

# The Pilgrim

St Laurence's Parish Magazine, Advent Edition 2024



## Contents

### What's New?

200 Stars for Radio Maria	1
The New Lectionary	1
Welcome to Fr Simon Davies	2
Studying Canon Law in Ottawa	2-3

### Features and Opinions

Advent Thoughts	4
We Flesh	5
'Shining like the sun'	6-7
The 'tears' of St Laurence	8-9
Cardinal Points	9-10
Jesuits	11
Parish Census results	11

### Parish Organisations and Activities

Liturgy, Education & Faith Sharing update	12
First Holy Communion update	12
Supporting Seafarers	12
SVP update	13
PPC summary	14-15
CWL update	15
New Altar Servers	15
Farewell to Fr Simon B	16

### Personal Stories and Experiences

A Liturgical Music Conference	17
Two Precious Holiday Memories	17-18
Advent – Time our true Healer	18
Sri Lanka	18-19
A Tribute to Bob Goodyear	20
Memories	20

### Books

Point of Departure	21
A Fountain of Hope	21
	23

### Poetry Corner

A Psalm for November	22
I miss the rest of me	22
A Prayer from Hell	23
The smallest hand	23

### Editorial

24



## What's New?

### 200 Stars for Radio Maria

#### Sarah Sykes



Do you enjoy listening to Radio Maria? Would you like to support its work and help keep the station on air?

Radio Maria are building a solid base of financial support through their '200 Stars for Radio Maria' campaign. They are looking for 200 people, or groups of people, to give £1,000 per year. This will give the station a sure financial footing, covering the basic costs of broadcasting. DAB licences are expensive! And, with God's grace, provide a solid financial platform from which to expand their broadcasting reach.

Now, £1,000 is a lot of money for one person or family to find, but how about if we pool our resources and many of us put in a little?

Are there 20 people in our Parish who could spare £50 to make a total of £1,000 or 40 who could spare £25?

If you would like to become a part of St Laurence's Parish Star for Radio Maria, please get in touch with me at [sarah.sykes33@gmail.com](mailto:sarah.sykes33@gmail.com). Let's help Radio Maria share our Catholic Faith with our country!

---

### The New Lectionary 2024

#### Nora Darby

On the first Sunday of Advent, 1st December, we, like all Catholic churches in England and Wales, will have the new edition of The Lectionary using the Standard English Version – Catholic edition. The changes are intended to make the biblical translations more faithful to the original languages, biblical scholarship, and to provide a text for use in liturgical setting that is more proclaimable and, where appropriate, more inclusive.

This is the reason why!

*'The new Lectionary is a sign of the Bishops' desire to provide the Catholic faithful access to a reliable and contemporary version of Scripture through which to hear the Word of God proclaimed in the Mass, and by this to grow as a people of faith.'* <https://www.newlectionary.org/>

The Readers (including me) at St Laurence's have known about it for some time and now we have to prepare and be aware of the new Lessons and Psalms. Fr Simon let us know that:

*'The layout is more or less the same, but the font, texts size and some titular terminology is different, so it can be a bit disorienting looking at them for the first time. I personally think that it is a good layout, but it is different, so best to inspect it properly beforehand.'*

Of course the new version of the Lectionary will involve the whole Parish, not just the Readers, so it will be a time of adjustment for all.

## Welcome to Fr Simon Davies

We welcome Fr Simon Davies, who has been appointed on a temporary basis to look after our Parish, while we await the arrival of the new Parish Priest. He shares his thoughts about his time in Canada training as a Canon Lawyer for our Diocese.

## Studying Canon Law in Ottawa

### Fr Simon Davies

Shortly after I was ordained, Bishop Alan asked me to study Canon Law (the law of the Church). This is because every diocese needs a certain number of priests with a specific Canon Law qualification to fill certain required pastoral positions. For example, Fr Simon Blakesley is our Diocese's 'Judicial Vicar', or the head judge of the Diocesan Tribunal. This job needs a certain qualification called a *licence*, and that job must be filled by a priest, for example. Bishop Alan was planning ahead for the good of our Diocese.

After I had completed three years as Parochial Vicar (A parochial vicar is a priest assigned to a parish in addition to, and in collaboration with, the parish priest or rector (Wikipedia)) in our cathedral in Norwich, I went to St Paul University (SPU) in Ottawa, Canada, to study Canon Law, so that I could get a Canon Law licence (JCL). There are only three universities in the western world that can grant the JCL: the Catholic University of Leuven, in Belgium, the Catholic University of America, in Washington D.C., and SPU, in Ottawa. SPU worked out to be the best option for both my personal and academic needs and the Diocese's financial capability, which is why I spent two years across the Atlantic.

Both Fr Simon Blakesley and Fr Eugene Harkness had been to SPU as well (both a few years ago!), so I like the idea that I helped revive something of a tradition for our Diocese.

I did this full-time and in residence, because I find it difficult to devote myself to two totally different things at the same time: I can either work pastorally full-time, or work in academia full-time. I didn't live in a parish house while in Ottawa, but I was occasionally able to help out a few times in a parish when the priest was away, or hearing confessions at events in the city, and I also celebrated Mass regularly in a nursing home. My priestly ministry, however, was study.

It's a small university, and, especially since Covid, many bishops have tried to make priests study part-time and work in parishes full-time since more faculties are offering distance options, which is quite difficult for priests in parishes. It meant that many of the other students were online. In fact, starting with me, back in September 2022, there were just three of us in the physical classroom: an American priest, an American laywoman, and me. There were also a few doctoral students on campus. In our second year, more on campus students joined, so by the end there were about 30 of us, men and women, from all different countries: Canada, the USA, India, Australia, the DRC, Zambia,



the Philippines, Nigeria, Samoa, Korea, and South Africa. Online, there were also about 150 participating students.

I was very fortunate to study under some of the world's leading experts in Canon Law, including experts in penal law, marriage law, Church property law, and administrative law. The focus of SPU is very pastoral and accessible: Canon Law is studied in a way that it is used practically 'in the field', in the diocese and in the parish, not just as an abstract. I wrote my dissertation on the legal responsibilities a diocesan bishop has towards diocesan priests for their care and wellbeing, and how authority imbalances in a diocese and in the Church generally can be a motivating cause of priests leaving the priesthood. I was invited to pursue the doctorate, which may be a possibility in the future for me, if there is time and support for that.

Synodality is a hot topic in Canon Law right now, and there was a lot of focus on it, partly because it has significant effects in the practice of Canon Law. Not in terms of the law turning upside down, but rather that the principle of Synodality means authority figures regulated by Canon Law will eventually have to be more accountable to the whole Christian Faithful (essentially mandatory consultation in decision-making processes in the Church, and real top-down



communication and bottom-up accountability). In the spiritual life, Synodality is meant to convert hearts from directing others to walking alongside others and thereby learning more about human nature. I am glad to see (unsurprisingly) that St Laurence's is taking this seriously.

I didn't really want to study Canon Law; I responded positively to the Bishop's invitation. But it has opened my eyes and heart in many ways, and I am grateful for my time in Canada, both for study, and because it was a nice place to be for a few years, making good friends there. I enjoyed my time in Ottawa, a bilingual city and Canada's capital. It has bearskin-hatted soldiers at the royal residence like in London, as well as real bears in the parks, as well as moose and wild turkeys. It's also close to the beautiful cities of Montréal and Québec City, both of which I liked to visit occasionally while not working.

Canon Law has a bad reputation, perhaps, for being the most rigorous and awkward end of the Church's life. But really the Church's laws are a rich fruit of Divine revelation, and our present code of law is very much a product of the Second Vatican Council, in both letter and spirit. It's a pastoral tool applying our Faith to real life situations, even things we think are obscure. For example, there are laws concerning ordinary parish situations like 'the last priest made a verbal agreement about something, but now he's gone, what do we do?', or 'I am truly harmed by this decision about a church building closure; what can I do about it?', or 'we got married in a registry office 50 years ago, and I know that we should've married in the Church; I want to make it right by the Church, but my husband isn't interested; what do I do?'



I'd certainly say that the Church's law is an untapped resource: we have obligations, and we also have rights. I think a lot of people would be positively surprised at some of the Church's laws. There is even a part of the code which is like a 'bill of rights' for the whole Christian Faithful. Indeed, one of my favourite canons

in that section, and I am wont to remind people of it, is canon 212, paragraphs 2 and 3: 'Christ's faithful are at liberty to make known their needs, especially their spiritual needs, and their wishes to the Pastors of the Church... They have the right, indeed at times the duty, in keeping with their knowledge, competence and position, to manifest to the sacred Pastors their views on matters which concern the good of the Church'. I'd even go as far as saying that the code of Canon Law might even be *interesting* material for parish talks.



Finally, I should also say that I was fortunate to study at SPU not only with people from different countries and cultures, but also with lay students, women and men, as well as other clerics. It's not something which belongs to a priestly caste. Anyone can study Canon Law, although like any Masters' level degree, it costs a bit. SPU does offer a shorter micro-programme on safeguarding, and shorter diplomas on marriage law and administrative law. It's not a very lucrative work for lay people in this country realistically, although in some other countries, qualified lay people are often employed in dioceses full-time, and there are even lay-led Canon Law legal practices which can be very beneficial for the life of the Church. I hope that as time goes on, more lay people will be able to work in the canonical field in this country. Maybe even someone from St Laurence's might be inspired one day!

## Features and Opinions

### Advent Thoughts

#### Fr Bob Eccles

At this time of year, in many Dominican priories and convents, the community requires that every brother or sister should stir a Christmas pudding in turn. We all have to have a go, a Christmas pudding needs lots of stirring, before you rest it overnight and set it on the stove to steam. Many good things go to make a Christmas pudding, fruit and raisins and spices and Navy rum. Traditionally, we put in old-fashioned sixpenny pieces for good luck (sometimes the prior bans sixpences out of concern for elderly teeth). Memories get stirred into the pudding too. I remember Brother Andrew who cooked for us at Holy Cross, the year he died we discovered one of his very last puddings just waiting for next Christmas on the larder shelf. A lot of Christmases past are called to mind as we stir the pudding. A little rum goes into the pudding, and a little rum goes into the brothers in the kitchen when we stir the pudding in our house.

It's such an important thing we do together, to collect the memories, to remember the past, the good times and the hard times. That's the way we know who we are. We have to celebrate the people we've met on the road. It's Advent, coming on Christmas. Christmas feasts need to be prepared as do puddings. This is the time to stir up some of the memories. The Church has a long memory, she remembers Isaiah announcing a new shoot, a new growth, a fresh branch on the tree of David, demanding honesty and integrity in the land. On the Holy Mountain, the Lord will wipe away the tears from every cheek, he will take away his people's shame everywhere on earth, for the Lord has said so: and Isaiah makes sure we remember it.

Celebrating Advent as we do is about passing on the memory. In Isaiah and John the Baptist, in Joseph and Mary, we remember the friends of God. We urge and appeal to you, says St Paul, to make more and more progress in the kind of life God wants. All these men and women of the Scriptures say to us, raise your eyes to the horizon of the love of God, look where he comes. I remember when I was little at home, stirring Mum's pudding, and dipping my little finger in it, and wondering how such a funny-tasting mixture could ever become good to eat. Now at home the brothers still stir the pudding. It reminds them of Christmases past, but it also says, we have a future together, there's still lots to look forward to. This is also true of the promises of God. We don't only take this on trust, we act upon it whenever we try to share our hope, whenever we let friendship and concern for justice come about.

Christmas-time invites me to open my doors to friend and stranger. So who is going to be heartily welcome in my house, because it's Christmas time?

Advent stirs up more than puddings. Here is a new season, purple instead of green, a new feel to life. A Christmas-time of puddings and wine can't hide the fact that an old year comes to an end, times change and we are invited to change with them. To be human is to change and to become holy is to change often. Our salvation is closer to us now than when we first came to believe, and you can't bind the future. Are we prepared for change? John the Baptist didn't leave people as he found them, he proposed a conversion. Sometimes it seems that we are stuck in a rut, we just keep on keeping on, familiar people, familiar faces. But is God doing anything in our lives, and if so, what? Suddenly we may find that movement and change have become possible. We couldn't face a truth about ourselves, now we can. We used to think we could never get rid of a stupid habit, now suddenly we no longer care about it. We were quite mean with somebody but by the grace of God we are stirred up to be generous towards him or her. We are no longer indifferent or resigned to secrets and lies in national life, for the Lord demands honesty and integrity in the land. Last Christmas we didn't give much thought to people living under a rain of bombs, this time it has begun to trouble us too.

In Advent, the Church is a lady in waiting. She just has to be watchful and attentive to the coming of Christ, in all the ways he comes, the unprepared and unofficial visits as well as the expected ones. He has promised to be here in the Eucharist. Where else is he? Perhaps no further away than the decisions, big and little, which we put on the back burner when we stirred the pudding. Let us pray the Lord to stir us up, that we may know the moment when he comes, in every way that he comes. Come, Lord Jesus, come! Amen to that, amen.



## We Flesh

### Michael Allan

The Word became flesh  
and lived among us.  
(John 1:14)

We humans are made in the image of God and formed from the dust of the earth. The word ‘human’ has links to ‘humus’ (soil) and ‘humility’. How to be lowly, of the dust? How to be in the divine image? Being both: planted on earth, reaching to heaven?

Cole Arthur Riley, writer, poet, and liturgist: in her book *This Here Flesh: Spirituality, Liberation, and the Stories that Make Us* is brimful of passionate, imaginative insight. It travels through dignity, wonder, fear, rage, lament, to joy, rest, and liberation. Her reflections on the mysterious interplay of human and divine life here on earth are rooted in the sometimes-painful stories of real human lives, real human flesh, its joys and sufferings, including her own.

She believes that pain and suffering can be (at least sometimes) balanced with beauty and delight. In her chapter on Wonder, she invites us, for our own health and sanity, to pay a loving attention to the brilliant commonplace of earth, found in the simplest things: a tree outside the window, a patch of sunlight on the living room wall. Beauty can give us peace and joy, and so also give us strength to face suffering, our own and others’. For the poet Mary Oliver, to pay close attention to nature is ‘to be idle and blessed’. Beauty, wonder, and delight are a gift and a blessing. They are not a luxury. They are surely part of what life is for.

The Book of Genesis speaks of the newly created earth’s loveliness: And the Lord God caused to sprout from the soil every tree lovely to look at’ (Gen. 2:9). The beauty of the trees is noted before the fact that they bear fruit. The Genesis story also describes the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the evening, delighting in it, at home in creation. This beauty is God’s intention. Creation is given to be enjoyed – and cherished.

She suggests, ‘If you want to know if you’ve forgotten how to marvel, try staring at something beautiful for five minutes and see where your mind goes.’

In her chapter on Dignity, contemplating our being made in the image or likeness of God, she writes:

‘How can anyone who is made to bear likeness to the maker of the cosmos be anything less than glory? This

is inherent dignity. I do find it peculiar that humans have come to wield this over the rest of creation as though we are somehow superior. I don’t believe this to be the case. Sometimes I wonder if we knelt down and put our ear to the ground, it would make whisper up to us, Yes, you were made in the image of God, but God made you of me. We’ve grown numb to the idea that we ourselves are made of the dust, mysteriously connected to the goodness of the creation that surrounds us.’

‘Perhaps the more superior we believe ourselves to be to creation, the less like God we become. But if we embrace shalom—the idea that everything is suspended in a delicate balance between the atoms that make me and the tree and the bird and the sky—if we embrace the beauty of all creation, we find our own beauty magnified. And what is shalom but dignity stretched out like a blanket over the cosmos?’

A danger is our forgetting who we are, and being neither fully of the earth nor of God, but somewhere (nowhere) in between. Becoming completely both is a long pilgrimage into a remaking in the image of Jesus Christ: for ‘He is the image of the invisible God and the first born of all creation’ (Col. 1:15).

The divine Word – through whom all things were made – became flesh and lived among us: laid in an animal’s manger, broken on a criminal’s cross. Acquainted with our joys and sorrows. At home with us.

In this here place, we flesh;  
flesh that weeps, laughs;  
flesh that dances on bare feet in grass.  
Love it. Love it hard.

(from *Beloved* by Toni Morrison)



Cole Arthur Riley

Grateful acknowledgement is made for permission to reprint the above extract from *This Here Flesh*, by Cole Arthur Riley, copyright © 2022. Used by permission of Hodder & Stoughton



## Anne Maddocks: ‘shining like the sun’

### Karen Rodgers

‘And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.’

Matthew 19:29

As I talked to a young man called Jack recently in town who wants to die because he has never felt anyone loved him or that he belonged, I reflected that there is no more genuinely pro-life work than that of those who build real communities, one relationship at a time. The routine age segregation and isolation which have become the norm over the past thirty years have resulted in the most heart-breaking isolation for so many people of all ages and prevented the kind of mentoring on which we all depend for genuine wellbeing, healthy development and the sharing of the Faith.

I was so grateful for the Parish party. As I walked home afterwards through the velvety night, I felt a really deep sense of happiness. Well, actually it was what C.S. Lewis was describing in his essay entitled ‘Hedonics’; joy. There is nothing quite like fellowship with fellow Christians. And the love which is at the heart of [Wendy Cope’s poem about the orange](#) is powerfully communicated to all comers through fellowship.

Building genuine community is at the heart of the Christian calling. Such genuine community building contrasts radically to the substitute marketed at us at every turn by secular media, which is motivated by personal interest and which is reliant on popularity. Christian community seamlessly welcomes all comers regardless of whether or not they fit into a particular social group. At the Parish party, I observed one parishioner who is not attached to any particular sub-group and who struggles with interactions, try repeatedly to join one circle after another of people who were talking, with no success. He was getting discouraged when an elderly parishioner saw him and took him under her wing. We have been blessed by a succession of wonderful, hardworking, kindly, insightful Parish Priests here at St Laurence’s. In Mexico, I saw that the Parish Priest was accorded great respect for his office and automatically considered to be part of every family; here in Southern Britain, despite many people being friendly on a Sunday our Priests are not automatically part of any. Over the years, I’ve seen one elderly parishioner in particular quietly providing our Priests with the kind of respect for their office and the support which was needed. Young mothers have never been more isolated nor ever more in need of genuine community and support from older women. I remember all too keenly how isolated I felt when the

children were small, especially after the folding of the children’s pre-school group, Mustard Seeds. I personally will never forget the elderly parishioner who always had a kindly word for me and never failed to take an interest in our girls both face-to-face when they attended Mass and Parish events as babies, and also to ask after them as they grew. The lady in question in each of these cases was Anne Maddocks. Anne never needed an official title to do what she did. She just quietly got on with being salt and light to all she met.

Anne lived the truth so well expressed by C.S. Lewis that ‘Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbour is the holiest object presented to your senses.’ and that each one of us has a duty to invest time and energy in practising the Spiritual as well as the Corporal Works of Mercy i.e. in building up the kind of local, face-to-face social networks which are the bedrock of a genuinely pro-life Catholic community and the only real sword and shield against this culture of death. Anne was a constant reminder to me of all that was best about the social expectations and the morality of the world into which I was born.

The norm for me as I was growing up, modelled by my father (who grew up in Dublin in the 1930s in a tenement block), was that you didn’t think twice about making sure everyone was included and happy with whatever (meagre) means you had. Then I went to Mexico and spent a year in a culture where similarly this was absolutely taken for granted. I am still in touch with Conchita whose mother Anita adopted the wandering 20-year-old English waif and stray as though I were her own daughter. I’ve never forgotten her. Or my Dad.

When I came back to the UK, I had a kind of reverse culture shock as I readjusted to being in a context in which people routinely checked others out for their socio-economic status before even making eye contact, where isolation, even ostracism, was the norm and that shock has stayed with me even after all of these years.

I really love Thomas Merton;

‘In Louisville, on the corner of 4th and Walnut, in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all these people, that they were mine and I was theirs ..., that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. ... It was like waking from a dream of separateness . . . There is no way of telling people that they are walking around, shining like the sun.’

Thomas Merton in *The Seven Storey Mountain*

People like Anne make others feel this reality which passes so many of us by. Here at St Laurence’s, we have a few very dedicated people doing great things but the point is that discipleship calls each one of us who



attends Mass here to give of our time and commitment, to give ourselves. No one person can feed five thousand; no one of us can do everything but we can each offer our own five loaves and two fish. Each one of us has talents and skills. Whatever age we are, whatever talents we have, we are each needed.

The question is not the worldly one of 'what can I get?' but 'what have I got to give?'. What can I contribute? It is a question I have been asking myself. I regret that I can't support the excellent work of those involved with the Coffee Hub because I can't do regular Saturday mornings for example, but I can coordinate a once a month ladies reading group, provide liaison for SPUC's Cambridge branch and provide support and liaison for the wonderful English group on Tuesdays which welcomes recent arrivals to the UK. I am the only parishioner involved; the group is run by non-Catholics; indeed, many are atheists.

As parishioners, we cannot provide each other with fellowship if we never meet. The best kind of fellowship, genuine fellowship, is fostered when Christians work together on common projects of evangelisation and catechesis without needing an official title. We cannot evangelise if our Church is unique in our area in failing to offer any weekday opportunities for local people for encounter, companionship or discussion. We cannot help build up the body of Christ unless we recognise that the best thing we have to offer is ourselves and our time. St Laurence's during the week, despite our wonderful location and beautiful premises, is currently rather like the Marie Celeste. This contrasts with many local non-conformist and Church of England communities, such as St Andrew the Great, The Round Church, St Augustine's, Christchurch, St Giles, Grace Church, Arbury Road Baptist Church, CB3, the Good Shepherd and Eden Baptist Church, which are all positive hives of activity; busy all week with a variety of groups open to all comers mostly run by parishioners who are volunteers. These are Christians who are sharing their talents, energy and time with fellow worshippers and others alike, not for gain or prestige but for fellowship and evangelisation. Several Chinese members of our ESOL group here at St Laurence's, who were brought up under an atheist regime, have come to faith by attending the Eden Baptist Church's International Women's group, which is open to all ladies of all faiths with or without children. Over the past six months, I have been having remarkable conversations with agnostics and atheists I have known for years, who have suddenly started asking big questions. This is what Montessori called a 'teachable moment' and as Catholics we are called to answer those questions. We are in a time of great harvest; here in Cambridge there are remarkably few Catholic labourers.

Discipleship can't happen without all-age regular activities at the Church. Effective catechesis can't happen. Evangelisation can't happen if you have nowhere to invite people to.

Maybe you can sing and might offer to lead a community choir. Maybe you play chess or board games and could commit to running a group for this where young people could meet older members of the Parish on a regular basis?

Maybe you like philosophy and could run a series of Catholic-led discussion groups on key questions people are asking now, advertised alongside the Buddhist and New Age philosophy meet-ups which have posters around Great St Mary's?

Maybe you could run a community orchestra?

Maybe you love crafts and could take on to run a regular session; open at all families, single people and older people alike?

Maybe you have a new idea for something to share?

What could you commit to organising as a parishioner here at St Laurence's to be salt and light to Arbury, to respond to the challenge of Matthew 19:29, especially on the arrival of our new Parish Priest and to honour Anne's memory?



Anne Maddocks

## The ‘tears’ of St Laurence

### Miriam Santos Freire

On 6th July 2024, I attended the ‘Michelangelo: The Last Decades’ exhibition at the British Museum. It became a pivotal moment for me, as it helped me to better understand *The Last Judgement* fresco at the Sistine Chapel, and to make a personal connection with Saint Laurence in my life.

#### Saint Laurence in the Last Judgement by Michelangelo.



Image by Frans Vandewalle Cappella Sistina, The Last Judgement Sistine Chapel, The Last Judgement (1935), fresco, Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564), Cappella Sistina, Giudizio Universale <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.0/> (St Laurence is just below the leg shrouded in blue)

‘The mighty composition, painted by Michelangelo between 1536 and 1541, is centred around the dominant figure of Christ, captured in the moment preceding that when the verdict of the Last Judgement is uttered ([Matthew 25: 31–46](#)). (...) Next to Christ is the Virgin, (...) the Saints and the Elect, arranged around Christ and the Virgin, also anxiously await the verdict. (...) St Peter with the two keys, *St Laurence with the gridiron*, St Bartholomew with his own skin...’

Source: <https://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collections/musei/cappella-sistina/giudizio-universale.html>

I was fortunate to see *The Last Judgement* in person during a visit to the Vatican in September 1990, while on a sort of interrail trip with one of my best friends. The experience was overwhelming – so much to see in such a short time (half a day), and so many details, too distant for me to fully grasp their significance. Over the years, I’ve revisited the fresco mostly through literature, appreciating the artwork in bits and pieces as life events have brought them to the forefront of my mind. At the time of my visit, I had no idea who Saint Laurence was. Is it just a coincidence, then, that Saint Laurence is the patron saint of my local Parish, both here and in Portugal?

**Who was Saint Laurence?** Saint Laurence was born Lorenzo, to a noble family in Aragon, Spain, in the early

3rd century. Under Pope Sixtus II, Laurence served as a deacon responsible for the Church’s charitable works in the diocese of Rome, particularly caring for the poor, orphans, and widows. In AD258, Emperor Valerian issued an edict to execute all bishops, priests, and deacons. The Emperor initially offered to spare Laurence’s life if he handed over the Church’s ‘treasures.’ In response, Laurence presented the sick, needy, and marginalised to the Emperor, declaring, “These are the treasures of the Church.” Emperor Valerian ordered Deacon Laurence to be bound by chains to an iron grille (a gridiron) and burned alive, in public. His steadfast faith and courage in the face of such agony made him an enduring figure of Christian martyrdom.

Saint Laurence first entered my life in the late 1990s as the patron saint of São Lourenço, my local parish in Azeitão, Portugal. My curiosity about the gridiron led me to investigate his life and legacy.

In the late 2010s, I relocated to Cambridge and felt drawn to St Laurence’s Parish here, as it had a very welcoming and homely atmosphere. The statue of Saint



Laurence initially seemed unusual, as its incomplete painting left the figure without flesh tones. However, a few years later, it gained its full splendour. Cambridge is also where I deepened my understanding of Saint Laurence and his feast day, 10th August.

In October 2023, at St Laurence’s, my husband Pedro and three other resilient Portuguese ‘veteran’ university students celebrated their graduation in a special ‘Blessing of the Ribbons’ ceremony, led by our beloved Fr Simon, who recently moved on to pastures new.

Around the time of Saint Laurence’s feast day, the night



sky is often illuminated by the Perseid meteor shower – a phenomenon attributed to the passing of a comet. In folk tradition, these meteors are known as ‘falling stars’, symbolising the tears shed by Saint Laurence during his martyrdom.

Image by ArnasGold. Perseids 2016, from [Wikimedia Commons](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.en) <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.en>

For me, Saint Laurence’s presence in my life is more than a coincidence. The gridiron is a reminder of the many challenges and tears I’ve faced on my journey, calling for patience, humility, and trust in God’s plan, even when the future seems uncertain. Through these trials, I have also grown closer to the Virgin Mary, my namesake, Miriam.

May the ‘falling stars’ of Saint Laurence not only represent tears but also the many blessings he bestows upon us – not just on 10th August, when they are visible under a clear sky, but always, as his light continues to shine on us all.

---

## Cardinal Points – Religion and Responsibilities

### Ronald Haynes

‘So you say you’re no longer close to God – who moved?’ This potentially provocative pastoral message was spotted some years ago, on a car’s bumper sticker. It gently but dramatically changes the perspective of the dynamic connection between God and humans. Insightfully, it turns on its head the idea that we have to find God, or perhaps even that God is somehow elusive, hiding from us. If we have to do all the searching then it would seem that God is either testing us, perhaps hoping to be ‘found’, or worse some might think God is indifferent about being found by us. In either case, it seems rather remote and unlike a Creator God, especially a God who is identified with love, as the God of the kind of selfless love associated with Jesus.

The late John Hick (1922–2012), a well-known British theologian/philosopher of religion, had a handy and helpful way of distinguishing major world religions from minor and perhaps temporary ones – major ones are those that have engendered at least one civilization. This is a helpful way of finding differences and similarities among those religions which have had a powerful and inaugurating impact in the world, and continue providing a lasting influence on humanity. This naturally includes Judaism, Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam.

If we turn around Hick’s formula, and consider whether any civilization was not engendered by a religion, it seems a tricky (or impossible) task to find one. The very purpose of religion is to bring people together, in meaningful ways, and to foster understanding, wisdom and enlightenment. The word ‘religion’ has at least two root meanings (Latin), depending on traditions, but ultimately complementary of each other – roughly to ‘go through again’ or ‘consider carefully’ (relegere) and to ‘bind again’ or ‘place an obligation on’ (religare). These amount to key obligations to speak, hear, read and ponder the insights and wisdom of the faith tradition, and to bind together the faithful and make each responsible for the other as part of forming and building the whole community.

From this combined perspective, of the development of religion leading to the development of civilizations, and

the shared understandings and commitments forming a basis for stable communities, the natural expression of such values is in the emergence of enduring codes of conduct and laws. We have the long-lasting legacy and powerful impact of the Ten Commandments, as well as the Code of Hammurabi (and its inheritance in Islamic Sharia Law). Among the fundamental principles conveyed are directives about being faithful, honest, and trustworthy, as well as against lying, false charges, stealing, and inappropriate actions and relationships.

In the ancient codes, there is also an inspired core principle of proportionality, that a response to a wrong should not be a greater wrong. There have been times and societies where a response to a wrong (for example, perhaps the injury of a relative) is met with an excessive response (for example, killing the whole family of the injuring person). This idea of proportionality is summarised in the most famous paraphrase of the Hammurabi code: ‘and eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth’ – and it was introduced to set out a more proportional response to harm and injury, which was itself a practical, more fair, and civilizing principle.

Famously, Jesus quotes the same paraphrase and provides a new and even greater civilizing direction:

‘You have heard that it was said, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” But I say to you, do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.’

(Matthew 5: 38–42)

While the Commandments and Hammurabi codes are often remembered for what not to do (‘thou shalt not’), the passage above follows from the Beatitudes (Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:3–12), which are exemplary among inspired wisdom and codified guidance to provide positive recommendations – ‘Happy’ or ‘Blessed’ are you that are or do various good things. These ‘Blessed’ qualities and characteristics are associated with those who are holy, are close to God, and who are living their life as God intended. To help avoid a more isolated and individualistic interpretation of such spiritual direction and moral guidance, in the parable of the sheep and goats (Matthew 25: 31–46) Jesus makes it clear that our community – each and all of those around us – is vital to all our lives, now and into eternity.

So vital is this communal response, in fact, that people are welcomed into heaven (or not) based on whether they would reach out and minister to the needs of the people around them. In the power of parable, the story



turns to each and all of us, and we are prompted to review whether we reach out in some way to feed those who are hungry, to give drink to those who are thirsty, to truly welcome the stranger, to provide clothing to those needing clothes, and to visit and provide support for those who are sick or in prison. Like the rest of our lives, lived in this loving and communal way, our promised inheritance is to join the heavenly kingdom, often presented as the heavenly feast, or the larger community united as Jesus prayed for us, that we 'may all be one' (John 17:21).

Jesus' famous summary of the Law and Commandments is in the triadic core commands of love, of God, of neighbour and of self. Loving our neighbour is very broad indeed, and of course includes the famous charge to also love our enemies (Matthew 5: 43–48). The challenge of loving our neighbour is humorously presented in the song *If It Wasn't for You* from the musical *The Baker's Wife* (music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz, book by Joseph Stein), including where the village priest expresses exasperation with an argumentative villager by singing: 'For loving our neighbour wouldn't be hard, if only our neighbour wasn't you.'

The idea of the duty or obligation to each other was carefully considered by the French philosopher, mystic, and political activist Simone Weil (1909–43) in her *Draft for a Statement of Human Obligation*<sup>1</sup>, which provides clear reflections on some of the verses from St Matthew noted above, and in its Statement of Obligations includes these key points:

'A concrete conception of obligation towards human beings and a subdivision of it into a number of obligations is obtained by conceiving the earthly needs of the body and of the human soul. Each need entails a corresponding obligation.

The needs of a human being are sacred. Their satisfaction cannot be subordinated either to reasons of state, or to any consideration of money, nationality, race, or colour, or to the moral or other value attributed to the human being in question, or to any consideration whatsoever.

There is no legitimate limit to the satisfaction of the needs of a human being except as imposed by necessity and by the needs of other human beings. The limit is only legitimate if the needs of all human beings receive an equal degree of attention.'

In the famous poem *The Hound of Heaven* (1890)<sup>2</sup> by Francis Thompson (1859–1907) the author evocatively expresses the sense of God lovingly seeking us, and in panic and ignorance he/we are trying to run away from God, as indicated in these brief excerpts:

'I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;  
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;  
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways  
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears'

The poem ends with the author/us gladly accepting God's love, and full circle God revealing that in fact we too are seeking God, and that when we drive out love we drive out God:

'Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,  
I am He Whom thou seekest!  
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.'

Closing with insights<sup>3</sup> from Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–72), American Orthodox/Conservative rabbi, philosopher, and civil rights activist, he connects the call of religion and the call to responsibility, emphasising that: 'Religion begins with a consciousness that something is asked of us':

'The sense of wonder, awe, and mystery does not give us a knowledge of God. It only leads to a place where the question of God becomes an inescapable concern, to a situation in which we discover that we can neither place our anxiety in a safe deposit of opinions nor delegate to others the urgent task of answering ultimate questions.

Religion begins with a consciousness that something is asked of us. It is in that tense, eternal asking in which the soul is caught and in which man's answer is elicited.

The ultimate question, bursting forth in our souls, is too startling, too heavily laden with unutterable wonder to be an academic question, to be equally suspended between yes and no. We can no longer ask: Is there a God? In humility and contrition we realise the presumption of such asking. The more we meditate, the more clearly we realise that the question we ask is a question we are being asked; that man's question about God is God's question about man.

All of human history as described by the Bible may be summarized in one phrase: God is in search of man. Faith in God is a response to God's question.'

Footnotes:

1. The Question of God . Other Voices . Simone Weil | PBS – <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/questionofgod/voices/weil.html>

2. The Hound of Heaven by Francis Thompson 1890 – <http://www.houndofheaven.com/poem>

3. <https://images.shulcloud.com/1105/uploads/images/AbrahamJoshuaHeschelAProphetforourTime.pdf>



## Jesuits

### Dr Peter Neville

The Jesuit Order or the Society of Jesus has often been described as the crack troops of the Papacy.

Pledged to absolute obedience to the Holy See, and soon heavily involved (after the Order's foundation in 1540 by the former Spanish soldier Ignatius de Loyola) in missionary work in Latin America, its origins lay in the division of the newly explored world between Spain and Portugal by the notorious Borgia Pope Alexander VI in 1493. This meant that Portugal obtained Brazil, and Spain the rest of South America. This arbitrary act stored up much trouble for the future. The Kings of Spain and Portugal were denoted 'their most Catholic Majesties' when in reality, they were often far from virtuous.

The tensions between the two monarchies and the Jesuits over the treatment of the indigenous people in Paraguay and Brazil formed the subject matter of the distinguished 1986 film *The Mission* (notable for the fine performance of the Irish actor Ray McAnally, albeit as a fictitious Cardinal who was really a senior Jesuit).

The result was the suppression not just of the Jesuit missions or reductions, but also of the very Jesuit Order itself. Successive Popes Benedict XIV (1740–58) and Clement XIII (1758–69) who both admired the Jesuits, were bullied into this action by Portugal and Spain. The whole episode showed the vulnerability of the 18th century Papacy to the great Catholic powers of Spain, Portugal and France.

As far as the Jesuits were concerned, their greatest enemy proved to be the Marquis de Pombal, the Secretary of State and Prime Minister of Portugal, a man of overweening ambition and ruthlessness who envied the Order's influence at Court, and its economic power both in the colonies and in Portugal, as well as its dominant role in education. It was de Pombal, who in the 1750s, spread false stories about Jesuits encouraging Guaraní Indians to revolt in the part of Paraguay shared with the Spanish. Then he claimed that they were behind an attempt to assassinate King Joseph I, when in reality dissident nobles were responsible. The monarch foolishly believed these lies and ordered the expulsion of the Jesuits from his kingdom.

These domestic falsehoods impacted the colonies, in particular the indigenous Indians, who lived under Jesuit protection in Paraguay. Being placed in reductions gave the Indians a degree of protection against Brazilian slave traders and the smallest reductions were supervised by at least two Jesuit fathers. The Indians were able to subsist by selling

cowhides and a type of herbal tea. The reductions had some 140,000 Guaraní in Paraguay, Argentina and parts of Brazil. Unfortunately, a Spanish-Portuguese Treaty of Madrid agreement of 1750 opened the Guaraní to the more oppressive Portuguese system. This led to the serious revolt by the Guaraní reductions in the borderlands of Paraguay in 1756. It was crushed by colonial troops and this revolt is hinted at in the film *The Mission* (although there is no real evidence to show that Jesuits were involved in resistance to the colonial authorities as the film suggests). It is accurate though in its portrayal of the impressive Jesuit-inspired Guaraní musical tradition, movingly shown in the film.

The war against the Jesuits in Latin America was continued in 1767 when King Charles III of Spain expelled the Jesuits from his kingdom, and from the Spanish colonies in Latin America. 78 Jesuits were expelled, in what was an attempt to extend royal control. Subsequently, the Jesuits were expelled from France too, although the influence of the so-called Enlightenment can be detected here.

Ultimately, the Jesuits were to be restored in all these Catholic states, but the whole episode demonstrates the vulnerability of such a powerful order as the Jesuits, and indeed the Papacy, to the exercise of Catholic state power with its secular political agendas. It is too easily forgotten that successive Popes had territorial bases in Italy which made them vulnerable both to shifting Italian politics and constant incursions by powers such as France, Spain and Austria. The Jesuits were victims of this political and religious scenario. It is of course true that in the modern anti-colonial environment questions have been asked about the alignment between colonialism and all Christian missions, Catholic or otherwise. The Jesuit record in Latin America shows them to have been more independent than most. The ruins of their ill-fated reductions can still be seen in Paraguay.

### PARISH CENSUS

You might have noticed some of our Parish volunteers quietly counting people during Masses recently. This is the Parish census, which has to happen annually in every church in the diocese on the final two weekends of September and first two of October. This year we had an average attendance of 680 at the Saturday vigil and Sunday Masses. It's good to note that this is a return to similar numbers to those before the pandemic after some years of lower attendance.

## **Parish Organisations and Activities**

### **Liturgy, Education and Faith Sharing update**

#### **Roberta Canning**

After our Ministers' Afternoon, the group were full of ideas coming from suggestions from parishioners at the meeting. Several of them have been put on hold until our new Parish Priest has arrived and settled in and we can work with him.

We decided we could take forward our proposal to start a group for children who have made their First Holy Communion but are not yet preparing for Confirmation. This is to give them some continuing formation and activities and so to go on feeling part of our Parish. The provisional date for the first meeting is Saturday 16th November 2024

Members of the group are working with others to involve children and young people more fully in the liturgy, especially as we approach Youth Sunday on the Feast of Christ the King.

In Advent, we move to Year C and the Gospel of St Luke. We would like to form one or more groups to read the Gospel and pray and reflect together on this wonderful book. I know that every time I read Luke reflectively, I gain more from it. We would like to hear from anyone who would like to join a group. Would you like to meet in person at Church or on Zoom? Would you prefer to meet during the day or in the evening?

We hope to hold a Lenten Retreat Day for St Laurence's, date to be confirmed.

If you have questions or comments, please email me at [roberta.canning@btinternet.com](mailto:roberta.canning@btinternet.com)

---

### **First Holy Communion update**

#### **Paula Hawkins**

We have welcomed the children through the Inscription Mass and now we are just starting out on our journey with the children and their parents/grandparents. We have many returning parents and the siblings of children who have already made their First Holy Communion. This is lovely to see. Their older sibling can now be part of their journey too. Please pray for all the children and for the parents/grandparents helping the children through this wonderful journey.

## **Supporting Seafarers**

### **Mary Watkins**

Julian Wong, Chaplain for Felixstowe and Ipswich writes about his non-stop work supporting seafarers:

'Every single day I come across Ukrainian seafarers on vessels I visit at Ipswich and Felixstowe Ports. When the war first started in Ukraine, everyone was struck by what had happened and took a keen interest in the situation, in the country and in the sufferings of the people. These days, after such a lengthy period, with no end in sight, people have become numbed to the sufferings and the situation in Ukraine. As a Stella Maris chaplain, I always ask about their wellbeing and about their families. It now gets to a point where I am very conscious what to expect in their responses. How do I respond when I hear that their families are now in occupied parts of Ukraine or when they tell me that they only have intermittent mobile phone connection with their families?

Some are fine because their families are now safe, spread all over the world from Indonesia to Canada, Ireland or other Eastern European countries. They ask when they can ever go back home. Many still have their elderly parents in Ukraine as they have refused to leave.

Simple things that we take for granted mean so much to seafarers, like making sure that they are able to send money home to their families each month. Many a time, when I thought I was going to have a weekend off after a very busy week, I felt obliged to go back to the port to help seafarers send money home to their loved ones, realising that if I were to say 'no', their families may not have money for food or to pay the rent for their homes. They have very limited time in which to do this.

Each time on my visit, I ask when they would be going home. After 10 years of visiting seafarers and hearing that they spend an average of nine months away from home, I still find it very difficult and saddened when I hear that they won't be home till July next year!

This is the one point that I make no excuse for repeatedly telling people about the sacrifices of seafarers so that we can have the lifestyle that we are so accustomed to."

Please continue to pray for seafarers and if you would like to find out a variety of ways to help, please go to [www.stellamaris.org.uk](http://www.stellamaris.org.uk)

I am currently following the evening Mass from Medjugorje live on YouTube. Here is the link if you are interested. It starts at 6pm Medjugorje time which is 5pm here. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5CC3bpgxAc>

## Note from the St Vincent de Paul Society

### Ciaran Ward

Dear Parishioners,

We would like to take this opportunity to formally offer a special word of gratitude to Fr Simon Blakesley, who was a great advocate and support to the SVP in all his years as our Parish Priest – we wish him well and all of God’s graces for him and his new parish! We welcome our interim Parish Priest, Father Simon Davies, who has also been more than helpful to us already in his offering of support!

These summer and early autumn months have been busy once again! Our members have been involved taking the lead on execution of wills, joining parishioners at the regular Saturday morning Coffee Hub at 10am, Eucharistic ministry, supporting new beneficiaries with basic needs and helping older beneficiaries, supporting families to go out for the day during the summer holidays, care home visits, hospital accompanying and much more.

We also remember our dear parishioners / beneficiaries / friends whom we have lost (sometimes in unfortunate circumstances) and we pray for them but as we always say, we are glad to have met them and they have offered us so much more!

Once again, thank you for your support in all our endeavours, whether it is buying a raffle ticket, donating to us or helping us with some much need provisions. We are a generous Parish as Fr Simon Blakesley would have said.

### Past events

With thanks to Melanie De Souza, one of our Members, we had another successful trip to Walsingham for the SVP Pilgrimage of the Sick, on Sunday 7th July. We had a great time with a lot of our parishioners, and some beneficiaries too, and were even joined by the Reverend Bishop Alan Hopes, who prayed the Rosary with us.



See above a picture of some of us at Walsingham. Some of whom braved the rain by celebrating the Mass outside!

We would like to thank those who attended the Mass for the Anointing of the Sick and those who stayed with us afterwards for tea and refreshments!



We sold some wonderful SVP Christmas Cards on the weekend of the 26th/27th October and the 2nd/3rd November at the Coffee Hub and after Masses – these Christmas Cards were very popular! Thank you to all who bought some! Proceeds will go to both the national SVP office and our local conference.

### Upcoming Events

Our Giving Tree will be standing once more in the Narthex on the first weekend of Advent which is 30th November/1st December – this is always very well supported, and we look forward to another Advent season of giving!

### New members

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

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

- SVP President Ciaran – 07540 842 078  
[svp@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:svp@saintlaurence.org.uk)
- Any member of SVP that you know

God Bless  
The SVP Members



St Vincent  
de Paul Society  
England and Wales  
Turning Concern into Action

## **Summary of Parish Pastoral Council Meeting, 26th September [full minutes available on the Parish website]**

Present: Steve Warde (Chair), + 12 members, Sarah Sykes (Minutes)

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Fr Simon Davies who is currently looking after the Parish until a permanent Parish Priest can be appointed.

### **The latest on a change of Parish Priest and our Self Appraisal document**

The Bishop has invited the Adorno Fathers (CRM) a religious group from India. This Order is the same one that Fr Andrews (who stayed at our Parish briefly earlier this year) is a member of. This requires our new priest(s) to go through the visa application process, which usually takes about 2 months. The PPC was strongly supportive of the idea that there can be a handover period between Fr Simon and any priest(s) before he leaves the Parish. He said that English will be either their second or third language and highlighted that there will be a period of adjustment and learning as they come to grips with running a large parish in what, to them, is a foreign country.

Fr Simon was grateful to have a copy of our Self Appraisal document which he found very useful for giving an overview of the Parish. He noted that it would also be useful for it to include information about the church/presbytery keys, door codes, the opening and closing times of the church, information on how things work in the church and an idea of what the Parish Priest's typical day might look like.

Steve said that the Appraisal document is on the Parish website. We particularly need additional input from the Parish groups. A number of comments and suggestions were made on the document during the meeting.

Fr Simon suggested that a slight redraft or accompanying note to simplify or explain some of the English might be needed for the new priest(s). The document can be checked for best English, but the priests will need to check in with the PPC on anything which is not clear. Thanks were given to Steve and Edward for putting the Appraisal document together

### **Practical arrangements (Mass cover, home visits, locking/unlocking the church)**

Fr Simon will take a regular day off each week and requested that a rota for the opening and closing the church be put together. Guillaume volunteered to organise this. Fr Simon will continue to say Mass per the current Mass schedule but suggested that the Tuesday 8am Mass should be rescheduled. He confirmed that the Dominicans will continue to cover

some of the Masses, as they have been doing for several years.

Fr Simon is reviewing the list of sick people in the Parish and working closely with the SVP regarding those who need home visits. Fr Simon said that he would like the opportunity to visit everyone on the list who may not regularly see a priest. He will aim to visit everyone once every 4–6 weeks, with weekly visits being made by others in between. He plans to hand out the pyx during Mass to Eucharistic Ministers who take Communion out to those who cannot come to Mass.

### **Office and staffing including update on new Administrator**

Edward reported that the position for our new Parish Administrator had been advertised in various local churches as well as in the general community. Thanks were given to Debbie Banaszkiwicz who has been covering the office as a volunteer over the summer. She has agreed to stay on for a period to help Emanuela settle into the job. Office open hours have changed to Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10am–3pm.

### **Financial Planning**

Jim O'Sullivan reported on behalf of the Parish Finance Committee that with the formation of the PPC there is an opportunity to rebalance how the Parish's financial planning is done. A summary of his report can be found on the PPC webpage. Ideally, suggestions for projects and expenditure should now be fed to the PPC and then once agreed, passed onto the Finance committee, who would assess whether the cost can be afforded and then continue to monitor the expenditure.

The Diocesan Jubilee year is next year and we need to canvass ideas for celebrations and include an approximate cost for these activities.

Fr Simon Blakesley's end date should be added to his name on the Parish Priest plaque when the next permanent Parish Priest is appointed.

The Finance Committee has already authorised expenditure for the holes left in the external walls of the church by the changeover of the heating system, and the work will be scheduled shortly.

### **Buildings and Grounds**

The reroofing project, which includes new Velux windows in the Office, Library Room and Parish Room is starting mid-Oct. Scaffolding is due to be erected on 18th October. Two skips will be placed in the disabled bays opposite the church entrance. The work will probably last a couple of weeks.

Fr Simon reported that the Presbytery needs a substantial amount of work for it to be a more



comfortable place to live, this includes new carpets/flooring and general redecoration. It was noted that these items are already on our list of planned capital expenditure and there is no reason not to proceed.

Parking System – the Office is looking into alternative systems for controlling the use of the church car park.

### **Diocesan Consultation**

The Bishop has sent a briefing document and two questions for the PPC to consider. This is a three-stage consultation process taking place across the Diocese. Stage one was a Clergy consultation. Stage two is consulting the Parish organisational bodies such as the PPC. Stage three will be to consult parishioners and other religious organisations in the Diocese.

### **Liturgy, Education and Faith Sharing**

Roberta Canning gave a summary of events that have taken place since the last meeting including sessions on Parenting teenagers and studying the report, *Cross of the Moment*. Both had a low turnout, but it is hoped to offer a chance to discuss the Cross of the Moment at another time as Fr Simon B is interested in doing further sessions.

The planned 'Inbetweeners' group, being developed to plug the gap between First Holy Communion and Confirmation, will hold its inaugural meeting on 9th November. Before plans are made, this meeting will be an opportunity to see who attends and what people would like to commit to helping with for this parent-led project. In general, the plan will be to devise an evening with a mixture of activities, adoration and catechesis.

A new altar server training period starts this month. There are ten new candidates.

### **Communications**

Ronald Haynes reported that the group aims to meet monthly. They are considering revisiting the newsletter and expanding it. Work is ongoing on the next generation website. Work on interacting with other Christian denominations is also ongoing.

### **Social Activities**

Fr Simon B's leaving party and Mass were a great success and very enjoyable occasion. Thanks to Nora Darby for organising, but thanks also to Margaret Martin for finishing off the organising when Nora fell ill.

### **Safeguarding**

Jim O'Sullivan reported that the recording of attendance at Children's Liturgy is now happening across all sessions.

**Date for next meeting** - Tuesday 10th December at 7.30pm

## **Catholic Women's League**

### **Janet Scally**

Members meet on the second Friday of each month at about 11.30am but not in November due to repairs to the roof of the meeting room. We prepare a lunch for parishioners following the 12.30pm Mass and pray for people in need, both in the Parish and any people that we know who are struggling with life's problems. Money raised by those who join us for lunch is given to various charities. In the last few months, we have given to Cambridge City Women's Refuge, Macmillan Coffee Morning and Wear Pink for Breast Cancer.

If anyone is interested in joining us, do come along. Our meetings during Advent are on the 6th, 13th and 20th December.

---

## **New Altar Servers**

### **Stephen Warde**

It is great to see a new generation of altar servers emerging at St Laurence's! This Autumn we have been training 11 new servers. The group has had a number of introductory training sessions with our senior server, Ella Warde, and if you attend the 9.30am and 11am Masses, you may have noticed that we are now beginning to involve the new servers on the altar, with support from the current serving team. The aim is for everyone to become a full member of the team by Christmas. The picture shows some of our new group at one of their training sessions.



## Farewell to Fr Simon Blakesley

On Wednesday 18th September, we said a final goodbye to Fr Simon – both a sad and happy occasion.



There was a fabulous Mass at 6pm, with a full church and wonderful singing! Deacon Gian Luca Savini joined Fr Simon in celebrating Mass.

We then gathered in the Parish Room for drinks and food.



Stephen Warde, current PPC Chair, made a short speech of thanks on behalf of the Parish and presented Fr Simon with a cheque for £3,800.



And Sarah Sykes presented him with a memory album full of photos and good wishes, alongside a card with more good wishes!



Pages from the memory book for Fr Simon



## Personal Stories and Experiences

### A Liturgical Music Conference

#### Sarah Sykes

Although I've been to a few music days in my time, I hadn't been to a Liturgical Music Conference before, and I was looking forward to it as I set off up the motorway at the beginning of August, towards Hope University, Liverpool, to spend four days absorbing all I could from the other delegates and speakers.

We certainly had a packed programme with talks and activities scheduled from 8am–8pm (and often later!). I was particularly interested in hearing more about the upcoming changes to our liturgical texts especially with regard to the psalms.

As you may know, following the new wording for the Mass (published in 2010), which introduced changes to prayers such as the Gloria and Sanctus, the second half of the work of the new translation of the readings and psalms has now been completed and we will be using new Missals as of the start of the new Liturgical year beginning this December with Advent.

The conference was run by The Society of St Gregory, which was formed on 12th March 1929 to undertake the task of promoting full and active liturgical participation. The theme of the conference was 'A Symphony of Praise in Word and Music'. The keynote talks and seminars all focussed on this theme from different angles. The talks were all very engaging and were followed up with seminars to explore the topics in more detail.

I also enjoyed meeting several of the composers whose works we sing at our Masses, for example Christopher Walker whose Alleluia we regularly sing. And Nick Baty who has written some lovely liturgical settings. I even met someone who was a member of the Fisher House music group in the 1980s!

It was a great opportunity to discover new music resources, fellowship, daily Mass, and of course lots of singing! With grateful thanks to Fr Simon for this opportunity.



## Two Precious Holiday Memories

### Mary Walsh

This year we holidayed in Gardone, a little town on Lake Garda, in Italy. There are a few restaurants, very few shops, a *gelateria* serving delicious ice cream and a little church. The Chiesa della Natività di Maria (The Church of the Nativity of Maria) is not particularly remarkable from the outside, but as you open the door the beauty of the place just draws you in. It is stunning, peaceful and a wonderful place to sit and be calm.



My aunt was a nun. She took me and my sister to Lourdes when I was six. One of my clearest memories of my childhood was sitting in the cool of a beautiful old church, on that holiday, and having a baguette with La Vache Qui Rit cheese on it as I carefully balanced the orange juice on the pew next to me. We found a different church every day that week and had the same culinary delight. Aunt Mary had looked overwhelmed by the heat in her habit outside and she was often flustered looking after two young children on holiday. I remember noticing her relax and appear to feel totally at home as we sat quietly enjoying the picnic. "Is it a sin to eat and drink in church?" I whispered. She assured me that God is present all the time in church and wants us to visit His house and feel comforted. She told me to remember the coolness of the church and the feeling of relief from the stifling heat outside and to remember how every church is a great place to find solace. I did not know the meaning of the word solace at the time but I certainly felt the feeling of it.

We had been wondering whether a wedding was planned in Gardone. The church doors and railings were festooned with flowers and ribbons. The promenade along the lake was decorated with bunches of flowers and candle votives had been placed everywhere. The new parish priest wanted to revive the old custom of a candlelight procession from the church to the lake through the village in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Posters announced the special Mass followed by a procession.



It was a huge privilege to be handed a candle after Mass and welcomed to join the parishioners in the procession. The Priest and altar servers led the way. Four men carried the statue of The Sacred Heart aloft and we all

followed. As the evening light was fading the candles lit the darkness and as we processed through the village it was lovely to see people not only join the procession but to notice diners join in the singing and prayers from the restaurant tables. The waiters and manager from our



hotel had not gone home after their shift because they were joining in too. Candles floated on the lake as the priest climbed aboard a boat along with the servers and the statue. It was a

sight to behold. Everyone was taking part. The police who had ensured an easy passage for the procession were also praying and singing. The coastguard and fishermen had arrived in candlelit boats too.

Locals and tourists either joined in by participating or by enjoying the spectacle in silence. It was the most wonderful evening and will be another treasured holiday memory.

---

## **Advent-Time our true Healer?**

### **Mary Gullick**

Every piece I do always has such a different tone to the last; some lift, others give insight, and in this one (when I think of Advent) I think of a period of reflection, of introspection, of decluttering both mentally and spiritually, to be ready for the day we welcome the gift of new life and new purpose into our individual and precious lives.

For many around the world that is not an easy thing to see especially with world conflicts and destruction around, the crying of our most vulnerable in need of help and the voiceless left without a voice and to suffer in silence – Advent does do something. It highlights where we can change and breathe new life into a world full of darkness and hatred. Where suffering is aplenty it can be turned around, where kindness is insulted or deemed unaccepted another will see it for what it is, pure love, innocent like a lamb that has been born in the spring.

Advent is a time for family and neighbours, and sometimes we forget that there are those who struggle at this difficult time while we celebrate new life and the gift that Christ has to offer us at Advent, to prepare for the way forward and onwards towards our Calvary, our victory, I hope we have the ability to hold space for those around us who equally do not see Christ, and will challenge that.

## **Sri Lanka**

### **Petra Tucker**

Recently we went on a food and cultural tour of Sri Lanka, 11 days visiting a beautiful country whose people are so friendly and whose cuisine is colourful and packed with incredible flavours.

The food part of the holiday took us into people's homes where we watched (and occasionally helped) the preparation of traditional Sri Lankan dishes, then sat down and enjoyed them. These homes were of ordinary families, set in small pieces of land that were just teaming with vegetables and fruits; coconuts, bananas, pineapples, lemons, limes, mangos, peppercorns, cashews, aubergines, bitter gourd (Karela), green beans, turmeric, tamarind, garlic to name just some. Every square inch of land produced food for the families who lived there. We learned how to make banana flower curry, coconut sambol, dahl curry, fish curry, wadei, coconut roti, idli and puri.

Their diet uses coconut in many forms. We visited a coconut oil factory where we saw that every part of a coconut is used – nothing goes to waste. The work is back breaking and the machines have no guards; the tiled floor was like an ice rink and staying upright was a challenge – definitely a case of “tourists beware”!

Every market has piles of coconuts for sale, much bigger than the ones we can buy in the UK. Once the excess rough fibres are pulled off, you then find the correct place to hit hard with a large knife – one sharp tap neatly fractures the coconut in half. The water is collected and then the flesh is grated from the shell in one of two ways: (1) hold the shell over a circular grater (fixed to a work surface) that has extremely sharp teeth which grates the flesh as you turn the handle and finely grates the coconut; (2) rub the shell against a fixed blade, typically attached to a wooden block that the women sit on. Note that the fixed blade can also be used for chopping onions, garlic and all kinds of herbs.

I bought a coconut grater to bring home. The women who use them make the grating look so easy but in fact it is hard work as the flesh is so dense. You can use the raw grated coconut in making coconut roti – grated coconut is mixed with flour and made into a dough, before rolling pieces of the dough and cooking them on a griddle.

Alternatively, it may be used to make coconut milk by mixing with water and then squeezing by hand to get the freshest and whitest of coconut milks. The residue will then be used as a fertilizer on the garden. I bought several cooking spoons made from coconut shells,



which are lovely to use and always remind me of Sri Lanka.

We visited a family that makes buffalo curd that is sold in single use fired clay pots. Women stir the milk over a wood fire for several hours as it thickens and reduces.

Just before pouring the curd into the pots, some of yesterday's curd is mixed in to culture the milk. Paper is secured over the top and then they are neatly stacked, ready for market the next day. No fridges are used at all to store the curd.



Making coconut milk



Making buffalo curd

We watched a man climb up his coconut trees (using flimsy bamboo steps tied to the trunk) to collect juice from the flowers, which makes a thick treacle after boiling over a wood fire (the woman's job) for several hours. Traditionally, this treacle is poured over curd to make a delicious pudding.

Visiting a fish market in Negombo by the edge of the sea was noisy and very smelly. All kinds of fish lying on the slabs, with no ice to be seen. Birds hovering to see if they can help themselves to a tasty morsel and there were plenty of flies. The fish from that morning's

catch is sold within a couple of hours so it really is fresh when you eat it. One day we chose a tuna fish and immediately took it to our host's house where we watched her make a very simple spicy curry (Ambole Thiyale) that made a delicious lunch, together with freshly made coconut roti. We saw the filleting and salting of small tuna fish that are then laid out in the sand in huge rows – these are turned by women over a week. We also saw men gutting and filleting fresh fish with a large knife and no protective gloves – just accurate chopping!

Visiting a wholesale fruit and vegetable market was a feast of colour and noise. Lorries and tuk-tuks arrive crammed with sacks of fruit and vegetables of every kind. Mountains of produce piled up on mats, all so fresh and green.

We went into Buddhist, Hindu and Christian homes. One Hindu family had their three young girls aged 3, 6 and 9 dressed in the most beautifully coloured best dresses. They served us a meal of curry, idli, wadei and sambol, eaten off banana leaves, with the youngest girl eager to watch us to see if we liked the food. It was so good.

No visit to Sri Lanka is complete without visiting one of the national parks to admire the elephants, crocodiles, water buffalo and many different kinds of birds. Staying in a hotel next to Yala national park meant that after dark we had to be escorted from our lodge to the dining room, in case you encounter an elephant strolling through the grounds. The open air dining room had plenty of netting so that the monkeys could watch but not join the party!

Sri Lanka's tea plantations produce some of the best tea in the world. The lush terracing is beautiful to look at, but there was no hiding the harsh working conditions and low pay, legacies of British colonialism.

Our most touristy trips were climbing Sigiriya Rock (stunning views from the top) and watching the daily ceremony at the Buddhist temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic (packed crowds and deafening music).

Our reason for choosing to go to Sri Lanka, for what turned out to be an experience of a lifetime, was two-fold. Our daughter went there for her honeymoon and said we would like it, plus Nadee (a friend who comes to St Laurence's church) and her husband are from Kandy, the second city. Nadee's family gave us a wonderful evening when we visited, making sure we saw all their homes and serving us a superb supper. It was extra special seeing the family home where Nadee was born and brought up.

## A Tribute to Bob Goodyear

Frances Stafford



A Tribute to Bob Goodyear who died 13th June 2024, aged 81 years in New Zealand (from a tribute said at his Mass on 7th July 2024)

Before Bob and his wife Christine moved to New Zealand to be near their daughter and her family, they were active members of this Parish and of the wider community.

Nothing was too much trouble for them, supporting one another in the many projects that they undertook.

For 20 years, Bob, assisted by Christine, ran a pilgrimage to Lourdes from this Parish. Nothing was overlooked. Bob made sure every need was catered for, recruiting at least two nurses for every trip. This, together with Christine's training as a nurse, ensured coverage for every eventuality. He also invited students from Ratcliffe College in Leicestershire, together with their tutor, to join us in a caring role. The concern for others did not stop at the end of the pilgrimage but continued throughout the years to follow. Bob was always there to solve a problem.

On a personal note, when my husband's new hip replacement was removed, due to infection, leaving him with no hip joint at all for several months, Bob came to my rescue. In no time at all a ramp was made to enable me to negotiate the huge wheelchair into the motor home!

On moving to New Zealand, and now being too old legally to organise the Lourdes trips, he turned his attention to other ways to minister to the community: helping to settle refugees, community meals, men's shelter, and together with Christine, cooking lessons for young mums.

They should be named the dynamic duo!

He became a loyal member of the SVP and later, for six years, became president of the Taranaki region. He believed in the principles of the Society: helping and serving others, making lives better.

At his funeral, members of the Society formed a guard of honour as his coffin was carried out by his children and grandchildren. Family, friends and the needy mattered to Bob.

A few weeks ago, Geoff, in his sermon, quoted a saying attributed to John Wesley. As I listened, my thoughts immediately turned to Bob, and indeed, Christine. I would like to finish with this quote:

Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
To all the people you can  
As long as ever you can.

That was Bob to the day he died.

May your reward be great in Heaven and may you rest in peace.

---

## Memories

### Elizabeth McCluskey

Having lived in the Parish from 2000–10, while Fr David held the baton, I experienced valuable experiences, including cleaning the church. Circumstances changed our routine and I returned to Enniskillen where there is a vibrant Writers' Group. Some members at St Laurence's 'missed us' – but kept true – keeping contact by Christmas card, soon upped by Easter cards.

I eventually got my memoir published, *I Did It My Way*, a copy of which exists for reference at Cambridge's Central Library – please spend some time scanning through it – Cambridge features!

Parishioners, Anne Maddocks and Margaret Mason sent postcards – with an invitation. How pleased I was to walk the lines of yonder days, see some familiar faces and acquire *The Pilgrim*. It carried many of my items when I returned from visits to Rome and Strasburg, Germany (including an interview with a German POW – a 16-year-old lad doing National Service for Hitler).

The Parish is in the process of swapping clergy – Fr Simon was appreciated! That's Life – the next place will benefit!

## Books

### Point of Departure

#### A new memoir by Gila Margolin



POINT OF DEPARTURE  
by  
GILA MARGOLIN

*Point of Departure* is the third part of a trilogy of my life story. I was born in London in 1951, into an Orthodox Jewish family, and moved at age eleven to be near my relatives in Glasgow, going to university there in the

troubled Sixties. After relocating to Cambridge for studies in music in 1982, a series of mystical experiences in North Wales, East Anglia and Canada led me into the Catholic Church where I took the names of Juliana Edith in Baptism, after Mother Julian of Norwich and Edith Stein.

Edith Stein was a Jewish woman from Breslau (now Wrocław) who became a Carmelite nun and perished in Auschwitz in August 1942. *Point of Departure* is written in the form of letters to my spiritual mentor. Edith Stein (Teresa Benedicta of the Cross) remains very present to me.

Through these letters I also describe the continuing work, through my travels and the concerts for peace and reconciliation, for The Little Sisters of Joy, the Foundation for Peace and Reconciliation which I co-founded in 1999. The Foundation uses the elements of music, friendship and encounter to build bridges of peace between Jews and Christians, Jews and Arabs and different Christians. Since 2008, there has been an outreach to the indigenous peoples of Canada.

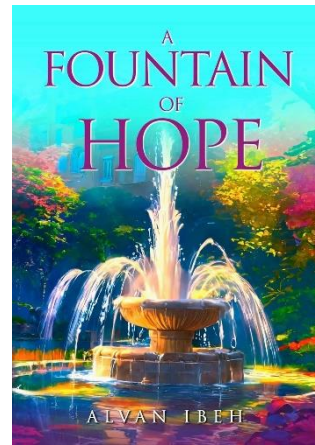
If you would like a copy of my new memoir, which includes 20 colour photos, I am offering it for a suggested donation of £10 to help me with my next journey to Canada. You can come to my flat from 23rd November. There is parking in our car park at the weekend. Tea and cake will be provided!

For more information, please contact me on the links below. The book is published by The Little Sisters of Joy, the name of our Facebook page.

[www.littlesistersofjoy.com](http://www.littlesistersofjoy.com) [margogila61@gmail.com](mailto:margogila61@gmail.com)

## A Fountain of Hope

### Fr Alvan Ibeh



One of the messages that comes across very strongly from reading this book is simply that God is always there for us and that he communicates with us in the right way at the right time. This book does just that, delivering the words of God in a way that epitomises this very message. It is a clear and interesting read that will pique the interest of anyone striving to find a fresh perspective on some of the issues that they may not be completely clear about.

In life, things don't always go to plan, and this can be a real challenge. Many words have been written on the subject to try and help people find their way, but I found this read particularly refreshing as it asks some of the questions that so often are overlooked. The author answers them in a way that is clearly inspired from a deeply held faith and that is easy to understand.

Why is God never late? And why is that important? Why is he not interested in our past?

The answers may not always be what you want to hear, but that's the point; the way ahead will always present obstacles, and the author deals with these pertinent points and projects the answers God gives us with clarity

As I read through the pages, I understood why the book is intended as the first of a collection that is centred around what is sometimes a misunderstood human emotion... hope!

Each chapter deals with different but related aspects of living a Christian life. There are many well-chosen biblical references but also some well researched true stories that make the point very clearly. I love the story that is referred to in the chapter entitled 'Do not change your nature'. It explains very clearly why we are all different and how God always intended us to remain true to who we are in any situation.

The author has produced a true fountain of positivity through the writing of this book and is to be commended for the interesting perspective it gives us. I look forward to the next instalment which will arrive as and when God intends, I'm sure!

Tom Goymour, Verbum Publications

## Poetry Corner

### **A Psalm for November**

**Philippa Johnson**

Here in this blue curvature of Earth  
a crescent of hope, gilded in morning light,  
with whale-song, the crimped shore  
frilled with seaweeds and the fingerprints of cowries,  
an arc of praise will arise: help us to worship You.

Between pale dunes, the tales of once-high cliffs,  
each grain a remnant of a former glory,  
reminders of seabeds now cactus-covered, red-blushed,  
yet the hope of grasses, dews, habitat of quiet wonders,  
a vibrant hymn of worship: help us to honour You.

From mountain ranges, littered with footsteps  
of our adventurous kind, looking for marvels,  
to the hills, grass-drenched, fields seed-strewn, harvest-full,  
& valleys broad & strong, river-woven, fertile & wooded,  
a paean of honour: help us to proclaim You.

In the tangle of cities, the great industrial swathes,  
in the towns, the busy places of care & labour,  
in the villages & remote homesteads, in farms,  
where concerns, fears, the hardships of life can weary us,  
a daily proclamation of Your love: help us to exalt You.

From leaf to branch, blossom to flower to fruit,  
with our brothers the birds and sister butterflies,  
in union with the fish, the mosses, the badgers & peregrines  
and all wild beauty, of which we are a part, to which we belong,  
a chorus of exultation: help us to glorify You.

Throughout the jungles – life blesses You, O God!  
Let the seas resound with joy of Your love, O Lord!  
With the poppies & pines, the asters & laurel, let us sing Your Name!  
In the melody of the clouds, the glory of rainbows, Your Name be praised!  
In the fellowship of each other, in prayer & adoration,  
let the whole world rejoice in You, our Redeemer & King!



*I miss the rest of me* was read by Michael McEwan at his wife, Eileen's, funeral. As it may still be in copyright, we have just printed an extract here. If you would like the full text for private use, please contact *The Pilgrim*: pilgrim@saintlaurence.org.uk or click on this link [I miss the rest of me](#) where the text will be available until the end of December 2024.

## **I miss the rest of me**

**Pam Jones**

I miss the rest of me,  
The special part that died.  
The precious part I loved so dear  
Is absent from my side.

---

## **A Prayer from Hell**

**Teresa Brett**

Here there are screams from people in pain  
That no-one must hear again,  
Howls, shrieks; contortions of sound  
In their death - lives.

God must be somewhere, but He's not here,  
Except on the side of helpers so dear  
That they are used to reachings from hell  
And do their best to break the spell  
Of destruction.

The once-alive and the almost dead  
Are not a good comfort to take to bed.  
But that I must do. I've not long to go,  
So I'll use it to let these words flow  
Before I'm totally gone.

What can I say to my Saviour  
To excuse my failed behaviour?  
Nothing, of course. There's no resource  
Left to me now. Please try to endorse  
All pain-screwed efforts at prayer  
God.

## **The Smallest Hand**

**Philippa Johnson**

holds His Mother's hair  
holds Joseph's finger  
holds Mary's heart

reaches for warmth & milk  
reaches for reassurance  
reaches towards love

touches Joseph's cloak  
touches Mary's cheek  
touches this world

opens to grasp & explore  
opens to receive love  
opens in welcome

feels arms & faces & kisses  
feels the Earth's cool air  
feels a mortal embrace  
becomes a healing hand  
becomes a working hand  
becomes the hand of sacrifice

holds us all in love  
reaches out with His light  
touches us with hope & salvation  
feels for us, blesses us, supports us, leads us  
becomes our model towards creation

the smallest and the greatest  
Hand of Grace

## **Editorial**

**Nora Darby**

In September, Emanuela Di Pietro joined us as our new Parish Administrator. The position had been vacant since Reece left in April so we were very pleased to welcome Emanuela to the Parish office. She has done an amazing job getting things organised and it is good to know that we now have a very friendly face and voice to go to once again.

We were very pleased to hear that Fr Simon Davies will be staying with us until about Mid –January. This of course means he will be with us for Advent and Christmas, we look forward to seeing and hearing him at the seasonal activities and celebrating Mass at this time.

# **The deadline for the next edition is **7 March** for publication on 5/6 April**

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

---

### **The production team:**

Editors: Nora Darby, Sarah Sykes

Sub-editors: Carol Williams, Sarah Sykes, Mary Walsh, Alex Dias

Commissioning Editor: Nora Darby

Cover: Leonie Isaacson

Proofreaders: Caroline O'Donnell & Miriam Santos Freire

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

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

## The Pilgrim

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

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

## Parish Pastoral Council (PPC)

<https://www.saintlaurence.org.uk/ppc/>

Current Chair: Stephen Warde

Enquiries: [ppc@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:ppc@saintlaurence.org.uk).

## ABLAZE

The St Laurence Youth Mass is known as Ablaze. It is designed to encourage our youth to build their confidence in participating in all aspects of the Mass.

It is held on the first Sunday of the month at 5pm. It is a vibrant and fun Mass. We encourage young Readers, Eucharistic Ministers, budding musicians and singers of all ages, the only requirement is enthusiasm for God. If you are looking for 'perfection' you won't find it here! So, if you fancy it pluck up your courage and join in.

## Upcoming Parish Events

<b>SVP Parish Xmas Giving Tree</b> All gifts and hamper items need to be <b>returned to church by</b> the third Sunday of Advent, <b>15th December</b>	From 30 Nov/1st Dec In the Narthex
<b>Advent – Parish Carol Service</b>	Sun 15 Dec 4pm
<b>Christmas Week Masses</b>	
Christmas Eve Family Mass	5pm
Carols & Readings Midnight Mass	11.30pm Midnight
Christmas Day	9am 11am
Boxing Day	11am
<b>New Year's Eve Mass</b> Followed by drinks and nibbles	6pm
<b>New Year's Day Mass</b>	12.30pm
<b>ABLAZE Youth Mass</b> (1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month) 5pm	1 Dec
PPC meeting	10 Dec at 7.30pm
<b>Regular meetings</b>	
Saturday morning Coffee Hub Parish room	10am-12pm After 9:30am Mass
Sunday morning coffee	After 11am Mass
Soulfood	Tues 8pm
The Carlo Acutis Youth Group (for children who have made their First Holy Communion, but not yet been confirmed)	2nd Saturday of the month from 16 Nov 3.30-5.30pm



Follow St Laurence's on Facebook:

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

# ST LAURENCE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

91 Milton Road, Cambridge CB4 1XB  
Tel/Fax: 01223 704640  
Email: [office@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto: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.

**Acting Parish Priest:**

Fr Simon Davies  
01223 704640  
[simon.davies@rcdea.org.uk](mailto:simon.davies@rcdea.org.uk)

**Deacon:**

Rev. Dr Geoffrey Cook  
01223 351650

**Safeguarding:**

Mary Jane & Jim O'Sullivan  
[safeguarding@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@saintlaurence.org.uk)

**Parish Administrator:**

Emanuela Di Pietro  
01223 704640  
[office@saintlaurence.org.uk](mailto:office@saintlaurence.org.uk)

**Treasurer:**

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

## Service Times

Saturday 9.30am  
6:00pm Vigil Mass (sung)  
Sunday 8.00am  
9:30am (sung with Children's Liturgy)  
11:00am (sung with Children's Liturgy)  
Mon, Thurs 9.30am  
Tues, Fri 12.30pm  
Wed 6:00pm followed by Exposition

*All Masses are livestreamed. Check the weekly newsletter for changes to the above times*

## St Laurence's School

Head of School  
Assistant Head  
Address

Mrs McGhee Wallace  
Mrs Rachel Chalklin  
St Laurence's School  
Arbury Road  
Cambridge  
CB4 2JX

Telephone

01223 712227

Email

[office@stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:office@stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk)

Website

[www.stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk](http://www.stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk)