

The Pilgrim

St Laurence's Catholic Church Magazine, September 2015



Bishop Alan celebrating ABLAZE Mass, June 2015

Contents

What's New?

A look at the Encyclical Letter Laudato Si' New Evangelisation	1-4 5
--	----------

Young People

You are specially made by God	6
-------------------------------	---

Features and Opinions

Sycamores	7
The Magdalene Conversation	7
Cardinal Points	8
God has a perfect plan for you	8-9
Pilgrims for Christ	10
An insight to the Orthodox Church	11-12
Why are we still not Jewish?	12-13
How to grow Catholics at home	13

Personal Stories and Experiences

1955, Phenoxyline Summer	14
Missionary experience in England	14-15
Friday Market Walsingham	15
Imagine	15-17
The theology of everyday life	17-18

Parish Organisations and Activities

Preparing for First Holy Communion at St Laurence School	18-19
Writing on the Moon - I Wish	19
Well Done 'Owls'	20
Diocesan Medal for former Head Teacher	20
Fr Ziad Hilal SJ visits our parish	20-21
Our personal prayer Lives	21
The 37 th J&P Conference 2015	21-22
Summary of Parish Forum – 16 July 2015	22-24
St Laurence – Feast Day Tea Party	24

Reviews

Reading novels creatively	25
Audiobook: The Four signs of a Dynamic Catholic	25
More Books added to St Laurence's Parish Library	26
Music: Taizé	26

Tailpiece

27

Editorial

28

The Pilgrim Magazine

STOP PRESS — STOP PRESS — STOP PRESS — STOP PRESS

And He will discharge His angels to surround you - Rosina Abudulai



Nancy Fraser (photo left: centre) a St. Laurence parishioner for many years left Cambridge on 11th August to join her sister in Australia. We prayed as a church community for a safe crossing into her new life in Australia. I did not know she was anxious about the journey but her letter below shows just how much we can trust in God and our faith to help us. I think it is worth sharing so here it is:

Thank you so much for your email and all your thoughts and prayers. My flight (23 hours) went well thanks to God. I had not been looking forward to it but it was amazing, God just looked after me all the way. Such very kind people looked after me all the time. It was especially lovely in Dubai, three of the assistants working there to whom I was chatting told me they were Catholics and a lovely Indian lady when she heard I was a Catholic too asked me to pray for her.

It is just lovely to be with my sister. My new parish St. Joseph's is very friendly and people have warmly welcomed me. I am sure I will settle in quickly. The resident priest Fr. Tom is lovely.

I am missing you all at St. Laurence's. Please give my love to people.

With lots of love,

From Nancy

Some Regular Events

The Parish Forum

The objective of the Forum is “to facilitate the active participation and collaboration of all parishioners in supporting and developing the life, worship and witness of the parish community, building up the Body of Christ and fostering pastoral and missionary action, as well as working with, supporting and advising the parish priest in his responsibilities.”

It is a regular meeting open to all who worship at St Laurence’s and all parishioners are warmly encouraged to attend.

The meetings are held approximately 3 month intervals at 8pm in the Parish room

ABLAZE

The St Laurence Youth Mass (formerly YAYA) is now known as ABLAZE and is an opportunity for youth in the Parish to come together and celebrate mass. It is held at regular intervals on Sunday evening at 6pm in the church, followed by a shared supper. After a summer break the next Ablaze mass will be on 20th September.

First Holy Communion Programme 2015-16

The Parish programme for children in Year 3 and above and not attending a Catholic school, wishing to make their First Communion will begin Saturday 12th September 10.15 – 11.30am in the Parish room. Registration forms are available online from the Parish website and also available from the Parish Office. Please register before 12th September. For queries about the Parish programme please contact Sue Price sueprice@gmail.com; for queries about the school programme please contact Mrs Quail at St Laurence’s School.

Upcoming Parish Events

1 st Holy Communion Programme 2015-16	12 Sept
Inscription Mass (school & Parish programmes): 9.30am or 11am	20 Sept
1 st Holy Communion weekend	28/29 May 2016
ABLAZE Youth Mass	20 Sept
Laudato Si – 4 week study group	From 10 Sept
Parish Forum	22 Oct
Prayer Week	1 Nov



“Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start”

~ Pope Francis
Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home

ST LAURENCE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

91 Milton Road, Cambridge CB4 1XB

Tel/Fax: 01223 704640

Email: office@saintlaurence.org.uk

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

Parish Priest:
Fr Patrick Cleary
01223 704640

pp@saintlaurence.org.uk

Assistant Priest:
Fr Bob Eccles O.P.
01223 741265

robert.eccles@english.op.org

Assistant Priest:
Fr Alvan Ibeh
01223 704640

fralvanibe@yahoo.com

Deacon: Rev. Geoffrey Cook
01223 351650

Secretary: Pat Cook
01223 704640

office@saintlaurence.org.uk

Sunday Masses

Saturday 6pm Vigil Mass (sung)

Sunday 8.00am
9.30am (sung) with
Children's Liturgy

11am (sung) with
Children's Liturgy

This Mass is usually held at St Laurence's School,
Arbury Road. During holidays, it is often held at the
Church.

Coffee is usually served after 11am in the Parish
Room.

Usual Weekday Mass times

Monday 9.30am
Tuesday 9.30am
Wednesday 9.30am
Thursday 9.30am
Friday 9.30am
Saturday 9.30am
6.00pm Vigil Mass as above

Check the weekly newsletter for temporary changes of time or location

St Laurence's School

Head Teacher
Address

Mrs Clare Clark
St Laurence's School
Arbury Road
Cambridge
CB4 2JX

Telephone

01223 712 227

Website

office@stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk
www.stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk

What's New?

Encyclical Letter LAUDATO SI' Of The Holy Father Francis On Care For Our Common Home

Introduction - Mary Watkins Compilations – Dick Wilson

From *In Praise of God for the Creation* by St Francis of Assisi

Laudatu si', mi signore, per sor acqua, La quale è molto utile e humele e pretiosa e casta....

Laudatu si', mi signore, per sora nostra matre terra, La quale ne sustente e governa,

E produce diversifrukti e colorati flori e herba.

English translation:

Praise be to you, O my Lord, for sister water, most useful, and lowly and precious and pure....

Praise be to you, O my Lord, for our sister, mother earth, sustaining us, providing for us,

With fruits of many kinds, the many coloured flowers and the plants.

Laudato si' (Be praised): On care for our common home

This article offers a brief guide for an initial reading of the Pope's Encyclical, outlining the overall development and identifying the basic themes. The numbers in parentheses refer to the paragraphs in the Encyclical.



“What is the purpose of our life in this world? What is the goal of our work and all our efforts? What need does the earth have of us?”

“Unless we struggle with these deeper issues,” – says the Pope – “I do not believe that our concern for ecology will produce significant results” (160).

The Encyclical takes its name from the invocation of Saint Francis, “Praise be to you, O my Lord”, in his

Canticle of the Creatures. It reminds everyone that the earth “is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.”

(1) People have forgotten that “we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. *Gen 2:7*); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters” (2).

Pope Francis notes that the earth has been abused and is mistreated and invites us to “change direction” by taking on the beauty and responsibility of the task of “caring for our common home”. He acknowledges those already striving to do this and is hopeful that “Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home” (13).

“Men and women are still capable of intervening positively” (58). “All is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start” (205).

Whilst addressing the Catholic faithful Pope Francis recalls that, “other Churches and Christian communities – and other religions as well – have also expressed deep concern and offered valuable reflections” on the theme of ecology (7). Indeed, such contributions are extensively cited in paragraphs 8 and 9. At several points, the Pope thanks the protagonists of this effort – individuals as well as associations and institutions. He acknowledges that, “the reflections of numerous scientists, philosophers, theologians and civic groups, all have enriched the Church’s thinking on these questions” (7). He invites *everyone* to recognize “the rich contribution which the religions can make towards an integral ecology and the full development of humanity” (62).

The itinerary of the Encyclical is mapped out in para. 15 and is divided into six chapters. It starts by presenting the current situation based on the best scientific findings available today (ch.1), followed by a review of the Bible and Judeo-Christian tradition (ch.2).

The roots of the problems in technocracy, and in an excessive self-centeredness of human beings, are analysed (ch.3).

The Encyclical then proposes (ch.4) an “integral ecology, which clearly respects the human and social dimensions of the global crisis” (137), inextricably linked to the environmental question. In this perspective, Pope Francis proposes (ch.5) to initiate an honest dialogue at every level of social, economic and political life that builds transparent decision-making processes.

Recalling that no project can be effective if it is not animated by a formed and responsible conscience (ch.6), ideas are put forth to aid growth in this direction at the educational, spiritual, ecclesial, political and theological levels.

The text ends with two prayers; one offered for sharing with everyone who believes in “God who is the all-powerful Creator” (246), and the other to those who profess faith in Jesus Christ, punctuated by the refrain “Praise be to you!” which opens and closes the Encyclical.

Several main themes run through the texts that are addressed from a variety of different perspectives, thus traversing and unifying the text:

- the intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet,
- the conviction that everything in the world is connected,
- the critique of new paradigms and forms of power derived from technology,
- the call to seek other ways of understanding the economy and progress,
- the value proper to each creature,
- the throwaway culture and the proposal of a new lifestyle (16).

Full copies of the encyclical letter may be borrowed from the parish library. This article is extracted from the guide available at:

[http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/Home/News/Laudato-si/Laudato-si-Summary/\(language\)/eng-GB](http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/Home/News/Laudato-si/Laudato-si-Summary/(language)/eng-GB)

How is our parish responding to Pope Francis's challenges?

- there will be a display of the key themes of the new encyclical with links to our continuing attempts to Live more Simply, Sustainably and in Solidarity with the poor at church starting on St Laurence's feast day celebration on 9th August.
- look out for details of a Study Group to explore the encyclical in more depth in September.
- join in the Cafod Harvest Fast Day Appeal Mass on 3/4th October which will celebrate the feast Day of St Francis of Assisi and our relationship with the natural world.

The view of scientists

Compilation: Dick Wilson

The Encyclical emphasises that no single approach can deal with either the urgent problem of global warming or the general overexploitation of the Earth's resources. Personal will is essential – so that there is a general understanding of what is going on, both as global warming and as effects of other human activity, on soil, forests, fisheries and lakes and seas.

People must limit their own personal use of energy and there should be a restriction on many kinds of economic growth. This acceptance is essential but must be turned into political will on the part of countries or individuals – this means you and me – so that billions who live in poverty can replace it with a life of dignity and comfort. Technological change is essential, and the development of solar energy offers much hope, if it is fairly distributed, not just making the rich richer.

Governments must cease to subsidise carbon extraction from coal mines, shale and sources of methane (natural gas), a powerful greenhouse gas if it leaks into the atmosphere, and which still produces carbon dioxide (though not as much as coal!) and water vapour. Calling for cheap energy from these sources and not funding energy saving is as harmful as you can get. So to bring about what the understanding tells us, individuals are prepared to accept, and new technology can offer, politics are essential. All these themes, personal understanding and will, new technology and political pressure, are found in Laudato si'. Where else? Well, every edition of the journal New Scientist in June and July 2015 reports on them too.

New Scientist: A special report on global warning on sea level rise

The 13th June edition (“Five metres and counting”, pp.8-10) reports that a sea level rise of at least 1 metre by 2100 is now inevitable. A further unavoidable rise of 2.3 metres for each sustained 1^o C will follow in a few hundred years, with a rise of up to 20 metres if drastic action is not taken soon.

Imagine the effect of this in the Fens. This is due partly to the expansion of the water in the warmer oceans and partly to the loss of glaciers and ice sheets, at first in West Antarctica (south of the east Pacific and West Atlantic oceans). The ice sheet there is seated in a two kilometre basin, and will rise and will melt quickly as soon as slightly warmer water, in which it will begin to float, is admitted.

This will be soon and unstoppable, giving a 3.3 metre rise overall. It was thought that the 5 metre rise would be reached only with a continuous temperature of at least 2^o above pre-industrial levels for perhaps up to 4000 years. It now turns out that the loss of ice sheets in East Antarctica (south of Australia and the Indian and east Atlantic oceans) is likely to be much more rapid than expected because two huge ice sheets, which are shallower but much larger than that of West Antarctica, sit in basins accessible to warmer melting water near their edges, this alone giving a 5.1 metre rise.

A political issue

The 20th June edition (“Pope’s salvo in US climate war”, p 10) notes the appearance of *Laudato si’* and assesses its effect on the millions of American Catholics who vote Republican. New Scientist considers that the Pope’s teaching could be an embarrassment to potential Republican presidential candidates in 2016 who are Catholics and also to a considerable degree, “deny the warnings of climate science and resist efforts to limit greenhouse gas emissions”.

Welcome by scientists

The 27th June edition (the Encyclical was published on 18th June), in an article by a scientist who took part in a 2014 seminar commissioned by the Pontifical Academies of Science and Social Science, lists the fearsome effects of global warning, especially on the 3bn people, a third of the human population, who cause only 10% of carbon omissions. It welcomes the moral context and lead that Pope Francis has provided – a basis for the change in personal attitude needed for science, technology and politics to take effect in time to avoid the worst.

Politics and global warming

The 4th July edition (pp. 42-43) reviews three books that indicate that measures to combat warming are having some effect, and that some warnings were unfounded. Claude Martin, in *On the Edge*, claims that after massive deforestation, Puerto Rico has now more bird species, not fewer, as forecast; Nicholas Stern, a former chief economist at the World Bank, in *Why are we waiting*, claims that new technologies can already be as cheap as burning fossil fuels, that 60% of electricity generation investment in 2014 was in renewables; and to argue about “burden-sharing” is an unnecessary hindrance to such investment, if you are going to gain rather than lose by it.

Anthony Barnosky and Elizabeth Hadly, in *End Game*, show that many policies of the past have had positive results – more efficient farming (technology); acceptance by individuals of much smaller families (personal adaptation); control of drunken driving (political intervention). They ask, can increasing positive restraints on global warming take effect before the warning and environmental degradation brings disaster?

Wind farms

The same edition reports (p.24) the withdrawal by the British government of subsidies for on land wind farms, as well as giving local communities more power to reject them. They are as unsightly as the long accepted pylons, but politics here seems here to have won against a promising if not permanent energy source – unlike coal and oil, which are subsidised immensely throughout the world. This edition also carries (p.10) a note on the ruling of a Netherlands court that the Government has a legal duty to protect its citizens and is currently failing to do so in this area.

Details of environmental loss

The 11th July edition (pp. 10-11) lists the effect of climate change on several UNESCO world heritage sites. Thirty-five UNESCO world heritage sites listed for their natural value already show visible effects of climate change, such as the shrinking of glaciers in southern Argentina; the loss of reefs and local species to warming, the import of sheep, dogs and cats and an increasing number of tourists in the Galapagos Islands; the destruction of the winter habitat of the Monarch butterfly in North America; coastline alteration in the German and Dutch Frisian Islands; water loss in Lake Turkana, in Kenya, a vital calling point for many migratory birds.

Coal burning grows apace

The 18th July edition (pp. 10-11) shows that in spite of political pressures and scientific evidence, the burning of coal is still rapidly increasing. Because richer countries have reduced coal consumption – if only in favour of natural gas or nuclear energy – there is a glut, and “poor but fast growing economies in Asia

and Africa have been investing heavily in coal power as prices fall.” One example of how this process works is the subsidising by the French government of the building of coal fired power stations by French companies, in order to avoid unemployment in France.

A 2⁰C ceiling?

The same article casts doubt on the target of holding global warming to less than 2⁰C up to 2050. This is not only dependent on reducing the rate of carbon dioxide emission, but such is the level of carbon dioxide already in the atmosphere that it is soon becoming absolutely necessary to capture and store it – possible but difficult and expensive.

It has been noticed that China, reporting a population of 1.357 bn for 2013, and till recently, a rapid growth in carbon emissions per head, is succeeding in checking this growth. The Bloomberg Business information service reports that in 2014 China’s level of emissions was no more than in the previous year, indicating that for reasons of public health as well as global temperature control China is beginning to tackle the problem.

Better batteries to store energy

The 25th July edition devotes a lead article to the development of battery energy storage in rechargeable batteries. Electrical energy produced by solar panels, becoming more and more cheap and efficient, needs night time storage, and similarly wind power needs storage whenever the wind drops. More than a third of all investment in rechargeables is in lithium-ion batteries (as in smart phones, but for larger batteries as well), costs, still high, but falling, technical and safety problems are being overcome, and other similar technology may be even more efficient. This makes using solar and wind energy much more attractive – stored when available, and available when wanted.

However, the article also points out that these problems remain and the evidence that very drastic action is needed to reduce the carbon dioxide component of the atmosphere (see “A 2⁰C ceiling?” above).

Personal barriers to change

The 11th July edition lists 33 ways in which action to tackle the effects of climate change is thwarted or ignored. (“The Road to Climate Hell”, pp. 28-33)

One kind of barrier is that of simple ignorance. Human beings, made to deal with problems here and now, are optimists, and listen to what supports their own views. The best positive actions are not always obvious or easy to understand. “Lamb raised in New Zealand and eaten in the UK has a smaller carbon footprint than lamb raised and eaten here.” Vested interests

unscrupulously deny climate change. An honest account of the issues can look like uncertainty. “There is nothing I can do about it” (this is why politics matters). Weighing up the cost doesn’t lead to the best outcome.

“Leave it to the market, or leave it to God”. One or the other will always make things come right. Changing the system may make things worse. If we don’t see other people changing their minds, why should we? If our money is invested in mining, motors, a bigger house, a better car, we want to use them to the full. We dislike intrusive solutions like wind farms.

The failure of many political initiatives or financial systems, and the consequent mistrust of them, make us unwilling to accept change or restraints on our own freedom. This kind of change is risky. Will electric cars work? Is cycling safe? Will I lose money on it? What will others think of me if I don’t go with the flow?

It is easy to take on little things, like not putting the groceries in a plastic bag, than more costly ones like cycling or bussing to work. It’s easy, say, to eat less meat and more vegetables – but what is the effect of growing them?

This is human nature. And be warned – a good initiative can lead to complacency – the bits of good news above do not mean nothing more is needed or can happen in time. A growing problem can lead to despair and inaction.

The conclusion of the articles is that what has to be done has to be done on all fronts. Wilful inaction is sin, and if New Scientist knows this, surely we do. This indeed is the message of *Laudato si’*.

A CAFOD overview of Laudato si’ has been produced by CAFOD which has been sent to supporters with a view to promoting it in the parish. The Family Fast Day this year falls on St Francis’s feast day (Sunday 4 Oct) and it is suggested that preaching and activities be based around Laudato si’. There will be a 4 week study group starting in early September using the encyclical (two copies of which are in the library upstairs) using a study guide shortly to be published.

New Evangelization

By Virginia Bird



"GO OUT TO THE WHOLE WORLD, PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS TO ALL CREATION" (Mark 16:15)

Rosina and Virginia attended the diocese's New Evangelization Event inspired by Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel*, (*Evangelii Gaudium*) held at the Parish of Our Lady, Mother of God, Thorpe St. Andrew, Norwich, together with about 40 representatives of about a third of the parishes in the diocese, facilitated by Fr Sean Connolly the Parish Priest of Thorpe St. Andrew in combination with St George's, Norwich and assisted by Rebecca Bretherton.

The day started with Mass at 10am followed by coffee when the Bishop joined us. He was going on to another appointment but spoke to us on how we need to first evangelise ourselves before seeking to bring a life of renewal to our parishes.

The main thrust of the day was conducted in three sessions, Signs of a Dynamic Parish, Breaking the Silence and Making Parish Events Evangelising. We were each given a copy of Sherry Weddell's book *Forming Intentional Disciples*, which is now in our library upstairs (2 copies as we already had one).

We were then given a task formed from another book we were much encouraged to read, *The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic* by Matthew Kelly, in which we worked in small groups identifying how our parish performed under the headings, Pray; Study; Give; Share. Some of this was harder than it seemed on first glance. Under "Pray" I listed: Week of Accompanied Prayer, November 2015, Prayer Group with Exposition, the tentative plan to keep the Church open for prayer during the day, Ablaze, Soul food Prayer Group as well as a couple of less well known activities.

Listing things quite quickly like this does mean some important things get forgotten, for which apologies. Under "Study" I put the study group that had looked at *Evangelii Gaudium* and the planned one to look at *Laudato si'*, the small groups looking at "the Family" leading to the questionnaire, Fr. Bob's study groups and the weekly Bible study group, as well as the ongoing preparation groups for Confirmation candidates and parents of infants to be baptised; "Give" was the easiest section although it also was the shortest, Cafod, food bank, Loaf Project, SVP, as well as the various charity lunches and giving at a more personal level such as Jimmy's.

The final area, Share, involved more thought and covered area like inviting other neighbouring churches to the Week of Accompanied Prayer, and week of prayer for Christian unity events, SVP lunch for the elderly, Friday charity lunches and House Masses.

In "Breaking the Silence" we prayed silently in the church using a scripture passage. We were being encouraged to think of our prayer lives as focused on Jesus and to take this out to our parishes. As Catholics we rarely refer to our Lord by name, and tend to talk about the Church rather than Jesus. We are encouraged to develop a personal relationship with Him, how else can we really say we love Him?

In the afternoon we further discussed making parish events "evangelising". Many ideas from other parishes' experience were of interest and some seemed very applicable to St. Laurence's. Rosina and I looked the idea of men's groups, meeting in a pub, given that most of the things churches do attract a preponderance of women. We also liked the idea of people accompanying the families of the newly baptised, and anniversary celebration meals for the same sort of groups, as well as locality based small groups which use their group as they wish, for prayer, Bible study, problem areas to discuss etc. Some parishes ran wonderful ideas which needed a specific location, OLEM does something they call Saturday Night Fever where a team go out into the street and invite passers-by in to light a candle.

This works wonderfully for them given their physical position on main crossroads, whereas St. Laurence's has few passers-by. However, something on similar lines could be explored. We looked at the Sherry Weddell book examining the conditions to make the seed of faith grow. She talks of the average parishioners being "seekers" whereas "intentional disciples" have "dropped their nets and followed Jesus". The ultimate stage of spiritual conversion is the "apostle". Are any of us that yet?

The thresholds of conversion are described as: initial trust (don't feel suspicious of the community). Once you have established a bridge of trust (Pope Francis, pontifex a bridge) we must build on it. Following this people show spiritual curiosity and a small percentage will move to spiritual openness, this is the threshold to spiritual seeking which is an active moment leading ultimately to intentional discipleship. The controversial part is that Sherry Weddell states that few of us are there, most of us are stuck right at the beginning of conversion, at spiritual curiosity, we prefer to talk of the Church than Jesus, we do not proclaim that we act in particular ways because we have a personal relationship with him, we use distant vocabulary which no lovers would ever use. Hard to think about, hard to act on, but the only way forward in our faith.

These are the Five Thresholds of Conversion for people within and outside the Church:

1. Initial trust - this includes where one partner may not be Catholic but is not antagonistic. It does not mean that either partner has an active personal faith.
2. Spiritual curiosity - where one person or partner is intrigued and wishes to know more about a particular activity of faith eg. signing foreheads with ash on Ash Wednesday.
3. Spiritual openness - where people begin to think that perhaps repentance has something to offer, or they begin to acknowledge the possibility of spiritual or personal change. This is the area considered to be most difficult area for the postmodern non believer.
4. Spiritual Seeking - this is when the individual is moving from passive to active seeking of the God who is calling them to discipleship.
5. Intentional discipleship - this is the moment to decide to drop your nets and to make a conscious decision to follow Jesus in the midst of his church and reorder your life accordingly.

Most people lie between two and three, even those of us who are regular and committed Catholics. In addition to all the above, the diocese is going to help every parish move forward in various ways.

Each parish is encouraged to create an evangelising team. Various activities are being offered to us, for instance on 20th September we are to celebrate Home Mission Sunday when we will pray for all those who rarely attend our churches anymore and there is a special prayer we will be asked to use.

Later in Advent we will be passing a statute of Our Lady and St. Joseph travelling to Bethlehem from family to family asking each family to invite friends and neighbours in the share; there will be further events to progress our parish life in the New Evangelization, in a renewed way to grow a personal faith in relationship with Jesus.

NB: Our next New Evangelization event is set for Saturday 31st October. It will be at the Parish Centre, Newmarket – more details nearer the time.

Young People's News & Views

You are specially made by God: a letter to the youths from Fr. Alvan Ibeh

A girl thought she was not physically beautiful and that she could never be loved by any man unless she compromised her body. In her search for love she allowed herself to be misused and abused sexually by any man that showed interest in her, she did almost anything to be loved and accepted. She wanted someone to hold her and tell her that she was special but she experienced disappointment, frustration and sorrow. Eventually she hated herself.

My dear, do not have an inferiority complex about your looks. You have assets that outweigh any physical difficulties. Others may envy what you dislike about yourself. One of the greatest mistakes you can make in life is to hate the way you are created and this is the reason for most people's frustrations.

You know what? Nobody is as beautiful or handsome as you are. You are wonderfully and beautifully made, a unique creature of God. You are just you and like no other person in this world. You are original and not a photocopy. Do not permit your looks, family background, financial difficulties, inadequate formal education, race, sex, age or other people's opinions limit you and determine how your life will turn out. Nobody is better than you! So stop feeling inferior about yourself because nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent. You are not a nonentity. You are somebody because God never wastes His time creating a "nobody". You are a priceless human being!

The truth about love is that you cannot give what you don't have. Before you can love others you must first love yourself (Matt.22.39), and by the same token, you must first love yourself before others will like you. A person who does not love himself/herself will find it impossible to develop a genuine relationship with others. Unless you feel good about yourself you won't have the confidence to be yourself. So stop looking down on yourself, stop feeling inferior because God has made you superior! But yet you have to remember that to see yourself as a superior creature does not call for pride but humility, knowing full well that there is nothing you have that has not come from God. To see yourself as a superior creature should not make you look down on others. Remember, every person is also as unique as you are and must be respected if not for any other reason, than as the image of God. Don't forget that pride must always go before a fall!

As you read and digest this message, I pray that God will bring new things into your life, change the negative impression you have about yourself so that you will begin to live and enjoy your life as the superior being God has made you to be. Amen.

Features & Opinions

Sycamores

Dick Wilson

In the Old Testament reading for the 15th ordinary Sunday of Year B, Amos is told by Amaziah, the priest of the royal sanctuary, the national temple in Bethel, to go back to where he came from, to Judah, and prophesy there. Amos replies “*I was no prophet; neither did I belong to any of the brotherhoods of prophets. I was a shepherd, and looked after sycamores.*”

Fr Pat, in his sermon, and members of the congregation, said they were puzzled to know what “look after sycamores” can possibly mean. Did the translator envisage the trees running away and getting lost, or needing constant neat trimming?

“Looked after sycamores” is absurd. The biblical Hebrew word is *shiqmīm*. In Amos 7:14, translated as “sycamores” (plural) does not mean the familiar English sycamore. Nor does it mean *Ficus carica*, in Hebrew *tīnāh*, the common fig, found over much of East Asia and beyond, including Europe. The word translated as “look after” is *bōlēś*, a borrowed word only used here, meaning “a fig-grower”. The phrase makes clear sense if it is understood to refer either to mulberries, or to *Ficus sycomorus*. This fig-tree grows fairly large and is found in Palestine and the Levant generally, including northern Egypt, as well as much of central Africa.

Amos’s second job was to scratch or cut the fruit to help it to ripen. The meaning of the phrase in Amos 7:14, *bōlēś shiqmīm*, is clear from *knizōn sykomina* in the Greek Bible. The Greek word *sykomina* normally refers to mulberries, but the whole phrase, like a gardener’s “dead-heading”, is a fruit grower’s technical term – “someone who scratches or cuts (*knizōn*) figs or mulberries to make them ripen”, and the Hebrew presumably means precisely this. The genus *ficus* as a whole is part of the mulberry family.

The Latin borrowed the Greek word *sykomoros*, which derives from two Greek words for this kind of fig, *sykē*, a fig tree or *sykon*, a fig, and moreover, a mulberry, and the phrase goes neatly into Latin, giving *vellicans sycomoros*: “pinching” or “nipping” figs (or mulberries). The use of this very specific term implies that the practice was widely understood, and pretty a low-grade job was implied. Amos is remarking that he had been a person of little importance, and not a professional prophet.

So far, so good. The confusion comes when the Latin word *sycomorus* came to be adopted in French and on

into English for a different tree, brought to England in Roman times, the massive *Acer pseudoplatanus*, which is what it now means in English. Its leaves resemble those of the maple and the plane, as well as figs and mulberries.

The word sycamore persisted in the Bible passages, in spite of the change in meaning, because the translators either didn’t know all this or were hypnotised by their Latin, Greek or French originals, as in much of the new translation of the Mass. The missal uses an English version based on the French Bible de Jérusalem, which has *sycomore*. In French, this usually means the same as “sycamore”, the big tree, as in English, but can mean the *figuier d’Egypte*, in other words, *sycomorus*.

The New English Bible has “a herdsman (correctly, not a shepherd; it could have been goats or cattle) and a dresser of sycomore-figs”. This is typical of its overwhelming but sometimes mind-numbing accuracy, which surely contributed to its failure to become very popular.

The common sense thing would have been to say “fig-dresser” or “mulberry dresser”, or better “I used to look after the flock, and cut figs so they ripen”, concentrating on the point here: Amos is talking about the two humdrum jobs that mark him out as a nobody, and not a prophet by trade. His message is direct from God.

And I shall always be reminded by this passage of an old man we met on holiday in Crete, spending his days looking after the goats that were feeding on scrub amongst the rocks.

The Magdalene Conversation, 30th June

Ann Hales-Tooke

It is possible that of all the events marking the 175th anniversary of the founding of *The Tablet*, ‘The Conversation’ held in the Cripps Auditorium at Magdalene College, Cambridge, on 30th June will come to be seen as the most significant.⁽¹⁾ The following is a précis of the report in *The Tablet*.

The Catholic professors, Eamon Duffy, the historian, Janet Soskice, the philosopher of religion, joined Rowan Williams, the former Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, to discuss the journey taken by the churches from Mary Magdalene to women bishops. ‘The Conversation’ was chaired by Paul Vallely, the biographer of Pope Francis.

Eamon Duffy gave an account of how the Catholic Church has arrived at its position of apparent fixity. He

feels that the Pope's position is to adjudicate at the conclusion of a process of debate and consultation on conferring ordination on women and 'this is a discussion the Church simply hasn't had.'

Rowan Williams explained how he had changed his mind on the issue 35 years ago. He admitted that the ordination of women and then of bishops had come at the considerable cost of unhappy ructions that had strained the unity of the Church of England to breaking point. But he insisted that the alternative would have exacted an even higher price – a festering injustice.

Janet Soskice emphasised the role of women in the story of salvation by reminding us that Mary Magdalene was present at the crucifixion and burial of Jesus, and went to the tomb on Easter Sunday to anoint his body. She also spoke of the extraordinary work done by Catholic women throughout the world in health care and education. The Second Vatican Council had castigated discrimination on the grounds of gender and defended women in public life. She was disturbed by a theology of the priesthood that the priest acting *in persona Christi*⁽²⁾ must thereby be male. She felt that the blocking of the discussion has been a licence for misogyny in the Church. The cork must come out of the bottle.

(1) "Releasing the cork from the bottle", by Brendan Walsh. *The Tablet*, 4th July 2015.

(2) *Editor's note: In persona Christi*, or more modern, *In persona Christi Capitis*, is a Latin phrase meaning "In the person of Christ (the Head)," meaning that the priest acts in the person of Christ, for example during Consecration. See also Catechism from number 1548 ("In the ecclesial service of the ordained minister, it is Christ himself who is present to his Church as Head of his Body (...) This is what the Church means by saying that the priest, by virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, acts *in persona Christi Capitis*") till number 1577 ("The Church recognizes herself to be bound by this choice made by the Lord himself. For this reason the ordination of women is not possible.") for further information.

Cardinal Points

John Hobson

Next month the Bishops meet in Rome for their much publicised Synod. No yawning please. There are a number of issues on the agenda and we may each have filled in a questionnaire in an attempt to cover some of the topics with our humble views and offerings and we know from Fr Bob that some of our views were less humble than others! I didn't study theology or any other -ology for that matter and I rely on a simple understanding of what is clear and easy and I struggle to search for knowledge and understanding of the more difficult bits of life and faith.

One of the topics on the agenda for our bishops next month covers who can and who cannot receive the Eucharist. I see that this time last year I addressed this same topic in the Pilgrim and wrote "...*We know we*

are created to be loved by our Creator who through the person of Jesus wants to meet us today in the here and now, just as we are, well read or illiterate, tall or short, fat or thin, single, married, divorced, whole or broken, with or without a passport.." and the truth of this is unchanged as Mathew reminds us in chapter 11, verse 28-30: "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls...*"

The Bishops however seem to have lost sight of this and created a rather complex debate about who can have communion, and all the time the answer seems clear and simple to me, which is a bit of a worry isn't it? It is sometimes useful to recall the old sayings that help us through life and particularly the one that tells us "familiarity breeds contempt". With this in mind we should take care to listen to the words of Christ in his short years of ministry and defend their meaning with all our understanding and power.

The fact that we hear His words so often should not make us contemptuous of them or to be tempted to re-interpret them or to weave obstructive rules around them. The particular words I have in mind are very simple and very clear and they fill my head and my heart with each hearing at Mass and remind me that I am indeed loved, wanted and summoned in exactly the personal condition He sees me at that moment – "*Take this all of you...*"

Now dear Bishops, which part of this do you not understand or no longer really believe? Answers on the back of a small envelope please because you really shouldn't be struggling with this – unless of course you know the secret that Christ didn't really mean it or intentionally left out a whole crop of conditions?

God has a perfect plan for you

Fr Alvan

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

A king had a male servant who, in all circumstances always said to him, "My king, do not be discouraged because everything God does is perfect, no mistakes." One day, they went hunting and a wild animal attacked the King, the servant managed to kill the animal but couldn't prevent his majesty from losing a finger. Furious and without showing gratitude, the king said, "If God was good, I would not have been attacked and lost one finger." The servant replied, "Despite all these things, I can only tell you that God is good and everything He does is perfect, He is never wrong".

Outraged by the response, the king ordered the arrest of his servant. While being taken away to prison, he told the king again, "God is good and perfect." Another day, the king left alone for another hunt and was captured by savages who used human beings for sacrifice. On the altar, the savages found out that the king didn't have one finger in place, he was released; because he was considered "not complete" he could not be offered to the gods. On his return to the palace, he ordered the release of his servant and said to him, "My friend, God is really good to me. I was almost killed today by some savages that captured me and wanted to use me for sacrifice to their gods, but for lack of a single finger, I was left to go. But I want to ask you a question, if God was good, why did he allow me to put you in prison?" His servant replied, "My king, if I had not been put in prison, I would have gone with you, and would have being captured together with you, and would have been the one to be sacrificed, since I have no missing finger. Everything God does is perfect, He is never wrong."

Often we complain about life and the negative things that happen to us, forgetting that everything happens for a purpose. No matter what happens to us in life, I have come to believe one thing: "God has a perfect plan for us". That is why God through the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah tells us, "for I know my plans for you, says the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jer.29:11). God knows the future and His plans for us are good and full of hope. As long as God who knows the future, provides our agenda and goes with us as we fulfil his mission, we can have boundless hope. This does not mean that we will be spared pain, suffering or hardship, but God will see us through to a glorious conclusion.

Most often, God allows certain things to happen to us so that through them, His name will be glorified. Most often, it is in darkness that light can be seen well. Have you seen someone using a flashlight in the day? Such a person will be seen as being crazy by people. It is only in the dark that light is recognised properly. It therefore means that it is apparent that troubled times are a reality in everybody's life. Someone said that God does not assure us a smooth take off, but rather a safe landing. He does not assure us a trouble-free life, but rather our redemption is assured. Even in the midst of our troubled moments, He has a perfect plan for us.

Troubled times were real in bible days; they have also been real throughout history. The bible affirms that we will have troubling times. Starting from Old Testament down to the New Testament, there were attestations to the certainty of troubled times. In Genesis, there was trouble in the Garden of Eden that brought about the fall (Gen.3). In the Garden still, Cain killed his brother Abel (Gen.4). Abraham and Sarah experienced the

trouble of barrenness (Gen.18). Joseph was sold by his brothers into slavery (Gen.37).

In the New Testament, the family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph was troubled right from the birth of Jesus. Herod wanted to destroy the boy, Jesus (Matt.2:13). Jesus was rejected by His own people (Joh.1:12). Paul was in constant trouble throughout his ministry: he declares in 2 Cor.11:23-29 that he had often been in prison, often at the point of death, that he was given thirty nine lashes five times, once he was stoned, three times he was ship-wrecked, once he spent 24 hours in the water, often in danger of high seas and wild animals, often without food, shelter or clothing. He says, "I have often been in distress."

Though there is no doubt that we must be confronted by troubled times from one period to another, there is always also an assurance that God will always be there for us. In Acts 14:22 we are told that through many troubles we will enter the kingdom of God. Joh.16:33 tells us that in the world, we must have troubled times. He then gives us an assurance because God has a perfect plan. He says, "But rejoice because I have conquered the world." Because we are conquerors in the Lord, we must count it all joy when we face times of troubles (James 1:2).

In Is.43:1-2 the Lord tells us this: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burnt; the flames will not set you ablaze." Remember it did not say "if you pass", but it says "when you pass", meaning that you must pass. It was not a conditional statement.

When you pass through the waters of financial hardship, through the waters of barrenness, through the fires of sickness, rejection by friends, confusion in the family, poverty, etc., you shall not drown or get burnt. Why is it like this? God has a perfect plan for His people. It is because of this perfect plan of God that made all believers more than conquerors and for this reason, Rom.8:28 says, "and we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." God works in all things – not just isolated incidents – for our good. This does not mean that all that happens to us is good. Evil is prevalent in our fallen world, but God is able to turn every circumstance around for our long-term good. All that is expected of us is to be patient and courageous and then wait upon the Lord as He brings to manifestation whatever plan He has for us even before we came into this world.

Leave your comments at fralvanibe@yahoo.com

Pilgrims for Christ

Sr Margaret O'Brien

The Missionary Movement in Britain and Ireland began with St. Patrick, who on hearing God's call returned in 432 AD to the country where he had been enslaved. St. Columba and his companions reached Iona in 562, where he established a monastery, which was a springboard for the spread of the Christian faith in Scotland and further south through Lindisfarne. As the Christian faith took deep roots, particularly in and through the monastic life, there was the desire to be “a Pilgrim for Christ” – to leave the land of one's birth and spread the Gospel of Christ.



Buddhist—Christian dialogue in Myanmar

This year many people throughout Europe are celebrating St Columba's life on the occasion of the XIV Centenary of his death. He was the founder of several monasteries in Europe. For the Columban Sisters, he is closest to us in his missionary zeal. In a drama, recently performed in Bangor, N.I., Columbanus is heard to say: “some monks there were who heard the call, then left the settled place to follow forest paths or the great shifting highways of the seas”.

The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St Columban was founded in 1926, specifically for the evangelization of China. Within three years, the first Sisters had arrived in China. They witnessed to the love of God and the example of Christ by their care for the people in the sufferings experienced from severe floods, local and national conflicts and the occupation of China by the Japanese Army during World War 2. In 1949, the communists defeated the nationalists and so came to govern China. Within a few years, all missionaries were expelled, suffering sadness and loneliness at having to leave the people they had grown to love. Many of the native bishops, priests, sisters and lay people were imprisoned or consigned to hard labour.

As Missionary Sisters, we are invited by the young churches to assist in witnessing to Jesus through our lives, our appreciation, compassion, and service of the people. Our vocation calls us to cross cultural boundaries of language, religion, social and political conditions. Our ministries vary according to the needs of the people in the different countries. In early years, we established schools, medical clinics and hospitals. Pastoral care of the family, catechesis and justice and peace were the needs which the local churches in some areas were unable to sufficiently address.

Over the years, the Columban Sisters were invited to serve in the Philippines, Hong Kong, Korea, Burma, Peru and Chile. We also served the missionary effort in Ireland, Britain and the USA. In 1994, the Sisters began their missionary outreach in Pakistan. In recent years, Sisters have been able to return to China and Burma – the latter had denied them re-entry visas in 1965.

We witness the growth of the local Church, particularly as laypeople take responsibility and commit themselves in faith and love to meet the needs of society and its people. In Hong Kong, the Jesuit-inspired Christian Life Community (CLC) – which has a base in the UK – accepted responsibility for two of the schools which we wished to hand over to the local church. The hospital for the treatment of tuberculosis, which in 1949 the Columban Sisters were invited to staff, has been rebuilt as a General Hospital and is now staffed locally. The Congregation has recently chosen to withdraw from two of what were initially called “mission areas”.

As it was Columba's early monastic training and prayer life which enabled him to sustain and nurture his devotion to Christ, so we also are privileged in having the opportunity to continually seek Christ. We are sustained and nourished by a spirituality which springs from contemplation and moves us to prophetic action and dialogue. Strengthened by daily prayer, the sacraments and mutual love, we are enabled to respond to God's call and grow in the motto of St. Columba, “Let us be Christ's and not our own.”



Children in Pakistan welcome Sister Rebecca

An insight to the Orthodox Church

Fr Raphael Armour

History of the Orthodox Church

The Orthodox Church traces its origins to the earliest churches; in Jerusalem (led by the Apostle James, the brother of the Lord) and Antioch (led by the Apostle Peter). By the time Christianity was legalised under the Emperor Constantine, three hundred years later, the other largest cities of the Empire had become important centres of Christianity: Rome, Alexandria (the second city of the Roman Empire) and Constantinople. (Only in AD 988 was Christianity adopted by Great Prince Vladimir of Kiev, generally seen as the beginning of the conversion of Russia.)

Each of these was a 'Local Church' with its own Archbishop and with their other bishops living and working 'in communion' with each other, with the Bishop of Rome having the primacy of honour, Rome being the chief city of the Empire. The final court of appeal in the event of a dispute between bishops was always the See of Rome, as '*primus inter pares*'⁽¹⁾.

Until the 11th century, union between East and West was maintained, albeit at times with some strain. Despite divergences within church life – the forms of services, the East using leavened bread for the Eucharist while the West used unleavened bread, the East maintaining married clergy in parishes while the West required clerical celibacy – for the most part, the bonds of love held. Over the centuries, however, Greek had ceased to be the common language and this, in part led to misunderstandings in theological discussion. By the middle of the 11th century two serious disputes arose: one about the claims of papal primacy, the second – and more important to the Eastern Churches – the addition of the 'filioque' to the Nicene Creed. This change had never been discussed, much less considered by an Ecumenical Council – still the ultimate authority in the Eastern Churches.

In 1054, Cardinal Humbert, who had been sent to Constantinople as the Papal Legate, entered the Church of the Holy Wisdom in Constantinople, and placed a Bull of Excommunication on the altar. As he left the church the clergy ran after him begging Humbert to remove the document, to no avail: the Pope had walked away from us. The final 'nail in the coffin' was the sack of Constantinople in 1204 and the slaughter of so many of her clergy by western armies during the Fourth Crusade. It was incomprehensible to the Orthodox that those who claimed to be Christians could treat their brethren as they did.

What is life like in a typical Orthodox Parish?

If you attend a service in an Orthodox church one cannot help but be struck by the 'otherness' of the worship: a screen of icons between the sanctuary and the nave of the church; clergy moving to and fro between the sanctuary and the nave during the services; icons on the walls around the church; people moving around venerating icons before and sometimes during the service; censings of the icons, the church and the people at certain points during the services; the people often standing during the entire service, everything being sung or chanted. The texts of the services contain frequent quotations from the Old and New Testaments – texts almost strung together like pearls – in addition to the chanting of whole Psalms as well as readings from the New Testament during the Divine Liturgy (the Mass). The clergy wear beautiful vestments and while the people may not necessarily sing everything along with the choir, there is a participation on a deep level involving all our senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell – as well as taste, when we receive the Body and Blood of Christ.

Orthodox teaching on the Christian life emphasises the need for discipline. A rule of prayer, morning and evening, is usually agreed with the priest to whom you confess. The rule itself will vary from person to person but is designed to be 'do-able' while at the same time requiring effort. All Orthodox Christians are expected to fast (involving abstinence from meat, dairy products and often fish) on most Wednesdays and Fridays during the year and during the 40 days before Christmas, the 50 days of Lent and Holy Week, a period (from eight days after Pentecost) before the Feast of SS Peter and Paul, and the two weeks before the Dormition of the Mother of God (the 'Assumption'). But it is not all discipline and there is no fasting between Christmas and Epiphany, during the first week of preparation for Lent, or during the week after Pascha (Easter)!

Although many Orthodox – in Western Europe at least – now receive Holy Communion with more frequency than was the case until about forty or fifty years ago, some will still come only once a year (at Pascha) or three or four times a year during the periods of fasting. The discipline of the Russian Orthodox Church requires the people to come to confession each time prior to receiving Holy Communion; this has been relaxed, somewhat, in our diocese so that those who receive the Eucharist weekly, must come to confession only once every 40 days. The discipline is different in other Orthodox Churches, many members of the Greek Orthodox Church, for example, confessing seldom, since few of their parish clergy are given permission to receive confessions.

A look at Cambridge

The Orthodox Parish of St Ephraim⁽²⁾, which worships in the Chapel of Westcott House (Jesus Lane, Cambridge), is a parish of the Russian Orthodox Diocese of Sourozh, which covers Great Britain and Ireland. Both the diocese and our parish were founded by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh (1914–2003), our bishop from 1957 until his death, by which time he was the senior bishop in the Russian Orthodox Church.

The parish has worshippers from a radius of about 30 miles of Cambridge. At present, we have about 110 parishioners worshipping at the Divine Liturgy on a Sunday morning, some 30 of whom are under the age of eight! Although a Russian Orthodox Parish, our people come not only from traditionally 'Orthodox countries' – Russia, the Ukraine and other 'former Soviet satellite' countries, Romania, Cyprus, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia – but also the USA, Hong Kong, Australia, Switzerland and Zimbabwe, as well as the United Kingdom. Our services are celebrated, for the most part, in English and the majority of our people who have come to the UK since the enlargement of the European Union accept that this is the way forward for the church. They may speak Russian, Romanian or Bulgarian etc. at home, but their life – and especially that of their children – is now in English. This is not to deny the importance of culture, but it is seeing the way forward for church life.

I wrote earlier about the Great Schism between East and West. Fortunately, these days, on the local level at least, our relations with the Roman Catholic Church are increasingly warm. For example, I have warm relations with Mgr Mark Langham at Fisher House and their students have welcomed the members of the University Orthodox Society on two or three occasions. In addition to my duties in Cambridge, I also serve a parish in Luton, where we enjoy good relations with the local Roman Catholics and use one of their buildings for our services.

While it may not be in our lifetimes that our two Churches are reunited, on the parish level, at least, we can show mutual love and friendship and do what we can to overcome centuries of mistrust and misunderstanding.

⁽¹⁾*Editor's Note: primus inter pares* – first among equals.

⁽²⁾There are two other Orthodox parishes in Cambridge. The Greek Orthodox Parish, which used to worship at St Clement's, have bought the former United Reformed Church building on Cherry Hinton Road and have been worshipping there since April. There is also a Romanian Orthodox Parish which worships in St Giles' Church.

Why are we still not Jewish?

James McQuillan

Why are we still not Jewish? Surely, as the Old Testament tells us, God's covenant, or testament, is eternal, as Scripture says, '*What worth has my kindred in God's sight, that he should make an everlasting covenant with me, sealed and ratified all of it?*' (2 Sam 23:5) So why do we not have a Temple, with animal sacrifices? God made agreements with Noah, Abraham, Moses and David, so what has happened?

After the Garden of Eden, God asked our first parents to till the earth. To Noah, God promised that mankind would not be flooded by water again, to Abraham He promised that the patriarch was the father of a blessed generation, for Moses He led the Hebrews out of Egypt and gave him the Divine Laws, David He made a king and ancestor of a great saviour. That person is known to us as the Lord Jesus Christ, descendant of David, and founder of another Covenant, replacing in most parts what we now call the Old. The waters of the flood are now the waters of Baptism, and the sacrifice of the Passover is now the gift of the Holy Eucharist. We still observe the Laws of the Ten Commandments given to Moses, if not all the other observances associated with diet and the ancient Temple. We are members of the mystical body of Christ, instead of the chosen race. But Jews seem to ignore this in favour of the continuity of the Old Testament, with grievous harm to the original inhabitants of the Holy Land, both Christian and Muslim. In the new Israel, reoccupied after 1900 years of absence, is there so much to hope for, in such a grim situation of politics, civilisation and sometimes violent behaviour?

It has been the constant teaching of the Church that the Covenant has not disappeared, but has been improved or abrogated, by the teaching, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ. I have already expressed such a continuity above, such as through the religious continuity of both the flood waters and the sacrifice of the Passover. What this means is that Our Lord Jesus has fulfilled the promises of the ancient covenants to the patriarchs as mentioned, and therefore we can rightly proclaim that we enjoy the virtues of the New Testament or Covenant, as St Paul described it. At the time of His death on Calvary, the veil in the Temple's Holy of Holies was rent in two alongside other signs, indications of a major change in the Divine dispensation. The Temple was finally destroyed in AD 70, and it is of course a real spiritual regret that modern Jews cannot reach our revealed realisation, as of course Jesus, Mary and Joseph were orthodox Jews in any case.

We should always pray that God's will to convert everyone to salvation will occur in due course. There

are major difficulties, as there are possibly blasphemous aspects to Christ's claim to be the Son of God, the major reason for His crucifixion carried out by the Romans, as Christ's assertion was a major obstacle for traditional Jewish theology. But – quietly or rhetorically – some Jews have always converted to this new religion, as Christians treasure the writings of the Old Testament, just as Latin bishops wear a skullcap as a Jewish male, and all clergy recite the 150 Psalms every four weeks in the Divine Office. Let us all hope and pray for better understanding for everyone under God's protection.

How to grow Catholics at home

The Eccles and Steiner families

Plant them at regular intervals and water at Baptism without delay. Their Godparents shall be friends who have a lively faith and who will take a real interest in them as they grow up. Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me.' So they must come. In our lovely parish, they have to come at three days old. It's alright to suckle in church, obviously.

A new member of the team changes the whole team, and in the same way the new baby makes up the whole family, and no family is all Catholics: as it happens Cousin Ahmed is Muslim, Aunt Ida is a "Wee Free" Presbyterian, Dad is Anguished Agnostic and Granny maintains she is a born-again Buddhist. In our own family too, no Catholic has ever married another Catholic for sixteen generations, as far as we can tell. You know from the outset that going to Mass is not some kind of fate but an option and a choice, if only because Daddy never comes.

Each and every one of us has his and her special witness to give as a gift towards the upbringing of our children, however complicated that can be in practice. Every gift is appreciated. Pope Francis says the doors of our churches must stand open in welcome. Let that be true for our family too. We are bringing up our children to be Christians in a very plural world. Are we afraid for them or have we plenty of courage?

Now, Jesus was at a wedding once (a couple was starting a family, you see). He changed the water into wine, better wine than they could have hoped for and far more than was strictly good for them. Why did he do that, do you think? Because of his delight. He came to take away the stern religion of duty, and put in its place the religion of delight. He came to show God is delighting in us. The heavenly Father rejoices in us and we should rejoice in Him.

So, how shall we make family religion the religion of delight? Let there be flowers in front of Our Lady's shrine the children have made at home, let there be the intimate moments of lighting a candle together and hearing the children's prayers. Switch off the television and let's read stories about funny old Noah and Moses in the bulrushes, about Jesus and Our Lady and the saints that we can share. There cannot be joy without God or God without joy. Without joy a person cannot be a true believer, says Pope Francis!

In my family whenever there is a First Communion, there is strawberries and cream for breakfast, because that is what Mum remembers having after her First Communion, and so did Granny too, and so perhaps did her mother – just so there is remembrance with delight.

Let's make Sunday special, time for us to be together as a family. Let there be proper family meals together round the table whenever we can, and let's sing *Thank you Jesus for our bread*. Let's say the Rosary in the car (not all twenty mysteries, please Mum, just enough to bless the journey). Let's find ways to celebrate Easter and Christmas with what we can rustle up at home, the reading of the story to one another, the drawing and the painting, the dressing up and the play-acting, the music-making and the baking. Can we celebrate all twelve days of Christmas please?

We all need the experiences that make for faith. Some go on a pilgrimage together; some do a Catholic Peoples' Week or a Christian festival somewhere. Which would you prefer, Lourdes with the sick and handicapped or Disneyland? How are we going to share with the hungry children of Africa in our house?

Some of the old ones in our family remember bomb shelters, doodlebugs overhead and parents in uniform. But they cannot remember anyone speaking a word of hatred or resentment for our enemies, not once. Still in our house, we do not want newspapers or any other stuff that is unloving or disrespectful about migrants or Muslims, single mothers or gay people, or even about the English bishops. We do not need that. We hear St Paul saying, speak only helpful words. The loving Lord Jesus is Lord in our house, remember how Jesus said he would come and knock on our door and come in and eat with us, and we with him?

Personal Stories

1955, Phenoxyene Summer.

Ann Hales Tooke.

In April 1955 after many adventures and various jobs I fetched up in Cambridge. I was 29 and had, against all the odds, secured a job as Statistics Clerk in the Sales Department of a firm founded by a Dr Ripper called 'Fison's Pest Control'. My salary was £7.10 shillings and seemed a splendid amount allowing enough for a room and use of kitchen in a pleasant Cambridge street. I was engaged to be married but my future husband was articled to a law firm in Norwich and could not move until he qualified. I used to catch the Bedford bus from the city centre as Fisons Sales office was situated on an old airfield near Bourn village a few miles out of town.

It turned into a very warm summer and the firm supplied artificial fertilisers to cereal growers. Phenoxyene, the chemical to stimulate all corn crops began to sell like the proverbial hot cakes. Fisons had a number of sales representatives and our job in the Sales Office was to check their mileage returns for repayment of petrol costs. A group of men and women toiled away in a sweaty office checking figures and writing invoices for the Reps. who operated in different areas of East Anglia. I was never particularly good at maths which made the acquisition of this job seem a bit magical.

Our boss was an easy going young man who wore loud checked shirts, corduroy trousers and suede shoes and bummed around in a small open racing car doing, it seemed, no desk work at all. He was very easy about allowing us time off to go and see the doctor, dentist etc.

We were a polyglot group of clerks, older men, and younger women. We all got on well and spent a lot of time 'chatting'. One day there was newcomer - a large young man, with a lot of floppy ill-kept hair of slightly threatening appearance, in dark, rather scruffy trousers. He occupied a small table on his own and from the first day never spoke to anyone. He did not seem to be applying himself to the columns of figures we all worked on, albeit rather perfunctorily, until towards the end of each month when we had to get the accounts finalised. Then for a couple of days the office was quieter as our little adding machines whirred. He sat chewing a pencil with an open exercise book into which he made the occasional note. He was a mystery and a bit frightening. One day Polly, who was our fair-haired office bimbo approached the silent one and offered to get him a coffee. This he accepted and after a few days Polly was actually sitting on his desk swinging her legs under her mini skirt chatting away as

she tossed her blonde curls. He seemed to be listening if not actually answering. Polly told us – confidentially – that he had no money and was sleeping on the Backs with his girlfriend which was why he sometimes had the occasional leaf stuck to his trousers.

The summer days grew hotter, the sales figures escalated and we were borne along on a euphoric tide. It was strange really as all my upbringing had been ruled by a farming Dad who was totally opposed to chemical fertilisers. He must have been the most organic cultivator in East Anglia. As August slipped into September and days were a little cooler we all got a little bonus with our weekly payslips. One day we realised our silent one had quietly slipped away. His desk was empty. Polly was sad for half a day.

My life went on. We married and found a small flat in Newnham and I was allowed to catch a bus an hour later into work. A year later I became pregnant and sadly left my work mates at Bourn. Two years later and there was another baby. My husband liked to write poetry and one day glancing through one of his magazines a picture caught my eye. It was the strange silent young man from Fisons Pest Control. His name? Ted Hughes. So the girl he was sharing a rug with on the Backs was Sylvia Plath!

First experience as a missionary in England

Fr. Alvan Ibeh

It's actually not that easy working as a missionary in a foreign land but because we know we are not sent by ourselves but by God, we have no other option than to carry out the mandate believing strongly that He is always there with us.

There are indeed many challenges one may encounter going on mission for the first time to a foreign land. These challenges can vary depending on where one has been sent to. But there are still some that are common to every missionary; leaving the environment you grew up in, your parents, brothers and sisters, friends, best dishes, etc. But as St Paul will say, "the love of God urges us on."

Being in England for the first time was challenging too, as I believe it was for my other brothers that came before me. I heard people saying that I came at the right time because of the weather. But in actual fact it didn't make any difference because, the weather as it were, was not really friendly at all. Having come from an apparently hot environment, I didn't find the cold weather I met so funny. It really dealt with me, but gradually I got used to it.

Communication was also another challenge. Though Nigeria is an English speaking country, English is not her *lingua franca*. We have many tribes and more than 150 different dialects. So our accents in the use of English language vary completely from that of the English people. So sometimes, it's either I don't understand some people or they don't understand me. It can be funny as well as frustrating too. But it's all a matter of time.

These were actually the two main challenges I had at the time I came. There are actually others like food, the people's way of life etc. which are totally foreign to me, but gradually I am getting used to all those things to the glory of God.

Being in St Laurence's Parish which is the second parish I am working in (the first being Our Lady and the English Martyrs) has really been a very wonderful experience. The Parish Priest, Fr Patrick and the parishioners are indeed very wonderful people and I am happy to be in their midst.

Fr Alvan Ibeh SMMM, belongs to a religious congregation known as the Congregation of Sons of Mary Mother of Mercy which is the first indigenous male religious congregation in Nigeria founded in 1970 by the Late Bishop Anthony Gogo Nwedo C.S.Sp.

Friday Market Walsingham on Bank Holiday Monday 4th May 2015

Michael McEwan

On a fresh spring day, pilgrims throughout the Diocese of East Anglia gathered together in Friday Market, Walsingham at the start of the Diocesan Pilgrimage on Bank Holiday Monday 4th May 2015. The pilgrims were welcomed by Bishop Alan Hopes. Some folk had already headed into the nearest café and had a coffee and a warm sausage roll, whilst the more spiritually minded nipped into the Catholic Church to catch the last quarter of an hour before the Blessed Sacrament. The programmes had been distributed and the banners unfurled and at last the ceremony of giving Our Lady of Walsingham a floral crown (secured by garden twine) got underway. The deacon sang the gospel to which we all sang the responses and Bishop Alan reminded us that this was also the day to remember the Martyrs of England.

In quiet contemplation and with the words of the Rosary in our hearts we left the Friday Market Place to walk the holy mile. Young people were stationed along the mile with placards exhorting us to prayerfully consider topics from the mysteries of the Rosary.

After a short while the cry went up, – “Make way for emergency vehicle!” And as an ambulance passed by I'm sure that many silent prayers were offered for the

one in need. Some children in the procession walked without shoes, others clambered up the grassy banks, bordering the farmers' rape seed crops and the road, to pick the yellow flowers of the fairies

A few yards further on I felt myself being ushered to the left side of the road where a stream had appeared flowing down towards us, so technically we were “walking upstream” (as we so often do in life.) I then noticed myriads of little bubbles floating downstream on top of the water, the sunlight shining through them which made me think I was being cleansed of my sins which now, looking behind me were floating away whilst I was feeling most refreshed!

We came round a bend in the road and our ears pricked up the strident peal of that solitary bell at the Slipper Chapel, like the introit calling us to Mass. As we neared the chapel we could hear the welcome strains of Our Lady's Litany to which we all responded. It was like coming home to a place where we felt we belonged, a place for all manner and condition of folk.

For me, walking the ‘holy mile’ was as memorable as the Pilgrims' Mass which followed.

Imagine

Fran Collet

Imagine your eagerly awaited beautiful baby/grandchild arrived in this world disfigured. Imagine that you know that this could be repaired but you know you will never be able to afford to have the treatment and make things right for your baby!

For many parents in the world this is the awful truth. 170,000 babies are born worldwide with a cleft palate every year. A cleft palate occurs when the two halves of the face do not fuse at 'just' the right time, when the baby is in the womb.

Many of these children have difficulty smiling, speaking or even eating meaning children with cleft lip and cleft palates are twice as likely to die before their first birthday. This disfigurement has **no** effect on the cognition of the child, but often results in children being shunned by society and in some parts of the world they are hidden away, stopped from socialising, attending school or playing an active role in their community.

Imagine pedalling for 938 miles – that's 1,510 km from Land's End to John O'Groats! That is what I am hoping to do, in order to change the lives of a few of these children and make a difference by raising money for **OPERATION SMILE** and the local charity, **CAMSMILE**.

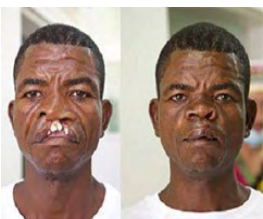
Smile and Camsmile provide free surgery to repair cleft lips, cleft palates and other facial deformities for children around the globe. Volunteers for these charities work to help give these children a hopeful future, by fixing their facial deformities and reversing the misery they face. Each procedure costs as little as £150 but the charities rely only on our donations to pay for the equipment to complete this life saving work. Throughout the world, more than 160,000 children have experienced this transformation from Operation Smile, and some of their stories are told here.



When Marianna was born, Yerling couldn't feed her. She worried as she watched her baby become more and more malnourished because she couldn't properly breastfeed. It's been difficult being in public with her daughter. "People say, 'Why don't you get her fixed?' And that makes me feel bad," Yerling said. It's been heartbreaking for Yerling as she has watched her baby get thinner and sicker because of her cleft lip and cleft palate.

Whanda's story: after almost 30 hours of labour, 18-year-old Whanda lost consciousness while giving birth to her first and only daughter, Yuleyssy, in a hospital in Chinandega, Nicaragua. When she came to, two days later, Whanda took one look at her husband's face and knew that something was wrong. "I wanted to know if she was alive," Whanda says. "I heard someone say 'better that she is not.' I did not understand". When Whanda first saw her tiny daughter she recalls feeling shocked and very sad, although she was unaware that Yuleyssy had been born with a bilateral cleft lip." No one explained why she looked different," said Whanda. "No one said it could be fixed."

Yuleyssy's story has a happy ending. Whanda and her husband made the journey to Chinandega to join Operation Smile, Nicaragua's surgical mission. When little Yuleyssy was carried from surgery and placed into her mother's arms in the recovery room, Whanda recalls her tears of joy. "It was happy crying. She was beautiful."



Kaza dreamed of the thought that perhaps he would be granted a lifelong wish of curing his cratered countenance, of sculpting a symmetrical smile, of the chance to say sounds such as

"p" "b" and "m" from his lopsided lips. He set his hopes on Operation Smile and started working toward his goal of reaching the medical mission site in time. Kaza worked for 13 days and used his savings for his

journey. He came by foot, rented a bike then caught a bus, taking three days to reach the hospital, not even knowing if he would be accepted for surgery. He was one of the lucky ones. As Kaza sat in recovery, his eyes smiling through the pain of surgery, he signals a "thumbs up" and murmurs his gratitude, finally able to say, "merci beaucoup" with precision.

As I grow and learn as a dental student, this cause lies very closely to my heart. Please support me in my GREAT CHALLENGE to help those WHO CAN'T HELP THEMSELVES.

You can sponsor me via:

Operation Smile via

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/cyclingforsmiles>

Or CamSmile via

<https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/cyclingforsmiles>

We will be collecting money after Mass in the coming months.

If you have any questions, queries or comments please email me via francollett@live.co.uk

Note: following bad publicity for the charity 'Smiletrain' on Radio 4, I investigated both the charities I am raising money for: CamSmile (Cambridge Smile) is run by volunteers from home, without any overhead and personnel costs. This charity is dedicated to supporting the work of Mr Per Hall (Consultant Plastic Surgeon at Addenbrooke's Hospital NHS and Operation Smile Volunteer) and his team in developing countries. They are committed to working with the Cleft Team at Addenbrooke's Hospital, for better care for patients in the East of England Region. Only 5% of all the money raised for Operation Smile is used for administration, I have also examined their financial accounts which are freely available online.

Websites: www.operationssmile.org.uk and www.camsmile.org.uk

Further Information about Cleft Palate.

What is cleft lip and cleft palate?

A cleft is an opening in the bones of the upper jaw and/or the upper gum. A cleft palate occurs when the two sides of a palate do not join together, resulting in an opening in the roof of the mouth. A cleft lip and palate can occur on one side or both sides. A child can suffer from a cleft lip, a cleft palate or both.

What causes cleft lips and cleft palates?

The exact cause is unknown. Cleft lips and cleft palates are congenital defects that occur early in pregnancy. Scientists believe a combination of genetic and environmental factors, such as maternal illness, drugs or malnutrition, may lead to a cleft lip or cleft palate. If one child in a family is born with a cleft, the

risk increases by 2 to 4 percent that future children in the family will suffer from the same defect.

Do you do any work in the United Kingdom to assist people born with clefts?

The UK's National Health Service provides free surgery to children born with facial deformities born in the UK with cleft lip and/or cleft palate.

I live in the UK. Why have I never seen a child with a cleft here?

Children are born with clefts in the UK too but as they are repaired in infancy it is extremely unlikely you'll see anyone with an unrepaired cleft lip or palate here.

The theology of everyday life

Rosina Abudulai

The Sub-Saharan sun is out with full vigour. Ghana is the country. The day has only just begun and is in its early hours of activity. It is 8.30am and the temperature is poised for a soaring race. March is particularly hot and humid, with average temperatures ranging between 21-28°C, occasionally exceeding this during the course of the day. The year is 1991, and I am visiting home sweet home, Ghana, for a family wedding. The period is buzzing with the fullness of joy and activity. Family are arriving from all over, and the family tree is at its most glorious. Friends too, and oh yes, some very good long standing family friends, are popping in and out, bringing their bounties towards the wedding and making themselves available for all kinds of responsibilities. It is just the way it works in Africa.

I am keen to maximise all there is to relish, relive, and especially, to rekindle anything African that I may have lost touch with. Yes, my African-ness, that thing which defines my personality is very important to me. There is, however, one slight problem. It is a problem I grew up struggling with throughout my life in Ghana, the regularly hot temperatures (yes, lovely!) and the relentless capacity for the sun to render one powerless and energy-less. The combined result for me was regular headaches. Sure, I was born in the right continent, country and place, with all its accompaniments which I wouldn't trade for anything whatsoever! But for the life of me, I just couldn't adjust to the climate. I needed a break on daily basis from the heat as a child, and even though I hadn't seen anything like it then, I had read about it, and could have done with a dose of snow! In its absence, rainfall for me was a priceless commodity. The farmer rejoiced for his crops, I danced in the rain for cooling the whole environment. So it wasn't, 'Rain, rain go away...' for me, but rather, 'Rain, rain never stop ...' What a blessing it was! And I still love to hear the footsteps of rain, even today!

The market is a metropolis in its own right. It is located on a plain at the edge of the city of Accra, Ghana. *Agbogbloshi* is very popular for fresh farm produce from all over the country. Retailers (middle wo/men) from the city markets *Makola*, *Kaneshie*, etc, also meet their bulk suppliers here. We arrive at the market by mid-morning. It is awash with a sea of people engaged in all kinds of commerce, buying and selling, bargaining, hawking, activity everywhere. Daily waged service providers, referred to as 'labourers' or 'by day' are busy carting and carrying purchased products from one end to the other or into waiting vehicles. A lot is happening in rapid succession all around to make one dizzy. The simultaneous interaction of so many people at every given moment going about their day's agenda is something to experience. It is impossible to notice people individually.

There are many more women than men, perhaps 80%. Traditionally in Ghana, women tend to run the market economy, and you don't want to mess with them. It is fully engaging and demands the use of all one's faculties. It is no work for the faint hearted. But they are skilled at what they do, and possess a high level of practical business and administration skills to admire. They go about their day's agenda with such flair as to make it seem easy. The market population continues to swell as the day wears on. And so does the heat and humidity, now at an insufferable level, with razor sharp rays directed at all and sundry at the same time. The sun is at the pinnacle of its midday heat and relentless at that. There is nowhere to hide, no shade, but for a few inadequate canopies. Everyone is a hostage of the heat.

I am beginning to feel very faint. Dehydrated perhaps? I am back to my childhood experience with the sun. I decide to return to the car parked somewhere nearby and let those who were actually sent to the market get on with it. I shall wait for them in the car. I watch the ongoing hustle and bustle as I reflect on the entire scene of day to day living. Suddenly, I am drawn to one particular woman. She is carrying a tray of a particular food item, she is trying to hawk but it is simply impossible. All other hawkers had a singular focus and stride with the objective to sell. This woman can hardly carry her own body. She looks malnourished, and lethargically unwell. She is struggling to go through the day. And what is more, she is carrying a baby on her back with a cloth, as we do traditionally - the updated European version of a sling. Behold, Mother and Child! The cloth used to tie the child is old and looks very weak. It could give way. It can hardly support the baby, who is about 5 months old, perhaps much older. The baby looks drawn, under-nourished, emaciated and long-suffering in his state of life. No traces of a child's blissful innocence are to be found here. He is neither awake nor fully asleep. He rests his head sideways against his mother's

back and takes the full brunt of the sunshine rays as a result. He has no bonnet for protection. There is nothing that protects this child. He is fully exposed, and at the mercy of his tormentor, the scorching rays of the day. He tries to close his eyes off and on as he whines. He wants to sleep, but the sun prevents him. Perhaps he is hungry but it does not look like mother has any natural milk to provide. He is in the throes of the agony of life. Are you drawing any parallels here with me?

The sight of 'mother and child' both unwell in the middle of the chaos unnoticed by any is quite unbearable. It is agonising. She is struggling to cope in the heat. Two women caught up in the same trap. But I have taken refuge in a car, and she and the baby have no shade, nothing at all. They both need help, they need some respite. It looks like mother is a 'by day' service provider, selling another's food-ware for a commission. To gain the commission, she must finish selling her wares. Something has to be done right here, and now. I pray. What difference will my two fish and five loaves make to her whole life? Yet, I have to do something.

I get out of the car and see another hawker. She is selling beautiful African batiks (these are tie and dye materials). I buy a piece of about 4 metres as I keep an eye on mother and child's whereabouts. It is quite a feat. There are so many people but I must keep her in focus. Material in hand, I run after them before they disappear into labyrinth of people. I stop her under the pretext of buying some of her food item *Fantekenkey*. This is food cooked in local leaves that keeps well. I decide to buy everything on the tray, paying more than the cost. I ask her to please take the day off and give the baby some shade and food. I give her the batik to carry the baby with and try to quickly disappear. Mother is overwhelmed and couldn't thank me enough. She bursts into tears with a canticle of praise to God. She calls out to all around to witness the kindness of God, asking them to join her in thanksgiving. Suddenly, a whole group of women gather around us to give thanks and to praise God for his loving care. In that very moment and at that specific spot of a rather large busy market, an altar of thanksgiving and praise was elevated in honour of the Lord. It was high in emotional tempo and, expressed in various different languages as to make the gift of tongues real. Momentarily, the sun too appeared to have lost its sting, and power to oppress. God's grace had permeated to reach us all, especially 'Mother and Child' in a small but substantial way. And this is how theology is done by us all daily.

Parish Organisations and Activities

Preparing for First Holy Communion at St. Laurence School

Claire Southgate

My daughter goes to St. Laurence School, and in Year 3 they prepare to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation and their First Holy Communion in class.



It all started with the Inscription masses in September, where all the children, both from the parish and school received their 'I belong' books, and signed up to prepare for First Holy Communion in the following June.

They followed this programme in their RE lessons at school, and learnt some new hymns especially for the First Communion masses. Throughout the year, there were opportunities for all the children and parents to get together and share in the preparations, and find out what the children had been learning. This included a lovely Christingle service and craft activity at Christmas. It was great to see the children getting to know each other better, and participating in the mass by singing, and doing the readings and bidding prayers.

In March, the children received the sacrament of Reconciliation in a special evening service. As part of the preparations, parents and children came to church to an information session led by Fr. Pat, to help us all understand further what reconciliation means in the Catholic faith, and how this is explained to the children. This is something that we adults often struggle with and I found it very useful, to help me talk about it with my daughter. Then all the children worked together to create a chalice made of pebbles in the church garden, which will hopefully be there as a reminder of them for many years to come!

The First Holy Communion masses held on Corpus Christi weekend were a really lovely occasion, again

with the singing, readings, bidding prayers and offertory led by the children. As families can choose which mass suits them best, there is a mix of parish and school children at all the masses, which helped them build friendships too. Finally the special “Going Forth” mass was held the following weekend, where all the children received a certificate and wooden cross, and then came together with their families to celebrate with a shared picnic and cake. It has been a special year and I am looking forward to doing it again with my younger daughter in a couple of years’ time.

Mrs Quail, Mrs Woods, Sue Price, Sr. Pat and the other people in the parish who helped throughout the year work so hard and do a wonderful job to prepare the children, and create memories that they will cherish for the rest of their lives – thank you very much.



Writing on the Moon

Roisin Scanlon, Barbara Quail, Cambridge News

Roisin Scanlon, who is in Year 6 at St Laurence Catholic Primary School, will see her tale travel about 240,000 miles on the Lunar One Space Mission to the natural satellite, where it will be kept in a time capsule. Teachers and literacy co-ordinators from the CB4 Schools, a group of schools in north Cambridge, came up with the idea to buy some time capsule space on the Moon expedition, which is being funded through a Kickstarter appeal.

St Laurence had considerable success in the Writing on the Moon competition last term. Four finalists from Eagle Class made it onto the judges’ shortlist. Roisin Scanlon, Milan Erdos, Joseph Milligan and Eliza Murphy were invited to a space event, featuring Cambridge Science Centre, at Mayfield Primary School last week to select the winner. In the end Roisin triumphed, the judges all agreeing that she

approached her story with the right balance of creativity and careful structuring. In addition to a generous gift voucher from Heffer’s Bookstore, Roisin has won a truly spectacular prize: her story will be sent to the moon on Lunar Mission One! The competition success also featured in Monday’s Cambridge Evening News.

Well done Roisin! Brace yourself for a brand new CB4 competition next year. Here is the winning story.

I Wish

Roisin Scanlon

Luna loved the sky, especially at night, the inky blue backdrop the mesmerising lights gleaming. She would just stand there and stare out of her bedroom window, and wonder and wish.

Thoughts of the night sky never left Luna’s head she became engrossed in the sky. Luna discovered people had been to the space. And that was when ambition and curiosity took over Luna’s head. Although it was then that Luna decided going to space wasn’t optional, she had to go. And the launch pad (for rockets that is) was the first place to go (luckily it was only 3 miles or so away).

Luna discovered the time of the soonest rocket launch (TOMORROW!). Luna was going to go on a lunar adventure, in the morning.

Luna sat up in bed wiping the sleep away from her eyes, she stood up and walked across the raw cold tiles as a cold shiver ran down her spine. But nothing could stop her, (Luna’s parents thought she was going to the science centre) but little did they know their daughter could soon be in space.

The rocket was launching in minutes and Luna was aboard. Suddenly a big gust of wind flew in and the door opened. Two large blue eyes met Luna’s, and that was when Luna’s lunar adventure ended. She was escorted out of the rocket, but she had forgotten something. Her story ...

3, 2, 1... Blast off. The rocket shot up into the air faster than a bullet, and Luna was not aboard. The astronauts were high in the sky when out of the corner of the astronaut’s eye he saw a discoloured sheet of folded lined paper. He reached down and picked it up; they both became instantly consumed with the story – and then the rocket went out of control. The astronauts went hurtling to the back of the rocket. As the speed doubled a large grey blur approached and BOOM! The rocket crashed, exploding into thousands of pieces, the radio crashed and they were never heard from again.

That night Luna peered through the telescope at the beautiful glowing moon and on it was her story.

Well Done “Owls”, Year 5 Class at St. Laurence School

Four children in Owl class were runners up in the nationwide Rosary project 2015, organised by the Association of Catholic Women. Each child won a rosary and holy picture blessed by the Pope Francis and a book.

The children had to choose three of the joyful mysteries of the rosary. They wrote the stories of their selected mysteries and explained the importance of each story. They also had to illustrate their work.

Diocesan Medal for former Head Teacher

Janet Scally, Chair of Governors

During St Laurence Mass on 21st June, one of the very first Diocesan Medals was awarded to the past Head Teacher, Mrs. Jan Southgate of St. Laurence Catholic Primary School, Cambridge. It was presented by our Parish Priest, Fr. Pat Cleary, to mark her great achievements for the school and also in recognition of her many good deeds for the Diocese, Parish, Parents and especially the Children of St. Laurence. The very attractive silver medal on a blue and yellow ribbon was bestowed with an accompanying Certificate, during Mass.



The school was even fuller than usual for our regular 9.30 Parish Mass as friends, parishioners, pupils and staff attended to celebrate with Jan. Afterwards the congregation enjoyed a special cake, coffee and biscuits while they waited to congratulate and greet Jan.

Fr.Ziad Hilal SJ visits our parish

Arn Dekker



In June we had the pleasure of welcoming Fr. Ziad to St.Laurence's. Fr. Ziad is a Jesuit priest from Syria, a country suffering with a civil war that has been going on for years. There are no signs that the war will end soon.

He is stationed in Homs, a city that was taken by rebel troops fighting the army of President Assad's regime in 2011. Homs was besieged for 3 years by Assad's troops with regular bombing and shelling and crimes against humanity. When the rebels withdrew in 2014 half of Homs was in ruins. Many people from other areas of the country are still fleeing the fighting there to come to the city and Fr. Ziad now works in Homs with the Jesuit Refugee Service to try and give shelter to the refugees.

Some of his colleagues have been abducted. No-one knows if they were taken by the rebels or by the government supporters. Day by day, while he was in Britain, Fr. Ziad was phoning friends in Homs trying to get the latest news on the abduction, but there was none.

On his visit to Britain it has been his mission to try and explain to his audience that it is necessary to look actively for a solution to the war in Syria. At the moment, he feels, this is not the case. Whereas negotiated settlements have always been the source of the end of conflict in the past, Fr. Ziad pointed out that there are no delegations heading for Geneva to discuss the end to the civil war in his country.

He was at pains to stress that the civil war should not be seen as a fight between two sides, there are many sides in this conflict, Shia Muslims fighting Sunni Muslims, government troops opposing rebels, Islamic State extremists trying to establish a caliphate and so on, there is no end to it. In the past, relationships between various religions and groupings in the country had been good and even today, Christians in Syria are sometimes called upon to form a shield between Shia and Sunni Muslims, as they are trusted by both sides.

Unfortunately too many people currently have too much to gain from prolonging the fighting in Syria. The agony and hardship experienced by the people of the country are of no importance to them as yet.

Fr. Ziad's voice has been heard on radio interviews in Britain as well as at conferences and discussions with influential politicians all over Europe. He is not only looking for financial support for the Jesuit Refugee

Service, although this is always welcome, but in particular he wants the situation in Syria to be kept under the spotlight so that a serious attempt to stop the fighting can be made.

During his presentation at the AGM of Pax Christi in London, he told us that a friend in Homs had joked with him about a possible consequence of the war. His friend had said “Don’t expect you’ll be able to go out and stand in the High Street in Homs if the fighting should stop tomorrow, you would be run over by all the wheelchairs of the victims of the bombing.”

Fr. Ziad did not expect the fighting to stop tomorrow. He asked for our prayers for his country, for the more than 3 million refugees and for the work of the Jesuit Refugee Service.

Our personal prayer lives

Virginia Bird

Have you ever felt that your prayer life does not quite give you what you need? Does it enhance your relationship with God, or leave something lacking? If this is the case this just might be for you.

St Laurence's is hosting an ecumenical week of accompanied prayer starting in the afternoon of Sunday 1st November and finishing on Saturday morning, 8th November. We have invited neighbouring churches to join us in the experience and hope all will find it a joyful and precious experience.

What this means is that for a full week a team of prayer companions will be with us. They will offer us a week of individual time each day to talk privately about our prayer lives and receive advice and guidance on how to develop it. The members of this team are all trained and experienced in this work, some trained with the late Sr. Pia Buxton, remembered with affection and admiration by many of us.

Many of us find private prayer quite difficult and seeking assistance is something we often do not even contemplate. We have been led to believe that private prayer is just that, private, and any problems we experience simply show our inadequacies. We feel that we should instinctively know how to pray but many of us have had no help or teaching since we were children when prayer styles which suited us at our mother's knees no longer satisfy or lead us towards a personal relationship with Jesus. Many of us still feel God does not listen unless we have the formula right, and that just makes it harder.

But God does hear us and longs to enter into positive adult relationship with us. The team who will join us and give us personal time and support are trained in

this and well experienced and practised. They are not looking for our failures but to being with us and beside us to help us find our own route to, and experience of, God.

We hope lots of you will sign up for this fruitful experience. Booking forms will be available in September as we need to know how many people propose coming so we have the right number of companions, and to find the best available time, morning, afternoon or evening, to meet to suit your work/life commitments. The commitment will be to attend the initial meeting when the week will be explained and some practice in praying using scripture will be given and then the final meeting when we can review the week. During the weekdays we will be asked to pray for at least 20 minutes each day using material suggested to each of us by our individual companion and to meet with him or her once daily for 30 minutes to review our prayer experience. All these meetings will be at St. Laurence's. It will also be possible to stop and meet others involved over a cup of coffee and some cake if you feel like that. It should not feel like a rush but a welcome and a meeting with friends in Christ Jesus.

There has to be a small financial donation asked from each individual to help cover the travel costs etc. of the companions, but don't let that put you off if money is too tight.

To find out more ring Sr. Anna Hawkes CJ at Brookside, 01223 272905 or Virginia Bird, 01954 782685. You will get written directions before the start.

The 37th J&P Conference 2015 draws Cambridge parishioners.

Arn Dekker

The Things that make for Peace was the theme of the National Justice & Peace Conference held from Friday 17th to Sunday 19th July at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire. Speakers included Prof. Paul Rogers of the School of Social and International Studies, University of Bradford and Fr. Edu Gariguez, Executive Secretary of National Secretariat for Social Action in the Philippines. Pat Gaffney of Pax Christi chaired the conference, with theological reflections from Rev. Dr Martin Poulson SDB, lecturer in theology at Heythrop College.

Approximately 300 individuals turned up this year for the 3-day event, 11 of them from the Cambridge parishes of St. Philip Howard and St. Laurence's, drawn to take part maybe by the theme for the weekend or perhaps by the high quality of speakers but

certainly by the prospect of spending time with like-minded, mostly Christian, people. Children too are always well catered for and the three days are filled to the brim with lectures, activities and spiritual reflections. Meal times are ideal to hear from people from other parts of the country and there is time for relaxation too in the bar in the evenings.

We listened to an inspiring talk by Paul Rogers, A Century on the Edge. The century Paul spoke about started at the end of the 2nd World War and we are still right in the middle of it. Paul called for drastic action over the next 15 years to address climate change or face the consequences. Paul said that governments often adopt a military solution to try to control problems rather than dealing with underlying causes. He warned that there is something very wrong with a world economy where the mass of wealth is accruing to an ever smaller number of people. This division of wealth is being exacerbated by some of the effects of climate change. Paul believes that it is often big shocks that cause world governments to act. The London smog of 1952 killed 4000 people in 4 days and as a result brought the Clean Air Act forward by a decade. Today, although we don't notice it much, the question of power supply is being addressed by grid photovoltaic panels being erected across Sub-Saharan Africa. Paul believes that the next 15 years will be crucial in moving strongly to address the threat of climate change to peace and the living environment.

Fr. Edu Gariguez is a Catholic priest from Mindaro, in the Philippines. He told us of the 92 large scale mining applications for the island of Mindaro. The government of the Philippines sees mining as a way to develop the country. Natural resources are seen as something to be exploited rather than something for the sustainable life of all. Fr. Edu has been targeted by death squads for his activities campaigning against exploitative mining practices. "If we are pro-life, we must be pro-environment", said Father Edu, who called for "concerted collaborative action, working together in building the common home." Fr. Edu Gariguez was given the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2012 for his work.

Martin Dinnegan was 14 years old when he was stabbed to death on the streets of north London in 2007. His mother, Lorraine, told us how her parish church of St. Mellitus and local police had helped her through "this terrible time." She recalled sitting in the Old Bailey a year later watching the trial of Joseph Chin, 16, who said he had killed Martin because he "looked at him the wrong way". Ms. Dinnegan revealed how she needed to forgive the killer of her son or else, "I'd just be left with misery and depression. I needed to just remember the nice and good things about Martin."

Thanks to the Mizen family, who had lost their son Jimmy in similar circumstances in south London, the Citizens Safe Haven plan was developed. Shops, willing to help, put up stickers in their window showing they would provide a safe haven to those in need. St. Mellitus Church working with police has managed to set up safe havens in 45 shops. Lorraine Dinnegan was given the London Citizen "leader of the year" award in 2013.

Sr. Maire Hayes spoke of her work with faith groups in Luton. She told us of how the right wing English Defence League and Britain First had descended on the town, creating fear in the Muslim community. Despite these incursions Luton is a town where people of different faiths pull together. There is an annual peace walk and sporting events when different faiths come together. After an incident in the town, when a rabbi was harassed, members of the Muslim community walked with him to the synagogue for 18 months. "We strive to build community cohesion, working to empower Luton's faith and cultural communities" she said.

Social Justice and Peace issues were on everyone's mind this year as well as in previous years but the recent Laudato si' from Pope Francis had strengthened everyone's determination to keep on working for a more just world.

Summary of Parish Forum – 16 July 2015

15 were present.

Newsletter/Bulletin. Richard Birkett has asked for tenders for a new photocopier from three providers. It would be more expensive to run than the present one but could do colour printing, allow a larger Newsletter, but smaller if wanted, and the Pilgrim quarterly with print quality at least as good as now.

Database. Richard Birkett and Dick Wilson met to discuss proposed database of addresses, etc. A parish-wide survey, probably in September, can ensure up to date information. Many people are cautious about giving their information in case it is misused. Exactly how the data will be used must be completely clear from the outset, as must tangible benefits for individuals. Example: for Fr. Pat to be able to email the whole parish if something important and urgent came up. Training could be well-targeted. No one would be on the database without their clear consent. Material would not be given to third parties and individuals in the Parish would not automatically have access. The survey in the autumn needs to be clear and inviting.

Chairs. These have been ordered. It is suggested that Emmaus might like the old ones.

The Live Simply award. We need to look at its practical implications. It is apparent that there is a raising of consciousness and people are noted to be talking about living simply in various forums. An outdoor activity, a walk or cycling group perhaps would be a nice addition.

The Ordinary Assembly of the Bishops' Synod, on the Family, will be held in Rome in October. Our parish's contribution, a questionnaire completed by 120 members of the parish in April, and by two small groups, was reported in the June Pilgrim. The summary and graphs were sent to Bishop Alan and to Cardinal Nichols and Bishop Peter Doyle of Northampton, who represent England and Wales, and to the England and Wales Bishops' Conference, and have been acknowledged and welcomed. Fr. Bob reminded us that this autumn's meeting is the second stage and that the working document is available online (key *Synod 2015 Instrumentum laboris* into your search engine). He commented that while some representatives may hope this is the end, Pope Francis "pulls no punches". If this is kept alive teaching will evolve and develop as the Church does change over time.

Liturgy. The 9.30 Sunday Mass will be held in Church over August.

Training for Speakers. Fr. Bob spoke of the need for training for readers etc. It is hoped that some people from the school may become Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist (Eucharistic Ministers). Fr. Pat said that he wanted people who serve, read or administer the Eucharist to more closely represent the congregation in age, gender and ethnic mix. A training session is planned.

Sound Quality. Microphones are proposed at the 9.30 Mass for readers and on the altar. Martin Avery is looking into this; there may need to be a master box. With regard to the present poor quality of sound in Church Martin Avery has said that as the mics are directional they should pick up voices provided the microphone is facing the reader.

The Bishop. Bishop Alan has been to the parish several times, to the Ablaze Mass, to Confirmation and to Fr Paul Maddison's father's funeral.

Finance. Deacon John Steel is doing the finances for the parish. He has offered to produce a 6 month interim report.

Social Life. An SVP lunch for older parishioners has been held. A CAFOD social event will include an afternoon party for St Laurence's day on 9th August.

Laudato si'. An overview of the encyclical has been produced by Cafod for local use; a study group will begin in October, a study guide will appear and there are two copies in the library.

Catechesis. Christine Brierley is running the confirmation course. This is now for young people in the school year when they reach 13. Sue Price and Barbara Quail still do the first communion programme. Many thanks! Parents say that the children really enjoy the first communion programme.

Baptism preparation continues with Helen Allen and Rosina Abudulai leading this with Fr. Pat. Parents and godparents are invited. Though this is not a criterion for baptism many come along and enjoy it. Suggestion: an annual special mass and party be held on the Sunday of the Baptism of the Lord for all those who have had children baptised with that church year.

Marriage preparation has continued for 25 couples. Most are from a wide range of countries and go home for the actual wedding. Marriage Care provides a day in Newmarket.

For those who have been bereaved a letter is sent each November asking if the family would like the deceased person to be prayed for.

Accompanied Prayer. Starting 1st November there will be a week of accompanied prayer. Each day, for 30 minutes, a trained prayer companion will meet those taking part who will listen and suggest ways of developing their prayer over the next 24 hours. We also are offering this to neighbouring churches and the Revd Nick Moir, the vicar of St. Andrew's Chesterton, is very keen for his parish to be involved. OLEM did this in March 2015 and people heard what a good experience it was and are keen to join us. (See Pilgrim, p 21). Further details will be given in the autumn.

Buildings. The mosaic in the garden is in place under the big tree.

The balcony rail is proving to be a very difficult and potentially very expensive problem as any change involves virtually rebuilding the whole balcony, which was not felt to be possible. Fr Pat suggested that TV screens might be a solution and this could be looked at in conjunction with CCTV if it is planned to keep the church building open for prayer.

The building of a storage cupboard under the stairs in the Parish Room is going ahead and the broken window in the church replaced. Fire assessment was done and there will be a lit exit sign over the outside door to the passage with the kitchen.

It was noted that the heaters had been on during the hot period and thermostats did not seem to have been working. Welcomers need to open and close windows before and after Mass.

An offer to lightly touch up the face and hands of the statue of St Laurence has been declined.

The Diocesan Finance Officer has asked if we wish to continue letting the small piece of garden near the shed or whether we would prefer to sell it to the people who currently rent it. It was felt that it would not be wise to sell this small piece of land.

The difficult porch door has been seen by the installers but is still a serious problem, it may have to be replaced. A glass door will be safer and more welcoming. Opening pads can be fitted to swing doors. More detail at the next Forum.

Parking. Parents from Milton Road School park cars at drop off and pick up time. People no longer park there all day, after notices were left on cars sometimes blocking church users. The local nursery asked if a few of their staff could park here regularly, and there will be a trial period. The cycle track continues to be a worry.

School. Mary Jane O'Sullivan is to be the new chair of school governors from September.

New Evangelization. Virginia Bird and Rosina Abudulai went to a meeting in Norwich which produced a lot of excellent ideas for activities churches can carry out in response to Pope Francis' call for a new evangelization. There is to be a Home Mission Sunday, 20th September when we will receive prayer cards and are asked to pray using this prayer: We are asked to use it every Sunday in the bidding prayers until Christmas and it is suggested that the congregation join with it each time.

Posada is a tradition from Central America. Each parish will be receiving a statue of Mary and Joseph on their way to Bethlehem. A plan is made so that the statue passes from one household to another daily over Advent and each household is asked to invite friends and neighbours in to see the statue, to pray together very simply and to share simple hospitality, coffee and biscuits, tea and cake etc.

We are asked to become more open in our following of Jesus and to use His Name openly in our conversations.

Next Forum: Thursday 22nd October. Main topic, New Evangelization.

St. Laurence – Feast Day tea party

Nora Darby

On Sunday 9th August we celebrated the feast day of our patron saint St. Laurence with a Bring and Share Tea Party organised by the parish CAFOD group. We were so lucky it was a warm, sunny afternoon so we were able to sit in the garden at tables covered with Jenny Martin's colourful African cloths.



There was an amazing array of food, sweet and savoury which rapidly disappeared. It was helped on by quite a number of hungry children enjoying the food as they played in the garden!



Mary Watkins and Teresa Campbell had set up a very interesting exhibition on panels which portrayed the key themes of Pope Francis's new encyclical **Laudato Si** – on Care for our Common Home. This was appreciated and commented on by the partygoers.



It was a very happy, relaxed afternoon; we were blessed, a good way to celebrate the Feast of St. Laurence!

Reviews

Reading novels creatively

Anne Hales-Tooke

For many being intensely interested in the human condition would seem to be a hallmark of their humanity, Christianity, Catholicism. Without denying the very pleasurable aspects of reading, say, novels and memoirs, there can also be an educative aspect to the activity. Some discipline can make this reading both more enjoyable and profitable.

Weekly I read the *Saturday Guardian* Review Section and make a note of books I might enjoy. For a few weeks I watch out for other reviews of the same books and look at them in Blackwell's Bookshop or Waterstones. Discount offers in supermarkets are helpful. I do not use Kindle.

Once I have got the book I keep in it the reviews that led me to the choice, also articles the author may have written themselves about their book. A recent example is '**The Green Road**' by **Anne Enright** (ISBN-13: 978-0099539797). I much enjoyed her earlier novel 'The Gathering' which won the Man Booker in 2007, was Irish Novel of the year and won the Irish Fiction Award. Now a book set on the West coast of Ireland in the Burren was very alluring.

I am attracted to books by Irish writers. I have a number by Jennifer Johnston, William Trevor, and Colm Tobin. I also admire what has become known as Nature Writing, particularly books that are about places I know and love. I had a week in the Burren at Lisdoonvarna with a group looking for spring flowers. In seven days we found and identified 800 species many growing in the crevices of the granite rock, known as grikes. Because of its very temperate climate the Burren supports flowers from the Mediterranean and Alpine regions. As we trundled along in an old minibus we saw a fox asleep on a sawn-off tree trunk surrounded by a sea of blue Gentian, Bloody Cranesbill, and gleaming white Mountain Avens. A feature of Nature Writing is to dwell on the small details of a rural scene. It is a way of looking akin to that used in the practice of Meditation and Mindfulness.

A first reading of **The Green Road** left me feeling disappointed. I was looking for more about the landscape. In a very long article about the book, published in the *Saturday Guardian* on 9 May 2015, Anne Enright wrote, 'Over the years I had avoided what I call "the landscape solution" in Irish prose, whereby the writer puts the word "Atlantic" or "bog" into the story and some essential yearning in her character is fixed.'

She goes on to say, 'But there I was myself, getting fixed on the green road, and it seemed to me that this was something I should allow myself to write about now.'

Anne says her father was very much his own person. She does not mention her mother. She was raised near the Green Road.

For me there is an ambiguity at the heart of the book which is about the struggle to tell a story that is not subsumed into the landscape. A simplistic outline of the story is that it is about a powerful, maddening yet beloved mother, Rosaleen, in her seventies, widowed and complaining, and her four grown children: good-hearted Constance and actress manqué; alcoholic Hannah living near her in County Clare; a son, Emmett, with a female partner in third world Africa; and Dan, the eldest son, once heading for the priesthood but now living with an older man in Canada. Their stories are each told in a different chapter. Rosaleen decides to sell the now dilapidated family home and divide the proceeds among them. She summons them home for Christmas to break this news.

A closer second reading led me to realise that the influence of the physical surrounding of the Green Road is not altogether irrelevant. The book is perhaps about 'mothering'; the enigmatic nature of 'good' and 'bad' mothers. Had I been misled or is the author uncertain herself as to the final shape and direction of the story? On reading this novel you may find your own resolution to these questions, and others.

The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic (Audiobook)

Matthew Kelly

ISBN-13: 978-1937509668 (paperback). Also available on Kindle and iBooks.

Recommendation by Karen Rodgers

I would like to recommend Matthew Kelly's books and especially his audio CDs. This book in particular would make a wonderful basis for a Parish discussion and prayer group in this year of Evangelization.

What four things did Mother Teresa, Francis of Assisi, John Paul II, Therese of Lisieux and Ignatius of Loyola all have in common? They all practised the four signs.

http://www.amazon.co.uk/Four-Signs-Dynamic-Catholic-Catholics/dp/1937509397/ref=tmm_abk_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

[Ed: Also see Virginia Bird's article on p.5 about New Evangelization. She also mentions Matthew Kelly]

More books added to St Laurence's Parish Library

Virginia Bird

Forming Intentional Disciples, the Path to Knowing and Following Jesus - Sherry A. Weddell.

(2 copies in the upstairs room library waiting to be borrowed)

“Could you briefly describe to me your lived relationship with God at this point in your life?”

Forming Intentional Disciples starts by asking this challenging question. How many of us are actually able to describe how our relationship with Jesus is a living vibrant one? This book is an inspirational attempt at creating a new sort of parish with new lay-members whose lives are inspired and driven by their living relationship with Jesus. It seems we have been living in a dream-world when we said that a good Catholic childhood would ultimately bring people back to the faith, statistics do not bear this out. But do not despair, there is a way forward if we are sufficiently motivated.

Laudato si' Encyclical Letter, by Pope Francis. (2 copies in the library waiting to be borrowed)

This encyclical, given in May, is Pope Francis' analysis of how human beings have misused the planet which is our shared home. He writes of how scientists have identified the damage we have done and how that impinges on humanity and wildlife alike. He points out that the poor are the most hurt by the serious changes that are taking place while at the same time being those who have done least to contribute to it. He looks at our ideas of economics and points out that continual economic growth just cannot happen; it is a myth, a fantasy. He asks us to look at ourselves and make changes to our lifestyles so that our beautiful and fragile planet can continue to be home to humanity and wildlife in harmony. We are asked to be stewards of the planet not exploiters. Let us strive to make the changes needed to restore equilibrium.

Other books new to the library include:

The Just Soul, a letter written by Blessed Mary Ward, brought into the 21st century by two modern Sisters of Jesus.

Let There Be Light: praying with Genesis, by Canon Angela Tilby erstwhile vicar of St. Bene't's. “We are all miniature universes in so far as we are creatures who insist on making meanings. So, whatever else it is about, the Genesis text is about the creation of us.”

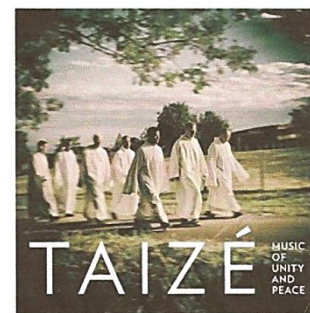
Living in Praise, worshipping and knowing God, by David F. Ford and Daniel W. Hardy "helps us see how worship is an alternative to the stoicism that grips the lives of Christians and non-Christians alike". David Ford is Regius Professor of Divinity here in Cambridge.

Wrestling for Blessing, by Marilyn McCord Adams “.... for people who find God's goodness problematic. speak to those who have tasted and seen the presence of God, yet who struggle with many of the teachings of the Church, who have been abandoned, abused or condemned by Christian parents, teachers or priests.”

The Gospel of Rutka, war, peace and the Good Samaritan story in Iraq, by Greg Barrett.

Redeeming the Past, my journey from freedom fighter to healer, by Fr. Michael Lapsley, SSM an Anglican priest active in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples, by Sherry A. Weddell “It is not the same thing to have known Jesus as not to have known him, not the same thing to walk with him as to walk blindly, not the same thing to hear his word as not to know it We know well that with Jesus life becomes richer.” Pope Francis' the Joy of the Gospel.



The Taizé Community is an order based in Burgundy, France, composed of more than 100 Protestant and Catholic monks. Founded 75 years ago, it attracts more than 100,000 young pilgrims from around the world each year who come for prayer, study, communal work – and the famous music.

Sung prayers play a central role in the life of the Taizé community. This recording is an uplifting collection of the most beautiful chants and songs of the community, performed by the brothers along with a hand-picked choir of young visitors who sing and play instruments.

Gently calming and relaxing it can be downloaded from iTunes and bought from Amazon.

Tailpiece

Graveyard humour. Some tombstones and epitaphs are either a revenge on the deceased or show nothing more than the writer's crude wit:

In a Ribbesford, England , cemetery:

Anna Wallace

The children of Israel wanted bread,
And the Lord sent them manna.
Clark Wallace wanted a wife,
And the Devil sent him Anna.

In a Ruidoso, New Mexico, cemetery:

Here lies Johnny Yeast.
Pardon him for not rising.

Some can be effusive in their praise, especially where virtue and prosperity went hand in hand:

In St Mary's Nottingham, there are fine examples.

Near this place lieth the Body of Thomas Smith Esq
He was a Man of Exact Integrity & Skill in his
Extensive Business by which He acquired a
handsome Fortune and the reputation of universal
Humanity and Benevolence. The Charity entrusted
with Him by others received an Increase From His
Prudence & Generosity

And here praise is combined with innocent complacency:

Near this Place Lies interr'd the Body of Thomas
Berdmore Esq who Acquired a Liberal and Ample
Fortune by the Profession of *Dentist*

Rabbi Blue tells a story about a man and his wife who were having a furious argument that spilled out into the street. A circle of neighbours heard the shouting and gathered round and somebody thought to send for the rabbi. When he arrived the man stopped berating his wife and turned to the rabbi and poured out a litany of recriminations and complaints. "You're right," said the rabbi as soon as the man paused for breath. Then it was the turn of his wife who took up the tale and delivered herself of a diatribe against her husband. "You're right," said the rabbi at length. "You fool!" shouted a bystander rudely, "They can't both be right!" "And you're right too," said the rabbi.

Who needs canonisation?

In the Oxford Book on Oxford Jan Morris quotes what was written as an epitaph for an 18th century don and

famous gourmet, Thomas Sergeant of All Souls. She does not say whether it ever reached the chapel walls.

Here lyes Doctor Sergeant within these cloysters
Whom if the last trump wake not, then crye oysters

What did you say?

My hearing doesn't get any better. I was cutting the hedge we share with our neighbour, with a trimmer. She came out, and said, "Oh, thank you. I thought I heard a mole." I had a vision of a large beast, roaring and groaning as it crawled out of its mole hole into her garden. "A mole?" "No, a lawn mole." "A what?" "A lawn mower". Recognition. "Ah, yes."

One of our readers doesn't see any need for [Facebook](#). He thinks you can do it all directly:

For those of my generation who do not really comprehend why Facebook exists. Presently, I am trying to make friends outside of Facebook while applying the same principles.

Every day, I go down the street and tell passers-by what I have eaten, how I feel, what I have done the night before, what I will be doing and plan to do.

I freely spout my political and religious thoughts without regard to theirs. I give them pictures of my family, my friends, my dog, my holidays, my gardening and spending time on the bowling green. I also listen to their conversations and I tell them I love them.

And it works. I already have 3 persons following me: 2 police officers and a psychiatrist!

Cricket

Pauline A Gullick

We know the cricket season is here, it's pouring with rain!

The Ashes, what are "THE ASHES"? Many years ago England were playing Australia in a Test Match at the Oval. England were expected to win, but were soundly beaten by the Australians.

The next day in *The Times* obituary column was the following:

In affectionate memory of English Cricket which died at the Oval yesterday. The body will be cremated and "The Ashes" taken back to Australia.

Ever since then test matches between England and Australia have been termed "THE ASHES" The ashes do in fact exist in an urn at the Lord's Cricket Ground!

Editorial

The Pilgrim magazine

The Pilgrim came back into print in December 2013. Its principles, set out then, and added to since, are:

- A quarterly, open to all clergy and parishioners of St Laurence's.
- Outside contributions from time to time, asked for specifically by The Pilgrim team.
- To give publicity in particular to present and future activities in our own parish, in the Diocese; and also outside church matters, with a presentation note from the person who sends in the information.
- An opportunity for all to express views on plans, thinking and doctrine.
- To encourage responses to what we print and wider discussion, in the form of letters or articles.
- Book and media reviews, about the Diocese and the wider Church, written, compiled or commissioned for the Pilgrim.
- Catholic and general religious concerns, but a place to share life and work experiences, anecdotes and other ideas of interest to our parishioners
- A team to produce and distribute it and to share and exchange work between team members.

The Pilgrim production team:

Editors for this edition: Sarah Sykes and Nora Darby

Editor - Responsible for obtaining and commissioning material: Dick Wilson

Sub-editors - Responsible for arranging, trimming, augmenting each section:

Alex Dias	6.00pm Mass	What's New?
Ralf Huebner	11.00am Mass	Features and Opinions.
Nora Darby	6.00pm Mass	Personal Stories & Experiences.
Dick Wilson	9.30am Mass	Parish Organisations & Activities
Sarah Sykes	9.30am Mass	Young People's Views/ Reviews.
Nora Darby	6.00pm Mass	Letters and Comments.
Dick Wilson	9.30am Mass	Tailpiece.
Leonie Isaacson	9.30am Mass	Cover (Contents, etc.) Proof reader 2.
Caroline O'Donnell	9.30am Mass	Proof reader 1.
Sarah Sykes and Nora Darby		Layout. (preparation for printing)
Carol Williams	11.00 Mass	(Joining for next edition)

All members of the Pilgrim team can also be contacted at pilgrim@saintlaurence.org.uk Incoming emails go to: Sarah Sykes and Nora Darby and are forwarded to the team member or members responsible. Sarah and Nora will also send material on to section editors following the submission deadline.

We thank all who have contributed so far and continue to welcome submission of interesting and original material for all sections. We would like to receive more from the young people of the parish for the Young Persons News & Views section. Also, have your say – we want your letters with your Comments and Opinions on what you've read. To: pilgrim@saintlaurence.org.uk

The deadline for the next edition will be 30th October.