risen Christ!

With my prayers and blessings,



Fr Teodoro O. Kalaw, CRM
Preposito Generale, Clerics Regular Minor (Adorno Fathers)

Fr Robin



Fr Alex



Shrove Tuesday, Lent and the Jubilee of Hope

Francis Stewart – CAFOD Theology

Jane Crone – CAFOD in East Anglia

We are writing this at the end of February, the joyful singing of birds at dawn, and snowdrops tell us that Spring is on the way. For Christians in the Northern Hemisphere, Spring coincides with the season of Lent, a word derived from the Middle English word *Lenten*, meaning the lengthening of the day. The day before Lent is called ‘Fat Tuesday’ in Denmark and Norway, ‘Bursting Day’ in Iceland, ‘Pancake Day’ in the British Isles and ‘Mardi Gras’ in the Americas, Spain and Portugal. It is a time of feasting, laughter and fun, when rich foods are eaten up before the Lenten fast. How can we make Shrove Tuesday and Lent part of our Jubilee of Hope in 2025?

Days of celebration like Shrove Tuesday are moments when we can ‘let go’, lay down our tools and rest. As well as being fun, they are spiritually essential, inviting us to relinquish control over the world. Letting go of an attachment to wealth, status, work, carries an important spiritual lesson – we are not masters of the world or of each other, we are loved children of God. Loved children are joyful children; they know how to play and when they are tired they sleep long and well.

The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales have identified six themes of Jubilee in Scripture: one is rest and worship and another is forgiveness – these themes are in the Old Testament. There was a Jubilee year every 49 years when everyone returned home. Prisoners, debtors and those estranged from family for reasons of work, crime, or poverty could have a fresh start. Within 49 years, there are seven sets of seven years. Each seven-year cycle was called a *Schmittah*, ending with a year of release when debts were written off, the land lay fallow, fences come down so orphans and widows and strangers could gather what they needed from the land. Time divided into groups of seven is still found within the Jewish year. *Yom Kippur* is celebrated during the seventh month from Passover and is a festival of renewal, of fresh starts. The seventh day of the week is called *Shabbat* and is a day of rest, recalling Genesis, when God spent the seventh day of creation seeing what he had made as good.

This Jubilee year can we learn to use days of celebration like Shrove Tuesday to let go? Can we let go of our projects and obsessions, of the tendency to manage and control our lives, of power over those who work for us, or those who owe us one? Can we rest, can we forgive, and can we worship joyfully and with gratitude?

The Bishops’ Conference identified four other Jubilee themes in Scripture: care for creation, food poverty,

modern slavery and managing debt. These have radical implications for the economy and society, and for us personally. How can we reflect on these during our Lenten journey as Pilgrims of Hope this Jubilee year?

The priests and prophets of the Old Testament knew that life was beset with injustice from their experience of the tyranny of Pharaoh and the rule of their own flawed kings. Concentration of power and wealth, fraud, broken relationships and bad luck worked against the most vulnerable in society. They also knew that plans to challenge poverty and inequality had to be attuned to the ways of God who made all things. It is not just the human spirit that needs moments of release to tune into the principle of having a day of rest; the economy also needs moments of release, of letting go, built into its very structure.

Did you know that an ocean wave can reach a maximum height of one seventh of its length before it breaks? A wave has, built into its nature, a limit to how much it can grow before it collapses upon itself. When it comes to the global economy, humans ignore the need for limits; there is only so much debt, so many complex webs of interactions and rapid transactions across cyberspace, only so much inequality can be sustained. We are still human beings made from dust. At a certain point, the economy, like a wave, starts to get out of balance, tensions start to froth and foam at the surface. The wave is about to break.

In today’s world, we experience this as cycles of ‘Boom and Bust’, with all the poverty, hunger and conflict that comes with that. The same pattern existed in Biblical times – financial crises, plagues and pandemics, famines and wars were moments where the system seemed to have collapsed in upon itself. In Old Testament times just like today, those who were already vulnerable were often the first to suffer when the going got tough.

What if, instead of the cycles of ‘Boom and Bust’, wars, pandemics, famines, we chose to have a peaceful, joyful, restful Jubilee this year through turning to the patterns God has written into all things? What if we began to attune our economics to these patterns? What if, as we roll into a new era, towards another crest in the wave, we could find ways of putting human relationships and care for our common home at the centre of our economies?

These are big questions – it is easy to feel overwhelmed by them. A good place to start is by using the **CAFOD Jubilee reflection guide**. It has four sessions on Jesus as Jubilee, Good News, Liberator and Lord of Creation, and can be used by individuals or groups. You can download it from the prayer section of the [CAFOD website](#).

Parish Organisations and Activities

Note from the St Vincent de Paul Society

Ciaran Ward

Dear Parishioners,

It seems so long ago with Spring in the air but we would like to share our gratitude for your wonderful support over Christmas to our Giving Tree. Your response was fantastic as it is every year, and your good efforts and generosity were put to use:

- you have helped 15 families with hampers of goodies and gifts for their children;
- 61 homeless people with vouchers (for Wintercomfort to distribute); and
- you gave around 100 gifts for local elderly people, which Meals on Wheels delivered with a Christmas meal.

A big thank you from the SVP Members!

Mark your diaries – Upcoming Events

As usual, we hold many events throughout the year for the purpose of bringing people together for a meal, for prayer, to reach out with the children at the school, and for the sacraments – so pencil these dates in your diaries and look out for newsletter details in the coming weeks!

Location	Event	Location	Date
Primary School	Senior Event with Mini Vinis	Saint Laurences Catholic Primary School	28-Apr-25
Parish Room	Senior Citizens Lunch	Saint Laurences Church, Parish Room	05-May-25
Walsingham/Parish	Walsingham, SVP National Pilgrimage	Walsingham	06-Jul-25
Coton Garden Centre	Garden Afternoon Tree	Coton Garden Centre	12-Jun-25
Parish Church	Mass with Anointing of the sick	Saint Laurences	October TBC

Please note, for those of you less mobile, we will be arranging lifts/taxis to attend our events and the trip to Walsingham will have a coach provided as usual! Details to come nearer the time.

SVP conference – Change of Meeting format

We are evolving in the SVP to make it more attractive, we hope, for new members and to give more time for giving or for worship. We will be changing our meeting format to once a month (with exceptional meetings in between to discuss events) on the first Wednesday of the month from 6.30pm.

If that wasn't attractive enough, we will be having tea and cake once a quarter which is open to all from said time – we will keep you posted in the newsletter – do join us! For Cake at least!

New members: If you can spare some time, please do contact us or pray for us – there really is no help too small for the SVP, including your prayers.

If you would like to contact us for any reason, please do so using the contact details below:

- SVP President Ciaran – 07540 842 078
svp@saintlaurence.org.uk
- Any member of SVP that you know

Now for some sharing of our work with Manor Care Home in our very own Cambridge with thanks to Natalie Ashton, one of our members, for writing the article:

Caring Together

The Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) at St Laurence's has a long history of supporting the local care homes, and our relationship with the nearby Cambridge Manor Care Home is blossoming. This is thanks to a warm and welcoming collaboration with the care home staff, who, together with relatives and SVP members, bring the best support they can to the residents.

SVP members visit independently and also accompany Fr Robin on a weekly basis to bring Holy Communion to the Catholic residents who are unable to attend Sunday Mass.

The SVP also have an active role in befriending the Catholic residents of the care home and these visits take place every week. They may include a walk around the garden and occasionally a trip out, for example to a church or SVP event, or a visit to the Botanical Gardens, assistance with reading the Parish newsletter, or arranging greeting cards for family members.

The SVP organise a rota, of both parishioner and SVP, volunteers who help to bring those who are wheelchair-bound or unable to walk long distances to the 11am Sunday Mass at St Laurence's, thus maintaining a valuable immersive connection with their faith and our Catholic community. There is an opportunity for residents to befriend the different volunteers who bring them each week and a chance to meet others for a chat over a cup of tea after Mass.

One experienced SVP member has recently worked closely with the care home and relatives of a lady who needed much reassurance in an unfamiliar setting, to bring her to Mass, with a relative on standby in the wings, whilst she gradually gained her confidence. It has been a joy for her to join us in Mass each Sunday and she recently reflected, "I like it here; the people are nice," which meant so much to all of us. We are caring together, and it works!

Signing off: God Bless, The SVP Members

St Laurence's Confirmation Group: A Journey of Faith and Formation

Helena Judd

This year's Confirmation candidates at St Laurence's have embarked on a wonderful five-month journey of faith formation, filled with enriching sessions, a day retreat, and opportunities for deeper involvement in the life of the Church. The group consists of 19 candidates, guided by dedicated catechists: Helena, Gail, Jason, and May. Fr Simon Davies has been an invaluable source of support, and we look forward to Fr Robin's guidance and leadership as the journey continues.

Meeting twice a month, the group follows the *YouCat Confirmation* programme as recommended by the Diocese of East Anglia. However, at St Laurence's, we strive to go beyond the standard curriculum by incorporating engaging sessions on saints, vocations, science and faith, and inviting guest speakers to inspire the candidates. Additionally, the candidates receive hands-on training to actively participate in Church liturgies, strengthening their understanding and role in the faith community.

Involvement in the Ablaze Mass

On the first Sunday of each month, the candidates arrive early to immerse themselves in the roles of the laity within the liturgy. The Ablaze Mass, a dynamic and charismatic celebration for all ages, offers them opportunities to serve as lectors, offertory collectors, music ministers, and writers of the bidding prayers. They also extend a warm welcome to parishioners and, at times, present moving dramas or poetry related to the liturgical season. During the March Ablaze Mass, for instance, they shared reflective poetry to prepare the congregation for Lent.

The Role of Parents and Sponsors

A key element of the programme is the active participation of parents and sponsors. They join the candidates in sessions, praying and learning alongside them, ensuring that faith formation extends beyond the classroom and into family life. Catechising parents and sponsors strengthens their own faith while fostering the close-knit, supportive family atmosphere for which St Laurence's is known.

Preparing for World Youth Sunday

In November, the group took our first trip, partnering with candidates from Our Lady of the English Martyrs (OLEM) to the Cathedral of St John the Baptist for a day to prepare for *World Youth Sunday*. This special day, encouraged by the Pope, invites local parishes to support, celebrate, and encourage young people to take an active role in parish life. The train ride to the Cathedral helped break the ice among many candidates, allowing them to get to know each other better and build new friendships. The experience deepened their understanding of their role in the Church and inspired them to become more engaged in their faith communities.

A Special Retreat: *The Happiness Show* with RISE Theatre

On Saturday, 18th January, St Laurence's hosted a retreat day led by *RISE Theatre*, a well-known Catholic theatre company that uses drama to inspire and communicate the Gospel message. The retreat, titled *The Happiness Show*, focused on the question, *What makes you truly happy?* and explored how Jesus provides us with 'Living Water' – a love and friendship unlike anything the world can offer.

This retreat brought together our candidates with those from Our Lady of the English Martyrs (OLEM), fostering friendships and unity among the young Catholics of Cambridge. The Confirmation group is deeply grateful to the Parish for its financial support, which made this retreat possible.

Looking Ahead: More Opportunities for Growth

The journey does not stop here! The candidates have many exciting events ahead, including a day retreat led by the Carmelite Friars from Oxford, focused on the power of prayer. Later in the year, they will go to the Diocese of East Anglia's *Ignite Weekend* in Bury St Edmunds – a weekend filled with praise, worship, adoration, prayer, Confession, and Mass. The retreat culminates in a pilgrimage to Walsingham on 5th May, where the candidates will unite with the wider Diocesan community in prayer and celebration.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Parish for its continued generosity, especially in funding the coach transport for the retreat and pilgrimage. Your support enables our young people to deepen their faith and grow in their journey towards Confirmation.

Please continue to pray for our candidates as they prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, that they may be strengthened by the Holy Spirit and live out their faith boldly in the world.



Day retreat at St John the Baptist Cathedral, Norwich



Retreat Day at St Laurence's Primary School for Candidates presented by RISE Theatre



Combination of St Laurence's and OLEM Confirmation Groups on their Pilgrimage to Norwich.

Pro-Life Witness: A Talk by SPUC at St Laurence's Catholic Church

Helena Judd

This February, St Laurence's Catholic Church welcomed Paul Gardner, the local Cambridge representative for the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC), along with Sarah, a parishioner from the University Chaplaincy, to speak about the realities of abortion and the importance of pro-life advocacy.



SPUC is one of the UK's oldest and most prominent pro-life organisations, dedicated to defending the right to life from conception to natural death. Through education, political advocacy and practical support, SPUC works to expose the realities of abortion while promoting life-affirming alternatives for women and families in crisis pregnancies.

During their talk, Paul and Sarah shed light on how abortion advocates often frame their arguments using misleading language, presenting abortion as 'healthcare' or a matter of 'choice'. However, as Paul poignantly explained, abortion presents the worst choices, whereas the pro-life movement offers hope, compassion, and genuine pastoral care.

The speakers highlighted various organisations that provide essential support to women, men, and families facing crisis pregnancies. A particularly moving story was shared from Rachel's Vineyard, an organisation that offers healing retreats for women and men who have experienced the pain of abortion. Rachel's Vineyard provides a safe and supportive space for individuals to find emotional and spiritual healing, reaffirming the message that no one is beyond hope and redemption.

One of the most pressing questions raised during the talk was: 'How do we respond when someone says, "My body, my choice"?' Paul's response was both touching and thought-provoking. He affirmed his deep respect for women and their choices, while also expressing his profound concern for their well-being, as well as that of their unborn children. "If you truly care for someone," Paul said, "you want to offer them choices that uplift, heal, and affirm life – not those that bring harm and sorrow."

March For Life: A Call to Action, 6th September 2025

The talk concluded with an encouragement for parishioners to take their pro-life witness beyond the walls of the church and into the public square. One powerful way to do this is by attending the annual *March for Life UK* in London. This event brings together thousands of people from across the country to stand in solidarity for the unborn, advocating for a culture of life in our society.

To facilitate participation, I am proposing to organise a coach from Cambridge to the *March for Life*. This will allow interested parishioners to attend together, making the experience both accessible and communal. More details will be shared in the coming weeks.

A Personal Testimony: A Family's Experience at March for Life

Reflecting on last year's *March For Life*, I had the privilege of attending with my three sons, who were then aged 5, 9, and 11. It was an unforgettable experience. The atmosphere was overwhelmingly positive and hopeful, filled with families, young adults, and people of all ages standing together in a mission to defend life.

One of the most moving moments for us came when a young man, who recognised my sons from *New Dawn in the Church*, approached them during the march. He walked alongside them, encouraging them in the chants and helping them understand the importance of what they were doing. It was a beautiful reminder that every voice matters – no matter how young.

As we made our way home on the Tube, my sons were still buzzing with excitement. One of them turned to me and asked, "Did we win, Mummy?" I smiled and told them, "Today, we did."



I invite you to join us this year for the *March for Life* and be part of this life-affirming mission. Whether you are new to pro-life advocacy or have been involved for years, your presence makes a difference. Let us stand together, pray together, and walk together in defence of the most vulnerable in our society – the unborn.

St Laurence's New Youth Choir: Bringing Young Voices to the Liturgy

Helena Judd

Last Advent, a new and exciting initiative began at St Laurence's – the formation of our very own Youth Choir! This talented group of young singers made their debut at the Parish Carol Service, performing a special piece, and later led the music for the Christmas Eve Family Mass. Their contributions brought a joyful and prayerful atmosphere to the celebration, helping to make the liturgy even more engaging for families and children.

Under the leadership of Steven and Lynette Levitt, and with the support of Helena Judd and Alaika D'Souza, the choir has been finding its rhythm. Rehearsal attendance has varied as the group tested different meeting times to accommodate busy family schedules. However, the enthusiasm and dedication of the children have remained strong, and they are eager to continue using their voices to serve the Parish.

One of the highlights of the Christmas Eve Family Mass was the full participation of children in the liturgy, even during the homily. Fr Simon Davies invited them to engage by answering questions, making it a truly interactive and meaningful experience for young parishioners.

Following the success of their initial performances, Fr Robin has invited the Youth Choir to sing once a month at the 11am Mass. The group is excited to take

on this commitment and hopes to grow in both numbers and

confidence over the coming months. With time, they aspire to contribute to music at other Masses and Parish celebrations.

A huge thank you to the Parish for its financial support in launching this initiative! The choir is still in need of a pianist to assist with rehearsals, which take place on Sundays from 12.30 to 1.30pm. If you or someone you know can help, please email

Confirmation@SaintLaurence.org.

Please keep our young singers in your prayers as they continue to develop their gifts and bring joyful praise to our Parish community.



Gathering our Youth: the Carlo Acutis Group

Zuzanna Marciniak-Nuqui, Teresa Siu Fabry

The Carlo Acutis Group kicked off with its very first meeting on 16th November 2024, gathering youth who have made their First Communion, but have not yet been confirmed. We have been very happy to have around 12 young people joining us every second Saturday of the month and we would love to have even more join in the coming months! Meetings take place every second Saturday of the month between 3.30pm and 5.30pm, and typically include Eucharistic Adoration, teamwork, and a social gathering around pizza.

Through our group, we hope to empower young people to deepen their bond with Jesus through a greater appreciation of the Eucharist, strengthen their belonging to the Church through building meaningful friendships, and to serve others in the spirit of Christ's love.

As we were reflecting on possible ways of engaging the Parish youth, we naturally gravitated towards Eucharistic Adoration because it holds a special place in our hearts and has been pivotal in our own faith journeys. Our hope is to invite the youth to a closer relationship with Jesus in the Eucharist. Only in hindsight did we realise just how perfect the patron of our group is for us in that regard: "the Eucharist is my highway to Heaven", as he put it.



Carlo Acutis: a patron saint for today

Carlo Acutis was born in the UK to Italian parents in 1991. He moved back to Italy with his family a few months after his birth and was known for his deep love for God, frequently praying the Rosary even at a very young age. After receiving his First Communion, young Carlo developed a great love for the Eucharist convincing his family to attend Mass with him every day. His devotion to the Eucharist prompted a conversion of his mother who was not a practicing Catholic. Carlo was a good friend and a generous member of his community, supporting the homeless, elderly and disabled.

As a bright and talented student, Carlo taught himself graphic design and computer programming, using programming languages such as C and C++. He used his abilities to create a website about Eucharistic miracles around the world, including information about more than 150 miracles. You can still visit the website today:

<http://www.miracolieuaristici.org/>. Carlo died of myeloid leukaemia, aged only 15, on 12th October 2006. Carlo will be canonized on 27th April 2025, and will become our first millennial saint.

Our activities thus far

Our first meeting allowed us to get to know each other and focused on how the Carlo Acutis Group can help us on our way to Heaven. Our young people prepared beautiful posters to illustrate the journey we are on.



Our second meeting took place in January and focused on the Jubilee Year of Hope. We reflected on hope and our youth prepared posters using psalm verses that help us realise and hold on to our hope in God and His goodness. You can now admire these posters in the Narthex.



In February, we spoke about Eucharistic miracles and learned about the 8th century miracle in Lanciano, Italy. We also practiced singing some hymns and, as usual, gathered for Adoration and for pizza. This was also our first meeting with Fr Robin, who led us in Adoration and blessed each of us individually with the Blessed Sacrament.



What lies ahead

Our next two meetings will take place in Lent and we will be focusing on what we can give to God during this special time. Our May meeting will be slightly different given that it will take place shortly after the canonisation of Carlo Acutis – we will be celebrating this occasion with our own party! In June, we are hoping to go on a Jubilee Year pilgrimage. We warmly invite all youth to join us and to bring friends too!



A hello from the organisers

We are very grateful to François Hennequin, Alaika D’Souza and Jim Infield for enriching our group with their presence and assistance. Please do feel free to say hi to us if you happen to spot us.

Zuzanna Marciniak-Nuqui



Teresa Siu Fab

News from Stella Maris

Mary Watkins, Stella Maris Parish rep



Many thanks to knitters from St Laurence’s and our Anglican neighbours at St Luke’s and Christchurch parishes for their hard work. Beautiful hats and mittens are on their way

again to keep our seafarers warm in their often difficult and dangerous work of bringing us over 90% of our everyday goods. Stella Maris chaplain, Julian Wong, assures us how appreciated these gifts are, as much as a token of appreciation of the work they do, as for their practical use.

Julian remains as busy as ever working out of Ipswich and Felixstowe and covering even more of East Anglia. He writes ‘This morning, I am taking a Ukrainian ship engineer to London Nuffield Hospital / St Bart’s Hospital for his angiogram. I took him yesterday for the pre-op assessment because there was no one from the shipping’s insurance company to take him. Please keep him in your prayers. He has a congenital heart condition (hole in the heart), without realising it until he became unwell while his ship was at Ipswich Port. Sadly, he cannot have it repaired in UK because he has to take medication to bring down the pressure first and that will take 4/5 months.’

So, he will have to have his operation in Ukraine. With the war and the costs, what are his chances, I dread to think. Apparently, his young son in Ukraine also has this condition. Please continue to pray for seafarers.

CWL Update

Janet Scally

Catholic Women's League enjoys having its 'Second Friday' meetings, and, after the 12.30pm Mass, we have a lunch for any parishioners who want to join us. Their generosity enables us to support various charities. In the last few months, we have given £200 to Jimmy's Night Shelter, as we thought how important the night shelter is during the coldest weather. A donation was also made to Radio Maria.

We will be having our Friday lunches throughout Lent, when our charities may be Arthur Rank or the Cambridge City Food Bank.

Any ladies are welcome, come along and join us. Meetings start at 11.30am on the second Friday of the month. Contact: Janet Scally 01223 365330

First Holy Communion 2025

Paula Hawkins

We are now over halfway through our preparations, and the Big Day is approaching. The children are about to participate in the second sacrament of their Catholic journey. This is their First Reconciliation, and it will take place at the end of March. We then only have a couple of sessions left before they all make their First Holy Communion. We have had another big class again this year, and it is lovely to see so many children taking their next step.

Please, as always, pray for the children and their families as they proceed through this journey.

Education, Formation and Faith Sharing Group

Roberta Canning

The group was set up as the Liturgy, Education and Faith Sharing Group. In February, the group decided that our remit is better described as Education, Formation and Faith Sharing because it does not include planning or delivery of the liturgy, which is covered by others working with Fr Robin.

There will be reports from others in the group on the Blessed Carlos Acutis Group and other youth activities, including the Youth Choir. I will just highlight plans for a study group after Easter to join in reflection of the Synod Final document.

Pope Francis has stated that the Final Document is to be treated as coming from the magisterium, and that the global Church should get on and implement its teaching. The first part – *The Heart of Synodality* – explores our call to conversion and how our Baptism and Confirmation call us to be missionary disciples and active members of our Catholic communities. It's good Lenten reading but also offers the basis for us to reflect together after Easter.

We will also have another afternoon for people engaged in lay ministries in the Parish.

Healthcare, the NHS and Justice & Peace

Arn Dekker (Justice & Peace Group)

NO BORDERS IN THE NHS

When you read this article, the event it relates to will have already taken place. However, when the 'Justice and Peace Group, Cambridge' discussed the event, we thought it was important enough to publicise this issue anyway.

Often health care workers, as well as migrants, are unaware that many of the services the NHS provides are available free of charge to people with or without passports.

When we think about it, the health of the individual is important not just for them but for the rest of the community as well.

As Christians we believe in providing and caring for each other and at the same time, when we provide health services to new arrivals in our community, we provide health safety for the whole community at the same time.

SENIOR PATIENTS NOT PASSPORTS DOCTORS ALL

This event may be of particular interest to migrants and healthcare workers

**NO BORDERS IN THE NHS:
KNOW YOUR HEALTHCARE RIGHTS**

The National Health Service (NHS) can be difficult to navigate, but many services are free for everyone, regardless of your immigration status.

We are running an information event to help you understand your rights within the NHS, including:

- What services can be always accessed for free
- What to do if you are asked to pay for an NHS service
- Services available in Cambridge

8TH MARCH 2025
10:15-12:30
ARBURY COMMUNITY CENTRE
Camplin Road, Cambridge, CB4 2LD

Free to attend
Refreshments provided
Everyone welcome
No sign-up required

There is a need for us all to be aware and to broadcast the fact that some of the services of the NHS are available, free of charge, to all, regardless of immigration status. You can contact the following for more information:

www.patientsnotpassports.co.uk as well as patientsnotpassportscambridge@gmail.com

News from St Laurence Primary School

The school's Lenten journey started with the annual school Pancake Races, which were run by the Mini Vinnies. Each class from Reception to Year 6 took part racing against each other and just over £100 was raised for Mary's Meals.



We welcomed Fr Robin to school to celebrate the Ash Wednesday Liturgy with us and the children are looking forward to getting to know him and Fr Alex as they come in to visit us over the school year. Lent is a special time at the school and we are currently preparing the children for the sacrament of Reconciliation. Year 3 and 4 are rehearsing the Passion Play ready to perform to the whole school.



We are very lucky to have wonderful prayer spaces in our outside area at St Laurence. The Grotto dedicated to Our Lady is continuing to thrive and has had the recent addition of some clematis planted that will grow around the pillars.

The outdoor Stations of the Cross have been secured on the school field and classes have been visiting and praying and reflecting on Christ's journey.



Diversity Week

During the week of the 10th March, St Laurence celebrated our diverse and culturally rich school community. Events included coming to school in cultural dress, learning songs from around the world, listening to popular stories from other countries and tasting bread from our home countries.



Features and Opinions

Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Sacred Words

Michael Allan

Journal entry, 8th April 1873:

‘The ash tree growing in the corner of the garden was felled. It was lopped first: I heard the sound and looking out and seeing it maimed there came at that moment a great pang and I wished to die and not to see the inscapes of the world destroyed any more.’



Gerard Manley Hopkins

So wrote Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1889), Jesuit priest and poet, in his personal journal. He passionately loved both God and creation. He used the term ‘inscape’ to refer to a divinely instilled essence or design unique to each created reality, such as a tree, a bird, a flower, or indeed a human. For Hopkins, these realities, these creatures – in all their extraordinary, unstoppable multiplicity – are God’s very utterance of Himself outside Himself: each one a sacred word of God; each flashing into and out of existence; each, as it flies, telling both of itself and its Creator.

Journal entry, 19th July 1872:

‘I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at. I know the beauty of our Lord by it. Its inscape is mixed of strength and grace, like an ash tree.’



Bluebell at Moses Gate Country Park, 2008. (Copyright David Ayrton and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence.)

In the following, from his poem *As Kingfishers Catch Fire*, Hopkins – in his own dazzling language – sings of these sacred words, each reflecting God’s overflowing beauty by being fully alive, being fully, utterly, and uniquely itself:

‘As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell’s
Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves — goes itself; *myself* it speaks and spells,
Crying *Whát I dó is me: for that I came.*’

It has been said that we live today, and have for a long time, in a disenchanting world, where the sacred and divine have been banished and God’s voice long silenced. The modern myth, as in the story we live by, that now prevails seems to be that science and reason alone have more or less explained everything, or will do so, and that we clever modern people see everything clearly now; and, as a consequence, that God and the sacred are thereby redundant. (There are, however, scientists, philosophers, and many others who see through that modern myth.)

Perhaps this banishing of the sacred has also meant that creation has become, for us, just a collection of inanimate things – things we are increasingly separated from, that have little to say to us, that we can treat as we will. We walk past them, staring intently at our little screens. It is a hollowed-out, impoverished world: mechanical, prosaic, and predictable, where the spiritual has been stripped out of the material, leaving an empty husk. Is this itself a form of illusion or enchantment, a story we have swallowed?

Thankfully, this illusion, this separation, sometimes breaks down, our blind eyes are opened, and the world’s sacred beauty floods in – as Seamus Heaney (1939–2013) says in his poem *Postscript* – to ‘catch the heart off guard and blow it open.’

For the great St Augustine of Hippo, creation – far from being prosaic and mechanical – actually speaks to us the very words of God:

‘Some people, in order to discover God, read a book. But there is a great book: the very appearance of created things. Look above and below, note, read. God whom you want to discover, did not make the letters with ink; He put in front of your eyes the very things that He made. Can you ask for a louder voice than that?’

Amid the madness of our times, looking beyond ourselves towards the real, listening to that voice, reading that great book, nurtures life and peace. This was true for Hopkins. Here, after a long walk through the countryside, with attentive heart and eyes open, he recorded faithfully all he had seen:

Journal entry, 3rd May 1866:

‘Some oaks are out in small leaf. Ashes not out, only tufted with their fringy blooms. Hedges springing richly. Elms in small leaf, with more or less opacity. White poplars most beautiful in small grey crisp spray-like leaf. Cowslips capriciously colouring meadows in creamy drifts. Bluebells, purple orchis. Over the green water of the river passing the slums of the town and under its bridges swallows shooting, blue and purple above and shewing their amber-tinged breasts reflected in the water, their flight unsteady with wagging wings and leaning first to one side then the other.’



Swallows, near Tattershall, Lincolnshire, 2009. (Copyright: Mick Lobb, licensed for reuse under the Creative Commons Licence).

Here Hopkins is surely delighting in nature itself and in its Creator.

But not everything in the garden is sweet and lovely. (The decline in birds and wildflowers in Britain, largely due to us, and which would have grieved Hopkins, is merely one example.) We are fallen, and the world with us. For St Paul, creation is groaning as in the pangs of childbirth. We too groan, for our tragedy hangs heavy upon us. Hopkins himself suffered terrifying darkness and pain, as witnessed to in his ‘terrible’ sonnets. Mercifully, later in life this darkness eased. Shortly before he died, of typhoid fever at the age of 44, he declared, “I am so happy, so happy.”

Yes, the world is indeed fallen, scarred with darkness, but still overflows with sacred goodness and beauty, still speaks of God. What those sacred words say is, of course, ultimately inexpressible in human words. Yet still they heal and nourish us; otherwise, we would shrivel up. In the First World War, in pauses in the anger of the guns, skylarks were sometimes heard singing high above the trenches: “Without the birds, what a hell it would be,” said one soldier. Yes, as William Blake knew, joy and woe are woven fine. The pain Hopkins endured did not negate that sacred beauty, but rather made it infinitely more precious.

The ultimate Word of love spoken to us is Jesus Christ:

The Word through whom all creation was made and is being made anew at every moment.

The Word made flesh, made one with us, who descended into the deepest hells of sin and darkness, and raised us up into light.

The Word who dwells within, forever calling to us, thirsting for our response, our love.

In Him all those other sacred words have their origin, fulfilment, and home.

Journal entry, 17th August 1874:

‘As we drove home the stars came out thick: I leant back to look at them and my heart opening more than usual praised our Lord to and in whom all that beauty comes home.’

“Do not forget that hope is not an illusion; beauty is not a utopia.” Pope Francis

Miriam Santos Freire

I got used to watching the major religious celebrations on *Vatican News* during the COVID-19 lockdowns. You may watch them live or whenever you have the opportunity, either via the *Vatican News* or on YouTube, with detailed commentary and live translation in many different languages.

On the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 16th February 2025, it was Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education, and a fellow Portuguese – and a poet himself – who celebrated the Mass for the Jubilee of Artists and the World of Culture. It was sheer curiosity that led me to this seemingly ‘ordinary’ service, but in the end, I don’t think it was just a coincidence. Cardinal Tolentino delivered this extraordinary homily by Pope Francis, and it spoke to me in a way I hadn’t expected.

I am no artist, but lately, hope has been quite elusive for me, and this message fit me like a glove.

Reflecting mainly on the Gospel of the Beatitudes, Pope Francis spoke about the crucial role of artists – not only in creating beauty and revealing truth and goodness, but also in posing questions about life’s deeper meaning, helping humanity not to lose its way and to keep a hopeful outlook.

‘Dear artists, I see in you guardians of beauty who are willing to attend to the brokenness of our world, listen to the cry of those who are poor, suffering, wounded, imprisoned persecuted or refugees. I see in you guardians of the Beatitudes! We live in a time when new walls are being erected, when differences become a pretext for

division rather than an opportunity for mutual enrichment. But you, men and women of the world of culture, are called to build bridges, to create spaces for encounter and dialogue, to enlighten minds and warm hearts.’

(Extract from Pope Francis’ homily on 16th February 2025)

I invite you to visit and explore the *Vatican News* website (<https://www.vaticannews.va/en.html>) and to read this and many other homilies of Pope Francis, along with other content, in the language of your choice, at:

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/pt/homilies/2025/documents/20250216-omelia-giubileo-artisti.html>.

‘Am I to forget my friend?’ (Seneca)

Miriam Santos Freire

I have always been fascinated by how the Greeks and Romans have shaped our modern world and society, and how they reflected so wisely on our deeper questions and concerns. Physical distance from friends and family is one of the most difficult aspects of living in a different country. Yes, technological advances help, but you miss out on the all-important physical contact – such as smells, hugs, and kisses – the day-to-day conversations, being there for your older loved ones at the end of their journey, watching the numerous surprises and events of a growing family, and the increasing challenge of coordinating diaries when you go home. These are the happy occasions.

You also simply miss out on people who pass away or with whom you gradually lose contact, and you start realising that your world of affections becomes smaller and smaller.

I recently came across a particular piece of writing by Seneca, the Stoic philosopher from the mid-first century CE (Roman Imperial Period), *On Grief for Lost Friends*, Letter #63 of his Moral Letters to Lucilius (*Ad Lucilium epistulae morales*). I hope it will help me put the right focus on this grief for lost friends – not necessarily those who have passed away but those who, for so many reasons, have gradually faded from my life.

Here are some excerpts from the translation by Richard Mott Gummere (*Letters from a Stoic: Epistulae Morales AD Lucilium*, originally published in 1918), *On Grief for Lost Friends*,

‘The remembrance of lost friends is pleasant in the same way that certain fruits have an agreeably acid taste, or as in extremely old wines it is their very bitterness that pleases us. (...)

To me, the thought of my dead friends is sweet and appealing. For I have had them as if I should one day lose them; I have lost them as if I have them still. (...)

Let us greedily enjoy our friends, because we do not know how long this privilege will be ours. Let us think how often we shall leave them when we go upon distant journeys, and how often we shall fail to see them even when we are in the same place;’

Friendship is like a flower. Besides the soil and the occasional fertiliser, it needs water, sunlight, and some TLC to flourish. Let us be gardeners then and cherish our friends while we are together. And even when time, distance, or life itself separates us, shared memories will keep them present.

The silence of eternity

Sarah Sykes

Can you imagine what it would be like to experience silence for eternity?

Living in our world today, I find it difficult to imagine. Wouldn’t it be kind of boring? The world is a place where calm, peaceful moments and places can be found. But, day to day, it is mostly a noisy, busy place and we have grown used to the constant input.

However, Cardinal Robert Sarah says that your soul joining with God is the place where you will find the silence of eternity.

‘This is the silence of eternity, the union of the soul with God’

From *The Power of Silence* by Cardinal Sarah

On contemplating this phrase, I found myself thinking: this is not an empty silence, but a silence in which we are as one with God. We are filled by him, satisfied by him. We are fully ourselves. All is returned to the way it should have been from the beginning. There is no more searching.

You are at peace, fully content, no longer driven, for you have arrived. Your soul is at rest.

You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.

From *The Confessions* by St Augustine of Hippo

Cardinal Points – Stupidity and Sanctity

Ronald Haynes

‘The difference between genius and stupidity is that genius has its limits’ – so goes an old and witty saying, sometimes attributed to Einstein, but in fact found in the 19th century and most likely from the French writer Alexandre Dumas (author of *Camille* [also known as *The Lady of the Camellias*], son of the famous author of *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *The Three Musketeers*). Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German Lutheran pastor and theologian shared powerful insights about stupidity and evil from his prison cell, before being executed as an anti-Nazi dissident caught in a plot to stop Hitler. Stupidity, wrote Bonhoeffer, ‘is a more dangerous enemy of the good than malice ... Evil always carries within itself the germ of its own subversion in that it leaves behind in human beings at least a sense of unease. Against stupidity we are defenseless.’ He suggests this is because ‘reasons fall on deaf ears; facts that contradict one’s prejudgment simply need not be believed ... and when facts are irrefutable they are just pushed aside as inconsequential, as incidental.’

In extreme examples, such as that which Bonhoeffer directly experienced, he found that when trying to converse with someone so affected ‘one virtually feels that one is dealing not at all with a person, but with slogans, catchwords and the like that have taken possession of him. He is under a spell, blinded, misused, and abused in his very being’ and given this, that person ‘will also be capable of any evil and at the same time incapable of seeing that it is evil.’ Yet, he says that the ‘word of the Bible that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom declares that the internal liberation of human beings to live the responsible life before God is the only genuine way to overcome stupidity.’

Dietrich Bonhoeffer argues that stupidity is worse than evil because stupidity can be manipulated and used by evil. He also argues that stupidity tends to go hand-in-hand with a group acquiring power – that is, a group being in power means we (for example, as group members) surrender our individual critical faculties. Of course we all have seen evidence of such human stupidity, its presence and too often its horrific power, in our political life and perhaps interpersonal interactions, and we have seen how it tends to bend, shape, and even dangerously dominate our discussions. Instead of seeking truth together, in our diverse and divinely-gifted communities, supporting each other graciously (mercifully even) to greater understanding – which is either better or only possible together, stupidity can undermine the fabric of our

societies and the strength of our communities – and vice versa.

In his book, *The Basic Laws of Human Stupidity* (1976), Carlo Cipolla, the famous Italian-born professor of Economic History at the University of California, Berkeley, provides a well-considered approach to these concerns. The Penguin book blurb¹ helpfully summarises some key points: ‘Since time immemorial, a powerful dark force has hindered the growth of human welfare and happiness. It is more powerful than the Mafia or the military. It has global catastrophic effects and can be found anywhere from the world’s most powerful boardrooms to your local pub. This is the immensely powerful force of human stupidity.’ It goes on to promise ‘the first and only economic model for stupidity.’

As a helpful example, Cipolla’s third law² is: ‘A stupid person is a person who causes losses to another person or to a group of persons while himself deriving no gain and even possibly incurring losses.’ Complementing that he indicates that: ‘Intelligent people contribute to society and leverage their contributions into personal benefits; stupid people are counterproductive to both their and others’ interests’.³

In more recent writing, the *New York Times* conservative columnist, David Brooks, referenced Cipolla and Bonhoeffer in an opinion piece entitled: *The Six Principles of Stupidity*.⁴ In brief, he shares that: ‘I’ve distilled what I’ve learned so far into six main principles:

Principle 1:

Ideology produces disagreement, but stupidity produces befuddlement.

Principle 2:

Stupidity often inheres in organizations, not individuals.

Principle 3:

People who behave stupidly are more dangerous than people who behave maliciously.

Principle 4:

People who behave stupidly are unaware of the stupidity of their actions.

Principle 5:

Stupidity is nearly impossible to oppose.

Principle 6:

The opposite of stupidity is not intelligence, it’s rationality.

Brooks’ fourth Principle makes reference to the Dunning-Kruger effect,⁵ named for two researchers who described evidence when people overestimate their knowledge or ability in a specific area, for instance due to lack of self-awareness. It is often seen as the opposite of the imposter syndrome, a bias

toward underconfidence in one's abilities, for instance when competent people doubt themselves and fear of being discovered to be a fraud.

Another researcher has identified what he calls the Abilene paradox,⁶ which could serve perhaps as a corollary to Brooks' Principle 5 and some of Bonhoeffer's warnings. This situation describes a collective misconception in which group members don't want to 'rock the boat' and jointly decide on something which they do not prefer or would not choose as individuals. Given insufficient communication, and a desire to be aligned with what is believed to be the preferences of most or all of the others, this can lead the group to decide on something that is in fact counter to the preferences of most or all individuals in the group. Given this, typically members do not raise objections, and may go further in expressing support for an outcome they do not want.

With so much to say about stupidity, how do we counter it, prevent it and protect against it? How might we find ways to engage each other, with openness and honesty, to try to review, recognise, and root out any such stupidity in our lives – individually and communally?

In writing about Enthusiasm,⁷ Anthony Ashley-Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, a 17th – 18th century English aristocrat, politician, philosopher and writer, used the term as commonly understood at the time to indicate 'extravagant religious emotion', sometimes suggesting belief in immediate contact with God, at times with overlapping and similar meaning for fanaticism or extremism. As an example of the concern, and related harm he writes:

'All enthusiasm brings a kind of melancholy. Whether it's a matter of love or religion (for there are enthusiasms in both), nothing can put a stop to the growing mischief of enthusiasm in either until the melancholy is removed and the mind is freed to hear what can be said against the ridiculousness of an extreme in either way.'

Perhaps surprisingly, Shaftesbury presents as remedy for this harmful enthusiasm, for extremism and the melancholy it brings, that what is required is good humour. This term somewhat echoes the ancient Greek medical idea that 'humours' refer to bodily states, character-traits and moods, however Shaftesbury also uses a more modern sense, including when talking of 'good humour' versus 'ill humour':

'Good humour is not only the best protection against enthusiasm but also the best foundation for piety and true religion: for if right thoughts and worthy

understandings of the supreme being are fundamental to all true worship and adoration, it's more than probable that we'll never go wrong about this except solely through ill humour. Nothing but ill humour, whether natural or forced, can get a man to think seriously that the world is governed by some devilish or malicious power.'

This rather serious role for good humour is presented in a rather striking and convincing way by considering the example of St Paul after his conversion and most dramatic change from active persecutor to ardent proponent of the new Christian faith:

'I believe our great and learned apostle Paul ... improved more from the candor and civility of his Roman judges than from the zeal of the synagogue and the vehemence of his national priests. Though when I think of this apostle as appearing either before the witty Athenians or before a Roman judicial court in the presence of their great men and ladies, and see how handsomely he fits himself to the views and temperaments of those more polished people, I don't see him refusing the way of wit or good humour; rather, I see him as being so confident of the rightness of his cause that he is willing to subject it to this test, trying it against the sharpness of any ridicule that might be offered.'

He also applies this key approach to more modern religious experience, and perhaps with prescience considers how to fend off what can be related abuse and misuse of religion:

'In short ... I think that the melancholy way of treating religion is what makes it so sad, and leads it to produce such dismal tragedies in the world. My idea is that provided we treat religion with good manners we can never use too much good humour or examine it with too much freedom and familiarity. Why? Because if it is genuine and sincere, it will not only pass the test but thrive and profit from it; and if it is spurious or mixed with any imposture, that will be detected and exposed.'

Shaftesbury includes emphasis on the vital need to examine ourselves, considering carefully how to avoid harmful extravagance and delusion, seemingly sharing some powerful insights in the Jesuit spiritual exercises with a kind of call to action following a discernment of spirits:

'To be able to judge whether spirits are from God, we must first judge concerning our own spirit:

- Is it from reason and sound sense?
- Is it calm, cool, and impartial?

- Is it free of every biasing passion, every giddy vapour, or melancholy fume?

Only if each answer is yes is our spirit fit to judge at all. We can't know anything unless we *first understand ourselves and know what spirit we are of*. Then we can judge the spirit in others, consider what their personal merit is, and test the validity of their testimony by testing the solidity of their brain. In this way, we can prepare ourselves with some antidote against enthusiasm.'

If all such spiritual discernment and exercises were to be regularly followed, by more individuals and communities, we would have a better world, more evidence of divine perfection, and a greater sense of the intention of the prayer which Jesus taught, where Christians regularly pray for and say that they want 'Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'. This is naturally connected with Jesus' direction that we 'be perfect', as the 'heavenly Father is perfect'. In a previous *Cardinal Points* article (*The Pilgrim*, <https://saintlaurence.org.uk/pilgrim/pilgrim-2021-06.pdf>) this is explored further in related concerns about *Perfection and Pessimism*.

Perfection and sanctity figure prominently in Pope Paul VI's 1975 homily for the canonization of Elisabeth Ann Seton,⁸ the first saint from the USA, as he shares insights about both:

'But what do we mean when we say: "She is a Saint"? We all have some idea of the meaning of this highest title; but it is still difficult for us to make an exact analysis of it. Being a Saint means being perfect, with a perfection that attains the highest level that a human being can reach. A Saint is a human creature fully conformed to the will of God. A Saint is a person in whom all sin – the principle of death – is cancelled out and replaced by the living splendor of divine grace.'

Paul VI shares more insights into what it is to be a saint, and refers to the 'science of sanctity' as 'the most varied, the most surprising and the most fascinating of all the studies of that ever mysterious being which is man'. Expanding mysterious into mystical, the Pope points to the divine-human unity presented as the reality of human life and brought into clearer focus in the virtuous life of a saint:

'The analysis of the concept of sanctity brings us to recognise in a soul the mingling of two elements that are entirely different but which come together to produce a single effect: sanctity. One of these elements is the human and moral element, raised to the degree of heroism: heroic virtues are always required by the Church for the recognition of a person's sanctity. The second element is the mystical element, which

expresses the measure and form of divine action in the person chosen by God to realise in herself – always in an original way – the image of Christ. (cf. Romans 8: 29)⁹'

In the prophetic voice of Jeremiah, there is a cry against the stupidity and mob mentality which has been a recurring curse in human society, and a call to the sanity and sanctity of the authentic individuality, which enables authentic community to form and to remain healthy and strong. We must each and all choose which of these truly supports our lives, and in doing so also truly supports each other as family, as community, as inheritors of God's commandments of Love:

'For my people are foolish, they do not know me; they are stupid children, they have no understanding. They are skilled in doing evil, but do not know how to do good.' (Jeremiah 4:22)¹⁰

'Thus says the Lord: Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.'

(Jeremiah 6:16)¹¹

Footnotes

1. <https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/441356/the-basic-laws-of-human-stupidity-by-carlo-m-cipolla>
2. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlo_M._Cipolla#%22The_Basic_Laws_of_Human_Stupidity%22_\(1976\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlo_M._Cipolla#%22The_Basic_Laws_of_Human_Stupidity%22_(1976))
3. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlo_M._Cipolla
4. <https://lawandsocietymagazine.com/the-six-principles-of-stupidity>
5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunning%E2%80%93Kruger_effect
6. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abilene_paradox
7. <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/shaftesbury1708.pdf>
8. https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/homilies/1975/documents/hf_p-vi_hom_19750914.pdf
9. <https://biblehub.com/niv/romans/8-29.htm>
10. <https://www.biblegateway.com/verse/en/Jeremiah%204%3A22>
11. <https://www.biblegateway.com/verse/en/Jeremiah%206%3A16>

The Conclave in Catholic Tradition

Dr Peter Neville

The process of the Papal Conclave is at the very heart of Catholic tradition. It results in the selection and induction of a new pope who will lead the global Catholic community until his death (although rarely, Popes have abdicated as in the case of Benedict XVI). It has been a process involving both mystery and intricacy, qualities which were well brought out in the very recent film, *Conclave*, with an outstanding performance by the English actor, Ralph Fiennes.

The film re-creates the special atmosphere of the Conclave, with the tensions between conservative and liberal cardinals very well described, so it is a pity then that it's ending is so implausible. A much more effective

and realistic ending would have had Cardinal Lawrence, the central character who is played by Fiennes, emerging as the first English Pope since Hadrian IV. The film is, of course, a work of fiction based on a novel, but it does show how the Conclave process has become far more cosmopolitan in the modern era. The Church was certainly open to criticism for allowing a very long series of Italian Popes to continue until 1978 (who can forget the great roar which went up in St Peter's Square when the Polish Pope John Paul II was elected!) Since then of course we have had a German and an Argentine Pontiff.

Yet the Italian domination of the Conclave only mirrors other periods of national domination in the history of the Papacy. Notably in the 14th century during the so-called 'Babylonish Captivity', when the unruly state of Roman politics forced the Popes to take refuge in Avignon and thus become vulnerable to the machinations of the French monarchy. A long series of French Popes thus followed until Rome was deemed safe enough for a papal return. Thereafter of course conclaves were guilty of electing totally unsuitable people. Most notably Alexander VI, the Borgia Pope who was a sexual libertine, who made family members cardinals, so combining nepotism with every other form of corruption. His successor Julius II, though he did commission Michelangelo to paint the roof of the Sistine Chapel, also led Papal armies into battle.

There is a converse to this malpractice. It is that conclaves and individual popes were subjected to outrageous intimidation by secular rulers. In Avignon, cardinals were starved and subjected to the elements with the roof of the Conclave building removed, all to secure the Pope wanted by the French. In 1527 Rome was sacked by the army of Emperor Charles V, the nephew of Catherine of Aragon, and the Pope forced to flee. While Pius VII (1800–23), one of the great popes, was forced by Napoleon to attend his coronation in Paris, supposedly to crown him Emperor. In the event Bonaparte seized the Crown and crowned himself!

Conclaves throughout the long history of the Papacy have shown that cardinals, the princes of the Church, had all too human flaws. Outstanding choices could be made such as that of the great reformer John XXIII in 1958, along with awful ones like the election of the Borgia Pope. The film *Conclave* is worth seeing because it shows that overambition, excessive nationalism and prejudice can be factors alongside devotion to duty, and the acceptance of awesome responsibility. This overlays the unconvincing, bizarre ending.

On Art and the Christian

Karen Rodgers

'Beauty will save the world' – Fyodor Dostoevsky.

Contemporary art is just religion in drag! Artists have become our priests and prophets, museums our churches, art collectors our church patrons, curators our apostles and professors our evangelists, critics are the theologians:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0hb1mWSav_E

Art dealer, David Zwirner here tracks a process which was already in train at the time of William Blake who declared:

'A poet, a painter, a musician, an architect, the man or woman who is not one of these is not a Christian. He must leave father and mother and house and lands if they stand in the way of art.'

He needed to read his Bible with greater attention. In Matthew 19:29, it is, of course, not art which is at the centre but Our Lord.

I recently attended an exhibition of a self-described Christian artist and came across the work of a second in the process. The images of the human body in both cases were highly distorted and repellently ugly, and in one case the depiction of motherhood and childbirth so desolate and traumatic that they could not have been better designed to deter any young woman viewing them from herself becoming a mother. And what a shame that would be; having a child is surely the most beautiful work of all.

David Zwirner again comments on one of these self-describing Christian artists that she conveys the message that: 'In dreams identities change, environments morph and time is confused, the only way through is to adapt, or watch or wait in fights you never win.'

This is not the Christian approach. The Good News is that if we are with Christ, we do indeed win and we are enjoined:

'Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things' (Philippians 4:8).

And our identity is not subject to random change but rather conferred on us by our loving Creator.

Christ dramatically places the beauty of the human person however marginalised or vulnerable at the centre of all material things. He told us that the two fundamental commandments are firstly to love God (not art) with all your heart, mind and soul and secondly, through the grace received by meditating on the glory and greatness of the Creator, to love our fellow human beings as ourself. A Christian artist is not simply someone who prays and/or talks about Christ. 'Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven' (Matthew 7:21).

A Christian, whether or not a professional artist, is someone who responds to the command of the Lord to contemplate and find joy in the beauty of the Creator and of His creation and out of love to share this beauty with others so that they have the chance to be freed from the ugliness resulting from disobedience to the will of the Father which presses on us from all sides. By doing so, genuinely Christian artists find and indicate a path from ugliness to beauty, from despair to hope, and from hatred to genuine love. 'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full' (John 10:10).

Catholic iconographer and author, Michael D. O'Brien writes:

'Modern cultural norms are dominated by a philosophical revolution that is intent on removing the sacred and the human (I mean the whole truth about mankind) from life, and thus they cannot be trusted. Go to the very source. Go to Christ and ask for a spirit of discernment in order to find your way through the fog of our times. Ask for humility and faithfulness, and for the ability to incarnate Truth in beautiful forms. Be a servant of the One who is the source of all Beauty ...the raw impulse to create and a willingness to sacrifice are not in themselves enough We must be technically good with the media of our art as well as alive spiritually. If a work of art is to glorify God and advance the Kingdom, he will send an angel of inspiration to help with the creation of the work. But we must ask God for this': <https://www.seatofwisdom.ca/michael-d-obrien-an-open-letter-to-fellow-writers-and-artists/>

In his *The Elements of Drawing, in Three Letters to Beginners* (1857), John Ruskin sets an exercise for students; to go and find a stone from the garden, to set it up on white paper with light falling clearly from one angle and to use a graphite pencil to draw the patches of light and shade which you see. He comments that anyone can do this and if you practise anyone can do it well. Also that if you can draw that stone, you can, with attention and practise draw just about anything.

As John Ruskin observed, 'One can't be angry when one looks at a penguin' and especially not when trying to draw one. And there are so many beautiful things to observe and to share if we only look. Snowdrops, the way the light shines through glass, shaggy dogs, ridiculously fluid cats which seem capable of morphing into the most extraordinary shapes. Outside my back door a couple of days ago I saw, for the first time this year, five gorgeous daisies growing in the most beautiful configuration. I hope I get time to try and draw them. If you don't already sketch or paint, I can highly recommend it.

I've set out some resources below which may inspire you.

Thoughtful image-making is a wonderful thing to take up for Lent; and what better Mother's Day card than one you have made yourself?

Dostoevsky was right; amid all the chaos in the world, let's help save it by celebrating Creation, making beautiful images and sharing them.

Resources

The Joy of Botanical Drawing: A Step-by-Step Guide to Drawing and Painting Flowers, Leaves, Fruit, and More by Wendy Hollender.

A gorgeous, easy-to-follow, and inspiring guide to stunningly realistic botanical drawing that covers everything you need to draw our natural world. <https://www.alibris.co.uk/The-Joy-of-Botanical-Drawing-A-Step-by-Step-Guide-to-Drawing-and-Painting-Flowers-Leaves-Fruit-and-More-Wendy-Hollender/book/46228076?matches=20>

The Elements of Drawing, in Three Letters to Beginners by John Ruskin

<https://www.alibris.co.uk/The-Elements-of-Drawing-in-Three-Letters-to-Beginners-John-Ruskin/book/31174396?matches=4>

Sketchbook Challenge: 100 Prompts for Daily Drawing by Susan Yeates.

Kickstart or develop your own daily sketching habit with 100 simple and thought-provoking prompts from the creator of the 30-Day Sketchbook Challenge. www.alibris.co.uk/booksearch?mtype=B&keyword=%22Sketchbook+challenge%22+Yeates&hs.x=0&hs.y=0

Image making classes at St Augustine's Church; <https://jayneruffellward.com/classes>

The Adorno Fathers: A Legacy of Eucharistic Devotion and Humble Service

The Spirit of Renewal in the Church

Fr Ted Kalaw, CRM

Throughout history, the Spirit of God has never abandoned His Church, raising up new religious communities in moments of great need. One such moment came during and after the Council of Trent, which sought to reform and strengthen religious life. In the second half of the 16th century, a number of new religious orders emerged, bringing fresh energy and renewed commitment to the Church. Among them was the Order of the Clerics Regular Minor, more commonly known as the Adorno Fathers.

Founders with a Noble Mission

The Adorno Fathers were founded by three men of noble birth who were profoundly touched by God's call: John Augustine Adorno, Fabrizio Caracciolo, and St Francis Caracciolo. Despite their privileged backgrounds, they chose to dedicate their lives entirely to God, embracing a life of humility, prayer, and service. Their mission was clear: to reform the clergy, promote deeper Eucharistic devotion, and bring about moral renewal among the faithful.

These three visionaries came together in Naples, withdrawing to the hermitage of Camaldoli, where they spent time in intense prayer and reflection. It was there that they formulated the foundational Rule for their new religious family. In addition to the traditional vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, they introduced a unique fourth vow – not to seek ecclesiastical dignities. This vow was a radical commitment to humility, ensuring that their focus remained solely on serving God and His people.

On 1st July 1588, Pope Sixtus V officially approved the Order of the Clerics Regular Minor, marking the beginning of a remarkable spiritual legacy.

The Charism of the Adorno Fathers

At the heart of the Adorno Fathers' spirituality is the imitation of Christ in the Paschal Mystery. They live out this calling through a life of prayer, fraternity, and pastoral service. One of their most distinctive spiritual practices is Circular Adoration – a continuous cycle of Eucharistic worship among the members of the community. For them, adoring the Blessed Sacrament is not just an act of devotion but a way of uniting with Christ's ongoing intercession for the Church and the world.

This deep Eucharistic spirituality naturally extends into their ministry. The Adorno Fathers strive to cultivate among the faithful a profound love for the Eucharist, encouraging communal adoration and fostering vocations through their pastoral and missionary work.

St Francis Caracciolo: A Life of Holiness

Among the three founders, St Francis Caracciolo stands out as a beacon of holiness. Born into nobility in 1563, he could have pursued a life of privilege, yet he chose the path of radical discipleship. After recovering from a serious illness, he renounced all his wealth and noble titles, dedicating himself entirely to God's service.

In Naples, he immersed himself in prayer, often spending hours in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. He also joined the 'Company of the White Robes of Mercy', a confraternity dedicated to assisting the sick, the poor, and prisoners. His unwavering commitment to Christ and to the suffering members of society earned him a reputation as the 'Father of the Poor' and the 'Preacher of God's Love.'

St Francis Caracciolo's life was one of intense prayer and self-giving. He even declined an episcopal appointment, preferring to remain in humble service within his Order. He died in 1608 at the age of 44, on the eve of Corpus Christi – a fitting end for a man whose life had been centered on Eucharistic adoration. He was canonised by Pope Pius VII in 1807.

Challenges and Resurgence

The Adorno Fathers flourished between 1687 and 1830, growing to five provinces – two in Spain and three in Italy – with around 50 communities and as many as 800 religious members. They were actively engaged in parish work, teaching and serving as consultors for the Holy See. However, the Order faced severe challenges in the 19th century. The suppression of religious orders, political upheavals, and the rise of nationalism led to the closure of many houses and a decline in vocations.

Despite these setbacks, the Order experienced a revival in the early 20th century, particularly after World War I. New communities were established, and the Adorno Fathers expanded their mission beyond Europe. Today, they are present in Italy, Germany, the United States, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Kenya, India, the Philippines, Saipan, France, and, most recently, Great Britain.

The Adorno Fathers Today: A Living Witness

In the modern world, the Adorno Fathers continue to live out their charism of humility, Eucharistic devotion, and missionary service. Each member is called to a life of deep prayer and pastoral ministry, seeking to bring souls closer to Christ through the power of the Eucharist. Their communities are centres of adoration,

fraternity, and service, where the joys and challenges of religious life are shared in common.

The Order remains open to new vocations, inviting young men to embrace the religious life as priests, brothers, or permanent deacons. In a world that often seeks power and prestige, the Adorno Fathers offer a countercultural witness – one that points to the true source of joy and fulfillment: a life lived for the Greater Glory of the Risen Christ (*Ad Majorem Resurgentis Gloriam*).

Looking to the Future

As they step into the third millennium, the Adorno Fathers remain confident in God's providence. With hearts full of gratitude, they renew their commitment to their founding charism, trusting in the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Their mission continues: to be living signs of Christ's resurrection, bringing hope to a world in need of His redeeming love.

In the words of their motto, they live For the Greater Glory of the Risen Christ, always seeking to reflect His light in a world longing for truth and salvation.



Monsignor Ronald Knox

Dr Peter Neville

In the 20th century, the English Catholic community produced three remarkable literary, political and religious figures. They were G. K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc and Monsignor Ronald Knox. Of the three, Knox (1888–1957) was perhaps the most remarkable. Starting life as an Anglican, Knox converted to Catholicism, was ordained as a Catholic priest and made a monsignor by Pope Pius XII in 1951. As the Catholic student chaplain at Oxford University for many years, Knox became a

highly influential figure. Thus developing a characteristic, evident in the early part of his life when he had briefly been tutor to the youthful Harold MacMillan. By then already a Catholic, he was sacked by MacMillan's American mother for breaking a promise not to talk about religion! It is easy to forget now the ferocity of anti-Catholicism in those days just before the First World War. Even then at Oxford, Knox came very close to converting the future prime minister to Catholicism. He retained the great respect of MacMillan even when he became premier (1957–63). When Knox had to come to London for medical treatment, he was allowed to stay with MacMillan at 10 Downing Street.

Knox became a distinguished theologian, who explored his journey to Catholicism in *A Spiritual Aeneid: Being an Account of the Journey to a Catholic Faith*, in 1918, while also using his prowess as a classical scholar (he won numerous classics prizes while at Eton and Oxford) to translate the Latin Bible into English (in a version which was widely used by Catholics in the 1960s and 70s). He later attributed his conversion to Catholicism to G. K. Chesterton, then a High Anglican who himself became a Catholic in 1922. The two men had much in common, in particular an interest in writing detective novels, although Chesterton's detective hero Father Brown (the hero of a long running BBC TV series and films starring Alec Guinness, a Catholic himself) was much better known than Knox's Miles Brendon. Knox however, can claim to have written the definitive Ten Commandments for detective novelists in 1929.

He was also an accomplished broadcaster for the BBC; he can be heard on YouTube talking about Cardinal Newman. His prowess on what was then called 'the wireless' was shown as early as 1926, when he was responsible for a programme which suggested that there had been a revolution and the House of Commons had been destroyed. Severe weather meant an absence of newspapers, which would have shown that Knox had created a dramatic fiction. Orson Welles was to admit later that his notorious 1938 *War of the Worlds* radio drama, which created a mass United States panic about an alleged Martian invasion, was influenced by Knox's drama.

Knox was thus a man of many talents, who could write spoofs suggesting that Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson were real people, while also translating the autobiography of Saint Teresa of Lisieux. He was also a man of some courage. Converting to Catholicism and abandoning his Anglican background meant that he was cut out of his father's will, and ostracised by his family. His talent and determination meant that Ronnie Knox (as he was known to friends and admirers) was indeed a Catholic of influence.

Personal Stories & Experiences

A day in the life of an Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) member

Petra Tucker

Having volunteered in a position where most interactions took place virtually, I decided that I wanted to find a role with a greater hands-on approach, as I like to be 'on the shop floor'! I then saw an advert for the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB).

IMB members are the eyes and ears of the public, appointed by ministers to perform a vital task: independent monitoring of prisons and immigration detention. We report on whether prisoners are being treated justly and humanely, and whether they are being given the support they need to turn their lives around. Our work can make a huge difference to the lives of those held within these facilities. You can find the IMB's annual report on the web (www.imb.org.uk) for any prison – they make for interesting reading.

I now volunteer as a Board member in a high security prison housing male prisoners who pose the greatest threat to the public, the police and national security.

As an IMB member, you have access to all prisoners, staff, all areas of the prison and most records. On a typical day, I leave home at 7.30am and the earliest I get home is 5.30pm. As I drive there, I plan my day in my head, starting with the senior management team's daily briefing, which gives me an idea of what is happening in the prison on that day. Prisoners may be mentioned for a variety of reasons and I may decide to visit them, recognising that they could benefit from some support from the IMB. As I listen to what is being shared in the daily briefing, my day unfolds and any tentative plan of action is overturned by the 'life of the prison'! Before I know it – 4.30pm has come around and I am handing in my keys. The work is always interesting and often challenging.

Prisoners can put in an 'app' – application to the IMB – when they want to speak to us. They might have issues about lost property, dietary requirements, visits of family and friends. It is important to remember that our work is monitoring – we are not advocates – as our independence is vital.

The Board may do a 'deep dive' into a particular area of the prison. Recently, I went to the kitchen and looked at everything I could think of. Whilst there, I chatted to the prisoners who were making sandwiches for the next day's meals. Part of my day may be watching meals

being served at the servery on each wing, looking for things like the wearing of white hats and coats.

I attended early one morning to watch a medication round on one of the wings. Sometimes it can be challenging for the nurses to do a round while the wing's regime carries on regardless. I might go to the workshops and chat to prisoners as they work. Meaningful and purposeful activity is important for the men. We might monitor the visitors' hall or check that arranging visits is easy.

The care and separation unit (informally called the segregation unit) and gated cells are an area we visit each time we are in prison. Holding prisoners in solitary confinement is not good for their long-term well-being, so the Board observe fortnightly segregation reviews, where the prison sign off that each prisoner is being held there appropriately. Prisoners are segregated under several rules. Rule 45 is applied for two reasons. Either you are segregated because prison staff believe you are dangerous to other people and/or you are segregated for your own protection, as prison staff believe you are in danger.

I may go to the wings and just walk around to chat to the prisoners – invariably somebody has something they need to discuss with you. I like to see what the prisoners are cooking on the spur kitchens. Flavours from all over the world.

There is always an IMB member on-call, who is notified in case of an incident, and for more serious incidents we go to the command suite to monitor how the incident is handled. Serious incidents might be someone climbing 'on the nets' (installed in certain areas, such as stairwells or landings), which prevent prisoners from harming themselves by jumping from heights, or a death in custody. One of the challenges for me is seeing prisoners who have serious mental health problems – distressing to see as they are just so ill.

The prisoners will often say, "Hey Miss – what do you get paid for this?" We explain it is voluntary and we are respected for that. However, there are occasions when a prisoner will tell you (often in abusive language) how useless you are! The noise levels on the wings are tremendous and it can be difficult at times to hear the men talk.

Our team is small, with just five members. We are all from different backgrounds and ages but we work well together and I feel supported if I have any questions. We are always looking for new members, there are many prisons to choose from and we are currently recruiting! Why do I write about this in a parish magazine? For me, this kind of work is social justice put into action in an increasingly godless world. I don't know whether or not

my colleagues have a belief – that is irrelevant, as it is my Christian faith that motivates me.

If you'd like to find out more or apply to be an IMB member, you can do so on our website www.imb.org.uk. Our recruitment campaign closes on the 15th April.

My journey to Calvary

Mary Gullick

Many parishioners know my parents, or have heard of them, but my siblings and I have been in the background until recent times. All of us had different paths, each had difficulty and at times felt alone. This season we journey to Calvary, but all of us strangers from different backgrounds and upbringings united by faith alone, a deep need at this time of year to regenerate or clear space for the next new year which is started in March.

My mum and dad had their unique ways and traditions, not all of which have been kept, but having faith is certainly one of them I and my siblings have. My mum would say, "I don't go to church because I am good or holy, I go because I need to". For her, it was a support through the good and the bad, and, when life became a struggle, her faith was her food to be nourished by, even if as a child I didn't understand why.

I have never been shy about saying I had a battle with believing everything like my mum and dad did, especially when times were hardest, like in 2011 when I lost my children: two in foster care, and one was adopted. My journey to Calvary then was one like Thomas who doubted – how can God do something like this to me and my children? So much pain and intense feelings which I am now at peace with, and healing support just like Christ when he takes the journey to Calvary. He would have his faith tested even knowing his fate. How would we feel, if we all knew the fate we had, at critical and fate making times?

We all have had to rebuild, find our way. And, as for the family I lost – one of the two is now an adult living independently who still struggles with his past. He went through a painful childhood experience that no child should ever have to go through and, when you discover it, you feel so powerless. As a mum I would go to the ends of the earth for all my children. There isn't anything I wouldn't do, as long as I have it in me and am able to. The other is still, as far as I'm aware, in foster care, and a third child very creative but trying to find her way in this world. All of them are Cambridge-born children and loved by me, held deeply in my heart like Mary held her son when she wept painfully for him knowing she couldn't do any more.

At some point we will play a character in Lent: Mary, Christ, the apostles, high priest, tax collectors, officials. Whoever we are during this time, we will play our part and find ourselves in the role, but do we choose heart or head? Do we journey to Calvary with consciousness, or lead with a full heart, knowing the destination is the Cross at Calvary and our restart??

May Easter bring you many blessings!

Poetry Corner

Lenten Meditation

Philippa Johnson

The crocus rises,
a crowd of soft, purple spears
from bare brown earth.
Lord God, have mercy on us:
bring us back to life.

In hazel & oak, sap rises,
leaves stretch from sleeping stems,
push towards the light.
Christ Jesus, have mercy on us:
lead us back to your light.

On rose & lilac, buds rise,
packed with fragrance & colour,
eager to open, share bounty.
Lord God, have mercy on us:
encourage our generosity.

Narcissus & tulip rise,
remind us of persistence
throughout the long, dark waiting.
Christ Jesus, have mercy upon us:
draw us on to walk with You.

The Son will rise in glory:
awaken our hope, refresh us in prayer
renew us from our sleeping.
Lord God, have mercy on us:
dawn in our hearts anew this day.

Dream Builder

(To my daughter, upon her leaving to study architecture)

Nick Corcoran

O build me a grand mansion, with doors to West and East
With gallery and great hall, where company may feast
And terraces to stroll upon, and see the evening fade
And hear the tall trees whisper when there's no more to be said.

O build for me a castle up in the mountains bare
A castle up above the clouds, a castle in the air!
There the days will pass in dreaming, as the cloudy flocks go by
And the nights shall be for wonder, with the moon and stars so nigh.

O build for me a city, where men at peace may be
A city in the shining plain, a city on the sea!
O build me Rome and Timbuktu
And Shangri-la and Xanadu
With wondrous palaces and towers
And gardens full of secret bowers -

But in the end I'll tire of these
Here is where I'd take my ease:
A place where friends will lift the latch
A stair to a room beneath the thatch
A window looking down a lane
Where one day you will come again

Poems about Lent – by St Laurence's Confirmation Group:

Poem 1

This Ash Wednesday
we bring Lent
Remembering those 40 days
Jesus Spent
In the Wilderness preparing
what to Say
To them He would teach up to
Good Friday
Here is 3 things that we
need to do
Fast, Pray and Almsgiving, too
During Lent it's a good time
to confess
Let Jesus clean up your mess
Give up chocolate, TV or sweets
And on Friday, stay away
from meat
Hallelujah, you must not say
Lent begins this Ash Wednesday!

Poem 2

40 Days by Klara, Patrick and Ryan

40 Days of Lent
40 Days in the Desert
Jesus survived 40 days
What can we give up for 40 Days?

I am giving up sugar,
I am giving up video games,

I am giving up being angry,
I am giving up eating cereal.
By the grace of God, we can
achieve this by sacrificing,
praying, almsgiving and fasting.
By the grace of God.
40 Days.

Poem 3:

Dear Heavenly Father,
we come to You today.
because we know
You lead the way.
we just want to come
to You and pray.
We are coming up to Lent,
We would like to repent,
because of the message
You sent,
to us in Your word.
For 40 days
we will dedicate to You,
please show us what to do,
we will give up things and take
up things,
We will read Your word,
we would like to offer
this Lent for You,
for the things that You do.
So thank you.
Amen

Lenten Anguish

Teresa Brett

A piece for *The Pilgrim* is just
what I need
Because I don't have to succeed
In worldly terms.
Like friendly worms
Who eat up methane,
Who give us air
And keep us sane.

Soil needs air to live,
Like us, who need air to give
As God taught us.
I'm a tortoise
Bringing slow hope
To my Lenten grope.

We need God, all of us.
We need Lent, without fuss
Except to teach
As we try to reach
Out to others,
Make all our brothers.

I hate Lent
But I repent
Of that hatred,
for it centres on me.
If centred on the One I can't see
It may win
Me and others from sin.

This took me five minutes
to write.
Its sacred inspirer is out of sight.

The Pilgrim

By Email: The Pilgrim magazine is available as a paper copy or you can receive a pdf version by email. If you are not already on the distribution list, send a request to pilgrim@saintlaurence.org.uk

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

Parish Pastoral Council (PPC)

<https://www.saintlaurence.org.uk/ppc/>

Chair: Michanne Haynes-Prempeh

Enquiries: ppc@saintlaurence.org.uk.

ABLAZE

The St Laurence Youth Mass is known as Ablaze. It is designed to encourage our youth to build their confidence in participating in all aspects of the Mass.

It is held on the first Sunday of the month at 5pm. It is a vibrant and fun Mass. We encourage young Readers, Eucharistic Ministers, budding musicians and singers of all ages, the only requirement is enthusiasm for God. If you are looking for 'perfection' you won't find it here! So, if you fancy it pluck up your courage and join in.

Upcoming Parish Events

Lent & Easter	
Stations of the Cross	Fridays 7-7.30pm
Holy Hour (Adoration and Confessions)	Thursdays 6.30-7.30pm
CWL Lent lunches	Fridays after 12.30pm Mass
Chrism Mass St John's Cathedral, Norwich	Tues 15 April at 11.30am
Holy Week Masses	
Maundy Thursday, 17 April	7.30pm Mass followed by watching until midnight
Good Friday, 18 April	
Children's Stations of the Cross	10-11.30am
Veneration of the Cross with Holy Communion	1pm and 3pm
Stations of the Cross	7.30pm
Easter Vigil, 19 April	9pm
Easter Sunday, 20 April	8am, 9.30am, 11am
Other events	
First Holy Communion weekends	14-15 and 21-22 June
How to pray event	Saturday 24 May 11.30am-3pm
Regular meetings	
Saturday morning Coffee Hub Parish room	10am-12pm (after 9.30am Mass)
Sunday morning coffee	After 11am Mass
Soulfood	Tues 8pm
The Carlo Acutis Youth Group (for children who have made their First Holy Communion, but not yet been confirmed)	2nd Saturday of the month 3.30-5.30pm
First Friday celebration	6.30-9pm
First Saturday Devotions	8.15-9.30am



Follow St Laurence's on Facebook:

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

ST LAURENCE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

91 Milton Road, Cambridge CB4 1XB

Tel/Fax: 01223 987091

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.

Priest in Charge:

Fr Robin Mampallithadathil CRM

01223 987091

robinjosephcrm@rcdea.org.uk

Assistant Priest:

Fr Alex Vadasseril CRM

01223 987091

Deacon:

Rev. Dr Geoffrey Cook

01223 351650

Parish Administrator:

Emanuela Di Pietro

01223 987091

office@saintlaurence.org.uk

Treasurers:

Davide Fiorentino

Una Mannu

treasurer@saintlaurence.org.uk

Safeguarding:

Mary Jane & Jim O'Sullivan
safeguarding@saintlaurence.org.uk

Service Times

Saturday 9.30am

6:00pm Vigil Mass (sung)

Sunday 8.00am

9:30am (sung with Children's Liturgy)

11:00am (sung with Children's Liturgy)

Mon, Thurs 9.30am

Tues, Fri 12.30pm

Wed 6:00pm followed by Exposition

All Masses are livestreamed. Check the weekly newsletter for changes to the above times

St Laurence's School

Head of School

Mrs Rachel Chalklin (from Easter term onwards)

Address

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