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### *Plus Other Features*

*Magazine Team*

*Margaret Rank*

*Ann Wiseman*

*Helen O'Connor Tim Thorp*

*whose views are not necessarily the same as those expressed in the magazine.*

*Photo Supplement: Edd Hogan*

## From Fr Pat

*Catholic Faith Exploration* shortened to *CaFE* has joined up with *The Bible Society* to produce a twelve week course called *The Big Picture*. In St Joseph's in Malvern we have run the first half of this exploration on six consecutive Tuesdays.

We deal with the big questions. Let me put it this way. A while back I was taking a class in St Joseph's Primary School. It was Year Five I remember. One of the boys, he would be ten, asked me, "How do we know that there is a God?" There was a general murmur of assent to this and I could see he had touched a real issue.

I prepared a lesson for them, hoping to put things together: in other words, to give them a look at the Big Picture. How does our faith come to us? How can we be sure?

Where does it come from? What does it say about us human beings and our Maker? I took my Bible with me and presented our story. Our course tries to do the same thing.

The Big Picture has an attractive book for each person taking part. It is a journal for each day of the week. There is a short passage from the Bible to find, dig into and think about. Each page has plenty of space to jot down any reflections or prayers.

On a Tuesday, we sit at café-style tables in groups of four or five people and discuss what we have found during the week. People collect a cup of tea and biscuit and share what the week has brought. Naturally we share our own personal experiences. This setting provides an ideal opportunity to talk about what we believe.

Every evening there is a chance to watch a fifteen minute DVD. We have pinched a lot of ideas from the *Alpha Course*. They have a fresh, direct technique, which speaks to people who don't really have a ready-made language for speaking about God. Some of the scenes are on location in the Holy Land and in Rome. There is good discussion, where key questions are asked. There are testimonies from a variety of people. There is also a useful continuity in the presentation, which does

indeed show us how things hold together. They give us *The Big Picture*.

1 First of all we looked at ‘The Plan.’ What does it mean to say that we can look at God’s plan as he reveals it to us in the Bible?

2 We don’t create ourselves. God made us as the catechism says. So we looked at our own personal images of the God who made us. We are his creatures, we belong to him.

3 We live in a wonderful world and are learning about the marvels of an evolving creation. Our planet is fragile. We have greatly damaged our environment. We have a responsibility to leave wonderful things to those who come after us.

4 We looked at the fall in Genesis 3. We ask ourselves how it is that things go wrong?

We make our own decisions and sin gets in. We aren’t talking about some old bible myth. We are talking about the massacre in a Baptist church in the USA that week. How can this happen?

5 Through Abraham and Sara, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Rachel God chose a people and revealed himself to them. Jesus is their descendant and we too, the Christian people, share those promises.

6 In our final session this autumn, we looked at Christ’s coming and joining his people as a human being.

Every day the people on the course read selected verses from the Bible and prayed with them. They could then note anything significant in the journal. They could then discuss this, if they wished, at the next session.

After Christmas, when we have got through January, we will hold another six sessions to examine the New Testament. We have had about thirty people each evening so far. Will you join us for the second half?

*Patrick Kilgarriff*

*More on the Big Picture, from a parishioner’s viewpoint, on page 20.*

## PAC Report

It is many years now since I have served on the PAC. I was co-opted, with one or two others, last summer. Alan Hood had served his three years and I volunteered to take up the position. I judge myself extremely fortunate to be serving with a very interested and pro-active committee. Lindsey, newly employed as parish secretary, has been a real answer to prayer.

I have subsequently been at the helm for two meetings. Alan asked that we continue to look at one or two items, which included car parking, the stone wall between the school and upper parking area, the parish kitchen, evangelisation and health and safety issues with the choir loft. As a result, you will be aware that notices have been posted regarding safe parking and the need to prevent access to the choir loft, the latter certainly over the short term. Car park stewards will be needed when we have any special events at the church. We have one or two volunteers on stand-by but we could do with more. Please give your name to Lindsey in the parish office or to myself if you can help at such times. We continue to monitor the use of the car park by those without prior authorisation.

Many of us took part in the pilgrimage to Walsingham, organised by Edd Hogan. Thanks to the considerable amount of time, energy and enthusiasm that he gave, plus Fr. Pat's spiritual direction, it was very successful and enjoyable. This, together with the Tuesday evening presentations on 'The Big Picture,' reflect actions around the subject of evangelisation.

Hopefully, by the time you read this, the stone wall will have been repaired and discussion of plans to upgrade the parish kitchen will have progressed.

Other items have been on the agenda of course. The Parish Activity Survey conducted by myself is completed and comment appears elsewhere in the magazine.

There are on-going investigations into the provision of up-dated audio-visual resources in the McEnnis room. Lindsey has given, and continues to give, priority to updating fire regulations/requirements and issues associated with Health and Safety. On the liturgy front, we

look forward to an Advent carol service and there has been discussion about services and times of services over Christmas and the new year.

Inevitably there are a number of further areas of importance that are on the back burner waiting to come to the fore. If there are issues that you would like to put forward for consideration by the PAC please pass them to the parish office. Also, copies of minutes from previous meetings are available for reference in the narthex.

*Chris Burger*

## Young Readers

We are very lucky in this parish to have a number of young people who are happy to share their gift of reading the Liturgy of the Word. We are all extremely pleased and proud that they have come forward to offer their services in this way, and we recognise their commitment. We remember with deep gratitude all that the late Norma Hughes did to support the young readers over many years, in her role as mentor.

If you are a young person who feels inspired by their example and would like to join them, please do get in touch with me and I will pass on a few words of wisdom (some of the team have prepared notes to guide all readers, young and old!) We are always delighted to welcome new readers.

*Helen O'Connor*  
hmoconnor127@gmail.com

**Welcome** to the following small new Christians and congratulations to their families: Parker and Ralph Bland, Freya Harford, Eden Neal, Oliver Wiktor and Leah Keane.

**Welcome** also to the following newcomers to the parish: Patricia McPherson, Richard Lee-Heung and Carol-Ann Harnett .

**Our congratulations** and best wishes to Tristan and Jennifer Baddeley recently married at St Joseph's.

**Rest in Peace:** Nancy Murtagh, Maureen Flaux, Mary Ferguson, Anne Docker, Norma Hughes, Margaret Walker, Joan Cossali, Frank Wheel-don and John Kenny.

## **Biblical Bathing**

On 30th September - the Feast of St Jerome, who famously said "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ" - Christians from around the county gathered for the annual day of the Big Bible Study, this year in St George's RC Church in Worcester. Organised by a planning group from churches of different traditions, it's an occasion which gives opportunity to Christians of different denominations to pray, study and eat together, during three hours of refreshment for all. Led this year by the Bishop of Worcester, Dr John Inge, our Archbishop Bernard Longley and the Heart of England Baptist Association Regional Minister, Revd Alison Mackay, the Unity Candle was lit to remind us of Christ's light upon us all. Revd Helen Caine of St Andrew's Methodist Church led a brief Act of Worship.

We began with Bishop John giving us the story of Blind Bartimeus from St Mark's Gospel, then we formed groups and Revd Alison led us in a reflective study on the passage, with periods of silence as we considered if a particular word had spoken directly to us, to be shared with our neighbours, if we wished. A coffee break gave chance to mix and chat in the Parish Hall and we returned to be led by Archbishop Bernard in an Ignation Meditation, particularly appropriate when we have a Pope who is a Jesuit and the church in which we were meeting having been served by the Jesuits for many decades.

Our coming together from many different Christian backgrounds to break the Word as one family, and to reflect upon the healing of the man who was blind, reminded us of our institutional blindness, and was a spur to encourage us not to be limited by fears, anxieties and worries. Faith is born of an encounter with a loving God, a love we can lean on and through which we can receive power to see others as he sees them. We can allow ourselves to be changed by him, through the power of the Word, discerning what God wants and co-operating and collaborating with his will. "We are involved in Mixed Bathing", said the Archbishop!

*Viv Jones*

## Children's Liturgy

Children's Liturgy is going from strength to strength with high numbers of children attending at the 10am Mass. The groups are split between Swallows for the children aged 6 and under, and Disciples for the older ones. Caroline, aged 6, told us: "I like church because I like the colouring in and doing the craft and listening to the stories. I feel sad when there's no Sunday School." Children's Liturgy takes place during term time and is run by volunteers on a rota basis with the number of children attending ranging from five to over 20 on busy weeks. Tilly, also aged 6, said: "I like the sticking and I like going up to the front and showing Fr Pat what we've made. My sister goes to the other one." The under-6 Swallows group offers a simple version of the Gospel followed by craft activities, while the older group discuss more in-depth issues combined with relevant artwork and writing. Alex, 8, attends the older Disciples session and said: "I like the word searches. They're fun. And I like the sticking and gluing. I've made some new friends!"

The Children's Liturgy is also supportive to the families who attend. Mum-of-two Antonia, noted: "Not having a Catholic partner it's nice to meet other mums who are bringing up children in the Catholic faith, especially as my children don't attend St. Joseph's Primary School. After a year, I was happy to volunteer to help out; there are lots of resources online and I enjoy teaching the children." Lindsey, another mum whose daughters regularly attend, said: "I couldn't have done without it when my children were young!" The children exit the church soon after the start of mass by following a new, brightly coloured Children's Cross and return to display their work on the altar in front of the congregation, bringing our Catholic community back together for the end of mass.

If you are interested in joining the friendly group that makes the Children's Liturgy possible, please email [stj@kilgarriff.plus.com](mailto:stj@kilgarriff.plus.com). We offer full training and resources. Volunteers to serve tea and biscuits after mass are also welcome.

*Beverly La Ferla*

## Outpost at the Other End of the Archdiocese

Having enjoyed six months as priest in residence in the most westerly parish on the southern perimeter of the Archdiocese of Birmingham, I took up my post as PP of the most easterly parish on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, 14 September last. Even though advertised in the Bulletin as a *dies non*, on the evening of my arrival I celebrated an evening Mass – I could not let such a great feast in the liturgical calendar slip by without celebrating Mass – and it was heartening to see eighteen parishioners, some curious no doubt to be among the first to lay eyes on their new pastor, attend the liturgy and come into the sacristy to greet me afterwards.

And so it has gone on. The people here at Caversham, who have been served by a series of good, zealous priests down the years and hold them in great affection, impressed upon their new PP immediately that they were relieved to have a priest at all and that they were very happy that the new priest should be I, even though they knew little or nothing about me. (Some had done *Google* and *You-Tube* searches).

The Mass count in October averaged four hundred attending Mass each weekend (a Saturday Vigil Mass, a Sunday morning family Mass and a Sunday evening Mass) and the profile of the parish community is much as it is at Malvern. Like it is at St. Joseph's, the Catholic Primary School is right next door to the church. There is a Children's Liturgy each Sunday and the number of children is quite extensive. One of the immediate tasks awaiting the new PP is the organisation of sacramental preparation programmes for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Within my first six weeks I have celebrated six Baptisms. Pastoral tasks are not lacking nor are the pastoral challenges one might expect in such a relatively large and extensive parish. Still awaiting the arrival of my car which has been ordered, I look forward to launching a programme of parochial visitation once my Honda Civic has been taxed, insured and parked in my driveway.

*Father Patrick H Daly*

## **Congress on the Future of the European Union**

In order to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Treaty of Rome (signed 25 March 1957), the Commission of Bishops' Conferences of the European Union and the Secretariat of State co-organised a major congress, held at the Vatican between 27 and 29 October, on the future of the EU entitled **(Re)thinking Europe**. It brought together a cluster of cardinals, forty or so bishops, an equal number of members of the European Parliament, the top leadership from the European institutions (the First Vice-President of the EU Commission, Frans Timmermans and the President of the European Parliament Antonio Tajani), senior Commission civil servants and many who work for and advise on Europe with the national bishops' conferences of the EU. There were four panels of distinguished churchmen and academics – most of the latter being women – and, on the basis of their in-put, a dozen or more workshops gathered participants to spend a whole morning in a free-wheeling discussion about their beliefs about the EU and its future. To enable the participants to speak openly, frankly and freely, the Chatham House discipline applied to the workshop debates. It was my privilege to share the fourth panel with Archbishop Paul Gallagher, foreign minister of the Holy See, and Pat Cox, President Emeritus of the EP and winner of the Charlemagne Prize, and present the synthesis of the workshop discussions.

The finale of the congress was in two stages: an address by Pope Francis to the gathered participants in the Paul VI Synodal Hall on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> and a closing Mass, with Cardinal Reinhard Marx, Archbishop of Munich and Freising [President of COMECE], in St. Peter's Basilica on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> at 09.00 hrs. All the participants, bishops, MEPs, civil servants and professors alike, left feeling the congress had been a success in marking the diamond jubilee of the foundational Treaty of Rome and flagging up the Church's benevolent interest in the European project, yet whether creative or imaginative ideas as to the EU's future beyond the threshold of its sixtieth birthday emerged from the Rome encounter must remain an open question.

**Father Patrick H Daly**

*'Europe infos - Christian Perspectives on the EU' is the monthly newsletter from COMECE and the Jesuit European Office. See [www.europe.infos.eu](http://www.europe.infos.eu)*

## **When Two or Three are Gathered Together.....**

### **Experiences of Taking Communion to the Sick Part One**

As eucharistic ministers ourselves we decided we would like to collect the experiences of those who regularly take communion to the sick or housebound. Our idea was to take short pieces or extracts, and produce something within editorial limits. However, the reflections and testimonies we received were so beautiful, we can only reproduce them just as they came, and with the editor's help we have had to split them over two magazines. Here for Advent, we draw together those that focus particularly on the extraordinary nature and privilege of the experience. For next time we have three helpful and insightful descriptions of what goes on - and an overview from Ruth of how she has seen the institution developing over her time as a pastoral assistant. (We contacted all on Chris's list, but if others would like to contribute, please send us your thoughts.)

The title reflects Chris P's own testimony, because it is something we all experience:

"Taking communion to a parishioner is a great privilege and always reminds me of one of my favourite sayings; 'when two or three are gathered in my name there am I in the midst of them'."

This is explicitly echoed by Jo, whose main account belongs in the next magazine.

"Where two or three are gathered in my name...."

What a blessing and a privilege. They thank me, and I very much thank them!"

A hugely important need that might seem daunting to the newcomer, is taking communion to those with an illness like dementia. Our next contributions show how worthwhile an experience it is. Here is Viv:

"My most moving experience is saying the Our Father with a person who appeared asleep, deep in dementia, and tears fell on the cheeks, and the chest rose with a sigh of emotion."

Brenda has experienced something similar:

"It can be a humbling experience taking communion to the sick. You meet people who are suffering but show such great resilience, that it makes you appreciate the gifts that God has given you, especially good health.

The two ladies that I visit both have dementia and cannot really make sense of their surroundings, and yet when they both join in to say the Lord's Prayer it is an oasis of calm and satisfaction for them both. They appreciate the love from St. Joseph's that comes with the visit."

The theme of a gift from the community and the support that gives to the person you are visiting continues in Francesca's contribution, as does the sense of blessing.

"Her face lit up when I came in, because she remembered what I had told her the first time that she received me: "This Blessed Sacrament was consecrated at the Parish Mass this morning, and the whole community with the priest want to share it with you as you are such an important part of our parish community." It was this feeling of being valued in the eyes of the community that perhaps made the greatest impact on her. Receiving Communion in this spirit made her more aware that she really was part of the Body of Christ.

Sharing Communion with the sick and the housebound has brought me many blessings. The sufferings of the sick, the poor and the lonely are constant reminders of my own woundedness and need of healing. In the presence of God's suffering people I feel more and more that it is through their suffering and vulnerability that the Spirit provides the Church with energy and power."

There is only room for one more contribution in this half, and an unusual one: the person receiving communion has an exceptional ability to express herself, despite her serious illness and disability. Her joyousness and faith shine through. Without saying it, the account makes it clear how much we benefit ourselves - not that this is why we do it, but it is a fact. We see again how the recipient is able to feel connected to the community through the event. This is Rosemary's contribution, and is what gave her the impulse to seek other people's

witness. We hope it conveys the faith and love which so often can no longer be put into words, but is somehow there.

"I went to see a parishioner in Worcester Royal, taking the Blessed Sacrament from the 10 o'clock Mass. I have chosen a pseudonym for her, for privacy. On top of years of debilitating illness, she has had a dose of exceptional bad luck, falling and breaking bones badly in two places.

Clare: 'I've realised that all this was for a purpose. I've learnt so much and met so many wonderful people...'

Me: 'What have you learnt?'

Clare: 'I've learnt how much love matters. I've been surrounded by love. I've learnt patience. I've learnt you can trust and it comes out all right. I want to tell people that'.

Me: 'I'd like to write down what you've just said and put it in the parish magazine.'

Clare: (heartfelt): I wish you would.....'

I had brought the hymn we began with at the 10 o'clock Mass that morning, and she reads it as part of our communion service. Here's part of it:

Could the Lord ever leave you?  
Could the Lord forget his love?  
Though the mother forsake her child  
He will not abandon you.

Should you turn and forsake him,  
He will gently call your name.  
Should you wander away from him,  
He will always take you back.

Go to him when you're weary,  
He will give you eagle's wings.  
You will run, never tire,  
For your God will be your strength.

Oh, she says, that was meant for me. That was meant for you to bring me."

Joy and deep faith, for once really able to be expressed, but we can often recognise them even under the depth of illness, as our first two contributions told us.

*Authors: Chris Park and Rosemary Thorp, with help and contributions from Chris Burger, Win Crawford, Ruth Hopkins, Viv Jones, Jo Roberts Powell, Brenda McLaughlan and Francesca Townson.*

## **The Last Journey of Brother James**

Brother James, the 93-year-old founder of Reaching the Unreached, died in October. We, the parish, have been supporting Brother James' work for some thirty years, Viv Jones' grandson Daniel was an intern with him, and the present director, Father Antony, was here in the summer. Thanks to his visit and to the enthusiasm of the Head, the school is building a relationship with the school children in the project.

Mo Houlden, the UK organiser, writes: "Brother James lived an extraordinary life of true dedication, selfless obedience and Christian discipleship. For over 60 years, he made a difference to the lives and wellbeing of countless destitute children and families in the rural villages in southern India and Sri Lanka in which he gave a lifetime of service to the very poorest people. His life has been and will be an inspiration to many. Rarely can a single person have touched so many lives in such a positive way."

Father Antony has sent a lengthy description of Brother James' last journey', with many pictures which don't reproduce well here: we will be delighted to give anyone who wants a full copy. Here are a few extracts:

"Brother James Kimpton, founder of Reaching the Unreached, died peacefully at his home in Sirumalar Children's Village at Reaching the Unreached at 8.30 pm local time on 5th October 2017 after a short illness. I wanted to share with you news of his Last Journey. .. As a mark of respect, two days of mourning were observed throughout our local villages. From early in the morning on the next day, people

arrived at RTU's main campus from miles around. Our staff enabled the public to pay their last respects to our Brother James one by one until the funeral mass on 7th October. Around 100,000 grieving men, women and children offered a tearful adieu to Brother in that time. Fifteen villagers from our local village, G Kallupatti, had their heads fully shaved, which is usually done by a son on the death of his father, and came in a procession along with their local people with big garlands and a black flag to pay tribute to Brother as per our Indian tradition.....

All the children, mothers and local people prayed and sang their sorrows due to his death, singing of how they missed our Thatha and saying more of his greatness, commitments and achievements. Everyone, from the very smallest children to local elderly people, stayed around his body praying for the repose of his soul. Cries of Thatha rent the air as a sea of people thronged to the auditorium to pay their last respects... Paying homage to Brother stopped at 3.30 pm even though there were still people queueing. As per his wishes, his body was placed on a Paadai - a stretcher like structure made of two bamboo stems, placed parallel to each other and Thennai Olai (coconut tree leaves) were used to create an interlinked mesh like structure to support his body while carrying. This Paadai is the custom here for village people and was kept on a big table visible to everyone. At the funeral, several people shared how Brother always interacted with the children in kind ways and the model he left with us to continue his mission. They also shared his good qualities and his total commitment. His love and affection for the small ones, especially the orphaned and disadvantaged children, was great. The final word they said was that Brother was a male Mother Teresa..."

*From the One World Group*

## **Harvington Hall and the Archdiocese of Birmingham**

I recently attended the archdiocesan annual pilgrimage to Harvington Hall – Shrine of the English Martyrs. It is a wonderfully appointed Tudor manor house between Worcester and Droitwich. It's owned by the diocese but operates as an independent organisation and visitor attraction. The house has only ever been in three families: the

Pakingtons; the Yates and finally the Throckmorton family. It was a wonderful history but it is most well known for being the home of the recusant Catholic Pakington family in the turbulent Tudor and Elizabethan times. There are nine known priest hides in the house – which isn't surprising when you see what a warren of steps, rooms, corridors, fake fireplaces and so on there are. I'm told that eleven primary schoolchildren can fit inside one of the hides! The house was extended over the years. One impressive feature is that in the extension of the kitchen, the courtyard well was integrated into the new kitchen and thus a fresh springwater well was now inside the house – secure and safe from potential saboteurs. The well bubbles up from groundwater that sits beneath the depth of the moat.

The Pakingtons were landowners with a sense of social justice. They were well liked by tenants and labourers. Their grand-daughter inherited the property and she married into the Yates family. She lived to the old age of 86. In her long life she established a number of almshouses. These almshouses are still there today on the lane leading to Harvington Hall, albeit they were rebuilt in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Interestingly, and in spite of the number of priest hides in the house, the house was never searched in anger. Perhaps this is because of the deep affection and respect of those who worked with and for the Pakingtons.

There are two chapels on the upper floors as well as a small Georgian chapel in the grounds, and the parish church just opposite.

It is thought that had the Pakingtons chosen to convert then the house could well have been endowed with royal support and eventually turned into a palace, such as Blenheim or Chatsworth. The family however chose to remain true to their faith.

The house was once about a third bigger than it is today. It is thought that the third that was removed was done so deliberately and the stone and bricks reused elsewhere around the estate. It would once have looked extremely grand indeed. Gradually over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the house was slowly stripped of valuables and the interior fittings. The family preferred to live at their Coughton Court estate. It

wasn't lived in much other than by the occasional tenant or governess. Parts fell into disrepair until it was finally put up for sale in the 1920s. Over the years the many hundreds of acres of land were sold off and all that remained of the Harvington Estate was the house itself, the moated island, and a small field. When it went to auction it didn't sell – probably because it was in such a poor state and no one could really do anything with a tumbled down, moated old pile. It was shortly after that that Ellen Ferris offered to buy it. She lived locally and knew of the important heritage of the building and its place in the Catholic life of the country. Ellen believed it was worth saving.

The house was purchased by Ellen and handed over the archdiocese when it was in quite a decrepit state. When ivy was removed from one end, the house half fell down. Since the 1920s there has been a committee driving the renovation of the house and it is largely due to their efforts that today's house is as outstanding as it is. Ellen Ferris's son was the MP, Robert Ferris, who rose to become a prominent politician and was given a peerage in 1974 when he took the name Lord Harvington. Later, Lord Harvington bestowed a considerable legacy which helped with a number of modern refurbishments.

Each year the diocese gathers at Harvington to remember and honour the English Martyrs. In particular, we pray with and for those martyrs who were active in the area. Principal among these was St John Wall.

The house contains all kinds of artefacts linked to the archdiocese and to the enormously rich Catholic heritage that the house has. The volunteer guides interpret and assist thousands of visitors each year, including a great many school children. It is quite unlike any other country house I've visited and is a labyrinth that is just ripe for exploring. I would urge you to visit Harvington Hall – it isn't far and it depicts the way Catholic life in this country has evolved over many centuries. There are not many buildings like this in the country, and even fewer in the ownership and stewardship of the Catholic church.

*Edd Hogan*

# The Walsingham Pilgrimage

13<sup>th</sup> October to 15<sup>th</sup> October 2017



Thirty five of us set off on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October at 12noon. The excellent planning by Edd Hogan had started many months before and we had already received an outline of the two days. More details were given after we boarded the coach. It was explained that everyone was free to choose how much or how little they took part in the organised aspects of the pilgrimage. People were able to decide what was important for them and this gave a wonderful feeling of freedom to the weekend.

Some people had visited Walsingham before, for others it was the first time. The group was made up of people mainly from St Joseph's plus other local parishes including St Wulstan's, St George's and parishioners from Upton and Ross.

At 8pm in the Church of the Annunciation, in the grounds of Elmham House, there was a Pilgrim Service with Sacrament of the Sick, led by Fr Pat and one of the priests from Walsingham.

The next morning the day started at 8.15 with Morning Prayers, followed by breakfast. We collected our packed lunch and walked in bright sunshine and in glorious countryside, saying the Rosary, led by Fr Pat, along the Pilgrim Way from Great Walsingham to the Catholic shrine at Little Walsingham about a mile away. Some people went by coach and met us at the Shrine. When we arrived there was an opportunity to visit the Slipper Chapel, take part in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, or just sit and reflect in the quiet of the gardens. Mass was at 12 noon. It was a moving and an uplifting experience for us all and Fr Pat concelebrated.

After Mass we had our packed lunch together on the picnic tables and after that we had free time until Vespers at 6pm. Some people stayed at the Shrine, others went back to the village to visit the sites there and some went to Wells Next the Sea and enjoyed a walk along the estuary and an ice cream.

Supper was at 6.30 and at 8pm there was a candle lit procession in the gardens of Elmham House.

Sunday was another beautiful day which started with Morning Prayers at 8.15 followed by breakfast. We again walked to the Shrine or went by coach and had the opportunity to spend time there praying, reflecting and discussing.

Mass was at 12noon and again it was very inspirational to see members of the group doing readings and assisting with the Offertory procession. There were pilgrims from other parts of the UK at the Mass and everyone was in good voice for the hymns.

After a picnic lunch we left the Shrine by early afternoon and arrived back at St Joseph's around 7pm after a very beautiful and inspirational Pilgrimage.

But what did it mean for us? Some of the group were happy to share their thoughts and reflections.

Here is a selection:

The Pilgrimage made me feel surrounded by love.

It is a privilege to be here, everything just 'flowed' with no irritations.

My first visit to Walsingham, what a wonderful experience, uplifting, new friendships formed and my spirit renewed.

Over the years we have made several visits to Walsingham and we feel that this time it has been the most spiritual and prayerful experience, mainly due to Fr Pat's inspirational homilies and insights into the Scriptures. We have been privileged to be present at two beautiful celebrations of Holy Mass in the Basilica, together with pilgrims from all over England, Poland and India. We were particularly impressed by the number of parents bringing their children and young people to the Shrine. We were very grateful to Edd (Hogan) for organising everything so well, which resulted in a most enjoyable and comfortable stay at Elmham House among such caring and friendly parishioners of St Joseph's.

What did I learn, the power of friendship, of sharing food and walks, how much we can learn from each other when we have time to listen.

Our impression of the pilgrimage was that it represented a 'complete package'. It had ingredients of the spiritual, community, good humour, friendship and challenge. It was certainly beyond our hopes and expectations. A real blessing.

The name Walsingham sounds like WalsTZingham and many of our pilgrim group must have felt like doing that after such a joyous and uplifting weekend. We pilgrims went to visit and pray at the Shrine of Our Lady. Her gift to us, certainly to me, was sheer joy, happiness and love to those around us. On Saturday morning saying the Rosary on the Pilgrims Way I prayed for my late husband and family and later on during the very holy and beautiful Mass at the Church of the Annunciation, I became aware of the very close presence of my family. They were all there, and my husband praying with me. It was an extraordinary experience. I felt like walking, or should I say waltzing, on air for the rest of this very lovely and memorable weekend.

With special thanks to Edd Hogan for organising everything so well, making sure that we got to where we needed to be at the right time and to John our coach driver from Aston's for his expertise, kindness and ability to manoeuvre the coach around very narrow Norfolk lanes!

More details on Our Lady's shrine at Walsingham can be found at [www.walsingham.co.uk](http://www.walsingham.co.uk)

*Maggie Griffiths*

*With thanks to all the people on the pilgrimage who provided comments, especially Mary, Janet, Geraldine, Grania, Liz, Chris, Margaret and Christina.*



# **The Big Picture: a Bible Course**

Each person that has attended the 'Big Picture' evenings this autumn will have a different experience and a different view, the following are purely my own personal thoughts after the first four sessions ...

## **What is it?**

'The Big Picture' is an informal Bible course of 12 sessions. The course materials are from 'CaFE' or 'Catholic Faith Explorations' group which produces many resources and is linked to 'CREW', a Catholic Charismatic Renewal Organisation. At St. Joseph's, sessions are scheduled for Tuesday evenings both before and after Christmas. We met, usually in the McEnnis room, sitting around at tables 'café style'. There was a different 15 minute film each week so that we could see and hear a wide range of speakers including individuals, married couples, priests and monks. Fr. Pat and Deacon Paul (from Worcester) also contributed.

We each bought the course book which contains the same films on DVD. The book has suggested short Bible readings for six days each week plus reflections and tasks to think about. There is often one longer read as well, such as a psalm or chapter from the Bible. The readings and DVD films present the various topics of what CaFE describe as the 'big picture' or Salvation History. The book has space to write a personal response to questions and reflections. The aim is to 'dig' and 'chew over' the readings prayerfully and reflectively in our own daily time as well as when we are back together, with 'heart' and Spirit, not just 'head'.

## **What I loved best...**

- A great mix of people attended, including both real teenagers and recycled teenagers. I especially loved talking with others about what really matters. I sat with two or three people who I felt I know quite well and with two people who I previously knew only by sight and whom I'd now like to count as firm friends. They were all so great and I learned a lot from the different ideas shared. We are very lucky in this parish, surrounded by lovely people on all sides.
- I thought the Bible readings were brilliantly chosen and offered a rich store to dip into and I know I will return to them again and again.

- It was great to have a structure and focus each week and a great deal of love and thought has clearly gone into the materials.
- I feel I am learning to navigate around the Bible, getting much more practice than I usually do.
- The sessions were well-organised, comfortable and enjoyable. Grateful thanks are due to all who contributed, including those who made the Mc Ennis room into a mini-cinema each week, complete with refreshments!

### **What I liked least...**

- I found some of the DVD material a challenge. It irritated me that the 'café' materials declare themselves to be 'inspirational', 'engaging' 'amazing' and tended to tell me how wonderful they were. Call me a rebel but I have a morbid fear of anything like that and I had to work hard, especially at first, not to be put off by this kind of approach and repeated film footage of everyone nodding and smiling at the presenters!
- It surprised me that the DVDs seemed to convey only a literal message at times, for example often referring to the story of Adam and Eve as an actual historical 'event'. Some people see it this way, others do not, but I think that the two possibilities should be clearly welcomed on the course. I think it is this sort of message that has helped turn some people away from the Church. If, in all conscience, people cannot believe in things in a literal sense, they may just feel obliged to maintain their integrity by walking away. I'm veering away from the topic (and I did say this was just a personal view) but I feel that the laity could be treated as thinking people more often by the Institutional Church with minimal risk and great potential for growth. Parish priests manage it!

### **What I'd like to do next...**

I'd like to carry on this course! Overall, this has been great for me and very much appreciated. Thanks to each and every one who has played a part.

*Teresa Lehane*

## Reflections on the Altar in Stanbrook Abbey

*I will go to the altar of God, the God of my gladness and joy.* The altar is a symbol of Christ. Every time we enter our church, we bow before the altar as we go to pray.

Our altar stone is carved from Yorkstone, a tight-grained sandstone rock embedded with minerals. Weighing several tons, it was lowered into place with crane and lifting tackle before our church was roofed, and 'bedded' on its plinth in the same orientation as it was formed in the ground. It is ancient rock consecrated for worship in our modern church.

Despite its great weight, its form creates the illusion of lightness. Designed by the Brazilian liturgical artist, Claudio Pasto, the altar's sides taper very gently so its base is narrower than the top, and, because its mounting is concealed, it appears to float on its shadow. The embedded minerals, iron oxides and feldspar; reveal ochre and ruddy strata in changing light, making it a living rock.

A cross with equal sides is carved in black onto the altar front, bearing the signs for Alpha and Omega on its horizontal arms. Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, and the equally sided cross is the cosmic symbol of redemption reaching out to 'the breadth and the length, the height and the depth' of the world, revealing 'the utter fullness of God' (Eph 3.19).

Our altar stands on a circular plinth of Purbeck stone, flanked by black wrought iron candlesticks. Designed by artist-blacksmith Alan Knight of Droitwich in 1973 for our Worcester monastery, they find their perfect setting here: their beautiful simplicity harmonising with the black altar carving. Thus our past and present meet.

The altar, consecrated on 6 September 2015 by Bishop Terence Patrick Draney, was rubbed with holy oil, inset with the relics of Saint Fulgentia (brought with us from Worcester), and dressed in a fine white linen altar cloth. From this altar we, the community and our visitors, receive the living presence of Christ in his body and blood at daily Mass. Through the sacrament we become the living stones building his Body the Church. Stillness and movement, time and eternity, rock and light meet here in this altar, symbol of Christ's beauty and living presence.

***Sr Petra***

*Reproduced with permission from Stanbrook Benedictines, the magazine of the community in Wass*

## Visiting Stanbrook Abbey – August 2017

We moved to Callow End in 1988 just five minutes' walk from Stanbrook Abbey. I can't claim that we chose the house because of its proximity to the Abbey but I was pleased when I realised how close it was. St Joseph's became our parish but I often went to Stanbrook for Sunday and weekday Masses.

When the nuns left in May 2009 and moved to Wass in North Yorkshire we were sad to see them go. I heard news from time to time of their new home and often thought that I would like to visit. The opportunity arose in August of this year when we booked to spend a week in Northumberland and broke our journey with an overnight stay in the village of Helmsley, only six miles north east of Wass. On the following day, before setting off northwards on the rest of our journey, we decided to spend the morning seeking out the new Stanbrook Abbey.

We were unsure about the precise location of the new abbey but were confident that our sat nav would come to the rescue. Unfortunately the signal disappeared as we travelled across the North York Moors National Park so we resorted to the tried and trusted approach of finding a 'local' and asking the way! As we drove up the steep hill and turned into the Abbey grounds we were immediately struck by how unusual and different the new 'Stanbrook' was compared to the Victorian splendour of its 19<sup>th</sup> century predecessor. Ahead of us was a light brown largely single storey building surrounded by grass overlooking fields and spectacular views of North Yorkshire.

Despite the building's modern, environmentally friendly appearance (it features solar panels, a woodchip boiler, rainwater harvesting and a green roof of sedum grass to insulate the building and attract local wildlife) it fits perfectly within the surrounding countryside.

As we entered the Abbey grounds we were struck by how quiet and still it felt. We were keen to explore further and I had discovered that there was a Mass later that morning. We knocked on the outer door to see if we could gain access to the Abbey church and perhaps make some purchases in the bookshop.

Sister Hilda opened the door and once she realised where we had come from, happily chatted about the people we knew in Callow End, not to mention the rather different activities now taking place in the old

Stanbrook! She told us that when they first moved to Wass it had taken quite a bit of getting used to but now they were very happy in their new home. We were then shown the new bookshop and were greeted by Sister Benedicta. We spent some time chatting to her about the 'old and the new' as well as making a few purchases!

Sister Benedicta kindly took me along to the new Abbey church before Mass, stopping briefly on the way to talk to Sister Josephine. As I entered the church, I was immediately struck by its simplicity and tranquility. To the right, facing south is a floor to ceiling window which bathes the whole church in light. The majestic crucifix in the apse was brought from Stanbrook but looks as though it was designed especially for the new church.

As soon as the nuns filed in and started singing I felt a surge of familiarity and peace as their beautiful voices soared throughout the church in praise of God.

When the Mass finished, I left the church feeling spiritually uplifted and thankful to God that I had had the opportunity to visit and see for myself this wonderful building which sits so easily in the surrounding countryside and seems to me to have achieved what the nuns set out to do when they moved from Callow End.

If you are ever in the area I would highly recommend a visit; you could always stay at one of the Crief Lodges run by the nuns or even do as we did and visit Ampleforth College and Abbey which is only a couple of miles away.

I still miss having the nuns of Stanbrook nearby but I can see for them their new purpose built house is more practical and suitable. I shall definitely visit again!

*Colette Phelps*

**T**hank You as always to all our contributors. Please keep the copy coming and watch the bulletin for the next copy date.

## **Norma - Parish, Pacifism and Panache**

My first encounter with Norma was in the car park of St Joseph's in 1985 when she stepped out of a snazzy red sports car, dressed in jeans and with her collar turned up in characteristic style. My first thought was, that's a lady with real panache and I was not wrong. Frequently stopped by police when driving her beloved MG at night, they were invariably taken aback to be confronted by a formidable lady of mature years, rather than the boy racer they were expecting to find. Norma's standard response was, 'What is it, officer, that you think I am doing wrong?' This was always followed up by taking a note of the frequently tongue tied and invariably shocked constable's number.

Norma Mary Hughes was born in Cardiff in 1921. Her earliest memories were of going to the cinema with a much loved older brother. He was a professional musician, a drummer, who provided atmospheric sound effects for the silent films and allowed Norma to sit at his feet while he played. She proudly helped by ringing a doorbell when prompted, to add a sense of realism to the cinematic experience. She retained a love of the 'movies' throughout her life. Recently discovered in her personal effects were two Cathays High School for Girls exercise books, which had been put to a use surely not envisaged by Cathays High. They are full of cuttings from newspapers and magazines about all the famous Hollywood movie stars of the day, Clark Gable being a clear favorite. When Margaret Mitchell's 'Gone with the Wind' was published in 1936 Norma was desperate to read it but had to wait her turn for the book at Boots lending library. When she eventually got her hands on it she secretly read it at school concealed behind a propped up text book, all thoughts of study cast to the wind!

At a time when the majority of children left school at fourteen Norma stayed on until she was sixteen and then left to become a clerk at Cardiff docks. Always acutely aware of injustice and social inequality, she became an ardent member of the Labour Party and horrified her mother by selling the 'Socialist Worker' on street corners in central Cardiff.

Her loyalty to the Labour Party lasted until the advent of Tony Blair and New Labour, which she thought strayed too far from the core principles of the party she had joined in her youth. She retained a keen and incisive interest in politics but was not an admirer of the more modern brand of

party leader, once describing David Cameron and Tony Blair as 'just on the right side of good looking but with no substance'. It was not unknown for her to hurl expletives at the television when either of them appeared! It seems fitting that the last book she read before her death was John Bew's 'Citizen Clem', a biography of Clement Attlee, one of her political heroes and probably not on 'the right side of good looking'!

When war broke out Norma, always a woman of strong and sincere principles, registered as a Conscientious Objector. She convincingly defended her position before a tribunal and went on to do her bit in the Land Army. She was posted to Wiltshire and whenever she was able to she travelled by rail back home to Cardiff. These journeys were always disrupted by troop movements or bombing raids, which along with the blackout meant that travel was very difficult. On one occasion whilst waiting for a long delayed train Norma met a downcast sailor who was finding it impossible to get home for a short spell of leave. Always prepared to help she invited him back to her parents' home in Cardiff. Further down the line, and with yet another delay, Norma added a similarly distressed airman to her retinue and eventually they all arrived at the Hughes house in pitch darkness in the early hours of the morning. One can only imagine that her mother was glad the journey ended when it did before kind hearted Norma collected a full set of servicemen from all the armed forces!

After the war ended Norma continued with a career in administration, working in the Health Service and in education, eventually becoming Head of the Schools Department in West Bromwich, Birmingham. At the age of forty she decided to experience education at the chalk face and trained to become a teacher. She was quickly promoted to become Head of Pendock School where she remained until she retired. Retaining a life-long love of learning Norma turned to yet another form of education in retirement, gaining an Open University Degree and continuing to successfully study for a Master's degree in History at Birmingham University.

Norma's pacifist principles stayed with her throughout her life. She was a member of the Greenham Common women's peace camp in the 1980s. This was a uniquely female protest against the establishment of American nuclear missiles at RAF Greenham Common. Fittingly the protest was kicked off by a Welsh group – Women for Life on Earth. At

the peak of the protest in 1983, 70,000 women formed a 14 mile long human chain from Greenham to Aldermaston. The last missiles left the base in 1991.

Norma joined St Joseph's parish in the 1980s having been an Anglican all her life. Her decision to convert came after the visit of Pope John Paul II during the Falklands crisis. Persuaded that this was an historic occasion which was not to be missed, Norma joined Dave and Pat Taylor for the trip to Coventry airfield. She was moved and impressed by the Holy Father's anti-war address to the crowds but when it came to the distribution of Holy Communion Norma felt excluded and after much thought she went to speak to Fr Antony, then Parish Priest of St Joseph's. She kept him on his toes during her period of instruction with incisive and penetrating questioning and on the occasion of her reception into the Church he said, with some relief, 'We made it, Norma!'

Norma was a very active parishioner. She was one of the founder members of the One World Group, a governor at the parish school, a member of the parish magazine team, the First Holy Communion team and finally relinquished organising young readers at the age of ninety five. She could always be relied on, and her energy made her a valued member of all these enterprises. She could also be relied on for a forthright opinion but this would be tempered by her great kindness and thoughtfulness. The esteem the young readers held her in is testament to those qualities. Norma was a great servant of this parish, very much loved and greatly missed. May she rest in peace.

*Angela Park*

## **The Parish Activity Survey**

Chris Burger, Chair of the PAC, decided to initiate the recent parish activity survey shortly after being co-opted on to the PAC, when the question of how more people might be encouraged to take part in parish life came up at a meeting. 'I realised that much of the information about parish life was either non-existent or way out of date. Refreshment was a starting point! The update can be put on a database in the office and updated, if and when, very easily. Lindsey was brilliant and realised

that it would also help her to get a grip on what goes on. Further to that, there are people who would like to get involved but don't have the information or ideas on ways to use their gifts or where to be involved socially.'

Parishioners responded with relevant information and you may remember seeing the notice below in the bulletin over the summer:

*The recent survey of our parish activities revealed these statistics:*

*Number. of different activities – 28, plus number of different inter-Faith activities - 4.*

*There are also those who have added their names to a 'Contact list' as possible helpers at parish events.*

*We are truly blessed by those who serve us through each of the many activities. While being obviously thankful to the parishioners involved, there is always a need for additional help. Many parishioners have loyally committed themselves to serving us for many years. But if the life of the parish is to continue to flourish, it is so important that each of us consider how we might continue to use or add our abilities, skills or qualities to parish life in the future. We must all be aware that parish life will, almost certainly, change and that there may be an even greater need for lay participation.*

*There is now a list of all the parish activities in the narthex. Do look at the list and, at least, consider if there is any way that you could offer your service.*

*If you think you could or would like to help in any way, please complete an accompanying slip and put it in the box provided. Or/and speak to Lindsey in the parish office who will pass on your offer to the relevant person.*

It's still not too late to look at the very varied list and complete a slip. There's something there for everyone.

# The Young Magazine

For all of us, Advent is a period of waiting and of preparing. For children, impatiently counting off the days on an Advent calendar, it seems as though Christmas will never arrive; for adults, there never appear to be enough hours in the day to make sure everything is ready in time!

For many people nowadays, there is a confusion between the season of Advent and the feast of Christmas, with celebrations starting a long way before December 25. There are all sorts of Christmas parties, dinners, concerts, shows and events in the early weeks of December, and very often not much at all in the official twelve days of Christmas going into the New Year. In many houses and nearly all shops, the decorations will have gone up before the beginning of Advent and may be taken down on Boxing Day.

For us as Christians, however, Advent is a very special season. It is not just about getting ready to celebrate a moment in time when a special baby was born; it's also an opportunity to look forward to the day when Jesus will come again, not as a helpless child, but in power. The readings in Advent underline this by pointing to both the first and the second coming of Jesus. They look back to the prayers and longings of the Old Testament prophets and then to the time of Jesus' birth; they also show us the way forward in the shared *hope* of eternal life. Through them, we learn more about the spiritual journey we are taking, from being filled with *joy* in the birth of the Messiah, to finding him present in our world today and then fixing our sights on the final destination of being with him forever. This is the journey of *faith* that we make after accepting him in our lives, responding with *love* to his call and making a commitment to follow him.

His birth at Bethlehem makes possible his coming into the lives of those who are willing to receive him. He will be born again in our minds, actions, relationships and experiences. This is something that we can see as work in progress, so we need to pray constantly the Advent refrain, "Come Lord Jesus, come." In this way we can think of our lives as one long Advent, spent waiting, being formed in patience.

We are inspired as we wait by these themes of hope, joy, faith and love; we can find examples of them all in readings from both the Old and New Testaments.

## **HOPE**

*I wait eagerly for the Lord's help, and in his word I trust. Psalm 130, v.5*

*Because of his great mercy he gave us new life by raising Jesus Christ from death. This fills us with a living hope, and so we look forward to possessing the rich blessings that God keeps for his people. 1 Peter 1:3-5*

## **JOY**

*The desert will rejoice, and flowers will bloom in the wilderness. Isaiah 35, v1*

*So you rejoice with a great and glorious joy which words cannot express, because you are receiving the salvation of your souls, which is the purpose of your faith in him. 1 Peter 1:8-9*

## **FAITH**

*Acknowledge that the Lord is God. He made us, and we belong to him; we are His people, we are His flock. Psalm 100, v.3*

*Your faith, which is much more precious than gold, must also be tested, so that it may endure. Then you will receive praise and glory and honour on the day when Christ Jesus is revealed. 1 Peter 1:7*

## **LOVE**

*For those who honour the Lord, his love lasts forever, and His goodness endures for all generations. Psalm 103, v.17*

*Love one another earnestly with all your heart. 1 Peter 1:22.*

Because Jesus came into our world that first Christmas, we can live in hope, joy, faith and love until he comes again. They are the same themes which dominate the season of Lent, another time of waiting and of preparing. The Church shows us this connection between the two seasons by the use of the colour purple, traditionally representing royalty, in both Advent and Lent. We are familiar with the custom of "giving up something for Lent" (eg. chocolate) but in

earlier times, Advent was also a time of fasting. There was a greater emphasis on confessing and repenting as well; it is a good time to prepare for new life, for the birth of Christ within us, by examining our conscience and being receptive to the Holy Spirit, so that we can show loving kindness towards those around us.

It's not just the colour purple that is symbolic in how we decorate the church during Advent. Making and displaying an Advent wreath has ancient origins, probably pagan, but it has deep meanings, too. The wreath is circular because a circle has no beginning or end and so it is a reminder of God's unending love for us. The fresh evergreens from which the wreath is made are a sign of life in wintertime, when not much is growing; they point to the hope of eternal life which we find in Christ.

The candles on the wreath contrast darkness and light, reminding us that just as Jesus was the light of the world, we ourselves are called on to shine with joy for other people, as we reflect the light of God's love and grace. As we count the Sundays in Advent by lighting the four outer candles, we are reminded of the faith of those who waited for the coming of the Messiah hundreds of years ago. The candle in the centre, usually white and often larger than the others, is the Christ candle, representing the fulfilment of his promise. This is how Zechariah describes the birth of Jesus: *"The rising sun will come to us from heaven, to shine on those living in darkness."* (Luke 1, v. 79)

Advent literally means the coming. We cannot come to God; He is beyond our reach. However, he can come to us; we are not beneath his mercy. He has come already; we see him in our fellow Christians, in his Word, in the sacraments and in our souls.

As Advent ends and Christmas begins, we celebrate in all sorts of festive ways that make us happy; singing carols, eating the traditional foods, spending time with family and friends, and of course, exchanging presents. This is because God gave the world the gift of his only son, Jesus. He didn't come wrapped in silk and gold but in swaddling clothes and lying in an animal's feeding trough. The greatest gift ever given could not be recognised by the wrapping;



the message for us is to look beyond appearances and find gifts that will show how we are living out that good news of great joy which we proclaim at Christmas.

If you're wondering about what to get for people, here are a few suggestions that I came across and which I share with you;

For your enemy, forgiveness.  
For your opponent, tolerance.  
For a friend, your heart.  
For a customer, service.  
For all, charity.  
For every child, a good example.  
For yourself, respect.

*Helen O'Connor*

**Groan...groan...**

Dad; What did I say I'd do if I caught you stealing mince pies again?  
Ben; That's funny, I can't remember either.

What do you get if you cross a woodpecker with a pigeon?  
A bird that knocks before it delivers the message.

What's covered in custard and complains a lot?  
Apple grumble.



'Rotten swizz! Not even one chorus of Jingle Bells!'