

The Pilgrim

St Laurence's Parish Magazine, September 2021



The Lizard, Cornwall



Loch Lomond, Scotland



Pembrokeshire, Wales

**“Take a good look at God’s wonders –
they will take your breath away.”**

Psalm 66:5

Contents

What's New?

Habemus Presbyter	1
Coffee Hub	2
Ch-ch-ch-changes	2

Features and Opinions

Popes and Synods	3-4
Where strife and care are never seen	4-5
The Tamarisk Tree	5
Building Back Better	6
Thought for the Week	6-7
Affirming the dignity & joy of human life	7-8
This is the bread come down from heaven	8-9
Cardinal Points	9-12
Gift Aid	12

Parish Organisations & Activities

SVP update	12-13
CAFOD LiveSimply	13-14
CWL update	15
Parliament in your Parish	15-16
CAFOD There is no Planet B	16-17
Summary of Parish Open Meeting	17-18

Personal Stories & Experiences

Our Patron Saint – Deacon and Martyr	19-20
A trip down memory lane	20-21
Estere and the snake bite	22

Poetry Corner

Words	23
I wish I could see Jesus laugh	23

Editorial

24

What's New?

Habemus presbyter

Nora Darby



Parishioners and friends boarded a coach for Norwich on the morning of Saturday 3rd July. Pulling away right on time at 9am, we had a trouble-free journey to the Cathedral of St John the Baptist, arriving with time in hand as our experienced driver took us through the back streets of Norwich avoiding the busy streets around the Saturday Market in the town centre.

A congregation of around 150, with about 40 from St Laurence's and members of Fr Mike's family, gathered for the Ordination with choir and organ providing a sung Mass. The ordination was conducted by Bishop Alan Hopes assisted by some of the other 25 priests in attendance from around the Diocese as well as several altar servers.

Among the priests present were Fr Simon, Fr Bob, Fr Pat, Fr Jay and Fr Simon Davies who did a wonderful job of looking after Fr Mike ahead of the ordination and guiding him through the ceremony.

Antonia Braithwaite of the Philip Howard Parish beautifully read one of the lessons and, as well as his usual sermon, Bishop Alan gave a short speech of thanks to Fr Mike at the end of Mass. Fr Mike gave a lovely reply, in which he said: I don't think you can ever feel fully prepared for it but ultimately it is about trusting in God that he will give you the strength to do His work.



The congregation were then invited to receive our newly ordained priest's first blessings – always a special honour.

Afterwards we had a picnic lunch in the grounds of the Cathedral leaving Norwich at 2.30pm arriving back to St Laurence's later in the afternoon.

I returned to the church later that evening to attend 6pm Mass and was delighted to bump into Fr Mike who had not long arrived back from Norwich and we chatted about how much we had both enjoyed the occasion.

Fr Mike celebrated his first Mass the next day at 11am – a joyous occasion – followed by a small celebration in the Parish garden with parishioners who were able to stay on.

In his first year as a priest, Fr Mike is really looking forward to working with people and helping them in their faith and in their prayer life.

It has been lovely to have Fr Mike in our Parish for the first few weeks of his life as a priest, but he has now left to spend some time living and working at the Cathedral in Norwich. Our thoughts and prayers will be with him.

Meanwhile, we can look forward to a Mass of Thanksgiving followed by farewell celebration and presentation of leaving gift on Friday 17th September at 7.30pm.



St Laurence's Coffee Hub
Every Saturday 10am to 12pm

Jeanette Milbourn



Design drawn by Kay Dodsworth

This is really a fancy name for our very own street cafe which we started in June as lockdown was coming to an end. The idea came from a similar Coffee Hub set up by St Thomas's and St Martin's church in Newnham. The aim is to build a sense of community within our Parish and to link with the wider local community.

Our inaugural coffee hub was on 26th July and we have managed to open every Saturday (except for Mike Smith's ordination which some of us were lucky enough to attend) since then, despite many of our small band of volunteers being away on holiday. So far, we have had great support from the 9.30am Mass attendees and some other parishioners keen to see people face to face again.

We would really like to spread the word to all parishioners that the Coffee Hub is for all of you, especially those of you who may have been isolating for a long time and are worried about coming out and meeting people again. Our aim is to provide a safe, open-air environment which is why we have set up in the car park and will continue to do so, weather permitting. If it rains, we will move inside for those of you who feel comfortable to do this.

We would really like to see the Saturday Coffee Hub continue as a regular feature of St Laurence's life but, to do that, we will definitely need more volunteers. At the moment, we are a small team of about five people and it would be lovely to have more so that we could start a rota system, and maybe even have some setting up and others packing away – since being outside means

we have to move the tables and chairs. We really could do with some more strong volunteers to help with this. If you would like to help, please email Jo Wager jowager@aol.com or telephone 07989 81141.

On Saturday 25th September, we are going to take part in the Macmillan 'World's Biggest Coffee Morning' to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support so please put this date in your diary in particular. But don't wait until then – come along this week for a cup of tea or coffee, a biscuit and a chat – all free (although donations are gratefully received). We have bunting and colourful tablecloths to make it look amazing – come and join us soon and see for yourself how lovely it all is!

Ch-ch-ch changes

There are a number of changes afoot:

As you may have seen in the newsletter, from September, and after 10 years of being our Assistant Priest, Fr Bob will be stepping back from his full-time role at St Laurence's. He will continue to help with some weekly Masses and to be busy at Blackfriars, plus by request and with the permission of the Bishop, the occasional Latin Mass. He will also, of course, step in as and when needed to cover for holidays etc. Meanwhile, he is looking forward to weekend invites and trips.

And as Fr Bob leaves, we will be joined by Fr Walter Chenyika, of the same diocese as Fr Johanne, from Zimbabwe.

Fr Mike will also be moving on to Norwich at the beginning of September, but we look forward to welcoming him back briefly on 17th September for a farewell bash after a Mass of Thanksgiving. The Parish Office is happy to accept all offers of help with organising this.

The Bishops are planning for a full return to the Sunday Mass obligation on the first Sunday of Advent and, as we move on into the autumn, we hope to continue with the gradual relaxation of restrictions which we've had over the final weeks of summer, including singing with masks on and welcoming an increased number of people in church.

Features and Opinions

Popes and Synods

Joe Canning

The forthcoming synod of bishops called by Pope Francis raises fundamental questions about the nature and government of the Church. Pope Francis is expressly acting in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council which stressed collegiality and a reinvigorated role for bishops. Synods or councils have played an important role throughout the history of the Church but as the papal monarchy developed over the last 1000 years there has tended to be a tension between the claims of the papacy and those of bishops. When in session, a general council of the Church, largely composed of bishops, has been a parallel source of authority to that of the pope, who would, in normal circumstances be part of that council.

The most dramatic example of the role of general councils came at the time of the worst crisis which the Catholic Church has ever known – the Great Western Schism (also called the Papal Schism) (1378–1417). From 1378 there were two people who claimed to be pope (the Roman and the Avignon popes, both elected by the self-same College of Cardinals), and after 1409 three, because the cardinals of the Council of Pisa, from both obediences, deposed the papal claimants and chose a third pope (neither the Roman nor the Avignon popes accepted their depositions). Alexander V reigned briefly from 26th June 1409 until his death in 1410, when he was succeeded by John XXIII. This amounted to an institutional breakdown in the government of the Church at its weak point – the election of a pope. There had been many disputed elections and schisms before but this one was unprecedented in its duration. Who was the true pope? It was, and remains, a murky question. The vast bulk of Catholic Europe accepted the Pisan pope, John XXIII, as the true pope – the Avignon and Roman popes had far fewer supporters.

The Schism was solved by a general council of the Church, the Council of Constance (1414–1418). This turned out to be the only way of doing it because the popes themselves proved incapable of doing so. In the event, John XXIII was prevailed upon to call the Council under pressure from the Emperor-elect, Sigismund. He then absconded but was apprehended and brought back. The Council deposed John and the Avignon pope, Benedict XIII; the Roman pope, Gregory XII, did the decent thing and resigned, and then sat on the back benches as a cardinal. In 1417 the council elected Martin V. The modern papacy considers that Gregory XII was the true pope all along. In 1958, Angelo Roncalli took the name of John XXIII showing the 15th-century one was considered to have been an

anti-pope (not a true pope). This is not how it seemed at the time. John's tomb can be seen in the baptistry of Florence cathedral with the inscription, 'John XXIII, sometime pope (*quondam papa*)'.

The Council of Constance marked the high-point of the conciliar movement in the church – its moment in the sun. Conciliarism was an entirely orthodox theory of church government which provided an alternative, indeed a polar opposite, to papal monarchy which had been developing exponentially since the Reform Papacy of the 11th century. The conciliarist argument was that ultimate authority in the Church lay with the whole Christian people, the congregation of the faithful, which was represented by a general council which in turn was superior to the pope and could depose him. The conciliarists were not Protestants before their time: they were trying not to abolish the papal office but to control it. The pope was seen as a part of the council – but the part was not greater than the whole.

The papal theory was simple, indeed. It was one of monarchy. Christ, the head of the Church, had chosen St Peter as his vicar on earth and had committed the government of the Church to him. It was a thoroughly hierarchical view. Much emphasis was placed on the text, Matt.16:18-19: 'Thou art Peter and upon this rock I shall build my church...' including the grant of the powers of the keys of binding and loosing to him. But there was a problem. There were orthodox opinions in the patristic period and the Middle Ages which identified the rock with Christ. Furthermore, as the conciliarists stressed, at Matt.18:18 Christ had granted the powers of binding and loosing more generally. But to whom? The popes tried to control councils: in canon law for a council to be valid it had to be called by the pope, and for its decrees to be valid they had to be approved by him. A pope could always avoid calling a council. The Council of Constance tried to solve this problem by the decree, *Frequens* of 1417, which enacted a change in the constitution of the Church, whereby there would be regular councils, one five years after Constance, one seven years after that, and then one every ten years till the end of time.

If one had been alive in 1415 one would, most likely, have thought that the future lay with conciliarism. But against the odds, it was the papal monarchy which survived in the form of the Renaissance papacy which adorned Rome with magnificent architecture built with stones pillaged from ancient monuments. The issues which were raised by the conciliar movement, including reform of the Church, were never properly addressed providing a backdrop for the crisis of the Reformation in the 16th century. The papacy survived but in a weakened and changed form.

The history of the Church did not have to go the way it did. The orthodoxy of the alternative vision of the conciliar movement was in part shown by the way in which its supporters argued in terms of canon law which also contained a large amount of material on councils and synods. The last council of the conciliar period, the Council of Basel was dissolved in 1449. The papacy appeared to have won, although conciliarism continued as the official position at Paris, Europe's foremost theological university, and a small council took place at Pisa and Milan in 1511–12. The papacy tried to write the conciliar movement out of history. Its success is shown by the fact that, to this day, most Catholics have not heard of the conciliar movement. It did of course feature in discussions at the Second Vatican Council. The conciliar movement is clearly relevant to us because it was the most spectacular historical example of the issues of synodality and collegiality, watch-words of Vatican II. On a purely local point, we await the choice of a bishop. But we wait on the papacy's decision. Why should this be so? In the late Middle Ages it was a point of disagreement whether bishops derived their powers of jurisdiction from the pope. In the early Church, of course, bishops were elected by the local clergy and people.

Where Strife and Care are Never Seen

Michael Allan

From *I'll Dream Upon the Days to Come* by John Clare

I'll lay me down on the greensward
Mid yellow cups and speedwell blue
And pay the world no more regard
But be to nature loyal and true
Who breaks the peace of hapless man
But they who truth and nature wrong?
I'll hear not more of evil's plan
But live with nature and her song

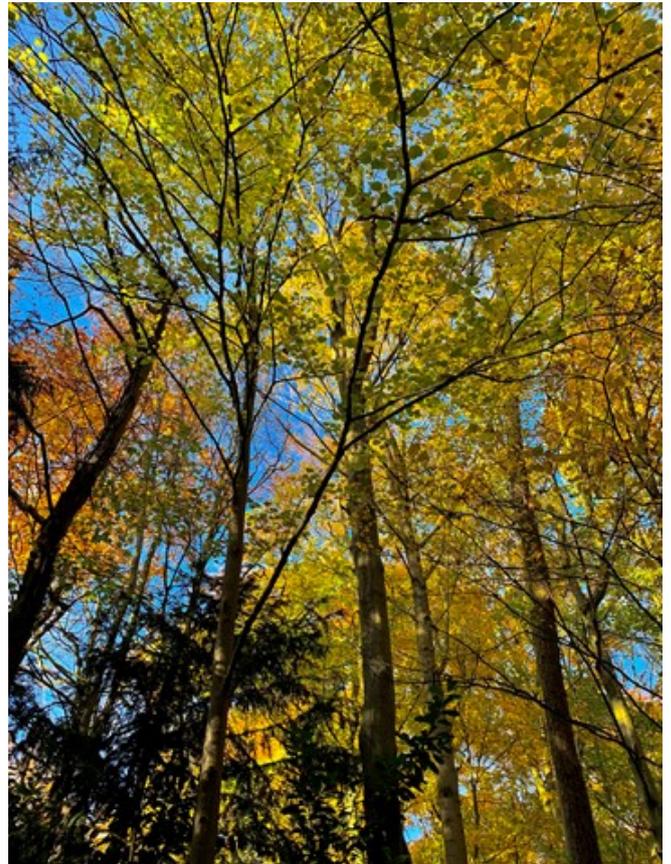
Where nature's lights and shades are green
Where nature's place is strewn with flowers
Where strife and care are never seen
There I'll retire to happy hours
And stretch my body on the green
And sleep among the flowers in bloom
By eyes of malice seldom seen
And dream upon the days to come

(greensward: grass-covered ground)

How many of us in this last year and a half have longed to lie down and sleep and dream in peace, away from 'strife and care', to 'pay the world no more regard'?

Grief and fear, anxiety and stress, have been forced upon all of us. For those who have been 'shielding', we have often felt shut away and forgotten. But, in one way or another, we have all of us been through a lot, and have all had enough.

Walking in the countryside, in a park, along a riverbank has been a welcome escape, giving some peace and beauty. Being in that green world has taken us away for a while not just from the pandemic, but also from the often harsh noise and violence of the human world we have made. We need that more-than-human world that lies beyond our front door and TV screen far more than perhaps we realise. It is not insignificant that our lost Eden was a garden – ideally a place where humans and the rest of creation live together in peace.



The poet John Clare (1793–1864) had a great need of rest and peace. His mental health grew worse throughout his life. It is thought that he may have had bipolar disorder with episodes of severe paranoia, delusions, and hopelessness. Sadly, there was no proper diagnosis available, let alone any effective treatment. He was committed to St Andrew's Asylum (Northampton General Lunatic Asylum) in 1841 due to 'insanity', spending the last 23 years of his life there.

Also, he was greatly distressed by seeing the green world he loved, that had brought him so much joy, coming under attack. In the 'Enclosures' of land that happened in his lifetime large areas of 'common land' were forcibly enclosed, with fences and hedges put up,

pastures put to the plough, trees and shrubs uprooted, and streams dammed or diverted and generally 'tidied up'. (*There's scarce a greensward spot remains. And scarce a single tree*.) If he was alive now, what would he see of that green world ... or not see?

For John Clare, in a sense, he and the green world he loved had both become enclosed; he, by the pain and darkness in his own mind and spirit, and by spending his last years in an asylum; and the green world, by being fenced in, regimented, uprooted, turned into an 'efficient' vehicle for profit.

Poetry is what he turned to: both to celebrate the green world, while also lamenting and protesting its destruction, and to lay bare, in some of his greatest poems, his own inner darkness and desolation. Poetry has the power to do this. Even in darkness it can be a celebration and affirmation of life.

The Tamarisk Tree

Fr Bob Eccles

In the book of Genesis, in chapter 31, we read, 'Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba' (a name that means 'the well of the oath' because there Abraham and Abimelech a local leader swore to keep the peace) – 'and called there on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God. And Abraham resided many days as an alien in the land of the Philistines.' I mention this about the tamarisk tree because Teresa very kindly took me, as a treat, to see a tamarisk tree only the other day. It's growing just down the street from St Laurence's Church, in the front garden of number 65, it has lovely feathery fronds and is coming into bloom. I'm told it came from India to accompany a family and remind them of home. Which might remind some of us of a homesick young poet who wrote about missing the English Christmas, instead of the holly and the mistletoe it was 'high noon behind the tamarisks, the sun is hot above us, as at home Christmas Day is breaking wan.' *Christmas in India* by Rudyard Kipling, the ever-present tamarisks come in every verse.

Some scholars wonder if the manna that the Hebrews were told to collect in the desert might have fallen as fruit from the tamarisk trees. They are found in hot dry lands around the Med and in southern Asia. It has very special properties, it puts down deep roots to find water and its evergreen leaves breathe out to refresh the traveller who finds its grateful shade, it's an air-conditioner. A Targum (an Aramaic translation of the Old Testament) reads the Hebrew characters of the word as an acrostic spelling Food, Drink and

Hospitality. In the book of Samuel, the paranoid King Saul takes his seat under a tamarisk to order the deaths of the priests of Nob who had been good to David trying to hide from the king. Such a tree would be a landmark. When Saul and his sons died in battle some of his crack troops rescued his body and took it to be buried 'under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh'.

What a treat, to meet a tamarisk tree! Trust Teresa to find one for me. There must be others, perhaps in the botanic garden? What was Abraham thinking of? God had sent him far from home to show him the Promised Land but not to possess it, he was always a stranger there, 'an alien in the land of the Philistines.' Well he did buy just a plot, just enough land to bury his wife. He never saw his descendants reach the land of the promise. So he was not to reap the benefit of his tree and sit under its shade himself, it was planted for generations to come, his gift for the future. Trees are perennials, they have a longer life than animals or man, and the sort we prize the most take time to grow, the olive for example can stand as the symbol of peace because it takes years of peacetime for it to produce fruit. Which is why cutting down an olive orchard belonging to a Palestinian family is such a terrible crime. So to plant a tree sends a message for a future. As the earth heats up, what message are we sending to posterity? The planet is sick, it needs trees, trillions of trees.

In the first Psalm, the virtuous person is like a tree planted by living water that puts down roots and produces fruits in due season, fruits of peace and justice. Water – it makes us think baptism? When we educate our children in the ways of faith, hope and love, to grow up in Christ, we and they are in it for the long term, they are not meant to drop off when they have made their Holy Communion or their Confirmation. To lapse means to fall over, and a lapsed Catholic is like a sickly tree that never put down roots in the first place!

There's lots more to be said about trees, of course. How often do they spring up in the Gospel parables? In one of the most famous Anglo-Saxon poems, *The Dream of the Rood*, the poet dreams of 'a splendid tree soaring aloft, wound round with light, the brightest of boughs': it is that 'one and only noble tree' of which the Church sings on Good Friday as she creeps to the Cross. What a resonant image for the life of the Spirit, the triumph tree! And on the very last page of the Bible, the book of Revelation or Apocalypse sees the water of life flowing from under the Temple to give life to desert places, and by its banks grows the tree of life with its perennial fruit, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Here is *The Dream of the Rood* again: 'Listen! Glory's Lord exalted me over the trees of the wood....now, resplendent, I rise up under heaven, and I can heal everyone who holds me in awe.'

Building Back Better

Dr Sue Price, Co-Principal and Pastoral Outreach Co-ordinator, Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology

These three Bs are the latest catchphrase and they are not to be taken lightly. I want to suggest that to be able to build back better there need to be strong foundations, based on knowledge, to enable whatever gets built, physically and metaphorically in our Churches, our local communities and our families, to be better.

Part of developing strong foundations requires becoming informed. A starting point might be to ask what exactly needs to be built? The Pope has given a very strong indication in his call for the Synod on Synodality. Joe Canning's article in this edition of *The Pilgrim* gives a very good starting point from an historical perspective. We are running a mini-series on the forthcoming Synod, led by Dr Peter Coughlan at the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, which will inform and give a strong foundation for the contributions that the Pope is asking each of us to make towards this important event in the Church's life. The course will run on 6th, 13th and 20th October, 4pm – 6pm, online. Cost: £50 (£45 early bird fee) for the whole series. Booking via Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/the-margaret-beaufort-institute-of-theology-33109216441>

I suggest that appropriate leadership is also part of how we build back better. Our Study Day on *Catholic Ethical Leadership and Management within Ecclesial and Secular Settings* features presentations from seminal lay and religious speakers in the field, including Anna Abram (Margaret Beaufort Institute), Charles Wookey (Blueprint for Business), Dame Laurentia Johns OSB (Stanbrook Abbey), Rev. Dr Adrian Porter SJ (London Jesuit Centre), Dr Gemma Simmonds CJ (Religious Life Institute) and Catherine Arnold OBE (St Edmund's College, Cambridge). Topics to be covered include sessions on Catholic social teaching and thought; Benedictine and Ignatian spiritualities of moral and ethical leadership; and ways in which the Church's teaching on the dignity of the individual can and must be met 'on the ground' both within an ecclesial and secular setting. This will be a mutually thoughtful and dynamic study day with the opportunity to engage, question and explore a topic of huge impact and importance upon individual lives within and without the Church. This will be online, 23rd October 2021, 10am–4pm, with appropriate breaks for lunch and coffee. Cost: £20. Booking via Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/the-margaret-beaufort-institute-of-theology-33109216441>

Our Thursday afternoon *Catholic Theology and Practice* (a learning space for Catholic Women)

modules also contribute to the theme of building back better. The modules in the coming term focus on spirituality and biblical studies that are an essential part of the strong foundations needed for the building work ahead. Dr Louise Nelstrop will be looking at *Jesus through the Centuries*, exploring how the person of Jesus has been understood and represented across history, from the Early Church to the present day. Dates: Thursday afternoons, 7th–28th October, 2pm – 5.30pm online via Zoom. Cost: £180. Email apply@mbit.cam.ac.uk The second module will be led by Dr Rosalie Moloney, looking at *The Nameless Women of the Bible: from Potiphar's Wife to the Samaritan Woman*. Rosalie will be exploring their stories through biblical sources, art and literature. As she says, by the end of the course you will still not know their names, but you will know these women. Dates: Thursdays, 4th–25th November, 2pm–5.30pm online via Zoom. Cost: £180. Email apply@mbit.cam.ac.uk

And there is much more on offer, do browse through our brochures, see what is going on via our website, <https://www.mbit.cam.ac.uk>, follow us on Twitter and Facebook. Becoming informed, strengthening our foundations and continuing to learn, are all essential elements contributing to building back better.

Thought for the Week

Originally written for students at Anglia Ruskin University

Rosina Abudulai, Roman Catholic Chaplain, ARU

'Here comes the dreamer, come on let us ...!' (Genesis 37:19). That story appeared not to have ended well for Joseph, the much-loved younger son among his brothers.

Dreams have a way of taking us out of the ordinary day to day experience. Sometimes, we daydream into a future of perfection: a future where everything is just as we would like to have it, whether it be related to a career, a certain passion, a place, family, or a home. Some of us may even dream ourselves into a castle! The point here is that most of us are constantly dreaming ourselves out of the tedium of our daily norm into a certain defined future of perfection.

These 'future-perfect' dreams were in existence pre-pandemic. However, it now appears as though we are having reverse dreams. We just want everything to be as it was before the pandemic struck. We want back pre-lockdown March 2020! How interesting, that we have had to go through such a surreal period to appreciate the fact that our mundane activities form the fabric of life. It is what life is about, and that perfection is in the moment! Perfection is in the moment we share with

family and friends, when we hug a loved one, when we speak to the stranger, when we share laughter about nothing significant. There lies perfection, in the very little and seemingly trivial activities of the day!

So where does that place dreams? Must we stop dreaming altogether? We know that some dreams remain a dream, but not all. Joseph dreamt dreams, and one might say dangerous dreams at that, especially when he shared them in good faith with his brothers (Gen.37: 5–11). Mostly, his dreams pointed to a future where his elder brothers would bow before him, the youngest! He was disliked by his siblings for these dreams which he shared generously. And because of such dreams, he almost lost his life, getting away rather lightly, having instead been sold by his brothers, once the opportunity arose, into slavery to a foreign land.

But Joseph's dreams became a reality. After unimaginable twists and turns of life from a 'favourite child' to a child in slavery, his brothers – all ten of them – driven by famine from their home country, travelled afar in search of grain. And they did indeed, come to bow before one with great authority, beyond their recognition, a chancellor of a foreign land in charge of all affairs, to buy grain! That was Joseph! Joseph, for his part, recognised his brothers instantly. (Gen. 42). Was this too a divine plan?

Pope Francis, in his book *Let us Dream* (2020), encourages us to dream the path to a better post-pandemic future. And yes, each one of us can dream more positively, see much more broadly, listen more attentively, smile a bit more often – especially to that stranger (someone must have smiled at Joseph, for him to become who he became!) – and share the love of God in our daily mundane activities more generously; the pandemic has stirred all these qualities in us.

So yes, let us dream into a better post-pandemic future, applying Mother Teresa's words wherever we find ourselves: "if each of us would only sweep our own doorstep, the whole world would be clean".

And above all, look what the 'dreamer' ended up as!

Affirming the Dignity and Joy of Human Life

Karen Rodgers

I had a friend at college who thought she was God. She had no straws in her hair but was in fact a very focussed, intelligent, and determined young lady who is now a leading bureaucrat in a high-ranking and influential position. My friend was, and I understand still is, a solipsist; that is, she believes that everything she

experiences is a projection of her own imagination. This still begs the questions, where did her consciousness originate and why did it come into being at all. But it is one possible view of the human person and not, it seems, an uncommon one.

We all need a working model of who we think we are, why we are here, and what this tells us about the status of the other people in our lives, because without it we cannot begin to take even the simplest of decisions which are needed for every-day living. How do we spend our time? How do we react to challenges presented by others? How do we allocate resources? The way in which we answer these questions crucially depends on what we think we are and hence what we think about other people. It seems to me that there are only three possible views.

The first was the one embraced by my solipsist friend; i.e. that we are God and that therefore being the creator we can and should have the right to dispose of others as we see fit. In my experience of talking to friends, the second is probably the commonest; that each one of us is merely a material being, a chance result of blind evolution, not essentially different from any other animal. This view begs the question as to where all the matter came from in the first place and the further question as to why we should trust our own minds at all if they are each merely chance products of an irrational universe.

For those who find it implausible that they are the creator and observe that the existence of logic alone points to there being more to life than the merely material, the third possible view is that we are created beings whose existence is due to a creator. It follows that we have both a need and a responsibility to find out what we were made for and hence how we should live our lives.

The question as to which of these three views we embrace is not only of philosophical importance; the answer we give to the question, 'what am I?' has highly practical consequences.

If we believe we are God, then we have a right to do what we like to our creations; we made them after all.

If we believe we are merely material beings and that both logic and morality are therefore merely chance emanations from the material world, of no more consequence than the path traced by leaves in the wind, then we have no duties and are at complete liberty to do whatever we like to anyone who is weaker than we are.

It is only if we acknowledge our status as created beings, with a responsibility both to our creator and, because of this responsibility, a duty to give account of our dealings with the other beings the creator has made, that we can have any rational basis for asserting what we should or should not do.

It comes down to this; who says I cannot do whatever I like to anyone who is weaker than I am? Who is going to tell me I can't take what I want from someone poorer than me, of lower status or of less influence?

The materialist will simply say that it is the person who is stronger than you who will stop you from taking what you want but will have no arguable basis at all for indicating anyone who can prevent the strongest person from taking whatever he or she wants. Might is the only measure of right.

The average non-believer has no idea to what extent their life and happiness depend on the upholding of the traditional consensus that we have rights and duties because we are created beings. We are now seeing in China what happens when this traditional consensus breaks down; a denial of objective truth which inevitably leads to the unleashing of a lust for power and in this way to forced labour, forced imprisonment, forced abortions, forced and fatal organ donation.

I have worked as a care assistant in a retirement home, as an advice worker in a deprived area of London, as a volunteer at a homeless project, as a teacher for student support, as a teaching assistant and teacher at a psychiatric unit school and in comprehensives and in the community with young families. Chillingly, I can attest that it is not only in China that might is proving to be perceived as right. Thirty years ago, I saw poor people being exploited and elderly people being deprived of warmth, food, and even water. Twenty-five years ago, I saw young women in schools being routinely sexually harassed and teachers unable or unwilling to do anything about it.

Twenty years ago, I saw medical coshes being used on young people to control them in a way troubling to the consciences of the nurses who were employed to care for them, and young women under pressure to abort their babies. Fifteen years ago, I began to see parents being bullied by doctors and others to take actions which were contrary to their consciences with regard to the rearing of their own children. As a society we have been steadily, stealthily but inexorably moving from a view of the human person as created in the image of God to the idea that, in the absence of power or money, none of us are really any more significant or valuable than cattle.

Now here in the UK it has become commonplace for tiny conscious children to be dismembered, for those in positions of power and responsibility to believe they have the right to impose whatever they like on other people, for the lives of those with a disability, of critically ill toddlers and of elderly people to be ended because they are judged by those who wield power not to be worth living.

It seems very clear to me that we have a mission as Catholics to shine a light on these grievous abuses of power which are being carried out under the false cover of respectability.

But what can any of us do?

On Saturday 4th September there will be a pro-life festival that consists of live music, family fun activities, educational stalls, Christian prayer and inspiring speakers. The highlight of the day is a joyous march through the heart of London proclaiming our central message of 'Life from Conception, No Exception'. We are not God. We are not merely material beings. Each one of us is created for a purpose and greatly loved by our Creator. It is the mission of baptised Catholics to declare these truths. By God's grace we have the chance this September to affirm together the dignity and joy of human life.

This is 'the bread come down from heaven'

Fr Simon Blakesley

Of all the Sundays in the year when your parish priest, suffering from a mild degree of 'gate-fever' before his holiday, might be tempted to dash off a quickie 'omelette' – an abbreviated homily – the 7/8th August was it. And then I checked out the readings and realised that we have one of the most profound gospels that is ever read in our Sunday liturgies (John 6: 24-35). St John is giving us the heart and soul of our Lord's teaching about the mystery of the Eucharist, driving straight at the core of this reality the life of the Church.

Christ sustains us every day in the same way and to the same depth that we were nurtured and sustained in our mothers' wombs as we grew to birth. We were fed via our placenta and cord which in terms of 'foetal cosmology' is nourishment 'come down from heaven', a constant living and loving relationship that sustains us in the depth of our being. This is why the Church emphasises, as the Lord himself insisted, at the risk of scandalising the Jews, that this is a flesh and blood relationship by which we live in the depths of who we are as disciples of Jesus Christ. This is a 'cosmology' not consciously 'remembered' but nevertheless it remains constantly within the sub-conscious reality of the human mind and heart.

The Cross of Christ is become the 'Tree of Life' for us – our new and eternally life-giving placenta that is a constant and powerful sign of our being able to draw life from Christ as surely as he draws life from the Father. This is the reason why I am so motivated to suspend the crucifix in the church directly over the altar

as it is, par excellence, the sign of our being nurtured by Christ through the blood of his Cross.

I know that some of you may feel a bit queasy about such direct allusions and imagery, but it has always been at the heart of the unspoken, the pre-verbal dimension of the Paschal Mystery. It is the reason that, within the mystical tradition of the Church, the saints who have been drawn into the ‘thicket of the Cross’ have never been afraid of the blood of Christ; they realise that in the outpouring of his lifeblood flows the gift of our salvation. If you want to know this tradition just sing ‘Soul of my saviour’ once through and you will realise that we are all called into this flesh and blood relationship with Jesus through which he nourishes each and every one of us in the depths of our being. “Unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink of his blood, you cannot have life within you.” (John 6:53)

Cardinal Points – Metaphysics & Morality

Ronald Haynes

‘Just as each of us has one body with many members, and not all members have the same function, so in Christ we, who are many, are one body, and each member belongs to one another.’ This essential and famous message from the Christian Scriptures (Romans 12:4–5, 1 Corinthians 10:16–17 speaking to the world views of both Greeks and Romans) is among the most inspired and reassuring revelations, while also being one of the great mysteries we say are to be celebrated. The underlying concepts – of body as matter and metaphor, of identity and unity, of the one and the many – land us firmly in the enduring, often neglected, but strangely familiar territory of metaphysics.

St Paul channels insights from the great cultures around him, steeped as he was in Greek, Roman and Jewish traditions, and encourages us to ponder and follow where such deep matters take us. He advises us to consider: ‘whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise’ and asks us to ‘think about (or take account of) these things.’ Connecting this thought to action, he immediately adds the guidance to: ‘Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.’ (Philippians 4:8–9). Unsurprisingly, the connection between thought and action, between metaphysics and morals, is seen to be strong.

Einstein once said that: ‘The more I learn of physics, the more I am drawn to metaphysics,’ while Whitehead noted that: ‘No science can be more secure than the unconscious metaphysics which tacitly it presupposes.’ Schopenhauer maintained that: ‘Physics is unable to stand on its own feet, but needs a metaphysics on which to support itself, whatever fine airs it may assume towards the latter.’

More generally, for those who might try to detract from its relevance, Archbishop Fulton Sheen makes a clarifying point: ‘To deny the necessity or value of metaphysics is to assert a metaphysical principle, just as to say a religion must be without dogmas is to assert a dogma.’. Mircea Eliade points the way towards some of the personal and perennial significance: ‘The way towards ‘wisdom’ or towards ‘freedom’ is the way towards your inner being. This is the simplest definition of metaphysics.’

Returning to St Paul, the ‘Mystical Body’ deftly provides a maestro model for better understanding a much more radical mystery than may often be appreciated whose power may seem diminished by its extensive familiarity – perhaps a bit like the times we forget the power of love, and just what a wondrous gift it is to love and be loved. From ancient times, and across so much of life and literature, we see a wrestling with a potent puzzle – are there only particular and isolated things in the world or is there a great universal and unifying combination of all that is?

More personally, how is it that we each can be unique individuals with special talents and yet also an intimate, inseparable part of a family, a society, and of the whole of the wider community? In Christian terms the wider community is not even bounded by space but is also unbounded by time – this is part of what we mean in the Apostles’ Creed we say we believe in the ‘Communion of Saints’. Unbounded time and space are also implicit when we celebrate and communicate with our favourite saints, the many patrons and matrons of good counsel and example, or seek the aid of guardian or other angels.

Additionally, there are many depictions of the heavenly feast, a model of communion with the whole of the heavenly family – and while they are grounded in the eternal and present to us now, we also continue to live bounded in a temporal reality. Embracing these related contrasting situations as compelling mysteries, as types of living paradoxes, invites us to an openness of thought beyond the helpful limitations of an ‘either-or’ approach, grasping a more inclusive ‘both-and’ approach to otherwise baffling spiritual matters. Our thinking in these areas, our own guiding metaphysics, largely directs our many beliefs and actions, and generally forms and indicates our personal morality – whether we orient our efforts for good or ill, whether for momentary rewards or longer-term benefits, whether for self and/or for others.

Such ideas of the links between metaphysics and morality are long established and it is natural to consider that the way we think, as well as what we believe about anything – about everything – will affect how we live and act and treat each other, yet always provide fresh areas for fruitful reflection. While some debates pit a belief in the supremacy of the individual (or at least selected individuals) against the undeniable demands of priority for the requirements of a community (whether local, regional, or global), there are ‘both-and’ type beliefs that neither extreme position is coherent or tenable without taking account of both individual and communal needs.

This ‘both-and’ approach is explicit in Jesus’ response to the question of which is the greatest of the Laws – from which we get the triadic Laws of Love (Matthew 22:37–39) which tell us to Love God over all, and to love all others as well as to love ourselves. Here, the ‘both-and’ is extended to become ‘both-and-and’, so to speak – and importantly reminds us that life has many such coupled commitments, requiring us to embrace a combination of concepts in a unified way, or otherwise miss them all. Like the proverbial tripod stool, removing any one of the ‘legs’ of the three-part Laws of Love means we fall down on them all. This is not just a matter of theory or principle, it has practical and even, we are told, eternal implications.

The parable of the sheep and goats (Matthew 25:31–46), also known as the ‘The Judgement of the Nations’, powerfully underscores and conveys the results of following the earlier calls to action found in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1–12). We are invited to share the surprise and vital awareness that whatever we have done ‘for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ The practical and loving examples of the things done are responding to each other’s essential needs: ‘I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ Like Jesus saying to his disciples that ‘I call you friends’, the eternal blessing to those sharing Love is offered as an ‘inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’

Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, formerly of Chicago, helpfully articulated these practical Gospel principles of love through what he called the ‘consistent ethic of life’, grounded in the conviction that all human life is sacred, as rooted in the fundamental belief that we are created in the image of God. These issues of life are of one piece forming, so to speak, a ‘seamless garment’. They are interrelated and call us not only to commit to preserving life but also to enhancing it for each other. Bernardin’s often-quoted summary of this is: ‘Those who defend the right to life of the weakest among us must be equally

visible in support of the quality of life of the powerless among us: the old and the young, the hungry and the homeless, the undocumented immigrant and the unemployed worker.’

Following the global financial crisis of 2008, Benedictine Abbot Christopher Jamison wrote that ‘Lying behind the current financial crisis is the same ethical lacuna that hinders effective debate over climate change – a lack of any clear moral compass beyond compliance with the law. What is needed is a return to the classical virtues’ (Might of metaphysics, *The Tablet*, 15 November 2008). Jamison shares a story about how he and a City consultant were hired in 2002 by the chairman of the Financial Services Authority to respond to his plan to develop ‘An Ethical Framework for Financial Services’ to have a tangible impact on firms’ and individuals’ motivation to do the ‘right thing’ and to establish a clear and explicit, shared understanding about what integrity means in practice’.

In response, virtue was presented as the vital ethical foundation for the financial services industry, indicating that the classical (‘cardinal’) virtues – fortitude, justice, temperance, and prudence – provided a practical basis for defining integrity. It is worth sharing a lengthier quote from the ending of that insightful article:

One of the most important insights of Catholic theology is that the life of virtue can be known by all, without reference to religious doctrine. The term ‘the good life’ once meant the life of goodness and virtue that all decent people aspired to lead. This was seen as a life full of delight in living well; this was happiness, not a burden to be endured. This attitude is one that we must recapture if we are to find the human resources needed to cope with climate change. If we identify happiness with knowing the good and doing good, then we have a happiness that does not demand endless pleasure and endless consumption.

The four cardinal virtues (fortitude, justice, temperance and prudence) have become endangered species, but the Church has given them sanctuary. They have been protected by the three theological virtues of faith, hope and love. For the Christian, the cardinal virtues are rooted in the theological virtues. The Church is the principal global institution that sees in these virtues hard realities that have their own science that can be taught. In addition, the Church affirms them as an integral foursome that, when rooted in faith, hope and love, adds up to the heart of humanity.

Following a different approach and scale, Oxford University anthropologists have identified [Seven moral rules found all around the world](#). The seven are: ‘help

your family, help your group, return favours, be brave, defer to superiors, divide resources fairly, and respect others' property'. These were the results of a survey analysing over 600 sources, ethnographic accounts of ethics from 60 cultures, from all around the world. These moral rules, which would seem to show a more united humanity, also suggest that: ['Everyone, everywhere, shares a common moral code. All agree that cooperating, promoting the common good, is the right thing to do.'](#) With further emphasis on the metaphysics behind the idea of common morality, a related article on the findings indicated supportive thoughts from David Hume, who believed that moral judgments depend on an 'internal sense or feeling, which nature has made universal in the whole species,' and that certain qualities, including 'truth, justice, courage, temperance, constancy, dignity of mind . . . friendship, sympathy, mutual attachment, and fidelity' are (fairly) universal.

Given all these well-founded thoughts, should you at all be interested in reviewing and perhaps noting some of your own metaphysics, the notes (just after this paragraph) are shared as a kind of rough set of starting points. This might help address at least some of the challenge from St Peter to 'Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you.' (1 Peter 3:15 – adding to do so 'with gentleness and reverence'). Of course, there are many guides and resources (e.g. [Catechism and Compendium](#)) to help when exploring such questions, and to help further develop an informed conscience so as to be better ready to approach additional challenges in the future. As a thought experiment, it would be interesting for some of us to create our own pamphlet of 'Things I Believe' and have it ready to hand to those who might come to our door with their beliefs and related literature – it could make for more interesting discussions! (Please get in touch if you think this would be an interesting and worthwhile project!)

As a kind of set of metaphysical starting points, you might consider areas such as the following five categories, along with their framing questions. These should help provide the start of a usable outline for some of the fundamental areas which can be part of metaphysical discussions. (If further interested, please do share any comments or suggestions to improve this rough draft.)

1. Community

Since we begin life, and often end our known lives in the intimate company of others, what is the role of a community? What does it mean to belong to a community, and how do we identify with it, or distinguish between it and other communities? How do we join another

community while either leaving one or belonging to both? Do members of a community maintain their individuality, do either individuality or community survive (natural) death, and if so for how long?

2. Identity

As we develop a sense of self, how do we clarify our own uniqueness, distinguish our special talents and gifts, and discern how these can interact with others? What responsibility do we have toward our own existence, persistence, and development – and what responsibility for the same in others, either in our community, or for anyone (or any living thing, or any life-sustaining environment)? How can we distinguish between our individuality and others, especially those upon whom we depend – or with whom we have an interdependence? Is it possible to maintain and sustain identity (and life) without reliance on, or reference to a community, or anyone else?

3. Truth

Do we need to be able to tell what is false and what is not, and how do we do so? Does discerning the truth (often) rely on some amount of trust in others, and if so how do we know who to trust (and in what way or what areas)? Can we sustain community or identity without truth, or is truth part of building up and supporting of both? If goodness and beauty are identified with truth, does knowing more about one help us understand something about either of the other two? When falsehood is substituted for the truth, and trust is broken, what is needed to begin or to bring about reconciliation? How does it affect the individual, or the community, if reconciliation is not begun or concluded? Are there different types or degrees of truth, and if so how can one set be compared or reconciled with any others – is there a common set of core truths held by at least one community, or perhaps by all communities and individuals (whether consciously or not)?

4. Agency

How capable (and free) are we to act in and to affect the world around us? Are we agents of our own will, or of some other source (e.g. chemical, biological, psychological), or of the will of others (e.g. tyrannical, diabolical, divine) – or some combination(s) overlapping, competing, or working together? How much do we understand our actions, as well as our related intentions and the resulting consequences, and how responsible can we be for the outcomes of our actions? Do we ever act

purely for our own sakes, and if that is possible should we do so without consideration of anyone else, perhaps especially those who are more directly affected? How might we ensure that our actions and those of others sensitively and constructively interact with each other, for everyone's benefit?

5. Reality

How can we tell what is real, whether about ourselves, or others, or concerning the world around us? How can we tell the difference between what we perceive of the world when we are awake, rather than what we perceive when we are asleep, or day-dreaming, or hallucinating, or in a coma, or when using various drugs? Given our experience of reality, of the world around us (and of which we and others can be said to be a part), how can we tell whether others experience the same reality? How long do we believe that (any part of) the reality we experience, of the world around us, will persist? What happens when we, or anyone (or any living thing, or any life-sustaining environment) dies? Has life always existed? Will life always persist? If so, will any (or all) of it be in recognisable form, and if so will we all be recognisable – as individuals and as an eternal community?

Hopefully we will find that our metaphysical musings will continue to prove both engaging and very fruitful, and provide for even greater insights and reflection, individually as well as in our community life. At the very least, in the witty words of William James, perhaps we may find that: 'Metaphysics means nothing but an unusually obstinate effort to think clearly.'

Gift Aid - the good way to give to your Church

Jim Scally

Gift Aid is an arrangement that allows charities, including churches, to reclaim tax on donations made by a taxpayer. If you are already paying tax on earnings, pensions or income/capital gains from investments, the government gives back to the Church some of the tax you have already paid. Your donations will qualify as long as they are not more than four times the tax you have paid in that tax year (6 April to 5 April). All you have to do is complete a simple form called a Gift Aid Declaration with your name and address.

You can find this form on the St Laurence's webpage under '[**Gift Aid**](#)'

Parish Organisations and Activities

Saint Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) at St Laurence's

Catharine Warren, President St Laurence's SVP

SVP members continue to respond to new requests and offer ongoing support, in line with COVID risk reduction guidelines.

Recent activity includes:

- keeping in telephone contact with people.
- befriending a family new to the area and helping them with purchase of furniture, donating a bike and delivering a child carrier to attach to the bike.
- issuing foodbank vouchers to several families.
- applying for a Taxi Card on behalf of a person with limited mobility.
- help at the Traveller drop-in service.
- providing bedding for a person in temporary accommodation.
- helping towards the housing costs for a couple while they secure more suitable accommodation.
- measuring up and assisting with purchase of new flooring after fire damage.
- helping several families with the purchase of shoes for their children and advertising the SVP Children's Shoe Fund in St Laurence's School (SVP has been given some large donations to be spent on shoes for children).
- helping with holiday costs for a family in need.
- requesting donations of children's clothes and deliver the donations.
- supporting an elderly couple liaise with GP and assist with various medical appointments.

THANK YOU

The practical assistance given by the SVP to alleviate poverty is made possible by parishioners, through Alive in Faith money allocated to SVP and by your donations of money or goods direct to SVP. Thank you for your continuing generous response to SVP collections and requests for items. If you have items that you think the SVP could use to assist others, please contact me so we can agree on delivery etc. Unfortunately, we cannot take everything as we have no storage facilities and can only accept those things that we know one of our beneficiaries currently needs.

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

SVP members offer people the hand of friendship, practical assistance and total confidentiality and we are eager to recruit new volunteers to help us respond to all the requests for visits. We meet families, single people and elderly people and will lend an ear to those who

need someone to listen to them during the difficult times. We visit people – initially in pairs – at home, in care homes, and in hospital. Some members give lifts to Mass and Parish events, some are Eucharistic ministers and take Communion to people who cannot get to church. If you have a few hours a week to spare, we invite you to think seriously about joining us. We need volunteers who are, above all, caring and compassionate, able to keep confidences, open-minded,

respectful and non-judgemental of others. Contact me or any SVP member to find out more. You can call me on 07421 253100 or email: svp@saintlaurence.org.uk

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

LiveSimply

Our response to Pope Francis' call to walk lightly on the earth: You can do something!

St Laurence's Church pledge to combat Climate Change

We need to walk lightly on the Earth and use less of its precious resources. This is something we all need to do to avert the devastating effects of climate change, and for those with young families, encourage your children to do the same. Young people understand the need to act now and will be our best reminders. **After all, it's their future we need to protect.**

As Catholics, we are called not to stay silent and not to be passive. 'Reclaim Our Common Home' (CAFOD's campaign) is a call to action! It's a call to participate both individually and collectively in rebuilding a more dignified and sustainable world after the pandemic. St Laurence's is a **LiveSimply** Parish, in response to Pope Francis' invitation in *Laudato Si'* to, 'work with generosity and tenderness in protecting this world which God has entrusted to us'. It is awarded by CAFOD communities who can show how they have been living:

- Simply
- In solidarity with people in poverty
- Sustainably with creation

Go to the [CAFOD page](#) on the St Laurence's website and see the information and pledge ideas under **Reclaim Our Common Home**. Choose one, two or even three ideas and make a commitment however small, because it **will** make a difference! It is the shift in our awareness and taking action to change habits that collectively makes a real impact. In the words of one famous supermarket 'every little helps'! So, what can we do? It is important to analyse our habits and consider their environmental impact and this will be different for each and every one of us. For example, do you chew gum? Do you know the environmental impact of chewing gum? Yes, gum! It is made of polymers, a synthetic plastic, and it is not known to bio-degrade. It is second only to cigarette butts in terms of littering!

We are asking **All OF OUR PARISHIONERS** to identify something that is within the scope of their lifestyle – start with little changes, otherwise you will soon give up – and build up over the weeks. On the next page is a list of ideas to help you identify some ideas – try and choose one a week and pledge it online or add your own, and we will see how collectively we can change the world! If you do not have access to a computer, do contact Serga on 07474724042 who will make the pledge for you.



St Laurence's Livesimply ideas and suggestions:



- Praise God for the wonderful world he has created
- Pray for climate change/ for others less fortunate than you /justice and equality
- Plant a tree for Baptism or Holy Communion
- Say thank you
- Be kind to someone/lookout for neighbours and volunteer to help others

- Assess your own carbon footprint – how does your lifestyle impact on the environment – can you make any improvements?
- Cycle or walk to church/school/work instead of going by car
- Carshare or go by public transport
- Switch off TV/your phone and read a book/play a game with all the family
- Spend time outside with your family/go for a walk
- Turn lights off when you go out of a room
- Turn off electrical devices when you have finished with them – eg TV, phones, computers – don't leave them on standby
- Turn down the heating by 1 or 2 degrees – put on a jumper instead

- Look around you at the beautiful world God has made: be kind to nature:
- Grow plants that attract bees and other wildlife
- Put birdfeeders or bat boxes in your garden
- Cut a hole in your fence (ground level) to let hedgehogs go through
- Compost kitchen waste
- Don't drop litter – pick it up and put in the bin eg chewing gum, packaging
- Buy less takeaway food in disposable packaging
- When buying groceries avoid excessive packaging: choose loose fruit and veg where possible
- Use re-usable bags for your shopping
- Always have the 3 R's in the back of your mind: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle
- Recycle paper – use both sides; avoid waste
- Recycle unwanted tools to artisans in Africa, with the charity '[Tools for Self Reliance](#)' - Contact Jim Infield on 07952-705684

- Eat less meat and pay attention to the source of your food eg miles travelled
- Select fish from sustainable fishing/line-caught fish
- Buy food that is locally grown or in season
- Grow vegetables in your garden – for you and your local food bank
- Use less water and don't waste water eg while taking a shower or cleaning your teeth
- Assess your need for new household goods/electronics – is the item still functional? If so do you need to buy that new phone/TV/kitchen units bathroom
- Think about the lifecycle of your product from creation ie resources required to disposal
- Donate your items for reuse if possible eg to charity shop and purchase from charity shops where possible. Set up or donate to a second-hand school uniform exchange.
- Participate in CAFOD fast days and donate the money saved
- Switch to renewable energy companies ie electricity
- When buying new electrical goods, make sure they have an 'A' energy rating
- Avoid batteries but if you need to use them use rechargeable ones.
- Don't store unnecessary data in the cloud eg all those photographs you take all have to be stored somewhere using electricity – clear the data clutter!
- Travel less especially by aeroplane/take a holiday by train

Catholic Women's League

Janet Scally

We are still together and would like to get back to meeting, but it still seems risky to some of us. We are hoping to send two members to the AGM of the National Catholic Women's League in November, which is held in lovely surroundings at a religious retreat near Derby. If anyone wants to join us, please just contact me, Janet Scally on 01223 365330 or Angela Stocker on 01223 424024. Of course, we have not been donating as much to needy charities as we'd like, but have given to the Cambridge Food Bank and the Cambridge Women's Refuge.

We are hoping to be able to offer our Friday lunches again soon, we had hoped for June but that has come and gone, so maybe September!! If you enjoy meeting people for a light lunch, watch the newsletter for the date.

Parliament in your Parish

Jeanette Milbourn

Deanery CAFOD Parish Volunteer co-ordinator (With thanks to Jim Infield for his notes.)

CAFOD's **Reclaim our common home** campaign is in response to Pope Francis's call for a new way of thinking about the world, and to take an active part in renewing our troubled societies by embracing the universal values of solidarity and fraternity. One of these activities is the Parliament in your Parish. These are virtual meetings with the local MP. However, because St. Laurence's covers such a large area, we actually have 3 MPs in our Parish:

Daniel Zeichner, Labour MP for Cambridge City
Andrew Browne, Conservative MP for South Cambs
Lucy Frazer, Conservative MP for East Cambs

The Parish CAFOD group, led by Serga Collett, was able, under the auspices of Teresa Campbell, to arrange a virtual meeting with Daniel Zeichner on 16th July. Prior to the meeting, a steering group put together a list of 11 questions which we sent to Daniel the day before the meeting, as we felt that we would get a better response if he was prepared for these specific questions. The questions covered were mostly related to COP26 being held in Glasgow in November 2021 and climate change. There were also questions on international aid. Finally, we asked how could we, as local citizens, make a difference. The meeting was open to the other Catholic parishes of Cambridge and we had

representatives from both – all active CAFOD supporters.



We only had an hour, but we covered a lot of our questions. Daniel started by thanking us for our interest in climate change and for arranging the meeting. Daniel is very interested in climate change and is on several government committees related to this topic. He said that having these local discussions is very helpful to him. He feels that the intellectual argument is being won, but politically it is a bitter fight over budgets and resources. He feels that too much aid spending is driven by the UK economic interests.

With specific reference to COP26, he is very sceptical about Boris Johnson's ability to lead the talks. Boris has not built the alliances in advance which are necessary, since the issues are very complex and there are many competing interests. Henry Dumbleby's, board member at DEFRA, recent report which is very detailed, has been dismissed by Government and the tabloid press. Daniel pointed out that the UK parliament does not have a direct role to play at COP26. The government has appointed Alok Sharma as full-time president and MPs are required to address him as Mr President in the House of Commons. Daniel feels that we need to make stronger links between COP26 (Climate change) and COP15 (Ecological and Biodiversity). COP15 will take place in China in October 2021. Prof. Dasgupta, Emeritus Professor of Economics at the University of Cambridge, has written a large report on the need for nature-based solutions, but Daniel felt that this was unlikely to change the Treasury's thinking.

With respect to developing countries' debt crises, more than one third of Africa's debt is held by private, not government, lenders. Influencing these private lenders is very difficult. It requires international institutions to work together and it is hoped that this will be helped by Joe Biden now being in power. The USA has re-joined the climate debate. However, the USA and Japan pay proportionally very little towards the International Development Budget. Daniel is interested in Japan as there are several Japanese companies based in Cambridge and he said he would investigate if there were any ways in which this could be used to influence international co-operation.

Despite the recent cut to the Aid Budget in the UK, which was based on spurious polls, and aggravated by

the abolition of the Dept. for International Development, the UK pays 0.5% of GNP. Cutting the Aid Budget was significantly influenced by the Brexiters. Other malign international influences come from Russia and China; although Canada and Australia refused to sign the COP24 agreement due to their interests in fossil fuels.

There was a discussion about migration and how this is linked to poverty, war and famine, but also labour shortages. The reduction in migration to 10,000 seasonal workers in the UK is already having an impact locally – farmers cannot get skilled workers. Daniel has a personal interest in this. His grandfather was a farm worker in Shepreth and was respected for his work. Nowadays, farm work is perceived, incorrectly, as unskilled and for uneducated people. Many of the migrant workers have been coming to East Anglia for generations. However, Daniel does not feel that this is a good thing as people are separated from their families for long periods of time, it is hard work, and they often live in poor, cramped conditions. We should be working towards a goal such that no-one has to migrate in order to earn a sustainable income. Furthermore, people need to be educated that they cannot expect to have food out of season e.g. tomatoes all year round. There is a need to educate children about where their food comes from, since many only see prepacked, processed food. Expanding the teaching of cooking in school could help this (not the multiple ways of topping a pizza which my children had to do!).

Daniel said that handwritten letters are the most influential way to communicate with MPs. Pre-formulated emails (like the CAFOD templates) are not that helpful unless they are sent in very large numbers. However, MPs **do** read and monitor emails and letters to know what their constituents care about and it keeps MPs aware of key issues.

The full list of questions was as follows:

1. What are Daniel's top priorities for COP 26?
2. How will the UK advocate international action to keep the global temperature rise below 1.5C?
3. What about guaranteeing full participation at COP 26 of countries in the global south that are already suffering the effects of climate change and are also suffering from debt crisis?
4. USA and Japan pay proportionally very little towards international aid budget. UK pays 0.5% GNP, towards aid. Can the UK put pressure on these countries and others, to contribute more?
5. With respect to COP 26, what can be done in the light of the massive UK international aid cuts?

6. What other budgets with discretionary amounts could have been cut instead of International Aid?
7. More than one third of African debt is private. Debt repayment is costing these countries more than they are able to spend on healthcare and education. What legal control can the UK potentially exert on private lenders?
8. What will be the impact on international aid now that it is under the remit of FCDO, which has a history of linking aid to trade?
9. What is his view on the role of local government in general with regards to climate change?
10. How can individual responses address climate change to get government to take action?
11. Given the rash of xenophobic action associated with Brexit, which is pervading the country resulting in the massive cuts in international aid, what is Her Majesty's Government going to do about this?



There is no Planet B

Serga Collett, Parish CAFOD rep

With the eyes of the world on Britain, as we host the international climate change conferences (G7 in June and COP26 in November) we have been in a unique situation to address averting this threat to our beautiful world. The Pope reminds us that this world is everyone's home and it is the duty of each and every one of us to become involved in looking after it. It was therefore a most opportune time for our Parish to celebrate His Word and remind each and every parishioner of their duty to care for OUR COMMON HOME! On Sunday 11th July we celebrated our own Laudato Si' weekend and praised God for his wonderful creation at both the 9.30am and 11am Masses, entering the church to the epic words and spine-tingling music of 'Laudato Si O Mi Signore'. During Mass the children



created a Tree of Life, writing down their wishes and prayers for the earth – and so inspiring they were too – it is after all, their futures that we need to safeguard with our actions.

In their sermons, Father Simon and Father Bob spoke of Jesus' message (Mark 6:7–13) of 'travelling light' when he sent them into the world to spread the good news. In order to ensure everyone felt included, some of the Mass was signed in Makaton (a language development programme) and the congregation asked to participate. The music was beautiful and was chosen with an environmental theme. Before finishing to the rousing strains of 'The trees of the field shall clap their hands', a representative of CAFOD spoke to the congregation about the importance of looking after the earth and the consequences of our daily actions, for example the environmental implications of buying the newest upgrade of your phone – not because your phone is broken but because we are always keen to have the newest and best that money can buy.

All parishioners were also invited to sign the 'Reclaim our Common Home' petition cards that another CAFOD representative had set out at the back of church and 83 people signed the cards, which asked the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, to push world leaders at the COP26 climate conference to show the ambition of all the world to avert the climate crisis.

We need to keep temperature rises below the disastrous 1.5-degree threshold. This means that all countries must play their part. Wealthy nations, such as Britain, who bear the greatest responsibility for the crisis, need to step up.

(NB if you haven't already done so you can sign the petition online, type in 'CAFOD Reclaim our Common Home' into your browser).

The weather was kind to us and after Mass we were able to adjourn to the Parish garden to eat our lunch in amiable company before making a start on our greening project of demonstrating care for our environment on our doorstep – tidying up our very own St Laurence's garden. There was much to do but with lots of help and friendly chatter the time soon went and the front car park began to look much more presentable. So, let us remember that God's creation is not a property, which we can rule over at will; or, even less, is the property of only a few: Creation is a gift, it is a wonderful gift that God has given us, and we must care for it and use it for the benefit of all!

Summary of Parish Open Meeting, July 2021

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

Parish News

Fr Michael Smith was ordained this month at St John's Cathedral Norwich. On return from a break, he will cover Parish Masses in August while Fr Simon is away on holiday.

Fr Simon will organise for envelopes to be made available marked, Gift Fr Michael Smith, for people to make a donation towards a gift to celebrate his recent Ordination. Donations can also be made via the Parish bank account referenced 'Mike's Gift' or by cheque to the Parish. The Chair recorded on behalf of the Parish what a great joy it is to have an ordained priest from our Parish.

As the school year draws to a close, there will be a final Blessing of Year 6 and a farewell to Mrs Bennet (joint Head) who is moving to take on a new headship.

Fr Peter Wygnanski, who was ordained last year at Norwich, will be coming to our Parish this coming weekend to celebrate the 11am Mass.

The electrical rewiring work in the presbytery has now been completed along with new TV points in the three bedrooms.

A new Bishop? – the date for the appointment of a new Bishop for our Diocese is still unknown. The process of appointment has slowed down considerably due in part to the pandemic, and in part to finding a suitable replacement who feels able to take on these duties. We hope for news later in the Autumn, particularly as his

secretary is preparing to move to a new parish at that time.

Mass Arrangements

The Chair introduced this part of the meeting as a time of general discussion for people to voice their thoughts and ideas as we approach the national lifting of pandemic restrictions on 19th July. We await updates from the government concerning places of worship following which the Bishops' Conference will formulate plans going forward.

We considered the following:

Masks still to be worn? Congregational singing to recommence? Changes to social distancing and seating arrangements?

A general consensus was reached

- that we should continue to wear facemasks out of respect for one another and that we would continue to keep this under review.
- that – if in line with Bishops' Conference – we would recommence congregational singing with masks in place.
- That we will also plan to relax the seating spacing at the 11am Mass to allow more people to sit in the benches, also use all benches at this Mass. In this event parishioners will be asked not to kneel in order to maintain as much distance from each other as possible.
- That we will continue to use alternate benches at other Masses.
- That a welcoming/stewarding role is still needed at all Masses – but perhaps only one or two per Mass.
- That we would keep ventilation measures in place.
 - That the queue for Communion could return to two queues down the centre aisle.

There will no longer be any enhanced cleaning of the benches after each use, however, it would be sensible to continue to wipe down touchpoints such as door handles, bannisters, tops of bench-ends down the centre aisles on a regular basis.

Spacing for the clinically vulnerable at 11am was also considered but it was felt that the option to attend an alternative well-spaced Mass was preferable to trying to reserve an area in the front benches to be used with social distancing.

There was a brief discussion about the relatively low attendance at the 9.30am Mass which has been unable to return to the school. Reasons for this could be: no children's liturgy and that there is easier access at school for those walking, especially with pushchairs

and children, or coming in from the villages to the north, with the school having more parking. Due to school lettings not being permitted, we are unable to return to school but this will be reviewed later in the year.

Parish Group updates

SVP – Catharine Warren said that through the income received from Alive in Faith and Parish donations the SVP group have been supporting families who have needed help with practical needs including food vouchers and furniture. Given moral support including help in asylum seeking. Visiting and taking Holy Communion to elderly parishioners or those with failing health, also keeping in touch with the traveller community through the drop-in at Cottenham. As most volunteers have been fully vaccinated, they are now able to resume indoor visits. The group have also welcomed a new volunteer.

CAFOD – Serga Collett thanked all involved with the weekend of Laudato Si Masses (which had attracted more families to the church for that weekend) and those who helped with the gardening. The work done in the front garden is very much appreciated by Fr Simon and the whole day was very enjoyable. Serga hopes to be able to organise a session in the back garden at some point during August, followed by a further session in October to get the gardens ready for the winter. The CAFOD group hope that parishioners will consider making three pledges of what they can do towards protecting the environment. Webmaster, Richard Birkett, will upload details to the CAFOD section of the Parish website. Details will also be pinned on the CAFOD noticeboards. Serga reported that Teresa Campbell got lots of petition signatures ahead of the COP26 summit later this year and plans to be available at the 6pm and 8am Masses this coming weekend to gather more. CAFOD representatives will also be meeting with local MP Daniel Zeichner.

On behalf of the Meeting, the Chair thanked Serga and the whole CAFOD team for their work on this important topic. He also congratulated Jo Wager and Jeanette Milbourn for getting the Saturday Coffee Hub off the ground, which people have enjoyed visiting, and thanked those who have helped restart coffee after the 11am Mass.

Finally, look out in the Grafton Centre for one of the town centre cow sculptures which is decorated with a design by St Laurence's school pupils.

NEXT MEETING

14th September at 7.30pm – probably still via Zoom, but check newsletter for details nearer the time.

Personal Stories and Experiences

Our Patron Saint – Deacon and Martyr

Fr Mike Smith

Red is the colour of blood. I sometimes forget this. As Catholics we are blessed with a liturgical tradition which makes use of all our senses and visual colour is part of this. The different seasons have distinctive colours shown in the vestments and other features of our churches. The liturgical colour of red is used on various occasions, for example for Feasts of the Apostles, Good Friday and Palm Sunday. I was made to think about this more when I was privileged to be ordained a deacon. I wore a red dalmatic (the outer garment with sleeves worn by deacons) on the Feast of St Laurence, our own patron saint. It was then – especially – that I was reminded that martyrs shed their blood for Christ and red is the colour of blood.



Church of St Laurence outside the walls (San Lorenzo fuori le mura)

Laurence was martyred in Rome in the third century. Since he is very much a local saint in that large and vibrant city, it is not surprising that there are several churches dedicated to him. One of these Roman churches was mentioned last year in *The Pilgrim*: it forms part of the *Seven Churches Walk*, a pilgrimage around the city originally begun by St Philip Neri and continued today during Holy Week. This particular church is located outside the ancient city walls and is accordingly known as *San Lorenzo fuori le mura*.



In San Lorenzo fuori le mura: One of several statues of St Laurence View of the Sanctuary – Looking into the crypt and the tomb of St Laurence

It marks the place where Laurence was buried after his death, during the reign of the Emperor Valerian in 258AD. But Laurence is not alone here, within the building itself are the remains of other members of the Church – relics of St Stephen, brought from the Holy Land and the tomb of Pope Pius IX, the longest ever reigning pope (31 years) who presided over the First Vatican Council and the installation of street lighting in the city, among other things! Adjacent to the basilica is a very large cemetery, the *Campo Verano*.

Statue of St Laurence in San Lorenzo fuori le mura



During the first few centuries of Christianity, it was normal practice for people to bury their loved ones outside the city walls, sometimes along the sides of major highways leading out of the city. This goes to explain the locations of the tombs of St Peter, St Paul, St Agnes, and St Laurence among others. Once Christianity was

legalized under Constantine the new Emperor built churches (basilicas) over the tombs of the saints. Frequently these original churches were added to over the centuries, or entirely replaced by larger ones.

One of the additions to this church constitutes its major section and includes two impressive lecterns, one for reading the Epistle during the Mass and one for reading the Gospel, with an enormous spiral-shaped holder for the Paschal Candle close by.



Lectern for the Epistle in San Lorenzo fuori le mura

Lectern for the Gospel with spiral-shaped Paschal candle holder nearby



Another lovely feature of this church is that it is run by a community of Franciscans and if you ask nicely, you get a peek into their cloister, verdant with plants which obviously thrive in the Roman heat.



Cloister gardens of the Franciscan Monastery

From our current location, in the northeast of the city, we now switch to the centre of town to glimpse other locations relevant to our patron saint.

The Via del Corso is a smart shopping street, almost a mile long, in the centre of Rome running approximately northwards from the Piazza Venezia to the Piazza del Popolo. It runs close by the Italian Parliament and Prime Minister’s residence, as well as major tourist sites including the Spanish Steps and the Trevi Fountain. About halfway along, in a side chapel of the church of San Lorenzo in Lucina. About halfway along is part of the gridiron on which Laurence was martyred.



San Lorenzo in Panisperna – external view

The actual location of Laurence’s martyrdom is marked by another church, San Lorenzo in Panisperna, which is on the Via Panisperna, down the hill from the great Basilica of St Mary Major. Here we find beautifully painted depictions of both the martyrdom and the entry of the saint into heaven. Beneath the church, accessible via a doorway to the right of the main entrance, is the place where the saint was

grilled. Before Laurence was executed, as we know, he highlighted the truth that the poor are the true treasure of the church and during the gruesome process he is reputed to have remarked ‘turn me over now I’m done on this side!’



San Lorenzo in Panisperna: painting depicting the martyrdom of St. Lawrence – entrance to the place of martyrdom below the church – altar at the place of martyrdom below the church

Though not part of the *Seven Churches Walk*, San Lorenzo in Panisperna is part of another Roman tradition, it is one of the *Lenten Station Churches*. Throughout Lent an early morning Mass (in English) is celebrated at a different church every day. The Station Church Masses are very well organised by the North American College for the benefit of all and we look forward to the day, following the pandemic, when they will be reinstated, once more providing a rich prayerful experience for the Anglophone community in the city.

Red is also the colour signifying the Holy Spirit and it is only through the love of the Holy Spirit that the martyrs can shed their blood for Christ. As we pray daily for a greater portion of that Spirit, let us call upon the Blessed Martyr Laurence to pray for us, that we too will witness more and more to the love of God in Christ.

St. Laurence, pray for us.

A trip down memory lane

Petra Tucker

Back in January, I set myself the goal of walking 1000 miles during 2021, which sounds ambitious but can be attained simply by walking 2.7 miles every day, which is probably normal for thousands of dog walkers around the country. I have chosen to do two long walks (13+ miles) and a short walk (8 miles) each week, keeping a pace just over 3 mph. I walk in all weathers and have Joe for company at least once per week. This has taken me/us all over Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, and The Isle of Arran.

Apart from exercise making you feel good, it is just wonderful looking at our beautiful countryside and

listening to the birds. On urban walks, this beauty may be less abundant, but it is still there. During the rhythm of walking, loads of memories come back to me – often triggered by what I am seeing, hearing, or smelling. I have stopped and chatted with all sorts of people – sometimes it is a brief exchange, but other times there is a connection, and the chat takes a bit longer. It is amazing where talking to strangers can lead you.

One of the longer walks (21 miles), on a hot day in April, was essentially a trip down memory lane for me, but also served to show Joe where I grew up. We parked the car in Castle Street, Wellingborough, opposite the house where I lived for two years in my early teens. Walking through the nearby park, I was reminded of the smell coming from Saxby's Pork Pies factory, boiling the bones, in order, to make traditional gelatine. I smelt this every Sunday morning as we walked to church. The Saxby's factory has long since gone and the site is now a housing estate full of matchbox-sized homes. We got chatting to a man outside one of the original houses who had been a foreman in the slaughterhouse for over 25 years. In those days Saxby's produced their own meat.

Our route by the River Nene next took us by the Whitworth's flour mill, consisting of defunct original buildings surrounded by newer buildings, presumably to accommodate modern production methods. They are still a large employer for Wellingborough. We were soon out into the countryside and continued along the river towards Northampton, passing water mills and canal boat traffic which was rather dreamy in the heat of the day.

The village of Ecton was our halfway point (and a much-needed drink stop), where we crossed the river and headed back towards Wellingborough. The next village we came to was Earls Barton, home of Barkers Shoes.



Its Anglo-Saxon church was built in the late 10th century, I remember going to a pageant to celebrate its 1000th anniversary, with horse riders dressed up in period costume and local people watching from the mound which surrounds the church. Vivid memories. Just around the corner is Tebbutt's Yard, where my father had a factory. I was

able to tell Joe about how I loved visiting as a tiny girl, being shown the machines by the men who worked there and going up to Mr Selman's office just because it was my Dad's, and I didn't have to knock! All you can see today is a row of houses, but we got chatting to

a woman who lives in one of them and was interested to learn about the history of her street.



We then walked through Wilby, where I lived until I was 11. My tiny primary school is still there, now greatly extended. I wanted to show Joe inside our old house – Ancaster Lodge – and fortunately the present owner was very hospitable and gave us a tour of the garden. I was able to fill her in on all sorts of questions that she had. The house and garden have both changed and what seemed like a huge place when I was small, is actually not as big as I remembered.

The final part of the walk took us through a large council estate called Kingsway, built in the 1960's for London overspill, together with nearby Queensway estate. Now the park in Kingsway has been made very attractive, with lots to do for everyone.

We finished this walk thoroughly exhausted and got back to Cambridge at 9pm. Altogether a very satisfying day, which told Joe a lot about my early life while making me grateful for the very happy and secure life that my parents gave their six children.

One walk out of so many that I do. If you see me striding along the roads, do toot your car horn as I am happy to wave – it all helps to make the walk.

I reached my target in five months and three weeks so a bit ahead of schedule!

Estere and the snake bite

Sr Pat Robb

A short memory by Sr Pat from her time working in Africa in the 1990s

It must be bad enough being a refugee, forced out of home and land with only the possessions one can carry; living in crowded conditions in a tiny hut with thousands of others all around. So different from their home where villages were spread out and there was plenty of space for all.

Of course, in refugee situations everyday things, like water and firewood, become major problems – all day queueing for a small can of water, or having to walk for miles for a small bundle of firewood with each day's walk getting longer as trees were chopped down.

Estere was busy enough; no husband (he had been killed by the rebels) and three small children. One morning she rushed to the palm plantation to see if she could find some small bits of bark and fallen palm fronds to burn. She thought that she would make the long trek to the forest for proper wood later.

The palm forest was dark in the early light of morning and Estere could not see very well as she scavenged around at the foot of the palms. And then, OOUCH! The pain was TERRIBLE. She saw the slippery serpent making off but could not identify the type. Somehow Estere hobbled back to the edge of the plantation before collapsing with shock. Someone, thank God, was nearby and called for help.

The traditional treatment for snake bites is to put a tourniquet on. This, of course, can be dangerous for, if the tourniquet is left on, the circulation will stop and the limb can become gangrenous. Estere had been bitten on her big toe.

By the time I was called, her leg was swollen and she was semi-conscious. The little clinic at the camp refused to treat her so I bundled her into the truck and we dashed, horn blaring and lights flashing, to a small Government hospital nearby. There a 'black stone' – a specially prepared bone which absorbs snake venom – was immediately applied to the bite, but Estere's condition was serious. Injections followed but things looked hopeless.

I knew nothing of Estere's home situation but asked the driver to go back to the camp to try and fetch a family member. Soon a frightened, elderly grandmother came in; terrified of hospitals, terrified of her granddaughter's condition.

Meanwhile, other work awaited me at the camp, so I left, promising to return in order, not only to see Estere, but also to pay the impoverished staff for the medicines that had been used. I returned in an hour.

Imagine my delight to see Estere sitting up and the grandmother all smiles. Estere's foot was swollen and VERY painful and would be for several days, but her grandmother obviously wanted her home.

In countries that are struggling to improve conditions for their people, hospital beds are in very short supply. Often there is no bed, but only floor space, and anyway the conditions are pretty appalling all round. People would rather be ill at home, even if home is the floor of a small mud hut in a refugee camp.

There is also the question of traditional beliefs. In different parts of Africa different illnesses have different meanings. For example, in some places measles is always the fault of the mother. Diarrhoea that leads to death is caused by a witch and that witch has to be pointed out by the traditional 'prophet'. Punishment for witches can be pretty severe.

We collected Estere and the granny and took them back to the camp where our patient, with a sigh of relief, collapsed onto the floor of her hut. I knew that there would be much discussion as to whose evil spirit was in the snake which had tried to kill Estere. It may be unbelievable to us, but we also have our superstitions; walk under a ladder and it is bad luck or a black cat crossing your path is evil – or is it good?

Estere took about a week to become pain-free, but she was so grateful to her friends and all who had looked after her. Her friends helped her to survive. They looked after her children, cooked for the family, carried the water and in so many ways put themselves out.

These people teach us; we, who so often do not want our plans disrupted. The last time I saw Estere she was hobbling, with the aid of a stick, but she was smiling ... and so was I!

Poetry Corner

Words

Wally Moscuza

Hunters and horses are ready to go
Trotting proudly down the expanded field
I was the witness I could see
The fox's hunted in the field, in fear she hid
A game or sport it raced into the road
At the howl of the dogs.
No time was ever born for
The sea reflects life and engulfs the world
As the birds gurgle in their nests
I am motionless!
Careless with words.
Ageless love, it flashes from heart to heart
Words Words Words
Singularly they are senseless and cold
Together they tell man's thoughts
Opens his eyes, enlarging his view of life
I want to see the wind swiftly turning the mill ...
The stream Life Earth Bread
Watermelon, cottage cheese –
Ambition A figure kept trim
Inhibition Humiliation. Hunger!
Parade on catwalk but I saw
Transfigured images of rachitic bones, effecting
The so young – I understand therefore I collect
Pains and thoughts
A nunnery for repose I recall.
She wore in the summer, a white dress and
A veil over her head – a cross on her chest.
Fire satellite_Circles define death and time ...
The cubs were fast asleep next to the precipice
A taciturn moth scornfully flew below.
Maybe she knows but I do not!
A transparent box with nothing to be seen but
Thoughts
A gift from God ...
An intermezzo of origin unknown.
Henceforth I shall only live for words – No rules
The fountain of youth for we live for Truth.

I wish I could hear Jesus laugh

Teresa Brett

I wish I could hear Jesus laugh.
My mother would smile and say, 'Not 'arf'.
She, like me,
Liked to hear and see.

I'd ask her now but she's long gone.
To where I hope there's lots of song.
I feel her, but not so I can tell
If she can sing and hear and smell.

Jesus had friends who told of Him
Such wondrous things they fill each hymn,
But not with a smile, or laugh or wink.
What's a girl like me to think

Of a man who did such good
That it cast a glorious hood
Over his face, mouth and eyes
So there's no surprise

Of a sunlit giggling beam
Ready to help me see my dream
Of a God-man nudging, smirking
So I see fun where he is lurking.

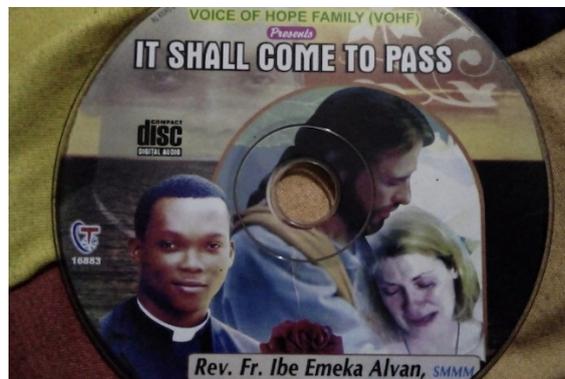
Editorial

Sarah Sykes

As we publish the September edition of Pilgrim, we hope that you have managed to enjoy some downtime over the summer. Last year we hoped for a gradual relaxation of restrictions, but ended up in a long winter of lockdowns, so let's not tempt fate this time!

We will instead wish Fr Mike well, as he heads to pastures new and begins the next chapter of his priesthood, and welcome Fr Walter to our Parish – more from him in the Advent edition. And talking of Advent, we look forward to receiving your Advent-y thoughts, articles, pics and ideas at the end of November.

Meanwhile, you might enjoy listening to Fr Alvan's creative musical offering on his YouTube page: [Alvan Ibe](#).



[image courtesy of RCDEA news page]

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

The deadline for the next edition is

Friday 5 November 2021 for publication on 4/5 December

The production team:

Editors: Nora Darby, Sarah Sykes

Sub-editors: Alex Dias, Carol Williams, Nora Darby, Sarah Sykes

Commissioning Editor: Nora Darby

Cover: Leonie Isaacson

Proofreaders: Caroline O'Donnell & Sarah Sykes

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

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

Some Regular Events

The Parishioners Open Meeting is where **ALL** parishioners can come together to discuss and debate Parish matters, and decide when and where things need to be done. The Agenda is planned in advance and the meeting is led by the chairman and Parish Priest. Meetings commence at 7.30pm and currently are held online as a Zoom meeting.

The Zoom link is published in the Newsletter and sent via the Keep in Touch email during the week before the meetings.

You can raise a topic at the meeting but it helps if you send a short note about 10 days before the next meeting to Stephen Warde at openmeetings@saintlaurence.org.uk

The Pilgrim by Email

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

Pilgrim on the Web

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

ABLAZE

The St Laurence Youth Mass is known as ABLAZE. It is designed to encourage our youth to build their confidence in participating in all aspects of the Mass. It is held Sunday 5pm on the first Sunday of the month. It is vibrant and fun. We encourage young readers, Eucharistic ministers, budding musicians of all ages, and the only requirement is an 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!

Parish Virtual Coffee and Chat

held after 11am Mass

Zoom details:

<https://zoom.us/j/93748136619?pwd=eUZLZkRiQXIZQWZndFdzci8wZnp6Zz09>

Meeting ID: 937 4813 6619

Passcode: 222496

Upcoming Parish Events

Next Parishioners Open Meeting	Tues 14 Sept 7:30pm
Mass and farewell celebration for Fr Mike Smith	Friday 17 Sept 7.30pm
Ablaze Mass	1st Sunday of the month at 5pm
CAFOD Family Fast Day	Friday 1 October
Confessions	After Mass on Saturday morning until 10.30am
Currently heard in the parish room/garden only	Before Saturday evening Mass 6pm



Follow St Laurence's on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/stlaurencecambridge>

ST LAURENCE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

91 Milton Road, Cambridge CB4 1XB

Tel: 01223 704640

Email: office@saintlaurence.org.uk

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

Parish Priest:

Fr Simon Blakesley
07946 390060

simon.blakesley@rcdea.org.uk

Assistant Priest:

Fr Bob Eccles O.P.
01223 741265

robert.eccles@english.op.org

Deacon:

Rev. Dr Geoffrey Cook
01223 351650

Secretary:

Mr Reece King
01223 704640

office@saintlaurence.org.uk

Treasurer:

James Dore
07980 467534

treasurer@saintlaurence.org.uk

Safeguarding Coordinator:

Petra Tucker

01223 704640 (messages)

safeguarding@saintlaurence.org.uk

Service Times

Saturday 9.30am

6pm Vigil Mass (sung)

Sunday 8.00am

9:30am (sung)

11am (sung)

Join us afterwards for virtual coffee and chat after Mass on Zoom (details on inside back cover)

Mon, Tues, Thurs 9.30am

Wed, Fri 12.30pm

All Masses are livestreamed. Please watch out for any changes to this, and Mass times, on the Parish website and weekly notices or announcements at Mass.

St Laurence's School

Heads of School
Address

Mrs Veronica Harvey
St Laurence's School
Arbury Road
Cambridge
CB4 2JX

Telephone

01223 712227

Email

office@stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk

Website

www.stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk