

The Pilgrim

St Laurence's Parish Magazine, Lent Edition 2021



Easter means hope

Contents

Parish Organisations & Activities

CAFOD's Lent appeal ' Walk for Water'	1
Stations of the Cross	1
Map for Stations of the Cross	2
Walking Stations of the Cross Guide	3-4
Children's Lit.: Good Friday & online links	5
SVP Update	6
First Holy Communion Update	6
Summary of January 2021's Parishioners' Open Meeting	7

Features and Opinions

Turn off the News – look out the window!!	8
When you can't come to Holy Communion	8-9
The Pleasures of Earth are Occasions for Joy	9-11
Three ways to pray	11
Still fasting	11-12
International Justice	12
Priesthood and Celibacy: discerning the future	12-15

Getting New Priests	15
'TRUTH' - the final frontier!	15-16
St Alphonsus	16
Cardinal Points	17-18
Gift Aid	18
St Laurence School Photos	19-22

Personal Stories & Experiences

Bringing Back Memories	23
Listening in Lockdown	23-24
Inside view on a Covid-19 vaccine trial	24-25
Thought for the Day- Where is God in all this?	25

Poetry Corner

Poetry Corner	26
Reviews	26
Tailpiece	27
Editorial	28



**LENT: A TIME FOR RENEWING
FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE
- POPE FRANCIS**

@catholicbishops

Parish Organisations And Activities

CAFOD's Lent appeal 'Walk for Water'

Serga Collett

Did you have a cup of tea this morning? Did you just turn on the tap, wash your hands and brush your teeth – or maybe you even had a shower? And the water just comes running out; clean, hygienic, hot or cold! We wash our hands probably more than ever before – the coronavirus pandemic has shown how important it is to have stringent hygiene routines and that, of course, comes with one essential requirement; to have access to clean, safe water. And yet one in three people globally DO NOT have access to clean drinking water – a real basic need. At the same time, lockdown and coronavirus restrictions have made the work of charities such as CAFOD really challenging and fundraising very difficult. That is why your generosity this Lent is needed more than ever.

Let me tell you Abdella's story. Abdella is 23 and lives in a small village in the Afar region in northern Ethiopia. He wakes before dawn to start on a long journey that will see him walk along a dried-out riverbed, over rocks, and over a mountain just to get a drink of water. The entire journey to get water for the family will take Abdella ten hours. And despite this demanding and risky trek, he is only able to supply his family with two jerry cans of water each day.

Can you imagine needing a drink of water and having to spend most of the day collecting it? Coming back exhausted and bruised from the journey? Abdella gets fed up: "I am a young man. I am wasting my life. What would I do if I had the time? I would start a small business. I want to make something of myself." Can you help Abdella?

What your donation could buy:



£10 can buy sturdy water containers; **£40** can bring safe drinking water to a hard-to-reach school; **£70** can help someone like Abdella start a small business; **£750** can give a community water supply.

Throughout Lent, as well as the Lent appeal in February, you will be able donate on **St Laurence's Cambridge 'Walk for Water' JustGiving page** – individuals and teams have taken on the challenge of

walking 10,000 steps a day – that's five miles a day! You can still join in the challenge? Even the doggies are getting in on the act and have made up a team! Whether taking part or praying to stand in solidarity with Abdella, support him and others like him in order for CAFOD to have their best appeal ever Your donations are needed more than ever! You can of course also donate to CAFOD's Lent appeal online at cafod.org.uk/give or by texting **Lent** to **70460**.

Stations of the Cross

Gail Osman

I have created a 10,000 step journey of the Stations of the Cross with the start and finish at St Laurence's Church.

10,000 steps is this year's Lenten pledge and was originally set, to try and encourage people to do 10,000 steps a day to remind us how far so many people have to go to get their basic water supplies.

Obviously, we are not expecting people to do our walk every day but maybe as a treat once a week during Lent. Along the way, I have picked out significant landmarks for each Station and Helena at Radio Maria England has created a [podcast recording](#) for you to listen to as you travel the journey. There will also be a script that can be printed out with the map as an alternative.

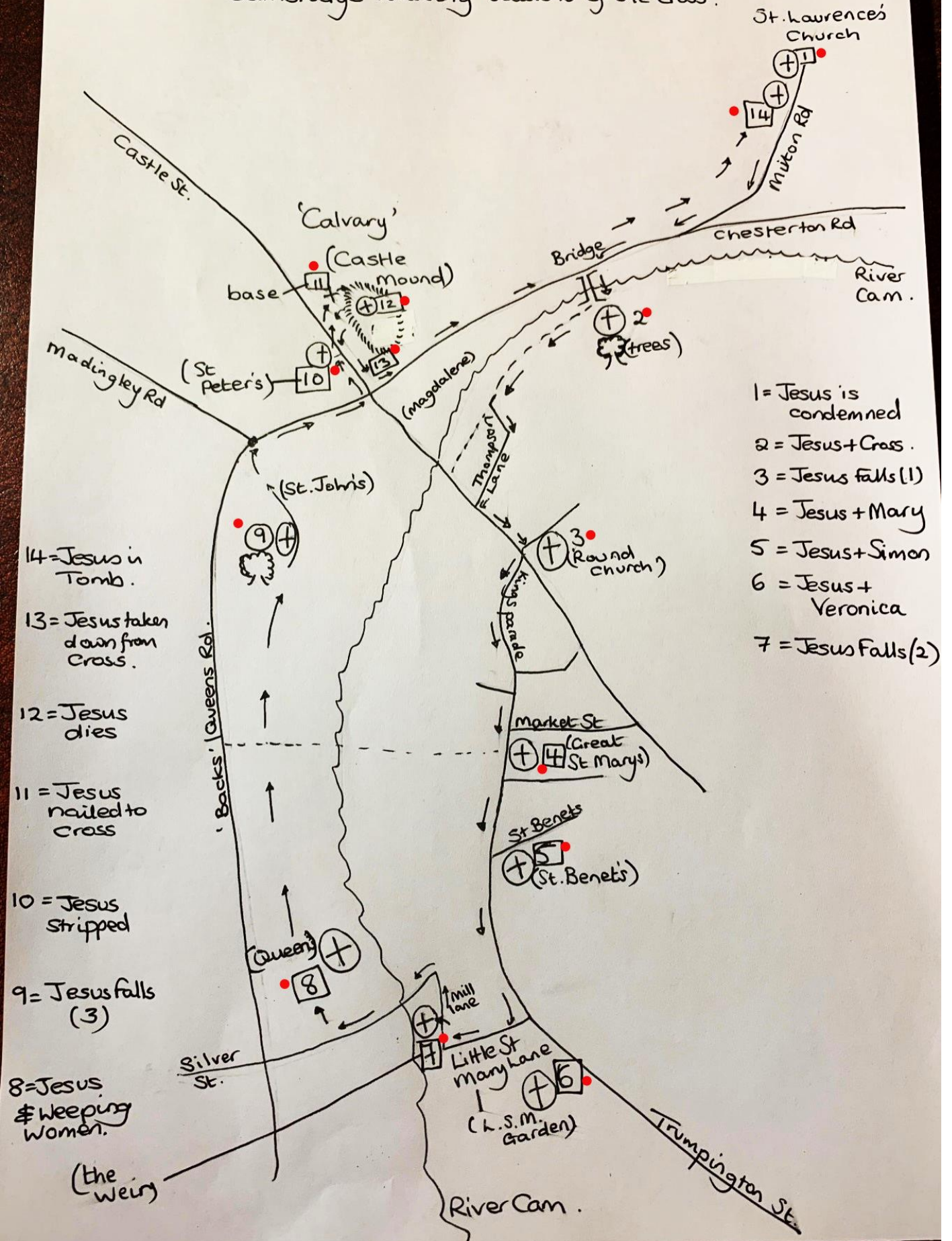
The terrain is all flat except for the Calvary Station which can be done at the top of Castle Mound with breath taking views across the city and added poignancy at dusk. However, for those who can't make the steps, the Stations can be performed at the base. At each Station there is a safe area to stop and reflect.

Loretta at St John Fisher Church has created a similar version in Cambourne.

I hope you will enjoy this very different Stations of the Cross this year that conforms to Lockdown rules, and will be a great opportunity for exercise, but even more so will be a really beautiful and reflective experience.

For those who are house- and garden-bound you could travel with us by printing out the map and spacing your Stations around your garden and or home. I also intend to record a version as I am walking the route, so parishioners like my Mum, who are housebound, can follow with me and enjoy the most moving journey from their home.

Cambridge Walking Stations of the Cross.



- 1 = Jesus is condemned
- 2 = Jesus + Cross.
- 3 = Jesus falls (1)
- 4 = Jesus + Mary
- 5 = Jesus + Simon
- 6 = Jesus + Veronica
- 7 = Jesus Falls (2)

- 14 = Jesus in Tomb.
- 13 = Jesus taken down from Cross.
- 12 = Jesus dies
- 11 = Jesus nailed to cross
- 10 = Jesus stripped
- 9 = Jesus falls (3)
- 8 = Jesus & Weeping Women.

Cambridge Walking Stations of the Cross

Start and finish: St Laurence's Church (10,000 steps)

Station 1: St Laurence's Church: *Jesus is condemned to Death*



Station 2: *Jesus takes up His Cross*

Tree by bridge Jesus lock/ Jesus green



Station 3: *Jesus falls the first time*

Round Church/ Church of the Holy Sepulchre



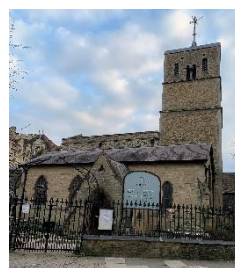
Station 4: *Jesus meets Mary*

Great St Mary's Church



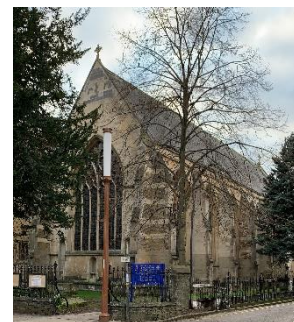
Station 5: *Jesus is helped by Simon*

St Bene't's Church



Station 6: *Veronica wipes Jesus' face*

Little St Mary's Lane / Churchyard, Little St Mary's



Station 7: *Jesus falls a second time*

The weir near Scudamores



Station 8: *Jesus meets the weeping women*

Queen's College



Station 9: Jesus falls a third time

The trees to the rear of St John's College.... Still a way to go!



Station 10: Jesus is stripped of his clothes

Little St Peter's Church



Station 11: Jesus is nailed to the Cross

Base of Castle Mound Now climb our **Calvary**



Station 12: Jesus dies on the Cross

The top of Castle Mound



Station 13: Jesus is taken down from the Cross

War memorial in St Giles churchyard

Station 14: Jesus is laid in the Tomb

Return to St Laurence's Church



God Bless!



Children's Liturgy: Good Friday event and online resources

Leonie Isaacson

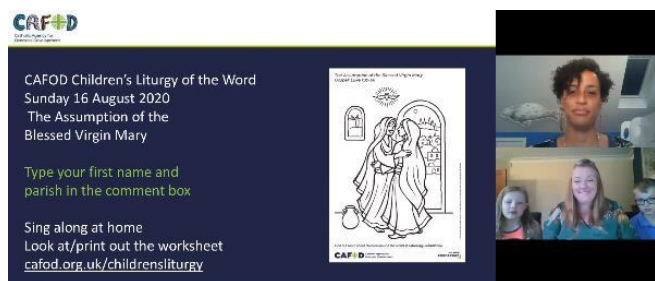
Our children are a vital part of the Parish community and we want them to feel part of the Mass celebrated at St Laurence's and to be given an opportunity to explore the Gospel reading at their own level. During this pandemic and with social distancing restrictions, the options available to deliver Children's Liturgy have been limited. Despite this, a small group came together and enabled it to return to 9:30am Sunday Mass in October and in between lockdowns up until Christmas. Continuation into 2021 post lockdown does however rely on the support of volunteers. Currently there are just 5 volunteers helping, which is not sustainable, and we have had to make the decision that Children's Liturgy is unlikely to resume until social distancing requirements are lifted. We are however intending to hold a *Good Friday Children's Liturgy event* – so look out for details of this in the Parish notices.

In the meantime, if families want to hear a Children's Liturgy, we encourage you to utilise other options that are available. There are a variety of websites, Facebook pages as well as Radio Maria that offer valuable resources and activities for Children's Liturgy for every Sunday of the year. You may have already identified some. Here are a few that we have identified:

1. CAFOD – Weekly Online Children's Liturgy of The Word

Parents and children are encouraged to join CAFOD online **every Sunday at 10am** for prayers and reflection on the Sunday Gospel. The liturgy is led by catechists who would usually be leading Children's Liturgy in their Parish and is based on CAFOD Children's Liturgy resources. Sessions last approximately 15 – 20 minutes and it takes less than a minute to register. You will also find downloadable activity sheets to keep your little ones busy. **To register:**

<https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Children-s-liturgy>



Activities to accompany many of the liturgies can be found on the [CAFOD website](https://cafod.org.uk)

2. Radio Maria – Children's Liturgy, Stations of the Cross, Youth radio show and much more!

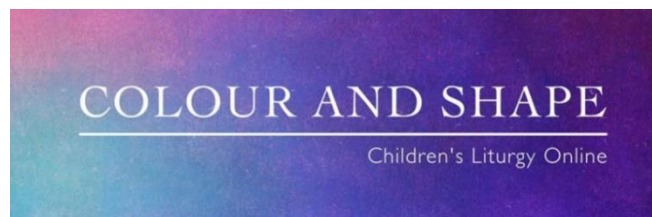
If parents want to listen to a Children's Liturgy, **every Sunday at 9:45am and 2:30pm** tune into Radio Maria <https://radiomariaengland.uk/about/programmes/> where it is also available as a podcast. It is often led by a family (some from our own Parish) and is also based on the CAFOD resources.

Radio Maria also hosts *RMEY Faith Vibe!* (Radio Maria England Youth) on **Fridays at 5pm** a Christian radio show and podcast by young people for young people. They play contemporary songs and discuss various aspects of our Faith with the audience, all in an hour's worth of fun-filled excitement.

RMEY Faith Vibe! has a YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKhIFs7UZ-zGPcaVL6v0q4w> and an Instagram account. Search for **rme_youth**.

3. Colour and Shape – Weekly Children's Liturgy online

A community of UK parents have come together to create "*Colour and Shape*" on Facebook and YouTube as a way for families to gather in prayer and share God's Word together.



Videos are posted on Saturday evenings, ready for use on Sundays.

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

4. Lectiotube – Catholic videos, podcasts and resources

Lectiotube.com offers curated Catholic videos, podcasts plus resources from across the world for Catholics of all ages. The Children's resources include weekly videos from a variety of Children's Liturgy Online Worship (CLOW) leaders across the world. Particularly, you might like to view: **Emily Pearson** – Primary School teacher and Children's Liturgy catechist from St Helen's Church, Langside. Archdiocese of Glasgow. She also hosts a Facebook page: [Children's Liturgy during lockdown](https://www.facebook.com/childrensliturgyduringlockdown)

If you have any feedback, suggestions or would like to help, please do contact nonie.isaacson@gmail.com

Saint Vincent de Paul Society (SVP)



Spring 2021 Update

Catherine Warren, President St Laurence's SVP

The Giving Tree last Christmas was very well supported by parishioners. Thank you. SVP members sorted the heaps of hamper items you gave into 11 large hampers for families and 6 smaller hampers for single person households. Over 90 presents were donated and these were given to children, to elderly people via Meals on Wheels and to homeless people via WinterComfort. We were also able to give some families supermarket vouchers to help buy fresh meat, veg, fruit and perishable items for meals over Christmas.

THANK YOU to all of you who responded so generously to the special collection this January for SVP Sudan and South Sudan appeal. You raised a magnificent £2,663 + Gift Aid of £381. With the added challenges of the global Covid19 pandemic, Sudan and South Sudan are struggling more than ever. In both of these countries SVP projects are active in feeding children, providing medicine and clean water In South Sudan (in partnership with others) SVP also supports the vocational training of young people. They need financial help to continue to do this and SVP groups in this country are committed to assisting them.

For more information go to:

<https://www.svp.org.uk/twinnage-and-overseas-aid>

As the church was closed in January and parishioners were attending Mass by live-streaming in their own homes, SVP members could not take the usual collection in person at the end of each Mass. Instead we set up a JustGiving page. This is the first time our SVP conference has tried JustGiving: we also received cash, cheques and BACS payments, but JustGiving was by far the most popular way of donating to the appeal.

Maundy Thursday SVP Collection

This year your contribution will be split between the SVP Sudan and South Sudan Appeal and the SVP Covid-19 Emergency Fund. This fund was launched in April 2020 in response to the pandemic to enable conferences in England and Wales with limited funds, to provide Vincentian support to those in urgent need. Since then £100,000 has been distributed to hundreds of cases requesting assistance. The fund has helped families and individuals in many ways, including getting food, paying bills, and obtaining necessary items, such as technology for home-learning, during the unpredictable economic circumstances of the pandemic.

The SVP isn't only about fund-raising; befriending people is the heart of our volunteer work. Though not currently meeting people indoors, members are still able to offer ongoing support and respond to new requests. Recent activity includes:

- keeping in telephone contact with people;
- obtaining a grant to provide heating for a person in temporary accommodation;
- getting a second-hand bike for an unemployed person hoping to get work as a delivery rider;
- delivering a donated DAB radio so a parishioner can listen to Mass on Radio Maria England;
- helping a homeless person keep their room in a temporary hostel by paying the licence fee arrears.

Please do contact us if you, or someone you know, needs help with any difficulty or would like a confidential chat. And if you need a laptop for live-streaming Mass, you can contact me, as the Parish Tech Group has donated laptops available. Call me on 07421 253100 or email: svp@saintlaurence.org.uk

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

First Holy Communion update

Jim Infield

The First Holy Communion group continues this year despite all the obstacles and neither the catechist team, the parents nor the children are going to let that get in the way of preparing for this very special sacrament. Despite the much smaller numbers this year, the ten children we have are very attentive and spiritually engaged during our monthly Zoom sessions, which the team always find inspiring and encouraging.

We continue to follow the 'I Belong' book, as we have for the last few years, because it is very well-written for 7–8-year-old children. It has all the important teachings helping them to progress throughout the ten sessions held from September to May to be ready for the Big Day in June.

This year, as last, it will be a more subdued event and the church won't be bursting at the seams with all the elegantly dressed families with smartly turned-out Communicants. Maybe that space will allow us all to receive God into our hearts and focus on what this day is all about. With fewer distractions the children will be better able to pray and enjoy a greater spiritual experience for their very First Holy Communion.

Summary of Parishioners' Open Meeting, Jan 2021

Present: Fr Simon, Stephen Ward (Chair), Deacon Geoff Cook + 18 at start of meeting

Mass arrangements and private prayer at the church

With an increase in COVID infections linked to the new variant Fr Simon decided that it was not reasonable to keep the church open for Mass noting that a lot of our parishioners, including many of the stewards, are in vulnerable categories. Bishop Alan Hopes wants a minimum of one Mass open for people to attend and, while we continue to encourage people to join via live streaming, the doors will be open for the Sunday 11am Mass. Communication about the closure seems to have gone well with only readers attending as requested at the other Masses. It was pointed out that, in line with the bishops' guidance and best practice, stewards should be in place at any public Masses. Numbers attending are low, this may not be an issue but if numbers increase it could become one.

Private prayer, people are being asked via signage to leave a post-it note where they have sat to indicate that the space has been used and therefore needs to be cleaned. The Parish cleaner comes in to clean 4 days a week and is wiping down the benches as needed.

Several parishioners voiced their agreement with Fr Simon that the church should be kept closed, particularly as numbers of COVID patients in our local hospital are still high.

Fr Simon is happy for people to text/email/phone to arrange for people to come into the church for private prayer so that church use can be monitored and cleaning done.

Now that Masses are behind closed doors it was suggested that we should revert to having just two Masses on Sunday at 9am and 11am.

It was explained that even if people have been vaccinated it is still possible for them to catch the virus, be a carrier of the virus and infect others, and therefore all our current provisions need to remain in place.

While we are on reduced Mass attendance, CD DJ-ing can be done by the readers.

Ash Wednesday – if the church remains closed, how can the Parish celebrate Ash Wednesday in a meaningful way.

Confessions – if someone wants to go to confession is this possible in general and in particular during Lent. Fr Simon has been conducting individual confessions in the Parish room with 2 metres distance and wearing a mask.

He suggested that he could conduct an online Stations of the Cross followed by a penitential rite and general absolution.

Review of Christmas ticketing system

Footfall for most Masses was disappointing due to the late change in Government ruling on meeting up for Christmas, although the Christmas Eve family Masses were well

attended. All Masses were more or less fully booked but there was a lower than expected turn out. The process for booking tickets and managing attendance worked fairly well and could be used again if needed. Stephen Warde confirmed that bookings had also been received via phone calls to the Parish Office. The Chair recorded thanks to everyone who had contributed to all aspects of preparing for Christmas, including church decoration, music, stewarding, children's liturgy.

Redecoration

The Meeting agreed with Fr Simon that with the church currently closed, it would be a good opportunity to get the church interior re-painted. The choice of colour for the repainting can be discussed at a later meeting.

SVP update (Catharine Warren)

Catharine thanked the Parish for its generous response to the Giving Tree initiative. The SVP was able to fulfil all the hampers and gifts that it planned to and received donations in excess to their requests. They now plan to focus on an overseas appeal asking the Parish to support the Sudan and South Sudan appeal again.

The Chair offered thanks on behalf of the Parish to the SVP group for organising this and helping us keep some of our usual Christmas preparations as a Parish going.

Fr Simon was grateful to the SVP for organising the Giving Tree online this year. He was pleased to see this ongoing tradition maintained, and said it is important to continue this work.

CAFOD update (Serga Collett)

Serga reported that £157 had been donated to CAFOD from the making and selling of the Christmas masks and thanked everyone who had made and bought them.

CAFOD is now preparing for the next Fast Day appeal which is due to take place on 26th February with the collection on the weekend of 27th/28th February.

CAFOD are also organising a Lent fundraising effort called 'Walk for Water'. The aim is to walk 10k steps every day of Lent – as an individual or as a team – to raise funds for CAFOD to support those who need to walk to get collect clean water. Alternatively, for those who cannot commit to a daily 10k total, there will also be one single walk on Saturday 20th Feb.

Dates of Meetings

Tuesday 23rd February (Minutes now available on Parish website)

AND

Thursday 25th March

AT 7.30pm via Zoom.

Features and Opinions

Turn off the News – look out the window! John Clare and the peace of wild things

Michael Allan

Turn off the News, read a book, read some poetry – write some poetry! Look out of the window, go for a walk if you can. Pay attention to the beautiful world. It's a gift. Step out of anxiety and fear for a while – give yourself a break. Let some light in. This is not about escaping from life, but about *joining* life. Paying close, loving attention to something real and beautiful can bring some peace, can change us, even if just a little bit.

The poet John Clare, the son of a farm labourer, who was born in 1793 in the village of Helpston, near Peterborough, struggled with poor mental health all his life in an age when recognition and treatment of mental health problems was very poor. He loved the world of fields, streams, woods, birds, insects, small mammals, of weather, of seasons, of dawn and dusk. Being in that green world and writing about it must have brought some peace and been a refuge to him.

Levels of anxiety, fear and depression are rocketing across our world. We know there are no easy answers. But there are rich sources of life we can turn to. Creation, creativity and the imagination are gifts from God that are always freely available to everyone. They have been given to us to use and enjoy.

Here are two poems by John Clare, full of love for the life around him.

Sudden Shower

Black grows the southern sky, betokening rain,
And humming hive-bees homeward hurry bye:
They feel the change; so let us shun the grain,
And take the broad road while our feet are dry.
Ay, there some dropples moistened on my face,
And pattered on my hat – tis coming nigh!
Let's look about, and find a sheltering place.
The little things around, like you and I,
Are hurrying through the grass to shun the shower.
Here stoops an ash-tree – hark! the wind gets high,
But never mind; this ivy, for an hour,
Rain as it may, will keep us dryly here:
That little wren knows well his sheltering bower,
Nor leaves his dry house though we come so near.

In Hilly-Wood

How sweet to be thus nestling deep in boughs,
Upon an ashen stoven pillowing me;
Faintly are heard the ploughmen at their ploughs,
But not an eye can find its way to see.
The sunbeams scarce molest me with a smile,
So thick the leafy armies gather round;
And where they do, the breeze blows cool the while,
Their leafy shadows dancing on the ground.
Full many a flower, too, wishing to be seen,
Perks up its head the hiding grass between –
In mid-wood silence, thus, how sweet to be;
Where all the noises, that on peace intrude,
Come from the chittering cricket, bird, and bee,
Whose songs have charms to sweeten solitude.

(ashen stoven = ash-tree stump)

When you can't come to Holy Communion

Fr Bob Eccles

'Many tax-collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. When the scribes of the Pharisees saw it, they asked, why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?' Mark 2:15-16.

The one they said ate and drank with sinners – and on occasion, so we are told in another place, even let a sinner wash his feet (because, of course, of being forgiven, otherwise she would not have shown so much love) – now welcomes us (because, of course, of being forgiven, we can show our love, our love for him).

Beggars, lame, and harlots also here,
Repentant publicans are drawing near,
Wayward sons come home without a fear,
God and man at table are sat down.

(*Welcome all ye noble saints of old*, a hymn by Robert Stamp).

Why the Eucharist? So that he might come to us and make his home with us. So that he might dwell in our hearts through faith, our faith in him. But suppose we are prevented? Lockdowns or just prudence leave people at one remove from the Mass. In time of sickness whole communities can be unable to come. Of course, there are those who hardly leave home anyway because of chronic illness or frailty, which is why we have the Mass kit ready in the sacristy, to take the Mass to them. We might open out that line of thought and look further, from this gathering to all the Christian people.

Believers can see into the sacraments to the reality of the Church, but it is not given to them to see all the members of the Church (this is discussed by Fr Herbert McCabe OP in *The New Creation* (1964) pp. 84-85 and compare his *The Teaching of the Catholic Church: A New Catechism of Christian Doctrine* (1986) n. 74). There are those who are united to the Church by links which are not made sacramentally visible even to the eye of faith. Besides the comparatively small group of people who are actually gathered at the Eucharistic meal there may be many more who are united to them invisibly; men and women who through no fault of their own are absent from its sacramental enactment. Here the all-important principle to remember is that those with a will moved by divine grace, who sincerely desire to receive a sacrament, but are prevented from doing so, share fully in the ultimate effect of that sacrament, the growth of charity. *Ubi caritas et amor Deus ibi est*. We should particularly remember this when we think of the worship of other Christians. It is in their prayer, and especially in their common prayer, that they most fully express their invisible union with the sacramental Church.

In the second Eucharistic prayer the Church prays, 'may all of us who share in the body and blood of Christ be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit.' The mystery of faith that is signified and brought about in the Eucharist is the unity of Christ's followers in the spirit of charity. Can we share in the mystery of grace without celebrating the sacrament? Why yes! We can share in the Spirit, the mystery of grace, by our desire to receive the sacrament, even if the celebration is in some way prevented, even if the mystery of the Church is not enacted (because of not being able to gather in the name of Jesus, not even in twos and threes).

We more commonly think of desire for the sacraments in connection with Baptism, the example being the unfortunate man who is always setting out to be baptised and is always being run over by a tram, or after Vatican II (the Second Vatican Council) by a bus. Of course, we believe that he has received his gift and met his Saviour. It is as sacramental Christians that we are commanded to celebrate the mystery of salvation through the discipline of the sacraments. The command 'do this in memory of me' is given to be received and obeyed by us. In no way can this observance or obedience of ours set up boundaries or restrictions to the Lord and giver of life – whose word does not return to him empty but brings about what it was sent out to do.

They have given us a prayer to express desire for the Eucharist, for those at home. Isn't it a tad diffident and

lacking assurance? It has you pray, 'come spiritually into my heart that I may embrace you as if you were already there.' Now spiritual isn't to be opposed to sacramental. Or thought of as something somehow less. Life in Christ is always spiritual, no-one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. All is the work of the Spirit, all sacraments, all prayer. St Thomas Aquinas describes every reverent approach to the altar as spiritual, as opposed to receiving unworthily. 'As if you were already there?' 'As if' sounds somehow conditional, 'as if' sounds like a work of the imagination, 'as if' is uncertain, it's neither 'yes or no'. But in Christ it is never yes and no, in him it is always 'Yes'. For in him, says the Apostle, every one of God's promises finds its 'Yes'(2 Corinthians 1:20). It is our redeemer, friend and brother who has set in our hearts this deep desire for him to come to us and make his home in us, and he will answer our longing, without fail, he will. Listen, he stands at the door and knocks! We may repeat with the assurance of faith the lovely words of welcome, 'Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed'. So, let us with confidence approach the throne of grace, for there we shall find mercy when we are in need of help! (Hebrews 4:16).

If you would like to discuss such things with Fr Bob call 01223 741265.

The Pleasures of Earth Are Occasions for Joy

Karen Rodgers

Into the sunshine,
Full of the light,
Leaping and flashing
From morn till night!

The Fountain by James Russell Lowell (1819–1891)

Poetry is such a consolation.

The old Devil Screwtape writes:

'we want a man hag-ridden by the Future – haunted by visions of an imminent heaven or hell upon earth – ready to break the Enemy's commands in the Present if by so doing we make him think he can attain the one or avert the other – dependent for his faith on the success or failure of schemes whose end he will not live to see. We want a whole race perpetually in pursuit of the rainbow's end, never honest, nor kind, nor happy now, but always using as mere fuel wherewith to heap the altar of the future every real gift which is offered them in the Present.'

Evil wants to keep us in fear; not merely because it enjoys tormenting us but because when we fear and let fear rule our choices, we take very bad decisions. We need peace and clarity for the kind of true discernment to which each one of us is called. Our Lord tells us ‘Do not be afraid’ both because He does not want us to suffer needlessly and also because He wants us to be free to hear His voice in the quiet of our hearts.

We see many laudable programmes at the moment which aim to free us from fear. However, Our Lord reminded us that when devils are cast out, we need to find something to take their places (Matthew 12:45). This something is joy.

We cannot create joy; only the Creator can do that but we can create the circumstances in which we are ready to receive the joy which Our Lord is daily showering upon us.

Meister Eckhart observed:

‘If the only prayer you said in your whole life was, ‘thank you’, that would suffice.’

Annie Holmquist comments: “Might we not find the freedom from fear that so many of us crave right now if, as St Augustine posited, we rest our restless hearts in Him?” If we recognise the goodness that the Almighty offers us in so many moments of our daily routine will our lives not be transformed?

In his compellingly beautiful novel *Perelandra* (1943) C S Lewis writes:

‘The smells in the forest were beyond all that he had ever conceived. To say that they made him feel hungry and thirsty would be misleading; almost, they created a new kind of hunger and thirst, a longing that seemed to flow over from the body into the soul and which was a heaven to feel.’

‘...all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise... The world rings with praise – lovers praising their mistresses, readers their favourite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favourite game – praise of weather, wines, dishes, actors, motors, horses, colleges, countries, historical personages, children, flowers, mountains, rare stamps, rare beetles, even sometimes politicians or scholars.’

In his essay on *Hedonics* (1945) (the science of the study of pleasure), C S Lewis recalls an experience of deep happiness he had during a train journey he made into the suburbs of London:

‘I was free to take it or not as I chose – like distant music which you need not listen to unless you wish, like a

delicious faint wind on your face which you can easily ignore. One was invited to surrender to it. And the odd thing is that something inside me suggested that it would be ‘sensible’ to refuse the invitation; almost that I would be better employed in remembering that I was going to do a job I do not greatly enjoy and that I should have a very tiresome journey back to Oxford. Then I silenced this inward wiseacre. I accepted the invitation – threw myself open to this feathery, impalpable, tingling invitation. The rest of the journey I passed in a state which can be described only as joy.’

Joe Rigney (Assistant Professor of Theology and Literature, Bethlehem College & Seminary, Minneapolis) explains so compellingly in his lecture on joy that God is the author and source of all pleasure, that it is only pleasures taken at the wrong time or in the wrong way which are evil and how any licit pleasure, no matter how simple, can become a channel of adoration. He writes:

‘Why don’t we recognize God in our pleasures? What keeps us from experiencing these tiny theophanies? Lewis gives us four answers.

Inattention: we ignore the presence of God everywhere. We fail to see that every bush is a burning bush.

The wrong kind of attention: we subjectify the experience and see only the internal workings of our own mind or body. The pleasure comes and we kill it by turning around and directing our attention inward.

Greed: we demand the exact experience again. We shout ‘Encore!’ forgetting that all of space and time is not enough for God to utter himself even once.

Conceit: we take pride in our ability to find God in the little things, forgetting that those who are looking down their noses at others are never able to see the One who is above them.’

We all have moments like the one Lewis describes when we have a choice; to accept or to reject the invitation to joy and thanksgiving and in my experience they present themselves with increasing frequency once we make a conscious decision to recognise and welcome them.

‘We know we are being touched by a finger of that right hand at which there are pleasures forevermore. There need be no question of thanks or praise as a separate event, something done afterwards. To experience the tiny theophany is itself to adore.’

We must be alert and awake to pleasures, while also embracing the necessity of self-denial in governing our earthly joys. When God gives us earthly pleasures, we must say thank you for the gifts. “How good of God to

give me this.” And then, we must labour with God’s help to adore him, to run our minds back up the sunbeam to the sun, saying, “What must be the quality of that Being whose far off and momentary coruscations are like this!” (C S Lewis)

I think we all really need to rediscover Pollyanna – as a society we’ve been cynical about her too long and we are seeing the effects.

Every day I have my ‘to do’ list of ten or so small cheering things, my early morning cup of green tea while enjoying the growing light in the sky, listening to a cheerful singer while I prepare the meals, while I work, listening to some wordless classical piece (recently I discovered *Norfolk Rhapsody* by Ralph Vaughan Williams), walks on the look-out for enthusiastic dogs, beautiful flowers or trees and the quality of the light, making eye contact and smiling at people, chance conversations with acquaintances or strangers, watching good classic TV (especially *Dad’s Army*, the 30 minutes of company spent with the dear members of the Home Guard has never yet failed to lift my spirits, I particularly like Godfrey), reading aloud together in the evenings (we just finished *Taken on Trust* by Terry Waite and have started a biography of Frederick Douglass), reading good poems and sharing them. And when the joy comes as it often does, embracing it, savouring the moment and being thankful.

I used to get cross at traffic lights. Now I realise they are Providence’s way of allowing me to stand and stare.

What will you do today to give yourself the chance to enjoy the beauty and the pleasure which our Father showers upon us? What can you do to experience the joy of the thankful awareness of His faithful presence and of His love?

Three ways to pray for those recovering from the coronavirus crisis

Serga Collett

In the face of a global crisis, it can be hard to know where to start with prayer. Here are three simple ways you can pray in your daily life for those working to rebuild from the coronavirus crisis.

1. Pray with the Scriptures. St Augustine said, “The Holy Scriptures are our letters from home.” Try reading a daily passage from the Gospel and reflecting on how its lessons could help in our world today.

2. Start a Novena. This is a simple and powerful way to commit to prayer. Choose a prayer that has personal

meaning for you and pray it for nine days. Ask friends or family to join your Novena and pray with you.

3. Pray your way. We all have ways that we are most comfortable praying. If you pray the Rosary, could you offer a decade for those affected by coronavirus? If you pray the Angelus, could you remember CAFOD’s local experts?

Still fasting...

Sue Price, Co-Principal (with Dr Anna Abram), Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology

When I wrote about fasting and feasting for the Advent edition of *The Pilgrim* I did not envisage that we would still be fasting from so much as we go into Lent 2021. I must admit, it is getting harder. The continuing loss from not being able to meet in person along with the distancing that has to be maintained is increasingly difficult. It is as if we have been living with a Lenten fast for a very long time. However, it makes the moments that can be shared even more of a feast. At the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology (MBIT), we have been able to continue offering feasts in a different way, enjoyed by many from all over the world and I do invite you to come and join in the feast.

These are feasts on offer for the coming months, all online via Zoom. Book your place by email: mbitadm@hermes.cam.ac.uk

Study Days: (Cost: £45 or £40 early bird fee)

17th April, 1.00pm – 4.30pm, ‘Activism or Preaching? The Artist’s Vocation’ led by Sr Pavlína Kašparová OP.

17th April, 1.00pm – 5.00pm, ‘Spirituality of the Psalms’ led by Dr Melanie-Prejean Sullivan.

8th May, 11.00am – 3.30pm, ‘Introduction to the Dead Sea Scrolls and their Significance’ led by Professor Susan Docherty.

22nd May, 11.00am – 3.30pm, ‘Women in Time to Come: Mary Ward and the Church of the Future’ led by Sr Gemma Simmonds CJ.

Or join us for a ‘May Retreat: May Magnificat’, 15th May, 10.00am – 4.00pm, led by the MBIT outreach team. Cost £20.

Also there are places available for the fifth module in our ‘Catholic Theology and Practice’ Thursday afternoon programme. This is a learning space for Catholic Women. Dr Férdia Stone-Davis will be exploring the works of Catherine Keller. Thursdays, 2.00 – 5.30pm, 29th April, 6th, 13th and 20th May.

International Justice

Jim Infield

We are all proud to be members of a truly international and Catholic Church; Catholic meaning a church that is open to all regardless of where in the world they come from or their skin colour. We see this in the rich diversity of our own Parish. We all accept and believe that we are equal in the eyes of God, so how can we not see all our brothers and sisters that way ourselves?

Prejudice is something we all have – we acquire it from our parents and the environment we grow up in – it is not something to be ashamed of but to be open to. However, we must be forever vigilant of our prejudices, which lie so deep they can be difficult for us to see, but when our actions betray them, they are keenly felt by those who experience them. None of us want that, and would be ashamed if only we knew. Subtle acts of discrimination can be no less painful than full on overt racial prejudice. And so, we pray that the Holy Spirit shines a light for us so that we may see them clearly.

We pray for the courage to act when we witness racial prejudice. Those who are on the receiving end of racist remarks and actions feel it deeply and emotionally. Standing by as allies and not looking the other way brings hope to those who suffer, knowing there is solidarity in the face of injustice and not everyone thinks and behaves as the perpetrators. In practical terms, the mere presence of a white person helps to diffuse the situation, and if necessary, can call for help when the victim is too confused and shocked. We too should not fear knowing the Lord is always nearby.

Pope Francis reflects: *“instances of racism continue to shame us, for they show that our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive as we think.”*

He also challenges us: *“This is a moment to dream big, to rethink our priorities — what we value, what we want, what we seek — and to commit to act in our daily life on what we have dreamed of. God asks us to dare to create something new.”*

The Catholic Church in the UK urges us to act

The voices of those who feel rejected or perpetually in second place must be listened to:

- Ethnic minorities have suffered disproportionately from the COVID-19 pandemic,

demonstrating a systemic problem with racial injustice in our society.

- Racism is a sin and a violation of human dignity in which we are all complicit. As Catholics we need to acknowledge and confront our own failings, as individuals and as a Church.
- We need to address the lack of visible diversity at every level, so that people can see themselves, their race, their culture and their history in the Church’s life.
- Most importantly we need to actively invite people from different ethnic communities to share their experiences and genuinely listen to their voices, however challenging this may be.

Take a look at the Zimbabwe Catholic Youth group’s moving and articulate video

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/events/racial-justice-sunday-2021/zimbabwean-catholic-youth-on-racial-justice/> which expresses their view on Racial Justice.

Priesthood and Celibacy: discerning the future

Fr Simon Blakesley

Firmly I believe, and truly, that the Lord intends his church to have a priesthood of men who are healthy and well-rooted human beings, many of whom who will be living celibate lives and some who will be living their priesthood in the context of the vocation of marriage. Most readers will probably think of this statement as begging the massive question “Yeah, sure, but in what kind of ratio and in which traditions?”

Any consideration of this issue, both theologically and pastorally considered, has to begin from the current situation that pertains within the entirety of the ‘Catholic Church’ and not just from the perspective of the mainstream Latin Rite. The recent framing of the debate as one that was occasioned by the pastoral situation of areas within the Amazonian basin was, of course, seen as pertaining to the whole of the Western Church, and the pastoral, canonical, and sacramental considerations were of necessity, universal.

The background to *Querida Amazonia*

‘Hard cases make bad law’ is a well-travelled truism, but the Holy Father has been particularly careful not to allow the Western legal mind-set that operates on the common-law principle of precedent to override the canonical tradition of the Catholic Church which does not argue from case to case to establish legal principles. Humanly speaking, however, as in situations in the

recent past, the whole world has been observing keenly this particular ‘neck of the rain forest’.

For the Western Catholic Church in North America and the European Union the demographic of priestly vocations shares some basic trends, and while it might be helpful to research the actual statistics it would probably be too depressing. It is not unreasonable to extrapolate from my own experience of being a priest and the seminary situations that I have known. I was born in 1955 and when I entered the seminary in Rome in 1973 there were about 15 students in my year about half of whom (not including me) progressed through to ordination in 1980. In my second sojourn in formation from 1986 to 1990 in a different College (Ushaw), my year had 28 men in formation, 25 of whom persevered to ordination – although of this 25 the breakdown rate has been quite high.

Ushaw has now closed down, there having been a precipitous decline during the 1990’s and only a moderate recovery since the year 2000. It is generally accepted that those candidates in more recent years have had a higher incidence of breakdown than experienced in previous generations. There can be no doubt that a serious socio-pastoral survey of secular priesthood and religious life over the last fifty years would bear worthwhile results. However, some questions and discernments within the data and the trends would be of necessity controversial.

Seminaries: seeds of doubt?

No serious-minded study could ignore the traditionalist versus progressive issues that have caused strife in many formation communities and discernment teams. Nor would it be credible if it did not seek to address the questions of sexual orientation and behaviour within our seminaries and religious houses. The elephant in the room is a pink elephant.

Pope Francis is entirely correct to set our focus on holiness as the way to elevate the enquiry and the debate above the human recrimination and factionalism that could all too easily overwhelm this area of study and reflection. Holiness, however, emerges from the reality of the human and pastoral situation we are already in. As a young priest I encountered several people who simply made the assumption that I was gay, because in their mental universe a heterosexual man would not choose to enter the jungle of religious and ecclesial life that they had experienced as being planted thick with gay men. The authority and career structures, as seen in parallel with other corporate structures, was presumed to have a ‘fast-track’ in place for those men who were open to giving and receiving sexual favours in order to progress. I stress that these were huge presumptions, and not all that securely based, but they had been made.

When an ostensibly celibate priest fails in chastity and in basic prudential friendship whether he is in a gay or straight relationship is not of concern, but how that individual’s progress towards ordination had been charted and evaluated may be more of an issue. It may also be an issue of the pattern of relationship or the socialisation involved in those experiences. I well remember a priest who complained about having to go to the west of Ireland to our Canon Law Conferences because ‘there’s no bloody gay bars...’, and I have also heard of seminarians ‘cruising the gay scene’ within the locality of their College.

I am sure that there are Seminary rectors past and present who are bristling at this portrait of what has been happening and insisting that those students who are too ‘out’ in their behaviour are not promoted to major orders. But it will always be a risk assessment, as indeed it is for a straight man, as to whether any man will be able to maintain a basic integrity of life once the oils of ordination are dry. The question will always be “How high should we set the bar?” and, as the Church continues to suffer from a dearth of vocations, there is a constant pressure to ordain some ‘Fosbury Flops’ who only just made it over the bar... Another problem is that many young men manage to ‘keep their noses clean’ while in formation, but then once ordained and free from the external inhibitions and monitoring of seminary life, their own internal inhibitions take a hike and they begin to find relationships.

Taking the road more straight?

So, if we were to suddenly impose a moratorium on ordaining any gay men, would we find a cohort of straight men to take their place, who, crucially would say that they felt called to be celibate? Or would we be more likely to find a cohort rather of ‘*virī probati*’ who have the ‘skill-set’ to enter pastoral ministry, and were probably not in any way that different to those men who have been recruited and trained to be called to the permanent diaconate? One additional factor inevitably surfaces in this debate and it pertains to the support of clergy who serve in our parishes. Depending on the church/state relationship and on the tradition of ‘tithing’ within a particular church there are wide variations on what level of financial support a priest could expect to receive. All I need say is that in some countries there would be a need for a greater change in the socio-economic realities than in others. I have also observed situations where Catholic curial offices have had only a limited idea of what a married priest needs to earn in order to sustain an established family on a similar level to what he might receive in another communion.

So would ‘taking the straight road’ get us to where we need to go? If we set the bar too high would we get enough applicants? Many personalities who make good priests are themselves ‘wounded healers’ and many of

these may be wounded in their sexuality in a way that leads them to make a celibate decision. The question of whether they are straight or gay is irrelevant as they find themselves to be eunuchs, a state which they then offer to be consecrated into celibacy for the sake of the kingdom. A personal process that was once described so perceptively by Dr Peter Taylor Forsyth as “the conversion and sanctification of wounds incurable”.

The problem has been, and I realise now, having read Dr Joe Holland’s book on clericalism (*Roman Catholic Clericalism: Three Historical Stages* 2018), that endemic within the clergy the choice and tradition of celibacy has had its roots needlessly yet irrevocably tangled in a misogynist dynamic that has allowed a gay subculture to flourish to the point where the prefix ‘sub’ is hardly required. I had always presumed, from the way church history was taught, that married priests had kind of ‘petered out’ and that the highly structured reforms of the Council of Trent had been to impose professional standards within what had become ‘a rag, tag and bobtail’ collection of massing priests and itinerant friars. The monastic reforms in fact predate the Reformation and have a deeply misogynistic instinct that seeks to wrest control of all ecclesial life into the power of the monasteries. This then feeds into the Tridentine model for priestly formation that imposes monastic structures onto individuals who are then sent out from a monastic seminary community to maintain an antiphonal structure of prayer, mainly by themselves. A basic understanding of Dr Mary Douglas’s work *Natural Symbols* is helpful to understand why such a system of moving from one structure to another doesn’t really work. The Church, it might be said, trained men for one model of church and then released them into another, and the results have not been good.

Working well together?

The Church has suffered from the failure of many priests whose level of psycho-sexual maturity was not sufficient to enable them to live integrated celibate lives; “let he who is without sin cast the first stone”... Nevertheless, it may be time to examine the experience of all of those ecclesial communities which have a mixture of both celibate and married priests, both among the Eastern churches and our nearer neighbours in the Church of England, as they will know how the human issues are perceived and managed in everyday life. Does one cohort challenge the other to a greater generosity or integrity of life? Or do the two groups fall into a kind of dissociative denial that there are any problems and there is a tacit agreement “Don’t mention the war...”? Is there an implicit and complicit awareness that the celibate clergy are in fact functionally homosexual and that, therefore, although priests together in the same church, they are unlikely to share in the picnic basket of life? Is there an honest

recognition of clergy whose marriages break down and the role of the demands of ministry in this?

It is evident that we have the two traditions and in more recent years in England it is also the case that the ministry of married former Anglican priests among a largely celibate clergy has been a challenging experience, but one that we have probably not interrogated closely enough. How do celibate priests feel that their discernment and decision now stands in the light of a development that they would never have imagined possible? I remember back in the early 90’s the incandescent distress of parishioners who had known and shared in the agony of good priests who had left their ministry in order to marry, and now witnessed the Church allowing, albeit in a unique set of circumstances, married men to be ordained Catholic priests. That the Church was being so open, ‘sweet’ and welcoming turned very bitter in the stomachs of some.

Where are we now?

Ultimately, the discernment of what should be done in the future rests upon a completely honest assessment of where we are now, particularly in terms of measuring the outcomes, both positive and negative, of the clergy ordained over the last fifty years. My own ministry as a Canon lawyer has perhaps led me to a jaundiced view of priestly failure, not excluding my own weaknesses, and therefore the solid, fruitful and dependable ministry of the many has been sullied by the few. The truth is that we have been left with a disheartened clergy, dismayed at the failure of the more recently ordained clergy or of those no longer in active ministry due to safeguarding concerns of some sort that have created costly impasses. If it were a cricket team, we would say that there has been a collapse in the middle-order batting, but we need to know the hard facts. We can all wave a despairing hand in the direction of the clergy abuse crisis, but we all must admit that such behaviours emerged within parishes entirely known to us and by priests we have been at deanery meetings with; these were those that we walked together with in the house of the Lord.

In re-reading *Gaudium et Spes* the other day I noted a paragraph that calls for the formation of institutes of ‘Pastoral Sociology’. This has a very 1960’s ring to it, but in fact such a body would be well placed to actually crunch the data, using the software now at our disposal. Such an exercise could lead us to understand where our Seminary Formation, albeit given several makeovers since the Council, has left us in terms of priests who are capable of serving the Church, and, crucially, renewing their own kind. In our heart of hearts we know that has not been happening, and it is probably about time we really asked the question why?

Whenever such a discussion happens in the parish, the easy outcome is to agree that there needs to be a change, but that, in a way, just perpetuates the comfortable idea that ‘they’ need to do something about it. The truth is that we are called to understand the deeper issues of call and service involved and to recognise the human realities at the heart of all Christian ministry.

Getting new priests

Dick Wilson

In several editions of *The Pilgrim*, we have listed the causes of potential priests dropping out. Here we make proposals to rectify these.

- Drop the requirement that priests be unmarried. The rule that priests are celibate goes back to the late Roman Empire, where resistance to being invaded was by Angles and Saxons, and mostly run by monks.
- We should ordain someone for each Mass location so that no regular Mass can be without a priest.
- Such a person might usually be from that congregation itself, trained to do Sunday Mass but they might also do pastoral duties, teach in school or do other things that come up. It doesn't require long training.

I am asking the Parish Priest and the Bishop for discussion on these lines.

TRUTH' the final frontier!

'A contemplation of being true to yourself'

Serga Collett

Joe Biden recently signed an Executive Order to interpret sex discrimination in federal law to include sexual orientation and gender identity. ‘Hurrah’, I thought, ‘at last someone who will fight for inclusivity, fight against discrimination and take the side of the poor’. Surprisingly the Catholic News Agency took what I feel is a negative view on the order. “Redefining ‘sex’ to mean ‘sexual orientation and gender identity’ isn’t equality, and it isn’t progress” said John Bursch (senior counsel at the Alliance Defending Freedom legal group), “the reason for that is that biology is not bigotry. When the law does not respect biological differences between men and women, it creates chaos...”.

I was very surprised, and often am, by the Catholic Church's archaic and cramped views of sexuality! Yes I did just say that! Is it really what Jesus came to teach us? His words were definitive: ‘Love one another’. Does this not mean that every person must be treated with respect and dignity and should not everyone be able to live without fear, no matter who they are, who they want to be or whom they love. Is it not about ‘being true to yourself’ and not living a lie, whether that be heterosexual, homosexual or transgender!

So I started to ponder what being ‘true to yourself’ actually means. Truth What is it? I started by looking it up in a dictionary: Truth is the property of being in accord with fact or reality or corresponds to represent reality or otherwise correspond to it, such as beliefs, propositions... Is this not already our first hurdle to overcome? Someone is born as a particular sex (usually) – fact! However, some ‘believe’ that they are born into the wrong body, therefore according to the definition of truth, it is true to that individual, therefore were they to live a ‘heterosexual’ life, would they not be living a lie? And hence is the truth individual? Therefore, what is true for one person may not necessarily be the case for another – they may both be transgender but their needs/journeys are individual.

As a young girl, my mother (she was very broad minded for the time – early 60's) befriended a young man who seemed somewhat lost. One day, he had a horse riding accident and she went to visit him in hospital but could not find him. She had looked for him in the male ward but was in no uncertain terms told to go and look for him in the female ward. This was a surprise to her but, to cut a long story short, my father and my mother took this young man under their wing and after recovery he came to live with us. He was with us for many years and as a child I grew to love him; he cared for me and looked after me during the many and long absences of my parents abroad as my siblings were still in Germany. His need to be a man (much more difficult in the 60/70s) was driven by the abuse he had suffered himself as a child at the hand of his mother. When I was much older, he himself returned to Germany and later met a wonderful man, they had a loving relationship and in time, with love, the pain subsided and he returned to being a woman. (They are now happily married – man and wife). The love I felt for him then, as now, is not at all influenced by his gender and I still am in contact with him now, 50 years later.

In an online discussion with Father Bob, he said, “for me pastoral care is about staying with a person as he or she comes nearer to the truth about who they are and who they are meant to be; it's personalist then. Love is more important than any rule and this means engaging with people where they are right now, not where anyone

else would like them to be. Ideologies soon lose sight of the person”.

If we believe that God is truth and Jesus said several times “I am the truth” and “I have come into the world to testify to the truth” and that “God is love” (1 John 4:16), then we must conclude that it is what HE wants: that we give an individual respect and dignity and acceptance of their individual journey and indeed destination, however they may have got there.

“God is love and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1 John 4:16)

St Alphonsus

John Conlon

I must admit, I had never heard of St Alphonsus before the pandemic. Now, because of Covid, I know a lot more about him.

Fear of the virus has either closed churches completely or persuaded many parishioners to watch Mass via live-streaming to avoid infection, which left many unable to take communion from the priest. This has been a big blow for Catholics who believe that sacramental nourishment at least once a week is a vital part of their religious lives.

While watching 8am Mass on my laptop during the Covid19 era, I noticed Fathers Simon and Bob saying the prayer of St Alphonsus, which is recited by Catholics unable to attend a service in person. The prayer is:

“My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there
and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.”

But who was Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787)? He was an Italian Bishop from near Naples, a spiritual writer, musician, lawyer, and theologian. Clearly, he was an intelligent man of faith. He founded the Redemptorists order in 1732. His best-known works include *The Glories of Mary* and *The Way of the Cross*. He was

canonised in 1839 and proclaimed a doctor of the Church in 1871. He is the patron saint of confessors.

His prayer is a Godsend for Catholics unable to attend Mass and go to Communion in times of crisis, such as the Covid emergency, because the heart of our devotion is obeying Christ’s commandment at the Last Supper to ‘do this in memory of me’ ie take bread and wine and believe they are His Body and Blood. The Eucharist allows us to enjoy a God-given special union with God and other Christians at Mass and in the Catholic Church.

That is why being unable to go to Communion is such a big issue for us. I recall as a child being aware of my parents or grandparents being very upset if they could not get to Mass on a Sunday and thus miss Communion. Holiday travels would be planned to allow us to attend Mass en-route or before we left to return home. My mother used to tell me that Irish country folk would walk many miles across inhospitable terrain and in all kinds of bad weather just because of their love of Mass and Communion.

St Alphonsus’s prayer can never replace what happens during the sacrament of Eucharist but I find listening to it and reciting it extremely comforting, however, deep down I look forward to the day when we don’t need to say it again at Mass!



But, for now, St Alphonsus is having his moment of fame and we should be grateful for his life. His missionary work included theological and spiritual writing, today that work is continued by Redemptorist Publications. Also, both at Hawkstone Hall, near Shrewsbury, and at Kinnoull Perth, Scotland, the Redemptorists run renewal courses and retreats.

St Alphonsus would be proud of his missionary legacy. We should salute his strong faith, piety and good works. But I am sure, if we could ask him, he would rather not be associated with a crisis that has cost so many lives and ruined so many people’s livelihoods.

Sources: *Redemptorists’ website*, *Wikipedia*, *Catholic Encyclopaedia*

Cardinal Points – Conflict and Community

Ronald Haynes

When others seem so wrong, how can we treat them right? What does it take to reach agreement when we find ourselves in dispute with someone else, especially someone who seems diametrically opposed to our key beliefs and cherished values? These and related concerns, about resolving conflicts and building consensus, have been vexing humans since perhaps the earliest settlements. As with the haunting story of Cain and Abel, so many of us have been deeply troubled by the heightened tensions between opposing sides of political partisanship, so painfully evident in the US, but also found elsewhere.

By stark contrast to current clashes, there is outstanding guidance and an enduring model from the compassionate example of Abraham Lincoln, such as the keen insight to say of another ‘I don’t like that man. I must get to know him better.’ After doing so, he asked this former harsh critic to be Secretary of State, and they became lifelong friends and more effective colleagues. When community and collaboration for the common good become shared goals, we find that friendships can increase, anxieties can decrease, and together we can achieve so much more. Socrates taught that if we knew the good we would choose to do the good. Aquinas, picking up from Aristotle, suggested that no one seeks evil for itself, but falls into it while trying to achieve apparent good. We must ask, as did they: is there some confusion in the world about what is the good?

For those intending to follow the message of Jesus, there are regular reminders of the fundamental call of the Gospel. For example, Matthew succinctly conveys some key and, ever so memorable, teachings – be humble, make peace with others, feed those who are hungry, cloth those who are naked, visit and comfort people who are afflicted, or sick, or imprisoned, love one another (Matthew 5:1-12, 22:39, 25:31-46).

More generally, there is a long tradition – more recently referenced by selected US politicians – considering what and how we might serve the common good. The ‘common good’ is perhaps the most familiar concept of Catholic social teaching, with similar concepts in many other religious traditions. The [Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church](#)¹ cites it as something ‘to which every aspect of social life must be related’ (164), and as the ‘primary goal’ of society (165). Clarifying more of what is meant by the common good, the Compendium goes on to say:

The common good does not consist in the simple sum of the particular goods of each subject of a social entity. Belonging to everyone and to each person, it is and remains ‘common’, because it is

indivisible and because only together is it possible to attain it, increase it and safeguard its effectiveness, with regard also to the future. (164)

The essential bonds and responsibilities of the common good seem sometimes diminished or dismissed by what some say is their focus on ‘personal’ or ‘family values’. In an article on ‘The Moral Priority of the Common Good’ theologian Frank Kirkpatrick writes that ‘biblical tradition reminds us that ignoring the social conditions that perpetuate poverty and injustice ultimately undermines the realization of family values while destroying the bonds of mutual responsibility that constitute a good society.’²

On similar ground, Kirkpatrick wondered whether we might ask prominent Mormons (e.g. Republican Mitt Romney) to comment on the importance of one of Joseph Smith’s (the founder’s) social policies: the Law of Consecration and Stewardship, which says, ‘there shall be no rich and no poor among the Latter-day Saints; when every man and woman will labor for the good of all as much as for self.’

In his article, ‘The church teaches that purpose of government is the common good. Period.’, Daniel Horan highlights the fact that the Catholic catechism ‘presents a digest of three key elements that combine to shape our understanding of the common good: respect for the human person, prioritization of collective social wellbeing and development, and the pursuit of peace.’³

Given so many vivid recent as well as historical entanglements, of the friction between the peaceful and loving mandates found as matters of faith and the dysfunctional and damaging expediencies too often found in politics, it perhaps is a perfect time to review and ask each other how we can ensure support for whatever might responsibly serve our morals, which in turn are called to enhance the common good. Wherever there is conflict – and where do we not find it? – there are thoughts and attempts to address the clash, inviting each of us to be peace-makers, and to try to resolve the conflict.

For example, the 17th century polymath Blaise Pascal provides powerful and much-needed insight into how we might persuade each other – or perhaps might be persuaded – by being prepared to unreservedly discuss and listen to each other, requiring each to actually engage with and reflect on thoughts from each other:

When we wish to correct with advantage, and to show another that he errs, we must notice from what side he views the matter, for on that side it is usually true, and admit that truth to him, but reveal to him the side on which it is false. He is

satisfied with that, for he sees that he was not mistaken, and that he only failed to see all sides. Now, no one is offended at not seeing everything; but one does not like to be mistaken, and that perhaps arises from the fact that man naturally cannot see everything ... People are generally better persuaded by the reasons which they have themselves discovered than by those which have come into the mind of others.

These insights complement an earlier and foundational approach to conflict resolution, found in the Bible, with advice about reconciliation we hear coming from Jesus (Matthew 5:23–25 NRSV):

- So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.
- Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison.

In case there is any uncertainty about what ‘come to terms’ might mean, or if perhaps you feel the situation is reversed and you have something against another, elsewhere in Matthew there is more detailed advice about steps to take to resolve a conflict (Matthew 18:15–17):

- If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one.
- But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses.
- If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector.

Reflecting some of this Scriptural guidance, and to promote personal peace and common good, many people regularly pray a version of the Serenity Prayer – commonly quoted as:

*God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference.*

A humorous take on this can be found in Bill Watterson’s comic strip Calvin and Hobbes, where Calvin tells his friend: “*Know what I pray for? The strength to change what I can, the inability to accept what I can’t, and the incapacity to tell the difference.*” His friend Hobbes responds: “*You should lead an interesting life.*” – to which Calvin replies: “Oh, I already **do**.”

Given all this, it is notable that the original version, composed by the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, specifically asked for courage and for changing things that must be changed – which is a good prayer for us all to help heal conflicts and build community:

*Father, give us courage to change
what must be altered,
serenity to accept what cannot be helped,
and the insight to know the one from the other.*

Footnotes

1 Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church – https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html

2 The Moral Priority of the Common Good | Tikken – <https://www.tikkun.org/blog/2012/10/25/the-moral-priority-of-the-common-good>

3 The Church teaches that purpose of government is the common good. Period. | National Catholic Reporter <https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/faith-seeking-understanding/church-teaches-purpose-government-common-good-period>

Gift Aid

Jim Scally

During lockdown many of our parishioners have changed to making their donations by bank transfer. This is easy and convenient for both of us. If all of these donations were also to be Gift Aided, it would allow the Parish to reclaim a further 25p for every £1 donated.

You must be a tax-payer and have signed a Declaration Form.

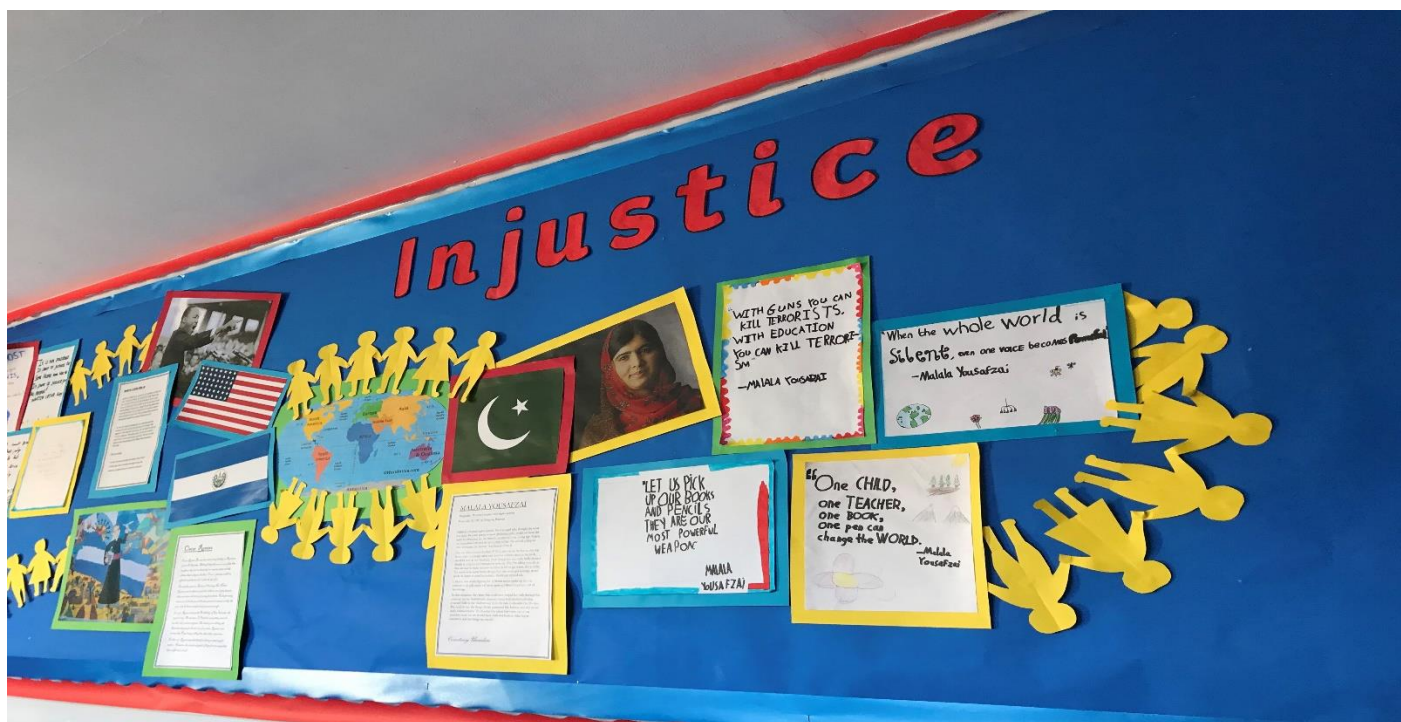
Want to know more? Contact the Parish Office or e-mail [**giftaid@saintlaurence.org.uk**](mailto:giftaid@saintlaurence.org.uk)

St Laurence School Photos

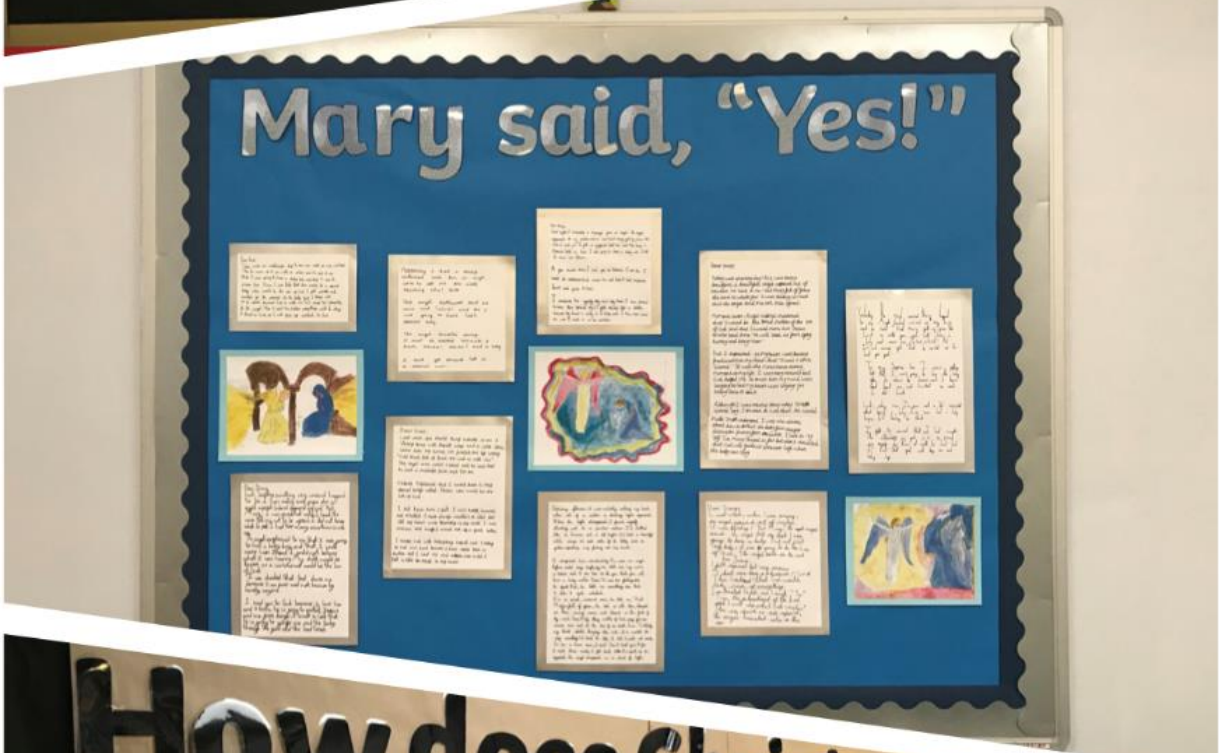
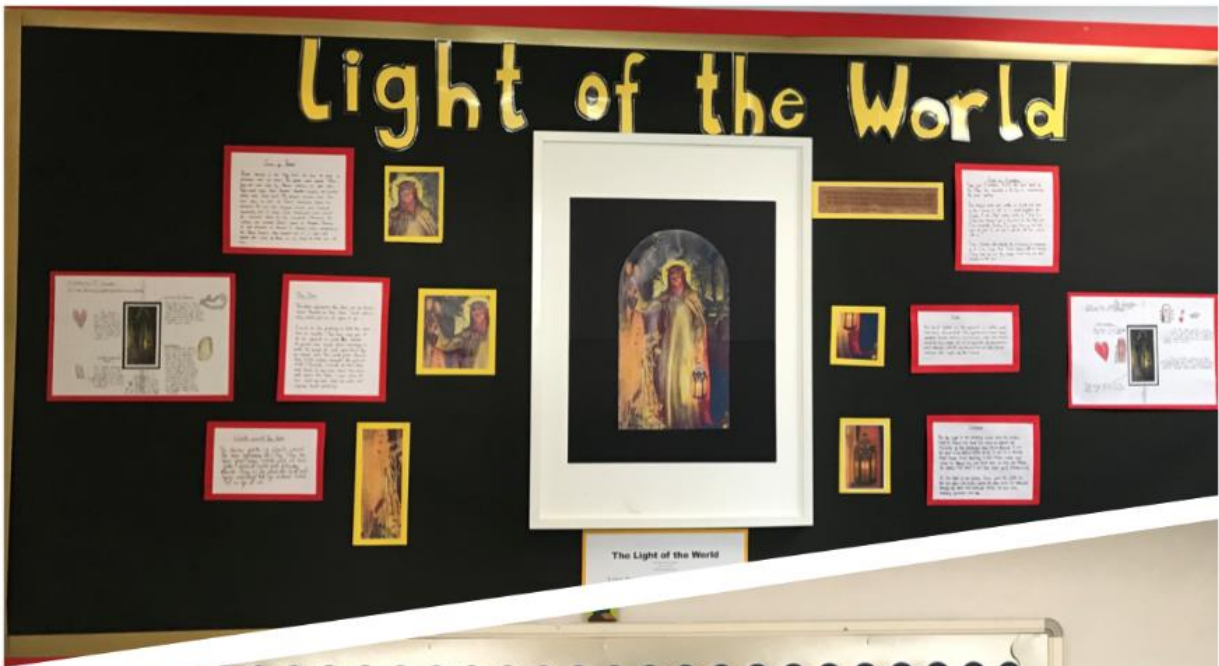
Veronica Harvey

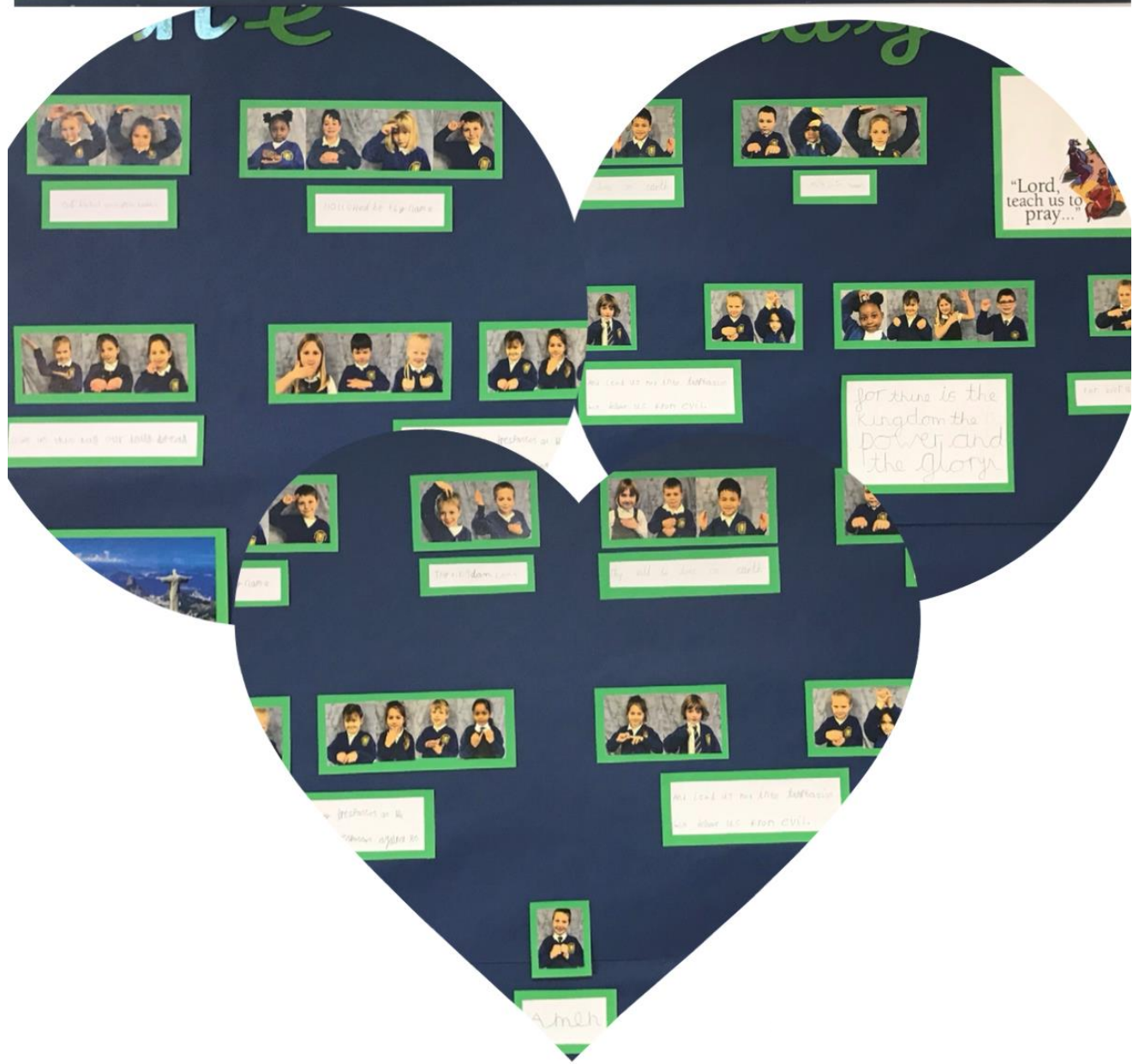
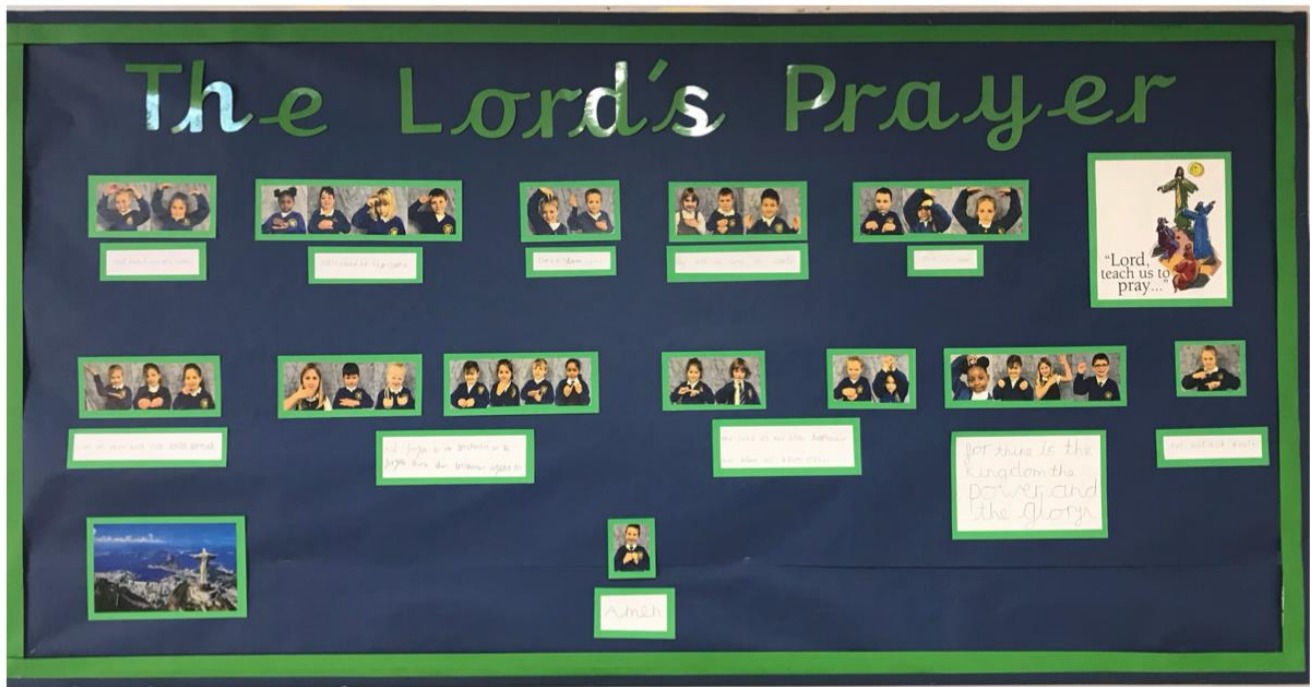
The display boards at St Laurence have been updated to highlight the children's work from their RE topics this term. Topics included Mary Our Mother, God's Promise to Zechariah, Injustice around the World and KS1 applied their skills of sign language to The Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary.

As a whole school we have also been thinking about how Christ works in us and how we show this to the wider world. We were supported in this by sessions (via Zoom) held by Sue Price on Servant Leadership.









Personal Stories and Experiences

Bringing Back Memories

Mike Dimambro

Nora Darby: In the Advent edition of Pilgrim, we published a picture of a 1970's Newsletter in Tailpiece. A few weeks later I received a letter from Mike Dimambro telling me how it brought back memories. After reading through it I asked him if we might publish his memories in the next edition of Pilgrim plus, did he have anything more he might like to add?

His reply:

The Tailpiece article brought back memories. My name on the reader's list of that newsletter reminded me of how long I have been a reader in our Parish. Fifty years plus now. Reference to Father Dick Wilson recalled my six years as Chairman on the Parish Council during his tenure as PP. I took over from Ron Brooks and handed over to Sean Martin. Probably in the month of November 1970 I would be appealing at each Mass for support for the Christmas Bazaar we held at the school. One year we raised over £1,000 to carpet the altar.

The 10.30am Mass at St Joseph's on Waterbeach Barracks was eventually led by Eucharistic Ministers, of which I was one back then, when we only had one priest in situ. We collected a ciborium of consecrated hosts from the church to take to St Joseph's for distribution. We were stopped at the gates by armed sentries and signed in at the Guardhouse. In response to the implied challenge "Friend or Foe" with the hosts by our side we could truly reply "Friend".

That newsletter also mentioned Stella Cracknell as a reader. She played the organ at my wedding and for years I gave a lift to her father and brought him to church and back home. I have been in the Parish since 1965 and recalled this last Sunday when I read with Margaret Plumb at the 8am Mass. Margaret has, of course, been a member of the Parish even longer and together we represented over a century of Parish membership at the lectern. Father Paddy Oates was PP when I joined and he didn't like flower displays in the church for weddings as he said he was often left to clean up the dead flowers. When I got married at St Laurence's in 1966, my mother-in-law, an experienced flower arranger who had displayed at the Smithfield and Kew Shows, asked me to persuade him to let us have flowers for my wedding to her daughter Jill. Father Oates agreed because I promised that they would all be removed in the evening after the ceremony.

My mother-in-law arranged displays of yellow and white flowers in the entrance to the church and on the altar. Father Oates was so impressed with the papal colours that he asked her if she would leave them until after the Sunday services next day. She cleared them away on the Monday. His attitude to flower arrangements changed after that. Father Hypher, the assistant priest to Father Oates, was the celebrant and he agreed that my wife's vicar, the Reverend Cecil Longden of St Mary's C of E Church in Potton, Beds could participate in the service. The reversal of policy on flowers and the joint celebration of a wedding by Catholic and Anglican priests, a first in St Laurence's, made our wedding a game changer.

Besides my six years' term as Chairman of the Parish Council in Father Dick Wilson's time, I have had two spells as school governor. Because of my experiences as a coach and referee in Rugby Union, I was asked to assist the teaching staff by taking classes for football and cricket twice a week. Barbara Quail kept an eye on me and the children. One pupil who showed special talent was Carl Bradshaw, son of teacher, Philomena.

We met again when Carl played rugby at Cambridge University and he went on to play at high levels. I make no claims of assisting his success. Rugby has been a great part of my life for 70 years and I have always given back to the game for what I got from it. I was pleased to introduce Father Michael Ryan to the Cambridge Rugby Club when he was curate here. He played several games as scrum half for their social team.

I believe that if you receive you should give back. We have been very blessed to have dedicated clergy to lead us. They deserve our support. For over 50 years I have been a reader and eucharistic minister as priests have come and gone. Although I am less active in Parish affairs these days, I sense that support is forthcoming from our parishioners. Thank God for that and for them, Bentley and all. St Laurence's has proved a firm anchor for my faith and a source of comfort and inspiration in difficult times. I'm glad to be one of its pilgrims.

Listening in Lockdown

Mary Watkins

During this time of lockdown, I have found a couple of resources which may be of interest to others.

Firstly, 'Pray as you Go' which provides a 10-minute prayer and reflection each day. It can be downloaded for free, each session starts with some form of music, from well-known classical pieces, choirs from around the world (my favourite are the monks from Moussa in

Senegal) modern songs and Taizé chants. There is a reading from scripture followed by a guided reflection. I particularly like the different voices that introduce each day – male and female with a range of accents. I find that using this opportunity has helped me to structure my day and I have found starting the day with this instead of the daily plethora of news is a welcome change! There are also retreats for Advent and Lent and based on other areas of reflection such as ‘The Earth’ (encountering creation) ‘Healing Hands’ (a prayer guide for health workers) and a ‘Walking Prayer’ for those taking their daily exercise!

Last year I had hoped to visit Belmont Abbey, a Benedictine monastery in Hereford, to go on a retreat, I had planned to go with an old friend, but of course this did not happen, but my friend pointed out that the Abbey was offering retreats online. They have a varied programme, currently offering ‘The Mysteries of Mark’ and ‘The Golden Gospel of Duccio’. ‘The Art of Listening’ is their Lent Retreat starting on 24th February on Wednesdays. Famous for their retreats using art works, ‘Vermeer in the Light of Faith’, is now available. It is well worth exploring their site for all sorts of treasures. There is usually no formal charge, but a donation is appreciated. I enjoyed doing all these things and hope others may find them helpful.

Inside view on a Covid-19 vaccine trial

Petra Tucker

For over 15 years I have been a research nurse, where the work has always been interesting and varied. Last autumn I was asked to work on a Phase 3 Covid-19 vaccine trial called Ensemble-2, sponsored by Janssen. In Cambridge we have recruited over 200 people out of a worldwide total of 30,000. Since the beginning of this pandemic, pharmaceutical companies around the world have been racing to develop vaccines capable of protecting everyone against dying from Covid-19.

One of those companies is Janssen – part of the Johnson & Johnson multinational corporation – and last year they decided to run two Covid-19 vaccine trials, Ensemble-1 with a single dose protocol and Ensemble-2 with a double dose protocol. Recruitment for Ensemble-2 began in November 2020 and finished at the end of December. On 29th January, Ensemble-1 announced good efficacy and a few months from now Janssen are certainly hoping that the Ensemble-2 trial will show even better results. The first step is recruitment, with research nurses phoning anyone who has expressed an interest in taking part in Covid-19 research, living within a 40-mile radius of Cambridge. After checking that they are eligible, we send them a

Patient Information Sheet (PIS), which in this case is 40 pages. A couple of days later we phone again to make an appointment at Addenbrooke’s Cambridge Clinical Research Centre. From our initial phone call to the first appointment at CCRC is typically less than a week.

At this hospital appointment, a doctor takes a detailed health history while nurses carry out various baseline observations before the subject signs the consent form. Subjects give a blood sample then we show them the website which they will use to record twice-weekly observations for the next two years. Each subject is given a digital thermometer and a pulse oximeter which measures oxygen levels in capillary blood. Ensemble-2 is a randomized blind trial; therefore, each subject has a 50 percent chance of receiving the vaccine, with the other 50 percent receiving a placebo. In this trial, the placebo is a saline injection, whereas for the equivalent Oxford vaccine trial the placebo is a meningitis vaccine. No one working on the trial knows who is on the vaccine arm of the trial or the placebo arm.

To get through all these steps, the first appointment takes about two hours, with nurses and doctors monitoring all aspects of the procedures. The second dose of the vaccine is given at Day 57 and as I write this article, we are in the process of calling people back for their second injection. There are various follow-up phone calls. Participating in this trial comes with a real benefit to subjects, since anyone who develops Covid-19 symptoms will be closely monitored in order to capture additional research data. People from all walks of life take part in such trials, though the mix in Cambridge probably has an unusually high proportion of research scientists and PhD students. Then there are people who just ‘want to do their bit’ as they recognise the importance of this work. We have people from their early 20’s to their 80’s on the trial. Despite the lockdown restrictions, there is a good atmosphere in our unit as people generally feel positive and hopeful that the result will be another successful vaccine.

As the national vaccination programme is now well under way, we are being contacted by study subjects who have been offered a vaccine by their GP. Since research should never interfere with receiving medical care, the principal investigator (PI) can unblind a subject. If this reveals that they were on the placebo arm of the trial, they just go ahead and have the vaccine that the NHS has offered them. If they were on the vaccine arm of the study then they are asked to wait for four weeks before deciding whether to have the NHS offered vaccine. As the results for Ensemble-1 are so favourable, it might be that our subjects decide not to take the NHS vaccine after receiving two doses of the Janssen vaccine. It is the subject’s choice though. After unblinding and receiving the NHS vaccine, they can still remain on the trial.

The question of whether (or when) people should take a Covid-19 vaccine is outside the scope of this article, however Covid-19 will probably become part of the repertoire of viruses that are now part of our lives and (therefore) my duty as a citizen is to protect my neighbours by having the vaccine. From my inside view of one trial, I can see that approving vaccine candidates is a meticulous process and the relative speed with which Covid-19 vaccines have been developed reflects the huge effort of highly skilled scientists, many of whom have dedicated their careers to vaccine development. For instance, the Janssen vaccine is built on the same platform as their highly successful Ebola vaccine. Since the beginning of this pandemic, vast amounts of money have been put into vaccine research.



His walking alongside the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and creating opportunities for them to talk through their despair, desolation, and heartbreak – to tell him their story*!

The pandemic world we woke up to almost a year ago seems to persist in its agenda to throw everything we know out of the window. In its stead, a new order full of uncertainties appears to be a replacement, at least for now. We find ourselves in the sea of grief and insecurities. The Christmas period, though different in many respects, offered us some glimmer of hope that we may return to a slightly better world...

In the ensuing developments and realities, we are confronted with, certain normalities have carried on. Babies have continued to be born. Priests have presided over funerals, and presidents have been inaugurated. Daylight has constantly responded to its call of duty as has night. Doctors and nurses and the whole system of healthcare professionals have continued to give, to care and to be there for our loved ones, in spite of themselves. Our supermarkets have never run out of food, and the army of people/volunteers who see to all these, sometimes delivering to our door, continue to work in our favour tirelessly. Vaccines and vaccinations are here and ongoing.

Does any of the above illustrate the presence of something or someone more than, an invisible presence, a transcendence? Is it possible that we may find God in all of this?

As on the road to Emmaus, is He perhaps walking with us? Maybe, we too can tell Him our stories!



* The road to Emmaus story is in Luke's Gospel, Ch 24, verses 13-35

Thought for the Day – Where is God in all this?

Rosina Abudulai

In the turbulence of our current world affairs, one would be forgiven, even people of faith, for asking where God is in all of this. Where is the loving God we have known and believed in? The God of our ancestors and the God of our patriarchs of faith?

As a people of faith, we have read about His mighty works and of his interventions, even. Of the parting of the Red Sea and of the calming of the Sea of Galilee. Of

Poetry Corner

Final few lines of Henry Vaughan's poem *The Nativity* written in 1656, apt for today's Pandemic.

sent in by Pat Ward

This poem was written during a turbulent time of English history after the death of King Charles I with Cromwell ruling as Protector. Despite this Vaughan ends the poem with the wish for light and hope as we do in these difficult days of lockdown. [Eds.]

Lord! grant some light to us; that we
May find with them the way to Thee!
Behold what mists eclipse the day!
How dark it is! Shed down one ray,
To guide us out of this dark night
And say once more "Let there be light".

Hope

by Josephine Cullum



2020 was awful,
which nobody can deny
but we managed somehow
and gradually we got by.

Now that we have the vaccine
our future seems much brighter;
the days are getting longer
and everything is lighter.

Spring is getting closer
when new life will begin.
Flowers in the garden
and hearing the birds sing.

God has been with us
to guide us through the dark
and hopefully we will soon be
sitting in the park.

Our church will reopen
to be at Mass once more
to share our times together
to worship God as before.

When life can seem so dreadful
our prayers can give us hope
to make us so much stronger
and therefore we can cope.

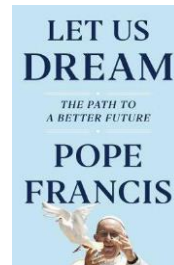
Reviews

Let us Dream, *The Path To A Better Future*

Pope Francis

ISBN 978-1-3985-0220-8, Simon & Schuster UK Ltd

Reviewed by Nora Darby



One of the gifts I received this Christmas was the book, *Let us Dream*. It is the result of Pope Francis sharing his thoughts in conversation with Austen Ivereigh, the author, who then suggested a book so that it could reach out to a broader public. Pope Francis, to Ivereigh's amazement, agreed.

The story begins as the Covid19 pandemic started to spread. It starts with a **Prologue** and is then divided into three parts.

Part One. **A Time to See.** What this crisis can teach us, how to handle upheaval in our lives or the world at large. He openly discusses the three crises which appeared in his own life.

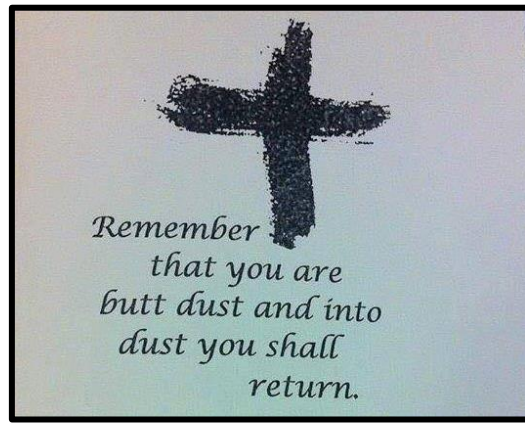
Part Two. **A Time to Choose.** Pope Francis then delivers a scathing attack on the systems and ideologies that have produced this crisis. A global economy, politicians, who are all in it for profit, heedless of the people and the environment. He reminds us that a Christian's first duty is to serve others.

Part Three. **A Time to Act.** Here the Pope offers a solution for building a better world for humanity. He shows how ordinary people acting together, despite their differences can bring about change.

In the **Epilogue** we are asked, what is my place in the future and what can I do to make it possible? He tells us 'to decenter' and 'transcend'.

There is a wonderful poem called **Hope** at the end of the book, which Pope Francis tells us he read in lockdown. He traced the author, a Cuban actor and musician, Alexis Valdés and Pope Francis' final words were, 'Let's let his poetry and its beauty have the final word, helping us to decenter and transcend so that our peoples may have life.'

This book is amazing, it is full of so much observation and truth. We are told to use unconventional thinking and why we must increase the role of women's leadership not only in the Church but also in society throughout. He reminds us of the cruelty and inequality in our society but also the resilience, generosity and creativity which may be the means of saving our society and our planet. Everyone should read it!



Faith in action

Make 2021 a GREAT (green) year with our special pull out

POSITIVITY PLANNER



Let's face it, 2020 was a rough ride. But with every New Year comes new opportunity.

Make 2021 a year to remember. Tear out this page and plonk it on your fridge, then tick the box next to each month's pledge as you complete it.



January

Start the year positively. Write down (so you don't forget!) three little, personal pledges you are definitely going to achieve this year.



February

Sign up to take part in our Walk for Water challenge!



The challenge is simple: 10,000 steps every day for 40 days. Get sponsored and get walking – and make a massive difference in the fight against water poverty.

Find out more at cafod.org.uk/walk

Bonus pledge: get five people to sponsor your Walk for Water challenge (or better yet, get them to take part too!)



March

Complete the Walk for Water challenge and fill in the gaps below.

I walked a distance of _____ and raised a total of £ _____ to help give the boot to water poverty.

Bonus pledge: take a photo of the above and post it to social media, tagging @CAFOD and #walkforwater

April

Easter's here, the Lord is risen and spring is on the way! It's time to shake off your winter blues and enjoy the blooming daffodils. This month's pledge is easy: find an Easter prayer at cafod.org.uk/pray and share it with your friends and family.



May

Write down three reasons you are thankful.



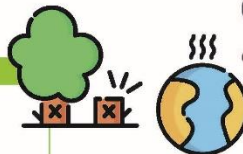
June

This summer Britain will be hosting some of the most powerful world leaders at the annual G7 summit. We can all play our part in making sure that the UK uses this moment to show global leadership in the fight against poverty and injustice. Find out what you can do by signing up to our monthly campaigning newsletter at cafod.org.uk/actionnews



July

The climate crisis has not gone away. We continue to stand with vulnerable communities who have contributed the least to climate change but are affected the most. Any solutions must include protections for the most vulnerable people and restore our planet for future generations. Visit cafod.co.uk/climate and sign our petition to hold the Government to account.



August

Summer is here! Your challenge this month is to get outside and enjoy nature in all its glory. Set aside a few minutes each day to appreciate the trees, the leaves, the birds and the bees. Take the time to give thanks for the wonders of Creation.



September

Most young people head back to school this month, but you're never too old to learn something new. Visit our blog to read stories from your sisters and brothers around the world at blog.cafod.org.uk

Bonus pledge: let us know how you feel. We love getting feedback on stories. Write to us at cafod@cafod.org.uk or get in touch with @CAFOD on social media

October

Every Harvest we stand with families around the world and offer practical help and support so that they can thrive. Find out how to get involved with Family Fast Day: this Harvest at cafod.org.uk/fastday



November

This November sees the delayed UN Climate Summit, COP26, arrive in Glasgow – a brilliant opportunity to make our voices heard in the fight against climate change. Write down three little ways you'll help live a cleaner, greener life from now on.



Bonus pledge: speak to your family and friends about climate change – the more chatter there is, the better!

December

Buy a loved one a unique present from World Gifts. Every gift supports people in hard-to-reach communities with love and hope. Is there a greater gift than that? cafod.org.uk/worldgifts

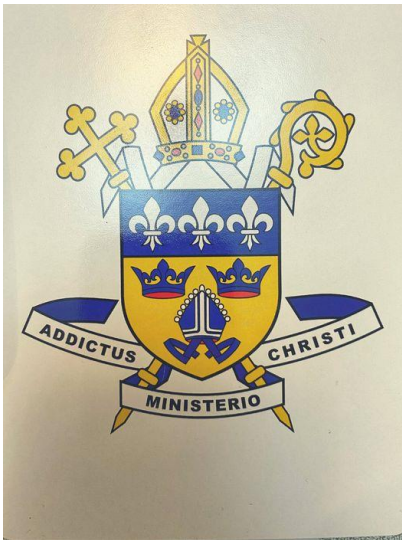
Bonus pledge: have a wonderful, relaxing Christmas holiday. With your year of pledges, you've definitely earned it!



Editorial

Sarah Sykes

We hope you are enjoying your Lenten activities under lockdown. Remember, Fr Simon said **take** something up rather than **give** something up as we have all had to give up so much of what was daily life. There are lots of Lent resources around such as the Bible reading plan provided in *The Voice* Bible called 'A 40-day Retreat with Jesus'. Or a series of online Lent lectures by Dr Scott Hahn, well-known Catholic author and speaker, on the St Paul's Centre website. And of course, you can contribute to CAFOD's 'Walking for Water' steps and join Fr Simon for his online Stations of the Cross on Friday evenings at 7.30pm. Catholic internet radio station, Radio Maria England, are also broadcasting a series of Stations of the Cross through Lent and each week focusses on the work of a particular Catholic charity. The first week of Lent focussed on CAFOD's work and in particular their Lenten Walk for Water challenge. You can download and listen to a podcast of this and many other RME programmes directly from their website, or on one of the many podcast platforms including Apple podcasts, Spotify and the Google podcast app.



Bishop Alan who has been serving as Bishop of East Anglia since July 2013 looks set to retire at last, after being asked to stay on after his official retirement date a couple of years ago. The process has now begun to select a new Bishop and Bishop Alan asks each of us to recite this prayer daily for God's guidance and blessings in this task:

O God, eternal shepherd, who govern your flock with unfailing care,
grant in your boundless fatherly love a pastor for your Church
who will please you by his holiness and to us show watchful care.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever. Amen

Our Lady of Walsingham, pray for us.

Saint Felix, pray for us.

All Holy Martyrs and Saints of East Anglia, pray for us.

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

The deadline for the next edition is

7 May 2021 for publication on 5/6 June

The production team:

Editors: Nora Darby, Sarah Sykes

Sub-editors: Alex Dias, Carol Williams, Susan O'Brien, Nora Darby, Sarah Sykes

Commissioning Editor: Nora Darby

Cover: Leonie Isaacson

Proofreaders: Caroline O'Donnell & Sarah Sykes

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

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

Some Regular Events

The Parishioners Open Meeting (formerly 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. Meetings commence at 7.30pm and currently are held online as a Zoom meeting and should not last any longer than an hour.

Due to the pandemic situation, we are currently holding meetings on a monthly basis, so that we can keep everyone in touch and share thoughts on church opening plans and other issues. The Zoom link is published in the Newsletter and sent in the Keep in Touch email during the week before the meetings.

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

The Pilgrim by Email

During this lockdown period, the Pilgrim magazine will be published online and you can receive a pdf version by email. If you are not already on the distribution list, send a request to pilgrim@saintlaurence.org.uk

Pilgrim on the Web

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

ABLAZE

The St Laurence Youth Mass is known as Ablaze. It is normally held on Sunday at 5pm on the first Sunday of the month. However, during the current lockdown there is no Sunday evening Mass. Keep a look out for announcements of Ablaze's return as restrictions ease.

Upcoming Parish Events

Stations of the Cross led by Fr Simon	Online each Friday during Lent 7:30pm Meeting ID: 951 1419 0674 Passcode: 200955
Stations of the Cross led by the Cambridge Justice & Peace group	Online each Wednesday at 7:30pm Meeting ID: 817 3822 5074 Passcode: 103176
Holy Week Masses Palm Sunday (Church open) Maundy Thursday Good Friday: Children's Liturgy activity Good Friday Liturgy (livestreamed only) Service of Reflection before the Cross ending with Holy Communion (in church and livestreamed) Easter Vigil Easter Sunday NB Check the Parish newsletter for details on how to book for these liturgies (including the use of Eventbrite)	Normal Mass times 1 April 7:30pm 2 April 10:00am 12:00pm 1pm – 5pm 20 min service every ½ hr 3 April 9pm 4 April 8am 9:30am 11am
Parishioners Open Meeting	Thurs 24 March 7:30pm
Confirmation Mass	17 May

All the above Mass times are correct to the best of our knowledge at the time of publication but please check the newsletter for any changes.



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

ST LAURENCE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

91 Milton Road, Cambridge CB4 1XB

Tel/Fax: 01223 704640

Email: office@saintlaurence.org.uk

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

Parish Priest:

Fr Simon Blakesley
07946 390060

simon.blakesley@rcdea.org.uk

Assistant Priest:

Fr Bob Eccles O.P.
01223 741265

robert.eccles@english.op.org

Deacon:

Rev. Dr Geoffrey Cook
01223 351650

Secretary:

Mr Reece King
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Treasurer:

James Dore
07980 467534

treasurer@saintlaurence.org.uk

Safeguarding Coordinator:

Petra Tucker

01223 704640 (messages)

safeguarding@saintlaurence.org.uk

Service Times

Saturday 9.30am

6pm Vigil Mass (sung)

Sunday 9.00am

11am (sung)

Join us afterwards for virtual coffee and chat after Mass on Zoom (details in newsletter)

Return to normal Mass times from Palm Sunday

Mon, Tues, Thurs 9.30am

Wed, Fri 12.30pm

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

St Laurence's School

Heads of School
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