

# The Pilgrim



St Laurence's Parish Magazine, Advent 2021 Edition

		
<p><b>Welcome to Fr Walter</b>  <b>Wishing you all peace, health and happiness this</b>  <b>Christmas</b></p>		

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WHEN IS HE COMING?



ADVENT



PIC•COLLAGE

## What's New?

### Building Parish Life at St Laurence's

#### Facilitation Group

At the last Parish Open Meeting it was agreed that the time had come to build Parish life again. A small group of parishioners came together to set things in motion. A few weekends ago paper forms were distributed as people came to the various Masses and an explanatory notice was read out at the end of each Mass explaining what we hope to achieve with your help.

**We said:** As Covid restrictions gradually ease we are keen that St Laurence's Parish is rejuvenated and once again becomes an active, thriving, supportive community. With your help we can all play a part in this. So how do we do this?

It starts with knowing one another a little better and being able to communicate more effectively. This is something we found hard to do at the start of the pandemic, because, unlike many parishes, we have no list of contact information – no database – of people who worship here. With your help, we'd like to build that list now.

**Progressing on:** Over the past few weeks, we have invited you to complete a survey. THANK YOU to those who have done so. There has been a good response so far, and it is really encouraging to see the positive offers of help. **Even if you are a regular helper, we need you to complete the survey, so we can ensure we know who you are and that you are included on the parishioner database.**

For those who have yet to complete the survey, the purpose is first of all to learn about the number of people in our Parish and establish a database of parishioners. Please be assured that any information provided will be held securely by the Parish Office and used to support pastoral work or to contact you about news or activities only. Secondly, the survey invites you to help out with various church ministry activities and groups. With your help we can all play a part in bringing our Parish life back to where it used to be, but it will need volunteers and some commitment. It would be wonderful if individuals, couples, families and some of the younger people of our Parish could now get involved.

There are many church ministry activities and groups at St Laurence's. From reading lessons and welcoming people at Mass, to flower arranging, helping with children's liturgy, writing articles for this magazine, as well as joining prayer groups or other groups such as CAFOD or SVP.

You can complete the survey, either accessing it online: <https://www.saintlaurence.org.uk/buildingup/> or you will find paper copies available in the church porch. Ticking the form does not commit you.

We are currently collating the survey responses and if you have indicated your interest in an activity, someone from the activity will be getting in touch to discuss what is involved and you can then decide whether you're interested and able to help. Your help, no matter how small will help contribute to rebuilding our Parish life.

**Here is a brief update:** We have now updated details of over 250 parishioners with a good cross section of responses to help with various activities and groups, and we are starting to contact group leaders. We will continue with the following notice in the Newsletter and Keeping in Touch email.

If you haven't done it yet, do pick up a paper copy in the porch or fill in the online form at <https://www.saintlaurence.org.uk/buildingup/>

This way, hopefully, nobody is missed? You can also help by passing on the message!

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### Farewell to Fr Mike Smith

#### Nora Darby

On Friday 24th September we gathered to welcome Fr Mike Smith to his belated farewell celebration before which he was to celebrate 6pm Mass. At 5.45pm Fr Simon, phone in hand saying, "We have no priest" to those of us getting things ready. What has happened we asked – don't know, not answering phone. We guessed he was stuck in traffic as he was driving from Norwich? The hands of the clock were approaching 6pm and suddenly there he was; yes, traffic but now here. Mass was only five minutes late starting but it was a relief to everyone, especially Mike!

When Mass ended, we all drifted through to the Parish room for drinks and nibbles and a celebration cake made by Jeannette. Fr Simon called for silence and then presented Mike with his farewell gift, a cheque to which parishioners had contributed. You can see Mike's response below.

It was an evening to remember; a tinge of sadness however because Fr Mike was no longer with us. Our prayers will be with him as he proceeds with his priesthood serving at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich.

## A chat with Fr Walter Chenyika

Sarah Sykes

It's always lovely to welcome a new priest to the Parish, and Fr Walter kindly agreed to meet with me for a chat, so that I could share some of his life story with *The Pilgrim* readers. Before Fr Walter arrived at St Laurence's he had been working as the Diocesan Co-ordinator for Caritas as well as the Vicar General for his diocese (Chinhoyi Diocese). For those who don't know what being the Vicar General (VG) entails, it is the VG's job to sort out all the admin for the diocese and only involve the Bishop if there is a problem that cannot be solved. The Parish Priests of the diocese report all their problems, pastoral concerns and issues in their parishes to the VG. The heavy workload of these two demanding positions, led Fr Walter to ask his Bishop for a sabbatical break and he was given permission to travel to the UK to spend his time here, very much like Fr Johanne did a year or two ago. In fact, Fr Walter was Vicar General and processed Fr Johanne's application for sabbatical with us. And another fun fact, Fr Johanne was one of Fr Walter's lecturers when he was in seminary. He taught him Pastoral Theology.

Fr Walter was born in 1979 on 2nd November in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe. He lived there with his father (a teacher) and mother and sister; a family that would eventually grow so that Fr Walter now has three sisters and a brother. However, he was not terribly well as a baby and suffered from a condition which meant he was unable to digest his food. His parents took him to doctors but they were unable to pinpoint the exact problem and during the first couple of years of his life, Fr Walter remained unwell and steadily lost weight, until it got to the point where his parents were unable to afford to continue to pay for medical care. But, miraculously, just at the point when they stopped taking Walter for treatment, his condition suddenly improved and he went on to make a full recovery!

When he was 7yrs old, Fr Walter's family moved to a more rural area of the country and he went to school there completing his primary and secondary education. He was baptised at about 8-9 years old and soon found that he enjoyed going to Mass and learning the prayers without any prompting from his mother (the Catholic of his two parents).

At the age of 18 he decided to explore the feeling, which had been growing throughout his young life, that he had a calling to be a priest. He spoke with a local priest who advised him to contact the Bishop and he then agreed to go to a seminary to test whether this feeling was a genuine call to the priesthood. He began his formation in 1998 when he studied firstly Philosophy and then Theology and Religious Studies at the University of



### A message from Fr Mike

Dear Parishioners of St Laurence's,

Dear Friends!! Thank you so much for the very generous gift that I received from you all at my farewell Mass on 24th September. I was overwhelmed and very grateful indeed. Thank you also to those who were able to come to the Mass and the celebration afterwards. Thank you especially to all of you for making St Laurence's the wonderful community that it is.

May God bless you all and hope to see you again before too long! All best wishes and prayers, Mike Smith.



Zimbabwe. He became a Deacon in August 2005, and then on the completion of his honours degree he was ordained on 28 July 2007. Shortly afterwards he was assigned to be an Assistant Priest at a small parish, St John's Parish, where he served for a short six months until February 2008. He was then moved to Kristo Mambo, Mount Darwin Parish, a bigger parish which served a Mass Centre and a total of 42 outstations. He continued in the position of Assistant Priest until the September of that same year when he was made Parish Priest of Mount Darwin and remained there until 2011 when he was appointed as Diocesan Development Co-ordinator for Caritas.

He worked at this job until he gained a scholarship to do a Master's degree in Development Studies at Sussex University in Brighton, which he began in September 2014. He returned home in January 2016 where he continued to work as Caritas Co-ordinator, but often travelled back to England for holidays over the next few years. Then, at the end of 2018, he also took on the role of Vicar General for the Diocese.

And so, we arrive back at the start of this article where, following his resignation from his position as Vicar General in January this year, he spent a few months (from Feb-Sept) as Parish Priest in the small parish of St James in Mutorashanga before travelling to spend a sabbatical year – or possibly two – in the UK. He tells me it will be up to Bishop Alan to decide whether the whole of his sabbatical is spent here at St Laurence's. As for personal challenges, having already completed two Master's degrees (in Development Studies, and Sustainable Livelihoods and Technologies), he is considering applying to do a PhD, possibly in International Relations at our very own Anglia Ruskin University, but there's still the tricky question of securing funding. Meanwhile he will continue to say Mass, hear Confessions and visit the sick and learn about the life of our Diocese.



## Features and Opinions

### On Being a Pilgrim

**Dr Marystella Guerra,**  
Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology

When Sue asked me if I wanted to contribute something to *The Pilgrim* magazine several ideas came to mind. Since arriving in Cambridge, (nay, possibly from the weeks prior to it, as expectation of imminent travel had me preparing and doubting what I would do), ideas for different projects and plans started cropping up. These, however, have subsided as my mind's eye fixated on the name of the magazine, 'Pilgrim', leading to reflection of what pilgrimage and a nomadic life has meant for me.

A pilgrim is usually a person that goes on pilgrimage to a holy site – historically a walking towards God – though these days, more often than not, it is done by plane, train, bike, and yes, the old-fashioned walking. Possibly the less known meaning, or at least the meaning I am attaching to it as I consider the nomadic life and reflect on the Apostles' missionary journeys, is that of a constant seeking of God as we live through this life. The perpetual journey that we are on as we live our daily lives, regularly striving to encounter and connect with God as we go along in hope of the life to come with Him. This leading thought allows me to frame what I mean by nomadic life, and what my nomadic life has meant for my experience of being a perpetual pilgrim encountering God in the everyday.

Travelling has been a way of life for me from a very young age. My father's job had us changing home about every four to five years. I became very good at chatting to strangers and adapting to new school settings that revealed the chatty nature that would develop in me as an adult. I enjoyed encountering different cultures; learning about my friends' cuisine and cooking with them was especially interesting, food is such a central part of welcoming the stranger in most cultures that you don't really know a person until you eat with them. Quite naturally, after I finished my undergraduate studies, I did as my father had done and found a series of jobs that took me to different places. In each of them I joined a local parish or university chaplaincy getting involved more often than not in the choir, and in baking cakes or cooking; both allowed me to reach out to people in ways other involvements with the community did not, at least not for my character. But what I did wasn't as central as what I encountered. Being Catholic means that very practically we can go to a new church in a new city in a new language and we will encounter the same liturgy as far as structure and rituals go. While there is similarity there are also differences in how things are done. Here I mean the cultural particularities of each place, influenced by the locality's history and

social development. For instance, Germans love the Corpus Christi procession and in Catholic regions of Germany the entire town goes out for it in a way I have not seen in other countries. It helps that in these regions it is a national holiday with everything closed even though it is maintained on the traditional Thursday rather than being moved to a Sunday. I think maintaining it on the Thursday and having it be a holiday underlines the importance Jesus in the sacrament of the altar is for our lives.

God gives us, and leads us into, the adventures that will best feed our souls. For some it is to stay in one place and build the church there where they have always been, for others God expands their heart by taking them to different places. In my case it has meant leading a rather nomadic life. While this appealed to me instinctively, I don't think it would have been possible without God walking by me and frequently smoothing the road ahead for me. This has allowed me a vision of the Church that has enriched me spiritually in a way that would not have happened had I stayed in San Salvador all my life. And while I take with me my experience of growing up in Latin America and what that means for how I perceive society, the Church, and the person, this perspective has been challenged and remodelled through each encounter I have had with the Church in Europe and the United States.

One thing that stands out is how God has given us so many charisms, manifested in the different communities, parishes, and orders that paint the landscape of the Church. While there are the more well-known charisms, manifested institutionally through, for example, the Order of Preachers, there are newer manifestations of the Holy Spirit in us that remind us both of the richness of the faith and that God continues to act in our lives every day. That to this day, as has happened through history, different communities have emerged in response to a specific need demonstrates the dynamism of the Holy Spirit working amongst us and through our special gifts. As I write this, I sit in the Lash Library at the Margaret Beaufort Institute that was founded in response to the need to provide women with the space to engage with theology and very practically querying how women have and continue to build the Church. It is this question about being a woman, how she is understood and what this means for women's role in society and the life of the Church that is the focus of my study. Working and studying here has allowed me access to women researching this key topic and, significantly, given me the space to dig deeper into this question. One of the aspects that aids in this search are the courses on offer for example the seminars in January 2022 titled *Women who Changed the Church*. These lectures will explore all aspects of women's engagement in the life of the Church throughout history and promise to contribute to the ongoing conversation.

## **Homily June 2021, Solemnity of Corpus Christi: The importance of receiving the Eucharist**

**Fr Simon Blakesley**

### **Readings:**

Exodus 24:3-8

Psalm 115(116):12-13,15-18

Hebrews 9:11-15

Mark 14:12-16,22-26

Welcome to our celebration on this Solemnity of Corpus et Sanguinis Christi: the Body and Blood of Christ. In our Scripture readings today, there is perhaps a particular emphasis on the Blood of Christ, poured out for our salvation. For the Jews, life was and is "in the blood," (Leviticus 17:11) but without that blood the body cannot live. However, Christ has poured out His Blood into the Body which is His Church, through the mystery of the Eucharist (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; John 6:51, 53–58) and it is that living stream of grace and life that Christ pours out for us every time we come to receive Him in the Eucharist.

During my time working in the Royal Southampton Hospital, I was on the High Dependency Intensive Care post-surgical unit and a young man who had been involved in a serious motorbike accident was brought in. The surgeons knew that he was losing a lot of blood from internal injuries, and they rapidly took him to theatre to see whether they could repair the damage. Sadly, the young man died in theatre. The surgeon had to come back to write up his notes, which is always done, rather dramatically, in red. He had described how they had done an emergency lateral thoracotomy approach and he just wrote two words which chilled me to the bone. He had written, 'Heart empty'. Heart empty. The poor man had lost his circulatory volume because of the massive injuries to his thoracic aorta.

In a way, that is what we can say of the Heart of Christ: Heart empty. His life has been poured out for us. For love of us, when Our Lord's side was pierced on the Cross – a lateral thoracotomy if you like – His heart was emptied so that we could live fully. This is the massive paradox at the heart of our faith, the symbolism of our faith, that this dead Man on a Cross is the source of our life. This is at the heart of the mystery of the Eucharist. At the Last Supper, as Mark tells us, the Lord said, "This is the cup of My Blood which will be poured out for you." (Mark 14:24) poured out into the whole of Creation, poured out as a gift, poured out as life.

That is why it is so important and yet, now, so regrettable that we cannot have the fullness of the sign of the Eucharist of giving Communion under both kinds. Perhaps even when this was first introduced, there were some people who could not bring themselves

to receive Communion under both kinds. I think that is possibly because there is, deep in our psyche, an ambivalence about potentially ‘bad’ blood. Certainly, that was potentiated in the early eighties when there was the whole anxiety about HIV. Now, we have another, possibly even more lethal, virus to contend with and perhaps we will not, any time soon, be returning to that fullness of the sign of the Eucharist in offering to all the people Holy Communion under both kinds.

I am sure that many of you will feel that this is a great pity because this is the sign of Christ’s outpoured love, his eternally ‘good’ and life-giving blood. It is central to the fullness of the sign of the Eucharist. “This is the cup of My Blood, which is poured out for you”. That generosity, that life-giving, reckless abandon which accepted the Cross, is the love of Christ for me and for you, the ‘circulatory volume’ of the life of the Church, poured out willingly for the life of the world.

The Lord’s Sacred Heart is an empty Heart.

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## The Girls and the Women

### Michael Allan

In 2012, Malala Yousafzai, a 15-year-old Muslim girl living in Pakistan, was shot in the head by a Taliban gunman for daring to speak out for the right of girls to be educated. With emergency treatment and surgery in Pakistan and the UK she managed to survive. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 and went on to study at Oxford University. Malala has always had a profound belief and faith in God, Allah. She sees her survival as a kind of second birth, a gift, so as to devote her life to working for the education of girls. She, like Greta Thunberg, is a prophet of our time, speaking out in the face of lies, arrogance and violence. She – also like Greta – refuses to be silent.



Photo credit: Jane Hahn for Malala

flogged and killed schoolgirls. According to them women should be covered up, invisible, silent; their place is in the home, with few exceptions, and the Taliban have the right to enforce that. They claim it is their religion and their culture, but many devout Afghans and other Muslims elsewhere, like Malala,

The Taliban, now in power in Afghanistan, initially said that education for girls would be allowed, including to University level, but they have gone back on those promises.

They have previously bombed schools and

deny that. These are not religious or cultural values, they are patriarchal values. (There are also many men and boys in Afghanistan who hate and fear the Taliban, and do not want them in power, and they too will suffer.)

Afghanistan, sometimes called ‘a nation of warriors’, is a very traumatised, brutalised country, partly due to repeated invasions and political meddling by the so-called ‘civilised’ global superpowers, including Britain, over the last two hundred years. Bloody, barbaric violence has been perpetrated on all sides.

Patriarchal control over what girls and women can and cannot do, seen in such a hideous extreme in the Taliban, also exists in other cultures and religions, including ours, though sometimes, and thankfully, far less extreme – but no less real for that. It is a blight on our world.

The good news is that enormous progress has been made in girls’ education, with the proportion of girls in education much higher than it used to be. However, there is still a long way to go. According to UNICEF, around 130 million girls around the world are out of school. Gender discrimination, poverty and warfare are among the causes. (The climate change emergency has also had an impact, with many schools literally being washed away by floods in low lying regions.) Those 130 million girls are denied the opportunities we take for granted. It does them, their families and communities great harm, and it ultimately harms all of us.

Education is an essential gateway to a healthier, more peaceful, more economically and ecologically sustainable world. The education of girls has been found to have an enormous impact for good on the societies in which they live.

Our world needs their voices.



Village students in the Chalk Lanka Boat School, Singra, Natore, Bangladesh, July 2017.

Increasing floods, almost certainly due to human-made climate change, are causing great damage in Bangladesh. In just one year, 2007, floods destroyed 332 schools and damaged 4,893 others. (Photo Credit: Abir Abdullah / Climate Visuals Countdown)

*Donate, if you wish, to the Malala Fund, which actively promotes and supports education for girls, and indeed every child, throughout the world: [www.malala.org](http://www.malala.org)*

## Slaves or Free?

### Fr Bob Eccles

The world's best books and plays are full of clued-up and wily servants, those who have a cunning plan, whose loyalty comes with a slant: the Sancho Panzas and Launcelot Gobbos, the Avengers in top boots, the Sam Wellers and the Baldrics and the Jeeves' who lead their masters by the nose. The gospels have them too. In many cases we guess they have just wandered in from the comedy of the period, to be held up sometimes as glad encouragements, sometimes as dire warnings!

Of course we are not to take all these servants too seriously, they are stock characters the gospel writers had to hand rather than original inventions. There's no point in trying to accommodate them with our modern notions of the rights of the worker and social justice, after all in the ancient world your servants were generally slaves and slaves who shared the life of the family.

So we are used to stories about misbehaving servants whose master turns up unexpectedly and catches them at it (see for example, Luke 12: 39–48). They get their comeuppance of course. You have to see it in the context of the happier outcome of other episodes where the master returning from a wedding makes the personnel sit down for a meal and puts on his apron to serve their dinner himself, this is Jesus the Lord who is the Servant (Luke 12: 25–38). We would do well to suppose that in these cases the servants stand for the women and men who exercise responsibility in the community, the church of Luke and Matthew that is, very early Christians, called by Paul the stewards of God's grace, the leaders and teachers and catechists who did then what all you cheerful readers of *The Pilgrim* do today, look after so many aspects of church life. Some parable-like sayings reported of Our Lord have him coming to wait on us, throw a party for us. But some give a warning – make sure you really are good and faithful servants of the Word, not negligent or time-servers, because what you do, you do as for the Lord.

In the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, a lot of refreshing things are said about the service of the gospel of God, and the pattern of ministries in the Church, not so unlike the ones we find in St Paul's letters. An important point is made. *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, spells it out. It is not as though all ministry cascades downwards from the ordained ministry, the bishops and priests, who would delegate the stuff they have no time or inclination to do themselves. For some folk we know, the penny has still to drop! Catechists and musicians and the Society of St Vincent de Paul and the home visitors and all the many others are not to be thought of as 'Father's little helpers',

they exercise real ministries that are properly theirs, the flowering of their Baptism and Confirmation. It is the Lord who is the Servant, and he is among us as one who serves. What the ordained ministry has to do in this respect is to wake up the gifts and talents of the baptised, only apparently a managerial task, but in the first place an inspirational leadership, to bring out the lovely gifts that people have for the service of the kingdom and the building-up of the Body of Christ.\*

Servants are out of fashion, servility is by no means dead yet. Some folk seem born to help lame dogs over stiles! You'll meet lots of them in prison and in religious settings too, curiously. The first time one of them wants to find your page for you in the hymnal you think, how nice of him, if it goes on it's a concern. The ingratiating personality is a bully in disguise; he's bound to replicate the master-slave rapport, the only one he can imagine. If you are a Dominican brother, and brother is the title you defend with your life, you have to shock such folk with news that the only mature relationship is a fraternal one. We are all children of one Father. It's the same immature take on life together that has opened the door to the servile bullies who abuse children and vulnerable adults, those clerics who have gone out like wolves in the midst of lambs. *Corruptio optimi pessima*, the corruption of what is best is the worst tragedy. Only they never were the best, were they?

In an idle hour, I found on the Net an interview with a young religious, a bubbly new novice, who was explaining the vow of obedience as a surrender of the will, no longer would one need to take any more decisions about one's life, such a relief, one's superior would decide, dispose of it all. My superior knows best for me. Hmm. What do you think? Is this true obedience or is it abject servility? Blind obedience! Can you imagine a more dangerous doctrine? It's the pathological mind-set of sects like the Moonies and the Children of God.

Properly understood, it is my vow of obedience that admits me to the life of adult responsibility in my Order. Yes I am more responsible, not less. It is the solemnly professed brothers who meet with the Prior in Chapter to first pray, and then take counsel with him, consider our call, reflect together and discover the opportunities for the gospel. We must listen well to one another and try to see all sides of every bright idea, if we are to come to mature decisions for the mission, ones that each can own – each must individually vote – so that everyone, as far as possible, can own the community project or plan. The idea is not to come to a vote as quickly as possible, but to come as close to unanimity as we can. A totally obedient community would be one in which no-one was ever compelled to do anything, as my teacher Herbert used to say.

So, black and white spotted dogs obey, they come to heel. And the *Domini canes* or dogs of the Lord all dressed in black and white obey too, but it is not the same thing, is it? In the gospel according to John, at the Last Supper, Christ reveals to unworthy servants where their flawed obedience has led. A quite undeserved gift, but one which is going to form them, and must form us. 'No longer do I call you servants any more, I call you friends, for I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father.' Loving service, obedience freely given and without fear, the joyful form His friendship takes. As we move out of the pandemic (and our armchair for some of us!) and take our places once again in the family the Lord has gathered to himself (Eucharistic Prayer 3), we all need to move out of passivity and reluctance to get involved, shoulder responsibility, we all need to bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ, like the free people we are (Galatians 6:2). Especially, and most urgently of all, by holding up our Parish and one another in prayer.

\*See also Documents of the Second Vatican Council, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (7th December 1965).

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## See Judge Act!

### Fr Joe Inguanez

Since the days when we used to attend catechism lessons, if not before, we have heard our parents, teachers, priests, and catechists speak to us about Advent. Unfortunately, in our consumerist age during this liturgical period our attention is more attracted by the various gift shops than by the real religious and Christian meaning of this season.

I do not intend to distract you from the fact that Advent is for Christians a 'season of joyful and spiritual expectation'. It should not be considered a penitential season. Unfortunately our liturgy still has some residues of pre-Vatican II practices, such as the suppressing of the Gloria during Sunday Mass and the wearing of purple vestments. These practices have their origin in when Gaul moved to Rome in the 12th century. This ancient practice of the sobriety of purple was intended to make the white vestments appear more brilliant on Christmas Day.

Advent is a season of joy, a result of the fact of Incarnation and birth of God-with-us: Immanuel.

But this hope should be seen in all the Church. I think this year we should reflect on the coming General

Synod of Bishops on Synodality which is taking place between October 2021 and October 2023. However, Pope Francis has introduced a new feature in this Synod, in this common journey. He wants us to understand that this journeying does not belong to the Bishops, but to all the People of God whatever their sacramental status. He is aware that although there is a lot of official and unofficial literature explaining the concept of Synod and Synodality, still our Church has not yet been imbued by a synodal way of being a Church. We – priests and laity – are still acting as if the Church is a clerical Church, and that the role of the laity is to pray, obey and pay! Already in 2009 Pope Benedict VI said, "there is still a tendency to identify the Church unilaterally with the hierarchy, forgetting the common responsibility, the common mission of the People of God, which, in Christ we all share".

The title of the preparatory document throws much light on this: *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission*. This requires a new mindset both in the Church as the people of God and in the Church as an institution. Human beings wittingly or unwittingly are afraid of change and very often resistant to it. St Pope John XXIII presaged this resistance to change and spoke about it in his opening speech of Vatican II. He was experiencing as many spokes in the wheels as Pope Francis is experiencing nowadays. Some of us want to be more 'papist' than the Pope!

Thus at the end of the opening speech of this Synod Pope Francis made a strong prayer to God: "Come, Holy Spirit! You inspire new tongues and place words of life on our lips: keep us from becoming a 'museum Church', beautiful but mute, with much past and little future".

To be a Church we must be imbued by a spirit of 'Communion, Participation and Mission'. St Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians tells us clearly: 'You can all prophesy one at a time so that everyone can learn and be encouraged'. And St Peter in his First Letter gives us the reason why this is so: 'You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy'.

Pope Francis wants all the Bishops to immediately start a dialogue about the Church and its mystery with all the baptised – even with those who have lapsed from their faith. The ball is in our court. Pope Pius XII, the first pope to speak of public opinion in the Church, in a speech he delivered in 1950 (more than ten years before the Second Vatican Council) warned us that if this (public opinion) is missing, the fault would fall on its pastors and on its faithful. It is obvious that we have

failed him, and we have failed what Pope Paul VI taught us about dialogue. During this Advent we should ask the Lord to come again to talk to us. For us to listen and to share His inspirations. Let us not resist the Spirit. A Church without dialogue lacks something intrinsic to its very nature.

In his encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, Pope St John XXIII – the prophet of Vatican II – sanctioned the method introduced by Cardinal Joseph Cardijn as ‘the method’ of the movement which he founded in 1924 – the Young Christian Workers. In this encyclical Pope John XXIII tells us:

‘There are three stages which should normally be followed in the reduction of social principles into practice. First, one reviews the concrete situation; secondly, one forms a judgment on it in the light of these same principles; thirdly, one decides what in the circumstances can and should be done to implement these principles. These are the three stages that are usually expressed in the three terms: look, judge, act.

It is important for our young people to grasp this method and to practice it. Knowledge acquired in this way does not remain merely abstract but is seen as something that must be translated into action.’ (Para. 236–237)

Pope Francis is calling all to share what God is telling us about the Church and the world, because as we read in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, ‘The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts’.

During this Advent we should not see, judge and grumble but see, judge and act! In October last year Pope Francis, in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* warned us not to ‘pass by and look the other way... The complaint that “everything is broken” is answered by the claim that “it can’t be fixed”, or “what can I do?” This feeds into disillusionment and despair, and hardly encourages a spirit of solidarity and generosity. Plunging people into despair closes a perfectly perverse circle: such is the agenda of the invisible dictatorship of hidden interests that have gained mastery over both resources and the possibility of thinking and expressing opinions’. (Para. 75)

## Cardinal Points – Robots & Recreation

### Ronald Haynes

‘One machine can do the work of fifty ordinary men. No machine can do the work of one extraordinary man.’ This apt aphorism, in the language of the day, is from the American Arts and Crafts philosopher and artist Elbert Hubbard. It is one of many early reactions to the prospect of people being challenged or perhaps even replaced by human-like constructions, with divine creatures confronted by human creations, and natural life considering the prospect of artificial life forms. We might think of this area as the realm of the robot and related technologies. However, there are preceding influences which have helped build up our concepts and concerns but perhaps not yet led us to suitable societal resolutions. Among the persistent questions remain some perennial ones – what is it to be human, what limits the potential of humanity, how can we avoid being inhumane?

Over 200 years ago (1818), Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley gave us a warning in her *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. The subtitle is telling – dire consequences usually follow any theft from the divine domain. Just as Prometheus stole fire and was punished by the gods, so Victor Frankenstein is seen as stealing the power of creation, of giving life, by re-animating a corpse partly constructed from more than one body. Shelley’s potent fiction included ideas from galvanism, with electricity identified as the literal ‘spark of life’, of tissue preservation and swappable body parts, and something of the occult, set in a new world of labs and scientific experiments. A telling verse from Milton’s *Paradise Lost* is included on the frontispiece of the original publication:

Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay  
To mould me man? Did I solicit thee  
From darkness to promote me?

Well before Frankenstein’s creature was unveiled, however, and perhaps an important influence for the very idea, can be found in some ancient Jewish legends concerning a creature known as a golem. The golem is a kind of embryo human, not fully created (e.g. a monster to some), brought to life by esoteric religious ritual and sacred letters usually in order to protect people. Among the curious contrasts between the golem and Frankenstein’s creature, there is a key difference between the belief in the spiritual gift of life in the former (the golem is a gift from God, e.g. to protect the people) and the presentation of the scientific drive and theft of life in the latter (e.g. the power of life and creation is taken without prayer, request, or necessarily any clear purpose, except perhaps to try to ‘cheat’ death and inappropriately extend life beyond the intended

number of days). These differences are part of the tensions, real or imagined, often noted between religion and science, certainly in Shelley's time, and too often these also are rather entangled (e.g. occult, alchemy and lab experiments intermingled).

It was 100 years ago that we were introduced to the term robot, by the Czech dramatist Karel Čapek<sup>1</sup>. *R.U.R.* was well received and very successful, with Čapek's robots presented as artificial humans engineered in the lab to perform the work of society, while their masters could enjoy a work-free life. However, the 'real' ones become lazy and infertile, and the robots grow resentful and plot a rebellion to eliminate their now inhuman masters: 'the fault' Čapek wrote 'is ours'.

Following the success of *R.U.R.*, the use of the term 'robot' swiftly changed more toward how we use it now. The rapidly changing conceptions and depictions were particularly in the context of the horrors of the destructive machines used in WWI and the concerns around the rise of mass production and over-mechanisation to the detriment of the community. These concerns swiftly raised existential questions about either being dominated or eliminated by the new machinery in the hands of despotic regimes.

The year 1921 also saw the publication of the novel *We* by the Russian writer Yevgeny Zamyatin, who depicts an oppressively mechanised dictatorship creating a mathematically regulated future dystopia. The abuse of the people and of technology goes so far that an operation is ordered to surgically remove imagination and emotions, to prevent possible riots and ensure a kind of mechanical reliability, so that the people could function as 'tractors in human form'. This overly ordered society also gives rise to an underground dissident movement, one of whose members leads the protagonist into ways to pull away from (and hopefully pull down) the system, and rediscover what it means to be free, more fully feeling, and rediscover their humanity. The powerful tale has had enormous influence, ranging from *1984* by Orwell (who helped arrange translation and ensure Zamyatin was known) to works by Ayn Rand, George Lucas, Kurt Vonnegut, and even *The Lego Movie*.

A little later in the '20s would come first the novel (1925) and then the astonishing movie of *Metropolis* (1927), which is now widely considered to be one of the greatest and most influential films ever made, the first film to be added on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register. Set a hundred years in the future, and connecting the worlds of the seemingly utopian upper city with the highly regimented and mechanised workers' city underground, *Metropolis* introduced one of the most enduring images of the mechanical robot who is used, literally and wickedly, to replace a human.

The human in question is Maria, a kindly peace worker who shares words of hope and comfort with the workers in a kind of underground chapel and who also escorts their children on visits to the city above – because she contends that it is meant to belong to everyone.

The human Maria is abducted by a kind of techno wizard, who combines science and occult practices to transfer the physical form to a duplicate of Maria, literally to replace Maria but also to do the will of the leader of Metropolis. This backfires horribly and the wicked false Maria leads a kind of revolt of the workers which threatens the lives and balance of everyone, in upper and lower cities. While it doesn't go well for the false Maria, there are some key lessons about the essential interdependence of planning head and working hands.

As with the other stories noted above, with one group unfairly enjoying the fruits of others' labours to continue their increasingly imbalanced lifestyles, a crisis is created requiring a rethink and resolution. Returning briefly to the Frankenstein story, the creature sorely laments that he is rejected by society saying, 'I am solitary and abhorred... I was not made for the enjoyment of pleasure' and in his hurt and anger declares, 'If I cannot inspire love I will cause fear.' There are several clues here to what is missing which makes his existence so painful, and which indicate what is needed for humanity – from acceptance and enjoyment, to comfort from fear and the sharing of love.

When we consider these aspects of being human – love, alleviation of fear, acceptance, enjoyment – it is easy to see that these are identifiable ingredients of the moments of our life given to leisure and recreation. Josef Pieper's great work *Leisure the Basis of Culture*<sup>2</sup> helpfully addresses a number of these points, seeing leisure as attitude of mind and condition of soul fostering a capacity to perceive the reality of the world – allowing time for the contemplation of the nature of God. Alternatively, a world of total labour which eliminates leisure, one without silence and insight, filled with hectic amusements, is one which will destroy our culture (and ourselves). Piper says 'If we don't get leisure right, we won't get work right; if we don't get the Sabbath right, we won't get Monday right; if we don't get the culture right, we won't get the economy or politics right.'

Recreation, fun, play and imagination – these may not be signs of either the more puritanical or more materialistic views of the world. However they are a sign of a more human one, and even a more productive one and research shows this to be true. Burning the midnight oil itself will lead to burnout.

It seems that a stark contrast we keep finding, between the more mechanical or robotic and the more human, keeps bringing us back to love and leisure, balancing creation and production with recreation and play. While robotic systems are designed, largely based on studying how we perform various tasks and work, they are a kind of enhanced subset of the totality of a human. We may not know the full totality of being human, but we know that it must include significant time for play and leisure, fun and humour, laughs and love – together with other humans. Where we go wrong is usually in going too far in one or more directions, losing a balancing of the extremes, whether too much work, or even too little. ‘All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy’ goes the old saying, and the 19th century Anglo-Irish writer Maria Edgeworth added that ‘All play and no work makes Jack a mere toy’.

1. The 100-year-old fiction that predicted today - BBC Culture - <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20210902-the-100-year-old-fiction-that-predicted-today>

2. Josef Pieper's *Leisure the Basis of Culture* – An Integration of the Contemplative and Active Life – <https://www.stthomas.edu/media/catholicstudies/center/ryan/curriculumdevelopment/theologicaethics/NaughtonTeachingNote.pdf>

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## 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 paying tax on earnings, pensions or income/capital gains from investments, and you sign up for Gift Aid, 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 website under '[Gift Aid](#)'

**If you have not already signed up for the Gift Aid scheme, please consider doing so and read more about it [HERE](#) .**

Or from the Parish homepage select: Parish Ministries and Groups → Parish Communication and Administration → Parish Finance Committee and Gift Aid

## Parish Organisations and Activities

### Pax Christi Christmas cards



This year some of the Pax Christi Christmas cards depict Nativity scenes taken from banners originally made for St Laurence's. The idea came from Arn Dekker, a parishioner and Pax Christi representative. His wife Lyn helped to make the banners.

I asked Jenny Martin who was also involved, if she could tell us something of the history of the banners, and she kindly wrote the following for the Advent edition. (ND, Editor)

### St Laurence Banners



For twenty-five years or so, Eithne Barrett, Lyn Dekker and myself enjoyed Monday mornings at church making banners and a few altar cloths. Originally Fr Michael Griffin suggested that some banners would add colour to the church, and a larger group of us made a few to hang on the wall behind the altar. However, after a couple of years it became the three of us, with Frances Small sometimes, and it was a lovely part of our lives.

We made banners of various sizes St Laurence and Our Lady still hang from the balcony at the back. Smaller ones were made to hang round the sides of the church; for Advent, Lent, Parables, Women of the Gospels. Mostly people seemed to enjoy them, and I like to think children could follow the stories. For many people, our banner showing St Francis preaching to the birds seemed to be a favourite. We put in some animals

around the saint, and Fr David teased me about the pathetic appearance of the Wolf of Gubbio! It's true the wolf did look very unthreatening, but I argued back that it was after his miraculous conversion, so only right that he looked less wolfish!

We really enjoyed the challenge of making banners and we were always delighted when Parish groups asked us for banners or cloths, and took especial delight in the CAFOD ones. Also memorable were the two we made for Whitemoor Prison, at the request of the Chaplain. The prisoners themselves requested the theme of the second one – St Peter breaking forth from prison! This amused us, and we did it with full drama and bars breaking open!

We were also asked to make an altar cloth by an army chaplain to use in a mobile tent Mass centre in Afghanistan. Some parishioners were uneasy about this and felt we appeared to support the army presence in Afghanistan, but they misunderstood. As the chaplain said, he was supporting very young men far from home in a hostile environment and he wanted something bright and colourful expressing love. He subsequently wrote to me asking for a second altar cloth, and quoting the metaphysical poet Henry Vaughan: 'your altar cloth reminds us that there is another country far beyond the stars...'.

Eithne, Lyn and I loved doing these varied banners and we loved each other's company. We had a lot of fun, and as you sit sewing together, you share so much of what happens in your life, the ups and downs.

I am so happy that Arn's initiative with the cards for Pax Christi means that the banners have some more life and can raise some money for charity.



The Christmas cards are available from: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/product/nativity-trio-cards/>. Ten mixed cards plus envelopes can be ordered at £4.50 plus p+p

## Saint Vincent de Paul Society Update



### Catharine Warren, President St Laurence's SVP

The SVP is organising the Parish **Giving Tree** again this Christmas. Many people will be finding it harder to make ends meet with utility bills and other costs rising at the moment and it is great that parishioners have always responded generously to this opportunity to spread the joy of Christmas.

You may have read about the Giving Tree in the newsletter and the details are also on the SVP page of the Parish website. There is a Giving Tree display in the Narthex if you would like to take a tag or you can visit the Parish website to pick a gift from the online wish list.

The gifts and hamper items you donate will be distributed to:

- homeless people via Wintercomfort,
- elderly people via the Meals on Wheels service (CAMMS) and to
- children, families and parishioners known to the SVP within East Anglia.

### **All gifts and hamper items should be returned to church by 12th December at the latest.**

SVP members continue to respond to new requests and offer ongoing support, in line with Covid risk reduction guidelines. This has involved helping families setting up home to obtain white goods and furniture, signposting to other local charities, visits, giving lifts to Mass and taking Communion to people who cannot get to church. Recent activity includes providing:

- cot bedding for a family
- clothes and toiletries for a homeless person in hospital
- replacement flooring after a home suffered fire and water damage
- a contribution to reduce electricity debt
- assistance to a family with clearing some household items no longer needed
- Foodbank vouchers and Tesco vouchers for food and essentials for families facing a cash crisis
- help to families with the purchase of shoes for their children. (SVP has been given some large donations to be spent on shoes for children)
- support to an elderly couple with visits, gardening and accompaniment to medical appointments

THANK YOU, the financial 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. You can call me on 07421 253100 or email: [svp@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:svp@saintlaurence.org.uk) 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.

OVERSEAS AID: 'Alive in Faith' funds allocated to SVP can only be spent to alleviate need within the Diocese, but from other donations your SVP is able to send some financial support to SVP organisations overseas. This year we made a donation of £325 to the SVP India Covid Disaster fund. We are twinned with three conferences in Odisha, Eastern India and send £150 to each annually. Also we sponsor two Indian students to undertake courses in vocational and technical training. One is studying General Nursing and Midwifery and the other is taking a diploma in mechanical engineering. The cost is £70 per student per year for 3 years.

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

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## Catholic Women's League

### Janet Scally

We were thrilled to start our meetings again at 10.30am on the second Friday of October. We are all looking forward to meeting again on 12th November.

At our first meeting we agreed to welcome parishioners back to our Friday Advent lunches, subject of course to any Covid restrictions. It will be wonderful to see familiar, as well as new, faces.

**Update:** We will be offering Advent soup lunches on Friday 3rd, 10th and 17th December, after 12:30pm Mass. We will wear masks and gloves as well as leaving the doors open for air circulation. If you want to get in touch email [jj.scally@ntlworld.com](mailto:jj.scally@ntlworld.com)

### CWL AGM

Some of the St Laurence members were able attend the AGM, at the Hayes Religious Centre near Derby. We were delighted to meet friends and enjoy social times after such a long absence. The main aim of our charity

work of the last two years and into next year is the Medaille Trust, which now has nine safe houses. Usually, after police raids on trafficked people, who have been used as modern-day slaves, the Charity steps in and houses them and provides them with care and support until they are fit to either legally remain in this country or return to their own. There are now even British slaves!

If anyone wants to join the CWL, please just come along to a meeting, or contact me, Janet Scally on 01223 365330 or Angela Stocker on 01223 424024.

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## CAFOD'S Year at St Laurence's

### Serga Collett, Parish CAFOD rep

Despite lockdowns and restrictions placed on us due to Covid19, St Laurence's parishioners have risen to the challenge of raising amazing amounts of funds to help those most in need of aid in the poorest countries. Not only did parishioners walk huge distances, the equivalent of walking from the UK to Ethiopia and then onto Jerusalem in time for Easter but in the process raised the incredible total of over £10,000 for **Walk For Water**, which will help to provide water aid by building wells in Ethiopia.

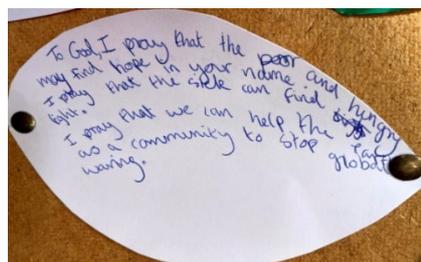
Our current grand total is **11,956,714** steps, or about **5,978** miles (roughly 2000 steps per mile).

We're 2,432 miles into our fourth leg, from Afar to Jerusalem, and **we've reached Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem!**

Harvest Fast Day too, was a great success and raised money for climate change, which affects the poorest communities worst of all. You raised a fabulous amount of almost £1200.

The summer saw a *Laudato Si'* Celebration Sunday and we became more familiar with the views of the Pope about Climate Change. In response some parishioners tidied up the parish gardens!

### A prayer written by one of our young parishioners at the Laudato Si' Mass



I am humbled and want to thank **each and every one** of you for supporting CAFOD during the past year! Let's have another fabulous year in 2022 which will be kicked off with the Unwanted Christmas Gift Sale, shortly after Christmas.

Don't forget, our prayer as a global community is more important than ever. Let's reach out in solidarity to our brothers and sisters around the world with our prayers, liturgies and reflections. Please pray with us:

### **Wake up and hear our cry**

*Annabel Shilson-Thomas  
from the CAFOD Christmas prayer collection*

As we journey with the Holy Family to Bethlehem, we pray for all who make forced journeys. Give them strength to carry on and courage to walk the road ahead.

**Wake up, little baby God  
And hear our cry**

As we hear the innkeeper say there is no room, we pray for refugees for whom there is no country. Gather them to yourself and keep them free from harm.

**Wake up, little baby God  
And hear our cry**

As we contemplate that first Christmas night, we pray for those with nowhere to lay their head. Comfort them in their need and uphold them in their plight.

**Wake up, little baby God  
And hear our cry**

As we listen to the cry of the infant king, we pray for children everywhere born into poverty. Wrap them in your love and uphold them in your tender mercy.

**Wake up, little baby God  
And hear our cry**

As we remember the fear of the shepherds in the presence of the angels, we pray for all who are afraid to look ahead. Reassure them with your presence and embolden them to face the future.

**Wake up, little baby God  
And hear our cry**

As we recall the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, we pray for all who flee from danger. Enfold them in your care and challenge us to offer our protection.

**Wake up, little baby God  
And hear our cry  
That justice may be born.**

Amen.

For further information about CAFOD please do not hesitate to contact your representative, Serga Collett via email at [collettserga@gmail.com](mailto:collettserga@gmail.com) or find us on the [St Laurence's website](#).

### **Pope Francis: Message to COP26**

As leaders of the world unite in Glasgow to discuss the climate crisis at COP26, villagers in Bangladesh are flooded out of their homes, farmers in Zimbabwe have crops that have failed, children in Peru are choking on air pollution. These people are not responsible for global warming but suffer the consequences. Unless we hear their voices and provide adequate financing for vulnerable communities, the promises made so far will be empty ones. Pope Francis explains that we should look at the crisis from the viewpoint of the world's poorest.

**Pope Francis has declared there is “no time to waste” to prevent the climate crisis devastating the lives of countless people in vulnerable communities.** The Holy Father warned in [a message to the COP26 climate summit](#) that ‘too many of our brothers and sisters are suffering’ and that leaders had to ‘acknowledge how far we remain from achieving the goals set for tackling climate change’.

The message, which was delivered in Glasgow on behalf of the Pope by the Vatican's Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, urged leaders at the COP to work together and take ‘necessary decisions’ rather than delaying action further.

### **Debt owed to people on frontline of crisis and younger generations**

The Pope said an ‘ecological debt’ is owed to people in communities hardest hit by the crisis, arguing the debt be paid by big emitters ending the use of polluting energy and by providing financial support to poorer countries, including cancelling financial debts.

Pope Francis also appealed for negotiators at the COP to provide young people with ‘reasons for hope and trust in the future’ for ‘the planet we choose to leave to them.’

Catholics and other faith communities across England and Wales and our partners in the global south join the Pope in demanding sweeping ambition from COP26. There can be no excuses in reaching net-zero carbon emissions, holding global temperatures to 1.5 degrees and providing adequate financing for vulnerable communities.

“We cannot afford any more empty promises. The time is now.”

## CAFOD World Gifts

Check out the [CAFOD World Gifts catalogue for 2021](#). There are some new gifts to tempt you this year which have all been inspired by CAFOD's work in response to the climate crisis, as well as some old favourite.



New this year!  
Fight fires in the Amazon  
**£18**



Top gift!  
Teach someone to read  
**£10**



New this year!  
Forest School  
**£40**



Keep clean kit  
**£6**



New this year!  
Restore the rainforest  
**£719**



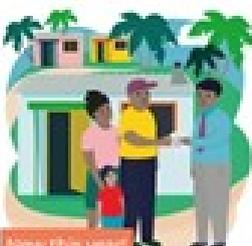
Top gift!  
Water for a family  
**£33**



New this year!  
Energy saving stove  
**£9**



Top gift!  
The goat that gives  
**£28**



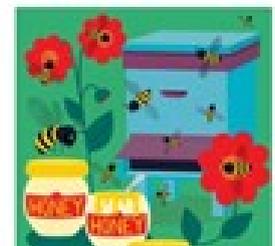
New this year!  
Safe place to call home  
**£175**



Emergency water  
**£5**



New this year!  
Fantastic fisherfolk  
**£73**



Happy queen bee  
**£4**



The Real Advent Calendar  
**£4.50**



Weatherproof crops  
**£12**



Soap to keep safe stickers  
**£9**

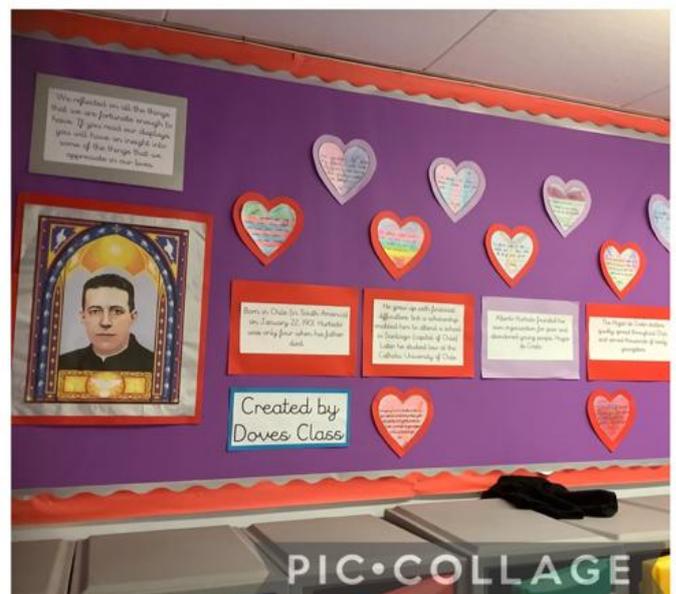


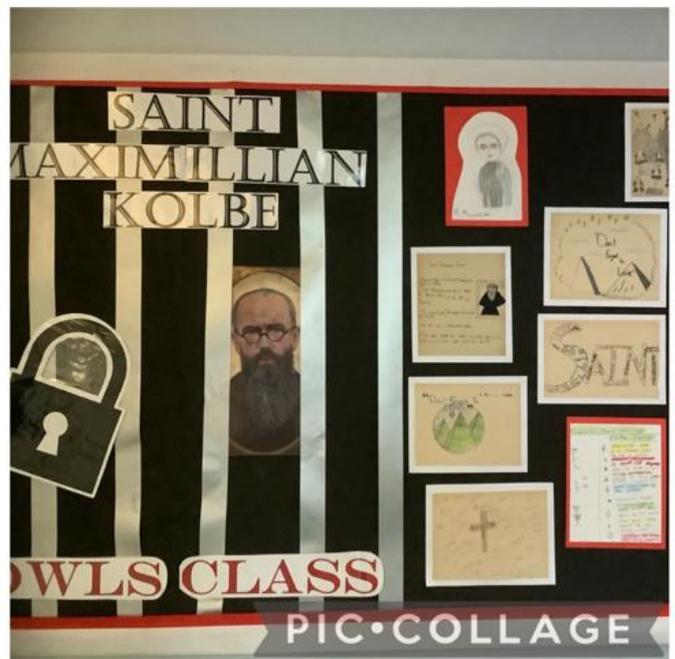
New this year!  
Christmas cards: Silhouettes  
**£4.95**

## New Class Saints

### Veronica Harvey

The new class Saints the school have chosen reflect the diverse nature of our community – in gender and ethnicity. We thought it was important that they were relatable to young children, so we have included some modern Saints, who demonstrate ways of dealing with very current challenges, such as modern slavery and homelessness. The purpose of our class Saints is to make the children realise that Sainthood extends beyond the traditional Saints that they may already know.





<b>Wrens:</b>	St Francis of Assisi	Patron Saint of Animals
<b>Nightingales:</b>	Saint Kateri Tekakwitha	Patron Saint of the Environment
<b>Skylarks:</b>	St Joseph	Patron Saint of Families, Travellers and Immigrants
<b>Kingfishers:</b>	St Vincent de Paul	Patron Saint of Charities
<b>Doves:</b>	St Alberto Hurtado	Patron Saint of the Poor and Street Children
<b>Quails:</b>	St Martin de Porres	Patron Saint of Racial Harmony
<b>Swallows:</b>	St Alphonsa	Patron Saint of Illness
<b>Magpies:</b>	St Faustina	Patron Saint of Divine Mercy
<b>Kestrels:</b>	St Josephine Bakhita	Patron Saint of Victims of Modern Slavery
<b>Owls:</b>	St Maximilian Kolbe	Patron Saint of Political Prisoners



# Parish Garden Tidy up Nov 2021

## Garden and ABLAZE

### Helena Judd

On Sunday 7th November the Confirmation candidates and their families helped with an autumnal tidy up of the Parish garden and front entrance. New bulbs were planted and we hope to see them flower in the spring! Pat also joined us and helped with some much needed pruning.

Later there was a lovely Ablaze Mass! Everyone is invited to this, once a month, Charismatic Mass which takes place at 5pm on the first Sunday of the month. After Mass, all are welcome to gather for some refreshments.

All ages are welcome and we do hope to grow the 'band'. Please email [confirmation@SaintLaurence.org.uk](mailto:confirmation@SaintLaurence.org.uk) if you'd like to help out.



## **Summary of Parishioner's Open Meeting. 25th November 2021**

**Present: Fr Simon Blakesley, Fr Walter Chenyika, Stephen Warde (Chair), Sarah Sykes (minutes).  
Total 14 present rising to 20.**

**'For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission.'**

### **The Synodal Way October 2021 – October 2023**

The Pope has asked the Church to discuss the involvement and participation of the whole People of God in the Life and Mission of the Church. He would like to hear the opinions from parish level upwards across the whole of the Church and to that end he has asked the Bishops to consult all Parishes across their Dioceses.

Fr Simon explained that we are about to enter into a process of reflection to understand where we are as a church, to look at what we feel we do well and where we might improve. To start the discussion we have been provided with 10 questions to consider, but we may also add questions of our own to be included.

The Chair showed the Meeting the questions, which will also shortly be available on our website. As well as in English there are versions in French, Italian, Spanish and the Filipino language. The questions can also be found on the Bishops of England and Wales website with more information on the process of this new initiative.

It is proposed that there will be a weekly discussion over five weeks taking two questions a session with the process launching at our next Open Meeting on 18th January and closing with the Open Meeting on 17th March. Our feedback is requested by 3rd Sunday of Lent (20th March 2022).

As well as a series of discussions, it was suggested that Parish groups take some time to discuss these questions. It will also be possible to make comment on these questions as individuals using an online tool, or written answers.

A key element of the process will be listening and discerning. Once we've asked ourselves these questions the second part of the discussion is to look at how we might solve any issues that we discover.

To try to get as broad a response across our Parish as possible, it was felt that a mix of small groups and bigger meetings, both in person and online via Zoom, held at different times of the day would give people a range of opportunities to join the discussion. The aim is to be as consultative as possible at all levels. Next steps are that we need a co-ordinator (or ideally a small team of people) to organise the detail of the parish process, based on input such as that recorded above. We are

requesting volunteers now. If you are interested, please contact the Parish office.

## **Current Mass arrangements, Advent and Christmas planning**

There was a general feeling that arrangements for Mass, within the context of the ongoing pandemic, were working well. The question of whether this would continue with the obligation to return to church for Mass on Sunday believed to be coming back into force from the first Sunday of Advent was raised. However, with rising levels of infection, this is going to be postponed until next year.

There was a plea for the windows to be opened slightly rather than wide open as we come into colder weather.

### **Carol Service held on the last Sunday of Advent.**

Fr Simon said that the school would like to send some of the children to sing at this service. We discussed whether it should be held in person or online. It was felt that we should plan for an in-person service while doing all we can to include those who cannot attend due to health concerns. To that end we will explore using the projector screen to show a Zoom gathering of those joining from home and arrange to include some of them in the reading and music ministries where possible. It was also suggested that we ask the school children to wear masks in church on this occasion. We are not planning to ticket the Masses this year.

### **Christmas Eve Mass Times**

Family Mass at 4pm and 6pm  
10pm and midnight Mass

### **Christmas Day Mass Times**

9am and 11am Mass

*Note: there will be no 6pm vigil Mass on this day*

### **Building Parish Life**

We have had a good return of the 'census' forms circulated over the last few weeks at all the Masses and thanks were offered by the Chair on behalf of the Parish to Richard Birkett who has built, and is managing, the database for recording the information, and to Leonie Isaacson and Nora Darby for putting the idea forward and helping to plan and produce the forms.

We have, so far, 281 records of adults and children on the database. The form will remain available on the website, paper copies are also still available in the Church porch so that we can continue to add to the database into the future.

It was suggested that Parish groups who visit parishioners in their homes could also take copies of the form for those who would like to complete them.

Richard is currently working through contacting Parish group and activity leaders with details of people who have expressed interest in the various aspects of Parish life. There will be additional administration required as people start to volunteer, some background checks will be needed, and in some cases, training.

Fr Simon mentioned that Petra Tucker will shortly be standing down from her role as Safeguarding Officer. He offered thanks to Petra on behalf of the Parish for all her hard work and said he would be looking for a new volunteer to take over this important role. He also suggested that each Mass should have its own safeguarding lead person (as well as the CRB needful groups such as SVP, Children's Liturgy), and that a Safeguarding Team should be formed, supported by Reece in an admin role.

### **Council of Laity. Report from Helena Judd**

Helena attended the council meeting as our Parish representative and said how nice it had been to hear what other parishes have done during lockdown and that St Laurence's fell well within the average range to what other parishes had achieved. She gave a brief report: As well as discussing the Synodal Way, the Council discussed how our Diocese had been represented at COP26, and although we hadn't been represented specifically, we had representation through groups such as CAFOD.

Fr Paul Maddison is taking on the role of overseeing how parishes are taking action on environmental issues. He would welcome the opportunity to attend any meetings to discuss this and present some ideas.

Sandra Portas has been recently appointed to be in charge of helping with, and co-ordinating, stewardship – not just of money but of talents, time and prayer – and fundraising. She has been visiting parishes across the Diocese and those who had already hosted her have been very complimentary about her work and her approach. We will be visited by Sandra at some point over the next year.

Refugees: New Roots, a group in Norwich is doing a good job supporting refugees in the diocese.

The Chair thanked Helena for going to the meeting on our behalf.

### **Parish group updates**

**CAFOD** – Serga Collett reported that CAFOD Harvest Fast Day had raised £1200. She thanked the Parish for this offering, which she was delighted to say was almost

the same averaged amount that we donate despite fewer people being present in the church for Mass. She also said that £330 of the amount raised was taken via the card machine.

All the CAFOD World Gift catalogues have been taken from which she hopes many people will order. The Christmas card sale has raised £82.75. There are also plans to put together a Christmas quiz with a focus on the environment.

Richard Birkett has been in touch with her and there are 14 people who have expressed an interest in hearing more about joining the CAFOD group and she will be in touch with them shortly.

The next fundraising opportunity will be the Sale of Unwanted Xmas Presents which will take place on 1st/2nd and 7th/8th January with which SVP also hopes to help. Check the newsletter for details of how to donate to this nearer the time.

CAFOD will be celebrating its 60th birthday on 5th February 2022 and our area rep, Jane Crone, has asked whether we would host a celebration at St Laurence's to which the Meeting agreed.

There are also plans to develop and produce an App in time for Lent which would aim to record when you've done something positive for the environment in your day-to-day life. They would like to get some ideas from the school children on what to include etc, and hope to also talk about it on the Catholic radio station: Radio Maria England.

**SVP** – Catharine Warren asked parishioners to visit the online Giving Tree Wish List on the Parish website to choose a gift to be distributed by the SVP to those in need in the Parish. There will also be some Gift Tags available at church for those who don't have online access. The deadline to return gifts is 12th Dec (2nd Sunday of Advent).

Richard Birkett has also been in touch with her with details of 21 people interested in finding out more about SVP's work and they will be holding a meeting for all in January.

**Children's Liturgy** – Jim Infield announced that it is hoped that Children's Liturgy will restart at the 9.30am Mass on 2nd Sunday of Advent. A rota is being planned for the beginning of the New Year; new volunteers eagerly welcomed.

**Next Meetings** – at 7.30pm via Zoom

Tuesday 18th January

Thursday 17th March

## Personal Stories and Experiences

### Games in the school playground

#### Petra Tucker

When I started primary school in the 1960s, it was all delightfully simple – a total of around 50 children with Mr Hopkins teaching the older age group (double desks with inkwells) and Miss Beryl the younger group (tables arranged into 3 hexagons). It was the only school in Wilby, and everyone knew where you lived and the business of your parents.

On a recent walk in Cambridge, I passed by a primary school during the lunch break and memories flooded back about the happy hours spent in our playground, which was far too small to be divided by gender or age group. We played many chasing and catching games. The simplest were Tag games where the person who was 'It' touched you then you had to catch and touch someone else. More collaborative was the catching game when, as each person was caught, they joined hands. In the end you could have a line of 20 children holding hands chasing and cornering the one remaining child, who had little chance of escaping. Wonderful ways of expending huge amounts of energy, these chasing games taught agility and allowed for lots of shouting as we shouted out who to go for next.

Another favourite was 'Farmer's in the Den', which had group singing, holding of hands and dancing in a circle. This game involved more thinking skills – the farmer needed to choose a wife, then the wife needed to choose a child and so on. Children would hope to be chosen, so you were expected to choose your 'best friend' for one of the roles and there was lots of shouting by children wanting to be chosen. It did happen of course that some children rarely got chosen, but somehow these games never ended up with upset children since after a couple of games a new game would start that included a different set of children.

Whilst the playground got us all moving before we went back inside to continue desk-based learning, it also taught us many social skills. Negotiating what game was going to be played, how the game was going to be played, who was the leader. We played these games without adult supervision – it was our world where we were in charge, using our wits to organise complicated made-up games, unaware that they were handed down through the generations. In wintertime, snowfall led to a section of the playground becoming an ice rink where we would hurl ourselves down the ice towards a flagpole at the bottom of a slope then grab the pole and slide round. Yes, someone did fall and lose a tooth –

just once in the six years I was there. Nowadays this game would certainly fail any risk assessment, but we were allowed to play games which contained an element of risk.



**Wilby Playground March 1967**

I am the girl on the left-hand side in a pinafore dress with white socks and sandals. My brother Jonathan is sitting on the climbing frame looking down.



**Wilby Playground July 1974**

In the photo of the crowning of the May Queen (July 1974) I am the girl on the left, standing. My mum made my dress.

In late May, a maypole was erected in our playground in preparation for the annual crowning of the May Queen accompanied by maypole dancing. The May Queen was always chosen from Year 6 and was chosen by voting. Lots of time was spent practising the dance around the maypole, involving all the school, likewise the May procession. On the day itself a stage was set up in the playground, everywhere was decorated with fresh flowers and chairs were put out for parents. Somehow everyone fitted into the playground for a great afternoon of tradition. The May procession involved new dresses and shorts and shirts. I had a beautiful dress made by my mother.

Then there were the games that as children we played away from school and home. There was a spinney a

quarter of a mile away from home where I would go with a couple of friends plus my brother and we would spend several hours playing by the stream and fallen trees. These games were often complicated and involved lots of hiding and being found. Somehow, we ended back home for the next meal. Finally, groups of children would arrange to meet after school at the village recreation ground, where we had basic equipment (swings, slide and roundabout) alongside the cricket pavilion.

Without a doubt, I think the social skills we learnt through play were just as important as what we learnt in the classroom.

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## Celebrating a young Parishioner

### Nora Darby

I have known Fortune Hutson, a fellow parishioner, at St Laurence's for quite some years. We both attend the 6pm Vigil Mass. During this time, she was often accompanied by her daughter, Sue, and grandchildren, Isabella and Sophia, so I have seen the children grow and develop into teenagers. Now Fortune wants us all to know about Isabella. After studying at St Mary's School and Hills Road Sixth Form, with excellent exam results, she is going to America. She has been accepted by New York University to study at the Tisch School of Arts to major in Cinema Studies.



Fortune and Isabella

Fortune and her family are very proud and excited for Isabella and her achievements, but also sad as she will be a long way from home.

We would all like to wish Isabella every success and we will keep her in our prayers.

## 70th Birthday Concert For Peace And Reconciliation

### Gila Margolin

Yesterday I gave a concert for the second time in the beautiful historic town of St Ives, not too far from Cambridge. The performance was the fourteenth in a series of these concerts I have given since 2004 but perhaps a bit special as I will soon be celebrating my 70th birthday! Hopefully, as psalm 90 says: '80 for those who are strong!'

The Centrum, or Worship Space, at the top of the Free Church (URC) right in the heart of the market town is an ideal place to sing. The acoustic is beautiful and we had the chairs spaced but in the round, so everyone could see and join in. We were graced by the presence of the Mayor of St Ives, Councillor Hussain, who comes from a Muslim family and seemed to particularly enjoy the Jewish liturgical music, which I learned during my childhood in London and Glasgow.

The audience, about 30 in number and varied as usual, raised their voices in the Scottish melodies of *Ye Banks and Braes* and the *Skye Boat Song*. They also joined in *Blowing in the Wind*, an important song for me personally and the Project for Peace, which I have been pursuing through The Little Sisters of Joy, the Foundation I started with the help of a friend in 1999. I learned the Songs of the Sixties when they first came out and performed in the Edinburgh Festival around that time. But yesterday I couldn't resist singing a touch of French music, *Les Feuilles Mortes*, known in English as 'Autumn Leaves.'

My own romantic connection to this song is not so much a person as a city – Toronto – the place I love best in the world and the spiritual and international heart of The Little Sisters of Joy, now blessed with an archive in St Michael's College, in the University of Toronto, I have another good reason to return to this amazing city of 172 Nations who speak 100 languages – in perfect peace!

Shalom and Happy Advent when it comes!



## Poetry Corner

### What can I do?

**Teresa Brett**

It is hard to wait  
when there's no date  
to long for.  
I need more.  
I need to know – there I go ...  
It can't be so. Doctors said no.

What if I fight?  
Is that alright?  
I don't think so.  
In fact I know  
I cannot win.  
But I can pin

My hopes on what I have now.  
Chew like a gentle or dreamy cow,  
Slowly, wholly,  
Then swallow and wallow  
In keeping food down.  
I've eaten and in my nightgown.

Ignore the pain  
Again and again.  
Feel breath on my hand,  
Warm at first and  
Cold when it's old.  
Breathe in and out and live with doubt.

I am alive  
So I just thrive  
On all around: sight, smell and sound.  
Look at the ground and at the sky.  
Take in the light, then the dark;  
Wake in the night, whispering "Hark!"

I exist, so I am blessed.  
That is my test in my quest  
For hope. That is the way  
I find that I can say  
To everyone  
"Smile like the sun."

## The Frogs' Song

**Wally Moscuza**

A crab  
Walked out of the sea, the child on the beach  
Innocently stamped and crushed it.  
The globe  
Is small, a ball to play with  
A tennis court in the summer months.  
Moses  
Was saved from the Nile, a crib that  
Floated smoothly down – A leader,  
The Liberator ...  
A nation walking in the wilderness, no  
Place to go. White snow on the windowsill  
I know  
'The sea can be seen in a basin full of water ...'  
Birds wash themselves in their bath of  
Terror-cotta  
Outside the kitchen door, they  
Dip their heads and squirt their tails.  
The frogs  
Are singing their song, ghrrow, ghrrow,  
They sing in the iced snow of the cold winter  
Without love.  
Faceless maggots  
Popping from their holes – I heard nature  
Crying  
I sigh as I think of the approaching night  
No cosy fire, a hot dish or a bed to sleep ...  
And all the homeless on the street!

**Assisi. (July 1975)**

**Roy Maclaren**

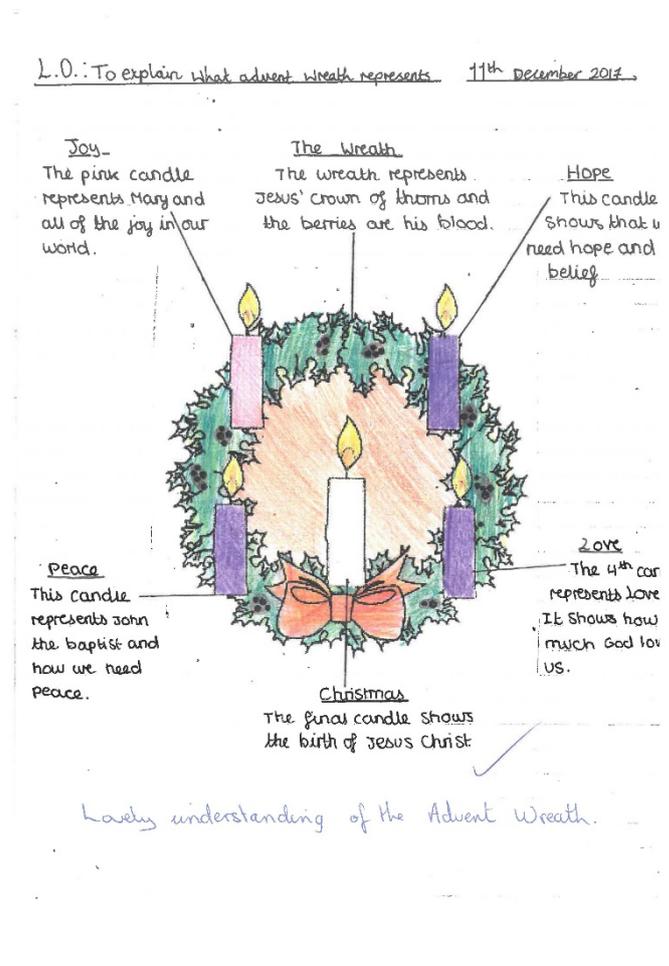
Crowning the hilltop  
The golden pink city  
Sits basking in the sun.  
Within its walls  
Glorious frescos enshrine  
the precious relics of the saint.  
Find here his girdle,  
There, his robe,  
and his habit, brown and coarse  
Simple raiment of the poor.  
Deep, deep down below  
he lies, in a casket hewn of stone  
Now an endless stream of pilgrims  
Offer up his prayer to God.

## Tailpiece

### Advent Quiz

- On which day of the week does Advent always begin?
  - Wednesday
  - Thursday
  - Friday
  - Saturday
  - Sunday
- How many purple candles will you find on an Advent wreath?
  - Two
  - Three
  - Four
  - One
- What does the pink candle symbolize on the Advent wreath?
  - Peace
  - Joy
  - Love
  - Faith
- The liturgical church year begins with?
  - Advent
  - Easter
- What is the last day in Advent?
  - Christmas
  - Christmas Eve
  - Epiphany
- "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." In which book of the Bible is this verse found?
  - Jeremiah
  - Isaiah
  - Luke
  - Psalms
- What does the word Advent mean?
  - Before Christmas
  - Arrival or coming
  - To go on an adventure
- Why are the advent candles arranged in the shape of a circle?
  - They make a wreath
  - It is the easiest way to see all the candles
  - It takes up the least space
  - Circles symbolise eternity
  - It represents the circle of life

- How did the Advent calendar begin?
  - Chalk lines drawn on the door to mark the days
  - Families hung pictures on the wall, one for each day
  - A candle was lit for each of the 24 days in December
  - All of the above
- What is the meaning of the Hebrew word 'Emmanuel'?
  - Mighty King
  - Christ child
  - God with us



### **Funny typos from church notices taken from the internet**

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.

Next Thursday there will be auditions for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

## **Editorial**

**Nora Darby**

When we saw the notice in the newsletter about photos of the St Laurence's Church banners being used to make Christmas cards for Pax Christi, we thought it would be nice for *Pilgrim* readers to hear more about it and contacted Jenny Martin. You can see Jenny's article on the history of the creation of the banners on page 10.

We now have an update: the actual banners have been found which Jenny is restoring back to their former glory. Maybe we can hang the Advent ones in the church for the coming season? When you see them, take a moment to say a prayer for Lyn Dekker who was part of the banner team and is now too sick to attend Mass.

Probably the most important thing that has happened at St Laurence's in the last few months is **Building Parish Life**. This is a survey primarily to set up a database of parishioners. This will enable us to be contactable to let us know what is happening in the Parish and be part of it. As well as the database people were asked to look at a list of Parish Activities and Groups and to say if they were willing to help with any of them. Because of the COVID situation we were not able to attend Mass so many of these things were in abeyance. Now hopefully we are able to resume most of them, but of course that means we need willing parishioners to help. The response so far is good and those who have signed up will be contacted in the near future. Because of the great response it has taken a little time to process all the information but just to say – you are all needed, thank you!

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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 25 February 2022 for publication on 26/27 March**

**The production team:**

Editors: Nora Darby, Sarah Sykes

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All members of the Pilgrim team can be contacted at [pilgrim@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto: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. It is also published on the St Laurence's website.

You can raise a topic at the meeting but it helps if you send a short note about 10 days before the next meeting, again, to Stephen Warde at [openmeeting@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:openmeeting@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](mailto: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 on the first Sunday of the month at 5pm. It is vibrant and fun. We encourage young readers, Eucharistic Ministers and budding musicians of all ages; the only requirement is enthusiasm for God. If you are looking for 'perfection' you won't find it here, so if you fancy it, pluck up your courage and join in.

## Upcoming Parish Events

<b>Advent</b> – Parish Carol Service	Sun 19 Dec 4pm
<b>CWL Advent lunches</b> after 12.30pm Mass	Fri 3, 10, 17 Dec
<b>Christmas Masses</b> Christmas Eve - Children's Mass - Children's Mass - Mass - Midnight Mass	4pm 6pm 10pm 12pm
Christmas Day	9am 11am
Boxing Day	8am 9:30am 11am
<b>Unwanted Presents Sale</b> with CAFOD and SVP	1 & 2 Jan 8 & 9 Jan
ABLAZE Youth Mass (1st Sunday of the month) 5pm	9 Jan 6 Feb 6 Mar
Parishioners Open Meeting 7:30pm, online Zoom meeting	Tues 18 Jan Thurs 17 Mar



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

<p style="text-align: center;">Quiz Answers</p> <p>1. c. Sunday 2. b. Three 3. b. Joy 4. a. Advent 5. b. Christmas Eve 6. b. Isaiah 11: 1-6 7. b. Arrival or coming 8. d. Circles symbolize eternity 9. d. All of the above 10. c. God with us</p>
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# ST LAURENCE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Email: [office@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto: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:**

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07946 390060

[simon.blakesley@rcdea.org.uk](mailto:simon.blakesley@rcdea.org.uk)

## **Assistant Priest:**

Fr Walter Chenyika  
01223 704640

## **Deacon:**

Rev. Dr Geoffrey Cook  
01223 351650

## **Secretary:**

Mr. Reece King  
01223 704640

[reece.king@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:reece.king@saintlaurence.org.uk)

## **Treasurer:**

James Dore  
07980 467534

[treasurer@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@saintlaurence.org.uk)

## **Safeguarding Coordinator:**

*Currently vacant*

01223 704640 (messages)

[safeguarding@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@saintlaurence.org.uk)

## **Service Times**

Saturday 9.30am

6:00pm Vigil Mass (sung)

Sunday 8.00am

9:30am (sung)

11:00am (sung)

Mon, Tues, Thurs 9.30am

Wed, Fri 12.30pm

*All Masses are livestreamed. Please watch out for any changes to Mass times on the website and weekly newsletter or announcements at Mass.*

## **St Laurence's School**

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