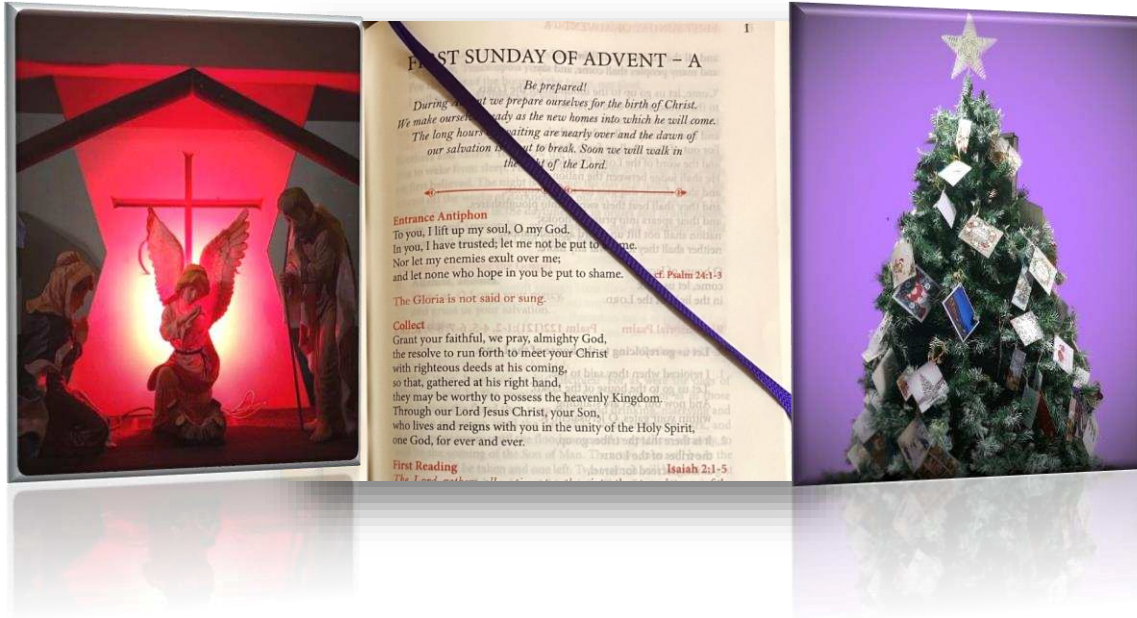


# The Pilgrim

St Laurence's Parish Magazine, Advent Edition 2025



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## The Face of God

Philippa Johnson

Glory in that fickle night, when folk  
rolled over in their sleep, grunted, unaware of Heaven's torch  
which, soft as velvet, swept the roofs in silent silver, a light  
to the world to indicate the arrival of our Means of Grace.

Snort of cattle, the cloudy breaths of donkeys  
dampen the hay packed into corners against the draughts,  
blanketing a strange throne for One so small, so great as He  
whose creative love had formed the pilgrim star itself,  
these beads of corn by snuffling noses sought, the trees  
from whom His bed – & His years-distant cross – were made.

His welcome, a carpenter's care-shaken palms, the musty-sweet  
of straw, the tender wrapping in His mother Mary's arms;  
to take that first gulp of air as human being, & first nourishment  
while grateful prayers are offered for their safety,  
joy at this Delivery.

Those first few, tiny cries  
that every parent remembers, the scrunched face  
that settles into life alone and smooths in sleep, while mother  
& holy father look on: a wonder to all in Heaven  
to see the Messiah tied to time, to know that He would satisfy forever  
that debt of human straying, rebellion's self-led doom.

This tiny morsel,  
Beloved of the Beloved, wields Love spanning time & space;  
sweet implosion of mystery, Divine, the face of God.



## What's New?

### A Message from The Editors

Nora Darby



Sarah Sykes and I wish to let all the *Pilgrim* readers, be it through the paper copies, email or Parish website that we will be stepping down as Co-editors of *The Pilgrim* magazine.

We have been involved with *Pilgrim* since Dick Wilson got together a small group of us in Summer 2013. He wanted to restart *The Pilgrim* again and would we be interested in working with him? Sarah and I became sub-editors and were part of the first edition, Advent 2013. In 2014, at Dick's request, we became co-editors and he became Commissioning Editor, but now after 12 years we feel it is time for us to say goodbye.

We have produced the Advent 2025 edition. Having started with Advent, we are ending with Advent.



The cover of the Advent 2013 edition

It was not an easy decision as it has been part of our lives for 12 years; with the team, we even managed to produce *Pilgrim* during Lockdown!

Members of our editing team have come and gone over the years but Caroline, Alex, Carol and Miriam are with us at present and know of our decision.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed over the years, without you there would not have been a magazine. Readers, you were also needed.

I would like to thank, what I call – my Regulars! The other hat I have worn is of Commissioning Editor after Dick retired from this position too. This entailed getting enough material for each edition. The Regulars would receive an email from me with final submission date for

that edition and invariably came up with – Will this do Nora? Here's something for you Nora!

These include, whoever was/is in charge of the various Parish Groups and Organisations including St Laurence School. Cardinal Points from Ron Haynes, which he took over when John Hobson sadly died, and has never missed an edition. Michael Allan also, he contributed from his hospital bed. Petra Tucker, Karen Rodgers, Mary Gullick, Fr Bob Eccles and Peter Neville among others. Poetry from the amazing Teresa Brett, Wally Moscuza until her eyes would not allow it, and more recently, from Philippa Johnson. Thanks also to Parish Priests Fr Pat, Fr Simon and now Fr Robin for being an important part of *Pilgrim*.

By the time you read this there will have been an abbreviated version in the Newsletter and KIT. We will have asked for anyone who might be interested in continuing *The Pilgrim* magazine to get in touch. As well as leaving the position of Editors, we also leave slots for someone to do the layout and printing. Sarah and I will be happy to answer questions or queries you might have.

Send to Sarah/Nora [pilgrim@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:pilgrim@saintlaurence.org.uk)

### Letter to the editors

Dear Nora and Sarah,

You told me that this edition of *The Pilgrim* will be the last one. It is sad to see such a publication finish.

For 12 years you have printed a magazine that truly represents the many strands of the Parish. There has always been something for everyone to read. The magazine has always been so much more than either advertising big events or the write ups after the event has taken place.

You have encouraged people to write about matters that are important to them. This has taken many forms – interviewing people who have been in the Parish for many years, poetry, documenting the life of St Laurence's School, looking at Catholic social teaching and how this can be brought into our daily lives and book reviews.

The commitment to this has been enormous. Thank you for all that you have done to enable this wonderful publication. It has been inclusive and welcoming of many different viewpoints.

I am sure there are many people who wish to say a huge thank you.

Petra (Tucker)



## Features and Opinions

### The Heart-Breaking Strangeness

#### *Advent* by Patrick Kavanagh

Michael Allan



Patrick Kavanagh holding a beet, Inniskeen, Co. Monaghan, where his family farm had been. (1963) – reproduced by kind permission of the National Library of Ireland.

Patrick Kavanagh (1904–1967), one of Ireland’s greatest poets, was born in rural County Monaghan, the fourth of nine children of Bridget and James Kavanagh. At the age of 13, he left school to work with his father at shoe making and tending their small, 16-acre farm.

It was essentially a life of poverty. In his poem *My Room*, he recalls his childhood attic bedroom, ten by twelve, with the bed serving as dining table, writing desk, and place to sleep. The poem ends by telling how the attic’s single window, though small, still ‘let in the stars’.

At the age of 27, he left home – walking 80 miles – for the big city, Dublin, for the opportunities it might bring him as a writer. But life there was frequently turbulent. For several years, he was often practically destitute. Later, he survived lung cancer, including the removal of one lung (he had been a heavy smoker).

Through all this, however, he retained his love for God, for the eternal, divine beauty he had seen, with the eye of the heart, glimmering within the fleeting, but infinitely precious, beauty of the world – the transitory, passing world that points to the eternal, uncreated God.

“Patrick Kavanagh,” according to a friend, Elizabeth O’Toole, “was a man consumed with the presence of God. It was not just that he believed in God as I did. It was that he was aware of God’s presence in all things.”

She and her husband looked after him in their home when he was very ill. As he recovered, he loved talking

to their children, who quickly came to love him. Elizabeth occasionally overheard his conversations with them. This was one of them, with her son Larry:

“‘What I’d like to know is what makes the plant grow’, Larry asked Paddy one day as they were planting herbs by the side of the coalhouse. ‘That’s where God comes in’, Paddy said. ‘How do you know that?’ ‘That’s a mystery.’ ‘But how did you find it out?’”

“Well,” Paddy said, “Thinking back on it, I wasn’t thinking at all. Everything just grew and I paid no heed to the why of it. Then, one day when I was about nine, I was running through the fields, and I stumbled. I could say I stumbled on God. Because when I got up. He was there. I mean I was aware He was there. He was everywhere, all over the fields, the banks and the uplands, the hedges and ditches. I looked at the buttercups and the Michaelmas daisies, and I ran all the way down to the cut-away bog where nobody ever went.””\*

In his poem *The One*, he draws on this memory of God and the cut-away peat bog:

‘That beautiful, beautiful, beautiful God  
Was breathing His love by a cut-away bog.’

Kavanagh knew well poverty’s crippling limitations. But in his poem *Advent*, he sees a creative power in a certain kind of voluntary poverty: a quiet watching in the darkness of winter, waiting for the dawn, a letting go of the pleasures and experiences that promised to fill us but left us empty, and darkened our vision.

He clearly treasured children’s openness and sense of wonder. They let in the stars. Adults, sadly, often seem to lose that openness and wonder. How to regain them? How can eyes and ears be reopened to the extraordinary, ordinary world – and perhaps, with the eye of the heart, catch a fleeting glimpse, or hear the echo, of that beautiful God?



Robin Young’s Hill Photo © Anne Burgess (cc-by-sa/2.0)

The poem visits the fields in which the young boy ran and stumbled upon God, but also invites the adults – who perhaps have tested and tasted too much – to

leave all that for a while, step outside to the yard gate, and open their eyes onto the heart-breaking strangeness.

Some parts of the poem can be puzzling, but there is no need to get hung up on them. It is all a journey to recovering wonder and vision.



Whin bushes – Photo © Albert Bridge (cc-by-sa/2.0)

## Advent

Patrick Kavanagh

We have tested and tasted too much, lover -  
Through a chink too wide there comes in no wonder.  
But here in the Advent-darkened room  
Where the dry black bread and the sugarless tea  
Of penance will charm back the luxury  
Of a child's soul, we'll return to Doom  
The knowledge we stole but could not use.

And the newness that was in every stale thing  
When we looked at it as children: the spirit-shocking  
Wonder in a black slanting Ulster hill  
Or the prophetic astonishment in the tedious talking  
Of an old fool will awake for us and bring  
You and me to the yard gate to watch the whins  
And the bog-holes, cart-tracks, old stables where Time  
begins.

O after Christmas we'll have no need to go searching  
For the difference that sets an old phrase burning-  
We'll hear it in the whispered argument of a churning  
Or in the streets where the village boys are lurching.  
And we'll hear it among decent men too  
Who barrow dung in gardens under trees,  
Wherever life pours ordinary plenty.  
Won't we be rich, my love and I, and  
God we shall not ask for reason's payment,  
The why of heart-breaking strangeness in dreeping  
hedges  
Nor analyse God's breath in common statement.  
We have thrown into the dust-bin the clay-minted wages  
Of pleasure, knowledge and the conscious hour-  
And Christ comes with a January flower.

\*\*\*\*\*

[Whins: gorse bushes. Dreeping: dripping, rain soaked. Cut-away bog: the remains of a peat bog after peat has been removed.

Advent and part of *The One* by Patrick Kavanagh are quoted from *Collected Poems* edited by Antoinette Quinn, (Allen Lane, 2004), by kind permission of the Trustees of the Estate of the late Katherine B Kavanagh, through the Jonathan Williams Literary Agency.

\* Quotation from *A Poet in the House* by Elizabeth O'Toole.]

## Cardinal Points – Hierarchy and Holiness

Ronald Haynes

'As a spiritual being, the human creature is defined through interpersonal relations. The more authentically he or she lives these relations, the more his or her own personal identity matures. It is not by isolation that man establishes his worth, but by placing himself in relation with others and with God. Hence, these relations take on fundamental importance.'

This insightful understanding of the fundamentally communal nature of our personal identity, spiritual maturity, and growth in holiness comes from Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (CV 53), and is quoted by Pope Francis and those involved in the Church's 2024 Synod's report: *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission*<sup>1</sup> which expands further on these insights:

'We recognise a synodal Church by flourishing interpersonal relationships flowing from the mutual love that constitutes the new commandment left by Jesus to His disciples (cf. Jn 13: 34–35). The Church as "a people made one by the unity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (LG 4) can witness to the power of relationships founded in the Trinity especially where individualism pervades cultures and societies. Differences that are found in every Christian community with respect to age, vocation, sex, profession and social belonging provide an opportunity for an encounter with otherness that is indispensable to personal growth and maturity.' [Unity as Harmony §34, LG – Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium*]

To emphasise that our life, and our path to holiness is not a solitary effort but necessarily and essentially involves others, the Synod's report tells us:

'It has pleased God, however, to sanctify and save men and women not individually and without regard for what binds them together, but to set them up as a people who would acknowledge Him in truth and serve Him in holiness.' (LG 9) [§16]

To be a people, to be bound together – part of what we mean, and part of a root meaning of 'religion' ('religare' – to 'bind again' or 'place an obligation on') – these are key aspects of living as we have long understood God intended. To live authentically, in truth and in holiness, in community supporting each other, is an essential shift, a change of relationship as declared by Jesus: 'I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.' Our status

changes when we are bound together, and when we are living as authentic community.

Aelred, Abbot of Rievaulx (Yorkshire) in the 12th century, reflected on living this call from Jesus in his book *Spiritual Friendship*, which has had great impact over the years. In it, in answer to a question about ‘what fruit it offers those who cultivate it’ Aelred answers:

‘Nothing in human life is hungered for with more holiness, nothing is sought with more utility, nothing is found with more difficulty, nothing is experienced with more pleasure, and nothing is possessed with more fruitfulness. Friendship bears fruit *in our present life and in the next.*’

This latter emphasis is referencing 1 Tm 4:8 (‘godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come’), indicating that spiritual friendship, the kind of life and community Jesus has in mind for us, is eternally enduring – in many ways another side of the prayer Jesus taught us, the *Our Father*, where we regularly pray that God’s will be done ‘on earth as it is in heaven’.

For a moment, consider what it would be like if we all lived in this way, as spiritual friends, in harmonious community, committing to resolving our conflicts with care and empathy, fulfilling God’s will on earth as we understand is the shared reality among the Communion of Saints and in the edifying heavenly feast! What wonders would we experience, and not only amongst ourselves but also in ways which naturally overflow and touch other people, especially those most in need – the love, the hope, the human help, and the promise of continuing to develop a meaningful future together.

Pope Francis’ moving writing in *Laudato Si’* (On Care for Our Common Home), conveys some of the powerful ‘Christo-cosmic’ vision of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955), the inspiring French Jesuit palaeontologist and theologian, whose 20+ years working in China (including with Chinese colleagues on the amazing find of ‘Peking Man’), inspired him to profoundly share that the ‘ultimate destiny of the universe is in the fullness of God, which has already been attained by the risen Christ, the measure of the maturity of all things’. Teilhard also shared a compelling vision of a future ‘Omega Point,’ following the evolution of human consciousness towards a collective awareness of divinity, and the universe ultimately converging into a final point of unification, like a state of divine consciousness.

In our lived experiences together, as we try to organise together and support each other in our local groups, parishes and communities, we are blessed when among

us, as part of our faith communities, we have good guidance and sharing and leadership from the pastors who are part of our community. The Synod’s report (noted above) tells us that:

‘Synodality offers “the most appropriate interpretative framework for understanding the hierarchical ministry itself” (Pope Francis, Address in Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops, 17 October 2015) and provides the correct context for understanding the mandate that Christ entrusts, in the Holy Spirit, to pastors. Synodality, therefore, invites the whole Church, including those who exercise authority, to conversion and reform.’ [§33]

Concerning what people can ask and expect from bishops and other clergy, in the section on ‘Ordained Ministers at the Service of Harmony’ the Synod’s report reminds us all that:

‘As with all ministries in the Church, the episcopate, priesthood and diaconate are at the service of proclaiming the Gospel and building up the ecclesial community. ... A bishop’s task is to preside over a local Church as a visible principle of unity within it and a bond of communion with all the Churches.’ [§68–69]

The Pope returns to the need for reform, mentioned earlier in the Synod’s report, in a section on ‘The Conversion of Processes’:

‘Formation is needed in order to engage in decision-making processes grounded in ecclesial discernment and which reflect a culture of transparency, accountability, and evaluation. The formation required is not only technical; it also needs to explore theological, biblical and spiritual foundations. All the Baptised need this formation in witness, mission, holiness and service, which emphasises co-responsibility.’ [§80]

Co-responsibility is a necessary aspect of the sacred call to be a Synodal Church, just as Canon Law reminds us of the Baptismal gifts and responsibilities a Christian faith community shares: ‘From their rebirth in Christ, there exists among all the Christian faithful a true equality regarding dignity and action by which they all cooperate in the building up of the Body of Christ according to each one’s own condition and function. ... All the Christian faithful must direct their efforts to lead a holy life and to promote the growth of the Church and its continual sanctification, according to their own condition.’ [Can. 208, 210]<sup>2</sup>

By direct contrast, and deeply at odds with the vital Synodal vision of shared dignity and holiness and

community, is the Pope's many warnings about clericalism, including in the Synod's report:

'Clericalism is based on the implicit assumption that those who have authority in the Church are not to be held to account for their actions and decisions as if they were isolated from or above the rest of the People of God. Transparency and accountability should not only be invoked when it comes to ... forms of abuse. These practices also concern the lifestyle of pastors, pastoral planning, methods of evangelisation, and the way in which the Church respects human dignity, for example, in regard to the working conditions within its institutions.' [§98]

Helpfully, Pope Francis clarifies more concerns about clericalism, and some alternative and promising areas of growth as part of the Synodal Church, in his writing *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*,<sup>3</sup> co-authored with his biographer (and long-time contributor to *The Tablet*) Austen Ivereigh:

'The sins of the powerful are almost always sins of entitlement, committed by people whose lack of shame and brazen arrogance are stunning. In the Church, this sense of entitlement is the cancer of clericalism, as I call it, that perversion of the vocation to which we priests are called.'

Among other harms, clericalism has also too often ignored the many gifts which women bring to parishes, dioceses, and wide communities:

'I want to make clear that an expanded role for women in Church leadership doesn't depend on the Vatican and is not limited to specific roles. Perhaps because of clericalism, which is a corruption of the priesthood, many people wrongly believe that Church leadership is exclusively male. But if you go to any diocese in the world you'll see women running departments, schools, hospitals, and many other organizations and programs; in some areas, you'll find many more women than men as leaders.

The Church walks as part of the people, serving it, not trying to organize it in paternalistic fashion, because a people organizes itself. ...

If you were to ask me what is one of the ways Christianity has gone astray I would not hesitate: it is to *forget that we belong to a people*. ... To set yourself above the People of God is to ignore that the Lord has already come close to His people, anointing them, raising them up. ...

The current crisis calls us to recover our sense of belonging; only thus will our peoples again be subjects of their own history.

This is the time to restore an ethics of fraternity and solidarity, regenerating the bonds of trust and belonging. For what saves us is not an idea but an encounter. Only the face of another is capable of awakening the best of ourselves. In serving the people, we save ourselves.'

The poet John Keats tells us, 'I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of the Imagination.' In his book *Holy Moments: A Handbook for the Rest of Your Life*<sup>4</sup>, the popular Catholic author and speaker Matthew Kelly shares some insightful and related points, about personal and communal holiness and interaction, with which to close:

'A Holy Moment is a single moment in which you open yourself to God. You make yourself available to Him. You set aside personal preferences and self-interest, and for one moment you do what you prayerfully believe God is calling you to do.

Holy Moments bring about flourishing for everyone, everywhere, in every sense of the word. ... Holy Moments are one of the most powerful forces on earth. One seemingly insignificant Holy Moment can produce a tidal wave of goodness.

There are no small acts. No acts infused with goodness can ever be considered small. Every act of goodness triggers more goodness. Each act, however small, sets in place a chain reaction of Holy Moments. You never know who will be impacted by the succession of Holy Moments you begin. Your Holy Moments will produce tremendous ripple effects.'

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#### Footnotes

1. [https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26\\_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale.pdf](https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/news/2024-10-26_final-document/ENG---Documento-finale.pdf)

2. [https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic\\_lib2-cann208-329\\_en.html#TITLE\\_I](https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic_lib2-cann208-329_en.html#TITLE_I).

3. [https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic\\_lib2-cann208-329\\_en.html#TITLE\\_I](https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic_lib2-cann208-329_en.html#TITLE_I).

4. <https://www.holymomentsbook.com/>

## Pio Nono (Pius IX (1846–78))

### Peter Neville

In 1846, when the famously reactionary Austrian Chancellor Metternich heard about the election of Pio Nono (Pius IX (1846–78)), he reportedly remarked that he was ready for anything except a liberal Pope. Pius was remarkable in a number of ways. He was elected by a Conclave that lasted just 48 hours. He was, at 54, amongst the youngest of Pontiffs and, at 32 years, his was the longest pontificate. He began as a popular hero throughout Europe, but by the time he died he was so unpopular that his corpse was nearly thrown into the River Tiber by the Roman mob. Crucially too, Pius was the last Pope to be a temporal ruler, as the Papal lands were lost forever in 1870. This led to a 59-year standoff with the Italian State.

It had all begun so well. Pius had opened the prisons; much moderated the censorship and eventually granted the Papal States (much of Central Italy) a Constitution. Cheering crowds followed him everywhere. Then it all went horribly wrong. When Pius said ‘God save Italy’ he did not mean to support the idea of a United Italy, as his admirers thought, as that meant giving up the Papal lands, nor did he want to be at loggerheads with Austria, a Catholic Power which ruled Lombardy and Venetia (northern Italy). Still less, as a result of the revolutions of 1848, did he want the Roman Republic of the nationalist hero Garibaldi (who – incidentally – was massively popular in Britain, which may be why so many pubs are named after him?) Pius was forced to flee to Gaeta, not returning to Rome until 1850, and propped up by a French garrison, which had been provided by the unlikely personage of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, nephew of the great Napoleon.

Thereafter there was a marked conservative drift in Pius’s pontificate, most notoriously with the 1864 Syllabus of Errors in which Pius seemed to be challenging modernisation, including railways.

Another clause in this document demanded that, in Catholic countries, non-Catholics should not be allowed to practise their religion. This was pretty extraordinary as in 1850, at the start of Pius’s pontificate, the Protestant British government agreed to restore the Catholic hierarchy. When in 1870 Pius promulgated the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, he aroused vehement hostility, notably in Germany, in the person of its famous chancellor Otto Von Bismarck who was already suspicious of Catholics (about one third of the German population whom he called *Reichfiende* or enemies of the Reich). Bismarck thought that the Pope was trying to assert authority over his beloved Empire. In fact, the doctrine only applied when the Pope was talking about ‘faith’ and ‘morals’. Bismarck used this supposed drive

for Papal power to launch his melodramatic *Kulturkampf* or Civilisation Struggle against the Church. Despite Pius’ protests, Catholic schools were closed down, Jesuits expelled and the recruitment of priests hindered. However, the persecution was heroically resisted by the laity in the 1870s, and in the end, Bismarck had to drop his campaign. When Pius died in 1878, he was glad to reach a compromise with his more pragmatic successor Leo XIII.

It is possible to criticise Pius for his latent conservatism, but he was not really to blame for the lengthy standoff with the Italian State. Removing the excommunication of King Victor Emmanuel II only a few weeks before his death may seem tardy and unreasonable, but Pius was the victim of Papal history. For centuries Popes had been both temporal and spiritual rulers, and this led to dangerous anomalies (such as Julius II leading Papal armies into battle). Thus, the confiscation of Papal lands in 1870 was a blessing in disguise though it was not one Pius recognised at the time. Pius was the last Pope to bear the burden of a temporal role, as the Vatican State, which was created in 1929, was minute.

In his purely spiritual role Pius did in fact leave a significant legacy. In 1854 he promulgated the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception which stated that the Virgin Mary was born without original sin. This was very much the Pope’s personal initiative, after he had just consulted a select few bishops. Four years later the Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes, which rapidly became a major place of Catholic Pilgrimage. Pius also supported the importance of the veneration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and created hundreds of new dioceses in North America and elsewhere. This is all too easily forgotten because of the controversy surrounding Papal-Italian relations and Papal-German ones.

Controversy continued to pursue Pio Nono even in death. Rather surprisingly, in 1881 it was decided to move his body to the Basilica of Saint Lorenzo, but because of his continuing unpopularity it was decided to do this in the middle of the night. Unfortunately, the Roman mob got wind of this plan, and almost succeeded in throwing his coffin into the River Tiber. It got to its destination battered and defaced.

The last word can be left to John Julius Norwich in his excellent history of the Papacy (all the more remarkable in being written by a non-Catholic). ‘Pio Nono’ he writes, ‘was as controversial a figure as ever he had been. He still is’.



## ***Pão por Deus* – A Portuguese Tradition of Faith, Charity, and Remembrance**

**Miriam Santos Freire**

I was talking to Nora Darby on Halloween. She mentioned that, when she was growing up in England, it wasn't the commercial, globalised version we see everywhere today. It was just simple neighbourhood traditions. That conversation made me think of what the tradition is like in Portugal around the same time of year. I still remember going out on the morning of 1st November with my friends in Lisbon, handing out small religious prints my mother kept at home in exchange for a few coins, some sweets, or simply a friendly chat. Looking back, I realise we were taking part – without quite knowing it – in something much older and deeply meaningful: the tradition of *Pão por Deus*. In Portugal, this is a far older and gentler custom that takes place at the same time of year, rooted not in frights or fancy dress but in faith, charity, and community. The name *Pão por Deus* literally means *Bread for God* or *Bread in God's Name*.

While Halloween has become a familiar global celebration, *Pão por Deus* reminds us of something deeper: the Christian call to remember the saints, pray for the departed, and share what we have with others. It is a simple custom, yet it speaks profoundly of gratitude, hope, and neighbourly love.

### **All Saints and All Souls: The Roots of the Tradition**

The Early Church established the Feast of All Saints around the fifth century as a way to honour all saints and martyrs – both those whose names were known and those who remained hidden in the heart of God. In time, a second day was added, All Souls' Day, to pray for all the faithful departed, including those who had no one left on earth to remember them.

Originally, both feasts were observed on 1st November, but they were later distinguished to preserve their individual significance – the first honouring the saints in heaven, the second remembering the souls in purgatory, awaiting the fullness of God's mercy. In Portugal, however, where 1st November is a national holiday, the two celebrations have once again become closely intertwined in people's hearts and customs. Throughout Christian Europe, many customs developed around these days. In Brittany, families believed that the souls of their loved ones were released from purgatory for 48 hours, free to visit their earthly homes. People would set out food and light candles to welcome them. In England and Ireland, the Soul Cake tradition took root: children and adults went from door to door singing or praying for the dead in exchange for small round cakes. For every cake given, it was said, one soul was

released from purgatory. When we look at Portugal's *Pão por Deus*, we can see a similar spirit. It, too, is a ritual of remembrance and charity, blending deep Christian belief with the rhythms of everyday life.

### **The Portuguese Custom: Bread for God**

In Portugal, the first day of November has long been a day of faith and community. Traditionally, children would rise early and set off in small groups through the village streets, carrying handmade cloth bags. They would knock on doors and call out cheerfully, “*Pão por Deus!*” – “Bread for God!” The principle was simple: they asked for something to eat or a small gift, and in return, they offered their prayers for the souls of that household's departed loved ones. In times past, those gifts might have been pieces of bread, *broas* (sweet cornmeal biscuits), dried figs, apples, nuts, or pomegranates. In later years, coins, cakes, or chocolates found their way into the mix. The bags were soon filled with autumn's bounty – a small but joyful harvest of generosity.

This was not a night of mischief or fright, as in Halloween's ‘trick or treat’, but a morning of light and gratitude. Children went from house to house under the bright November sun, smartly dressed, their voices filling the air with laughter and song. In some places, they recited rhymes of thanks for generous neighbours – and playful verses for those who failed to open their doors! Though each child carried an individual bag, they would gather afterwards, pool their treasures together, and share everything equally. It was a lesson in Christian justice, generosity, and joy – give us this day our daily bread, lived out in the streets and courtyards of the community.

### **The Earthquake of 1755: From Tragedy to Tradition**

The story of *Pão por Deus* cannot be told without remembering one of the darkest moments in Portuguese history – the Lisbon earthquake of 1755. On the morning of 1st November – All Saints' Day – a massive earthquake struck the capital just as people were gathering in churches for Mass. In an instant, much of the city was destroyed. The earthquake was followed by a tsunami and fires that raged for days. Tens of thousands lost their lives. In the months that followed, Lisbon's survivors faced hunger, poverty, and despair. Homes were gone, food was scarce, and the city was in ruins. A year later, on 1st November 1756, those who had little left began to go from door to door, asking their neighbours for *Pão por Deus* – bread in God's name. What began as a desperate plea for sustenance became an act of faith and solidarity. That day, the ancient Christian custom of sharing food and praying for the dead was reborn in new form. In Lisbon and its suburbs, the poor, and later the children, went out early in the

morning carrying small bags, reciting verses, and receiving gifts. It was a way of remembering those who had perished in the catastrophe and giving thanks for survival. From this moment, *Pão por Deus* took on a new and lasting meaning: a day of remembrance, compassion, and gratitude – born out of tragedy, sustained by faith.

### **Rural Roots and Regional Variations**

Over time, the custom spread far beyond Lisbon. Across the Portuguese countryside, from the Alentejo plains to the northern hills and the islands of the Azores and Madeira, *Pão por Deus* became a beloved part of the calendar. Even beyond Portugal's borders, the custom travelled – to Galicia in Spain (where it is known as *migallo*), to the Canary Islands (*Pan por Dios* or *Los Santitos*), and even to former Portuguese colonies such as Brazil, where a related tradition called *Finadinho* once existed. Everywhere, the message is the same: charity, remembrance, and the sharing of God's blessings.

### **A Morning of Faith and Fellowship**

Traditionally, the *Pão por Deus* visits take place only in the morning – from dawn until midday. After returning home, families would gather for lunch, and in the afternoon, they would visit the cemetery to lay flowers on the graves of loved ones. This rhythm – morning joy, midday gratitude, afternoon remembrance – beautifully mirrors the Christian cycle of life and death, sorrow and hope. In some regions, families also prepared special cakes for the day, setting aside one piece for the souls of the departed. Tables were laid with fresh linen and food as a sign of welcome, echoing older European customs of leaving a place for those who had gone before.

### **From Bread to Sweets: The Tradition Today**

In modern Portugal, the bright lights of Halloween have, in many places, overshadowed *Pão por Deus*. The influence of television and the internet has brought pumpkins, costumes, and 'trick or treat' to the streets of the larger towns and cities. Yet in smaller towns and villages, especially where families still live close together and parish life remains strong, the old ways endure. Schools sometimes encourage children to make *sacos de Pão por Deus*, decorating them with autumn motifs and taking them door to door. Older neighbours, delighted by the sight, prepare small gifts in advance – a few biscuits, chocolates, or perhaps a coin or two. In some parishes, *Pão por Deus* has become a community event. Children visit elderly parishioners who live alone, offering a small token and a prayer. In this way, the tradition finds new life as a gesture of kindness and pastoral care. Even if the gifts have changed – sweets

instead of bread – the heart of *Pão por Deus* remains the same. It is still about giving, gratitude, and prayer.

### **A Reflection of Faith and Charity**

What makes *Pão por Deus* so special is its quiet spirituality. Beneath its simplicity lies a profound Christian message – one that echoes the words of Christ Himself:

'Give us this day our daily bread.' (Matthew 6:11),  
'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.'  
(Matthew 5:7)

The bread given and received on this day symbolises far more than food. It represents trust in God's providence, gratitude for what we have, and compassion for those who have less. It is also a beautiful way to teach children about remembrance. When they knock on doors and say "*Pão por Deus!*", they are participating – even without realising it – in a centuries-old chain of prayer linking the living and the dead, the rich and the poor, the past and the present.

In the end, *Pão por Deus* invites us to remember that all we have is gift – that every loaf shared, every prayer offered, is part of the great communion of saints that binds us together in Christ.

### **Keeping the Tradition Alive**

For those of us living abroad or in communities where *Pão por Deus* is no longer common, the feasts of All Saints and All Souls still offer opportunities to revive its spirit.

We can:

- ❖ Pray for our departed family and friends.
- ❖ Share a meal or baked goods with a neighbour, especially someone in need.
- ❖ Teach children about the meaning of these holy days – not as a time of ghosts and ghouls, but of gratitude and love.
- ❖ Attend Mass and light candles for the souls of the faithful departed.
- ❖ Even a simple act – offering a loaf of bread to a friend 'in God's name' – can become a quiet echo of this old Portuguese custom.

As Saint Paul reminds us:

'Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.'  
(Hebrews 13:16)

## Conclusion: Bread for the Soul

*Pão por Deus* may seem, at first glance, like a quaint rural custom, but it carries within it the essence of Christian life: faith, memory, and mercy. It teaches us that even small gestures – a piece of bread, a shared prayer, a child's rhyme – can be filled with grace.

In a world where Halloween often celebrates fear or fantasy, *Pão por Deus* reminds us instead of hope and holiness. It turns the act of knocking on a neighbour's door into a moment of connection, and transforms ordinary bread into a symbol of God's love. So, as I write the month of remembrance draws to a close, let us recall this humble Portuguese tradition – born of suffering, sustained by faith, and still whispering to us the eternal message of the Gospel:

'For I was hungry and you gave me food.' (Matthew 25:35)

And may the simple prayer of the children echo once more through our hearts and homes:

*Pão por Deus!*

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## 'You are my Hope' – the World Day of the Poor in a year of Jubilee

**Jane Crone** CAFOD in East Anglia and Brentwood and member of the Caritas in East Anglia steering group.

The Jubilee of Hope World Day of the Poor on 16th November takes as its theme a phrase from Psalm 71, 'You are my Hope'. Despite living in a time of terrible trouble the psalmist has faith and hope in God, who is a 'rock of refuge' and a 'strong fortress'.

In his message for the World Day of the Poor, Pope Leo calls the poor 'witnesses of hope' because they cannot find hope in power and wealth which can disappoint. True treasure – which won't rot, rust or be stolen – lies in God alongside a lasting hope that will never disappoint us. He reminds us that Christian hope is symbolised by an anchor which grounds our human hearts in Jesus our saviour and points to our true home in heaven. Pope Leo's message calls us to improve our world by turning our hearts into 'fertile soil where charity for the life of the world can blossom' through faith, hope and charity. 'Charity is not just a promise; it is a present reality to be embraced with joy and responsibility. Charity engages us and guides our decisions towards the common good'.

On the 4 October, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, Pope Leo signed his first teaching document, *Dilexi Te*. In it he wrote 'charity is not optional but a requirement of true worship' (# 42) and is 'the burning heart of the Church's mission' (# 15). In both *Dilexi Te* and his message for World Day of the Poor, Pope Leo challenges us to reconsider our response to poverty and injustice as individuals and as a Catholic community. In our Diocese Catholic charities such as the SVP, the foodbank, Mary's Meals and CAFOD reach out to the poor in our own country and overseas, and also campaign for the structural causes of poverty to be addressed. He prompts us to consider if we should become more deeply involved in Catholic Social Action in our parishes, deaneries and across our Diocese.

If you want to find out more about Catholic Social Action, Caritas Brentwood has produced a range of free resources for World Day of the Poor and Advent. They have also created an excellent free youth version of the CSAN (Catholic Social Action Network) resources for adults relating to Refugees and Migrants – *Love the Stranger*. It is suitable for use in schools and Confirmation classes and available on their website <https://www.caritasbrentwood.org/resources/>.



## **Advent: The Time of Divine Newness**

**Fr Robin Mampallithadathil CRM, Parish Priest, St Laurence's, Cambridge**

Advent stands before us as a sacred threshold – the meeting point between promise and fulfilment, time and eternity, human longing and divine generosity. The Church, in her wisdom, calls us during these weeks not to mere remembrance of Christ's first coming in Bethlehem, but to a renewed openness to the ever-new coming of God into our lives and into our world.

### **The God Who Comes**

The term *Adventus* means 'arrival' or 'coming.' Yet in the Christian vision, it signifies not simply the arrival of a visitor but the self-manifestation of God who enters human history to renew all creation. The prophet Isaiah captured this longing centuries before the Incarnation: 'O that you would tear open the heavens and come down' (Isaiah 64:1). In Jesus Christ, that prayer is answered. The Eternal Word becomes flesh, entering history not with power or domination, but as a vulnerable child – the Divine Child who reveals that omnipotence and humility can coexist in perfect harmony.

### **Advent in a World of Turmoil**

We live this Advent amid a world wounded by violence, war, and ideological fanaticism. Entire peoples suffer; innocent lives are lost; Christians in several lands bear the cross of persecution. Humanity seems once again to cry out, "*Where is the promise of peace?*" and yet, the mystery of Advent teaches us that God's response to human darkness is not destruction, but incarnation. As St John Chrysostom wrote, 'God did not merely send a servant, nor an angel, but His own Son, that by this He might make known the greatness of His love.' The coming of the Son is God's ultimate protest against the cycles of hatred and despair that mar creation.

Pope Francis reminds us that 'Advent is the time when we are called to awaken our hearts and to recognize that God walks with us, that He never abandons His people.' Amid the world's violence, the Christian becomes a sign of contradiction – a bearer of hope rooted not in circumstance, but in divine fidelity.

### **The Parish as a Sign of Universal Hope**

In our own community of St Laurence's, we see a glimpse of that divine plan. Our Parish is multicultural and multinational, a mosaic of peoples and traditions woven together by one faith. We embody, in miniature, the universal Church gathered from every nation and

tongue. The Prophet Isaiah's vision finds fulfilment in our midst:

'Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.' (Isaiah 60:3)

Each language, each culture, each face that gathers at the Eucharist testifies that Christ's light transcends boundaries. Our diversity is not accidental; it is sacramental – a visible sign of the unity that the Incarnation accomplishes.

### **Conversion of the Heart**

Advent, however, is not only cosmic; it is profoundly personal. The coming of Christ demands the conversion of the heart. The Fathers of the Church constantly reminded the faithful that Christ desires to be born within the soul of each believer. St Ambrose declared: 'Every soul that believes conceives and gives birth to the Word of God.'

This interior Advent requires that we make space within ourselves – through repentance, forgiveness, and silence – for the newness of God. To forgive and to be forgiven is the path by which the hardened soil of the heart becomes capable of receiving divine life. St Augustine wrote, 'Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee'. Advent invites us to rediscover that rest not as passivity, but as receptive expectation, a posture of faith that allows God to surprise us anew.

### **The Mystery of Divine Newness**

The coming of Christ always brings newness – not novelty for its own sake, but the renewal of creation in its deepest truth. Pope Benedict XVI reflected:

'Advent is the season of the presence and the expectation of the eternal... it awakens in the heart the memory of the God who comes.'

To open oneself to God's coming is to accept that His ways may overturn our expectations. Mary of Nazareth embodies this openness:

'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word'. (Luke 1:38)

Her assent allowed the infinite to enter the finite. In her, humanity becomes the dwelling place of God – and through her, the Church learns how to receive divine surprises with faith and humility.



## **A Season of Hope and Joy**

Advent culminates not in vague optimism, but in the certainty of hope – that God is faithful to His promises. The Prophet assures us,

‘The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light’. (Isaiah 9:2)

The Child whose birth we await is that Light, and His coming continues wherever hearts are opened to His love.

As we light the candles of our Advent wreath, may their growing flame remind us that God’s grace often begins as a small spark – fragile yet unstoppable. Let this holy season form us into a people of hope, forgiveness, and joyful expectation, confident that the God who once came in humility will come again in glory, and that even now He prepares. Wishing you all a Blessed Advent!

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## **The Darnel in the Wheat**

### **Fr Bob Eccles**

The editor asked, tell our readers what friars do when they grow too old to get about? Well, we hear confessions, is part of the answer. For those who find help in the sacrament of Reconciliation it brings such courage and hope. Without it, we might stick at judging ourselves, try to tear up the darnel – uproot the alien corn we find in our hearts – but somehow that won’t work. So we are left discouraged, or else settle for the unexamined life. But in the sacrament of Penance, used in the right way of course, I open up to a brother who is an ornery sinner like me. We answer our Lord’s invitation when he says ‘come to me all you who are burdened, and I will give you rest, for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls.’ We give up on judging ourselves and throw ourselves on the mercy of our loving God.

In my confession, I am no longer all alone in my failure. I am going to meet another brother who is also in the way of making confession sometimes, and will hear me make mine. The sacrament is a human encounter with a divine depth to it. I’m put in touch with a tradition of moral discrimination and prudent care for persons (what’s prudence? why, it’s just common sense, silly). This is a waymark on the journey of faith and a time to move on a bit in my life, and the Lord himself is the Way.

In Confession we come to see what it is we just have to accept about ourselves, the tares among the wheat we

are going to have to live with for a while yet. We come to spot the old ways that thankfully we are at last ready to leave behind. We come to realize that even as we are, we are God’s acre. The love of God is poured into our hearts by his Holy Spirit who has been given us. We are going to taste the peace of God that passes all understanding.

The forbearance of the Father, his great patience and desire to save, is what greets me in Confession. Here I learn what I’m able with the help of grace to correct and change, what must be put up with for a time, and what perhaps is just part of me and is to be accepted peacefully. St Paul speaks of Christians as those who put on Christ, clothe themselves in Christ, and are found in Christ. When I hear confessions, and there is this quiet return to the sacrament among the people of God, I am brought face to face with the everyday holiness of all these people who have put on Christ and who live through love in his presence.

We all have our own way of making our confession. Some of us look for a brief encounter with the priest, and that’s alright. Some have a story to tell or a conundrum to explore face to face, that’s alright too. The confessor shares our joys and our sorrows. Where even two are gathered in the name of Jesus, there he has promised to be too, and when it is for this sacrament, there is all goodness and all grace. When the words of absolution are spoken, priest and penitent enter into a moment of great peace. But goodness, what numbers of young people come for Confession these days! Who told them it was alright to come? Once I have heard today’s confessions, I’ll have no fear for the future of the Church, no fear at all.

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## **Cardinal John Henry Newman**

### **Peter Neville**

Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801–90) was one of the most influential figures in the history of English Catholicism who went on to be canonised by Pope Francis in 2019. He was one of a number of leading Anglicans who made the spiritual journey to Catholicism in the 19th century. It was one made in a context of ferocious anti-Catholicism in England. In 1780, just over 20 years before Newman was born, London was subjected to ferocious riots (the so-called Gordon riots) of which Catholics were the chief victims. Only in 1829 were Catholics allowed to vote, and the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy came only in 1850.

Newman was an Anglican clergyman and Oxford academic who was a leader of the so-called Oxford Movement, sometimes called the Tractarian Movement

after his famous Tract 90. Newman and his followers became identified as High Anglicans, members of the Church of England who had moved close to Catholic liturgy and practice without accepting Papal authority. By 1845 Newman recognised that, as he wrote, 'I was on my death-bed with my membership of the Church of England'. He and some of his followers converted to Catholicism. This was a bold move, as Newman lost his living as an Anglican clergyman and lost his Oxford post too.

Newman rapidly became a Catholic priest, and advanced up the Catholic hierarchy. In 1879 he was made a Cardinal by the innovative Pope Leo XIII. He was a theologian as well as a religious leader whose most famous work was *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1864), while his poem *The Dream of Gerontius* (1865) was set to music by Edward Elgar, a fellow Catholic. On a practical level he was the founder of the Catholic University of Ireland in 1854 (later University College Dublin, part of a regional Irish university system which took in Cork and Galway). Newman was also important in another way. He challenged Catholics to address the 'modernism' of the 19th century, including issues like Darwinism, which challenged the Biblical explanation of the origins of the Earth and mankind. Yet the famous theologian and broadcaster Ronald Knox (1888–1957) thought that Newman's influence was greater on fellow Catholics 50 years after his death (Knox's 1948 broadcast about him can be found on YouTube). Newman certainly had the gift of explaining the complex in clear, lucid terms. Here is part of his *The Mission of My Life*:

'My God, you have created me to do you some definite service,  
You have given some definite work to me  
which you have not given to any other  
I have my place in your plan; I may never know what it  
is in this life but I will be told it in the next.'

Pope Leo XIV recognised John Henry Newman's intellectual contribution to Catholicism by making him a Doctor of the Church in 2025. It can be said of him, as it was said of Christopher Wren, that if you seek his legacy, look around you: a Specialist Science College named for him in Luton (which would have pleased him), an educational Trust in Bristol, another College in Preston, one in North Lanarkshire and so on. There are many more across the globe which honour the memory of this remarkable man.

## School News

### Education Sunday

**Address given by Mrs Rachel Chalklin, Head of School, at our Parish School, on 14th September 2025 at the 9.30am Mass.**

Good morning, thank you to Father Alex for giving me the opportunity to speak with you all this morning on Education Sunday.

My name is Mrs Rachel Chalklin, I am currently Head of School at our Parish school.

St Laurence's is located a short distance from this church on Arbury Road. It is wonderful to be joined here this morning by so many pupils, teachers and support staff from our school, as well as so many past pupils and staff that I can see in the congregation today.

Today is a day where we give thanks to God for the importance of lifelong learning, the role of Jesus as our ultimate teacher and the vision of our Catholic schools, during this year Jubilee year, as beacons of hope and places for spiritual growth.

As Pilgrims of Hope, we are on a journey through life and, as Christians, we journey with hope because we trust in God. My own Christian journey began in this church where I was baptised then received First Holy Communion, Confirmation and was married. My parents chose to educate myself and my brother and sisters at our Parish school and my own four children also attended St Laurence's.

I started full time work when I was 17, at Cambridge University Press whilst completing an OU degree, then Anglia Ruskin University in the International office and the Chaplaincy, before I completed a PGCE at the Faculty of Education in Cambridge. At this point, I was also a parent governor at St Laurence's and the following year I began teaching at St Laurence's in Year 1. Over the following 12 years, I progressed to KS1 and EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) phase lead, I have been the Curriculum Lead for History and Geography, Maths, Phonics, and currently Art and DT. I became Assistant Head Teacher in 2021 and earlier this year, Head of School.

My own experiences have made me very aware of the benefits of lifelong learning. As educators in a Catholic school, we help the children develop as whole persons, challenge them to ask purposeful questions and explore their faith. Staff are also encouraged to continually develop their own lifelong learning journey. Earlier this year I completed the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies, where I had the opportunity to study with

students from both the UK and overseas. During the modules, we had the opportunity to share our experiences of our own faith and education. Several of us had similar backgrounds where our primary and secondary education was at Catholic schools and it became evident very early on that there were common experiences and beliefs. Namely that our school experience was one of learning and friendships built on a foundation that we all knew we shared a faith in Christ; a golden thread that wove us together whether we were at a school Mass, in class, at home or out and about growing up in Cambridge or another place. Our Catholic schools are a sanctuary, a safe haven for inspirations and aspirations to thrive and flourish, reflecting God's love and purpose for each child.

This morning we give thanks for the dedication of all educators in Early Years, Primary, Secondary, Further and Higher education. I would particularly like to give thanks for the dedication of all our school staff. They are a wonderful team called to be examples of Christ's love, nurturing the talent of every pupil each day.

Our most recent Catholic school's inspection notes: 'St Laurence is an outstanding Catholic primary school. The Catholic life and mission of the school is upheld and lived out by all members of the community. It is a place where everyone feels cherished as part of a family and feels valued for who they are and the different gifts and talents they possess. Pupils have an important part to play in shaping the Catholic character of the school and thrive on taking responsibility for the many opportunities provided for their personal, spiritual and moral development.'

At our more recent Ofsted inspection last year the lead inspector noted: the Catholic ethos of the school is well embedded throughout the school community and also stated:

"Pupils thrive in the richly diverse community at St Laurence Catholic Primary School. It is an inclusive and friendly school where everyone is welcome. Pupils learn from the many different cultures and languages represented in the school. As a result, they have a strong appreciation of diversity." (Ofsted2024)

*Our Mission statement is: Through God's grace, a community growing in knowledge and understanding.*

St Laurence's is a secure and happy community where children are encouraged to develop their many talents. Academic excellence for all children is one of our goals, but we also seek to nurture the whole child and their special gifts which make each one unique. At St Laurence's we aim to help children

develop in their journey of faith in a positive learning environment. We place Jesus, His teachings and His values at the centre of all that we do.

If you have pre-school or primary aged children and would like to know more about the school, we welcome visitors on tours during the school day. Please do speak with me after Mass or contact our school office for more information.

Thank you.  
Mrs Rachel Chalklin  
Head of School  
[office@stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:office@stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk)

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## A Biblical Tree Garden

### Barbara Quail

It was decided that the 2025 leavers would like to give the school something in memory of their time at St Laurence's.

The idea suggested was to make a Biblical Tree Garden. Mr Brierley kindly made the signs and cemented them into the ground. The children wrote the relevant biblical quotes on these signs and they were then varnished by a leaver. All trees were donated.

Two leavers returned to St Laurence's and planted the following trees.





### A Vine



I am the true vine.  
(John 15:1)

### A Sycamore tree

Zacchaeus, the tax collector climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus. (Luke 19:1–10)



### A Fig tree

Adam and Eve covered themselves using fig leaves.  
(Genesis 3:7)

### Two Olive Trees

A dove returns to Noah with an olive leaf in its beak.  
(Genesis 8:11)

Jesus went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, he knelt down and prayed. (Luke 22: 39–40)

### Oak tree

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre.  
(Genesis 18: 1–15)



Leavers in pictures – Abi Taylor & Daniel Calvo-Lara and Mrs Khan-Blacker their class teacher

## St Laurence's School Leads Live Rosary Broadcast on Radio Maria

**Helena Judd** Promotions, Fundraising, & Events Manager for Radio Maria England



Radio Maria England was delighted to host a special live Rosary broadcast on Monday, 6th October, featuring Year 6 students from St Laurence's Primary School. They joined Radio Maria listeners across the country at 2pm to pray the Rosary live from their school.

The broadcast formed part of Mark 10 Mission's Rosary Challenge for October and reflects Radio Maria's ongoing mission to inspire a deeper devotion to the Rosary among young people and families across the nation. The Rosary Challenge was to pray a decade of the Holy Rosary each weekday in October. With the help of Archbishop of Southwark, John Wilson, Mark 10 Mission has created videos to guide young people through all twenty Mysteries of the Holy Rosary. (<https://www.themark10mission.co.uk/rosary-challenge>)

Mrs Veronica Harvey, Inclusion Manager and SENCo at St Laurence's School, shared: "In the midst of busy school life, taking the time to say the Rosary with the community of Radio Maria was an opportunity to put faith into practice together. It helped the children grow closer to God through prayer, reflection, and meditation on the life of Jesus and Mary. It increased our sense of unity and community with everyone coming together in one voice for peace, hope, and gratitude.

Praying the Rosary connects the school to the wider Catholic tradition, reminding children that they are part of a global faith family that has prayed these same words for centuries." Fr Alex helped lead the rosary and offered a blessing on the students and on the rosaries they were given by the school.

Helena Judd, said: "We find there's a special excitement for children when they realise how meaningful it is for our listeners – especially those who may not have a community to pray with. Many listeners have told us that hearing students pray brings them great hope, particularly grandparents whose own grandchildren may not be growing up in the faith."



## **Parish Organisations and Activities**

### **Stella Maris news**

#### **Mary Watkins**

So where does the money go that we donate once a year?

We know that Stella Maris is the largest ship-visiting network in the world.

We know they aim to improve the lives of seafarers and fishers through our network of local chaplains and seafarer centres, expert information, advocacy, and spiritual support.

And here are a just a few recent examples of what port chaplains and volunteer ships' visitors do day to day carrying out this mission.

#### **Supporting Crew after fire on board Bulk Carrier in Southampton**

After a fire broke out earlier this week on board a bulk carrier in Southampton, our port chaplain Luke visited the crew alongside colleagues from the Sailors' Society. He spoke with the Chief Officer, who confirmed all crew members were safe and accounted for.

It had clearly been a long and difficult night. Luke and the team offered Mi-Fi units to help the crew stay in touch with their families, provided warm clothing and other small gifts, and reminded them we're here to support them in any way we can.

#### **Visiting a Seafarer in Hospital**

Port chaplain Brian recently visited Adrian, a Romanian seafarer who has been in hospital for almost five months following an accident. Adrian spoke about the strength he draws from his faith and family as he continues to recover. Despite facing delays to his surgery, he remains in good spirits, and we'll continue to support him during this difficult time.

And something you might not have expected!

#### **Campaign Launched to Celebrate Seafarers' Cooking Skills**

Our local chaplain Julian Wong (sadly due to retire and who will be greatly missed by many seafarers) told me that the Ship's Cook is the one person who he never forgets to say hello to, as often he rarely leaves the ship – the seafarers have to be fed round the clock!

This innovative campaign celebrates seafarers' cooking skills and resourcefulness to prepare nourishing meals at sea.

The charity is asking seafarers to share their recipes for food that gives them sustenance on board – from breakfasts that fuel the day ahead, to comforting main meals that bring crews together, to energy-giving quick snacks for a busy watch.

At the end of the campaign, Stella Maris will produce a new seafarers' cookbook dedicated to seafarers, filled with chosen recipes from crews around the world. Recipes featured in the cookbook will win a US \$50 prize each.

Many thanks to Julian for keeping in touch, and for the invaluable work he has carried out for seafarers and on behalf of us all.

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### **CWL Update**

#### **Janet Scally**

The Catholic Women's League enjoys having its regular Second Friday meetings, and, after the 12.30pm Mass, we have a lunch for any parishioners who want to join us. Their generosity enables us to support various charities. Our last lunch raised £100 for the Alzheimer's Society; a big thank you to all who came and all who helped.

Our next lunch will be on Friday, 14th November, after the 12.30pm Mass, and we will be supporting our own Catholic Women's League funds.

Any ladies are welcome, come along and join us. Meetings start at 11.30am, on the second Friday of the month.

Contact: Janet Scally 01223 365330

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### **Confirmation 2025–2026 update**

#### **Anna May Agustin**

'For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a future and a hope.' Jeremiah 29:11

This was the theme of the first session of the Confirmation programme. We believe that God has a beautiful plan for all of us and that His timing is always perfect timing.

Please pray for all the Confirmation candidates and all the catechist volunteers as we embark on this journey of discovering God's love and His plan for each one of us.

## Diocesan Safeguarding Day

### Jim and Mary Jane O'Sullivan

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

On 18th October, we both travelled to Wymondham for the Diocesan annual training day for Parish Safeguarding Representatives (PSRs). The day included meeting the new Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator & Administrator, chatting with other PSRs, catching up with the newly retired Fr Pat Cleary over lunch and celebrating Mass together. During Mass, the Bidding Prayers were replaced by a reading of 'A Survivor's Prayer' written by a victim and survivor of church-based abuse. The prayer is definitely worth looking at. It is one of the Safeguarding Sunday Prayers, found on the Leeds Diocese website at <https://www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk/safeguarding/parish-safeguarding-resources/>. Do ask us if you'd like a copy.

The morning session was led by Professor Lisa Oakley, Professor of Safeguarding and Knowledge Exchange at the University of Chester. Lisa gave us an engaging presentation about Spiritual Abuse, how to recognise it and how to respond to it. The main points we took away were:

- There is controversy over the definition of spiritual abuse but broadly speaking it is characterised by the coercion or control of one person by another in a religious context, or in another setting but with a religious rationale. Spiritual abuse can happen in all directions; it could involve a church leader misusing their position of authority or it could involve a group of parishioners unreasonably attempting to control a priest, or it could occur between lay people. You could have a generally healthy parish community with isolated incidents of spiritual abuse occurring.
- In terms of UK law and statutory safeguarding procedures, spiritual abuse is not a recognised category of abuse in its own right. However, it often falls under other categories of abuse such as emotional/psychological.
- Examples of spiritual abuse can be:
  - Misusing Bible passages to control someone eg telling a victim/survivor of abuse that they should forgive their abuser 70×7 times, or telling a wife that she should submit to her abusive husband rather than reporting them to the authorities,

- Coercing or controlling people's behaviour by setting up a culture where it's not OK to ask questions or raise concerns,
- Using your position in the Church to say you cannot be challenged,
- Threatening spiritual consequences (eg "you'll never get to Heaven if you do that....").
- We can all help to guard against spiritual abuse by promoting teaching and values around love, equality and care of the individual.
- Negative impacts can include a loss of personal faith, feeling unable to partake in communal worship, increased isolation (if someone feels excluded from the Church community) and a general loss of trust in others. It takes a lot of courage to tell someone that you've been a victim of spiritual abuse; disclosing it can make someone feel very vulnerable and exposed.
- Any parish should be a place that feels safe for victims and survivors of any type of abuse. This includes communicating to the church community that the parish is a safe place for people who have experienced abuse and wish to talk about it. Lisa gave an example of a parish priest who decided to preach a sermon on the topic of domestic abuse. His parishioners told him that wasn't necessary; they 'knew' it wasn't an issue in their congregation. After talking it through with his Safeguarding Lead, the priest did preach on domestic abuse. Nine people came up to him after the service and told him their stories of being abused.
- It's helpful for us all to know how to respond helpfully if someone discloses spiritual abuse, or indeed any other type of abuse. That involves parishioners having appropriate levels of training. This linked into the afternoon session.

The afternoon session was led by Liam Sainsbury (the new Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator), assisted by Donna Wright (the new Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator).

Liam is the person to contact if you wish to report a Safeguarding concern. His headline message was "There's never a silly question about Safeguarding". It's always better to discuss something with him than to leave it unaddressed. His contact details are on posters at Church and on the Safeguarding pages of the Parish and Diocesan websites, as well as at the bottom of this article.

Donna is the person who oversees the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks in the Diocese. Anyone who's had a Diocesan DBS check this year will have received emails from Donna.

Liam reiterated the message that all our churches should be safe spaces. There's been a lot of publicity about the need to prevent abuse occurring within the Church. However, safeguarding in our parishes involves more than this. It means creating a community where anyone can feel safe to come to church and take part in parish activities. It also involves being a community where someone could feel it's safe to disclose that they've been a victim of abuse in other settings. We all have a responsibility to provide a caring, helpful response if someone does make such a disclosure to us.

For people who are actively volunteering in the Parish, that means having some training in what abuse is and how to respond if someone discloses it to you. The Catholic Standards Safeguarding Agency (CSSA) has put together some training resources and it is now mandatory for all parish volunteers to undergo the appropriate level of training. The basic training for all volunteers, whatever their role, is to read the CSSA leaflet *What should I do if I have a concern?*

Those who volunteer with children and vulnerable adults on behalf of our Parish will need to do an online training module (it takes about an hour to complete).

By the time you read this, we will hopefully have contacted all those who volunteer in the Parish about doing the above training. If you have any role in the Parish and haven't been contacted by us, please do get in touch either via the email at the top of this article, or via the Parish Office, or speak to us directly. We're usually at 11.15am Mass on a Sunday; if you don't know us, ask someone to point us out to you.

**Diocese of East Anglia Safeguarding Coordinator – Mr Liam Sainsbury**

Office telephone: 01508 492202 Mobile telephone: 07931 952626

Email: [safeguarding.coordinator@rcdea.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding.coordinator@rcdea.org.uk)

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## **'Be the Light They See'**

### **Karen Rodgers**

I recently attended the funeral of a remarkable lady called Finsetta. She came to England in the 1950s and devoted her life to service and fellowship, not limiting herself to the sterling work she did as a midwife but being a vital nexus of community here in Arbury and an enthusiastic and dedicated member of the Good Shepherd Church, informally mentoring many younger

people. Several attended her funeral and had moving stories to tell of just how much they had been inspired by her mentoring and Christian faith. Our St Laurence's equivalent was probably the recently departed and splendid Anne Maddocks.

I think of the kind of social life Catholics used to have in the 1950s: Catholic football teams, Catholic Friday night all-age get-togethers at the Parish, Catholic craft circles, Catholic book groups, etc. These were the contexts in which older children were mentored and caught the Faith. And they were so attractive that many people who were not Catholic came along and became Catholic. That was normal then. I know of two lovely men of my father's generation who became Catholic as a result of falling in love with a Catholic lady ... and these were genuine conversions, I am sure of it.

I was born in 1965 in London and was utterly deprived of the kind of Catholic community which had been the privilege of the generation before mine. I grew up in the roundly materialist desert that was the 1980s and looked in vain for Catholic community and for Catholic mentors. It was horrible. I still remember the pain of it. The bad fruits of this devastation ...this deprivation... among the members of my generation is clear and we have the chance to turn this around for the generation to come. How I earnestly sought mentors like Anne and Finsetta.

This generation are suffering in a similar way. I saw so many disinvest from the Parish between the years 2002 and 2007; repurposing time previously spent with fellow Catholics at the Parish to support secular activities elsewhere. Now very few children in the Parish know very few of the adults, so there is no chance of the kind of informal cross-generational mentoring which is vital for the passing on of the Faith. And few Catholic mothers and fathers know many other Catholic mothers and fathers, so that kind of peer support has gone missing, just as the changing culture has meant that we need it more than ever.

It is not possible to love our neighbour if we never spend any regular time with him or her. And these days if something is not scheduled and invested in, it does not happen. In this helter-skelter age, we define ourselves and our families most clearly by how we decide to invest our time.

There was a most productive and convivial pro-life afternoon here on Saturday 18th October where we enjoyed some wonderful food, some of it home-made (thank you Senait especially for the home-made bread and to Rosemary for the carefully marked ! mustard sandwiches) and watched two beautiful short films (links below...do watch them...thank you Paul and Peter for the technical support) and on Friday 24th October

we had a wonderful craft meet-up and a lovely Mass of Anointing, followed by a birthday party for Fr Colin. Things are definitely getting both darker and lighter and we can all light candles by giving whatever we have in the way of time and energy to help turn things around. Loaves and fishes. So many of us are feeling in the dark; yet we are blessed by the blessings we give. How can you be the light which those around you in the Parish are looking for?

What do you think we can do here in Cambridge to recover the kind of Catholic fellowship which is intended to be the focus of the lives of each and every Confirmed Catholic?

And what kind of regular activity would your family be interested in running or investing in?

What are your loaves and fishes that you can offer to the Lord to multiply for the Parish to build community?

In an increasingly dark and tasteless world, how could you, like Finsetta and Anne, be salt and light?

Please discern how you are called and, when Fr Robin gets back from his much-needed sabbatical, consider making a suggestion to him of what you and your family can offer in terms of skills to share, enthusiasm and above all... time.

Stunning.. I am awe-struck every time I watch this. *Formation of Baby in Mother's womb* full video (0 to 9 months)13 minutes;  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MM6M4qXVBUc>

Beautiful; *The Selfish Giant* by Oscar Wilde  
Video 26 minutes;  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jtLTS7T8cc>

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## Note from the St Vincent de Paul Society

### Ciaran Ward

Dear Parishioners,

Many thanks for your continued support throughout the Summer and into the Autumn (we also were happy some of you could join us at our SVP BBQ) – especially your responses to our newsletter requests for our beneficiaries' immediate needs, your offers of your used goods and your donations. Thank you as we couldn't do it without your support!

We are once again entering into a very busy period for the SVP as we march ever closer to Advent and the Christmas season. Once again, we will be running a Giving Christmas Tree from the first weekend of Advent (29th November) for the following beneficiaries:

- Families in the area are supported via hampers, food vouchers from a major supermarket and presents as donated via the Giving Tree
- The Homeless through voucher donations as provided to Wintercomfort
- Luxury goods hampers for some senior parishioners known by the SVP
- Meals on Wheels vouchers for other beneficiaries

Each year we are taken aback by the gratitude of our beneficiaries once they receive these modest yet essential gifts – this support goes a long way to make Christmas, an expensive time, much easier to bear.

Once again, we are grateful for our parishioners continued support and participation which makes it all possible. Please do find some key dates below:

29th November	Giving Tree will be set up and tags will be available for pick up Parishioners should purchase the gifts as specified on the tag
13th December	Tags and gifts (if wrapped, please do specify who the gift is for) must be returned at the latest
14th December	SVP will sort and deliver in the afternoon

We look forward to receiving your generous offers and donations once again.

On behalf of all the members of the SVP, we would like to wish all our Brothers and Sisters in Christ a blessed and happy Christmas break!

### New members – want to help in some way this Christmas?

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

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

- SVP President Ciaran – 07540 842 078  
[svp@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:svp@saintlaurence.org.uk)
- Any member of SVP that you know

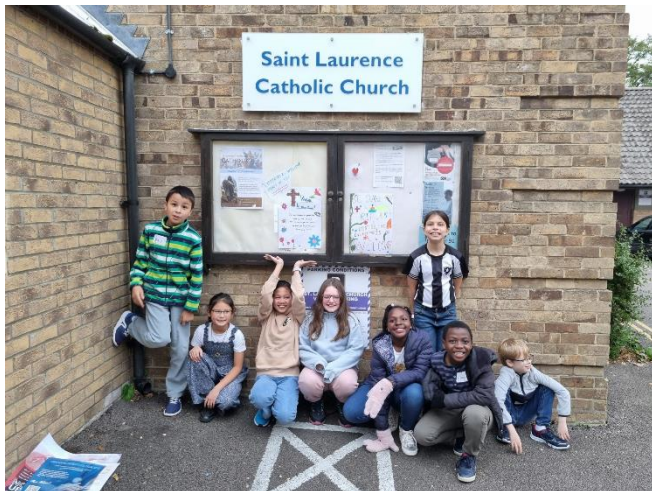
### Signing off

God Bless, The SVP Members



## An Update from the Saint Carlo Acutis Group

Zuzanna Marciniak-Nuqui & Teresa Siu Fabry



St Carlo Acutis Group meetings have resumed after the summer with a bang – our September meeting was a joyful celebration of the canonisation of Carlo Acutis, which took place on 7th September! We celebrated becoming the ‘Saint Carlo Acutis Group’ with a chat about our patron saint, Adoration and party games, pizza and sweet treats. We had a scavenger hunt, trying to spot various items around the Church and Parish Hall, as well as a very fun game pinning a halo to Carlo Acutis’ head. Our young group members have suggested that we organise a similar party every September to celebrate the canonisation anniversary together each year!



This year we will be focusing on where we can find and see Jesus, and how we can get to know Him better. Each monthly meeting will be an opportunity to reflect on this through looking at the rich liturgical, theological and prayer traditions that animate our Catholic lives and allow us to reach a deeper communion with God. We started our theme during our October meeting by focusing on how we grow closer to and get to know God through the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

We also explored how these Sacraments lead us out of ourselves and equip us to join in God’s mission of spreading the Good News – a timely reflection for the month of Mission. Our young people prepared beautiful posters welcoming newcomers to our Church community, which you can appreciate on the announcement board outside church.



We look forward to our next meeting in November, which will take place at a different time than usual – we will start at 1pm and finish at 2.30pm. We hope you can join us!

## **Personal Stories and Experiences**

### **Ecumenism as experienced by one person**

#### **Petra Tucker**

As I write, we have been told that King Charles III will be meeting Pope Leo this week and they will pray together (in the Sistine chapel), something which has not been seen for at least 500 years. My parents embraced Vatican II and one of the welcome changes for them was a new approach to ecumenism. The ways in which this interest has 'rubbed off' on me are many and various; a long journey walking alongside people of other faiths.

Newly married, we were involved with the Council of Churches in Nottingham. A highlight was visiting Ghent, where over several days we shared worship and experienced warm hospitality from members of various Christian churches.

One of our visits to Mount St Bernards Abbey coincided with an exchange between MSB and a Buddhist monastery. The respect and reverence shown by the Buddhist monks gathered around the altar made a deep impression on us.

In Fort Augustus it is the custom on Remembrance Day for all denominations to parade through the village by the Caledonian Canal and to meet and pray at the War Memorial. On the Isle of Arran, Father Noel and other local church leaders walk to Mullach Buidhe on the anniversary of a WW2 plane crash, where prayers are offered for the victims. The nearest church to our holiday cottage was St Molios in Shiskine, where we joined the worship of the Church of Scotland. We had been invited by a couple, where she is a lay reader and he plays the organ, for Sunday worship.

Over the years we have attended baptisms in Anglican and Methodist churches in and around Cambridge.

Around 2005, I was invited to a Good Friday service in the chapel at HMP Whitemoor. I will never forget the reverence of the prisoners of all denominations as they gradually stripped the chapel bare to await the Easter Service. What was as powerful as any Bible reading or prayer was the symbolism of these prisoners, who had nothing, leaving the chapel totally empty. If you get the chance to attend a Bar Mitzvah, be sure to take it – our neighbours invited us to their north London synagogue for the Bar Mitzvah of their eldest son. We also enjoyed a Shabbat supper with friends in Jerusalem some 25 years ago.

Cambridge Street Pastors welcome volunteers from all denominations in their mission to help anyone in

distress between 10pm and 4am on Friday and Saturday nights in the town centre. This is a practical way to share our common Christian beliefs, especially 'I was hungry and thirsty...'.

Recent faith-sharing events have been at the Cambridge Gurdwara in North Arbury and the Cambridge Central Mosque on Mill Road. On both occasions, we observed their prayers and music – so different from our Christian liturgy.

Helping to run a winter night-shelter involved working with several Christian denominations and the local Synagogue. Each night a different place of worship opened their doors to the homeless, who would sleep either in function rooms or the church itself, depending on size and numbers. This journey has been a discovery of commonalities between faiths and occasions when I have been refreshed while acting out the Gospel, putting aside rules and dogma. For me, this is more helpful to Christian Unity than talking about 'the one true Church', which must be so offensive to sincere Christians from other denominations.

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### **Finding my voice: a journey of faith and transition after loss**

#### **David Martin**

Nearly a year and a half ago, I lost my long-term partner through a sudden and traumatic death. We'd been together for 33 years. By the end, Catherine had a number of chronic health conditions, together with mobility issues, and I had become her main carer. My life was really centred around her needs. So, her loss has left me bereft, in more than one sense.

In the period since her passing, however, I have undergone quite a transformation in my life. Firstly, I've experienced a considerable deepening of my faith. I'd been absent from the Church for quite a long time. However, the first Sunday after her passing, in June last year, I was back at Mass, at OLEM. And I started to come to St Laurence's (which is my parish church) two months later. It's truly the love of Christ that has kept me going. I've had some extraordinary experiences of God's love and help, both in worship and in private prayer. I actually consider myself to be greatly blessed, despite all I've gone through. I feel a closeness to Christ that I'd never known before; and I'm confident that Catherine is now happy and healed in God's loving arms, her sufferings over.



One important aspect of the healing I've experienced – and this is hard for me to be open about – is that I've come to truly accept that I'm transgender: I identify as female, though I am physically male. I know this is something that people have very strong feelings and opinions about. But I can only speak for my own experience. I've come to understand that I myself had rejected and repressed this part of my identity very profoundly for most of my life. But the love of God I've experienced over the past 18 months has helped me to accept it and to love myself, probably for the first time ever.

One strange aspect of the healing I've experienced is that I have found my voice: literally, as well as metaphorically (in the sense of being open about my gender). I always had quite a strong singing voice, but somehow, my throat used to get constricted when I sang out strongly, and I'd end up coughing and the voice wouldn't come out the way I wanted to. Now, however, everything seems to have opened up, and I find myself singing out joyfully and emotionally in Mass, with a strong baritone that belies my gender! You may have heard me at the 11am, and now 11.15am, Mass!



The love of God after loss has indeed truly helped me find my voice.

---

## WWT Welney Wetland Centre

### Nora Darby

It was PILGRIM time! Friday 24th October was Final Submission day and it had been a hectic week in the run up. As Commissioning Editor I was trying to get together what I had received and see what I was still waiting for. For me it was also Mass Rota time for November/December! Sunday and Monday, head down and all done and sent out by Monday evening. Now I was able to relax and needed to get away. I had discussed the possibility of going to Welney with my friend Margaret so after checking the weather forecast, Tuesday 28th looked good and she said – let's go.

She picked me up and off we went. It was an uneventful journey until we were almost there, when two Red kites appeared hovering just above the car. They were so close that we were able to see the feather colours and their beautiful eyes. Amazing – a good start to what would be a lovely day.

On arrival, we decided lunch first! Margaret knows Welney well, so we went straight to the café where we enjoyed lovely ciabatta rolls with FOUR whole sausages and very good coffee. The views from the café across the Fen Wetlands is breath-taking and that is only the beginning. She then led me to the Main Hide and Wow! Birds everywhere!

The Whooper swans and Pinkfoot geese have arrived from Iceland and beyond; hundreds of them. To watch them coming wave after wave and landing each to their own space on the already crowded water was quite spectacular. There were many other species of swans and geese and, of course, ducks, from the well-known Mallard to beautiful Pintails, Pochards and Wigeon.

Margaret pointed out the Godwits – lots of them – and this is due to Welney's breeding programme which aims to increase what had been a dwindling number of these beautiful birds. We sat quietly watching – the sky was overcast, and then slowly the sun appeared and, as we watched, it grew and we had this amazing sun through the clouds, over the water and its carpet of birds.



Over on the Fens we could see a Marsh Harrier, coming and going, searching for a meal. Nearer to home, as it was now late afternoon, more and more birds were coming in and to my delight we had a small murmuration of starlings. I had only seen them on TV so it was a special moment.

It was time to make a move so we wandered back through their shop stocked with so many lovely things. We decided it would be good to return for some Christmas shopping...who knows?

My thanks to Margaret for a relaxing but truly amazing afternoon and I can't wait to return to Welney.



## **Poetry Corner**

### **The Need to Hope**

**Teresa Brett**

Sitting and waiting to move one's head  
Up and around to look outside  
Is hopeless for many: - Stuck in bed  
Or in prison cells on every side,  
Beaten to keep you tightly bound  
So daylight and night can't come round  
As they should, to save us.

Where can we find our light  
If we run out of strength to fight?  
In heart and head let a pool of peace  
Calm us with oil or grease  
So we no longer rust.  
Let the death dust  
Drift away as we breathe.

Come to us all, we beg you, Lord.  
Great as you are, you must be bored  
With requests and beggings.  
Yet you put on the leggings  
Of manhood and came to human rescue.  
All I can say is Bless You.

### **Body of Nature**

**Philippa Johnson**

Lungs of oak & hair of willow,  
Smile of foxgloves, words like wheat,  
Eyes of oceans' blue-green billow:  
Help me tread this earth with Jesus' feet.

Brain of clouds & hope's hawk soaring,  
Shoulders broad like granite tor,  
Swan-strong neck to rise above things:  
Open me to treat Your world with awe.

Arms of beech that bend & shelter,  
Hands that nurture like sun's rise,  
Tongue of clear stream, love's truth-teller:  
May I see this world through Jesus' eyes.

Strength of stag & leap of brown hare,  
Diligence of honeybee,  
Knees of grass to bend in heart's prayer:  
Keep me giving as earth gives to me.

Skin of moss & flanks of heather,  
Backbone strong as faithful hills,  
Ribs of rowan, touch of feather:  
Send me where Your Holy Spirit wills.

Rain's sweet kiss & lark's elation—  
Grant me, Lord, to grasp the worth  
of every part of Your creation:  
Give me grace to love & serve Your earth.

### **Looking for life**

**Teresa Brett**

When we came here  
No plant was near,  
Except a lovely rowan tree,  
Brave and tall for all to see.

There'd been no rain  
For twelve years. Pain  
Made the tree shove out a ground level shoot,  
In desperate hope of a new recruit.

It only grew when rain came down,  
Wiping away everyone's frown.  
The next-door Buddhists did a rain-dance.  
I washed my hair outdoors as I had the chance.

We planted a flowering bush  
To drink up car fumes and push  
Into earth's blessed soil,  
Albeit foul with slate, old roots and oil.

Now bushes and a spindly hedge  
Fill the front and along the edge.  
A red rose took root and grew  
Next to a small bamboo.

I scattered wild-flower seeds.  
They grew creeping blooms at ease  
With mosses and petalled bells. No empty patch.  
Even a herb garden with a batch

Of parsley, rosemary and mint.



## ADVENT WORDSEARCH

E	C	Q	S	Q	H	L	J	O	Y	A	P	G	D	A
N	L	F	R	Z	T	Y	O	Y	N	R	T	I	G	E
F	E	P	S	W	W	E	I	V	E	M	C	V	E	O
C	J	H	R	I	V	U	N	P	E	F	C	I	R	T
R	A	B	B	U	E	V	A	H	O	E	C	N	N	C
H	A	R	O	C	P	R	E	B	C	V	L	G	Q	Y
G	T	R	O	O	E	L	O	N	D	G	S	T	G	T
H	H	A	E	L	H	F	E	S	X	N	H	R	S	I
O	H	P	E	T	S	A	A	D	O	N	K	E	Y	V
B	O	L	E	R	O	I	V	Y	E	T	G	E	G	I
H	W	B	L	M	W	T	G	J	L	S	I	J	K	T
R	Q	W	A	T	C	H	A	N	D	W	A	I	T	A
R	A	D	N	E	L	A	C	T	N	E	V	D	A	N
E	T	A	D	U	A	G	V	H	A	O	Q	S	N	R
C	R	B	L	I	Z	J	K	L	C	G	Y	J	J	K

### Find

Advent calendar  
Bethlehem  
Candle  
Carols  
Donkey  
Faith  
Guadate  
Giving Tree

Hope  
Joy  
Love  
Nativity  
Prepare  
Purple  
Watch and wait  
Wreath



## STOP PRESS – STOP PRESS –STOP PRESS

CWL organised a party for long-time member of the Parish, Michael McEwan, who turned 90 years old recently, during their regularly held Friday lunch on 14th November. A cake was baked by Mary Martin and a rousing round of Happy Birthday sung!



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### **The production team:**

**Editors:** Nora Darby, Sarah Sykes;

**Sub-editors:** Carol Williams, Sarah Sykes, Alex Dias;

**Commissioning Editor:** Nora Darby;

**Cover:** Sarah Sykes, Nora Darby;

**Proofreaders:** Caroline O'Donnell. Miriam Santos Freire;

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

All members of the Pilgrim team can be contacted at [pilgrim@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:pilgrim@saintlaurence.org.uk)

## The Pilgrim

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

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

## ABLAZE

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

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

## Upcoming Parish Events

Fr Robin's Induction Mass followed by a celebration in the Parish Room	Mon 1 Dec at 6.30pm
Carol Service	Sun 21st Dec at 4pm
<b>Christmas Eve</b>	
Family Mass	5pm
Midnight Mass	11.30pm Carols and Mass at Midnight
<b>Christmas Day</b>	9am and 11am
<b>Boxing Day</b>	11am and 7pm
<b>Other events</b>	
CWL Lunch	Friday 12 Dec at 1pm
<b>Regular meetings</b>	
Saturday morning Coffee Hub Parish room & SVP drop-in	10am-12pm (after 9:30am Mass)
Sunday morning coffee	After 11am Mass
Soulfood	Tues 8pm
The Carlo Acutis Youth Group (for children who have made their First Holy Communion, but not yet been confirmed)	2nd Saturday of the month 3.30-5.30pm
First Friday celebration	7pm-9pm
First Saturday Devotions	8.15-9.30am
Ablaze Mass First Sunday of the month (except in August)	7 Dec and 4 Jan
Mass in Italian	Last Sunday of month

***Christmas Mass times updated for the pdf and web edition since printing the paper copy but please check the newsletter for final Mass times***



**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 987091

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.

## **Priest in Charge:**

Fr Robin Mampallithadathil CRM

01223 987091

[robinjosephcrm@rcdea.org.uk](mailto:robinjosephcrm@rcdea.org.uk)

## **Assistant Priest:**

Fr Alex Vadasseril CRM

01223 987091

## **Deacon:**

Rev. Dr Geoffrey Cook

01223 351650

## **Parish Administrator:**

Emanuela Di Pietro

01223 987091

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

## **Treasurers:**

Domenico Cirillo

Una Mannu

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

## **Safeguarding:**

Mary Jane & Jim O'Sullivan

[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 with Children's Liturgy)

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

Mon 9.30am

Tues 12.30pm and 7pm

Wed 9:30am and 7:00pm

Thurs 9:30am and 6:30pm Holy Hour

Fri 12.30pm and 7pm

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

## **St Laurence's School**

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