

# The Pilgrim

St Laurence's Parish Magazine, Summer Edition 2022



## Confirmation 2022

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## STOP PRESS – STOP PRESS – STOP PRESS



On 1 July, Fr Toby Lees, OP, joined the Radio Maria England team to lead them as the next Priest Director. He comes from a Dominican community in London and he will be based with the Dominicans at Blackfriars when in Cambridge, but will also spend some of the week working at Radio Maria's London studio.

St Laurence's social life is reigniting with a Bring & Share International Meal which took place in the Parish room on the evening Sunday 3rd July.



## STOP PRESS – STOP PRESS – STOP PRESS

## What's new?



### **Obituary for Pauline Gullick**

**Tim, Paul, Mary**

Pauline Keirman was born in Cambridge on 31st December 1943. Her family moved to Wisbech, and she was baptised on Easter Sunday 1944. Pauline was active in her local church of Our Lady of St Charles Borromeo, involved in the Justice and Peace group. She came to national prominence in 1965 after receiving a personal message from Pope Paul VI. She had written to him as she was ill, and it was noted in the article from 1965 that the Pope's message had a positive effect on her recovery. In 1969, Pauline married John Gullick and moved back to Cambridge that same year after their honeymoon in London. In the 1970's, Pauline and John had three children, Paul, Tim and Mary. In the 1980's, she moved home to Kings' Hedges, where she lived until ill health would force her to leave in 2021.

Pauline, along with John, campaigned in the mid-80s to save St Bede's School that was threatened with closure. It was a campaign that was successful. She raised money for both Fr Michael Ryan's and Fr Pat Cleary's missions in South America. She held stalls at the St Laurence's school fete and at the Arbury Carnival which helped in her fundraising activities.



Pauline and John laid out the chairs for the Mass which took place at the Kings Hedges Ecumenical Centre and, later, at St

Laurence's school. Along with this commitment, Pauline helped organise the senior citizen's Christmas parties in the early 1990's both at the school and, on one occasion, in the Church itself. She brought some of the elderly residents to Mass as well.

Pauline was a Eucharistic Minister who used to take communion to some of the elderly in the Parish. She further supported the Church Magazine by submitting children's stories which she had written about Lancelot hare, a fictional rabbit, whose nemesis was Mr Fox.

Outside of her church activities, she was to her family, the mean spin bowler in the style of Shane Warne. She had a short run up and delivered, albeit with a tennis ball, deliveries that would befuddle both her sons. She worked for a time, at St Laurence's school, as a mid-day supervisor.

In the early 1990's, her mother would come to live in Cambridge, suffering from the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. For 18 months, Pauline tried to look after her at home but eventually had to accept that her mother would be better looked after in a care home setting. Her mother would remain in a care home setting for nearly 15 years before she passed away in 2009. At the same time, John had health issues. He had a brain haemorrhage in 1992 and, with surgery, was lucky to survive. In 2002, he passed away and Pauline had to arrange his funeral. Her grandson, Kieran, would arrive in the next year. Pauline helped and supported Mary, to bring him up. Pauline's other two grandchildren, Alicia and Kayla, followed in 2010 and 2011.

Pauline's health started to deteriorate in 2015, when she suffered her first heart attack which significantly slowed her down. She was now walking with a stick but her zest for life and love of her church was made stronger as her body became weaker. She made various contributions to the Pilgrim over the following few years which remain on the Parish website. When Covid came along, the closure of everything and not being able to go to church was something that Pauline had to adapt to. However, her health took a significant downward trend. In 2021, she would be forced to move into a care home as her health had got to the point where being in her own home was no longer a safe option. She moved into Alex Wood House care home in August 2021. She was regularly visited by the Fr Simon, Fr Bob and by Monica King, who had known Pauline for several years, through the church.

In February 2022, Pauline had her last admission to hospital due to concerns about her kidney function. She would deteriorate over the coming weeks. The day before she passed away, the palliative nurse called the family and stated that Pauline was continually asking for Fr Simon. The palliative nurse felt that the end of Pauline's life was fast approaching. Fr Simon visited and anointed her. Pauline had always told those close to her that none of us know the time or date when we will be called from this earth. On Saturday evening, Mary got a call from the hospital to say that Pauline had passed away. Pauline came into the world in a time of war and left it with another war in Europe. To her family, she was funny, she was intelligent, and she was devoted to her Catholic faith. She contributed to the life of the Church and to the Pilgrim. Her family now look at those articles still online with fondness despite the sadness of her passing.

## Tributes to Sr Pat Robb CJ

### Nora Darby

Sister Pat died on the 21st May 2022. I heard this news, and saw her obituary in the *Times*, with sadness but knowing she was at peace was a blessing. There have been many tributes from people who knew her, and in the Diocesan Newsletter from Sr Gemma Simmonds CJ and Bernard Shaw – Justice and Peace, see link: [www.rcdea.org.uk/sr-pat-was-a-tireless-justice-and-peace-campaigner/](http://www.rcdea.org.uk/sr-pat-was-a-tireless-justice-and-peace-campaigner/)

I only got to know Sr Pat when I came to St Laurence's, introduced by Mary Watkins, as I was helping with CAFOD. I was also on the Pilgrim magazine team and when it came back into print, first edition Advent 2013, she and Mary were on the cover with the 'Live Simply' award. Over the years she contributed so much to our Parish life, especially the CAFOD Harvest Appeal when there would be a wonderful display of vegetables from her garden. I was lucky enough to enjoy chats covering many subjects with her, perhaps due to our mutual medical background? I was also the lucky recipient of some of her garden produce. This is my favourite photo, not the best quality, a copy, but I do not have the original.



Sister Pat and her lovely garden

Image from *The Pilgrim* Sept 2016

When she, very reluctantly, had to go and live in York we kept in touch. We had previously discussed her collection of memories of her time in various parts of Africa which she had written down, and what she should do with them. During one of our phone chats the topic came up and to my surprise and delight she offered them to me, thinking they might be useful, maybe for *The Pilgrim*, or whatever. Sure, enough a large envelope arrived with many sheets of various colours containing her stories. We have published a number of them in past editions of Pilgrim, definitely one in this edition. You will find much more comprehensive tributes from Kay Dodsworth and Mary Watkins about this truly amazing lady. To me she was Sr Pat, a friend I met when helping at St Laurence's.

## Sr Pat Robb

### Kay Dodsworth

One of my most vivid memories of Sr Pat is of meeting her in the staff room one day while I was chaplain at St Mary's when she was about to go to talk to our Sixth Form. She grabbed me and asked if I would look after two asylum seekers she had brought with her, as she had to go to London with them immediately afterwards to 'hustle people' about their applications.

It was a completely typical encounter as her whole life was the living out of a vocation to bring about social justice. Even before she joined the CJ community, while living in South Africa in the 1960s under apartheid, she outraged white churchgoers by insisting on sitting with black Africans in services. Once she had entered and trained as a midwife, she returned to Africa to work initially in a large hospital in Zimbabwe. From there she was called into neighbouring Mozambique, to care for refugees and victims of violence, until she was deported for criticising the government for corruption. She spent many years in Africa, working in countries such as Angola, Sierra Leone and Rwanda, working in refugee camps with victims of war and hunger, including with survivors of the Rwanda genocide, tasks not for the faint hearted.

When she came back to Britain she volunteered at the Cardinal Hume Centre for the Homeless in London, worked in Whitemoor prison and became chaplain at Oakington detention centre for asylum seekers. She campaigned energetically against the Arms trade, she even used to go and address arms manufacturers' shareholder meetings, having been given permission by the Order to buy a share in an arms company to enable her to do so. The East Anglia Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission was privileged to have her as its Chair.

Her work inspired many people and in recognition of her contribution to Justice and Peace in 2005 she was awarded the Pax Christi Peace Award.

The eradication of poverty being so close to her heart, in May 2013 she was one of the hundreds of religious leaders who addressed Congress to talk about her time in developing countries where she witnessed children dying from lack of food. She expressed the hope that the large scale of that lobby would put pressure on Congress to not merely listen, but to take [action against world hunger](#).

In 2021, Anna Rowlands dedicated her book, 'Towards a politics of communion', to Sr Pat, having been so impressed by her when they worked together at Oakington. She says that 'it has often been women

religious who were the most luminous guides to the lived reality of the Catholic social tradition’.

When I think of her I am reminded of one of my favourite sayings of Mary Ward, ‘I would have you become lovers of truth and workers of justice’. Sr Pat certainly made it her lived reality.

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## Sister Pat Robb CJ, 1936-2022

### Mary Watkins



Many parishioners will remember the redoubtable Sr Pat, who became an active member of St Laurence’s in 1999 following an extraordinary life spent in the service of others.

Pat was born in 1936 in Penang. Her father died in Malaya when Pat was only two, leaving her mother to move to a family farm in Somerset, where little Pat was soon in her element, riding horses and tractors and learning to love all things green and growing. Her mother was called up for nursing service in WWII, so Pat was sent off to the first of eight boarding schools aged six. The end of war brought a further move to Cambridge, where an angry, sulking, rebellious young teenager (Pat’s own description) was taken on in Paston House, part of St Mary’s School. The then headmistress saw Pat as a challenge – she was not the only person to share this view of Pat in her lifetime. Pat became aware of the Mary Ward ethos and its difference from the school culture she had met elsewhere. Renouncing her original ambition to become a stable girl to the racing trainer in Royston, she followed her mother and chose nursing at the Middlesex Hospital in London.

Pat loved nursing and the independent life of London with its smoke-filled coffee bars, skiffle music and mixed hockey played with young doctors. There were tensions around her interest in Catholicism both with

her staunch Anglican mother and with a young farmer boyfriend who asked her to choose between him or becoming a Catholic. But neither persuaded her, and Pat was received into the Catholic Church, making her First Holy Communion in the Cambridge Convent Chapel. Pat became a staff nurse, but further adventures called, and she sold her Lambretta scooter and boarded a ship bound for Australia, where she found a job in the mountains of New South Wales, covering everything from the children’s ward, A&E, maternity and the operating theatre, treating horrific accidents among men digging roads and dams out of the side of the mountains. She went on to South Africa in 1960, at a time of appalling violence and racial segregation, often finding herself sitting with the black Africans in church being glared at by white people.

Deciding to do a midwifery training in order to work in a Bush Mission hospital, she boarded a ship home, where she was pestered by two Irish nuns to visit their convent to see ‘what it’s like to be a nun’. Pat shuddered at the thought and avoided them for the rest of the journey. However, to get them off her back, she said she was entering the Order of the Sisters from her old school.

True to her upbringing, she then felt she had to keep her word. Mrs Robb was distraught when she broke the news, but the Cambridge convent community were so good to her that in later years she was to say that she hadn’t *lost* a daughter but had gained several. As anyone who knew her would understand, Pat found novitiate life very constricting, and after taking her vows in 1961 with the name of Sr Camillus, she was delighted when she was sent to St Mary’s School, Shaftesbury. She headed for the open country and the wildlife with alacrity! As Sr Camillus she spent 18 years there as school nurse, being chiefly remembered by the alumnae who have paid tribute to her on Facebook for riding their horses round the hockey pitch, roaring round in a tractor and teaching them to play touch rugby, despite the disapproval of many parents.

But her missionary vocation never left her, and she returned to midwifery in London, finally landing in Zimbabwe, in a hospital with over 200 beds, serving an enormous outlying rural area.

Reverting to her baptismal name, Pat moved on to the municipal clinic in the desperate poverty of Amaveni township, where her interests in justice and peace were roused by the torture and bullying she witnessed under Robert Mugabe’s supporters. Pat told me that following a clinic she was asked to see a man on the run because of his political activities. Asked to remove his shirt she realised he had been flayed. At that moment she realised she could no longer just patch people up but needed to address the underlying causes of such brutality. In this

spirit she moved to Chimoio, on the border with Zimbabwe. Built for 25,000 people, it now held 250,000, mostly refugees from the civil war, squatting on the edge of the town without sewerage or shelter. She concentrated on mother/child health but was also dealing with high numbers of mutilated victims of violence and people dying of HIV/AIDS.

In one of many stand-offs with authority in her life, she was deported from Mozambique after denouncing corruption within the local charity and government sectors. She was then asked to go to Angola with the charity CONCERN. She flew there to find that their office had been bombed during the night and all documents had been destroyed. Undaunted, she set up some feeding centres with *Médecins sans Frontières*. One hundred people a week were dying of starvation and related diseases under terrible living conditions and she was very busy. With shelling all night and drunk and drugged soldiers manning the many roadblocks, she and her companions also had to drive through minefields. Asked if she would do similar work in the camps surrounding Rwanda, she became the camp administrator in Tanzania in 1993, moving on to Goma in the Congo and on into Rwanda and then Burundi to a camp which they had to evacuate five times in the six months she was there.

Years later, she and Sr Gemma Simmonds went to see the film *Hotel Rwanda*. Sr Gemma recalls that Pat was very silent on the way home, later weeping as she spoke of the horrors she had witnessed during the genocide.

Pat moved to yet another war zone in Sierra Leone, organizing logistics to turn a disused university into homes for hundreds of people.

Her career in African war zones ended with brutal suddenness when a bout of cerebral malaria necessitated her repatriation to England. Here she found a volunteering role in the Cardinal Hume Centre for the Homeless, with one day a week in a legal aid firm involved with Human Rights for the Traveller community. It was the beginning of her life as a tireless campaigner for justice and peace that is acknowledged in Prof. Anna Rowlands' recent book on Catholic social teaching which carries a dedication to Pat. It says, 'She represented the persistent widow, the virtuous and difficult woman who faithfully believes in a truth beyond mere power and witnesses to it until justice is rendered. She stands for a generation of women, written out of the magisterial pages of the tradition, but who have led and inspired social renewal.'<sup>1</sup>

Conventional community life was not for Pat after her long years under fire and in May 1999 she moved to a flat in Cambridge, working first at Whitemoor High Security Prison and then in the chaplaincy at the

Oakington Immigration Detention Centre until its closure in 2010.

Pat became a force to be reckoned with in our Parish. I remember her visiting me and inspecting all my electrical devices checking to see if they were on standby! She raised issues of climate change, and sustainability long before *Laudato Si'*, often through Lenten campaigns, supporting the established Traidcraft and Justice and Peace groups and visiting the Parish school. She started an active CAFOD group in the Parish, a move which was not initially welcomed by everyone as three Parish overseas projects already existed, some prior to CAFOD's foundation. Given her experience of development work overseas, Pat felt strongly that a high level of accountability and a structure for the continuation of the work were necessary when founding members moved on. The Parish took this on and continues to generously support a wide range of fundraising and awareness-raising activities within CAFOD.



Among these was the achievement of the *Live Simply Award*, the first in the Diocese with its principles of living Simply, Sustainably and in Solidarity with the poor.

Well into advanced old age, Pat involved herself with Justice and Peace work through CAFOD and other NGOs, nationally and locally. In recognition of her contribution to Justice and Peace, in 2005 she was awarded the Pax Christi Peace Award. She campaigned on behalf of refugees, several of whom became part of her extended family. Her allotment was a source of pleasure to her and her produce often appeared as part of the CAFOD Harvest Appeal.



Pat lived up to her Order's founder, Mary Ward's, advice: 'I would have you become lovers of truth and workers of justice' – I only hope Heaven is ready for her! I am grateful to Sr Gemma Simmonds who kindly gave permission to use the material she put together from Pat's memoirs for her obituary.

Footnote:

1. Anna Rowlands, *Towards a Politics of Communion: Catholic Social Teaching in Dark Times*, (T & T Clark, London, 2021)

## Personal Stories & Experiences

### Camp Life

#### Sr Pat Robb

It was a bonus if I managed to finish the clinic in the refugee camp before the daylight went, for then I could have an hour or two wandering around talking to the refugees and visiting their huts. There was always so much to see and learn, so many interesting people to meet and it never ceased to amaze me what many had done to make life better.

Take Freddie for example: Freddie was a carver, and when he had had to run for his life, he had carried his small lathe across the border. Now he was working hard to make things out of the beautiful hardwood that grew in the area. Sugar bowls, candlesticks, goblets. I still have a goblet he made and it has pride of place on a shelf in my room. Freddie's young brother works the lathe with his feet while the craftsman tenderly shapes the wood.

Next to Freddie lives Jo. Today he is sitting on the ground reading. He calls me over: "I went to school for a few years, but since then have never had time to read, besides we didn't have any books or papers at home. Now I am trying to learn again." He shows me the Bible open at the story of Noah. The preacher had apparently lent him the book and shown him where to find familiar stories.

Tendai is nursing her new baby. She calls me over to look at some spots on his face. It is always the same when I walk in the camp: the mothers bring their children to me for advice on various ailments. Another mother is asleep under a tree, her baby sucking contentedly at her breast. Some girls are playing hopscotch, some are skipping and groups of boys are playing football, the ball made out of old sacks and plastic bags tied together. They are barefoot wonders: so quick and skilful, I wonder how many would make the top grade if they had the chance of training with a First Division club?

I can see four boys climbing a mango tree at the edge of the camp. A young girl is sitting outside her hut with a few wares spread on a sack for sale; three cloves of garlic, little piles of salt, a few chilies grouped together and some rather sad-looking onions. I wonder if she will get any customers, but she smiles and remains hopeful. It is hard to make a little extra to supplement the camp rations. A man comes cheerfully by; he is carrying several fish he has just caught. His family will not go hungry tonight and they will probably dry a few of the fish to sell.

Further along, a small girl is sitting by some dried fish, spread out on a sack. She is also waiting for customers. Mary, who I know well, struggles in with a huge bundle of firewood on her head: panting and sweating she sinks to the ground, dips the gourd in the water bucket, pours water over her head and then lets out a loud exclamation of triumph. To collect firewood is hard. First it is necessary to get permission to leave the camp and then there is a long walk to find the dead trees and chop hard all day. Now Mary can relax; she has firewood for a few days and some to sell.

The camp has been in existence for more than two years. It is situated on a group of hills very near the wide river that winds to the East, and standing on a mound of ground the vista is of hut after hut all close together and surrounded with a high wire fence. Most of the refugees had arrived two years previously, but with the constant border problems more are trickling in all the time so that the population now numbers nearly 30,000. The refugees get rations of beans, maize and cooking oil each week, and occasionally soap. Each family tries to find a way to make a little more to buy the extras. A few get work like Jed who is forming and burning bricks to make the new latrines. This is a project sponsored by CAFOD. He gets paid with extra food.

A man is climbing the hill toward his hut carrying some beans which he earned by helping to offload a food lorry. Another family will eat well tonight! One man comes with a pair of sandals he has learnt to make at the skill school, recently set up by a Norwegian group, and his companion carries a small stool which he had made at the carpentry school.

Children are running home from school. The refugees have set up, on their own, primary schools, but teachers are in short supply so the school has three sittings: early morning, late morning and afternoon. Most children can attend for 2 hours. Not much, but better than nothing and the parents are happy that the youngsters have something to do. One of the most difficult groups is the male youth; they long to have money in their pockets and freedom. Some have got permission to go to the nearest town and to buy a few items in bulk. These enterprising youngsters have now set up their stall on the 'main' road into the camp and do a pretty good trade. A few others have formed a co-operative to make baskets for carrying food. Some organisation had promised to take the baskets to the capital city each week to sell them for a better price there. And the young entrepreneurs have asked them to bring back some jeans and smart t-shirts with the profits: these young chaps really want to look smart.

I move on. Loud pop music plays outside one hut and four youths sway their bodies with that easy fluid movement Africans have. They call me over to join

them and after a few jerky steps they collapse in a heap of good-natured laughter at my poor efforts. The discordant, blaring music continues. In the distance I can see an Evangelical Church having a prayer meeting. They too are singing, but it is mostly Alleluia. All of them, and many of the other refugees are wearing T-shirts with the face of the American founder of their church blazoned on the front and 'Jesus is Alive' across the back. I remember the day when that American was in Camp. He gave out t-shirts by the score to all who went to his happy clapping sessions, but only very few remained faithful to his teaching after his departure.

I am called into a hut where an old lady lies dying. She is beautifully looked after by her family who ask me to pray. The old lady smiles and joins in with us as she nears the end of her final journey. And in the next hut I am called to see a baby born two hours ago. The Camp gives out clothes to new mothers so mother and baby are looking very spruce, the baby's face still wrinkled from his struggle to get into the world. Hovering nearby is the traditional midwife. She has started to attend classes at the clinic to make her practice cleaner and safer and is obviously very proud that I have witnessed her at work! But just along the track is Umi, who is a rather dangerous traditional healer. Outside his hut his son sits selling medicine for all ailments; medicines made from snake venom, tree barks, flowers, roots, animals blood and so forth. Umi is a rather sinister man, but his son is a cheerful and persuasive salesman. Umi has just treated a man for headache. He cut the man's forehead with a razor and pretended to remove a stone which had 'caused the headache'. Umi's son is busy selling medicine for diarrhoea while his wife is making a fertility waist band out of small beads. A lot of money crosses their palms as belief in traditional medicine is very strong and very expensive. Often Western medicine is a last resort.

We are down at the river now. A narrow, low concrete bridge crosses at this point, but it easily floods and becomes impassable during the rainy season. On one side of the bridge the boys and men have their pools for bathing and on the other side the women and children. The boys are jumping off rocks and splashing away, but for the women and girls it is also a time of washing the clothes. As always there are lookouts to watch for crocodiles or hippos. Several people get killed each year. Marnie was one; she just could not get out of the water quickly enough when the alarm was sounded and the hippos jaws broke her body in two. We watched helplessly as she and her unborn child died. Kuda nearly lost his life to a crocodile, but that is another story!

Some girls have had their wash and are sitting plaiting each other's hair; tiny plaits that will make them more attractive to the opposite sex. Meanwhile, John is putting on his clean shirt and jeans as today is his

official wedding day. He has paid the full bride price and can take his young bride to his hut. Not far away a beer drink is going on: homemade beer brewed in seven days from a mixture of maize, water and sugar. I am called over to join in, but beg to be excused from drinking as I find the thick, white liquid poisonous! But to sit and exchange a few words with the drinkers is good fun. They pay for their beer and the woman who made it is happy as she has money for soap and more sugar and she will start the process all over again!

Simon is mending his bike. He has made some brakes out of some old rubber tyres and is trying to fit them, but the bike looks like a right-off to me! At the edge of the Camp I hear the sound of metal against metal: a group of men have set up a small forge and are making axes, hoes and machetes. They use any scrap metal they can find and one of them blows on the fire with bellows made from a goat's stomach, while the others heat the metal and try to beat it into shape. The end results are not very professional!

Joseph is very excited because his eldest son has been chosen to go for teachers' training. That means he will get a bit of salary and will be able to support the family. It is a known fact that anyone earning is obliged to help his parents and brothers and sisters and sometimes even his cousins. Liza has got a little job at the feeding centre for malnourished children, also funded by CAFOD, attached to the clinic and she hands over most of her pay to her mother for the family. There is no space to grow any food and no possibility of fields outside the Camp. Some have a few scraggly tomatoes growing by the huts but dogs, hens and footballs usually destroy small plants. But there is a patch where the Camp grow tobacco and three old men are sitting in the shade, deep in discussion, all puffing on homemade pipes and foul-smelling tobacco.

Now the heat has gone out of the day, the sun begins to sink and women and girls get busy: it is time to go to the water points. The vendors get a few last-minute customers as people think about what they will eat. Fires are lit. Small naked children are gathered up, the last clothes which were out drying are taken in and the families prepare for yet another night. It seems so normal, but the reality is very different: surrounded by a high wire fence, no means of getting out to work, no means of cultivating any land, of visiting friends except within the Camp. They all long to get home again.

And by now they are all home, as peace comes to their country they made the long trek back to their villages and the Camp site reverted to scrub, unpopulated bush once more. Life for all was back to normal.



## Sea Sunday, 11th July: what does this have to do with us in Cambridge?

Mary Watkins

### Some personal reflections and a case study

I was born and brought up in Southampton, then a large cargo port and home to famous liners. In my primary school in the 1950's many of the children had fathers who went to sea with the merchant navy for many weeks of the year. Most of the remainder had family members who worked in the industries that supported the shipping trade. My own father's family moved down from Liverpool in the 1930's as Grandpa's employers moved their shipping company's HQ, The White Line, to Southampton. Grandpa was a steward on the liner Olympic – sister ship of the ill-fated Titanic. Two of my uncles also went to sea but my Dad refused. He had heard enough tales of the long hours, poor pay and conditions experienced by crew on the cruise ships and cargo boats of the time. Instead, he went to work in the docks' office for Elders & Fyffes, who shipped bananas from the West Indies, organising the coming and going of their fleet of boats.

As a child I would hear from my Uncle Joe (who went to sea at age 16 as a bell hop on the Queen Mary) of being left to fend for himself when a ship docked in a foreign port for urgent repairs with no pay or language skills. He told me how he and others stranded received help, bed and board from The Apostleship of the Sea, later known as the Stella Maris. In his retirement he ran the local Stella Maris club bar. At his funeral we were surprised when three port chaplains turned up together with a coach load of elderly seaman to pay tribute to his work over his life at sea to helping other seafarers through the Stella Maris.

So, you will understand why I continue to support the awareness and fundraising carried out on Sea Sunday, which this year will be on 11th July, to support care for the spiritual, social and material welfare of all the people of the sea regardless of colour, race or creed.

But what does this have to do with us in Cambridge, far from the sea? Well, did you realise that 95% of all imports and exports are transported by sea? The globalisation of trade worldwide with the massive containerships that now bring most of what we export, import and buy mean we are all dependent on seafarers and their welfare is also all our responsibility. Bigger ships, smaller crews, and faster turnaround times in port have ensured that goods can be delivered more quickly and cheaply than ever before. Working on containerships has resulted in huge changes and often for the worse. Smaller crews working for many weeks together can cause tensions. Often there is no time to go onshore for a break from relentless routine. Seamen are

away from families for longer and the recent scandal with P&O ferries has highlighted the precarious nature of hire and fire for many. Stella Maris is the largest ship-visiting network in the world. They improve the lives of seafarers and fishers through our network of local chaplains and seafarer centres, expert information, advocacy, and spiritual support.

When the Malaviya Seven ship was detained in Scotland, the crew were abandoned without wages and unable to return home for nearly 18 months. Here are a few extracts from Captain Anish's story\*. 'I remember the first visit by the Stella Maris port chaplain Rev Doug Douglas.... I was a little wary of all the whole situation namely the detention and the stranding which were all new to us. Over the months, he was a regular. He would also get his friends to accompany him. Each visitor wanted to help us in their own way. There were weekly visits to parts of Scotland in Doug's minivan. There was a sense of excitement amongst the crew for the visits and the prevailing sense of despondency used to be forgotten. Lots of practical help was given as well as moral support.... when the diesel was running short and we had to curtail the generator running hours.... Doug organised local support. Places where we could get burners to cook food and heaters to keep us warm were already planned by him. The Ship's requirement ..... a generator was promptly placed on board to reduce fuel consumption.'

'When the ship's crew started running out of phone top-ups, he was ready with portable Wi-Fi which was kept on board and made accessible to all crew. There were incidents when a local trip to the hospital was required.... emergency dental treatment.... enter Doug and his minivan. It was to Doug that we used to turn to for legal advice. He used to advise us, keep us updated .... There was an implied assurance that as long as the Stella Maris was present, justice would be served..... had it not been for the Stella Maris team, the crew condition would have been far different in the end.'



A happy crew about to leave Scotland at last!

\*Read full story and much more about the work of Stella Maris at <https://www.stellamaris.org.uk/>

## Walking with Petra Tucker

Yesterday I did my usual 20-mile solo circular walk. This route takes me along the river past Baits Bite Lock to Clayhithe Bridge, onwards as far as Bottisham Lock then into Lode by back roads to arrive at Anglesey Abbey in time for 11am coffee, returning to Cambridge through Stow Cum Quy, under the A14, to get onto Newmarket Road and reaching Parker's Piece before heading for home up Histon Road. Ample time to listen to the birds, enjoy the ever-changing river and take in



all the colours of the trees. As a means of exercise, walking has to be counted as a slow sport even if one walks at 3.75 mph. You have time to do all sorts of things in your head and at the moment there is plenty to think about. Yesterday it was 23 degrees and the sun was blazing all day. The photos I took were of a field of ripening rye, some

beautiful scarlet poppies and other hedgerow flowers.



The poppies were at the edge of the field of wheat which set off a whole train of thoughts. There is that lovely folk hymn – 'I sing of a girl in the ripening wheat'. A simple

Marian folk song written by Damian Lundy and set to the melody of Scarborough Fair. Looking at fields of golden wheat made me think of the bread that would be made from this grain and that bread, in some shape or form, links peoples all over the world. Then my mind wandered to the stark fact that the present war in the Ukraine is going to mean that developing countries who rely on Ukrainian wheat are going to experience catastrophic food shortages. I then looked at the simple red poppies and thought of Pete Seeger's anti-war song 'where have all the flowers gone'. A powerful song about young soldiers dying and how they are remembered by grieving women.

Powerful though this song is perhaps the most famous anti-war song is the one written by the American folk singer Ed McCurdy in 1950 –

Last night I had the strangest dream I ever dreamed before  
I dreamed the world had all agreed to put an end to war...

Its first album release was by Pete Seeger but the version I know so well is that sung by Joan Baez. This song has been sung by many people, including Simon and Garfunkel, but Pete Seeger's and Joan Baez's versions I think are so very powerful. While I'm out walking in relative safety, there are people risking their lives in order to defend their country against an aggressor who cares not a jot about killing anyone who resists them. War creates anger and hurt which lasts generations. In the early 1980s, I remember going on peace rallies where Bruce Kent spoke powerfully against the use of nuclear weapons. Are we really living under the threat of nuclear weapons in the hands of a megalomaniac dictator? I never thought that in my lifetime I would see full scale fighting in Europe and see our cost-of-living rocketing. Of course, I am glad that British soldiers are not in danger, but we are all being affected and will be for many years to come. How many more people need to die before this madness comes to an end? These are just some of the thoughts occupying me as I walk. The warm sun, birdsong and colours, the all-round beauty of nature, reminds me of God's unconditional love for us.

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## Who mentored you?

### Karen Rogers

This month I attended what we would have called the Speech Day, but what has now come to be called Graduation, at our daughter's college and the Principal made a most heart-felt, inspiring and timely address on the vital importance in life of personal responsibility, aiming for good enough rather than perfection and ultimately of joy. It is a message which Dominic lives; making an eager and sincere investment during his lunch hour in developing a personal relationship with each student, often seamlessly picking up on a conversation one week which they had started the week before.

Looking at all those young smiling faces I remembered a Speech Day 41 years ago at which my Chemistry teacher smiled and clapped and looked me in the eye as I came off the stage clutching my hard-won and most unexpected certificate. I struggled so hard at school and I never could do Chemistry. Yet Mr Finlay never gave up on me. God bless him. Some things change... but the need for face-to-face, one-to-one mentoring, for sharing the joy of life and a love of its beauty, never does. It can save a life and sharing the Faith can help save a soul.

*'My mentor said, "Let's go do it," not "You go do it." How powerful when someone says, "Let's!"'* – Jim Rohn

## **Features and Opinions**

### **Cardinal Points – Heresies and Holiness**

#### **Ronald Haynes**

No doctrines, no traditions – back to the Early Church! That was the enthusiastic plan of a house church group in Colorado, which was a spiritual home earlier in the life of a philosopher friend. So many movements start in a similar way, whether church-based or otherwise, trying to restore or return to a pure beginning – whether real or imagined (or a bit of both). So many also find that it is not as easy as it seems, whether because of misinterpretation of the many conditions comprising the original group, or because of the challenges in recreating in the current reality the key factors from the beginning environment and situation.

In the case of the Colorado church group, after a time their members started asking questions such as ‘what exactly do we believe?’ and ‘what makes our group different than others?’ The responses to these questions necessitated clarifications which confirmed their particular doctrines and their identifying traditions. However, even in the Early Church there were debates, controversies and enough divergence on essential beliefs or behaviours that there was cause to call for Church discussions and councils to settle significant differences. Over time, these serious interactions have helped to further develop the Creed, so as to clarify the resulting, and further evolving, understanding of those essential beliefs.

The Council of Jerusalem, the first Council of the Church, was initiated by the apostles and held around 50CE. In many ways it set the tone for all such deliberate gatherings to follow – including the Second Vatican Council, through to the more recent Synodal pathway process. A key concern which prompted that first Council was to solve the question of whether there was a universal obligation for Christians to also follow Jewish laws and practices – and specifically, must Gentile Christians (men) observe the custom (set in the time of Moses) of circumcision.

The Apostle Paul and Barnabas led a delegation (from present-day Syria) to confer with Peter and the other elders of the Church in Jerusalem. After praying with, and listening to, each other and invoking the help of the Holy Spirit, they were able to agree that the new non-Jewish Christians did not need to be circumcised, nor follow many other regulations of the Law listed in Leviticus, with a few exceptions agreed for all (see Acts 15 for more of the story). The Council was a clear demonstration of the willingness of the apostolic and other leaders to share and listen with empathy, and to

adapt certain practices as appropriate, in order to maintain peace and unity within the Church and to grow as a community.

Tragically, not all disputes have been so well managed or resolved. When someone, or often a group, moves away from core beliefs or practices they may come to be known as heretics. The origin of that word seems innocent enough (from Greek through Latin *haeresis*) and roughly meaning a choice or a school of thought. In the New Testament it can appear as ‘sect’, and through the Church came to mean a division that threatened the unity of Christians. The similar term ‘heterodoxy’ seems to have been in use since around 100CE, and the sense of choosing beliefs or behaviours which could lead to disunity among the Church would become the focus of serious punishments.

The first legally-defined Christian heretic, Priscillian, was executed in 385 by Roman officials. He was a wealthy nobleman of Roman Hispania (present day Spain) and later Bishop of Ávila, while a leader of a ‘Gnostic’ (secret knowledge) and overly strict form of asceticism involving a spiritual elite and a deprecation of the body and material world, all of which was generally incompatible with Christianity as it was understood and lived by the great majority of the Church of the day. This execution followed the official criminalisation of heresy by the Roman emperor, with Church and State authorities collaborating for the first time, enforcing what was determined to be orthodox teaching (and punishing what was not).

With tragic irony, it seems the last legally-defined Church heretic was also executed in Spain – in 1826! With some connection to the final days of the dreaded Spanish Inquisition, a final death sentence for heresy was given to a schoolmaster named Cayetano Ripoll, condemned for believing and teaching the heresy known as deism. Deists generally reject divine revelation, and instead believe in the existence of God solely based on rational thought, as revealed through nature, without any reliance on religious authority.

In a previous edition of *The Pilgrim* (June 2020 <http://saintlaurence.org.uk/pilgrim/pilgrim-2020-06.pdf>) there was a brief mention of the major clash in the fourth century between St. Athanasius and his fellow cleric Arius, along with many of Arius’ supporters (including a Pope and some Roman emperors). Athanasius held the profound and spiritually well-developed belief that: ‘God became human in order that humanity might become divine.’ This belief in divinization, theosis or sanctification was a key concern for many of the early Church leaders. Arius did not believe in the full divinity or eternal existence of Jesus and sought to change the Church’s core understanding of Christ. To help settle the dispute,

along with Scripture and debate, Athanasius convinced his friend Anthony (the Great, or Anthony of the Desert) to join him and provide testimony, so informed as it was by his life of prayer and personal experience of God. The dispute was settled, and the Creed was updated (incorporated into the one we regularly pray, the Nicene Creed).

Over the many years, and many disputes, perhaps we have learned a few things. We have at least stopped officially sanctioned killing based on divergence of beliefs, no matter how fundamental. While we still have ways of shunning and excommunication however, those often enough occur by being self-imposed. While we still care deeply about unity within the Church, these are among the essential matters which may be worth dying for (for example, martyrdom) but never worth killing for (something which immediately seems counterproductive as it does unwarranted by faith).

Hopefully we are learning to join Pope Francis in meeting more situations with the thought ‘who am I to judge?’. The Pope is naturally turning to Scripture to respond to thorny subjects, for instance referencing Matthew 7:1-4: ‘Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbour’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbour, “Let me take the speck out of your eye,” while the log is in your own eye?’

The tradition of remembering, respecting and treating as role models those we have identified as blessed, as venerable, and as saints has many helpful aspects for us and the wider community. For one, it means that everyone can find someone who ‘speaks to them’ and someone to whom they can speak – someone who perhaps has lived a similar life, or shown examples of how we might live. This goes as much for the patron saints of different professions and vocations as it does for those providing example for any aspect of our daily life.

In this way, models of holiness are available to us all – and can powerfully counterbalance any disturbing or damaging examples we might encounter amongst examples considered heretical. Still, there is good to be found in most stories and human encounters, even famously memorable and challenging ones. A simple example is conveyed in the Biblical story of the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:4-26). Among the most famous of the stories of Jesus, it contains some surprising messages – starting with the fact that Jesus is speaking with her, which she notes with surprise, since Jews generally do not associate with Samaritans (or even use dishes which Samaritans have used).

Another surprise is the Samaritan woman’s marital status, which turns out to be living with a man, after five husbands. Jesus does not judge her, nor lecture her in societal or marital norms, as we might imagine would be tempting for those in a more orthodoxy-enforcing mode. Instead, Jesus offers her the water of eternal life – himself – and she leaves her water jar to go and share the good news with the other people in her town, and call them to come and learn more about Jesus and this gift of eternal life. Some celebrate her example as the first Christian evangelist, and the Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic traditions see her as a saint, giving her the name Photine (or ‘luminous one’).

As a passing note, with her story it seems worth briefly remembering the story of the ‘Good Samaritan’, where a key and surprising part of the story is the holiness shown by that Samaritan in acting righteously, as one should. In that case, he is following the law and conscience, by caring for those in need, and setting a better example than the Jewish counterparts who pass by the beaten stranger in need.

Another important and challenging message would seem to be found in the story of the Last Supper, or what we consider the first Eucharist, and in particular in the depiction of Judas being offered to ‘take and eat’ along with the other apostles. In two particular Gospel accounts (Luke 22:17-23, John 13:21-30) we hear that Judas is part of the gathering and there is no bar from him being offered what we now call Communion. In Luke we hear, after declaring that we should: ‘Do this in remembrance of me.’ ... that Jesus adds: ‘But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!’

In John’s Gospel we hear that ‘Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.’ ... In answer to Peter’s question ‘Lord, who is it?’ Jesus answered: ‘It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.’ ... he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “Do quickly what you are going to do.” ... So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.’

However we see Judas, and the infamy of his actions, it is worth further reflection that Jesus offered him his body and blood and eternal life, even knowing that he was to be betrayed by the very same person. This is especially in contrast with those who think that Communion should be withheld from certain public servants or other individuals, whether based on apparent differences of principles, politics, or related culture wars. Pope Francis, who formally opposes such shaming (and shameful) sacramental shunning, also

indicates a better approach: ‘who are we to judge?’. The example of Jesus, whose body and blood is being offered, also seems clearly on the side of bountiful and unjudgmental generosity.

Heresy has a way of splitting us apart, from each other and often enough from the wider communion of saints. Holiness is a way to bring us together, to bind and blend and better each and all of us. There is a story about a visitor to Hell and Heaven seeing the same scene – a great number of people seated together at table, with plenty of food and only spoons with very long handles available to eat the food. In Hell everyone is sad and starving, because the spoon handles are too long to reach each person’s mouth. In Heaven everyone is festive and full, because the handles are just the right size to feed each other.

The American poet Edwin Markham (1852–1940), helpfully reminds us of a hopeful, loving approach in response to the would-be heretic:

He drew a circle that shut me out  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.  
But Love and I had the wit to win:  
We drew a circle that took him in.

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## A Biblical Approach to Gender Ideology

### Mark Hardcastle

‘From this time, many of Jesus’ disciples turned back and no longer followed him.’ John 6:66

In the last issue of *The Pilgrim*, I noticed that a question that arose from the Synodal process was asking for guidance about gender ideology. In this article, I hope to present a brief outline about what gender ideology actually is, and how we might take inspiration from the Gospels should we need to interact with people who speak of gender ideology or with people affected by such talk.

But first, an announcement: I hate sprouts.

I mean, I *really* hate sprouts. I have never had a pleasant experience with sprouts. It seems, however, that there are some odd people out there who class these evil objects as food and will insist that they make a great addition to a Christmas dinner. Talking of sprouts with such people is very difficult for me because their experience is completely alien. I have simply no reference frame at all in which I might understand the liking of sprouts. Consider a world where sprouts have, as is only good and decent, been banned. The law-

abiding majority have come together and declared that sprouts are so self-evidently hateful that they are to be purged from society as their existence offends the natural order of things. They are anathema.

Now, in that society, I fear to say, there exist a number of individuals who, in spite of everything, claim that sprouts are nice. Not only are they willing to tolerate the presence of sprouts on their plate, but they may actually seek out sprouts in spite of the ban. They are willing to bring shame and judgement to their whole family just so they can indulge their unnatural desires. Being good and upstanding members of the community, the family turfs the sprout-lover out onto the street and turns their backs on them. Cut off from family, friends, employment and even from shelter, sprout-lovers turn to one another for mutual support. They organise. They raise awareness that they exist and lobby lawmakers to remove some of the legal obstacles they face just trying to live life day-to-day and, occasionally, seeking out their favourite brassicas.

There is opposition, of course. Upstanding members of society are naturally wary of the pro-sprout movement. It is impossible for them to understand how anyone would sully themselves by allowing such foul vegetables to pass their lips voluntarily. They fear that sprout ideology will begin forcing them to eat sprouts against their will. They fear that schools will start putting sprouts on the menu and exposing the young and impressionable to these terrible flavours and teaching that it is OK to like sprouts. They fear that the tables are turning, that it is they who will be shunned for expressing God-ordained truth *that sprouts are disgusting and that liking them goes against the natural law*.

Let us invite Jesus into this hypothetical society.

‘Teacher, when the Law says “love your neighbour as you love yourself”, who is my neighbour? More importantly, whom can I shun, whom can I walk by on the other side without barring my entry to the kingdom of Heaven?’

‘You’ve got it back to front, young man,’ says Jesus, ‘the word *neighbour* doesn’t mean that it’s OK to love some people but not others. *Neighbour* is who you are when you treat others with love.’ (Luke 10:25-37).

‘Jesus hates you: your existence offends him!’ A child bursts from the house and disappears into the distance, sobbing. Jesus turns to his friends and says with a heavy heart, ‘anyone who turns one of these little ones from me... it would be better for them to have a millstone placed around their neck and be dropped into the sea.’ (Matthew 18:6)

In a town a little way off, there lived a man whose very existence upset his neighbours. They could not understand why he did certain things. His life would, surely, be better if he simply didn't do those things and tried harder to fit in. He's probably cheating and stealing anyway. Hating him is only natural. One day, Jesus came to the town and, of course, a large crowd gathered to see him and to hear what he had to say. But he stopped. He stopped and talked to none other than the man everyone hates. Surely, Jesus laid out what behaviour we expect and told him how to live a better life. But no. Jesus had a meal with him and said, 'This man, too, is a Son of Abraham.' Jesus did not say *anything* to him about his behaviour, nor how he expects him to live his life. Jesus loved him and allowed Zacchaeus to respond to that love without expectation of *how* (Luke 19:1-10).

Back in the real world, we have people who have been cast out of society not because of their love of sprouts, but because people do not understand their gender. There are people whose experience of their own gender is so totally different from my own that I have no frame of reference in which to understand it. In much the same way I cannot understand some people's experience of sprouts, I simply cannot understand some people's experience of their gender.

I have a choice. I can decide that my experience of sprouts/gender is the only real experience, or I could allow for the possibility that someone who is not me might experience sprouts and gender differently. If I allow for this possibility, it might benefit me to *listen* to that other person's story, to hear them speak of their own life, their own experience of gender, and to understand that their story is real, even though I will never, truly, be able to understand it.

Of course, I might choose the first option and decide that their own lived experience of themselves is wrong. This makes life much easier for me, because I don't have to listen to anyone else, and I don't need to try to accept their lived experience when it is incomprehensible to me. And I might decide that all people like this need either to force their lives into a shape that makes me comfortable or forever cast them into the pit where the worms never die and the flames never go out.

Where does gender ideology fit in? Gender ideology is a term that has been invented by people who chose the first option to describe what they think the other lot are pushing. People only ever use the term to describe something that they wish to oppose. It is framed as a threat to ourselves, to our children, and to God's natural order. To use the sprout analogy, people use the term gender ideology to suggest that everyone is going to be forced to eat sprouts, even the people who hate sprouts. They suggest that our educators are going to force our

children to eat sprouts too. Whilst it would be abhorrent if that really was happening, it is simply not true, and we would do well to educate ourselves before reaching for outrage.

Is this about the Church keeping up with the times, or is it simply about going back to the very foundation of our faith?

Every week, we listen to stories of a man who stood up to the religious authorities of his day, who called them out for their attitude to the weak and the powerless, who listened to the voiceless and spoke up when they could not, who sat at table with the outcast, who touched lepers, who stood between a woman and her executioners, who made the powerful feel stupid for their actions.

Of course, we also know what they did to him. It's probably best not to rock the boat.

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## Make a #Date2Donate

### Miriam Santos Friere

14th June was World Blood Donor Day 2022: 'Donating blood is an act of solidarity. Join the effort and save lives'.

According to WHO, this day was created to raise global awareness of the need for safe blood and blood products for transfusion and to highlight the critical contribution blood donors make to national health systems, among other goals:

'Blood and blood products are essential resources for effective management of women suffering from bleeding associated with pregnancy and childbirth; children suffering from severe anaemia due to malaria and malnutrition; patients with blood and bone marrow disorders, inherited disorders of haemoglobin and immune deficiency conditions; victims of trauma, emergencies, disasters and accidents; as well as patients undergoing advanced medical and surgical procedures.'

The need for blood is universal, but access to blood for all those who need it is not. Furthermore, the act of blood donation contributes to generating social ties and building a united community.

Don't forget that best match typically comes from blood donors from the same ethnic background!

I have recently received 10 units of blood! Please join me in thanking all the donors and the NHS, by including

them in our prayers. And if you can, please donate blood and share the word! (<https://www.blood.co.uk/>)



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## Why don't we feel that babies feel?

Fr Simon Blakesley

Sixty years ago, it was considered normal practice to perform surgery on infants and new-borns without anaesthetic. In addition to this it was considered unnecessary for the child or infant to be accompanied by its mother or primary care giver. Babies cried and cried while in hospital, surely we should get over it? Well, compared to those days, I do believe we are getting better!

We now know that babies feel and, what were once thought to be massively complex neurological responses, are operating within us much earlier than ever imagined. If you want to have a peruse of recent research, have a look at Dr Thomas Verny's (written with John Kelly) *The Secret Life of the Unborn Child* or *Windows to the Womb* by David Chamberlain (both available via Amazon) which assemble all of the recent research in foetal sentience. They are not particularly polemical works from a 'pro-Life' stance but both give significant research findings that make it impossible to dismiss life before birth as 'just a bunch of cells' as was the oft quoted dismissal of the suggestion that a child in the womb might be able to experience suffering and pain.

Naturally, we as Catholics have been on what appears to be the 'losing' side of the abortion debate. Politically, legally, socio-culturally, abortion-on-demand has become deeply embedded within our society. I know that many religious leaders believe that the ideological battle is lost so we should focus our efforts on supporting those traumatised by abortion and accept that not much more can be done.

I think that this is an unnecessarily defeatist approach. We should remember that medical and nursing students who are in training now will not have experienced the polarisation and the vituperative nature of the debates of the 1960s and 1970s and although they may well have

grown up with the recognition of abortion-on-demand as one of the facts of life, there is every reason to expect that they would be open to the research that has come from ultrasound studies and the whole development of pre-natal surgery that recognises the humanity of the unborn child. Their reaction might be summarised as: we know that this is a human being, but medico-legally its existence can be terminated at the request of the mother. They simply learn that for this patient they not only can, but should, turn off the normal empathetic response and dispatch it as quickly as possible.

During my training in anaesthetic nursing I had to witness (but not take part in) what were known as V-Tops (vacuum termination of pregnancy) and I won't give you the details, but I can remember the pathos of the young girl coming around from the anaesthetic in recovery and asking, "Could you tell whether it was a boy or a girl...?" Frankly, no chance. Of course, in the consent process she would not have been told the grisly mechanics of the operation, and so she was left unaware of the end that her unborn baby had met.

Even those church-leaders and academics who admit that babies can feel don't always make the next necessary logical connection that they too had feelings when they were babies. We cannot 'remember' so why should such feelings hold any significance for us? Memory, however, is a multi-layered reality and we readily speak about our 'sub-conscious' and accept that these deeper memories influence our behaviour in all sorts of subtle ways. The pre-fix 'sub', however, is in itself a metaphor, it refers to a depth within us that can and should be understood as having a time reference. Our sub-conscious is also our earliest consciousness and it is now certain that we, in this sense, have memories from before we are born, and indeed of birth itself. There is, however, an understandable convention in our human discourse never to even admit to this possibility as it is just too threatening. When Otto Rank, a contemporary of Sigmund Freud, suggested that the birth memory was truly significant in his book *The Trauma of Birth*, he was ridiculed and expelled at once from the Vienna Circle.

To give a simple example of why birth memories may be significant is to look at our most common phobias, and I would imagine for most people 'claustrophobia' comes pretty high up the list. This is surely explicable by the fact that we have all been pushed through the birth canal under some duress and we use the metaphor of being 'under a lot of pressure' for most stressful situations. These familiar metaphors really have a very simple explanation!

"Don't mention the war..." if fact, don't mention being born either. If we all agree to forget it, everyone will be a lot happier, won't they? Well, they might. If we are

all, however, keeping deep within ourselves deep feelings of loss, rejection and hurt it might be helpful (initially threatening though it may be) to realise these may have an even earlier cause than we might have realised. Some common psychiatric conditions are thought to be familial, i.e. genetic in their nature. It might be simpler to ask, uncomfortable though it might be, if someone showing signs of 'endogenous' depression might actually have experienced months of these baseline emotions in the womb of a depressed or anxious mother? Immediately I would want to qualify this by saying that it takes **two** parents to welcome a child, and that the vital response of the father in creating a safe space for the mother to then create a safe space for her child is crucial. Going on a stage further, should we be surprised if, someone who has suffered a threatened abortion due to some toxic event, might, having survived the pregnancy and being born 'healthy', later in their life when under stress become convinced that 'someone is trying to kill me' – the answer might be not at this moment, but within another time frame those feelings are completely understandable – there is a true biographical reference, you are not being paranoid or just 'imagining it'.

I remember watching a film at the seminary where a mother who was about eight months pregnant was being given some difficult news about another family member and her husband was consoling her and trying to calm her saying "Please don't upset our baby..." and the other students in the TV room scoffed at this very idea. At least the makers of the film and the actors were prepared to feel that babies feel.

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## God Has Left Mariupol

### Michael Allan

'My neighbour said, God had left Mariupol – he was afraid of everything he saw.'

So a resident of Mariupol in Ukraine recorded in her diary in March this year. Apartment blocks, schools, hospitals, bombed relentlessly. Rape, torture, murder: hell on earth, made by human hands, with the blessing of the Russian Orthodox Patriarch; although many Orthodox clerics have condemned the war.

In World War Two, the Allies, as well as Germany, deliberately bombed civilians. Do the ends justify the means? There are also questions today concerning the West. Is this a proxy war between the West and Russia, using Ukrainian blood? With nuclear weapons on each side, this is very dangerous. Or should we stand up to and fight tyrants whatever the cost? Or follow what

some believe is the radical pacifism and non-violence of Christ?

How many people in Ukraine and elsewhere have prayed and prayed, and the bombs kept falling, and God was silent?

Here are four witnesses to human evil and human goodness, to war and suffering, to the death of faith and the kindling of faith.

\*

Auschwitz – an outpost of hell made and run by people baptised as Christians, set in the heart of Christian Europe. On arrival, most women, children, elderly men and the sick were taken straight to the 'showers' (gas chambers) and then the crematoria. Healthy men were put to slave labour. Here, amidst the smell of burning flesh, and the smoke and ashes of corpses, faith in God died.

An Italian Jewish man, Primo Levi, tried to survive this hell. He did survive, and was freed at the camp's liberation in April 1945. He survived in part due to human goodness. He bore witness to that hell and that goodness.

Levi encountered in Auschwitz a fellow Italian, Lorenzo Perrone:

'I met Lorenzo in June 1944, after a bombing that had torn up the big yard in which both of us were working. Lorenzo was not a prisoner like us; in fact he wasn't a prisoner at all. Officially he was one of the voluntary civilian workers with which Nazi Germany swarmed, but his choice had been anything but voluntary.'

'Two or three days after our meeting, he brought me an Alpine troop mess tin (the aluminum type that holds over two quarts) full of soup and told me to bring it back empty before evening. From then on, there was always soup, sometimes accompanied by a slice of bread. He brought it to me every day for six months.'

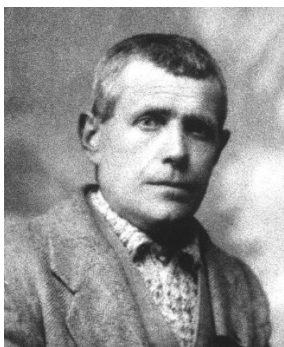


Primo Levi in 1940



This food, smuggled to him at great personal danger, meant Levi was able to live. (The prisoners were destined to die either of starvation or in the gas chambers.) But it was more than just food that helped him survive.

‘He then told me something which in Auschwitz I hadn’t suspected. Down there he helped not only me. He had other protégés, Italian and not, but he had thought it right not to tell me about it: “we are in this world to do good, not to boast about it.”’



Lorenzo Perrone  
Credit: Yad Vashem  
The World Holocaust Remembrance Center.  
[www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org)

‘He was not a religious religious; he didn’t know the gospel, but instinctively he tried to rescue people, not for pride, not for glory, but out of a good heart. He asked me once in very laconic words: “Why are we in the world if not to help each other?”’

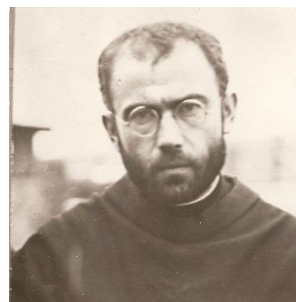
‘I believe that it was really due to Lorenzo that I am alive today; and not so much for his material aid, as for his having constantly reminded me by his presence, by his natural and plain manner of being good, that there still existed a just world outside our own, something and someone still pure and whole, not corrupt, not savage, extraneous to hatred and terror; something difficult to define, a remote possibility of good, but for which it was worth surviving.’

Perrone died in 1952 of tuberculosis and alcoholism. His time in hell had broken him on the cross of evil. He said he could no longer believe in God after Auschwitz, but he retained, according to a priest who knew him, ‘a sense of religion, a pity for the downtrodden’. Although he lost his faith, he still, unknowingly, embodied Christ, embodied goodness, in the world: he was a saviour.

In 1998, he was proclaimed a Righteous Gentile at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem.

\*

In July 1941, also in Auschwitz, after a prisoner had escaped, ten men were picked to be starved to death in an underground bunker to deter further escape attempts. When one of the men, Franciszek Gajowniczek, a Polish Catholic army sergeant, cried out, “My wife! My children! What will become of them!”. Fr Maximilian Kolbe, a Franciscan Friar, also a prisoner, stepped forward and volunteered to take his place. (Before his arrest and imprisonment, Fr Kolbe and his fellow Friars had given refuge to 3,000 refugees, some 2,000 of whom were Jewish.)



St Maximilian Kolbe  
Credit: [saintmaximiliankolbe.com](http://saintmaximiliankolbe.com)

In the bunker Fr Kolbe led the men in prayers and hymns, helping them face their approaching death. After two weeks without food or water only Fr Kolbe remained alive. He was then given a lethal injection of carbolic acid. It was reported that he calmly raised his arm to the needle.

The man he saved, Franciszek Gajowniczek, survived the war, and lived long enough to attend the canonisation of Fr Kolbe in 1982.

\*

In the Second World War, the writer and artist Caryl Houselander was living in London during the Blitz, when Germany was bombing Britain. She volunteered as a first-aider and a rooftop fire-watcher. The house she lived in was bombed, but she survived.

Her experience of the war, and the Blitz in particular, led her to reflect deeply on the Passion of Christ. In her book, *This War Is the Passion*, she wrote:

‘For us, this war is the Passion of Christ. There is no need now to dwell on its cruelty, we shall not be able to forget that. To the natural eye it seems that out of this war nothing could possibly result but bitterness, hatred and ruin; and indeed, nothing else could result from it were it not for one Person – Jesus Christ, our Lord.’



Caryl Houselander

‘Because He has made us ‘other Christs’, because His life continues in each one of us, there is nothing that any one of us can suffer which is not the Passion He suffered. Our redemption, although it was achieved completely by Our Lord, does, by a special loving mercy of His, go on in us. It is one unbroken act which goes on in the mystical body of Christ on earth, which we are.’

‘We have got to stretch Christ in us, to fit the size of this war.... The arms of Christ stretched on the cross are the widest reach there is, the only one that encircles the whole world. Christ must grow in each of us, to the size of his Passion in us all.’

To a friend she wrote of her fear, terror and faith during the bombing:

‘Oh yes, I was terrified: I’ve often had to resort to sheer force to hide the fact that my teeth were chattering, and been unable to speak as my mouth was too dried up and stiff from funk. But at the same time I felt that God had put His hand right down through all the well upon well of darkness and horror between Him and me and was holding the central point of my soul; and I knew that however afraid I was then, it would not, even could not, break me.’

\*

Where is God in war and evil? Or indeed, where is God when a pandemic kills millions, rips families apart, plunges the poor into even deeper poverty? Why doesn’t God intervene? Is God all-powerful or not? Or is God a cruel, deceitful lie?

Or have we got God wrong? In Christ, warfare, evil and pandemics aren’t magicked away. In the Incarnation Christ has made his home in us, sharing our suffering and our death. But he also respects our freedom – to do good or evil, to love or not to love. He doesn’t take away the pain of living and dying, but rather joins us on the road, and calls us to join him on his road, the road of his Passion – and so also to join him in death.

We all are called to be Christ in the world, to share his life and his priesthood, to be the body of Christ on earth, the labourers in his harvest – and so we cannot escape sharing his cross. Can we bear the cross of evil and suffering without hatred? Without hitting back? To break the cycle of violence, not only in war, but also (and especially) in daily life?

*Christ injected with carbolic acid in Auschwitz, blown to pieces in Mariupol, lying in a ditch on the road to Kyiv, hands tied behind his back with a bullet in his head, executed by a brutal regime with the blessing of a Christian Patriarch.*

In all the murdered of the Holocaust, in Lorenzo Perrone, in St Maximilian Kolbe, in the dead of both sides in Ukraine, in the tortured, raped and brutalised, in us and in countless others, in people of faith and of no faith; in the past, present and future; Christ was and will be present: loving, suffering, dying and saving.

Only love overcomes evil: out of the dense, cruel darkness of the cross bursts Easter joy.

(The Primo Levi quotations are from his books *If this is a man* and *Moments of reprieve*.)

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## Gift Aid – the good way to give to your Church

### Jim Scally

If you are paying tax on earnings, pensions or income/capital gains from investments, and you sign up for Gift Aid, the government gives back to the Parish some of the tax you have already paid. Your donations will qualify as long as they are not more than four times the tax you have paid in that tax year (6 April to 5 April). All you have to do is complete a simple form called a Gift Aid Declaration with your name and address.

You can find this form on the St Laurence’s website under ‘**Gift Aid**’

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

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

### Parish Offerings

Many of you are now making your offering via Direct Debit and we also continue to accept cash.

## Poetry Corner

**On 20th July our dear Bentley  
will be 10yrs old!**

**Karen Rogers**



To Our Dear Parish Guardian  
Happy Birthday Bentley

O noble hound so swift of paw  
so keen of nose and sharp of claw;  
dark and handsome, though not tall,  
implacable subduer of every ball.

O patient hound waiting by the door  
ball at the ready, head on paw,  
quietly panting yet oh so keen  
ready to greet us with hopeful mien.

O avid hound with hearty appetite,  
always eager for a tasty bite,  
frugal, wasting not a jot;  
will eat the pie but not forget the pot.

O gentle hound subduing every leap,  
when you find a little one full of sleep,  
sniffing gently, with wagging tail,  
the child will wake to smile not wail.

O loyal hound; at your master's voice;  
both ears and cheerful tail rejoice  
with brown trusting eyes so full of soul  
all eager for a sausage roll.

O generous hound, with heart so great  
which knows not the meaning of spite or hate,  
which embraces every single one  
you encounter whether old or young.

Young and old, from near or far,  
whether from Arbury or the nearest star,  
fair or dark, short or tall  
we wish you Happy Birthday one and all.

**I Try to Explain the Differences  
Between Oxford and Cambridge,  
Only to be Faced with Further Questions**

**Nick Corcoran**

Oxford is the city of dreaming spires.  
Cambridge has few spires and nobody asks if they dream.  
Oxford stands at the meeting of broadening waters –  
Cherwell, Isis, and Thames –  
Cambridge pounds up meagre Cam, or Granta and Rhee  
Not knowing one from the other.  
Cambridge is built between the last barely perceptible hills  
And the great levels: Oxford in a broad vale  
Among larklands of pastures and wolds.  
Oxford has river mists and rooks  
Cambridge, cold winds and icicles.  
Oxford makes cars. Cambridge rides bicycles.

Is it true that most things are not what they seem?  
And what do spires dream about  
And what do dreams mean?

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**A mother's everlasting love**

**Mary Gullick**

Mum taught me to be myself in a world that didn't  
understand itself,

Mum taught me to fight injustice where ever I saw it in  
the world and in my life,

Mum showed me how to be the woman and mother of  
three children I am today,

Mum gave me life and no matter what I am eternally  
grateful for her dedicated service and sacrifices she made  
throughout life,

Mum helped me when I was sick and mourned the ones I  
loved,

In times when I struggled with my own mental health,  
Mum never left my side, she stayed with me,

Thank you for the gift of my mum, I have been blessed  
to be the daughter of Pauline Gullick, and I continue to  
feel blessed – I still feel her love around me and miss her  
every day.



## God is Happiness!

**Teresa Brett**

‘God is Happiness!’  
I heard a voice say through the fuzz and crackle  
Of a radio Mass.  
I’d waited so long to hear this glorious cackle.

My heart leapt as the smile  
On my lips grew mile by mile.  
I shared this hope when they sang  
of dancing with joy; in my heart it rang.

The good news,  
How to spread it we choose.  
Desmond Tutu I love  
He was and is a dove

Of joy, a mischievous grin  
on his face, a smile  
Ever ready to begin  
The spread of joy even while

He suffered so much. ‘I love’,  
He said, ‘Humour, humility, honour.’  
Hooray! So do I, come what may.  
Let’s be humbly happy together as we pray.

**Portofino**

**Roy Maclaren**

Portofino  
Quaint and beautiful  
With a charm of long ago.  
Portofino  
Serenely accepting  
The tourists’ incessant flow.

The boat arrives the crowd belch forth  
With purses full and darting eyes  
Garishly attired, they surge  
From stall to stall, uttering cries

“Look at this, look at that  
Too dear, I’ll give you half”  
The goods sit smugly in their place  
Waiting to have the last laugh.

Strident voices, raucous laughter  
Trampling feet from far off lands.  
Ices, trinkets, home-spun laces  
Succumb to grasping hands.

Portofino  
Quaint and beautiful  
With your charm of long ago  
Portofino  
Bravely accepting  
The tourists incessant flow.

**I Am A Bee**

**Wally Moscuza**

A corpse covered with blood  
A storm of genes  
An eclipse  
Man cannot see  
I am up a tree  
A monkey  
An owl  
I watch, I see it is you  
Earth  
Me!  
A planet unknown, entrapped by  
The past  
The flames of hell Dante can tell –  
The joys on earth...  
I ascend

The sky,  
I can fly  
Over the earth at night – There  
Where the almond trees can be seen  
I am a bee  
I buzz and buzz around the honey  
A morning without light  
I sting  
I killed to be killed  
One dies one lives

Still, the Sun rises again  
Another life  
An estranged world... memories  
Dreams  
The lizard looks for the sun  
I am a man!



## Crowning of Our Lady 1



The Confirmation group had a special Mary crowning as a group. They discussed why Mary is an important figure for Catholics and the importance she has to intercede for us in prayer. The candidates brought flowers to lay at her feet and with the help of leader, Debbie, made a flower crown for Our Blessed Mother.

## Altar Servers



A new crop of altar servers have started back – joining the already trained. Rowan was excited to begin altar serving after

waiting for a year after receiving his First Communion. Martha Warde is helping train the new altar servers with her sister, Ella.

## Ignite Festival

Thirty-eight candidates from throughout Cambridge joined together to attend the Diocese of East Anglia's Youth Festival – Ignite. Some of St Laurence's younger parishioners also attended the festival and pilgrimage to Walsingham during the first May Bank Holiday.



## Children's Stations of the Cross

Around 60 adults and children attended the children's Stations of the Cross this year. It was such a joy for the families to gather together to follow Jesus (played by Lucas) on the way of the cross. Children enjoyed taking part playing roles of the Passion and offering their sins at the foot of the cross.



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## Catholic Women's League

### Janet Scally

We are back to enjoying our lunches again, as more people come on the

**2nd Friday of every month after the 12.30pm Mass – all are welcome to join us**

(Except on some rare occasions when other things happen, such as Easter, and alternative dates will be announced in the Newsletter).

We meet at 11am before the lunch for a catch-up, and it is such a pleasure after a long time of phone calls only.

We are especially keen to raise money for the needy in such difficult times. A few months ago I wrote that fuel prices were rising so that it would be hard for some people to make ends meet, now it must be almost impossible to afford to put fuel into cars! At least it's hot and we don't need heating as much now, but children still need new shoes and good food to eat.

As well as our meetings, some of us are excited about going to St John's Cathedral, Portsmouth to attend a pilgrimage on 22nd June and we will also go to the Annual General Meeting of the Catholic Women's League in early October, at the Hayes Christian Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire.

## Summary of Parishioners' Open Meeting 17th May 2022

Present: Fr Simon, Stephen Warde (Chair), Sarah Sykes (Minutes) plus 9 in person and 8 online.

### Minutes and matters arising

The minutes were agreed to be a true record apart from one requested amendment that the reference to Sudan in the SVP group update be changed to South Sudan.

The Chair thanked all who were involved in arranging and participating in all aspects of the Easter Liturgies. Fr Simon apologised for the oils not being in the church on Maundy Thursday. Due to an oversight in the business of the preparations, the oils weren't brought through from his office in the presbytery.

The Chair invited comments on how the Easter services had gone. It was felt that two services for the Good Friday Passion had worked well. The Chair commented that it was fabulous to have been able to celebrate Easter more or less normally for the first time in 2 years.

### Synodal Pathway Action Plan

Ron Haynes presented a 4-point action plan devised from the comments and suggestions received during the Synodal Pathway exercise earlier this year.

Headline points:

- Improved communication / Outreach
- Faith sharing / Catechetics
- Social Activities
- Improving lay/Parish participation

Ron and Geoff Cook were our Parish representatives presenting our Parish's response to the Diocesan meeting. It seems that the points we raised were repeated in other parishes' responses, apart from comments on the forthcoming new translation of the Liturgy, which came up a lot at St Laurence's, but not across the Diocese.

Points to follow up in the action plan:

- Supporting children and families better
- Make opportunities for bonding time through social activities
- Emphasise that all parishioners can and should be involved as much as possible
- Pastoral Assistant (someone who is a facilitator working in close co-operation with the Parish Priest,

If we have a Pastoral Assistant we should be careful that others don't step back and say the PA will do it all

- How do we overcome the attitude that all we need to do is turn up to Mass and not contribute in any other way to the life of the Parish?

- It was suggested that the Margaret Beaufort Institute would be a source of advice as we move forward.

The Chair thanked the team who ran the Synodal Pathway consultation for the Parish and expressed appreciation for the work that had gone into the process.

During the discussion about support for children in the Parish, Fr Simon reported that the Bishop has re-stressed that the Diocesan policy for preparing for the sacraments – in particular First Confession and Communion – is that these should be taught in the Parish rather than in schools. Fr Simon made it clear that, although this is Bishop Alan's decision for us as a Diocese, it reflects what is currently considered to be best practice.

It was decided that this item should go on the agenda for further discussion at the next Open Meeting in July.

### Social Activities

Pentecost Party – international bring and share meal – planned and run with the help of the Confirmation candidates, the date proposed for this is 3rd July after the Ablaze Mass.

CAFOD party – focussing on the new CAFOD campaign 'Fix the food system'. Serga would like a Laudato si' Mass to be celebrated which would include the CAFOD 60th anniversary celebrations (postponed from earlier in the year). It was suggested that this could take place in September.

St Laurence Feast Day (10th Aug) – Parish BBQ following an evening Mass at 6pm on, or a Sunday near, this date.

Fr Bob's 60th Anniversary of solemnly professing as a Religious and to thank him for his work in the Parish – Fr Simon proposed a wine and cheese evening and said he would ask Fr Bob for a suitable date in September.

An additional aside:

Fr Simon proposed mixing the Ablaze Mass into one of the other current main Sunday Masses.

Helena commented that it is not solely a youth Mass and every Mass should be child/youth friendly – but it is a Charismatic Mass. The Ablaze Mass is also a Mass where the Confirmation candidates are encouraged to take on many roles – reading, serving, music, operating the OHP. It's a safe space where, with their peers, they can explore celebrating Mass in a more relaxed environment. Already some of the Confirmation preparation sessions have been held after the 11am Mass with the hope that the families of the candidates would attend. It was decided that this should be discussed more fully at the next Open Meeting.

## Building up the Parish

Following the success of last October's survey and volunteer appeal, it was agreed that it would be worthwhile repeating the exercise, particularly as more people are starting to attend Mass and may have missed getting a form last time. The opportunity could also be used to recruit for working groups following up on the Synodal Pathway action points.

Stephen Warde suggested that this could be done on the weekend of 11th June with a view to collecting the forms in over the following two weekends.

## Parish groups updates

**CAFOD** – Serga Collett reported that the Walk Against Hunger campaign for Lent had raised £2,550 through online donations, £697 through the contactless unit after Masses and £1,246 through cash and cheques totalling £4,493.

Serga thanked all for their efforts for reaching this great total and reported that there is also a link on the CAFOD page of the Parish website for direct online giving for this campaign.

**SVP** – Catharine Warren reported that the Garden Centre trip would be going ahead tomorrow. There will also be an SVP pilgrimage to Walsingham on 3rd July. A coach will be booked for this. Recently help has been provided with the following: the cost of new flooring, school activities, children's shoes, lifts to Mass, accompaniment to hospital.

**Justice & Peace** – Ron Haynes reported that the group had run a successful Stations of the Cross on Wednesdays through Lent via Zoom. The group continues to meet monthly and regularly liaises with CAFOD on various campaigns. They plan to hold an online 'Laudato si' study combined with the Ignatian Examen on Zoom on 21st June, 7.30pm.

**Tech Group** – have gained 2 new members. The group is planning to take the music CDs and digitise them to MP3 format so that many different playlists can be compiled. They may also add some of the music generated during Lockdown.

Thanks were expressed to Richard who, following a website crash due to a hardware failure, had been able to get the website up and running in time for the meeting this evening.

Fr Simon suggested that we could have a rebranding of the website and could include some additional information such as photos and videos of Parish activities and photos of people who were contact points for the Parish groups.

## AOB

If anyone is interested in helping with a regular get together in the parish room to play board games and helping to run a monthly gardening club, please get in contact with Karen Rodgers through the Parish Office.

Reordering the Sanctuary, delayed due to the pandemic, will not progress until after we get a new bishop. There will be a thorough period of consultation involving the diocese. Fr Simon hopes to be able to request a Bishop's visitation to discuss proposals. However, it was felt that at the next meeting we should discuss doing some basic work such as replacing the sanctuary flooring and giving the walls a lick of paint.

Ron Haynes suggested that we need to talk in detail about Parish expansion – Darwin Green, Northstowe – and develop a plan of action to deal with this.

**Date of next meeting** Thursday 14th July at 7.30pm

**Topics for the July agenda** taken from the minutes of this meeting:

Catechism of the sacraments to take place in church not school

Mainstreaming the Ablaze Mass

Basic redecoration of the church – painting and flooring

Talk about how the parish is going to expand in the near future and what that means for us

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## Turning concern into action – SVP update

### Catharine Warren



THANK YOU for the Maundy Thursday Collection which raised £869.62 + £106.75 Gift Aid. The money has been forwarded to the SVP Disaster Fund to help Ukrainian refugees. St Laurence's SVP had decided to match fund the collection from existing funds, up to £500 for South Sudan. This has been sent to support SVP projects in South Sudan. All of this money is from donations so 'Thank You' for your generosity.

In 2022 we have resumed holding some SVP meetings in the parish hall but continue to find Zoom meetings a useful alternative. Members are now visiting again and because several more SVP members have become Lay Ministers of Holy Communion we are able to take Communion to more people who are physically unable to come to Mass.

Our first social activity for two years was an enjoyable outing with a few senior parishioners to Coton Garden Centre in May. The SVP National Pilgrimage of the sick to Walsingham has not taken place since 2019 but this



year we have hired a coach for the event on 3rd July and offered places to pilgrims from several different parishes.

Other activity to support individuals and families includes:

- a contribution to reduce electricity debt,
- assistance to a family with clearing a garden shed,
- foodbank vouchers and supermarket vouchers for food/essentials for people facing a cash crisis,
- support to an elderly couple with visits, gardening and accompaniment to medical appointments,
- help to provide a family with flooring for their new home,
- attending funerals of people members have come to know through the SVP,
- some Tesco Vouchers for Fr Simon to give when callers at the presbytery ask for a bit of financial help. The Tesco voucher is given with an SVP leaflet and mobile number in case the person wants to contact SVP for more support,
- giving lifts to people who would otherwise be unable to continue to come to Mass.

**Can you offer a lift to Mass?** Some people are given lifts to church by parishioners – that is a great service. We have recently had several requests for assistance to attend Mass and you don't need to be an SVP member to volunteer for this. So if you could offer a lift to and from Mass or perhaps wheel someone in a wheelchair from a home nearby church, please contact the SVP.

**If you need a lift** please do not hesitate to speak to a member of the SVP. We will try and arrange for an SVP member or other parishioner to give you a lift. The SVP can also arrange to book a taxi when necessary. A taxi fund was set up some years ago following a suggestion and donation by a parishioner. It continues with funds from 'Alive in Faith' donations.

**We are always on the lookout for new SVP members** to befriend/visit people, assist at the Traveller drop-in centre in Cottenham, offer lifts, give practical assistance, help with money or benefit problems and help run our SVP group. Please do think about volunteering. If you have a few hours a week to spare and are interested in joining us/finding out more, please contact me or speak to any SVP member.

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

**Contact:** 07421 253100 & [svp@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:svp@saintlaurence.org.uk)

## Catholic Churches of Cambridge Walk

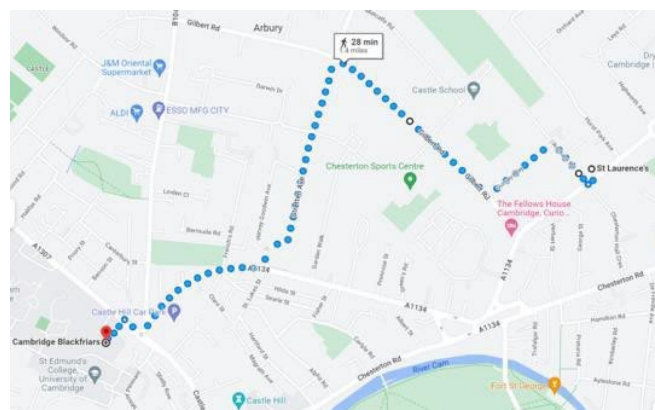
### Serga Collett

A walk across town will take us to our four (five) wonderful Catholic churches and chapels, all with some interesting history.

#### *Starting at St Laurence's Church in Milton Road:*



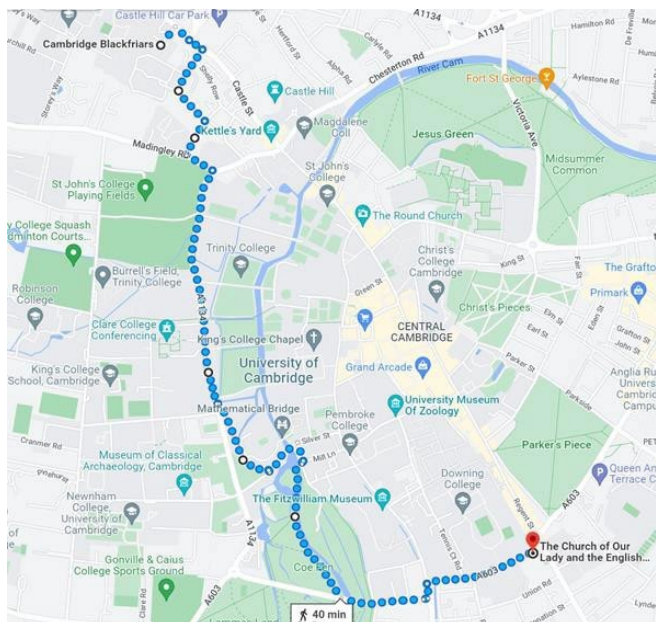
In the early twentieth century, Mass was celebrated by a priest from Our Lady and the English Martyrs in an upstairs room of the Dog and Pheasant Pub in Chesterton. By the time Chesterton became a separate Parish in 1939, Mass had moved to the 'tin hut' – (see St Vincent de Paul below) in High Street, Chesterton. Fr Patrick Oates arrived in 1951 and set about raising money to build the church, which was completed in 1958. There have been various alterations over the years, including the removal of the Communion rails in 1987 and the building of the new Parish rooms, kitchen and office in 1994. In 2006, further work was undertaken to add a new balcony and porch, and on 27th February 2006 St Laurence's was consecrated by Bishop Michael Evans.



*Turning right out of St Laurence's, then turn right into Ascham Road and left into Gurney Way. At the bottom turn right into Gilbert Rd. Turn left into Stretten Avenue and at the end turn right into Victoria Road. At the traffic lights turn right into Huntingdon Road and left into Buckingham Road.*

**Cambridge Blackfriars** is a priory of the Dominican Order. It was established in 1238, dissolved in 1538 as a consequence of the English Reformation and re-established in 1938 as St Michael's Dominican priory which, in 2000, became the novitiate house of the English Province of the Order of Preachers.





Now walking on, let's turn right out of Buckingham Road, walk along Huntingdon Road and after entering Castle Street, we turn right into Mount Pleasant (we pass St Edmunds College on our right), turn right again into Lady Margaret Road until we meet Madingley Road and turn left, then turn right into Queen's Road. We walk along the beautiful Backs until we meet Silver Street on our left. Walk along Silver Street turn onto Coe Fen at Scudamore's Punting Station and walk beside the river until you get to Fen Causeway. Turn left onto Fen Causeway and left again at the roundabout onto Trumpington Road. At the next roundabout take the second exit into Lensfield Road. Walk along Lensfield Road until you see Our Lady and the English Martyrs' Church on your right.



On our journey we walk past **Saint Edmund's College Chapel**, a Catholic foundation dating from 1896. St Edmund's College Chapel is a Grade II listed building designed by Fr Benedict Williamson CSSP and blessed by Cardinal Francis Bourne, Archbishop of Westminster, in 1916. It continues to be the only Catholic chapel with a Catholic Dean within a Cambridge college and, like the College, has a very

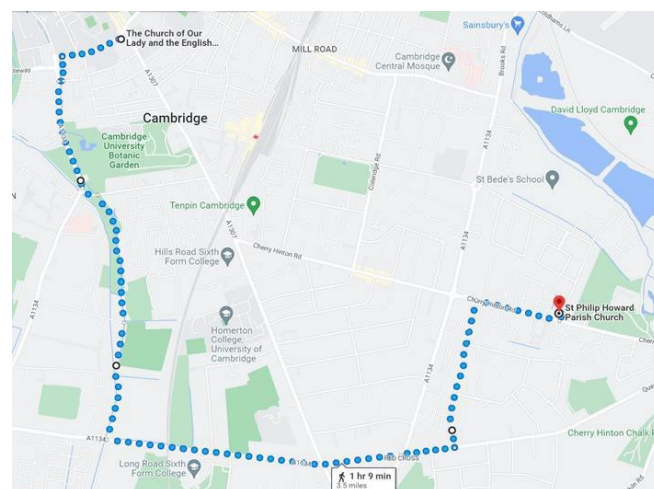
international flavour. Outside the chapel you will see a beautiful modern statue of St Edmund of Abingdon seated on a curved bench, sculpted by Rodney Munday.

### The Church of Our Lady and the English Martyrs,



also known as the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption and the English Martyrs (OLEM), is a large gothic revival Catholic Church at the junction of Hills Road and Lensfield Road in south-east Cambridge. Built between 1887 and 1890, the foundation stone was laid in June 1887. The construction

of a new Roman Catholic church on such a prominent site, as well as its dedication to the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales, caused much controversy among local Anglicans and members of the university. Despite this, and despite the ill health of Mrs Lyne-Stephens (benefactor), the church was completed and then consecrated on 8 October 1890. The first Mass was attended by most of the Roman Catholic bishops of England and Wales.



As we head on our way, whilst we could walk down Hills Road until we meet Cherry Hinton Road on our left, a nicer walk is to leave by walking along Lensfield Road again until we meet Trumpington Road and then turn left. As we approach Brooklands Avenue, we take a left only for a few steps and then turn right onto a footpath that runs beside a stream. We travel beside the brook for some time until we meet Long Road. Turn left and walk along Long Road, after some time entering Queen Edith's Way. Continue walking, crossing a roundabout and then turn left into Wulfstan Way. Keep walking until we meet Cherry Hinton Road. Turn right Into Cherry Hinton Road, before you reach Cherry Hinton Park you see St Philip Howard church (left).



**St Philip Howard Church.** In 1975 it was decided to build a dual-purpose church with social facilities and attached presbytery for parishioners of South Cambridge. The

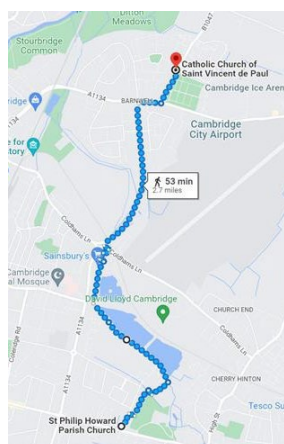
church, which is of a functional modern design, was opened on 25 October 1978. It was dedicated to the sixteenth century martyr St Philip Howard and houses a wooden statue of the saint.

*This concludes the main part of our walk – just over 5 miles or 10,000 steps!*



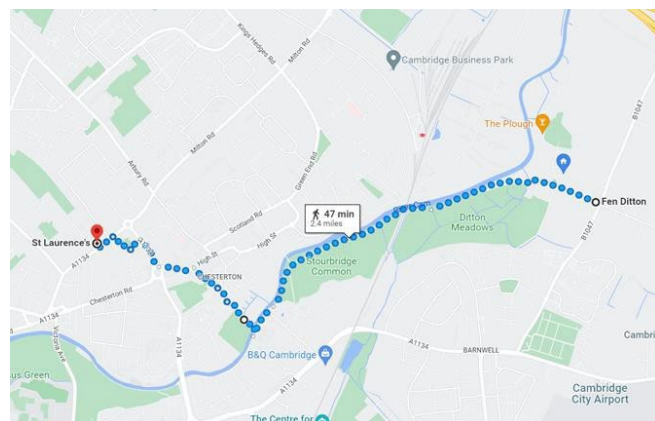
For the very energetic you may want to consider walking to an extra destination: the **chapel of St Vincent de Paul** in Ditton Lane. This little chapel which started its life in 1914, as a hospital ward with baths became housing after the war from 1919 due to the housing shortage. It then

travelled across Cambridge to Our Lady and the English Martyrs and was re-erected in the grounds of what is now St Alban's School. There it served as a men's clubroom and a hall in constant demand for many social activities. When the school began to be built next to OLEM, the little tin hut was once again removed and this time travelled across town again, to be re-sited in High Street, Chesterton where in 1939 it became the Chapel of St Laurence and was much loved for many years. In 1958 the parish church of St Laurence was built in Milton Road and the little 'tin hut' made its final journey, this time to Ditton Lane where it still stands today and is a much loved place of worship for many, served from OLEM.



*The direct route takes us from St Philip Howard along Walpole Road, then Birdwood Road and turning right along Brooke Road. Then past Sainsbury's into Barnwell Road until you meet Newmarket Road roundabout (McDonald's). Turn right walking for just a short time and turn left into Ditton Lane. Just five mins down this road, you will find the small church of St Vincent de Paul.*

*However a nicer walk from St Philip Howard is picking up the footpath along the brook in the top right hand corner of Cherry Hinton Park and follow Cherry Hinton Brook all the way to Sainsbury's. You then re-join the main route along Barnwell Road – it is advisable to walk on the left underneath trees to keep away from the traffic. As before you turn right into Newmarket Road at McDonald's and then left into Ditton Lane.*



*To return to St Laurence's you can join the River Cam at Fen Ditton and walk along the river through Ditton Meadows and Stourbridge Common. Cross the river via the bridge opposite the Technology Museum, then walk along Church Street and left into Chesterton High Street. At the roundabout take the last exit into Elizabeth Way and at the next roundabout turn into Milton Road.*

*This extra leg would add almost another 5 miles on to your journey.*

## CAFOD celebrates 60yrs

CAFOD has been reaching out to people living in poverty with practical help FOR 60 YEARS! Time to celebrate!

Our very own coffee hub at St Laurence's will be hosting the birthday celebrations on **24th September** after the Saturday morning Mass. Following speakers and celebrations, we will invite our younger generation to help us begin to 'Fix the food system' and we will then come together with a shared lunch.

Celebrations continue with Laudato Si' Masses throughout the weekend – during which we will reflect on Pope Francis' appeal to us all – every person on this planet – to care for our 'common home'.

Please do join us. Put the date in your diary and help us to continue to celebrate CAFOD's existence to help every woman, man and child to live a full and dignified life.

## Platinum Jubilee

St Laurence's marked the Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend with a special Coffee Hub get together marked by fizz and cake.

The celebration was continued the following day when the tea/coffee time after 11am Mass was spiced up with the remains of the fizz and cake!



## Crowning of Our Lady 2

As well as the Confirmation group performing their crowning ceremony, there was also a whole Parish crowning of Mary on the last weekend in May.

With prayers and blessings, the statue of Our Lady was crowned by a young parishioner.



## Farewell to Fr Andreas



Fr Andreas arrived in Cambridge last September and at the invitation of Fr Simon, himself a regular broadcaster on RME's Questions of Faith programme, Fr Andreas made St L's his home for the duration of his stay.

We benefited from this arrangement as Fr Andreas supported Fr Simon's work in the Parish by saying Mass regularly in the week and on Sundays. We particularly enjoyed his 9.30am Sunday Masses where he always added something special, often through some extra singing during the consecration and sometimes accompanying himself on the guitar as he sung the psalm.

He also celebrated Mass for Radio Maria England in St Laurence's which was broadcast live on the radio. And you can see his video on RME's FB page, shot in St Laurence's, wishing all a happy Easter.

We thank him for his time at St Laurence's and wish him well as he goes to work at other Radio Maria stations around the world, encouraging the volunteers and growing the work of Radio Maria.



## **Tailpiece**

Earlier in the magazine (p.8) we have Karen Rodger's article – *Who mentored you??*

There are some beautiful and interesting Mentor quotes but because of space restrictions we were unable to add all the quotations on that page so we have printed them here.

‘Preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words.’

St Francis of Assisi

‘For the Christian there is no such thing as a “stranger”, there is only the neighbour...the person near us and needing us.’

St Edith Stein

‘You are called like the Apostles to make God known to others.’

St Jean Baptiste de la Salle

‘They who want to win the world for Christ must have the courage to come into conflict with it.’

Bl. Titus Brandsma

‘You pay God a compliment by asking great things of Him’

St Teresa of Avila

‘The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled.’

Plutarch

‘Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.’

Benjamin Franklin

‘The best teachers are those who tell you where to look – but don't tell you what to see.’

Alexandra K. Trenfor

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## **Blips before and during Mass**

### **Nora Darby**

We all tend to think that Mass always goes smoothly BUT ...does it?

These incidents all really happened and I was there as witness – but no names!

**All is going well**, then suddenly – as the priest goes to open the Tabernacle, the key is missing! It is not anywhere on the altar or the surrounding area. Mass suspended. Slight panic as people rush off the altar to search, return, no key, has it gone home with the Sacristan?

Meanwhile Father is sitting calmly, he explains to the congregation, who are also waiting, what has happened. My Irish neighbour – loud woeful, stage whisper, does that mean there won't be Holy Communion?? At last! Sigh of relief, an altar server eventually returns with the key and Mass carries on as normal.

**Special occasion** – a newly ordained priest is due to say his first Mass at his former parish church. All is ready but – where is he? Anxious PP is looking at his watch, only a few minutes to go, but can't contact him, no answer to his phone. With minutes left until Mass time, a very breathless new priest arrives, caught in traffic! Rushes into the Sacristy, emerges wearing Chasuble and Stole. Deep breath and Mass starts 15 minutes late with apologies from new priest and applause from the congregation, happy to see him.

**The joys!** Small boy escapes from Mum, runs down the aisle straight onto the altar up to the priest who initially ignores him. Small boy decides to ‘help’ chatting and hanging onto vestments. At which point the Priest takes his hand and takes him to Mum, who has not attempted to reclaim him? He has a few words with her!! He then returns to the altar and Mass proceeds! I wonder how quickly Mum left the church, did she return?

**Saturday Vigil.** A PP is away so visiting priest is going to say Mass. We go early to prepare and help him. Vessels etc. are in the safe but where is the safe key? It is not in its usual place. Search on, try all the places it MIGHT be – but No! Make a phone call to someone who might have an answer, answerphone, so leave a message. Priest arrives and we explain the problem, time passes and it might be that there will be no Mass; parishioners as yet unaware? Thankfully my phone rings and I have the answer, someone decided to put the key in a safer place???. Relieved and happy priest, very fast prep, all hands on deck and Mass is only 10 minutes late starting!

Have any of you memories/experiences of similar incidents? If so we would love to have them for future editions. Thank you!

## **Editorial**

Summer is here and we can look forward to some social events at St Laurence's. At last we can mingle again? Look in the Upcoming Parish Events column, on the inside back page of the cover, for details and dates, including St Laurence Feast Day.

We are continuing the appeal to everyone to register and volunteer to help with **Further Building Up of our Parish**. It helps to know who and where you are. It is very simple, fill in a registration form if you have not already done so. If you have already done so, there is another form, much shorter, which asks for volunteers for our four action areas for 2022. Full details are on both forms which can be found in the church porch where you will also find boxes for returns. Alternatively you can use the online links:

**Registration form:** <https://saintlaurence.org.uk/buildingup>.

**Volunteering for action areas:** <https://saintlaurence.org.uk/action2022>

By the time you read this edition, other things will have happened including, 55 children will have made their First Holy Communion over two weekends in June. A very busy time for Fr Simon!

On Monday 4th July, Bishop Alan will have confirmed 27 young people from St Laurence, St Philip Howard and St Vincent de Paul (Fen Ditton). It is a blessing to see so many of our young people receiving these Sacraments.

With this summer edition appearing a month or so later than usual, we will not be publishing in September this year. Our next edition will be the Advent edition. See below for our deadlines!

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

**The deadline for the next edition is**  
**21 October 2022 for publication on 19/20 November**

**The production team:**

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

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

## Some Regular Events

**The Parishioners Open Meeting** is where **ALL** parishioners can come together to discuss and debate Parish matters, and decide when and where things need to be done. The Agenda is planned in advance and the meeting is led by the chairman and Parish Priest. Meetings commence at 7.30pm and are held in the Parish Room with the option to join online via Zoom.

The Zoom link is published in the Newsletter and in the Keep-in-Touch email. It is also published on the Parish website.

You can raise a topic at the meeting but it helps if you send a short note about 10 days before the next meeting to Stephen Warde at [openmeeting@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:openmeeting@saintlaurence.org.uk)

### The Pilgrim by Email

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

### Pilgrim on the Web

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

## ABLAZE

The St Laurence Youth Mass is known as Ablaze, it is designed to encourage our youth to build their confidence in participating in all aspects of the Mass. It is held on the first Sunday of the month. It is vibrant and fun. We encourage young readers, Eucharistic Ministers and budding musicians of all ages; the only requirement is enthusiasm for God. If you are looking for 'perfection' you won't find it here, so if you fancy it pluck up courage and join in.

Upcoming Parish Events	
St Laurence Feast Day Mass and celebration	Details to be decided
CAFOD 60 <sup>th</sup> celebration	24 Sept
Confessions	After Mass on Saturday morning until 10.30am Before Saturday evening Mass 6pm
Parishioners Open Meeting Dates for 2022	
ABLAZE Youth Mass (1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month) 5pm	Takes a break for August and will return in Sept – date TBC
Saturday Coffee Hub	After 9:30am Mass 10:00-12:00



Follow St Laurence's on Facebook:

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

# ST LAURENCE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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

## **Parish Priest:**

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

## **Deacon:**

Rev. Dr Geoffrey Cook  
01223 351650

## **Secretary:**

Mr. Reece King  
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## **Treasurer:**

James Dore  
07980 467534

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

## **Service Times**

Saturday 9.30am

6pm Vigil Mass (sung)

Sunday 8am

9.30am (sung) ) with children's liturgy

11am (sung)

Join us afterwards for coffee and chat after Mass

Mon, Tues, Thurs 9.30am

Wed & Fri 12.30pm

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

## **St Laurence's School**

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