

# The Pilgrim

St Laurence's Parish Magazine, Advent Edition 2016



**Alive in Faith**

*Building a Sure Foundation for the Mission of Our Diocese*



Children's Liturgy celebration of All Saints Day



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## Some Regular Events

**The Parish Forum** is where **ALL** parishioners can come together to discuss and debate Parish matters, and decide when and where things need to be done. The Agenda is planned in advance and the meeting is led by the chairman and Parish Priest. It meets every 3 months.

To go on the list to get the agenda in advance and the full minutes after the meeting, email [forum@saintlaurence.org.com](mailto:forum@saintlaurence.org.com)

*You can raise a topic at the meeting but it helps if you send a short note about 10 days before the next meeting, again, to [forum@saintlaurence.org.com](mailto:forum@saintlaurence.org.com), which can then be circulated.*

### The Pilgrim by Email

Away for the week-end? All copies taken? Don't miss the Pilgrim on publication day! You can receive a pdf version by email. Send a request to [pilgrim@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:pilgrim@saintlaurence.org.uk)

**Extra Pilgrim copies:** Do you know anyone who has difficulty coming to church but would like to receive the Pilgrim? Please feel free to take an extra copy.

### Pilgrim on the Web

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

### ABLAZE

The St Laurence Youth Mass is known as Ablaze. The Mass is designed to encourage our youth to build their confidence in running the Mass for the benefit of us all. It is held approximately once a month, is vibrant and fun. We encourage young readers, Eucharistic Ministers, budding musicians of all ages and 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.

The next Ablaze Mass will be on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 5pm.

#### Parish Life – Update/Corrections

Priests: Fr Bob Tel. 01223 741265  
Bidding Prayers: Contact: James Dore  
Human Rights – no longer active

## Upcoming Parish Events

Mass for pre-school children	8 Dec 12.15pm
Carols by candlelight	18 Dec 4pm
Penitential Service	21 Dec 7.30pm
<b>Christmas Week Masses</b>	
Christmas Eve - Children's Mass	5.00pm
Midnight Mass, with carols before Christmas Day:	11.30pm 9.00am 11.00am
ABLAZE Youth Mass	4 Dec, 8 Jan, 12 Feb 5pm
Advent Home Masses	28 Nov 5 Dec 12 Dec 19 Dec
Holy Hour	Every Weds 6-7.00pm
Bible Study	Every Weds 7.30 – 8pm
Soulfood Prayer Group 1 <sup>st</sup> / 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tues: St Laurences 2 <sup>nd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> Tues: OLEM Parish Hall	Every Tuesday 8pm
Next Parish Forum	19 Jan



## What's New?

### Chatting to our Deacon!

Nora Darby



I am sure many parishioners wonder about the man holding the Book of the Gospels aloft, leading Fr. Pat or Fr. Bob up the aisle at the start of Mass? Yes, they know he is the deacon, but know very little about him?

He is the Rev. Dr Geoffrey

Cook, an academic at Cambridge University. He was ordained as the first permanent deacon in the new Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia in 1978.

We started by discussing his background, he told me like Fr. Pat he is from Ipswich. He is a convert, having been an Anglican until he was received into the Catholic Church at Blackfriars by the Dominican Fr. Sebastian Bullough OP.

In 1962 he married Pat - 54 yrs. ago, he reminded me. We know her as our Parish Secretary. They worshipped at Blackfriars until coming to St. Laurence's in 1966. They have two daughters - one who lives in Cambridge, one in Connecticut, USA. Both went to St Laurence's school and on to St Mary's, as did their granddaughters.

Geoff's academic career started when he read Chemistry at Nottingham University. He came to Cambridge in 1959 to undertake his Doctoral research in the Department of the Regius Professor of Physic. From 1963 - 1965, he and Pat were in Los Angeles. Geoff was a Research Associate at the University of Southern California Medical School and Pat worked as a medical secretary at the Orthopaedic Hospital. On his return to Cambridge he became a member of the MRC external scientific staff, working at the Strangeways Research Laboratory, before transferring his MRC appointment to the Department of Pharmacology, where the University also granted him an Associate Lectureship. In 1977 he and the family spent a year in Canada, where Geoff was a Canadian Commonwealth Research Fellow at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. Returning to Cambridge, in 1986 he transferred to the Dept. of Anatomy now part of the Dept. of Physiology, Development & Neuroscience, where he still works. He is an Affiliated Lecturer undertaking research in developmental neurobiology.

As deacon his ministry is Diocesan and Parish, the former playing the major part. As Chairman of the Diocesan Commission for Dialogue and Unity he

represents the Church and the Diocese at national level. Geoff is involved in so many aspects of diocesan life it is difficult to single out a few for this article. Among other things he also represents the Diocese on the Forum of Churches together in England - the national inter-church body. At County level he is involved with many things including the Cambridgeshire Ecumenical Council. This body is responsible for nurturing and sponsoring Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEP'S). Geoff became Chairman of Shared Churches (Ely) Ltd in 2003 and he states, "I was honoured to be involved with the commissioning and the opening of the Church Centre in Cambourne."

To our deacon his Parish Ministry is very important! He said, "I greatly value being a member of a lively growing parish with a wonderful diversity of parishioners." At Mass, as deacon, he assists the celebrant, proclaims the Gospel, leads the Bidding Prayers and on occasions preaches. He invites us to exchange the Sign of Peace and at the end of Mass says the dismissal prayer. Over the years Geoff has assisted at many marriages and baptisms and he says "I have a sneaking feeling that some infants I baptised could be reading this piece. It has been a privilege to be part of their journey."

Do your academic and ministerial duties ever conflict?

"No, definitely not!" was the answer. He explained that he is a member of the Society of Ordained Scientists, of which he was the first Catholic to be admitted!

You have to travel for both your diocesan and academic work, so when you can relax - what do you enjoy doing?

He replied, "Being with my family. This Christmas we will all be in Cambridge and next summer we will all be together in Mexico for a holiday."

What are your feelings on Pope Francis?

"I think he is a wonderful man doing so much for the Church. I would love to meet him!"

Finally - Is there anything you would like to say?

"Yes! Thanks to everyone in the Parish for their support over the years."

I would like to thank Deacon Geoff for talking to me. I have only covered a fraction of this amazing man's life and history. There is so much more, I could have talked for hours and we could have an edition of Pilgrim devoted just to him!!

## A new CAFOD initiative for St Laurence's in the New Year – 28/29 January 2017

Mary Watkins (Edited by Nora Darby)

### Connect 2 with Peru!

What is *Connect2*? It is our chance to take a journey with ordinary people leading extraordinary lives, by fundraising as a Parish community. The money we raise will support our work in our partner community and in other communities like theirs throughout their country. You really can help transform lives.

### What is the idea?

In our parish, we have chosen *Connect 2 with Peru*. Over the next three years, local people will share their hopes, dreams, struggles and challenges with us through regular updates. In return, we support the community by praying, raising money and sharing news from our parish through photographs, cards and messages of solidarity.

### How will it work in our Parish?

Every family in the parish will be asked to donate £1 every month at a retiring collection at each Mass- the "*Pounds for Peru*". This will form the core of our fundraising effort and we ask for your support for this. In addition each parish group is invited to consider how they might additionally support this project. Some examples might be:

- committing to a fundraising event so many times a year or joining together with other parish groups to support one;
- organising a prayer event in Lent or Advent;
- offering to write and send pictures to their opposite numbers in Peru - for example children's liturgy might send Easter and Christmas greetings to the children's project there.

### When do we start?

We will launch the project in the New Year on the weekend of 28/29th January. We will have speakers at all Masses from CAFOD who have visited and know the projects and the people there. They will be available after Mass to meet you provide further information and answer any questions you may have. We plan to celebrate the start of this exciting venture with a fundraising Peruvian Meal on Saturday 28th January after 6pm Mass - please put this date in your diaries and come along for food, films and music.

### What are the Projects?

CAFOD works with partners across Peru, who are helping communities to be active in local and national decision making processes that affect their daily lives. There are two projects in *Connect2 Peru*, one in a rural, and one in an urban context. They also illustrate the positive contribution the Church can make. CEAS is the Social Action office of the Bishops' Conference

of Peru, and *Warmi Huasi*, a women's centre supporting women in the poorer communities which has its roots in the work of the Columban Missionary Fathers.

CEAS is the Peruvian Church Social Action Commission. St Laurence's CAFOD group is supporting their work with the *Cruz de Mayo community* who are standing up for the protection of their environment and water.

### Meet some of the people from Cruz de Mayo.



Adan lives in Cruz de Mayo with his wife and baby. At 26 he was elected President of the Water Users Committee for the area, a role he held for five years. He is proud of where he lives saying, "*The community of Cruz de Mayo is very beautiful.*"

*Where the water flows there are lots of trees offering shade, and you can walk there and think".*



Flor is a farmer, growing food for her family and flowers to sell. She is passionate about protecting the environment where she lives. She says: "*Our environment will stay like this because we are fighting for it. It is important to defend the land for our life, for our right to life, for our children, our grandchildren, our families".*"

### Meet some people from Warmi Huasi.



Milka is the Coordinator of our partner *Warmi Huasi*. Driven by a deep faith and strong sense of social justice, Milka is dedicated to leading the *Warmi Huasi* team in its efforts to ensure that children in Lomas de Carabayllo can grow up in an environment

where they can thrive. In return, she feels her faith is deepened.



Fr. Ed, also known as Padre Lalo by his parishioners, is a Columban priest. He first went to Peru as a newly ordained missionary in 1973. Fr. Ed's parish in Lima is called Our Lady of the Missions. It is a large and vibrant parish, so large

that there are several chapels in it. When the Columban Fathers started their mission here, it was a place of great poverty. Fr. Ed and the Columban

Fathers set up *Warmi Huasi* to help families in the parish.

### Some Questions and Answers - *Connect2 Peru*

#### Do monies raised go directly to these two projects?

Yes. All donations which have been raised (and earmarked) for *Connect2* will go to those two community projects, and will be used by CAFOD's partners CEAS and *Warmi Huasi* first for those projects. Then, if more is given than the projects' costs need, it will then go to other CAFOD funded projects in Peru.

#### Presumably we are not only parish who may link? If so how do we organise the flow of information to and fro?

We are hoping that lots of parishes will be enthusiastic about joining *Connect2 Peru*! *Connect2 El Salvador* currently has about 70 parishes and *Connect2 Brazil* some 40 parishes. The most followed is *Connect2 Ethiopia* which is in the hundreds. The idea is that there will be about 6 updates from Peru in a year: 3 mailings and 3 online updates. The mailings are also posted online on the same webpage. We are always keen to hear what parishes do to engage with *Connect2*. Some hold cultural evenings, or parish fetes where they raise money through a relevant activity, or maybe they do something every month. It is really up to the parishes how they would like to make *Connect2* real in their parish life. If they take a photo, and send it to us with a couple of lines explaining what they did or do, we can share that back with the partners. Often, in the autumn, we ask parishes if they would like to send Christmas messages to us for the *Connect2* communities and then we try to find a way of making sure the Christmas cards reach Peru. Another thing we do is collect the cards together and photograph them and send the photo through with a Christmas greeting by email, so that the overall goodwill sentiment reaches the partners in time for Christmas.

*PS Might our Latin Americans in the parish help with this?*

#### What is the history of *Connect* in general and of this *Connect2 Peru* in particular?

*Connect2* first got underway in about 2010 as a parish fundraising scheme that allows parishes the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the long term processes that our projects and partners are involved in with the local communities, whilst fundraising for CAFOD's work in a particular country. By bringing the voices of a few narrators who speak on behalf of their neighbours, the parishes hear about the day-to-day reality in the community and how people are protagonists of change in their lives, with assistance or guidance from our partners. Lots of parishes look for 'twinning' projects with communities overseas, and *Connect2* is our way of offering that to

parishes. When *Connect2* started, there were six countries (Ethiopia, Rwanda, Cambodia, Bangladesh, El Salvador and Brazil).

*Connect2 Peru* is a very recent addition, just this year, and St Laurence's will be one of the first parishes joining it. Our CAFOD group thought about Peru in particular as the Andes Team felt it would be very helpful to have the raised profile that *Connect2* brings. In Peru, the work that will be featured in *Connect2* is very much about building a strong sense of citizenship and local voice so that people in communities feel they have the skills and courage to speak up for the best interests of their communities, engaging with local authorities, and businesses or other powerful actors, as equals at the negotiating table. Our hope is that parishes in *Connect2 Peru* will have the chance to see that process developing over time, with the advances and the setbacks too. We hope that participants will see something of development issues in a rural context plus development issues in an urban context. In the case of *Connect2 Peru*, we hope the role that the positive contribution the Church can make will also be visible.

**Science meets Faith** 2016-2017

10 October 2016	<b>Dr Peter Woodford</b> Faculty of Divinity and Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge "Evolution and Ethics: Is there a Conflict?"
14 November 2016	<b>Faisal Mohammed</b> Managing Director, Cambridge Islamic College "Science and Faith in the Islamic Tradition"
12 December 2016	<b>Prof Emeritus Andrew Halestrap</b> School of Biochemistry, University of Bristol, and Chair, Christians in Science "Science and faith - friends or foes?"
9 January 2017	<b>Dr Rhoda Hawkins</b> Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Sheffield "Cells, cancer and Christianity: a physicist's perspective"
13 February 2017	<b>Christobal Uauy</b> John Innes Centre, Norwich "Is it ethical to oppose modern plant breeding technologies?"
13 March 2017	<b>Prof Alister McGrath</b> Director, Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion, University of Oxford "Conflict or Mutual Enrichment? Reflections on the Relation of Science and Faith"
10 April 2017	<b>Prof Ian McFarland</b> Regius Professor, Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge "Why did that happen? Science, Faith, and how we explain things?"
8 May 2017	<b>Prof Joel Robbins</b> Division of Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge "Social Anthropology and Theology: On the Prospects for Dialogue"
12 June 2017	<b>Prof Chris Done</b> Centre for Extragalactic Astronomy, Durham University "Scientific truth and biblical truth: how to hold the two together"

**Science meets Faith**  
**MONTHLY LECTURES**  
**Mondays 7.45pm**  
Programme overleaf for 2016-2017  
Refreshments from 7.15pm  
Free admission - Retiring collection  
Wesley Church, Christ's Pieces, Cambridge CB1 1LG  
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## *Alive in Faith*

### **Sarah Sykes**

It sounds like a mission statement, doesn't it? Well, the Diocese is on a mission, and that mission is to help secure our future and also to support us now in the present time.

The Catholic faith across the Diocese is alive and well and we would like that to be the case throughout the years to come. We have prayed for vocations across the decades with increasing concern, and we are now being rewarded for our faithfulness.

We have six seminarians in training and potentially another four planning to start next year. And who knows how many more the Lord has planned for us in the years to come?

We are grateful and, to be honest, relieved that we have this increase in vocations as we have a number of priests who are coming to the end of their service for us and they will be gradually retiring over the next 10 years.

As a 40-year-young Diocese, we need to build up our resources not only for the future of the Diocese but also to support our sudden good fortune with many coming forward to be priests. To that end, the *Alive in Faith* initiative was launched about a year ago and has been gradually rolling out as a fund-raising programme across the Diocese. We need to be able to pay the costs of training our priests-to-be and we also need to be able to care for our priests in their retirement with all the costs that this entails.

St Laurence's is in the third and final group of parishes to be asked to raise a sum of money over the next 5 years. Our target is £185,000. This seems a large target on the face of it, but easily within our reach if we all pull together. Over the last couple of months, Fr Pat and a team of Parish volunteers have been talking to as many people as possible about supporting this initiative through pledging to donate regularly over the next 5 years. We ask everyone to consider donating whatever amount they feel able to contribute and we hope that the total number of pledges we receive will add up to at least £185,000. If unable to contribute financially, then please keep the project in your prayers. *'Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain.'* (Ps 127:1 RSV)

As well as supporting our priests, the money raised will also benefit our Parish. We will receive a proportion of the money back in our Parish for our own projects. Once we reach our target, the more we are able to raise over that amount, the greater the percentage we will be able to call on. Finally, in this

Year of Mercy, the Bishop would also like a proportion of the money raised across the Diocese to be used in social outreach projects, spreading God's Word and God's Mercy from our abundance.

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## **Cinnamon Faith Action Audit results for Cambridge**

### **Carol Williams**

The results of the first Cambridge Cinnamon Faith Action Audit were launched at C3, the Cambridge Community Church in Brooks Road, on 6 October 2016.

The national Cinnamon Faith Action Audit provides evidence for the social impact and the economic value of all that churches and other faith groups do in communities across the UK. At a time when the effects of financial austerity and reductions in public sector funding are affecting many communities across the country, St Laurence's parishioners will be aware that churches and faith groups are among many in the voluntary and community sector stepping into the gap. Cinnamon Network is a partnership between churches of all denominations and affiliations, charities offering church-based community projects, civic organisations such as the police and local authorities and grant-makers. Matt Bird, the Founder of Cinnamon Network, says: *"Cinnamon Network hopes that by providing evidence that the value of the time given by churches and other faith groups to their communities each year is worth more than £3 billion it will build confidence that faith is a force for good in our society."*

An online national survey enabled the Audit to be carried out in 87 locations across the UK. Local champions led on each Audit and invited as many faith groups of all types in their area as they could to participate. The national response rate was 46%; however the response rate in Cambridge was 85.5% - the highest in the country.

Some headline findings from the Cambridge Cinnamon Faith Action Audit:

- £8,442,792 – Total financial value being provided to the Cambridge community by faith groups in the area in 2015.
- 71 - Faith groups delivering projects.
- 527 - Total number of projects.
- 7 - Average number of social action projects per faith group.
- 89,658 - Total number of beneficiary interactions in 2015.

- 414 – Total number of paid staff activities.
- 177,442 – Total paid staff hours per year.
- 4,627 – Total number of volunteer roles.
- 831,860 – Total volunteer hours per year.

To find out more about the Cinnamon Network and also for details of the full list of Cinnamon Faith Action Audit reports and examples of Cinnamon Network recognised community projects across the country visit: [www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk](http://www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk)

## Update on New Evangelisation Day at St Ives

### Rosina Abudulai

New Evangelisation now known as “*PROCLAIM: becoming an evangelising Parish*” explored the following in its attempt to help parishes decide what approach will best suit them in establishing a team to work on the agenda:

- Why do people go to church?
- Why don't baptised Catholics come to Church?
- Why do people **return** to Church?

It talked about the Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic (see also p.5 Pilgrim, Sept 2015), a concept developed by Matthew Kelly, which answers as follows:

- Dynamic Catholics pray
- Dynamic Catholics study
- Dynamic Catholics give
- Dynamic Catholics share their faith.

We explored which of the above are already happening in our various parishes.

It also posed the following questions:

- Who are the Dynamic Catholics in my life?
- How can I become a Dynamic Catholic?
- How can my Parish support Dynamic Catholics?
- How can I help others in my Parish become Dynamic Catholics?

The main outcome of the meeting was for each parish to go away and explore various approaches which will help them develop into an *evangelising parish*.

It made special reference to Christmas as a time when opportunities for the above may arise; when families come together, some returning to Church and/or being invited to Christmas events – fayres, carol concerts etc. If you are hosting the Posada this season, invite

friends/family/neighbours to visit and share the journey.

### Ideas for planning and discernment included:

- **Praying** for guidance and inspiration, both as a group or as individuals, rosary groups, bidding prayers etc
- Looking at **Welcoming** (from an outsider's point of view). Noticeboards, websites and how proactive we are in inviting visitors for coffee all form a part of this.
- **Parishes** to think of at least 3 things they could do this year. Starting around Christmas where possible is a good idea.

Evangelisation is a mission for all baptised Christians.

## Missio

Sarah Sykes

Fr Donald came to speak to us at Mass last month about the Missio project run from Mill Hill in London. Many of us took the red Missio boxes to fill through the course of the year. You can also get a virtual red box on your phone in the form of the Missio app.

Through the app you can see what projects are being supported and the difference your donations are making as well as get suggestions of various ways to pray for the missionaries. You can offer financial support through the app too. It can be downloaded from the Apple and Google Play stores.

You can also pray - if possible for 10 mins at 12.30pm on Fridays - for the Pope's Mission Intentions:

*Eternal Father, I offer you everything I do this day - my thoughts, works, joys and sufferings. Grant that, enlivened by the Holy Spirit and united to Jesus in the Eucharist, my life this day may be of service to you and to others. And with Mary and the whole Church I pray especially for the Pope's mission intention this month ...*

**November:** that all priests and lay people may work together in parishes at the service of the community without giving way to discouragement.

**December:** that the people of Europe may rediscover the beauty, goodness and truth of the Gospel which gives joy and hope to life.

**January:** That all Christians may be faithful to the Lord's teaching by striving with prayer and fraternal charity to restore ecclesial communion and by collaborating to meet the challenges facing humanity.

**February:** that all those who are afflicted, especially the poor, refugees, and marginalised, may find welcome and comfort in our communities.

## Features and Opinions

### In the Light of the Lord

#### Michael Allan

*“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,  
to the Temple of the God of Jacob  
that he may teach us his ways  
so that we may walk in his paths;”*

Here in the Old Testament reading for the first Sunday of Advent, Isaiah has a vision of all the nations of the earth streaming to the mountain of the Lord, to learn the ways of peace. Isaiah then calls on his own people (and on us) to also walk in God's ways and in God's light.

*“O House of Jacob, come,  
let us walk in the light of the Lord.”* (Isa. 2:1-5)

The world today is in great need of the light of the Lord, as indeed it always has been. There are many forms of darkness in our world, and in our own hearts. The darkness of human greed, cruelty and indifference is destroying countless lives across our planet. There can also be a more private darkness of pain and despair in physical, psychological or emotional distress.

The question that many believers and non-believers alike ask is, how can God be a loving, all-powerful God, when our world knows so much misery? Why did God let my child die? Why does God not stop evil happening? Maybe the goodness of God is a lie, a fraud? These are not new questions. The Bible, for example in the Book of Job and in the Psalms, also wrestles with these painful questions.

Job, a man who has lived a truly virtuous life, suffers calamity after calamity. All his children, his flocks, his wealth, are destroyed. He is left desolate, sitting in dust and ashes. His friends are of no help. They insist his suffering must be a punishment for sin, for surely God causes no one to suffer innocently? Job, unconvinced and un comforted, sees only darkness. He wonders if anyone will see his hope if he goes down to Sheol? (Sheol was believed to be a place of stillness and darkness, where all the dead went, cut off from life and from God.)

*“If I look for Sheol as my house,  
if I spread my couch in darkness,  
if I say to the Pit, ‘You are my father’,  
and to the worm, ‘My mother’, or ‘My sister’,  
where then is my hope?  
Who will see my hope?  
Will it go down to the bars of Sheol?  
Shall we descend together into the dust?”* (Job 17:13-15)

In some of the Psalms darkness and despair are almost overwhelming.

*“But I, O Lord, cry out to you;  
in the morning my prayer comes before you.  
Why do you reject me, O Lord?  
Why do you hide your face from me?”*

*I am wretched, close to death from my youth.  
I have borne your trials; I am numb.  
Your fury has swept down upon me;  
your terrors have utterly destroyed me.*

*They surround me all the day like a flood;  
together they close in against me.  
Friend and neighbour you have taken away:  
my one companion is darkness.”* (Ps. 88:14-19)

But the Psalms also show a hard won belief that even in the darkest place God's love and light could be found.

*“O where can I go from your spirit,  
or where can I flee from your face?  
If I climb the heavens, you are there.  
If I lie in the grave, you are there.*

*If I say, ‘Let the darkness hide me  
and the light around me be night’,  
even darkness is not dark to you,  
the night shall be as bright as day,  
and darkness the same as the light.”* (Ps. 139:7-8, 11-12)

God follows, or rather goes before, his people into the darkest places. The German Lutheran pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who after years of opposition to the evil of the Nazi regime was executed by hanging for his part in a plot to assassinate Hitler, said he could only worship a suffering God. In humanity at its very lowest point, beset by cruelty and suffering, overwhelmed by misery and despair, here is where you find the divine.

The old image of the distant, angry God, thundering from the heavens, no longer works, if it ever did. The suffering servant, walking along the road with us, perhaps unnoticed, unheeded, is our God. The Servant God, who desires to be born as one of us, to break the bread of life with us, to suffer and die with us. Jesus said to his disciples on the night before his death, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.” The face of Jesus on the Cross is the face of the Father.

In *The Coming*, by the Welsh poet and Anglican priest R S Thomas, God asks his son to look into a small globe held in his hand. In the globe the son sees a scorched land with a bare hill. The poem concludes:



“On a bare  
Hill a bare tree saddened  
The sky. Many People  
Held out their thin arms  
To it, as though waiting  
For a vanished April  
To return to its crossed  
Boughs. The son watched  
Them. Let me go there, he said.”

God's desire, God's thirst, is to be with us, even, or especially, in the most desolate, lonely places. The Most High gladly steps down to be born into our lowly mortal flesh, to live the joy and woe that we live, to show us God's way to be human. Finally, at the darkest moment, God in Jesus is not ashamed to descend into the dust with Job.

Even if the light we have may not always seem enough, perhaps no more than a flickering candle on a dark night, or a flickering star high in a cold night sky, it may well be enough to bring us safely home at last. The East Anglian mystic and theologian, Blessed Julian of Norwich, in her vision of Jesus dying in agony on the Cross, heard him say to her, “All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.”

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## How books capture our imagination – the story of the *I Belong* picture

### Charlotte Woodford

Next time you are in St Laurence's School, take a close look at the painting which hangs in the accessible cloakroom.



Around the school, art work by different class groups features books which have inspired children of different ages, from *Mr Men* books to young adult works. Year Three, preparing for their First Holy Communion, chose to depict their Religious Education course book, *I Belong*, in the company of the seven-volume *Harry Potter* series and the collected works of Charles Dickens. In a household where children of different ages (not to mention the adults) find common ground for discussion in their mutual enjoyment of J K Rowling, the montage prompted me to reflect on how it is that particular books and stories capture our imagination, and how much we enjoy learning that others also share our own passion for particular works.

But what kind of connection is there between *I Belong*, a work instructing children in their faith, and *Harry Potter*, set in Hogwarts school of witchcraft and

wizardry? *I Belong*, a path to the Eucharist, is a book which promotes self-discovery and offers reflection on shared values, including the importance of making choices, the meaning of friendship, and the centrality in our shared faith of forgiveness and mercy. The *Harry Potter* series is made up of novels of formation, sometimes called coming of age stories, where, as the protagonists grow up and learn where they belong, the impact of the choices they have made on the road to maturity becomes central to their successful navigation of the troubles ahead. Novels of formation by no means only offer positive role models; neither, on the whole, are they preachy. Rather, they show that the road to maturity is paved with disappointments and mistakes, with loss and misunderstanding. The protagonist's journey through those mistakes is like learning to walk only after much falling over, and it is a journey we make with them as we identify with their emotional journey. In this respect then, *Harry Potter* not only has much in common with *I Belong*, but also with those classic coming of age stories like *David Copperfield* or *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, alongside which J K Rowling's works sit in the painting in St Laurence's School. These books we have enjoyed are not ones we keep to ourselves, but ones which enhance our own sense of belonging when we share them with others.

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## Carmelite reflections

### Michael Smith

If you drive due north out of the small town of Burnham Market, your way takes you up a hill on the B1355 (Bellamy's Lane). Dominating the hilltop, with a view of the sea, is the fine round-towered Norfolk church of St Margaret's, Burnham Norton. St Margaret's is well worth visiting: both for its outside



and its inside. For instance, there is a lovely stained glass window above the altar depicting not one, but two St Margarets, there is the wine-glass pulpit, not to mention the rood screen and Norman font. For those with nautical interests the gravestone of Captain Woodget, one-time master of the *Cutty Sark*, complete with impressively carved rope and anchor, can be seen in the churchyard near the tower. Plus, of course there are also the inevitable links with Lord Nelson and other famous people from history.



The interior of St Margaret's, Burnham Norton, Norfolk

Inside St Margaret's the windows from two side aisles flood the space with light. These side aisles were additions to the building around the time that the Carmelite friars began serving as priests in the parish. The remains of their friary can be seen a field's distance away on the appropriately named Friars Lane.

I like to think that these friars would have found something particularly appropriate about the location of their new ministry –



here on a high point overlooking the sea – for the very first Carmelites began on Mount Carmel overlooking the eastern Mediterranean. Those original 'hermit monks', who chose to come together to form their first community on that holy mountain (famous for Elijah's triumph over the prophets of Baal, 1 Kings 18:20-40), asked their local bishop to give them a rule of life. The Patriarch of Jerusalem, Albert Avogadro, duly obliged and Carmelites all over the world follow a version of that rule to this day.

The Rule of St Albert includes a patchwork of scriptural passages encouraging this new little community to live a life of allegiance to Jesus Christ. Here's a flavour:

*"...Your loins are to be girt (Eph 6:14) with chastity, your breast fortified by holy meditations, for, as Scripture has it: 'Holy meditation will save you' (Prov 2:11). Put on holiness as your breastplate (Eph 6:14), and it will enable you to love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and strength, (Dt 6:5), and your neighbour as yourself (Mt 19:19; 22:37-39). Faith must be your shield on all occasions, and with it you will be able to quench all the flaming missiles of the wicked one (Eph 6:16)."*

This language of spiritual warfare may have had particular resonance for some of those in the community who had originally arrived in the Holy Land as crusaders!

A balance between community life and solitude is clear: the brothers were to gather for the Eucharist, meals and other activities, but at other times, to keep solitude in or near their individual cells. Silence was also strongly emphasised by Albert who, quoting Isaiah, says: "Silence is the way to foster holiness". This balance between solitude and community with an appropriate spirit of silence remains the essential balance of Carmelite life.

When the early Carmelites moved to Europe they founded communities in many places - the most famous in England being at Aylesford in Kent where the Carmelites arrived in 1242. Following the upheavals of the reformation, and after several centuries of absence, the Carmelites returned there in the 1940s. East Anglia played host to several Carmelite communities including Norwich and Blakeney as well as at Burnham Norton. John Baconthorpe (c. 1290–1347) was a member of the Blakeney community who later became a notable philosopher teaching in Oxford, Cambridge and Paris.

In addition to their male counterparts, communities of nuns developed in many places and in central Spain in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century a Carmelite called Teresa was drawn by the Lord into a deeper relationship of prayer which propelled her into a period of activity and controversy in the latter part of her life which would have momentous effects far beyond her own country or indeed century! One gets the overwhelming impression from her writings (of which there are many) that Teresa was quite a chatty person! Reading her is a bit like being with someone as they just chatter away, going off on tangents, and then returning to develop their original point after each digression. She loved to be with people, she was blessed with a persuasive and attractive personality, and friendship was central to her life. She came to realise that her very best and closest friend was Jesus, that this was a transformational friendship and the essence of our Christian calling, and her writings are full of encouragement to us all to spend more time with this wonderful friend.

*"Prayer is nothing else but an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us."*

Teresa learnt that Jesus is always close to us since the Blessed Trinity dwells within each one of us:

*"However softly we speak, God will hear us. We need no wings to go in search of him: he is within."*

Teresa saw the need for Carmelites to get back to basics, so to speak, in this spirit of friendship with Jesus. She added 'of Jesus' to her own name and established a small community of sisters in her native city of Ávila which had a simple balance of prayer, work and recreation. She saw this new model of community life as more in the original spirit of Albert's rule and some of her friends joined in this initiative. One of Teresa's friends was a Carmelite friar called John of the Cross. John helped to introduce some of Teresa's ideas into the male part of the Order and small communities of friars started to be established.

However, in 16th Century Spain new ideas were treated with great suspicion. Some of Teresa's writing was confiscated by the Inquisition and it was never seen again in her lifetime. Worse still one day in December 1577 John was abducted from the small friary where he lived and imprisoned in Toledo. John may well have died in that small dark cell had he not managed to eventually escape in August of the following year. The darkness of this prison experience had surprising effects on John – a transforming experience had taken place in him and the small notebook he escaped with contained poetry he had created there – the most famous of which has come down to us as the *Spiritual Canticle*. This poem speaks of a developing relationship of love – of a lover who is lost and found – the story of a transformation in which the soul is seeking God and God is seeking the soul even more powerfully.

The person must put in effort to seek the Lord and be committed to the task including embracing the Cross in her own life:

*“Seeking my love  
I will head for the mountains  
And for watersides;  
I will not gather flowers,  
Nor fear wild beasts;  
I will go beyond strong men and frontiers”*

As she seeks Him signs of his presence are everywhere:

*“Pouring out a thousand graces  
He passed these groves in haste  
And having looked at them  
With his image alone  
Clothed them in beauty”*

A poem which began from the depth of his own spiritual experience became a tool for his ministry: his friends set the words to music and the song was shared. John asked those listening what it meant to them and he added to it - the completed work came in at 40 stanzas. John saw it as our story, everyone's

dance of love with the amazing lover who calls and comes to us – our best and closest friend as Teresa would say.

Many men and women down the ages have been inspired by St Teresa of Ávila and St John of the Cross – some of whom have themselves joined the Carmelites and some have been recognised as saints by the Church – such as St Therese of Lisieux, St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) and most recently, as I write this article, St Elizabeth of the Trinity. There is so much to discover to help us in our Christian lives in the lives and teaching of these successors of those first hermits on Mount Carmel in Palestine.

John's teaching, and that of Teresa, involves recognising the value of humility. Before God we have nothing and all is gift from Him and we need to recognise our 'littleness' (as St Therese of Lisieux would say) in order to receive the transformation that we seek as Christians. This can take the form of persevering through the dryness of prayer and also through the trials of life which challenge us to choose the option of love – the transformation of ourselves into better people, more whole, more loving, always closer to Jesus and willing to embrace his Cross.

A short article like this cannot do justice to the life, writing and spiritual teaching of these great guides for the Christian life – but please view the references at the end of this article for further reading.

So what of today? Are there any Carmelites in East Anglia these days? A resounding YES is the answer! Firstly there is the Carmelite community of sisters at Quidenham near Thetford in Norfolk. Located in a small, quiet village the community at Quidenham pray for all of us and the whole world and offer in the spirit of Teresa a down to earth and joyful spirit of hospitality and guidance to those who would like to spend time in quiet reflection.

Additionally there are three groups of Secular Carmelites in our diocese – lay people who, without residing in a monastery, form part of the Carmelite order in everyday life – married or single, working or retired – living out their friendship with the Lord under the inspiration of Teresa and John and coming together once a month to share and learn and pray together. If you would like to find out more about the Secular Carmelites including contact details for the groups that meet in Peterborough, Walsingham and Quidenham please see the information at the end of this article. Last May some of our members made their first promises in the Secular Carmelite Order when the three groups met for a special day of recollection at Quidenham.

Finally I'd just like to finish with *St Teresa's Bookmark* – which encourages us on our journey of friendship with Jesus.

*“Let nothing trouble you  
Let nothing disturb you  
All things pass away  
God never changes  
Patience obtains all things  
The one who has God lacks nothing  
God alone suffices”*



Our Lady of Mount Carmel statue flanked by Carmelite Saints, Carmelite Monastery, Quidenham

Further reading:

There are many books about St Teresa of Avila. Additionally, of course, there are all the works she wrote herself and, of those, *The Life of St Teresa by herself* can be a place to start.

A good introduction to St John of the Cross is *The Impact of God* by Iain Matthew (1995) published in paperback by Hodder & Stoughton with a foreword by Jean Vanier.

These and many other books relating to Carmelite spirituality, life, history and the saints can be ordered via the Carmelite Book Service, Boars Hill, Oxford and online here:

<http://www.carmelite.org.uk/Books.html>

Retreats and Carmelite communities:

There are two Orders of Carmelites within the Catholic Church – the Carmelites of the Ancient Observance (OCarm) and the Discalced Carmelites (OCD). Both consist of Friars, Nuns and Seculars. Some of their retreat centres and communities are listed below –

- Carmelite Monastery, Quidenham, Norwich NR16 2PH <http://quidenhamcarmel.org.uk/>

- Carmelite Priory & Retreat Centre, Boars Hill, Oxford OX1 5HB (01865 321991) <http://www.carmelite.org.uk/Oxfordret.html>
- The Friars, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7BX (01622 717272) <http://www.thefriars.org.uk/>
- The Carmelite Church, High Street, Kensington (Parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St Simon Stock) <http://carmelitechurch.org/>

For more information about the Secular Order that meets in Quidenham, Peterborough and Walsingham: <http://www.carmeldiscalcedsecular.org.uk/contact-us.html>

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## A letter to a friend. Can you believe in God without religion?

**Dick Wilson**

Sometimes a friend says, “How can you believe in God?”

There are many kinds of answer. A Jew, a Christian, or a Muslim, might well point out that there seems to be a cause for everything. These days, the questions might be about human evolution, then back and back in time to the creation of the earth, then the solar system, then our galaxy, and at what is as far back as we can go, to the Big Bang. There we answer “God”. This invites the child’s question, “Who made God, then?”, and the answer can only be that a being, who created everything and is eternal, without beginning or end, is the one thing that doesn’t need to be “made”.

The friend may then ask, “So is it possible to provide a good argument to show either for or against the existence of God?” Well, there are some others. St Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1093 to 1109, said that what really exists actually is greater than that which exists only mentally, nothing greater than God can be thought of, so God exists actually. St Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) doesn’t agree with this. It is only true if the existence of God is assumed; that is, if the argument is circular. The Jewish theologian Maimonides (1138-1204), Aquinas’ “Rab Moses”, tries to harmonise faith and religion. The Muslim theologian Al-Ghazali (1058-1111) argues against the idea that God and the world are a sort of continuum. They are not; they are creator and creature; God and the universe. This argument is found before him in Christianity, and he also influenced St Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas has “five ways” by which he says you can prove the existence of God.<sup>1</sup>

1. When things are moved or **changed**, they are changed by something else, which in turn is changed by something else and so on, until you come to what is unchanged, the first mover – God.
2. Likewise we can see that things are **caused**. But it is not possible for something to be the cause of itself. At the end of the chain there is something that is not itself caused by anything further – God.
3. It is **possible** for some things to exist, while there are other things which can cease to exist. If everything was contingent and so could cease to exist, then, given infinite time, this would keep happening and nothing would exist. But things clearly do exist, so there must be something imperishable, a necessary being – God.
4. Things vary in **degrees of goodness**: more or less truth, nobility, health, competences. But this implies a standard by which they are judged. So there is something which is goodness itself – God.
5. Non-intelligent objects in the world behave in regular ways. This cannot be due to chance, since if they were it would not be possible to predict their behaviour and their purpose. Therefore, their behaviour must be determined by something else, which must be **intelligent** – God.

This discussion of belief in God is a bare outline of a complex matter. These propositions are not without challenge. 1, 2 and 3 do not deal with what we now know about the earliest moments of the known universe – its singularity at the point of the Big Bang, when the laws of physics seem to disappear, and causation is untraceable. That is not to assert that God exists – only that there doesn't seem to be any other explanation of what is there. A more difficult issue is presented by 5. The argument is that non-intelligent things behave in intelligent ways, and have an ultimate purpose which must therefore be directly set in place by an intelligent being. It has become clear since Darwin and his contemporaries and successors, from Mendel and Wallace to Dawkins, that this is not so. Living beings, and all their marvellous beauty and complexity, have evolved by way of wholly random genetic processes and environmental changes determining which genes survive to reproduce. The Church's view has always been that this theory of evolution is acceptable, but the rule that it is not the Church's business to lay down the findings of science and history lies conveniently to hand. There is no obligation to believe it, either way.

What the Church does with these findings is another matter. The Catholic Church's doctrine is that intelligence, perception, moral understanding, the capacity to know God, and all we call life, including both material life and consciousness – the soul – are bestowed on every human being as special act of creation. (In several papal statements from *Humani generis* [1950] onwards)<sup>2</sup> The problem is that as our

knowledge increases, more and more of what genes do and transmit, and how the body and the mind work, can be explained in material terms. It is the same for humans and all things, complex and simple.

“Um”, says our friend. “But what has this to do with practising religion?”

It makes it actually much easier to understand. How living beings on earth have acquired their present form through evolution, our knowledge of the way the world works, and in particular of how living beings have evolved derives, like all science and history, from human understanding, human speculation, and human description. And there are not two revelations – one about the existence of God, and another, trying to express what God is doing in the world. A double revelation like this would be incomprehensible; nothing would be revealed. And our friend would say, with every justification, “I believe in God, but that tells me nothing about why I should pray, praise God and take notice of what scripture and Church teaching says how I should behave.”

But as we have seen, our knowledge of the created world is taken, more and more, from human science and experience, not from the blue sky. And we can know nothing of God except as creatures in a created world. As a result, this kind of knowledge is incomplete and fallible. But human beings can understand and make use of this knowledge. By this route we learn worship, prayer, virtue and holiness, the belief in God's mercy and grace. Jews were convinced that the Scriptures (the Old Testament for Christians) were God's revelation to his Chosen People of his Covenant with them and the Law of Moses that they should live by. The apostles were convinced by the resurrection appearances, and so convinced, that they could speak of Jesus's death on the cross as the salvation of the world. From these came the Christian Church, its ministry, the religious experience of individuals and its doctrines and ethics. We see the Old and New Testament scriptures as God's revelation, the Word of God spoken to his people on earth. Muslims believe that the message of the Prophet Muhammad in the Quran is the true word of God and his will, revealed to Muhammad. The Church, the synagogue, and the brotherhood of Islam are where we share this knowledge and experience. This is what is called Theism.

And here we come to the answer to our friend. In our kind of religion, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the concept of God, the idea of creation – our God brought all this into being. And God cares for the creation and, from it, and from human products like scripture, ethics and preaching, we work out what God wants us to do in it. This is not always conclusive, because we have access to this knowledge through the human route. It is

an account worked up in the terms of the time it was spoken, and the tools of our human understanding. But it brings knowledge of God, and God will give us his grace to respond. This is what religion lets us do, and it is possible because God gives us revelation in a human way. We do not have two kinds of knowledge of God, one proved, the other from revelation and faith, less certain. You get the idea of God from everything that comes out of religion; and you understand religion from your idea of God. Belief in God and the practice of religion are all of a piece. One implies the other. Blessed John Newman pointed this out as a comment on Darwin's theory of evolution by the survival of the fittest – right in the middle of the 19th century. There is nothing to stop this being the work of God:

“As to the Divine Design, is it not an instance of incomprehensibly and infinitely marvellous Wisdom and Design to have given certain laws to matter millions of ages ago, which have surely and precisely worked out, in the long course of those ages, those effects which He from the first proposed. Mr Darwin's theory need not then to be atheistical, be it true or not; it may simply be suggesting a larger idea of Divine Prescience and Skill. Perhaps your friend has got a surer clue to guide him than I have, who have never studied the question, and I do not [see] that 'the accidental evolution of organic beings' is inconsistent with divine design - It is accidental to us, not to God.”<sup>3</sup>

“Ah”, says our friend.

<sup>1</sup>*Summa theologica*, Pt 1, q.2. article II.

<sup>2</sup>Pius XII, Enc. *Humani generis*, 36; John Paul II, *Message To The Pontifical Academy Of Sciences* 1996, etc.

<sup>3</sup>Letter to J. Walker of Scarborough, May 22, 1868, in *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*.

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## Digital cleansing

### Jay Magpuyo

Technological advancement is good if it does not replace the human person in his pursuit for a relationship with and search for His Creator. For one, technology takes humanity to another level as an attempt to have a dip into the unknown, that is, the future. Second, it is but a shield against the game of change or in the words of Darwin, ‘survival of the fittest’. So, welcome to the digital age. A kind of revolution where the full human potential is challenged and met with technological advancement in the guise of convenience and expediency to uplift human living conditions. But this development, for other reasons, is an outward show of force wherein at the apex of this

scheme man finds only himself and the God of life is veiled in the equation. This is its danger embedded in the paradigm; when the question of salvation is not even geared towards the reality of God but being shrouded by the promises of the scientific breakthroughs brought about by the unquenching thirst of man for progress.

An elderly woman complained that she has not received letters coming from her dear friends, and criticised the use of e-mails. For her, she still prefers the smell of the fragility of the paper scribbled with nostalgic ink. With letters, comes the identity of the sender making it up close and personal which is not evident in e-mails.

A man struggled to get to sleep during the evening only to find himself awake in the middle of the night tinkering with his mobile.

A supposedly wonderful holiday of a mother and her daughter in warm and crystal-clear waters somewhere in The Caribbean, gone bad because the daughter was hooked on her tablet and mobile instead of having a loving conversation with her mother.

These and more real stories we can tell of how gadgets disturb us. People reason that gadgets make life easy, convenient, fast, instant, productive and effective. True, there is no question with that. It has helped many to alleviate the great neutralizer of humanity which is suffering and death. However, it can also distract us from our sustaining priorities in life. These small interruptions, if not watched very closely, could result in a superficial kind of living wherein one is guided by the scripture written by Steve Jobs, Bill Gates or Mark Zuckerberg. Nothing is more surreal and meaningless than to create another reality and to dwell in a world of apps and social media instead of living in the real world where Jesus had once left his footprints.

Yes, there are more pressing concerns in the world like war and terrorism, attacks on the universality of human rights, the call for a just wage throughout the world, the homelessness of hundreds of thousands of refugees, and the anguish of poverty that continue to shake the pillars of society. These concerns show up our short-sightedness and cast its look on the seemingly isolated problem of First World countries, the search for meaning. But meaninglessness is real. In fact, most of our efforts and daily endeavours are but a response to the call for meaning and purpose. The only problem, often, is that it is difficult to identify. But one thing is certain, when one is surrounded by gadgets rather than friends and people, then it is happening.

## **Emmanuel United Reformed Church, Trumpington Street**

### **Rosemary Johnston**

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ

I am a member of the Emmanuel United Reformed Church and live in Impington, in your parish. So, when my Roman Catholic son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren stay with us we have worshipped at St Laurence's. Thank you for your welcome. When the invitation to write for your magazine arrived in our church office, I offered to respond.

The United Reformed Church was formed in 1972. As an Ulster Presbyterian, and economic migrant in Coventry, I voted for this ecumenical move. It seems to me that each participating denomination had a gift for the others. Presbyterians were used to an ordained eldership giving oversight to congregational life. From Congregationalists came the treasure of a regular, usually monthly, Church Meeting of all members as the decision-making body in the local church. This meeting also discusses and sends comments on current issues to the wider councils of the church. The Churches of Christ brought a strong tradition of theological learning amongst lay members. We recognise both infant and adult baptism. All roles in the church are open equally to women and men. Women were first ordained as ministers, who could therefore preside at communion services, in 1917.

The congregation at Trumpington Street dates from 1687 and was a Congregational Church, i.e. one of the main groups of churches, then mostly called Independent, which were independent of the established Church of England and any governing body outside the congregation. They were particularly strong in Eastern England, and Oliver Cromwell, John Milton and John Bunyan were Independents. Nowadays we benefit from having members of all the participating denominations at the founding of the United Reformed Church alongside others nurtured in other protestant denominations within the United Kingdom and internationally. This makes for lively conversations! Our weekly worship has an ordered liturgy within which we expect prayers of approach, adoration, confession, thanksgiving and intercession. Usually time is spent beginning to explore one or more of the lectionary bible passages when all ages are together before the children continue in groups. We place a strong emphasis on scripture. There is a sermon of about twenty minutes. Music is offered by our choir and occasional orchestra and musicians. As we have no minister at the moment, worship is co-ordinated by a worship planning group. Worship is led by ordained ministers or lay preachers from within the

congregation and sometimes led by invited visiting preachers.

The process over the last two years in seeking to appoint a new minister began with our drawing up a 'pastorate profile' describing our congregational life and what we hoped for in the future. This document was agreed at a Church Meeting and sent to our Synod Moderator. The notice of a vacancy is alerted to all United Reformed Church ministers who can then respond. The Synod Moderators suggest an interested candidate and their information is sent to a Vacancy Committee who, if they think the congregation would wish to proceed, then meet with the candidate and either recommend, or not, to the Church Meeting that s/he is invited to spend a weekend with us and 'preach with a view'. After this the members of the congregation vote during a special church meeting whether to offer a call.

Meanwhile we live life to the full. We seek to "be Christ's people, transformed by the gospel, making a difference to the world." ([www.emmanuel-urc.org.uk](http://www.emmanuel-urc.org.uk)) Like you, we support the Cambridge Churches Housing Project. Please visit us and enjoy The Fair Shares Café (Tuesday – Friday, 10:30 am – 3.00 pm) or a free lunch time concert on Wednesdays at 1.00 pm. The current building (built in 1874) is interesting and there is usually an exhibition. You will be welcome.

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## **On patrol with Cambridge Street Pastors**

### **Joe Tucker**

During daytime, the streets of Cambridge are crowded with students, tourists and shoppers, interlaced with a variety of dons, buskers and beggars. In common with other Street Pastor groups around the United Kingdom, Cambridge Street Pastors patrol in a team of four every Friday and Saturday night from 10:00pm to 4:00am. Our motto is "caring, listening, helping" and basically we look out for anyone who is in trouble or just wants to talk.

We are easily recognisable in our caps and jackets so every night we are asked, "why do you do this?" or "how much are you paid?" which sometimes leads to a longer conversation. Occasionally a nightclub doorman calls us on the radio but mostly we decide when to stop and when to move on.

The easy cases are street-life people wanting a quick chat and ladies walking barefoot, to whom we offer flip-flops for free. We check anyone lying on the ground, even if they appear to have friends nearby and

move on only when we're reasonably sure that the friends are genuine and capable of helping.

The hard cases, which take the majority of our time, are ladies who are alone and either wandering around or slumped in a doorway. Ideally they let us call some nearby friends or family, but if there has been a falling-out then we try to get them into a taxi home. Calling for an ambulance is a last resort (for people who are completely unresponsive) since it is very much part of our role to reduce the number of drink-related admissions to Accident and Emergency Departments.

There is always good camaraderie in the patrol team and you get to hear what's going on in other Cambridge churches. By 4:00am you're very tired but you always feel that it was time well spent. If you would like to find out more or do an "observation shift" then contact Mark Stevens on [Cambridge@streetpastors.org.uk](mailto:Cambridge@streetpastors.org.uk).

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## Water or honey?

### Yvonne Dias

One of my favourite scenes from the life of our Lord Jesus is the time that He met the woman at the well (John 4:1-42). Here we see Jesus, a Jew, speaking to a woman - not just any woman but a Samaritan woman and to cap it, an adulterer; all attributes that a law-abiding single Jewish male should steer clear of. But we see that Our Lord was not concerned about all those things to do with the Law but was rather concerned with the state of the woman's soul. So when He speaks of water to the woman, His message is that there is a water which will quench the desires of the soul forever – that spiritual Living Water and, of course, the woman realises what a wonderful offer she is being given; the chance to turn her life around and walk in the healing waters of the Lord Jesus. As I read this passage I too desire that Living Water and prayerfully ask that I will always desire to drink from the waters of life.

But, while I desire that Living Water, I am often tempted with the intensely sweet taste of honey. I am painting a picture now of how the Evil One likes to whisper in my ear and offer me a spoonful of honey, "just one spoonful won't harm you." So off I trot not realising the trap has been cleverly set. Before I know it I have consumed a jarful of honey and am sick to the pit of my stomach. Bowed down and penitent before the Lord, I repent of whatever it is that I have done and He reaches out and gives me that Living Water which I so need and always will need; the water that cleanses and washes away the sickness inside me. I thank the

Lord Jesus that He knows how we are tempted and waits patiently for us to run back into His loving arms.

Each day we, as followers of Jesus Christ, will be tempted – even the smallest seemingly most insignificant thought, like a drop of honey, will dirty our wedding gown before our Lord God. So today, what will you choose; the life-giving Living Waters or the thick, sweet taste of honey?

Just a thought...

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## Is Christmas pagan?

### Dick Wilson

It is obvious nonsense to talk about Christmas "being" a pagan festival. The early Church did not celebrate the events of the Christian year on appropriate dates, but, as Christianity became the general religion throughout Europe, and much of North Africa and the Middle East, the Church simply took the existing pagan feast days over and gave them her own interpretation, along with the days when martyrs died. Christmas and Epiphany were never historically in the winter, but a handy set of winter solstice feasts was available and was used. And so for the Conception (spring festival), Lammas (early August, the beginning of harvest) and Assumption (harvest home), and so on. The Church abolished pagan feasts but didn't want people to be deprived of their holidays, and did want to historicise Christian themes by giving them a date. Some pagan festivals survived alongside the Christian ones, or parts of them anyway – Lughnasadh in Ireland at Lammas time, and Bealtaine in Ireland on 1st May or an equivalent day in the spring, to bring along the growing crops, but now without any specific meaning. The date of the Passover became the date of "Easter", in England a pagan name for the greatest Christian celebration, with a christianised new fire.

Passover and Pentecost are exceptions to this, because as the Old Testament Israel had already done this with its own converted spring and summer feasts, and did the same with other festivals in the Bible, for example the story of Esther, taken up into Purim, a holiday feast in March. In Christianity Passover and Pentecost became the great Christian baptism days, probably before, or very shortly after, the recording of the events of the crucifixion and resurrection which we find in the New Testament.

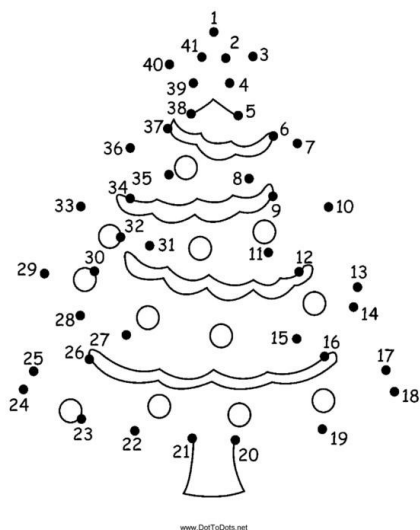
You can tell that this system developed fairly late in Christianity from the variations in different parts of the Christian world, such as giving more weight to Epiphany than to December 25th in the Eastern Orthodox Church and disagreements about the right



day to celebrate Easter. On the whole, there is no connection between the imagery and meaning of the pagan day and that of the Christian holy day that replaced it. The idea of Easter as a Christian Passover is an exception, but there we are talking about the straight use of an Old Testament event to explain the meaning of the death and resurrection of Jesus. The name of the pagan god Eostre and the use of Easter eggs in Germanic speaking countries only; or like dancing at Lughnasadh, in Irish-speaking countries only, are relics. Any direct connection with the original rebirth meaning of a ceremony and the meaning of the ritual on a Christian holy day is an accident; except for the new fire. The rebirth and new life meanings of the Passover make little or no use of any pre-Israelite fertility reference they ever possessed.

There are no good reasons why we shouldn't amuse ourselves with these pagan leftovers, nor indeed take some images from them to illustrate Christianity, as in some Easter hymns, just taking them over and making them Christian. They are then Christian inventions. They don't make the hymns pagan. One can only say of the trick or treat group that called this evening (I am writing this on Halloween) that they were doing it for fun (and two sweets each). I think that some of what goes on at Halloween has been re-imported from America, but is thought to have originated with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off roaming ghosts. Jesus spoke of his battles with the powers of evil in the language and understanding of his own time. How could he have done anything else? But we don't think in exactly the same way nowadays, and his grace comes to us differently, and in different forms. And so what is left over from paganism need not frighten us. We don't have a maypole in St Laurence's car park, but it wouldn't do any harm.

Happy Christmas!



## Parish Organisations & Activities

### **Margaret Fletcher: Foundress of the Catholic Women's League**

#### **Margaret Plumb**

Margaret Fletcher was born in 1862 in Oxford where her father was a Protestant clergyman. In 1896 when she was thirty-four, she came across the writings of St. John of the Cross. They were given to her by a High Anglican vicar for whom she was doing some decoration work in his Chapel of Ease. She had studied painting in London and Paris. In 1897 she asked a convert priest for the name of a Catholic priest in London, a request which led to a meeting with a Jesuit Father at Farm Street. She was received into the church at Farm Street on 9th September 1897 and made her First Communion at Southwark Cathedral the following morning.

She had been in the church some years when she thought of producing a journal dealing with social problems. Entitled *The Crucible*, the idea of a Catholic Women's League first appeared in its pages. In 1905 she was invited to lecture to a little group of women who met at the Holy Child Convent in London on some subject 'connected with history or art'. Explaining that she was no lecturer, she offered to give a talk on 'present day social work for Catholic women'. Only fourteen people turned up to hear the unknown lecturer speaking on a subject in which there was little interest. However, such was the personality of the lecturer that the group was caught up by her enthusiasm. They wanted the talk to be published and made practical offers of help so that it could be done. A copy was sent to Cardinal Bourne and it was also published in *The Crucible* and contributors to that publication backed the proposed League. In the autumn of 1906 a National Catholic Conference was held at Brighton.

In Germany the *Frauenbund* had been founded - with the approval and at the insistence of the Germany Hierarchy with the object of providing a counter-balance to the secular National Council of Women. In England, a little band of about seventy Catholic women under the leadership of Margaret Fletcher went forward to the immense tasks which lay ahead. In 1907 a provisional Executive meeting was held and at this time the League was known as the League of Catholic Women Workers and the first proposal put to the meeting was that the word 'worker' be omitted from the original title.

In January 1908 a branch was formed in Manchester and by June there were 1000 members. Branches were founded in Bournemouth and Boscombe. In 1910

branches were inaugurated at Birmingham, Leeds and Preston; in 1911 in Bath and Newcastle-on-Tyne and in 1912 Cambridge, Northampton and Norwich were founded and in 1913, Cardiff. And so the League grew.

Margaret Fletcher said that the Catholic Women's League needed women with 'balanced commonsense' and it should 'utilise the average women in convincing the Catholic world that businesslike methods and intellectual gifts are excellent weapons in the service of God.'

Margaret Fletcher was also one of the founder members of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations as well as being the fourth world President.

Margaret Fletcher died aged 76 on 21st December 1943.

Today the Catholic Women's League is a world-wide organisation.

**Hands On in Kitui in Kenya – CAFOD project completed!**

**Mary Watkins**

The community of Kitui in Kenya have spent two years working on a project to re-sculpt their landscape and bring back a sustainable supply of water. This has all been possible thanks to generous supporters in the UK, including parishioners at St Laurence's.

CAFOD reports everywhere we look we are greeted by signs of transformation. Our dam and wells are filling, people's gardens and our community farm are starting to produce harvests, and the landscape is so much greener than just two years ago.

Perhaps the most pleasing transformation is that, by seeing what they have been able to accomplish, the people of Kitui feel ready for anything!



The community has been transformed

Thanks to you, our regular donors, the people of Kitui have changed their lives. Over the last two years we have planted trees, dug terraces, built dams and learned everything necessary to bring safe water back to the Kitui community and people here don't have to walk for many miles each day just to have enough to drink. So a most important step on the journey was filling the dam again:



The Musosya dam was first cleared of silt and debris and is now collecting water.



The community are being trained on maintenance of the wells.



To make the best use of the reservoir, solar powered pumps were installed at our wells.

Thanks to the project, families in Kitui have seen their crop yields increase three-fold!



People continue to improve their land, using the skills they have picked up from our project.

## **Report of the Parish Forum, St Laurence's Church, Monday, 3rd October 2016**

The meeting was attended by Fr Pat, and Jay Magpuyo, with Jim O'Sullivan in the Chair and 21 members of the Parish

**Database:** Parish registration forms have been issued and about 260+ returned. These will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Uses for this data will include the *Alive in Faith* campaign, other information held in the parish office and an email circulation form for those who wish to be kept in contact for all sorts of things including emergencies.

**Open Church:** This is being well used and the new CCTV system has picked up one individual, not known to the Parish, behaving in a suspicious manner.

**Structure of the Forum:** The present set up was agreed last time to be satisfactory. The Facilitation Group will now be called the Forum Facilitation Group to tie it clearly to the Forum. It was stressed that the Forum Facilitation Group does not undertake all the plans but helps see that things are actioned by others. To further publicise the group a poster will be placed on the boards in the Narthex and on the website with photos of current members. All Masses except the 8am are currently represented. It is planned that members of the group should serve for 2 or 3 years to assist in active recruitment and to prevent it becoming a stale or closed group.

**Bulletin:** The proposal for a larger format bulletin was discussed. Richard Birkett will set up a template for large format bulletin for use whenever needed.

**Alive in Faith** fundraising campaign: Fr Pat explained this diocesan project, the aim of which is to raise a large sum of money (£185,000 St Laurence's goal) to pay for seminarians training and retired clergy care. In addition a good proportion of the money raised by each parish will be returned to that parish for local projects. Fr Pat thought that 50% of this money should be administered by SVP for outreach and social care work. The other half should be ring fenced for replacement of the Church roof. Money over and above this could be used for other projects. There was general support for this proposal. Martine Walsh suggested training for the laity should be an important part of this. Sarah Sykes suggested money to support youth work would be excellent. Parishioners pledge a sum over 5 years. The campaign should be completed by December.

**CAFOD:** implementation of the new *Connect2 Peru* project will be delayed until the New Year to give time to get *Alive in Faith* off the ground.

**Liturgy:** There was discussion regarding Advent house masses which are liked but leave many out who would like to attend. It was felt that it would be good to target areas of the parish so that different villages etc. have an opportunity to take part and this could encourage new hosts etc. The office will coordinate this.

Chioma Ubajaka is organising the Posada this year. She will make a rota for people to sign up and present it well before the beginning of Advent.

**Finance:** Heating – the heaters were on during the summer. Installing thermostats would be very expensive so they will be switched off manually in warm weather.

The Parish will look at making BACS payments for those for whom it is more convenient and cheaper.

**Social Life:** A party for the Parish musicians will be held as usual on St Cecilia's day on November 22nd.

**Catechesis:** The Diocesan New Evangelisation Project is now known as *Proclaim*. There will be a deanery meeting to help parishes set up a team to carry the project through, to be held on 5th November at Sacred Heart Church, St Ives.

There will need to be a new person to head up the Confirmation preparation next year. Helene who is part of the Ablaze Mass has been asked to take this on with Chrissy Brierley helping.

Sue Price continues to run the First Communion preparation.

There is a new diocesan Marriage preparation programme.

Helen Allan and Rosina Abudulai continue to run the Baptism preparation which remains voluntary and very successful.

**Buildings:** A leak from the shower in the presbytery has damaged the ceiling in the disabled toilet. A new shower will be installed. The damage should be rectifiable and payable through insurance. *[The work has now been complete - Ed]*

**School:** The school has a lovely new website. Mary Watkins is very pleased to be able to do more with CAFOD in school. The new road outside seems very good after the disruption of August.

**Parish Groups:** SVP are setting up Mini Vinnies groups for children. The group has been initiated at the school by the headteacher. Hopefully more groups can be set up throughout East Anglia and even in schools other than Catholic schools. Volunteers are needed to help spread this. The focus is on spiritual development with groups meeting once a week and, once in each term doing a fundraising or volunteering project. Further details can be found in the *Pilgrim*, Sept 2016.

**AOB:** Jim O'Sullivan gave notice that he was stepping down as Chair of the Forum at the end of 2017 and that Virginia Bird would like to be replaced as minute-taker at the same time. After some years on the Forum Facilitation Group, Dick Wilson has stepped down.

Jim O'Sullivan will represent the parish on the Laity Commission.

Jay Magpuyo is visiting the BUPA Home on the old Chesterton Hospital site. There will be a weekly Mass there. Masses have stopped, for the time being, at Bramley Court as there are no Catholic residents at present.

**FORUM DATES FOR 2017;** Thursday 19th January; Monday 24th April; Thursday 6th July; Monday 16th October  
Minutes of the last Forum have been publicised in the Narthex and on the website and are on offer to anyone who wishes to have them emailed (email [forum@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:forum@saintlaurence.org.uk) ).

If you missed out on filling in a Parish registration form last month, please complete the form below and hand it in to the priest after Mass, or email your details to the Parish Office: [office@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:office@saintlaurence.org.uk) and put '**Parish registration details**' in the subject line.

### St Laurence's Catholic Church Registration Form

Please complete this form in BLOCK CAPITALS.

SURNAME: \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

OCCUPATION: \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE SURNAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SPOUSE FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

OCCUPATION: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ POSTCODE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

TEL: \_\_\_\_\_ MOBILE: \_\_\_\_\_

In signing this form I agree that the information provided on this form is for the internal use by the Parish and Diocese only. The Parish will store and process the information in accordance with the data Protection Act. They will also keep me/us informed by telephone and other means about important Parish news, fundraising initiatives events!

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## What is the FORUM FACILITATION GROUP?

Have you ever asked who makes sure the Church buildings and grounds are in good order?

Who comes up with ideas for our liturgy or for decorating our church?

Who organises social events?

Who notices that you can't see the altar from the balcony, and does something about it?

The answer is, of course: we all can do!

We have great Parish priests, a hard-working office, and individuals and groups dedicated to some of these things. But the more of us that get involved, the better our Parish life will be.

One way to get involved is our Parish Forum. This is an open meeting to which we are all invited. It meets 4 times per year and is a place to hear news on Parish life, make suggestions, and discuss ideas.

Of course, agreeing actions at the Forum is only useful if those things get done. A small group, the Forum Facilitation Group, aims to make sure this happens. There are currently 7 of us and we'd love a few more volunteers. If **you** could spare an hour to meet on a few evenings each year, and a little time in between to organise or help with some tasks, please come and speak to any of the current members or Fr Pat, or email us at: [forumfacilitation@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:forumfacilitation@saintlaurence.org.uk)

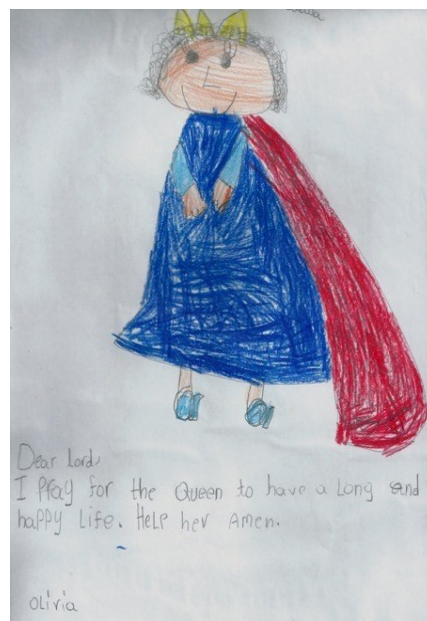
We'd also be interested to hear from you if you have a particular skill that you'd like to offer to St Laurence's when we need it for a specific project or need. For example, skills relating to buildings (architect, surveyor, building or related trade), gardening, communications (writing, web or print design), IT, administration, teaching, or simply enjoy organising social events.

If you are someone who likes to get things done, please do consider how you could help.

 <p>Virginia Bird 11am</p>	 <p>Nora Darby 6pm</p>	 <p>Christine Knight 11am</p>	 <p>Jim O'Sullivan 11am</p>
 <p>Sarah Sykes 9.30am</p>	 <p>Stephen Warde 11am</p>	 <p>Serga Collett 9.30am</p>	<p>Clare Witcom James McQuillan 11am</p>

## Some work from St Laurence's School

As I speak to you today I recall that Jesus died for us to be our King for ever and when he was born he saved our sins for ever after. Through out my long and happy life I have tried to follow Jesus' important words. I pray that we all reflect on their true meaning this Christmas. By Alice Shaw



My faith has supported me in my duties through out my long and happy life. I have tried to make the world a better place. At Christmas time it is important to remember the birth of Jesus and how he made the world a better place by healing and loving people. This Christmas try and make the world a better place by giving just a little bit of money to charity and love one another.

by Milena



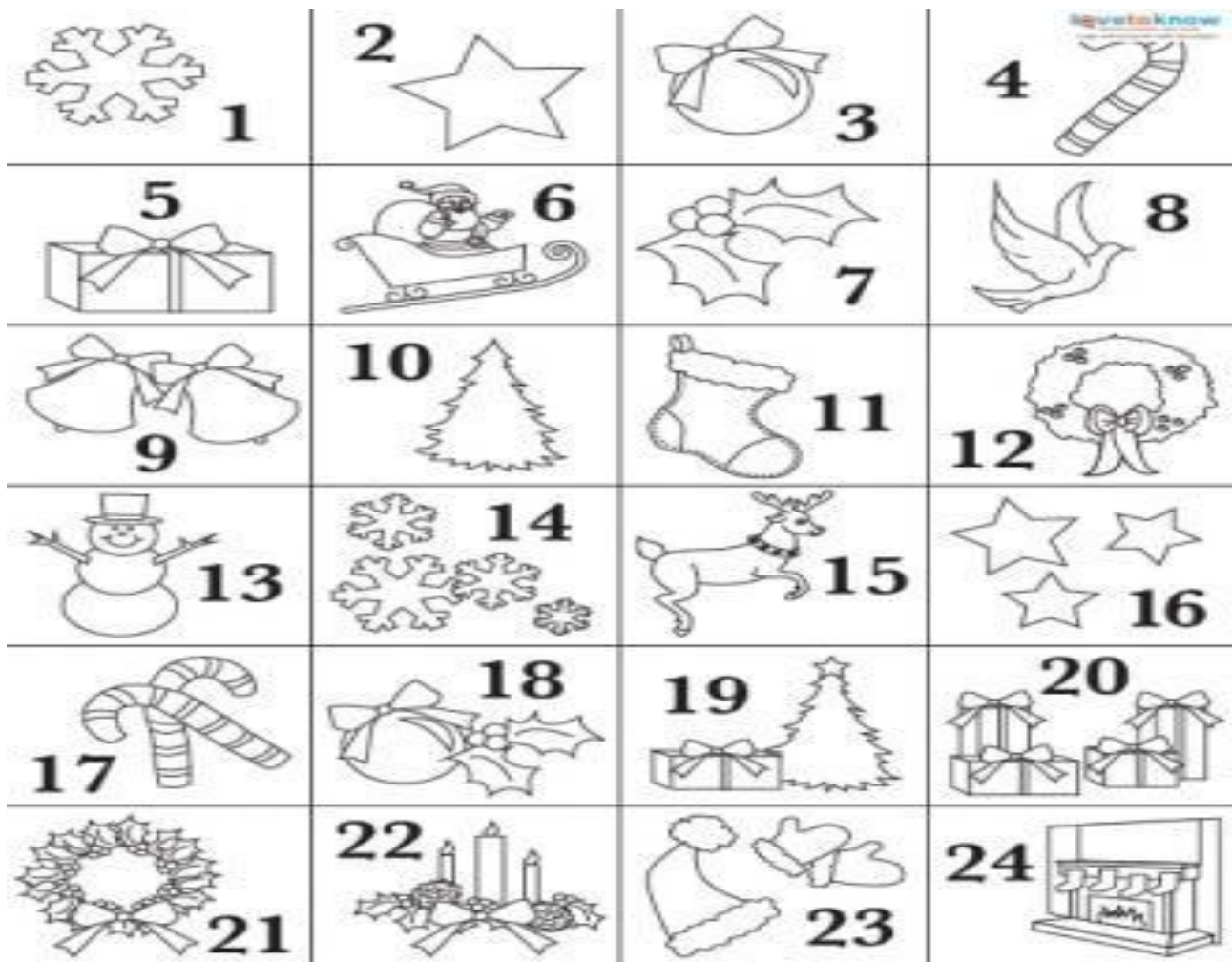
Dear Lord,  
We give you thanks for our Queen's long and happy life. Guide her and help her to make good decisions. Amen

by Cindy

I am the Queen and today I am sharing my Christmas message with you. You can reflect on this year. You can be kind to other people because it will make you closer to God. We should be kind and helpful to other people in the world.

by Simonet.

# Advent Colouring Calendar



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

## Advent wordsearch

ANGEL  
 READY  
 EXPECT  
 WATCH  
 COME  
 MARY  
 CANDLE  
 WREATH  
 EMMANUEL

## Archaeology in Histon and Impington, April — August 2016

### David Oates, Project Leader

A report on the first series of digs appeared in the September Pilgrim. A very productive final weekend not only took our tally of test pits to 28 but revealed the original Anglo-Saxon locations of both Histon and Impington, showed the reduction in arable cultivation after the Black Death, the emparkment of the Impington Hall estate, and even gave us our first Roman coin!



Dig



Sieve



Wash

The team was joined by leaders from other local groups and volunteers from Cottenham, Chesterton, St

Ives, Shelford, Sawston, Swavesey and Great Bardfield to augment the impressive number of friends, relations and neighbours brave enough to come to help us and try something a bit different. The team is very grateful for their help.



Richard discussing a medieval pot handle from Barrowcrofts

Richard Mortimer, Senior Projects Manager with Oxford Archaeology East, very kindly joined us at the Sunday afternoon bring and share tea. In a fascinating and most entertaining talk he examined and explained the finds and showed us that we really had made significant discoveries.

Richard explained how people lived in scattered settlements up to the middle Saxon period, about 800-900 AD. They then started to live together in "tuns" or towns, with names ending in -ton. Such villages would then soon acquire a church nearby. Remarkably, we found the characteristic thick hand-made black pottery of this period both at Church Street in Histon and in Park Drive on the edge of the College grounds in Impington. So that is where and when our villages first started.

Richard described the 'manuring' of the arable fields. Every piece of animal and domestic waste – literally – and including broken pots, went onto a heap which was subsequently spread on the fields. The resulting thin sprinkling of pottery fragments was turned over and abraded by the ploughs, indicating arable use of the land but not the presence of habitation. If the pottery stops at a particular date, it indicates that the land reverted to pasture at that time. The types of unglazed medieval pottery found in Barrowcrofts and West Road show that these fields were probably returned to pasture following the population decline after the Black Death.

At Park Drive there were no post-medieval deposits at all - it would appear that Impington Park was formed into pasture, perhaps at a Tudor date, and people were possibly resettled elsewhere.





Anglo-Saxon pottery from Church Street, Histon



Worked flint from Park Drive, Impington

Perhaps 6000 years old is this small worked flint, found in Park Drive. Would it be mounted in a wooden handle for a knife, or should we imagine half a dozen set in the end of a hefty club?

Very exciting was the discovery in Church Street of a small bronze Roman coin, thought to date from Constantus II 334-337 AD.



The coin

Over 250 people were involved at some stage or another - a remarkable effort. Several people have commented on the social aspects of the project - how working together has promoted a feeling of community and provided an opportunity to get to know people you would not normally meet. All quite apart from the spectacular uncovering of the origins of our villages.

## House Masses in St Laurence's Parish

### Sarah Sykes

Have you ever thought of hosting a house Mass for friends, family and people in your local area but not really known how to go about it?

Recently, Fr Pat made his usual offer to preside over house Masses throughout Advent and will, I'm sure, do the same for Lent. Indeed, he said he would be happy to say a house Mass at any time of the year.

House Masses are a lovely occasion - inviting fellow parishioners to share the mystery of Mass in your own home - and a phone call or word with Fr Pat after Mass can soon organise a convenient date. Personal invitations and word of mouth are the best ways to let people know your plans. However, to reach as many people as possible from your neighbourhood, it is a good idea to put a notice in the weekly bulletin to let all know the date and the area where the house Mass will be held along with a contact name and telephone number. A note by email, a handwritten note delivered to the presbytery or a quick phone call to the office on Tues, Weds, Thurs mornings with details is all that is needed.

It is a good way to get to know fellow parishioners living in your area over a cuppa and biscuit at the end of the evening.

1. Contact Fr Pat by phone or have a chat after Mass;
2. Agree a date and time. He will let you know what he needs to set up for Mass;
3. Personal invites and word of mouth;
4. A note in the bulletin a week or two before with a contact name and telephone number and information about where the house Mass will be;
5. A quick tidy up!
6. Make sure you've plenty of tea, coffee, and biscuits! But, please, nothing more elaborate than that.

Look out for invites in the newsletter to house masses this Advent season.



## Personal Stories and Experiences

### Letter from Ivona and Marcellus

*Some of you may know Ivona and Marcellus Boot, former parishioners of St Laurence's who have recently moved and are living in Cotton near Stowmarket while they wait to move into their new home. They write to us to remind us of the great treasure we now have in our Open Church. [Ed.]*

Dear Fr Pat

We are so delighted to hear that St Laurence's is now open all through the day for Adoration and private prayer. Even if the Blessed Sacrament isn't exposed, one can still do a Holy Hour and that is something we so miss since moving to the country. We absolutely love it here, but getting to Mass, to Church, is a real journey - six miles to Mass, each week, down winding country roads, which many folk seem to treat as a race track, hair-raisingly over-taking on too near corners. What it will be like in the winter - in mist, in fog, in sleet, in frost, in snow is quite beyond me

Thus to get to Mass, to make it in one piece, is for me (Ivona), quite a relief - I didn't realise it would be so hard to galvanise oneself to get to Mass. I'd always taken it for granted; walk, hop on the bus, even two buses. But here we only get two buses - one into the village and one out - twice a day. So the car it is. I used to joke I was going to get a horse to go in by bridle path - the joke is now becoming slightly more a reality - at least you can start a horse in bad weather.

We should be in our new cottage farm by mid-September giving us enough time to sort the wobbly chimney stack and set up a chimney pot to make sure the open fire embers don't catch the thatch. Time to shore up the barns (2 a bit dilapidated), against the country weather and time to make sure we have enough oil/wood, in case we get snowed in. Time to pack and wrap extra food .... The local shop is only tiny and everyone here has to be wise and prudent about food in advance .... But it'll be the spiritual food we'll really miss - the Food of Life.

If I'd known our nearest church was to be six miles away I'd have said to Marcellus, "We just can't." It just didn't *occur* to me that getting to Mass would be, could be, such a challenge. We used to do weekly 'Adoration' - we haven't been for a month; over ... I know one can pray at home but it really, truly, utterly isn't the same.

Please tell the congregation at St Laurence's just what they've got. What opportunity. Jesus - there - in the Tabernacle - Live - Available - Asking -Waiting - so

wanting them to visit. Oh! If only we could, but our Church doors have set times for Adoration. We can't even just turn up like you can at the Dominicans and say, "Please may we visit Jesus for a while," or nip into St Edmunds any time, and so it's a special six mile journey in and I just can't take the continual to-ing and fro-ing down those bendy roads; it just does me in - I'm on tenterhooks as, "Lookout round next hairpin bend obscured by bushes (even the ones they clip back)" in the passenger seat all the time - the Anglican Church only 1 ½ miles away ....but we are ... Catholic. Hard-won, hard-earned, hard-lived, precious Truth, we will not compromise and so, Christians, yes, Unity yes .... But Catholic. I feel like a Recusant Tudor Alien sometimes but ... we're Catholic ... and so it is ... six miles to Mass. But, we are hoping to knock three of our stables into a chapel and hopefully organise something for us local Catholics re. Adoration and Mass sometimes, before I get too frazzled (and grey) to get to Mass at all :)

Please pray for us. We would love to see you all sometime. Despite the winding roads, and perhaps even *because* of them, this is a most beautiful and forgotten type of old world rural around here. Thatched cottages with mediaeval pargeting, ancient hedgerows and byways, pretty brooks rippling along through Iris, and Blackberry glades graced with Eglantine and Dog roses that Shakespeare himself would delight in. The cornfields bright and shining with joy, insects hanging in the sunbeams, the light by turn strong, soft, dusky; the air pure and fresh and beautiful. It is God's country, rediscovered, full of Churches dedicated to Our Blessed Lady; Mary's Isle as was, once, long ago, still here.

We hope that you will come and visit us sometime when we're set up on our little six-acre farm. We hope to provide a place of prayer, of rest in God - with sheep - what else for those of you who know us. ☺

Till then, we think of you, as friends, but really we write to exhort you to take advantage of the beauty, the preciousness of having St Laurence's OPEN ALL DAY LONG. To go and adore and worship, pour your heart out, to love and pray to your dear Jesus, there, live in the Tabernacle. Would we have that easy opportunity here?

In the blessed love of Christ,

Ivona and Marcellus Boot Xx

## Via De La Plata – The Silver Route – Saint James’ Mozarab Way.

### Petra Tucker

Three names for the Spanish Camino route which starts in Seville and 750 miles later ends in Santiago de Compostela. It is the oldest Camino route and not many people walk it so we expected many differences from the *Camino Français* (which we walked last year) but we didn’t realise quite how hard it would be! In two weeks we saw just 20 pilgrims even though September is supposedly a popular time (it’s just too hot in June/July/August). In Roman times, Andalucía was a major centre for silver mining so large parts of this Camino follow an old Roman road, as indicated by signs which supplement the traditional shells and yellow arrows.



On September 16<sup>th</sup> we set off from Seville Cathedral early and full of energy. The signpost indicating “1000 km to Santiago” was easy to find but then the signs disappeared, fortunately we were rescued by an elderly local runner who spoke no

English but clearly understood our predicament (on seeing the shells hanging from our backpacks). Taking no chances, 15 minutes later he ran up to us again to check we were going in the right direction.



As advertised, our first night’s accommodation was fitted with air conditioning, however the extraordinary arrangement of cables, hoses, buckets and switches looked so dangerous that we opted to doze all night in stifling heat. The first few days of walking were through farming countryside where Iberian pigs were

our constant companions as they demonstrated their appetite for eating freshly fallen acorns. In Monasterio, the town museum is 90% dedicated to the pig industry and it became clear that we had missed the annual festival of the pig by just a few days. We walked through a beautiful national park with both oak and cork trees in abundance.

The relentless heat (32 degrees from 10am to 6pm every day) encouraged us to start walking at 7am, an hour before dawn (using torches to find the arrows), as we needed to get at least half the day’s walking done before the sun began to blaze. There was little or no shade and some days there was nowhere to stop and buy food or drink.

Walking in these temperatures with a rucksack it really paid off that we travelled extremely lightly indeed, my load being 5 lbs.



Most of our accommodation was very good indeed and at least two places we would like to visit again, particularly the charming hotel in the village of Aljucen. By contrast, one night our ‘hotel’ turned out to be in an industrial estate (not detectable from the photos) and the only other guest took extreme

objection to being asked to quieten down at 3am so tried to kick our door down. The rest of the night was spent sitting outside the local church. This tale provided much amusement to other *peregrinos*, two of whom (Alma and Melba from Houston) we met up with several times.

After this episode, we had breakfast with them and then took a bus to the next hotel as two long days of walking with 2 hours sleep in the middle didn’t appeal to us! From the region of Andalucía we entered Extremadura. This was noticeably poorer and had a lot of signs talking of EU-funded projects. We ended the first stage of this route (220 miles) in Cáceres, a beautiful town with many fortifications and buildings spanning centuries. We had a room just off Plaza Mayor and spent a lazy day exploring and drinking some very good local wines. From Cáceres, we took a slow train that meandered around hills and plains on its way to Madrid.

We are planning to walk the next third in April. This time we will build in a couple of rest days to allow us to properly enjoy the towns along our route.

## **My grandson's First Holy Communion Day, June 2011**

### **Pauline Gullick**

My grandson, Kieran, made his First Holy Communion in June 2011. It was a special day so we bought him a new shirt, new trousers, new socks and shoes for this very special day. But on the day, Kieran said he didn't want to wear the new clothes. So he wore a t-shirt, trousers and trainers; we were very disappointed.

When we arrived, we said to Fr Pat that Kieran wouldn't wear the new clothes we had bought for him. Fr Pat very reassuringly said, "It's not important what is on the outside. It's the inside that matters."

Kieran still receives Holy Communion so that's the important thing, isn't it?

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## **Review**

### **A Little Way of Healing**

T. Pauline Edwards  
4th revised ed., Ogilvie Press, 2015, ISBN: 978-1-910179-64-2

### **Sarah Sykes**

A Little Way of Healing is about the gift of healing given by Our Lord to the author Pauline Edwards. The aim of the book, as the author explains, is to witness to the healing work that has been accomplished and invite and encourage the reader to come to one of the courses so that as many people as possible can find healing and to witness God as a power and presence in the world.

The book is split into 4 sections. The first gives some background to Pauline's life and how she came to faith. The second explains how her healing ministry came about and developed. The third section records many testimonies of those who have experienced healing through Pauline – and her prayer partner, Fr Laurence's – ministry. The final section is a description of the process of healing sessions conducted and taught on the healing courses.

The author's healing ministry is a specific ministry of the 'healing of memories'; usually those from the very early years of a person's life. And, in that spiritual healing a physical healing often is also manifested.

She likens the release and healing granted by the Lord to Jesus calling forth Lazarus from the tomb and then telling the onlookers to unbind him. "In this type of prayer, God calls the person out of their particular

## **Diana Ross**

### **Pauline Gullick**

Several years ago Diana Ross of the "Supremes" was appearing at a Royal Variety Show. She broke from script and said the following:

'There is a place for us; for each and every one of us.....

Whether we are Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Gentile, black or white, rich or poor .....

..... And that is why Martin Luther King died.

What Diana Ross said impressed me very much. I don't know what the readers of the Pilgrim think?

'tomb' and He allows us, by His power and using His gifts, to do 'the unbinding'

The healing moment always involves forgiveness and reconciliation but, in the midst of long-buried hurts being uncovered, it is not always easy to do this, but she teaches that it is enough to take the first steps "to want to want" to forgive.

On a slightly parallel note, we have heard, over the last year or so, about New Evangelisation, and it is a concept that the author mentions several times in her book. She sees healing as a type of evangelisation and I think this quote sums it up well:

"The Eucharist is central to my life.... The daily reception of the Eucharist keeps me closer to God because I realise that I am a tabernacle no matter how unworthy I am. I am also reminded that I must not keep Him locked up but I must share Jesus with everyone and introduce Him to those who don't know him."

The Little Way of Healing Ministries run regular healing of memories teaching courses throughout the country, as well as Parish Healing Missions, Outreach days/evenings and healing events. You can find out more about the ministry and order the book at [www.littlewayhealingministries.com](http://www.littlewayhealingministries.com).

'Remember that it is Jesus Christ who is the Saviour of the world and not us. He allows us to be His instruments.'

If you have an interest in healing and enjoy reading about God's power being manifest in the world today. I recommend this book to you.

## Tailpiece

### Beards in fashion?

Judy bought me a book for my birthday called *The Philosophy of Beards*, full of scrappy second-hand history, arguing that bearded races are braver and more successful, and drivel about manliness. Published in 1854 by J.Haddock, and published again in 2014 by the British Library! Truly dotty.

Fashions have changed, probably because of the safety razor and the electric shaver. The RAF was strictly clean shaven. I suppose you wouldn't want your beard to catch in the propeller. I remember aged perhaps four, asking my father why he didn't have a beard. I can't remember exactly what he said, except that, to silence me, he told me "birds build their nests in them". Shortly afterwards my mother took me to the barber to have my hair cut. Among those waiting their turn was a man with a fine beard, rare and out of fashion at the time. I embarrassed my mother, amused the other customers and annoyed the owner of the beard, by going up to him and asking "Do the birds build their nests in your beard?"

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### How to avoid falling asleep in Church

In his *Brief Lives* John Aubrey (1626-1695) wrote short biographical notices, from a paragraph to several pages, about acquaintances, friends and the prominent going back well into the previous century.



From the rather sketchy *Life* of the revered Bishop Lancelot Andrewes (born 1555, died as Bishop of Winchester, 1626) we learn that when still at Pembroke Hall, he was much sought after by the Puritan faction. But they failed to get him to be one of them, and he was well-known for defying strict Sabbath observance for a good cause: Aubrey tells us:

"There was then at Cambridge a good fatt alderman that was wont to sleep at church, which the alderman endeavoured to prevent but could not. Well! This was preached against as a signe of *reprobation*. ["the act by which God condemns sinners to eternal punishment"; gratuitously in Calvinism]. The good man was exceedingly troubled at it, and went to Andrewes' chamber to be satisfied in point of conscience. Mr Andrewes told him that it was an ill habit of body and not of mind, and that it was against his will; advised him on Sundays to make a more sparing meale, and to mend it at supper. The alderman did so, but sleepe comes upon him again for all that, and was preached

at. He comes again to be resolved, with tears in his eies; Andrewes then told him he would have him make a good hearty meale as he was wont to doe, and presently [i.e. immediately] take out his full sleep. He did so; came to St. Marie's, where the preacher was prepared with a sermon to damne all who slept at sermon, a certain signe of *reprobation*. The good alderman having taken his full nap before, lookes on the preacher all sermon time, and spoyled the designe."

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### Reasons not to match wits with children - part 2

A Kindergarten teacher was observing her classroom of children while they were drawing. She would occasionally walk around to see each child's work. As she got to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was.

The girl replied, 'I'm drawing God.' The teacher paused and said, 'But no one knows what God looks like.' Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, 'They will in a minute.'

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### Reflections – Growing old gracefully!

1. Going to bed early
2. Not leaving my house
3. Not going to a party .....

.... my childhood punishments have become my adult goals!

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When I was a child I thought nap time was punishment ... now, as a grown up, it just feels like a small vacation.



I've lost my mind and I'm pretty sure my kids took it.



Lord, give me patience and give it to me NOW.



I don't have grey hair. I have 'wisdom highlights'.



I'm going to retire and live off of my savings. Not sure what I'll do that second week.

## **Editorial Comment**

As we go to press this month the Extraordinary Year of Mercy comes to an end.

The opening of the Doors, around this time last year, symbolically illustrated the idea that the Church's Faithful are offered an extraordinary path towards salvation during the time of the Jubilee. In his homily earlier this month, Cardinal Agostino Vallini said that this year has taught us that 'mercy is not a sign of weakness or surrender but a strong magnanimous radiation of the loving omnipotence of the Father who heals our weaknesses raises us from our falls and urges us to the good.'

Why a Jubilee of Mercy? asked the Pope of pilgrims at the start of the year.

Answering his own question he told them I'm not just saying 'because it is a good thing' but 'because the Church needs it!'

We are the Church. We needed this Year of Mercy, but let not the closing of the Doors be the end of Mercy in the Church but let it continue on through us, through our actions in the world.

In case you didn't read about it in the Diocesan newspaper, here are some ideas to inspire you, which another Parish embarked on during the Year of Mercy:

**Feed the hungry:** support the local foodbank.

**Give drink to the thirsty:** support the Water Aid charity through Lent by giving something up and donating the money saved.

**Clothe the naked:** support a clothes bank or other charity that asks for clothing.

**Visit the imprisoned:** support the cost of supplying your local prison with, for example, CTS pamphlets to be handed out by the prison chaplain.

**Comfort the sick:** local visiting; praying for the intentions of the sick.

**Shelter the homeless:** support SVP Vinnie packs containing emergency cold weather essentials.

**Bury the dead:** support a charity which provides financial assistance for those who need help with funeral costs.

### **The production team:**

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**We thank all who have contributed to this edition and hope to welcome interesting and original material in forthcoming editions.**

**We are now printing** in-house, would you like to help one afternoon every 3 months?

**The deadline for the next edition is 3rd February 2017** for publication 4/5th March

Preparing  
for His  
Coming

advent

Hope  
Peace  
Love  
Joy



# ST LAURENCE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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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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## Treasurer:

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01223 704640

## Service Times

Saturday 9.30am

6pm Vigil Mass (sung)

Sunday 8.00am

9.30am (sung)

with children's liturgy

This Mass is held at St Laurence's School, Arbury Road.

During school holidays it is held at the Church.

11am (sung)

with children's liturgy

Join us for coffee in the Parish Room afterwards.

Mon - Thurs 9.30am

Friday 12.30pm

*Check the weekly newsletter for changes to the above times*

## St Laurence's School

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