

The Pilgrim

St Laurence's Parish Magazine, Summer Edition 2025



Pilgrims of Hope



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What's New?

A round-up of news

Sarah Sykes

Not quite new news, but I think we should mark the fact that since the last edition of *The Pilgrim* we now have a new Pope at the Vatican. Pope Francis sadly departed us on 21st April 2025 and was sent on his way in simple but loving style by the Church both present in person and watching on TV or online. His successor was chosen surprisingly quickly, and I think, surprise number two, was not a pundit pick! Pope Leo XIV, an Augustinian monk and priest, born in America, but who has lived much of his life in South America and travelled widely, is now in the Chair of St Peter, and we pray for his leadership of the Church.



Pope Leo XIV, when he was still Fr Robert Prevost, in Kerala, India

From action in Italy to action in Italian! There is a new Italian Mass being said in the Parish as of last month! Having lived many years in Italy, Fr Robin is fluent in Italian, and this is a great opportunity for him to keep up his Italian and for Italian parishioners to enjoy Mass being celebrated in their native language. But fear not English-speakers! You too can join in with a side-by-side translation of the Mass to help you follow along! The Mass takes place on the last Sunday of the month at 6pm.



New music is also developing in the Parish. As well as music at the Italian Mass, we have a Young People's Choir (YPC) which took its first steps in leading some of the music at both 11am and 9:30am Masses last month. They did a great job leading the offertory hymn for the Feasts of Pentecost and Trinity Sunday, introducing 'Act Justly' by Bernadette Farrell to the Parish. They sang clearly and strongly encouraging the congregation to join in with the hymn's refrain. Well done to all who sang and all who are involved with this new choir!

And finally, returning to the Italian theme! Our young people will be embarking on their Jubilee Pilgrimage this summer. Congratulations to them for working hard over the last few months to raise funds to support their trip! Many cakes and biscuits have been baked! Thanks also to those who have supported their endeavours in both producing the baked goodies and those who bought and ate them! It's been a team effort!

Helena Judd writes: the group of nine pilgrims from St Laurence's preparing for their pilgrimage to Rome (28th July – 4th August) with the Diocese of East Anglia has been working hard to raise funds, and their efforts have been warmly supported by the Parish. The group includes current college students, young professionals, and even their Confirmation Catechist – making them one of the largest groups from a single parish taking part in this diocesan journey.

To support their pilgrimage, the group has organised a number of fundraising initiatives. In addition to numerous bake sales, a used book sale has been running continuously in the Parish Hall. On Palm Sunday, they also sold Easter cards that featured Scripture and focused on the Resurrection – messages not often seen in commercial Easter cards today.

The pilgrims extended their efforts beyond the Parish by hosting a stall at the Arbury Festival, engaging with the wider community and seeking further support. Recently, the Catholic Women's League of St Laurence's generously contributed £90 to the cause, for which the pilgrims are especially thankful.

The group is deeply grateful for both the ongoing prayers and encouragement they've received from the St Laurence's community and the financial contribution to the costs of the trip. In return, they look forward to holding the Parish in their own prayers and lighting candles in the many churches they will visit throughout Rome.

If you would like to support the pilgrims further, please consider making a donation directly to the Parish, specifying that it is for the Rome Pilgrims.

Features and Opinions

**HOMILY by Fr Robin – 7th Sunday of Easter
1st June 2025**

“That They May Be One: The True Face of Synodality”

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today’s readings immerse us in a beautiful but demanding vision of unity – a unity rooted in Christ and nourished by love, truth, and mission. At the same time, we are given the witness of St Stephen, the first martyr, who models for us a Church that is both Spirit-filled and faithful unto death.

In our **first reading from Acts**, we see Stephen, ‘filled with the Holy Spirit,’ gazing into heaven and seeing ‘the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God’ (Acts 7:55). He is being stoned for proclaiming the truth – and yet, even in death, he is forgiving his persecutors. This is the Church in her essence: filled with the Holy Spirit, testifying to Christ, forgiving in love, and led by grace.

In the **Gospel of John**, we hear Jesus praying not only for His apostles, but for all believers: “*that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us*” (John 17:21). This unity – not uniformity, but communion – is the heart of Christ’s mission. It is the foundation of **Synodality**, a word that means ‘walking together’.

Too often today, there is confusion about what Synodality really means. Some think it means replacing one form of authority with another – removing the parish priest or bishop from their spiritual and sacramental role, and handing over all decisions to committees or majority votes. This is not the Church’s vision. Synodality is not clericalism turned upside down.

The **Catechism of the Catholic Church** teaches that ‘the Church is both visible and spiritual, a hierarchical society and the Mystical Body of Christ’ (CCC 779). This means that there is a sacred order willed by Christ; bishops, priests, deacons, and the laity, all walking together – not in rivalry, but in **complementarity**.

St Ignatius of Antioch, writing in the early 2nd century, said: ‘Let everyone respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, the bishop as a type of the Father, and the presbyters as the council of God and the college of the Apostles. Without these, there is no Church.’ (Letter to the Trallians, 3)

Likewise, the Second Vatican Council affirms in *Lumen Gentium* that while the laity are called to participate actively in the Church’s life and mission, this is done **in communion with their pastors**, who are not mere administrators but **shepherds appointed by Christ**.

Synodality, then, is not a power struggle. It is a **spiritual process of listening, discerning, and walking forward together**, with each person – lay, religious, ordained – offering their unique gift for the good of the whole Body.

The parish priest is not the obstacle to Synodality – he is a key servant of it. As the Council of Trent taught, and as the CCC reminds us, the priest is ‘in the person of Christ the Head’ during the Eucharist (CCC 1548). The priest is not above the community but is ordained to serve it – to teach, to sanctify, and to govern, as Christ Himself did.

The laity, on the other hand, are not passive recipients. As CCC 900 says: ‘Since, like all the faithful, lay persons are entrusted by God with the apostolate by virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, they have the right and duty to work so that the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted by all people throughout the earth.’

So what does real Synodality look like in a parish? It looks like parishioners who pray, listen, and participate with charity. It looks like pastoral councils that offer wisdom and support, not opposition. It looks like priests who welcome consultation, but do not abandon their duty to lead in faith. And above all, it looks like **unity in Christ**.

As Jesus says in today’s Gospel, “I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one” (John 17:22). The glory of the Church is not in its structures, but in its **communion in love and truth**.

In the **Book of Revelation**, the Risen Lord declares, “*Behold, I am coming soon*” (Rev 22:12). Our mission is urgent. We are not called to form power blocs but to be **pilgrims of hope**, bearing witness to Christ in a divided world.

St Augustine once said: ‘In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.’ That is the heart of Synodality: not competition, but collaboration; not ideology, but identity in Christ.

Let us then walk together as a parish, as a diocese, and as a universal Church – in trust, in obedience to the Holy Spirit, and in joyful communion with one another. Let us not seek power, but grace. Let us not grasp authority, but live in charity. And let us always remember: **the Church belongs to Christ**, not to us. Amen

Francis and the Birds

Michael Allan

Francis and Francis. Pope Francis, way back in 2013, said, “Some people want to know why I wished to be called Francis. For me, Francis of Assisi is the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and protects creation.”

Saint Francis (1181–1226) and Pope Francis are still sure guides in helping us cherish and protect our beautiful earth, our one family of creation. Pope Leo, who has vowed to continue Pope Francis’ ‘precious legacy’, will undoubtedly also be such a guide.

In his beautiful *Canticle of the Sun*, Saint Francis shows his love for all creatures as his sisters and brothers, his family; not only the other animals, but also our Brother Sun and Sister Moon, Brother Wind and Sister Water, and indeed our Sister Mother Earth. For Saint Francis, they are all joined with us as one family in God.

In the Book of Genesis, God grants humankind ‘dominion’ over the other creatures. But we fell – becoming blind, arrogant, and cruel. The word dominion has roots in the Latin *Dominus*, meaning Lord or Master, also implying domination. But God is revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ as a loving servant and saviour. This is not what we expect – for God’s ways are not our ways. We want to dominate, but God, who is infinite love, only desires to serve. Jesus declares, ‘I am among you as one who serves.’ He calls us to a radical conversion of heart, to become loving servants like Him – to fully become the image and likeness of God. Our dominion is therefore to mirror God’s way of dominion, by our being the loving servants of creation, of our family.

In his Encyclical *Laudato Si’* (2015), on care for our common home, Pope Francis wrote: ‘Once we lose our humility and become enthralled with the possibility of limitless mastery over everything, we inevitably end up harming society and the environment.’ Also, he reminds us that the earth belongs to God alone, not to us. It is not our property.

Saint Francis, the man of tender humility, walking the road with his companions, to preach in the local towns, saw a large flock of birds: ‘Striking out across the field, he began to preach to the birds, who were on the ground, at which point all the birds in the trees flew down to join them, listening motionless in rapt attention to the holy man. “Dearest little sisters, you are much beloved by God your Creator, and at all times and in all places you must praise him. He has decreed that you have the freedom to fly anywhere you desire. He preserved your species safe and sound in Noah’s ark, so that you and

your offspring might survive to this day, and to this day you are beholden to him for the very air that sustains you and that you oversee on his behalf.

In addition to these blessings, you neither sow nor reap, and yet God feeds and tends you, provides you with rivers and fountains from which to drink, mountains and valleys in which to take refuge, and tall trees in which to nest. And though you know neither how to spin or to sew, nevertheless God clothes you and your children. He has even given you two and three new sets of clothing each year. Your Creator loves you very much and these many blessings demonstrate his love. So be on your guard, my dearest little sisters, against the sin of ingratitude, and at all times in your lives seek ways to praise the Lord.” (Taken from *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis*, excerpts from the life of Saint Francis, likely author Ugolino Brunforte composed at the end of the 14th century.)

God as Mother and as Father preserves, sustains, clothes, feeds, tends, and loves the birds and indeed all creation, including us. Creation, in return, praises God.

All creatures are our family, with whom we share our life. They, like us, have been embraced and illuminated by the risen Lord: ‘Christ has taken unto himself this material world and now, risen, is intimately present to each being, surrounding it with his affection and penetrating it with his light.’ (*Laudato Si’*)

Also in *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis brings in, as another witness, Saint John of the Cross (1542–1591), the Carmelite friar and mystic, and a Doctor of the Church. For John, the beauty of the world brings us intimately close to the beauty of God:

From *A Spiritual Canticle of the Soul and the Bridegroom Christ* by Saint John of the Cross

‘Mountains have heights and they are plentiful,
vast, beautiful, graceful, bright and fragrant.
These mountains are what my Beloved is to me.
Lonely valleys are quiet, pleasant, cool, shady
and flowing with fresh water;
in the variety of their groves and in
the sweet song of the birds,
they afford abundant recreation
and delight to the senses,
and in their solitude and silence,
they refresh us and give rest.
These valleys are what my Beloved is to me.’

God’s love ceaselessly flows towards us in the beauty of the earth, of our fellow creatures, our family. They nurture and heal. They can give us peace, rest, and joy – the peace a concrete desert cannot give. They also speak to us of their Creator:

‘Nothing has ever been said about God that hasn’t already been said better by the wind in the pine trees.’
Thomas Merton (1915–1968)

We, *Homo sapiens*, first emerged around 300,000 years ago (possibly longer). Modern birds, however, emerged an astonishing 160 million years ago. In this unimaginable length of time, with their long migratory flights, and powerful eyesight, how much of our beautiful earth they must have seen. They have witnessed God’s radiant presence.

‘The creatures of this world’, wrote Pope Francis in *Laudato Si’*, ‘no longer appear to us under merely natural guise because the risen One is mysteriously holding them to himself and directing them towards fullness as their end. The very flowers of the field and the birds which his human eyes contemplated and admired are now imbued with his radiant presence.’

‘Praise be to you! Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love, teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of you. Awaken our praise and thankfulness for every being that you have made.’ (*Laudato Si’*)



Giotto: *St Francis Preaching to the Birds*

Dated around 1300 AD. (Includes goldfinches, chaffinches, greenfinches, blackbirds, and others. All in pairs, in a reference to Noah’s ark, in which they were preserved.). (Credit: Photo by [Sailko](#) [Creative Commons](#) license.)

Being the Light They Seek

Karen Rogers

‘The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.’ (Isaiah 9:2)

As I type, I am aware of the fact that a week that started badly has become even darker; with the enthusiasm of Members of Parliament for back-street abortion up to birth. On Monday, the Antoniazzi amendment to the Crime and Policing Bill decriminalising abortion for women in England and Wales was approved by 379 votes to 137; by the Friday afternoon, this enthusiasm had extended itself to approve the killing of the vulnerable with the connivance of their own doctors (with the vote on the Terminally Ill Adults [End of Life] Bill by 314 to 291 votes). The context in which this takes place is that many are being driven to despair and even suicide due to isolation, homelessness and being treated as more of an object than a person. As an example, a local Cambridge man, who had been thrown out of his home by his partner of 12 years who had simply tired of him and who had been denied consistently for the best part of a year adequate housing and even medical treatment for his continual haemorrhaging, on being asked by me what he would say to a doctor who was actually listening to him at once responded, “What can you give me that would kill me in ten seconds?”

The hearts and minds of many have wandered far from the good news of the true nature of humanity, many reject the truth of the inexpressible value of each human being and, given the precepts of the Parliament Acts 1911 and 1949 and the fact that no bill has been refused Royal Assent since 1708, it would now take a miracle to stop either of these deathly measures now approved by Parliamentary majority from becoming law. I really saw this darkness a couple of weekends ago at the Heartbeat Witness which I participated in and which was organised by the Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform: <https://www.cbruk.org/heartbeat>. What struck me most overall was how closed down so many older people were; more than previously and how most now actively deny eye contact to those around them.

Recently, I’ve been listening to an inspired audio version of the full original text of the Narnia Chronicles and in stark contrast to the films, which are very loosely based on C S Lewis’ stories which have a very different ethos. I was reflecting as I listened that one of the best things any parent can do for their children currently is to share, read or re-read the Chronicles with their sons and daughters. I was reflecting on the scene at the Last

Battle with the crowds streaming towards the Gate, each individual looking at the Face and either loving and embracing that gaze or looking away and disappearing into the darkness and what I am seeing is very few people now ambivalent about their neighbours. I know so many people who are totally shut down and will only associate or even acknowledge those in their social circle and encouragingly a few who actively resist this trend and make eye contact with all comers and give the time to be present to each person they meet.

Dark indeed but I remember that it is darkest before the dawn and that the Lord has commanded us, saying, 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.' (Acts 13:47) and that we are exhorted and assured, 'Ask and you will receive' (Matthew 7:7). We need miracles but our God is the God of the miraculous – we are exhorted to pray for what we need whilst standing ready to be the Lord's hands and feet. He tells us, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' (Matthew 25:37–40) 'Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do.' (John 14:12)

And Saint Paul exhorts us, 'Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.' (1 Corinthians 15:58) 'Do not neglect the gift you have.' (1 Timothy 4:14)

It is easy to feel overwhelmed, but I remember the little lad with the generous heart who gave his lunch and, by the grace of God, it fed a crowd. We can all pray. Additionally, we each have God-given enthusiasms and talents, our own equivalents of five loaves and two fish.

Renewal doesn't happen via institutions or policies, where it happens it does so because one person after another decides to share what he or she has. I ask you to pray both for discernment and for the miracle which will be needed to prevent the full return of back-street abortions but this time funded and promoted by the State and the unthinkable innovation of doctors actually being employed to kill. Also, pray to discern how you may be called to be salt and light.

My own little candles in the dark are the book group I co-ordinate and the art group I attend. Also, I am seeing this summer if there is interest in a ladies Bible study. I dream of a group for Christian artists. What could you share which you love?

Perhaps you love chess and could commit to co-ordinating a chess club here at the Parish once a week. Perhaps you like knitting and crochet and could commit to co-ordinating a craft group once a month? Perhaps you could commit to co-ordinating another Bible study?

(Wouldn't it be great if we had several running simultaneously as many Evangelical churches do on different days of the week?) There are as many possibilities as there are people and talents. No 'experts' only brothers and sisters in Christ. We are each other's best resource and we can only love our neighbour if we spend regular time with him or her.

Many are beset by fear or even despair. As Catholics we are called to be the light they seek. We need to be each other's good reason for wanting to be alive – imagine if we had and shared that life to the full (John 10:10).

What time and talent can you dedicate to fostering all-age social interaction at the Parish and hence to building a genuinely pro-life community around our Church?

Health and her crown

Mary Gullick

When we are well, we live and don't see everything with the right vision. Have you ever seen it differently??

Have you ever looked at life through the lens of a toddler? All you do is get down on your hands and knees for 30 minutes at least and see what their world encaptures at that height.

The same goes for anyone facing limits in life with health. Before you judge the disabled, please get a perspective, a knowledge, an understanding of what daily life is for the individual – not every health condition can be boxed in, but can be assisted, supported with kindness and care. Try a task one-handed, or even dressing, without seeing what you are doing and see if you can do it. Try getting breakfast or even tea, washing or dressing at night. My question to all who read this – can you do what someone who loses a limb or is limited in mobility has to learn?

Can you live with less financially? Really?? A world crying out and in pain, conflicted, overwhelmed, even anxious about what is ahead, what is to come. Can kindness and humanity be a cure to the planet we have inherited? Can we finally take responsibility and make amends in a sustainable fashion which doesn't erode or cause further decay? Our planet, our health cry out asking all these questions – the solutions are just a heartbeat, a practical step, a solution which can break the barriers which humankind have created. What can we do to bring change into the world for a more sustainable world, a peaceful and harmonious place to be in for neighbours and wildlife alike? Let our health be the value and light up our crown universally.

The Question – ‘What is truth?’

Dr Peter Neville

The question ‘What is truth?’ asked by Pontius Pilate is one of the best known lines in the New Testament. It can appear to be a cynical remark by a Roman bureaucrat. Or did it reflect a genuine confusion on the part of a man who represented a multi-cultural empire which struggled with the concept of a monotheistic Judean society?

We only know a limited amount about Pilate, although he was plainly a real historical character, mentioned in the Gospels, and by the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus and the Roman historian Tacitus. The image which emerges in the Gospels is of a man torn by a desire to free Jesus, confronted by a baying Jewish mob which wants to have him crucified. Several times Pilate tells the Chief Priests and their supporters that he can find no fault in Jesus, and we know from St Matthew’s Gospel that his own wife Claudia (the granddaughter of the first Roman Emperor Augustus Caesar) warned him not to be involved in harming such an innocent man. Yet in the end he capitulates to Jewish demands. Why? The key may lie in St John’s Gospel when he asks the crowd if Jesus is the King of the Jews, and gets the intimidating response, ‘We have no King but Caesar’. This plainly unnerves this Governor of Judaea, but may also have linked up with Pilate’s political vulnerability. His imperial connection may have helped Pilate to secure his position, but he also belonged to the Sejanus faction in the court of Emperor Tiberius (14–37 CE). The overweening ambition of Sejanus caused him and his supporters to be purged in 31 CE, two years before the Crucifixion. Pilate would thus be anxious to display his loyalty to Tiberius.

Despite his capitulation to the crowd, Pilate continued to show his uneasiness about the verdict. When challenged by the Chief Priests because he calls Jesus ‘the King of the Jews’ Pilate replies, ‘What I have written I have written’, and subsequently allowed Joseph of Arimathea to put Our Lord’s corpse in a new tomb. This looks like the pangs of conscience, especially in the light of his wife’s warning.

We know almost nothing about Pontus Pilate after the Crucifixion. He appears to have been recalled to Rome in 36 CE as a result of brutal handling of events in Samaria. However, before he could get there, Emperor Tiberius died and Pilate subsequently disappeared into the mist of history. He remains though an ever present in popular culture, notably in Hollywood films such as *The Robe* (1953) and *King of Kings* (1961). Both films are spin-offs from novels, and thus stretch facts. *The Robe* was set in the reign of Caligula (37–41 CE) and wrongly suggested that persecution of Christians started

then. In fact, it was started by his successor Nero. Also, Pilate appeared in the outrageous *Jesus Christ Superstar* (musical first performance 1971, film 1973) as a character.

From a Roman point of view, Judaea was a hard province to govern, given Jewish objection to being ruled by Gentiles. Pilate might well have been relieved to be recalled. He like all Roman Governors preferred to rule through surrogate princes (as the British did in India), in his case the repulsive Herod Antipas on whom he unsuccessfully tried to unload responsibility for Jesus. Ultimately, just over 30 years after Jesus died, a massive Jewish revolt was brutally crushed by the Romans. The Temple was destroyed, and the tragic Jewish ‘diaspora’ began whereby the Jews were driven into historic exile from the Holy Land.

What Happened To Us On The Road (Luke 24:13–35, Homily 20th April 2025)

Fr Bob Eccles

On the first day of the week, two of the disciples of Jesus were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognising him.

Their Messiah is dead and gone, whose hope theirs had been that he would be the one to set Israel free, so these two fellows turn their backs and walk sadly away from the scene of the disaster. Having lost everything that matters, the bottom has fallen out of their world, life seems aimless today, as with so many people. How vulnerable to find themselves in that hostile situation, Jerusalem has shown its true colours, the city that kills its prophets and stones those sent against it, as the Messiah said it always would.

If they do still have one another to be of comfort, that’s all they do have. Even that could be no more than a lucky coincidence. Perhaps they bumped into one another only at the city gates and happened to find themselves walking side by side. Though didn’t the Lord himself think in twos? The Twelve were called two by two, and the first disciples were sent out on a mission two by two, perhaps with a mind to the Jewish law that says it takes two to witness to any truth.

St Thomas Aquinas commenting on the appearance of such couples in the Gospel finds another practical reason, the heart of the Gospel is the divine friendship, Christ makes of us not servants but friends, and people

are bound to see the point when it's two companions arriving on the doorstep, clearly kind friends who care for one another and are one in doctrine and in life. Where just a few, two or maybe three are gathered in his name, didn't he once promise to be there? You can't love God whom you cannot see, if you don't love your neighbour whom you can see, no prize for guessing who said that.

Our holy father St Dominic imitated this and sent his friars out into the highways two by two, as a sample or example of the demand of divine friendship. That great English Cistercian, St Aelred, says, God is friendship, and anyone who has no friends will find it difficult to know God. When two Dominicans meet after a time apart we embrace. (Well, maybe we just scowl and knock the corners of our skulls together twice). Christ calls us to his friendship, and any person who has a true friend cannot have only one. Readers, if you run away from home to join the Dominicans I promise you delightful friendships, you can't imagine!

So here is a pair of friends still, friends who find themselves together on the way. A word which also resonates in the pages of the New Testament, where 'the Way' is the expression everyone uses for the people of the Messiah who himself 'is' the Way. Of course it's also a common, basic symbol for life's journey with its ups and downs. The Church herself is a pilgrim people, and we know what pilgrims face, heat and thirst and weariness when the road is long (seven miles to Emmaus and seven is the Bible's cipher for what is full or complete or takes an age. Even in Harry Potter and the Half-blood Prince, seven is a magic number. I expect you know that!). I don't see how St Luke could have told this story without being aware of this symbolism of life's journey. I am growing old and have spent the seven ages of man on my journey and known sadness and bereavement like these two. But the Lord has never allowed me to be quite alone and friendless, he has always found me a sister or a brother to be by my side. *Quam bonum et quam jucundum*, 'how very good and pleasant it is when kindred souls live together in unity!' sang the psalmist, and that's right. (Ps 133:1)

If you are on a journey of faith you will be sure to need a companion and indeed a company of friends. You will not be alone for too long, and the Risen Lord will approach to come alongside you and walk by your side. This story promises you that. You will not at once recognise him and may indeed see only another stranger. You do not see him yet you love him, we hear in the first letter of St Peter. Two disciples had loved him dearly and were filled with joy to be told all the things in Scripture that concerned himself. They would never forget how their chill hearts were strangely warmed again as he talked to them on the road, and

explained the Scriptures to them. His word bringing them to live again, when all hope had died.

How is it we open our Bibles? Is it a lonely activity? Is it best done in company? Can anyone help? Philip turned up when the man in the chariot was puzzling over Isaiah, as we read in Acts 8. St Augustine says helpfully, we believe in the things we are still thinking about. Because faith always seeks understanding, real faith is questioning faith, intelligent faith. It just has to be part of a conversation then. We keep asking one another what it all means, if we belong to a household where faith is alive.

On this journey the one who was once their friend and could only come back as a stranger became a friend again. He wanted to say goodbye at Emmaus, no doubt he had many more people to meet, but they couldn't bear him to leave just yet. Now in the intimacy of the supper table where he took the bread in his sacred hand and blessed the Father and broke it to share, as they had seen him do so often at mealtimes, they knew him now, the dearest and the best. They got up at once and went to tell the others, missionary disciples now. In Jerusalem they joined the joyful community remade and restored by the living Lord.

This story is told in the Church to those preparing for the sacraments and this is why. Those who make journey of faith have their Emmaus insight, they are nearly home, for God makes a home for us in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is sometimes spoken of in hymns as something hidden, 'Godhead here in hiding', yet to the eyes of faith it is epiphany, it is revelation: Behold the Lamb: look and see, kneel and adore: Amen to the offer of the Body of Christ, Amen to the offer of His most precious Blood. No-one, says St Augustine, may eat this bread unless he first adores. And you too know him, a real presence, body, blood, soul and divinity, in the breaking of the bread; here is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh, by which our flesh and blood are nourished. From this table we too are sent on to tell the brothers and sisters, to be good news for them, to tell the others in our lives what happened to us on the road, and how we recognised him in the breaking of the bread.

Cardinal Points – Economy & Empathy

Ronald Haynes

'Reducing the economic gap may be impossible without also addressing the gap in empathy' – this is a helpfully challenging thought from Daniel Goleman, the American psychologist/journalist whose 1995 best-selling book *Emotional Intelligence* is available in 40 or more languages worldwide. This idea that a lack of

empathy is a bad thing helps emphasise the great role of our care for others – of our love for self with others – to help lead key decisions, concerned with understanding and addressing genuine needs and hopes across our communities, including those around economy.

By the sharpest contrast, the richest man in the world (Elon Musk) believes, in an online discussion related to immigration, that: ‘The fundamental weakness of Western civilization is empathy’. It is hard to overstate how far this opinion is from any ‘civilised’ tradition, or from any enduring civilisation, and how much it spotlights a self-centred focus from a position both over-privileged and under-representative of the community as a whole.

In reaction to these and related concerns, Scott Galloway, an active public speaker/entrepreneur and New York University Professor of Marketing, argued in an online discussion that while Musk is a ‘genius’, that does not excuse his ‘depravity’: ‘We’ve decided in America that innovation and money replaces or obviates or excuses depravity. Cutting off aid to HIV-positive mothers, deciding what veterans should get benefits, cutting off SNAP [supplemental nutrition assistance program] payments, which have shown to have a positive net return when people run out of money for food at the end of the month.’ Galloway added that: ‘the whole point of prosperity is such that you can protect people’.

While straining comprehension, there are some, who are called ‘evangelical Christians’, who write and try to persuade others that there is such a thing as ‘toxic empathy’, that somehow it is possible to care too much, and perhaps particularly to neglect or mistreat oneself when ministering to others. Given the ‘Law of Love’ and the many calls to love and unity in the Scriptures, to love God above all, to love neighbour as oneself, to rejoice and weep with those who are rejoicing and weeping, and for us all to be one – there is something about authentic love which does not diminish with sharing, but rather develops and grows. Love develops us as individuals, and also as a unifying community, aiding both growth and maturity toward the heavenly kingdom, which so many of us significantly ask of God when praying the Lord’s Prayer – ‘Your Kingdom come, Your Will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven’.

Love is of God, the Gospel of John says that ‘God is Love’. Unless we believe we can limit God, neither can we limit Love. As one philosopher put it, ‘if I write to one person “All My Love” and then write to another with the same message of “All My Love”, there is no contradiction’. Love is not a ‘zero-sum’ scenario, whereby it has a fixed or finite amount which is lessened with sharing – in fact, we so often experience how love

grows in and with our relationships, as the core of the community which it engenders and helps build.

There is some keen insight into the deep place of real care within our lives and our communities in the example of Edith Stein, the Jewish German-born philosopher who was a student along with Martin Heidegger, and one of Edmund Husserl’s teaching assistants and close intellectual confidante. Her doctoral thesis was titled *On the Problem of Empathy*. In a section on covering ‘The Significance of Empathy for the Constitution of Our Own Person’, Stein indicates how empathy helps aids self-knowledge and self-evaluation and personal growth:

We also see the significance of knowledge of foreign personality [others] for ‘knowledge of self’ ... through empathy with ‘related natures’ ... what is ‘sleeping’ in us is developed. By empathy ... we become clear on what we are not, what we are more or less than others. Thus, together with self knowledge we also have an important aid to self evaluation. Since the experience of value is basic to our own value, at the same time as new values are acquired by empathy, our own unfamiliar values become visible. When we empathically run into ranges of value closed to us, we become conscious of our own deficiency or disvalue. Every comprehension of different persons can become the basis of an understanding of value.

Stein’s work on empathy was part of what lead her to become a Catholic, and also having read the life of St Teresa of Avila, helped lead her to become a Carmelite nun. She lived with the many challenges of this love and empathy, and of those who seek to destroy it. She was executed by Nazi forces at Auschwitz, because of her Jewish heritage. She has been canonized as a martyr, with her religious name St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, and she is now one of the six patron saints of Europe.

Adam Smith, the 18th century Scottish Enlightenment philosopher and ‘father of economics’ (and for some the ‘father of capitalism’) also famously wrote *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* which begins with the famous quote:

How selfish so ever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it. (I.i.1.1)

While economic theory may include ideas about indexing happiness, and of maximising utility, we read

Smith as a founding economic theorist with interest in the nation behind the wealth, and the wellbeing of the people behind the politics. The various meanings of 'economy' reflect its origins from Middle French, from Medieval Latin, and ultimately Ancient Greek (*oikonomia*), rooted in the original meaning of 'managing a household'. We have extrapolated from prudent and sustainable household management to consider policies around trade and industry, affecting the making and use of the wealth of a nation.

What is too often missed, in the extrapolation, is the prudent household's focus on identifying needs (and wants) first, and working to find practical (and moral) means to meet those identified requirements. Nations and economic theories can go dangerously wrong when they ignore (or deliberately reject, or outright ridicule) the needs of the people of their nation, or any other nation. Instead, we are called to expect and direct those with responsibility to prepare and promote humane economic policies, ones which mandate the necessary support for the lives and needs of all the individuals and communities who, after all, are the purpose and primary reason for their jobs.

While the great thinkers noted above, did not all meet, their ideas can come together even better in us, in our time, and in our moral engagement with our communities and the Laws of Love. While emphasising how vitally important empathy is, and how morally right and necessary it is to protect others, we can acknowledge that some things are good in themselves, that we are called to stand up for others and for what is true and right, even without reward (or even facing punishment). Yet, some of our best and most famous literary expressions of the call to empathy also come with pleas for mercy, forgiveness, and the transformative good of showing compassion toward others (and oneself).

As a closing thought, we hear an excerpt of Portia's famous plea, explaining that 'The quality of mercy is not strained' in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, as she tries to convince Shylock not to demand the promised 'pound of flesh' (a special reminder in a year of jubilee, when debts were traditionally forgiven, slaves freed, and other restorative justice actions):

The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:

...

It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. ...

Thomas More – A man for all seasons

Peter Neville

Thomas More, who was canonised in 1935, has two sharply distinct images. One derives from the much-admired 1966 film *A Man For All Seasons*, based on Robert Bolt's play. The other has emerged from Hilary Mantel's much hyped novel *Wolf Hall*, subsequently made into a TV drama series. She denigrated More as 'a mere desiccated fanatic'. There is a vast gulf between the two presentations.

There were certainly aspects of More's life which might trouble modern readers, and even Catholic ones at that. He wore a hair shirt which might seem extreme, but more seriously he has come under attack because of his alleged persecution of Protestant heretics. It is true that More admitted to imprisoning them in his house in Chelsea and even to whipping them while tied to a tree in his garden.

This is rather more than a case of the novelist's dictum 'the past is a foreign country, they do things differently there.' More's religion was at the core of his being, in a way which may be difficult for the modern western world to accept. He did not deny that the Catholic Church of his day was flawed, but he could not abide those like Luther who challenged Papal authority. This, according to a 1980s comparative study of him and his great contemporary Cardinal Wolsey by Jasper Ridley, justified the title 'The Statesman and the Fanatic'. In her novel, Mantel seemed to buy into this portrait of the man by contrast with her morally dubious hero Thomas Cromwell. Using such language about More puts Mantel in the company of Ridley (he died as recently as 2004) whose books on the Tudor period are replete with references to the highly pejorative term 'Papist'.

Any serious analysis of More's life must surely reject such stereotypes. Thomas More was the author of *Utopia* in 1516, one of the most influential books in European literature. He was the friend and associate of the noted humanist scholar Erasmus of Rotterdam. Most unusually for his time he gave his daughters the same education as a male would get (something well brought out in a memorable scene between Henry VIII and Margaret More in Fred Zinnemann's beautifully crafted film). Between 1529 and 1532, he served faithfully as Henry's Lord Chancellor and was a patriot, saying at his execution in 1535 'I die the King's good servant, but God's first'. Henry was his friend, and More helped him to write the 1521 'In Defence of the Faith' which (ironically in view of what followed) was a defence of Papal authority against Luther. More was a well-known lawyer, and he used legal formula to allow him to circumvent Henry's Act of Supremacy, by saying that his silence on the issue indicated consent because that

was what English law said. This defence failed, because of flagrant perjury by Richard Rich who, as the last words of the Zinnemann film tells us, 'died in his bed'. Bolt gives More the words to insist that he was on trial because he would not accept Henry's putting aside of Catherine of Aragon in favour of Anne Boleyn.

Henry's motives are at least open to question. He disputed with More about the biblical references to marrying a brother's wife in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, but pure lust may have been the primary motive. Certainly, the pretence that a male heir was essential does not really stand up. In Henry's own lifetime, Mary of Guise, the mother of Mary Queen of Scots, was a perfectly competent ruler of Scotland. Both Henry's daughters ruled England, although both were involved in religious persecution as a result of the imbroglio created by their father. And there was undoubtedly a strong economic motive with the despoliation of the monasteries, by Henry and Cromwell. The latter did very well out of it as well as provoking the tragic and bloody Pilgrimage of Grace in 1537 (which Mantel says little about).

The most serious accusations against More suggesting that he tortured heretics have been firmly rejected by the doyen of Tudor historians, John Guy. He lived in an age of religious intolerance, but was as a leading humanist, lawyer and politician, truly a man for all seasons. Pope John Paul II made him the patron saint of political leaders. Ultimately, he gave his life for his beliefs telling his trial judges that if Rich was telling the truth he would not want 'to see God in the face'. It says a lot for the reputation of the man that even in the rival Anglican tradition he (along with Bishop John Fisher who was also martyred by Henry VIII) has been accepted as a saint.



Ss John Fisher and Thomas More, St Edmund's, Bungay

News from the School

Veronica Harvey

On Tuesday 17th June, we were delighted to welcome Bishop Peter to St Laurence Catholic Primary School. This was the first time that we had the honour of the Bishop visiting us. We had been planning and preparing and the children were more than ready.

The day began with Bishop Peter, and our Parish Priest Fr Robin, joining us for a liturgy about St Laurence. The feast day of St Laurence is actually in August so we choose another day to remember and celebrate him. A group of excellent Y5 readers told us about St Laurence and how he became a saint. When providing us with a reflection, Bishop Peter had us all singing Do, Ray, Me. There was much laughter in the room. Did you know St Laurence is the patron saint of cooks, comedians, deacons, librarians, archivists, and the poor?

Following our liturgy, during which the children sang beautifully, the Bishop had tea and biscuits with some parents and governors. Did you know that the Bishop likes extremely milky tea?

After the tea, I led Bishop Peter on a tour of the school where he got to meet our pupils in smaller groups. When in our Reception Class, the children were ecstatic to have Bishop Peter help them harvest their vegetables from their own garden. Both Bishop Peter and Fr Robin went home with a bag full of delicious produce. Did you know that Bishop Peter's favourite vegetable is an onion?

Going through KS1, the Bishop took part in a Phonics lesson and a Maths lesson. The children were fascinated to see him sit amongst them. Did you know that the Bishop didn't really like Maths when he was at school?

In LKS2, the Bishop heard the children perform some poetry and read some of their class text which happened to be one of his favourites – *The Magician's Nephew*. Did you know that the Bishop has thousands of books?

In UKS2, Bishop Peter had the chance to discuss the formation of the Bible with some of our Y6 pupils. They also talked about how we can use the Bible in our everyday lives.

Bishop Peter's visit concluded with a stop at our grotto. At St Laurence, we call this special place our 'Mary Garden'. Along with three of our Y6 Mini Vinnie members, Bishop Peter led us in prayer.

For photos of this special visit, please see page 21.

Parish Organisations and Activities



Bl. Carlo Acutis Group: Spring Activities

We have had a very fruitful time this Spring with our Bl. Carlo Acutis Group. We continued to have Adoration, an activity and pizza together during our meetings. Our March and April meetings took place during Lent. In March, we focused on what we receive from God and what we can offer Him, especially during Lent. We also prepared little Lent boxes for all our sacrifices, good deeds, and prayers.



In April, we continued the Lenten theme by visiting a local care home and praying the Stations of the Cross with its residents. This was a really special time, with many of our young people being in a care home for the very first time!



May saw us talk about Our Lady in her special month. We focused on the Rosary and created one out of glow sticks.

It turned out to be a really fun activity and everyone left with some glow sticks as a bonus!



In June, we welcomed Diana from Triumph Rosaries, who led a Rosary Workshop for our group. It was a great opportunity to continue thinking about Our Lady and to create beautiful rosaries, which will stay with us for years to come.

Apart from our usual monthly meetings, we went on our first pilgrimage as a group on 31st May – we joined the Diocesan Pilgrimage for Families led by Bishop Peter. The weather was glorious and we really enjoyed celebrating the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary with our wider Diocesan community. We will definitely be going to Walsingham together next year as well!



As the summer months begin, we are excited to welcome children who have recently received their First Holy Communion to our next meeting on 12th July. We will take a break in August and are looking forward to what the Autumn will bring, starting with our meeting on 13th September.

Children's Liturgy at St Laurence's

Leonie Isaacson

In the New Year, we introduced a Parish Attendance Register for each Children's Liturgy session as part of Catholic safeguarding regulations. This uses an online system which has been developed within the Parish and enables families to register either online or in-person.



Once a family is registered, it is a simple task to click on the name of the person attending (child or adult) to record their attendance. While initially being trialled with the Children's Liturgy groups, it has great potential for use across many other Parish activities and is already being used by the Carlos Acutis young children's group. Registering over 30 children and adults and conducting a meaningful Children's Liturgy within the time allowed is not an easy task, but the volunteers are doing their best! Many thanks to Jhon Nuqui and his team of developers for providing such a great system, and constantly improving it as we gain experience.



It is a great blessing that we have so many young children at Mass attending the Children's Liturgy. We can always do with more volunteers to help out. Sessions are run by two volunteers/session on a rota basis, at either 9.30am or 11am Mass, whichever is your

preferred Mass. Guidance and training is provided as well as partnering with a more experienced volunteer. It really is a rewarding experience – come along and observe a session and see for yourself!

If you would be interested in learning more about helping with the Children's Liturgy, please contact: jim.infield1@gmail.com or nonie.isaacson@gmail.com

First Holy Communion

Paula Hawkins

The children have now come to the end of their preparation and have made their First Holy Communion. All the children and their families came to Church for this wonderful celebration over two weekends. Some of you were witnesses to this special occasion.



The children participated in the Mass by reading the readings or bidding prayers, taking the offertory, or helping to hand out the collection baskets.



Confirmation update

Helena Judd

The Confirmation group at St Laurence's recently took part in the Ignite Festival, joining over 300 young people from across the Diocese for a weekend of faith, fellowship, and celebration. Held in Bury St Edmunds, the festival featured Mass with Bishop Peter, opportunities for Confession and Adoration, as well as plenty of time to connect with other young Catholics. The group is especially grateful to the Parish for its generous support in helping fund the coach transport to the event.



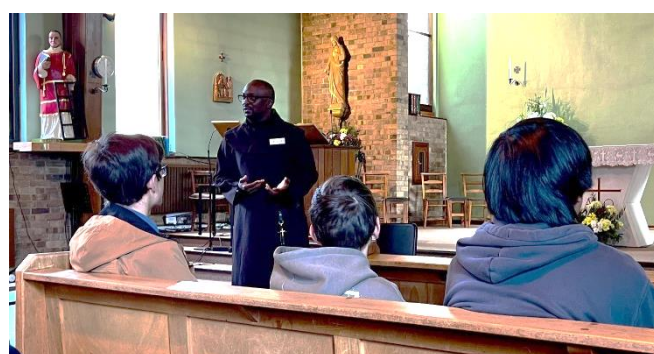
The festival concluded with a pilgrimage to Walsingham, where the youth joined the wider Diocese in walking the Holy Mile and participating in Mass at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham – an especially memorable experience for many of the candidates who were visiting Walsingham for the first time. A heartfelt thank you goes to the dedicated catechists – May, Jason, Gail, and Helena – for their continued support and guidance throughout the year. Special thanks also to the four Rome pilgrims who volunteered in various roles during the festival, including Alaika, who helped in the kitchen.



Youth Day of Prayer

Helena Judd

More recently, St Laurence's hosted a Youth Day of Prayer, welcoming young people from both St Laurence and OLEM parishes. The day was led by Fr Luke Dominic OCD, a Carmelite friar from Oxford and Programme Director for the Spiritual Direction Formation Programme (SDFP). Fr Luke, who holds advanced degrees in Theology and Christian Spirituality, is also Assistant Director of the Centre for Applied Carmelite Spirituality (CACS) and a member of the Carmelite community at Boars Hill. His guidance throughout the day offered the group deep insights into building a familiar and friendly relationship with God.



The day included engaging games, thoughtful talks, and creative reflections on how to spend time in Adoration. Fr Luke also shared St Teresa of Avila's beautiful metaphor of prayer as watering a garden, which resonated deeply with many. The group was then led in a time of Adoration and Confession. A special thank you goes to Paolo for providing contemplative music during Adoration, and to Fr Bob Eccles from Blackfriars for hearing confessions alongside Fr Luke. The day concluded with Fr Luke celebrating the 6pm Vigil Mass, keeping the focus on youth and prayer.

A heartfelt thank you to the Parish for its financial support in making this event possible. This day was a wonderful example of St Laurence's leading the way in inter-parish youth ministry, with the event open to all in the deanery and including young people from OLEM, St Vincent's in Fen Ditton, and our own Parish community. Many of the Rome pilgrims also participated, both as attendees and volunteers. In total, 40 young people joined the day – an encouraging sign of growing youth engagement in the deanery.

Pax Christi

Arn Dekker



In this country, Pax Christi, England and Wales is the peace organisation within the Catholic Church; Scotland has its own Pax Christi group.

Started just after the Second World War in France, Pax Christi International is, this year, celebrating its 80th anniversary. There have been and will be gatherings in Rome and Florence. We are an ecumenical organisation that helps to inspire and support many people in the wider peace movement. We have an education officer who goes into schools and colleges to inform pupils that non-violent settlement of disagreements is possible, to talk about knife-crime, to tell the story of the beatified Austrian Franz Jaegerstetter and Aisling Griffin and, with support of the Christian Peace Education Fund, he has been invited again to speak to students at St Bede's Secondary School. Other schools and colleges in our region are considered.

This year, Pax Christi is helping to organise the Justice and Peace Network's annual conference in Derbyshire. We are particularly keen not to be totally focused on London. Our yearly Ash Wednesday witness at the door of the Ministry of Defence in London is well-established but similar witness is now given by groups in Liverpool and Leeds.



From 13th April, this year, for two weeks, the Lakenheath Alliance for Peace organised a peace vigil with participation of Pax Christi.

On 16th April, the political and protest choirs' day, groups of singers from all over Britain took part. Raised Voices (London), Oxford Sea Green Singers, Lefty Men Sing (Cambridge), Didcot Red Kites, Sheffield Creative Action for Peace, the Cambridge Climate Choir and others all raised their voices.

On 23rd April, Faith Day, our CEO, Andrew Jackson, read extracts from the late Pope Francis' statements on nuclear weapons and lead a silent reflection. While noisy jet fighters took off and landed, the gathered crowd thought and prayed about the possibility of East Anglia once again becoming a target area for attacks.

There were peace prayers from the Iona Community and readings from the Qu'ran. Anglican Bishop David Walker, Christian CND, The Anglican Peace Fellowship, The Quakers, The London Catholic Worker community and Fr Martin Newell amongst others, were all there to support the vigil.

Banners on the fence around the base drew the attention of passing traffic on the A1065 with many drivers showing their support.

Finally, this is an advance notice that Pax Christi (England & Wales) is planning a study day on Non-Violence at St Laurence's Church on **Saturday 16th August, from 2 to 5pm**. The day is planned to start with a prayer led by Fr Robin. Mrs Fausta Valentine, from the London head office, will guide us with an interactive presentation on Non-Violence. We hope to finish with an exercise for all participants writing their own few lines of prose, poetry or prayer.

Note from the St Vincent de Paul Society

Ciaran Ward

Dear Parishioners,

We have now completed three of our scheduled events for the year – we shared, laughed, broke bread and dined at our annual Senior Parishioners' Lunch. We joined some parishioners at the lovely Coton Garden Centre for tea and cake, and we attended a 'meet & greet' event with the Mini Vini's at St Laurence's Primary School – what a Spring and Summer so far!

We were joined by our very own cherished parishioners, and we would like to send our thanks and gratitude to all involved! We especially would like to thank Mrs Veronica Harvey and the children of St Laurence's

Primary School for allowing us to join them for a chat, some tea and biscuits, listening to the children sing and sharing our activities in an exchange of presentations – it was well organised, and we really enjoyed the day!



Every year we complete an annual return that is filed with our national head office and reports our combined effort of the Parish Conference. In humility, we tentatively share that the total hours devoted to SVP activities was 2,608 hours:

- 399 hours at SVP meetings
- 1741 hours visiting people and on telephone calls
- 468 hours on other material or practical assistance and activities

Each meeting we pray, and our prayer reminds us never to claim that our work springs from ourselves alone! Indeed, praise the Holy Spirit first and the works of the Spirit dwelling in the Beneficiaries whom we love, in the parishioners whom we cherish and in the Members whom the Spirit has called! But as President, I feel it my duty to thank the members, our brothers and sisters, who make it all happen!

Upcoming Events

Every year the SVP hold the National Pilgrimage of the Sick at Walsingham and this year is no different – this article might be in print on the date of this event as it is scheduled for 6th July – and a bus will be leaving St Laurence's Church from 9.30am.

New members

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

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

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

Signing off

God Bless
The SVP Members

Good news – Bad news

Kay Dodsworth

'The good news is that God loves you. The bad news is that he loves everyone else as well!'

This is quoted from 'Listening Together', a collection of Fr Timothy Radcliffe's retreats and meditations given to the members of the Synod in Rome before they embarked on their conversations in the Spirit.

When you read this, we will have just had another conversation in the Spirit. From a personal perspective, taking part in the previous conversations has given me greater confidence in listening and talking to people in our Parish family about things that matter to us. I think I have also been enriched by the process, because just listening rather than chipping in or preparing a response has enabled me to really hear what people are saying and more fully understand and appreciate their view or experience. The moments of silence are so helpful in letting what is heard settle and be appreciated and understood. At the end of the conversations, I have been left with a sense of warmth, of how individually gifted we all are, how we complement each other and how God speaks to us all completely individually as well as speaking to us, and being with us, as a Eucharistic community.

The Parish has been in a period of transition and development which is always challenging as it is one of the places we find 'home'. It is also a time of

opportunity for growth, and I keep thinking of the Acts of the Apostles and how it shows us the fruitfulness of complete trust in God to lead our community.

To quote Fr Timothy Radcliffe again,

‘If we open our hearts to each other, wonderful things will happen.’

So, if you were not able, or reluctant, to come to previous Conversations in the Spirit, you will be very welcome to come to the next ones. In case it is of interest, the process is summarised below:

- Brief reading from the Scriptures and opening prayer
- In groups of about 6–8, each person responds in turn to one or more of three statements given out, while others listen. A moment of silence is held between each response, there is no compulsion to speak.
- After the first round, each person has the opportunity to say if something has struck them, encouraged or disturbed them in anything they have heard.
- The third round of listening involves noting any agreements or areas that need further resolution or exploration and noting any appropriate action points.

Parish Safeguarding Update

Jim and Mary Jane O’Sullivan Parish Safeguarding Representatives

What do we mean by “Safeguarding”

Safeguarding essentially means protecting children and vulnerable adults from harm. In our Parish community it means having procedures in place to ensure that the children and vulnerable adults we work with are safe when they participate in Parish activities. It also means ensuring that volunteers are aware of the signs of abuse and neglect (including those that have occurred outside the Parish) and know how to respond.

What do Parish Safeguarding Representatives do?

We co-ordinate all the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for volunteers who need them. Anyone volunteering with children or vulnerable adults on behalf of the Parish where they may end up being in 1:1 unsupervised contact needs to have a DBS check

registered with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. As we write this, we have 69 adults volunteering in the Parish who have current DBS checks and another six whose checks are being processed.

The Diocesan policy is that checks should be updated every 3 years. We are now approaching 3 years of being Parish Safeguarding Representatives so later this summer we shall start approaching people who had their DBS checks done in 2022 to get them updated. For those who signed up to the DBS update service, this should be a relatively straightforward process (signing a consent form and declaration form and sending it to the Diocesan Safeguarding Administrator who will check the national DBS system). For others we shall need to meet to re-do their ID check.

We routinely check with Fr Robin and Parish groups to update our list of who needs a DBS check. Examples of groups whose volunteers need a DBS check include:

- St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP),
- Children’s Liturgy, First Holy Communion Catechists, Altar Server Trainers, Youth Choir and Youth Groups,
- Eucharist Ministers who take Communion to people in their homes on behalf of the Parish,
- People who provide transport to Mass on behalf of the Parish,
- Adults going on the Rome pilgrimage this July.

If you think that you might need a DBS check for any volunteer work you do in the Parish and haven’t already been contacted by us, please get in touch.

We also have a responsibility for promoting safe practices in the Parish. Last year, when we attended the annual Diocesan Safeguarding Day, we were given a presentation on the national Catholic Standards Safeguarding Agency (CSSA) guidance ‘Creating a Safer Environment’ for children’s activities. Following this we met with our then Parish priest Fr Simon to discuss what additional measures might need to be put into place in our Parish. We then met with leaders of Parish children and youth groups to discuss a way forward. One outcome was the development of the QR code that you see on the bulletin each week for children’s attendance at each Children’s Liturgy session each week to be recorded. We are extremely grateful to the parents and tech group members who put a significant amount of time and energy into developing this.

We are a point of contact for questions or concerns about safeguarding practices in the Parish. We always encourage people to discuss any concerns they have, even if they may seem trivial. Making the Parish a safe place for everyone relies on everyone looking out for

each other and speaking up if there's something that doesn't feel right. The best person to report Safeguarding concerns to is our Diocesan Safeguarding Co-ordinator (Liam Sainsbury), but we know from experience that some people find it daunting to do this. We would rather someone spoke to us than felt unable to say anything, even if our advice ends up being to support them to contact Liam.

What don't Parish Safeguarding Representatives do?

We don't have overall responsibility for safeguarding in the Parish. That responsibility lies with Fr Robin, our Parish priest. However, we are here to work with him and support him with that responsibility.

We do not investigate safeguarding concerns ourselves. If anyone has a safeguarding concern, that would need to be investigated at arm's length from the Parish. Liam Sainsbury is the person to do this. Liam came into post earlier this year. His contact details are on posters in the Narthex and Porch, on the safeguarding page of the Parish website and at the bottom of this article. Whereas we are volunteers, Liam is a Safeguarding professional employed by the Diocese.

We don't tell people working with children and vulnerable adults how to run their activities. We will talk to them about what the national guidance is and what standards they need to be meeting, but ultimately those running the activities will know best how to meet the standards.

We don't "do Safeguarding for the Parish". One of the main themes of Safeguarding is that it is 'everybody's business'. We have been heartened when parishioners have talked to us about things that they don't feel comfortable with. Safeguarding is a standing item on Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) meetings and Jim has joined the PPC as a Safeguarding Representative to help ensure that Safeguarding matters continue to be considered and talked about in wider Parish discussions.

And finally.....

Just a reminder that if you want to submit a photo of a children's activity for publication on the Parish website, Facebook page or in *The Pilgrim*, you'll need to have obtained the permission of the children's parents or guardians. It would be **helpful if you could confirm that you've obtained this permission when you submit any photo.**

We want to get the balance between protecting our children and celebrating the joyful contribution they make to Parish life.

Contact details:

Jim and Mary Jane O'Sullivan:

safeguarding@saintlaurence.org.uk

Liam Sainsbury:

safeguarding.coordinator@rcdea.org.uk

Office telephone: (01508) 492202

Mobile telephone: 07931 952626

The Feast of St Francis Caracciolo

Nora Darby



Wednesday 4th June was the feast of St Francis Caracciolo, a very significant day for Fr Robin and Fr Alex as he is their Patron Saint, a founding member of the Adorno Fathers in the 16th century.

This meant we should all join with them in celebrating this special day. We had a Mass at 6pm co-celebrated with Fr Robin, Fr Alex and a friend and co-Adorno, Fr Matthew. Fr Robin told us about their saint and the Adorno Fathers in his homily. He then reminded us there was to be a Bring and Share PARTY in the Parish Room. As is usual with a St Laurence's party, there were masses of food and drink to be enjoyed by all present. It was great to see a large turnout for our, now not so new, priests and I have fond memories of a very happy Fr Robin dashing round between the tables with a bottle in each hand topping up the glasses. Fr Alex wandered round chatting and being chatted to, smiling happily throughout the evening.



There was a large picture of St Francis Caracciolo on display throughout the party. I wonder what he thought of it all, I am sure he approved!!!

Calling for debt justice in the Jubilee Year

Jane Crone – CAFOD

Whilst we still mourn Pope Francis and pray for our new Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, we continue to celebrate the Jubilee Year Pilgrims of Hope.

In his letter for the Jubilee *Spes non confundit*, Pope Francis invited us all to be ‘tangible signs of hope for those of our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind.’ His model was the biblical Jubilee of the book of Leviticus. Taking place every fifty years, the Jubilee marked a great societal reset – land was returned to its original owners, debts were cancelled, relationships restored, and creation renewed (see Leviticus 25).

We celebrate this Jubilee Year in a world where injustice, conflict and abuse of creation are sadly still prevalent. Just as the biblical Jubilee sought to transform economic and community life to reflect the values of God’s Kingdom, so we too are called to advocate for change today.



Central to this is the call for debt justice. In this Jubilee Year of Hope, Pope Francis called for richer countries to cancel the immense debt burdens of poorer nations saying, ‘More than a question of generosity, this is a matter of justice.’

CAFOD is part of a worldwide Caritas campaign calling for action on the global debt crisis. A petition is being signed in 160 countries calling on world leaders to take urgent steps in this Jubilee Year. You can sign it at cafod.org.uk/debtpetition.

Kenya is spending five times more on repaying foreign debts than it spends on hospitals and schools. Father Charlie Chilufya, a priest based in the country, explains the impact this is having on the Kenyan people, ‘Families are foregoing medical care and children are losing access to quality education’.

Pope Francis spoke about the debt crisis and the need for action in the Jubilee Year many times in the last year of his life.

Find out more by scanning this



QR code to visit the CAFOD website.

Celebrate the Season of Creation as Pilgrims of Hope with CAFOD

Presentation by Jo Kitterick, The process of post-Vatican II reordering was completed by Fr Simon Blakesley (parish priest from 1995 to 2003), with a new altar with platform and surrounding steps installed CAFOD's Director of Fundraising and Participation

At Our Lady of Lourdes Church 135 High St, Sawston, Cambridge CB22 3HJ

On Saturday 6 September 2025, coffee from 10.30am, talk and conversation from 11 am to 12.30

All welcome, contact Jane Crone jcrone@cafod.org



Personal Stories and Experiences

Mum's update – Agnes Murimi

Joanne Kerigun

Dear St Laurence's Parishioners



Last month, it was confirmed for the third time that Mum's throat cancer has been totally cured. She has been on a drip feed for the last 18 months, as a result of her throat completely sealing from the inside following the

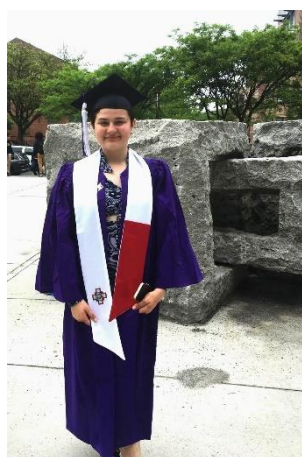
radiotherapy. However, the drip was removed last week and she is now able to drink and eat very small amounts very slowly.

Can I, as always thank you, for your continued help and support and prayers during this very challenging time.

Celebrating academic achievements

Fortune Hutson with Nora Darby

Four years ago, I was approached by friend and fellow parishioner, Fortune Hutson, who asked me if we could put a photo of her granddaughter Isabella in *The Pilgrim* magazine. She had been accepted by New York University to study Arts. This we did.



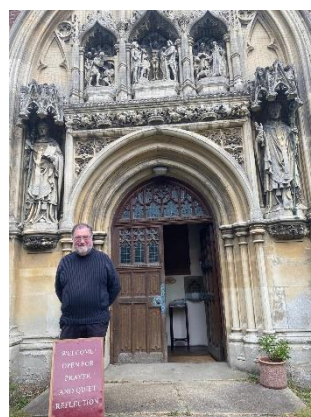
A few weeks ago, Fortune came with another photo of Isabella, who has now finished her studies. She says to her grandmother, I did a Double Major in Social and Cultural Analysis and Cinema Studies.

Fortune told me, it was 'so emotional week' but rewarding after her four years of studying.

I can only say congratulations and well done Isabella, and how pleased we are to publish the good news in *The Pilgrim* magazine.

A Visit to Bungay and Beccles

Nora Darby



On Saturday 24th May Sarah, Nora and Bess (Sarah's dog) set off to meet Fr Simon and Bentley in Bungay, one of his newish parishes, the others being Beccles and Harleston. They were waiting to greet us on arrival and of course it was the dogs who were first so happy to meet again, lots of tail wagging, lots of

fuss. Fr Simon had booked a table at the pub over the road from the church – reminded me of Ireland, church and bar always opposite from one another! Lovely lunch, good food and very friendly Suffolk folk.



St Edmund's Church, Bungay
(above and right)

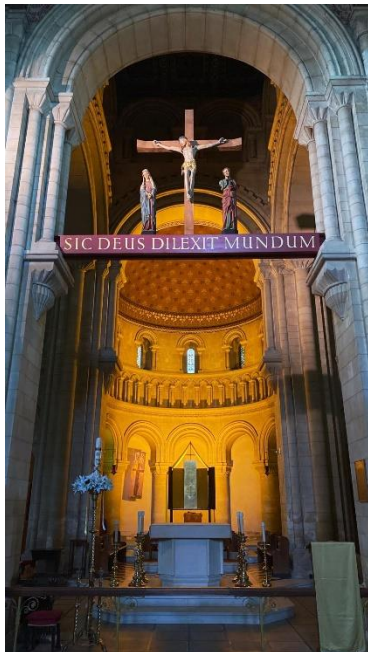
After a wander down the High Street we went back to see around the church, **St Edmund's**. It was, from being built in 1889–1901 until fairly recently, a Benedictine Monastery served by the monks of Downside Abbey. The church and presbytery are huge. The latter is much too big for one parish priest, Fr Simon lives in one corner. The interior of the church is very ornate late Victorian but the outstanding feature is the very elaborate, very beautiful Baptistry, entered through a locked iron gate.



The Baptistry in St Edmund's Church

After the dogs had been for a wander round the garden, we went on to Beccles where we had a nice surprise. Waiting to meet us was Fr Sam Randall. He is back from looking after Radio Maria in Australia and is looking after the parishes while Fr Simon takes a semi-sabbatical this summer.

After a chat, Fr Simon took Sarah and I into **St Benet's Minster** and Oh! What a difference. Although built around the same time, again for the Benedictines, we went into a light airy space. St Benet's was built in the



St Benet's Minster, Beccles

Anglo-Norman style of the 12th Century, so different to the dark Victorian Gothic of St Edmunds. Finally, lest we forget, he had told us of his time there as parish priest (1995–2003), and about the building of the Altar, which involved installing a new altar with platform and surrounding steps, which when finished completed the post-Vatican II reordering.

Fr Simon was a great host and tour guide and of course we enjoyed being with him and with Bentley once again. It is very different to St Laurence's and to Cambridge but Sarah and I plus Bess were pleased and happy to be with them.

The return journey was uneventful until, stationary at traffic lights, a Red Kite swooped in front of the car to pick up some roadkill; he/she took off again before the lights changed!

A Decluttering Adventure

Mary Gullick

Ever since Easter I have been on a decluttering adventure to clear up my world and to lighten the load on these shoulders which have seen a lot happen in 45 years of life, including living through a pandemic which was not so long ago.

So, with some inspiration in hand and a spring in my step and the rollator (let's be fair, my rollator is now my trusted friend!), I watched a video from YouTube to get my motivation and off I went. As I dived into decluttering, I rediscovered posts of my late mother, who also wrote for St Laurence's *The Pilgrim*, her voice, her words ever clear knowing she would love the fact that her daughter now is making a splash in writing herself.

The decluttering journey is still ongoing and as part of that process I asked St Laurence's SVP if it was possible to help me with some tasks which I know I am limited with due to health, and the transformation is just a sight to behold – when I go out to the bins I genuinely hold my breath and take it all in knowing how long it has taken to get it there in the first place and the same with the back garden. The Parish has amazing people who help when help is needed. St Laurence's is the Parish family I call on because I know I am never excluded or left behind and for a long period of time I have felt like a reject, an embarrassment, someone to scapegoat, the Mary Magdalene of a group.

In decluttering the home, I also get to declutter out of date philosophies and belief systems that are not true, painful beliefs which have caused a lot of harm and broken-down communication to occur. Like Mary Magdalene, I hope to heal and find my own way because I know I can't do this life alone, I never could. I am not perfect, and I have never said I am. There are plenty of misconceptions out there about the lady with a rollator who recently found out another misconception

from a child living in my area – apparently the reason I have a rollator is because I am overweight. I laughed when I got in the house because the reality is arthritis has taken over my life rather than me stuffing my face, but children hear from adults and take in so much. Even when, as adults, we assume they don't hear what we are saying they are taking it all in like sponges – who would have thought I once was so young and sponge like, I now reflect.

As summer arrives and we embrace its qualities of warmth, generosity, stability, expansion, maybe we can also have compassion and empathy for the world as it deals with wars, conflict, and inhumanity. Everything we in Cambridge see as a luxury others view differently, and I say that knowing different is not a bad thing. I live on a spectrum called autism and the diagnosis just requires kindness at its heart. I wish everyone a healthy and happy summer ahead. Be safe and well.



BEFORE



.... and AFTER

Photos from the Bishop's visit to St Laurence School



Poetry Corner

My Psalm

By Mary Black, resident at a care home in Cambridge.

In his *Psalms for the City*, John Paul Flintoff finishes by saying 'write your own Psalm of Joy and Thanksgiving'.

This is my Psalm of Joy and Thanksgiving.

For the gift of life and faith,
For my parents who gave me the faith,
For my family who have been a source of joy and love,
For the homes that I have had and the sense of security and safety that has blessed me these past few months.

This is my psalm.



Sunshine

Teresa Brett

The sun is here.
Summer is near.
But where are the rains?
We need to take pains
To bring rain near us.
It needs little fuss.

Water is Life, Jesus said.
He asked for a drink just before he was dead.
All we must do is bear that in mind.
Be kind to the earth. Soon you'll find
Plant-based washing-up liquid is a prayer after meals
As plants respond.

Wee creeping covers like moss,
Frail pale bell shapes at a loss
How to bloom take falling drops
Like drips of salvation.
Left-overs make a good feed
When poured on a scavenging seed.

Plant bushes to border the road.
They soak up car-filth, then explode
Into colour – white, red and gold.
God takes hold
If we let Him. Roses are bold
In an arch of petalled thanksgiving.

Pentecost in the Garden

Philippa Johnson

Here, hovering over each head bowed in prayer,
a flame, living—flickering to our eyes:
hibiscus purple, dawn blue, fuchsia red, gold.

That one person I can't like
has the same tongue of fire crowning them too:
a ribbon of music, diadem of forgiveness.

Glance up at Evening Prayer—witness
a sea of holy fire, uncaring of age or weariness,
lighting the darkness, stars & nebulae & novae.

This gift graced our sisters & brothers in long procession
before us, centuries of souls, & nurture us to be
a vineyard planted, trailing leaves & sweetness.

Whispers of inspiration, of intercession, an unburdening:
feel Christ the Gardener pass us, tend to us,
& turn to Him like sunflowers, like daisies opening.

In this one Holy Spirit, each a grain in God's great field;
a lily, an elm, lilac; a bluetit, eagle, sparrow, kite;
beetle or moth, stickleback or squid, mountain or stream.

The world would be cooler without your flame, dear one;
poorer without your worm, without your blackbird singing:
open your petals, your beak, & bless Him.



The deadline for the next edition is **24 October for publication on 22/23 November**

Wondering where to send your article, photos or drawings? Our email address is below and you will also find it every week on the front page of the Parish newsletter. Thank you to all who have contributed to this edition. **We welcome interesting and original material for all sections in the forthcoming edition. Anything you send should be your own work in your own words and a maximum of 2,000 words.**

The production team:

Editors: Nora Darby, Sarah Sykes;

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

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

The Pilgrim

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

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

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

Confirmation with the Bishop	Monday 15th Sept time TBC
Other events	
St Laurence Feast Day	<i>Save the date</i>
Pax Christi study day (see page 14 for more info)	Saturday 16 August 2-5pm
Celebrate the Season of Creation as Pilgrims of Hope with CAFOD Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Sawston	Saturday 6 September 10.30am- 12.30pm
Regular meetings	
Saturday morning Coffee Hub Parish room	10am-12pm (after 9:30am Mass)
Sunday morning coffee	After 11am Mass
Soulfood	Tues 8pm
The Carlo Acutis Youth Group (for children who have made their First Holy Communion, but not yet been confirmed)	2nd Saturday of the month 3.30-5.30pm
First Friday celebration	7pm-9pm
First Saturday Devotions	8.15-9.30am
Ablaze	First Sunday of the month (except in August)
Mass in Italian	Last Sunday of month



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

ST LAURENCE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Email: office@saintlaurence.org.uk

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

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robinjosephcrm@rcdea.org.uk

Assistant Priest:

Fr Alex Vadasseril CRM

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Deacon:

Rev. Dr Geoffrey Cook

01223 351650

Parish Administrator:

Emanuela Di Pietro

01223 987091

office@saintlaurence.org.uk

Treasurers:

Domenico Cirillo

Una Mannu

treasurer@saintlaurence.org.uk

Safeguarding:

Mary Jane & Jim O'Sullivan

safeguarding@saintlaurence.org.uk

Service Times

Saturday 9.30am

6:00pm Vigil Mass (sung)

Sunday 8.00am

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

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

Mon 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

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