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### *Plus Other Features*

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

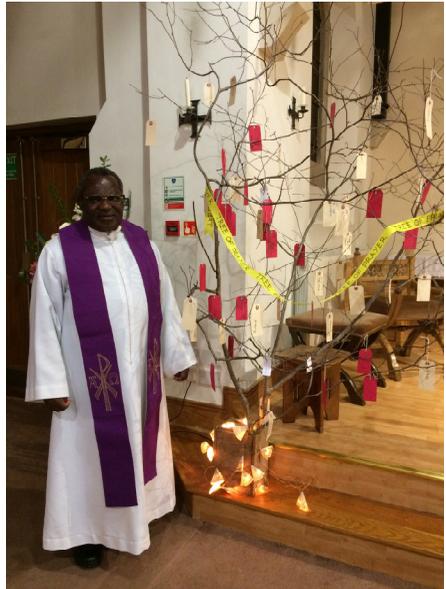
## From Fr Naz

**Healing Service** 10<sup>th</sup> November was the day set for a Healing Service in our parish. I just have to thank all the people of the parish and others who came to this service. Our parish has so many homes where healing ministries are being carried out through the care for senior citizens who have contributed so much to their country and beyond. As the Gospels tell us healing was central to the ministry of Jesus. It was a sign of God's kingdom, bringing renewal and wholeness of life to those who turned to God in their need. Jesus intended the healing ministry to be taken over by his disciples when he sent out them with the commission to *'proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal'* (Luke 9:2).

At Mass and in every act of worship, the Church celebrates the grace of God who desires wholeness of body but also wholeness of mind and spirit for all people. At this service of healing, we focused on that aspect of God's character.

Those present were invited to bring to God their own frailty and brokenness which affects us not only in physical illness but also in guilt, anxiety, burdens which weigh us. These include concerns for others, the church, victim of abuse and concerns of the world we live in.

I was very much edified by the response of the people of the parish. Even those who could not come to the service had hung labels with names and symbols of their loved ones in need of healing and wholeness on the tree branch situated in the church. Thanks to Anne Lewis for setting up the tree. I would like to thank Carol Anne who organised the background CD music and who did the laying of hands with Viv Jones prior to the anointing of those who came forward. A vote of thanks to Mary Carroll and Pauline Kirton for leading in the prayers. All this was requested of them there and then prior to the service. It is my hope



that we can form a parish-based think tank to organise the next Healing Service. It has been proposed to me that we hold another service in the summer when more elderly people can come to an evening service in daylight.

**Episcopal Parish Visitation** From time to time the ordinary of the diocese makes a thorough visit of the parishes of his own diocese. This enables the bishop to be in touch with the people of the parish and be engaged in some of the pastoral activities of the parish. The bishop does not come as an Ofsted inspector but rather as the father wanting to encourage and render support to the parishes of his diocese. Such visitations give the bishop a chance to see the needs of the diocese.

Next year on the weekend of 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> March Archbishop Bernard Longley will be making his visit to our parish of St Joseph's here in Malvern. He will stop for one night and will be preaching at both weekend Masses. During this visit the archbishop will want to have a tour of the parish guided by the parish priest and those who support him in ministry. Malvern being known for the number of care homes, taking the archbishop to a few selected housebound of the parish will be an essential item to include on the programme. Other engagements will surely include meetings with the PAC, Finance Committee and Safeguarding representatives. We also have a few organisations such as the One World Group, SVP and those engaged in some social action. 'Malvern Welcomes' with the Syrian refugees will be an area to explore. Another outstanding feature particular to Malvern is Churches Together. We have such a vibrant ecumenical spirit in Malvern and the archbishop himself, being such an ecumenically minded person, would enjoy meeting leaders of other churches and he will be in the position to give a word of encouragement to CT Malvern. The presence of our Catholic school at some point will be a thing to consider but for sure meeting representatives of the school cannot be ignored. Our Youth Group is another area to consider. I have not yet had a very close contact with them but I need to.

We cannot rule out the possibility of individuals who may want to meet the archbishop on their own. Should anyone wish to do so please book a slot with Fr Naz beforehand.

A meeting involving a number of parishioners will be called to thrash out the visitation programme.

**Advent** On the last Sunday of November we shall be celebrating the Feast of Christ the King. We shall be closing one liturgical year and shall be looking forward to the birth of the new liturgical year to be ushered in with

the First Sunday of Advent. Advent is a time of waiting. For many of us it is a time for waiting for Christmas - or perhaps waiting for a better direction with the impasse of Brexit and with so many questions being raised about the world we live in. But Advent is also waiting for Jesus to return. Jesus promised that he would return one day and that all the world would then know him as Lord and King. During Advent we remember this promise. We look forward to the time when all shall be well, and all hurts and tensions be healed. But the main theme of Advent is hope. Not just the vague hope of wishful thinking but the certain hope of fulfilment of that promise.

Advent begins in penitence: its colour is purple, the symbol for Christians of preparation and forgiveness. We reflect on our lives and realise our inadequacies. Let us not allow the fever of shopping ruin our opportunity for penitence. Have a blessed Advent time.

*Fr Naz*

## **PAC Report**

*NOTE...Much of the perspective for the information below can be seen in copies of the PAC minutes located in the narthex.*

Practical issues...

**Maintenance.** A quinquennial inspection of the church property has been carried out. The report will be discussed with the Maintenance Committee. No major issues are apparent, and the next inspection will be in five years' time.

The new kitchen has been completed and is up and running. New carpet has been laid in the organ loft. It is hoped that the outside painting and woodwork will be completed before Christmas.

There has been much discussion about the possibility of new floor covering in the church. This will be addressed in earnest once the problem of dripping wax has been remedied. This applies particularly to the sconce candles, which are also staining the walls, and to the votive candles, with alternative ideas being researched.

**Three areas of social concern** are currently being addressed. Two arose following the AGM in March.

It was agreed that we need to address the area of inclusion related to LBGT. Subsequently, we have also identified the need to examine where we might be more inclusive in all minority issues.

We are limited in the space to display items of information and the display boards are currently being assessed. This has become of greater importance as we seek to promote information around climate change and promotion of our wonderful primary school.

### **Spiritual Issues...**

Over the last few years we have been able to enjoy the occasional pilgrimage. These have proved of great benefit to the life of the parish community. Subsequently Edd Hogan has agreed to monitor and respond to interest from parishioners in this respect.

On the Day of Prayer for Vocations in July, we followed up Fr Naz's initiative in having a whole day of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, begun at morning mass and completed with benediction. Many parishioners attended throughout the day, providing a very rewarding personal and collective spiritual experience.

Fourteen of our Eucharistic Ministers attended the first, of what we hope will be ongoing, meeting with Fr Naz. This was both enjoyable and instructive. Subsequently there have been some changes in the approach to this ministry at mass, performing eucharistic services in the parish and in taking the sacrament to the sick and housebound.

Fr Naz instigated discussion around the confirmation programme which will reach its completion on Friday 20th November, and also towards the establishment of the Journey in Faith programme beginning on Tuesday 5 November, which will then continue each Tuesday through to Easter. The programme is open to anyone who would like to explore the Catholic Faith with a view to becoming a catholic, as well as for those of us who might like to deepen/develop our own understanding, whilst adding support.

The highlight of the summer was the very enjoyable parish celebration of Fr Naz's Ruby Anniversary. Quite naturally discussion time was given to this event, which was then successfully carried into motion by several hardworking parishioners, under the guidance of Anne Lewis.

Following a first meeting earlier in the year, a group of liturgists have met with Fr Naz to discuss proposals for the various feast days and events leading up to the new year. These will be evident in the bulletin over the coming weeks.

**GDPR/Security** has been an important and ongoing issue. The security of parishioners' private information and of our buildings has, and will, take up further time for discussion. Some of us will be attending a training event in Worcester in November. Safety of our buildings, possessions and, most importantly, our staff, was discussed at some length at our last meeting, with resulting ideas and options being investigated.

## **Further Future Events**

At Christmas, we will, unfortunately, be losing the services of Edyta as a member of our parish administration team. We have recently advertised and, of course, hope to fill the position as soon as possible.

In March we will be having a visitation from the Archbishop, who will be wanting to look at different areas of parish life. To facilitate this there will be a meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> December.

## **The Future**

The PAC is always keen to promote parish life in all its different guises.

It is becoming ever more evident that many who serve our parish are becoming older and, in some cases, overloaded. We all have qualities and abilities that, even if offered in the smallest of contexts, would help to keep things running effectively as well as engendering new life and ideas. Someone who could form a 'social' committee, provide help with children's liturgy, become an altar server, for instance. There are several needs. Please think about it and have a word with Fr Naz.

*Chris Burger*

## **Living the Life You Have**

Liz Docker used to be able to get to church, but now cannot, given her disability. When asked how she coped with Parkinsons, this was her reply, which she has allowed me (a friend) to share.

"We looked after 24 foster children, over a number of years. Among them were seven very sick and vulnerable little beings. Jamie, for instance, came aged two with an incurable condition which meant he could not move his limbs or speak. But he was strangely content, 'living the life he had', and always responded to me. (He also responded to Billie, the cat! If Jamie was not well, I would bring him downstairs to his 'day cot'. One day, I saw Billie jump in and snuggle at his feet. We watched carefully, but soon found that the cat always stayed at his feet, and Jamie loved this warm purring presence, so we let him be - to the horror of social workers and a visiting priest!)

All my sick foster children had this lovely capacity to 'live the life they were given'. As a carer I learnt from them that our role is to support them to live 'the life they have'. Now, as Parkinsons grips me more fiercely month by month, I try to live what they taught me."

*Liz Docker (transcribed by the friend)*

## The Induction of Fr Long as Parish Priest Our Lady of Fatima, Quinton



Fr Long at the end of his Induction Mass

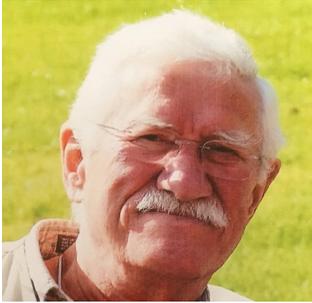
Quinton is on the outskirts of Birmingham – an easy commute into the city centre. It is also home to the parish of Our Lady of Fatima and on 15<sup>th</sup> October Fr Long was inducted as the new parish priest, taking over from Fr Craig.

The church was absolutely bursting – a great outpouring of faith and love to see a new priest inducted. Fr Pat, Fr Naz and a host of other priests were there as were people from the parishes where Fr Long has served since his ordination. A good contingent was present from St Joseph's, which was good to see.

This is Fr Long's first parish where he is parish priest and we pray for him as he establishes his ministry in Birmingham.

*Edd Hogan*

## David (Charlie) Hill 1938-2019



This is the story of a lifetime soldier who moved to Malvern with his family and joined St Joseph's parish and became caretaker of the church.

Charlie had a love of walking the hills, be it in Germany, Switzerland or Malvern. After living in Worcester for four years and belonging to St George's parish, his dream came true and he moved to Malvern in 1982, with Monika and a daughter and grandson in tow.

Charlie fully retired from Army life in 1993. He wasn't to be idle for long though, since he soon became caretaker of St Joseph's, which he was for several years. He took great pride in his role as caretaker and made many new friends through the parish. You could always guarantee the paths were cleared in the winter months and made safe in the early hours. He loved gardening and woodwork and got to use these skills during his time at St Joseph's. His handy work can still be seen in church. The boards that display the hymn numbers were made by him as was the Christmas stable, a robust structure built to last. Sue Stubbings remembers with fondness how he showed her how it was built with bits and bobs and how to put it together and away again. Every piece had been numbered.

Charlie found something special in his new family at St Joseph's and at Easter 1994 Fr Nicholas received Charlie into the Church with Sue Stubbings and several others. It was a time of great joy and happiness. Charlie settled into the Catholic way of life and enjoyed going to 6 o'clock mass with Monika and Chris. By that time he had a second grandchild, Charlotte.

Life took on a new challenge for Charlie and his family when he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. The family gained support from joining new support groups such as Singing for the Brain, The Dementia Cafe, Malvern Carers' Group and St Martin's day care centre. Christine can recollect with great emotion two Christmases ago when she took Charlie, her father, to church to see the crib and light a candle. After sitting and saying a prayer with him she asked who had made the stable. As clear as day Charlie answered, "I did!" He had looked at her with great surprise, as if wondering why she should ask. It was an emotional time since Charlie did not even know what time of year it was but being at St Joseph's seemed to bring him a

sense of peace and clarity and he knew when he was amongst friends, even if he could not remember their names any more.

With the help of family and friends Charlie was well cared for and lived his life with much love, care, dignity and laughter. Special thanks to Mike, Vivien and Win. He was particularly fond of his grandson Ben who always made him laugh. Charlie also loved having his great-grandchildren come to visit him, Poppy who is five and little Charlie, who was named after him. This always made Charlie laugh out loud when he was told this lovely little baby boy was named after him. To see Charlie with his great-grandchildren was always very touching. Poppy for a five year old was very attentive and caring towards him. (The poem below, read at Charlie's funeral, sums this up well.)

Charlie was buried on 16 September at Malvern Cemetery, where he rests in peace amongst several of his friends.

### **Poppy's Poem**

When Mummy said you had gone to sleep,  
I said it's OK as we have memories to keep.

In the end, you had memories you couldn't find.  
Sometimes confused, but always kind.

Sometimes I was too young to understand,  
But I was always there to hold your hand.

I would hold your hand to help you walk,  
I would always listen when you'd talk.

You would love to hold and squeeze me tight.  
Now it's time to say goodnight.

And although you may be gone,  
Through me and little Charlie, you will always live on.

## **Confirmation—An Enjoyable Journey**

I have been preparing for my Confirmation since the start of September, and it is a very enjoyable journey. I am learning about getting closer to God and how to pray to Him properly. Every Monday afternoon all the other people preparing for their Confirmation and our teachers meet together and we all learn together, and it's been a nice start to the week. During our lesson we've talked about all sorts of things and got to know each other better, it's been good to be able to talk about things that we don't get the time to discuss at home or at school.

One of the first things we were asked to do was to find a sponsor; they can be anyone of our choice, their job is to help us on our spiritual journey. They should be someone that we can talk to easily and someone we can ask questions of too. They must also be 16 years old or over and confirmed themselves. Your sponsor must be present during your confirmation and always there to help you, it's a job for life. I had to think really carefully about who I could choose, especially as Fr Naz said it couldn't be someone from our family. I am so pleased that the person I asked agreed to help me and I'm really happy with my choice.

We also get to choose our saint name; we are able to choose any saint that we like. They can be a patron saint of a hobby that we enjoy or have similar character traits as us. Their feast day might be on your birthday or they might be someone you want to be like and you aspire to. This saint can be someone you are able to pray to all the time and always feel connected to. During our confirmation the bishop may ask why we chose our particular name. Choosing my saint was really interesting, but it took me a very long time. I found out about so many saints that I had never heard of and their stories were amazing.

In the lessons we learnt about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how they can help us in our daily lives. We learnt how right judgement can help us in all sorts of situations, especially when we are having difficulty about what to do. At these times we can call on the Spirit for help. We also learnt about the fruits of the Spirit and how we can use them. We learn about how to show love, patience, faithfulness, peace, self-control, gentleness, kindness, goodness and joy to our friends, family and all those around us. Fr Naz explained to us what the signs of confirmation mean and how it makes us all priests, prophets and kings or queens for God.

I feel as though going on this journey I have been able to get to know myself better and discover what is really important to me, it has also made think

about those things I need help with. Once we had thought about why we wanted to be confirmed we had to write a letter to Fr Naz explaining our reasoning to him. Writing this letter really made me think about how ready I feel to be accepted into the church as an adult.

When I was baptised my parents and godparents made the choice of faith for me and now I am old enough and mature enough I know that I am ready to make that choice. I am ready to fully receive God's spirit. I want to complete this chapter of my life and start my adult journey properly and start to put what I believe into action.

I've enjoyed my preparation and I am really looking forward to my confirmation in a few weeks. I've been coming to St Joseph's since I was tiny, I've grown up in the parish, so it will be lovely to be recognised as an adult member of our church.

*Klara O'Mahoney*

## Christmas

On this day called Christmas  
Christ has come to stay.  
It is a reminder to us all  
That Christ was born today.  
He came to live among us  
So we might welcome him  
Enjoying everything he gives  
Yes every little thing.  
Whilst going to fill a census  
Mary's child was due.  
Joseph found a shepherd's hut to stay.  
What else could he do?  
On the day that Christ was born  
There was a bright star in the sky.  
Some wise men noticed that it moved,  
So went to find out why.  
They came upon the shepherd's hut,  
And took a look inside.  
They were looking for a warm place,  
In which they could abide.  
The wise men had riches with them,  
They laid them at Christ's feet.  
The star had stopped above them.  
They knew their journey was complete.

The presents that the wise men left,  
Were gold, Frankincense and myrrh  
And as the wise men departed  
Jesus did not stir.  
Some shepherds in the fields nearby  
Heard crying from the shed.  
So left what they were doing  
And gathered there instead.  
What they saw there was amazing  
They were overcome by what they saw.  
They rushed to get some presents,  
Sheep skins, food and more.  
The scene was oh so gentle  
The men could only stare.  
They thought they heard some singing.  
And they saw some angels there.  
This story shows Christ came to us all  
In love and with no fuss.  
He came to serve the rich and poor  
In fact that's all of us.  
If you find this story  
Too hard to follow through,  
Then take the Christ from Christmas  
And the best of luck to you.

*Martin Burger 11*

## **An Ecumenical Pilgrimage**

### **Rome September 30th - 7th October 2019**

*From Roger Watson*

I had the opportunity of joining a pilgrimage to Rome with about 40 others led by Canon Brian McGinley, dean of the Worcester deanery, for the Catholics and The Venerable Robert Jones, archdeacon of Worcester, for the Anglicans. The itinerary was arranged by Anthony Coles, a travel agent specializing in pilgrimages. We were also very fortunate to have had the Archbishop of Birmingham and the Bishop of Worcester with us. Their input was very valuable and helpful. The addresses they gave at the celebration of the Eucharist were inspiring.

There were three Catenians on the pilgrimage and a couple of ex Catenians. Jim Quinn, President of the Droitwich circle, got a choir together to sing at the Eucharist. Their rendition of "Drop, drop slow tears" and the Tallis "Ave Verum" were particularly moving. Well done, Jim!

To remind us that we were on pilgrimage and not on a sight-seeing tour, we would stop at strategic points in the pilgrimage such as St Peter's Square, St Peter's Basilica, various churches and the Jewish Quarter, and Archdeacon Robert would lead us in appropriate prayer. Prayer and worship played a key part in the pilgrimage. Each day there was a celebration of the Eucharist according to our respective traditions. One day there would be a Catholic Mass and on the other day an Anglican Eucharist. We only received Communion at the celebration of own church. At the other we went up to receive a blessing. It worked very well and we learnt how much we have in common both in belief and practice. On some days Father Brian led us in Morning Prayer on the coach as we travelled to our first place of interest.

I am not going to mention in detail any of the places of interest we visited as they will be included elsewhere in the parish magazine. But I will include the highlight of the pilgrimage for me and that was the Pope's weekly Audience in St Peter's Square at the Parcheggio Gianicolo. We were given privileged seats to the left where the Pope was sitting. I was on the back row and had an uninterrupted view from where the Pope emerged in his popemobile. He then drove around St Peter's Square, greeting the crowds of over 6,000 people, before taking his seat, from which he addressed us and blessed us and our own families and the churches where we belong. So St Joseph's, St Wulstan's and Our Lady and St Alfonsus would be included in his blessing.

Later after the general Audience was finished the Pope went and greeted various groups including people in wheelchairs and young families, and we were ushered out by an official to stand in a particular place where we would be able to meet the Holy Father and shake his hand. As far as I



was concerned this honour was unexpected and I was completely overcome by the occasion of shaking and kissing the Pope's hand. It will remain with me for the rest of my life to have met and spoken to St Peter's successor. We all received a rosary in a case with the papal emblem on it. What a day to remember!

I have to admit the pilgrimage was not for the faint-hearted. It included a lot of walking uphill, including several flights of stairs on several occasions. It was very tiring as we were on the go until fairly late in the evening, having had dinner away from the hotel. But it was well worth it for the friends we made, and the fellowship we had together as we shared both what we had in common and our differences too. It was a wonderful experience. Although I felt I had climbed all the seven hills on which Rome is built I came home fitter both physically and spiritually, so glad that I had been among such wonderful loving and caring people. I look forward to the next pilgrimage.

### *From Viv Jones*



Viv and Gemma in St Peter's Square

Archbishop Bernard Longley and the Anglican Bishop of Worcester, John Inge, led 20 Roman Catholic and 20 Anglican pilgrims in an Ecumenical Pilgrimage to Rome. Gemma, Roger and I, from our parish, and Tony and Jeanette Lupino, were among the group, who were able to explore our shared heritage and pray at sites important to us all, such as the tombs of Saints Peter and Paul. It was the first of its kind, an historical journey, acknowledged by the welcome we received at the Papal Audience on the 2nd October, where several of the group were able to speak to Pope Francis. He gave us his blessing, and asked us to share it with our families and communities, humbly requesting our prayers for himself.

We had extraordinary meetings with Cardinal Kurt Koch, head of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and with the Archbishop of Canterbury's representative to the Holy See and director of the Anglican centre in Rome, to learn about their work. We had afternoon tea with the Ambassador at the British Embassy to the Holy See, visited and talked with students and staff at Beda College and the Venerable English College, and had a guided tour of the Jewish Museum and great Synagogue, where we learned the Jewish community in Rome goes back to the second century BC.

We visited St Peter's; the Sistine Chapel and museums; Castel Gandolfo, the previous popes' summer residence; St Benedict's Monastery at Subiaco; as well as the Churches of St Paul Outside the Walls and San Clemente, a 12th century church with its 1st and 4th century levels; and the catacombs of San Callisto.

We were wined and dined, we travelled, walked, prayed, worshipped, shared and laughed together. We became one in the joy of the One Lord and Saviour, Jesus.

We discovered a tomb of a 16th century prior of Worcester in the English College chapel, and learned there were four Italian Bishops of Worcester in the 16th century, one of whom became Pope Clement VIII, who would not grant King Henry VIII an annulment of his marriage to Katherine of Aragon, and so began the English Reformation.

We faced the reality of the corporate sin of disunity, marring the history of the church, and were unable to share sacramentally in the full unity of Christ's body, but bore the pain of having Anglican and R C Eucharists on alternate days. But we sought to unite ourselves to Christ, knowing that in growing closer to Him, we will grow closer to one another.

Our hope and prayer is that our prayer and presence in Rome will be a small contribution towards the unity of the church, a unity for which Jesus prayed, " That they may be one, as we are one ...to let the world know that you sent me, and have loved them, even as you have loved me. " John 17. May His Kingdom come!

What can we do?

We can walk together along the Way, and pray for the Unity for which Jesus prayed, according to God's will.

*Roger mentioned the Catenians in his article. More on them next time.*



Gemma, Roger and Viv at Subiaco

## On Lighting a Candle

I don't know how to pray...  
I don't know what to say...  
I haven't much time...      So?  
The candle that I light is a little of my goods  
A little of my time  
A little of myself  
That I leave before the Lord,  
Before the Holy Virgin  
Before the saints.

This shining light symbolises my prayer  
And continues even as I go on my way...

*Loosely translated from a sign in Rouen Cathedral*

# The Canonisation of St John Henry Newman

Rome 13<sup>th</sup> October 2019

It seemed as though most of the most of the Catholic Church in England had arrived in Rome by the evening of 12<sup>th</sup> October. Pope Francis was to celebrate a large scale open air Mass to canonise five Blessed – four religious (Guiseppina Vannini [Italy]; Mariam Theresia Chiramel Mankidiyan [India]; Dulce Lopes Pontes [San Salvador]; Marguerite Bays [Switzerland]); and one cardinal – John Henry Newman. In the piazza in the cool evening air I stood to take in the sheer scale of St Peter's and looked at the five huge tapestries of the soon-to-be-saints hanging high up from the edifice of St Peter's. I was joined, by chance, by my old friend Archbishop John Wilson (Southwark) and Bishop Marcus Stock (Leeds) – both there to do the same as me! After a while chatting we each went on our way. In the cafes and restaurants around St Peter's you could hear rather a lot of English accents. That said, India and Croatia were well represented too in readiness for Sunday.



*The beginning of the Canonisation Mass at St Peter's*

Sunday morning saw thousands begin to gather at St Peter's for the Mass at 10am. By 9.30am the piazza was bursting and many of the concelebrants were in place. Bishops and the Roman Curia followed on as the invited guests also took their seats. HRH The Prince of Wales was attending accompanied by the British Ambassador to the Holy See, Her Excellency Sally Axworthy. She and the British Embassy have done an awful lot of work to support St John's canonisation preparations. The president of Italy was present too. Music began to fill the air and flags were being flown – including a healthy number of

Union Jack flags. I saw groups of school children from a number of dioceses – the St John Newman school from Glasgow were there as was a big group from Nottingham diocese, and of course our own diocese was there in numbers. The oratory schools were all represented.

Mass began at 10am and one of the first parts of the Mass saw Cardinal Giovanni Angelo Becciu, the Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Causation of Saints, declare to Pope Francis that these five holy people had met the criteria for canonisation. Pope Francis then prayed the prayer of canonisation, finishing with the words, "...we enrol them among the Saints, decreeing that they are to be venerated as such by the whole Church...".

A round of applause echoed around the piazza. Mass continued with the a sung *Gloria*, and an Oratorian read the first reading. Mass continued as normal. Both Deacon Jack Sullivan – recipient of the first Newman miracle, and Melissa Lobos and family – recipient of the second Newman miracle, were there. Throughout the Mass there was a palpable sense that something extraordinary was happening. It was, despite the sheer numbers, extremely spiritual.

At the end of Mass, Pope Francis toured the masses and it was an opportunity for people to see the Holy Father. This is always a spectacle, in a good way. Afterwards the street cafés and restaurants were buzzing with pilgrims. I've never seen so many clerics in one place but then that's hardly surprising given the venue!

The next day saw a uniquely English event – a Mass of Thanksgiving held at Sant Giovanni in Laterano (St John Lateran) – the Pope's diocesan church as bishop of Rome – where Cardinal Vincent Nicholls led a full church in prayer and praise with St John's hymns featuring prominently.

The homily was given by our own former area bishop, Robert Byrne CO, and he spoke about the humanity of St John, his writings and poetry and his profound ability to connect with those around him as well as those only now



Pope Francis touring St Peter's Square after the Canonisation Mass .  
Edd in the foreground

finding out about him. He was a humble and inspirational man – a kind leader and an utterly devoted man of God.

There is a movement that will hopefully see St John elevated to ‘Doctor of the Church’, regarded and referred to as the most influential theologian since Thomas Aquinas.

And here he is, our local man – St John Newman – his church is but 40 miles north of us where his oratory church flourishes to this day.

Rome is a city of delights and wonder. Around every corner is a basilica. In each basilica there is a constant stream of Mass, confession, adoration and the sense that God is everywhere – which he is, I know – but trying to articulate the overwhelming power of God that you experience in Rome is not easy!

Before leaving I visited the oratory church of St Philip Neri, the saint who St John was dedicated to, where I prayed at St Philip’s altar where his body lies. An image of St John was on display at the front of the church, being venerated by pilgrims.

So there we are – St John Newman – a man of his time and a man for our time. We can each learn something from his example – I know I have, and will continue to. And whilst in Rome I prayed for our parish, as well as my family and other individuals whose prayers I took with me.

*Edd Hogan*



*The sanctuary and altar in St John Lateran shortly before Mass*



*Basilica of St Philip Neri (known as the Chiesa Nuova or 'new church')*

## A Saint in the Family

John Henry Newman seemed to have an enormous capacity to keep many friendships in play – both male and female; indeed it has taken years of work by scholars to document his correspondence. Newman and my great-grandfather, who were second cousins through his wife, were quite close and they corresponded regularly. They also met regularly – Newman, for example, would dine with my great-grandfather when he was in London, including when he was on his way to Rome to receive his cardinal's hat. Their friendship was both through family ties and religious interests. My great-grandfather was an Anglican vicar in London. But they did not agree on everything, particularly politics. In a letter, Newman castigates him for his political friendship with Disraeli, who visited regularly. Newman wrote: "I don't think Disraeli will do anything for you, he will use you and throw you out. What does he care, for instance, of the Athanasian creed?"!

The relationship between Newman and my great-grandfather is important to the family, but we feel close to Newman for another reason. Newman, as we well know, moved over a number of years from the evangelical Anglican tradition of his childhood, through his Anglo-Catholic Oxford movement phase, to finally becoming a Roman Catholic. The mid nineteenth century Anglo-Catholic development was going on throughout England, though not usually to the extreme of its followers becoming Roman Catholic. And this progression was exemplified by my great-grandfather. He was the son and grandson of conventional vicars of Thame near Oxford. He too became a vicar but gradually also wanted to revive some of the ceremonies and indeed faith of the Fathers of the Church.

By the 1860s he had become a very Anglo-Catholic vicar of All Saints, Lambeth (the site is now underneath Waterloo station), but his incense, lace and indeed his sermons caused riots – noted in *The Times*. He became so worried about the validity of Anglican orders, that he and two other Anglican clergymen, went secretly to Italy, hired a boat in Venice to take them into international waters outside any ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and through the good offices of three bishops, one said to be Greek, one Copt and one Catholic or Old Catholic, got themselves 'properly' ordained! Near his death-bed he too became a Catholic, and then over the next twenty years so did most of the rest of the family. So I was brought up a Catholic with one uncle a monk and one aunt a nun, and now am second-cousin-three-times-removed to a saint!

*Tim Thorp*

## **A Local Celebration**

On Friday 18th October, the Birmingham Oratory held a special thanksgiving Mass for the canonisation of St John Henry Newman. The Oratory was beautifully decorated for the occasion with glorious red and white flowers and a large copy of the celebrated painting of Newman by Millais. The celebrant was Archbishop Bernard Longley and there were many guests representing civic life in Birmingham, including the Lord Mayor and his Lady Mayoress, the Lord Lieutenant, the Mayor of Sandwell and a broad range of representatives from various professions. His Excellency the Most Reverend Joseph Adams, the Papal Nuncio, was also present.

Pontifical Mass was celebrated using the Latin rite of 1962 and the musical setting of the Mass was by Monteverdi. The choir was magnificent and helped the congregation to sing with gusto. The Homily was given by Father Ignatius of the Oratory, and it was both simple and powerful. The speaker emphasised how greatly Newman had loved Birmingham and how hard he had worked not just in his intellectual endeavours, but also in his work amongst the poor of the city. We were reminded that Newman had risked his life to visit and support the sick during an outbreak of cholera, and also reminded that when Newman died, the poor had turned out in their hundreds to line the route of his funeral because he was their Cardinal, and they knew how much he had valued and cared for them.

The church was packed and many had to stand at the back for this long and detailed service. One of the most engaging aspects of the Mass was the diversity of the congregation who came forward for communion. The front rows may have housed those in authority but the majority of those there were local Catholic people who wanted to celebrate the canonisation of their local saint. Small girls in their first communion dresses, several generations of families, children waving from their parents' arms, people from the homeless shelter and parishioners from across the city all joined together in a genuine appreciation of the importance of this canonisation.

It was a fitting way to celebrate the man after whom the city's first Catholic university is named; a man who had given up his profession, his friends and his academic status to become a Catholic and to work unstintingly for the Church and for the people of Birmingham.

*Pam Taylor*

## The Amazonia Synod

The Synod ‘Amazonia, New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology’ met in Rome between 6 and 27 October. Its report has been published. So after skimming the turgid vaticanese of the document, can we now forget about it and get on with life? I think and hope not – it is being said that this may have been the most important meeting of the Church since Vatican II. Why so? Two main reasons, I think, both left unfinished from Vatican II. First, was the issue of a synodal church – that is to what extent the periphery (bishops’ conferences, diocese etc) has autonomy while remaining part of a united church. For example, the Synod of the Anglican Church, an assembly of bishops, clergy and laity, creates laws of the church and has more legal authority than the church hierarchy. Second, related to the first, how does the church change and move forward? By prayer, theological studies, tradition etc yes, but much more could be learned from the lived experience of its members – the *sensus fidelium* (an ancient saying much expounded by St John Henry Newman). The synod tackled the issue partly through extensive consultations within the Amazon region.

The way the church learns is important. Marshall McLuhan famously said “the medium is the message”. In this context that implies that there can be more meaning in the processes of the synod than in the words which come out of it.

So let us consider the lived experiences of those in the Amazon region, the processes of the synod and some of the outcomes so far.

### **The lived experience**

The peoples in the Amazon are becoming destabilised through intense migration (both inward and outward) and by the growth of cities. About 75% of the total population now live in cities. Such migration leaves many people vulnerable to exploitation and indeed trafficking.

There is potential and actual conflict everywhere: between the different peoples in the area; between the different agricultural factions (primitive forest, secondary forest, cleared land for small and large-scale farming including oil palm); between mineral extractives (oil and gas and gold) and agriculture; between legal and illegal operations both in agricultural and mineral extractive activities. The problems in the cities and the periphery of cities are particularly acute.

Key issues include rites and culture (in indigenous culture water and land are more than commodities; they have spiritual meaning and represent life itself); poverty and lack of agency among all marginalised communities; the impacts of climate change and extractives; and the role of the Church.

## **The Synod Processes**

A key adviser to the synod was the network set up in 2014 by the nine national churches that cover the Amazon region (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Surinam, Peru and Venezuela) known as REPAM. This had been involved from its beginnings with making representations on human rights to the EU and to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights etc and supporting human rights defence cases. For the synod, REPAM organised a process of consultation with 50 or so assemblies involving 85,000 people.

The key issues for the synod emerged as the issues outlined above.

## **The Outcome**

The synod accepted that the church was not succeeding in its pastoral duties. Its presence in many parts of the region was minimal. In many cases the church's local presence is organised by base communities, with a priest visiting perhaps once a year. The church must "adapt the liturgy, valuing [Amazon communities'] world view, traditions, symbols and original rites that include transcendent, community and ecological dimensions". It proposes an Amazonia rite to join the other 23 rites that build in and value local experience. There was immediate criticism from the conservative elements particularly in the North American church, including statements that the church was indulging in idol worship.

The peoples are suffering from outside forces they cannot influence or be protected from; they ask the church to help. So how can the church 'hear the cry of the poor' and seek justice and the defence of the dignity of the people? Part of this is the way the church interacts with the state. At least in many parts of Latin America the church has ceased to be in bed with the state and has become more confrontational over poverty, violence, human rights etc. In Amazonia, probably land rights is the most important and explosive issue facing the communities: it is land rights, mediated by the state, from which conflict between locals and the extractives business (such as oil and gas, logging, agriculture) mainly arises.

The fourth chapter of five in the report is on 'New ways of ecological conversion'. 'Ecology and social justice are intrinsically united' and 'defence and promotion of human rights, is not merely a political duty or a social task, but also and above all a requirement of faith.' 'Ecological sins of commission or omission against God, one's neighbour, the community and the environment' are 'sins against future generations'. So it is now becoming evident that the church is slowly moving to a position where preservation of healthy ecologies and the reality of climate change itself are seen as moral issues and not just another way in which people, particularly the poor, are improperly affected by the actions of those of others, particularly in the richer nations. The critics say that this smacks of a religion making a god of the earth, water etc.

In the fifth chapter, the synod underlines that priests must understand and be embedded in the local culture. It proposes that a permanent diaconate be established with proper training for deacons and their families. Then there is a further suggestion that at least a part of the priesthood should return to the model of the early church where local long-standing permanent deacons of ‘legitimately constituted stable families’, may become priests. For young men of a different class and culture, their training for the priesthood must include a period of formation in the Amazon. While in principle the Latin Church could live with this for remote Amazonia and similar regions, many fear that this would be a wedge which would allow the opening up of such practices to the rest of the Latin Church. (We should remember that the Latin Church already has married priests, in the Anglican Ordinariate, as in similar circumstances do other Churches of the Catholic Church. The norm appears to be that married men can become priests, but priests cannot become married men).

As noted earlier, in many cases the local church is organised in base communities often led by women. The synod is asking that ‘the institution of ministry for “women leadership of the community” be created’. The consultations showed there was also a desire for a permanent diaconate for women. The pope has already indicated that he will reinstitute the suspended study of the role of women deacons in the early church.

The synodal processes are seen as a valid exemplar for the universal church. It remains to be seen whether they will take root and a new balance be established between the local and the universal. Local could just mean more autonomy to bishops and to bishops’ conferences. But in the synod at least massive local participation was achieved. Such local and lay participation is probably more likely to become embedded than happened after Vatican II. First, this pope is clearly in favour of a more synodal church. Secondly, for example, the Synod of Bishops in October 2018 did have young people taking part, though not voting on the final document. Thirdly, in the secular field around the world “citizens’ assemblies” have proliferated. For example, in 2017 there was one in the Republic of Ireland on the abortion issue, in the UK in 2018 one on Social Care.

Finally, at the closing mass, the pope castigated self-righteous religious behaviour: Catholics who believe they are righteous end up worshipping themselves.

*Tim Thorp*

### **Hustings – Meet the Candidates**

All the local candidates in the General Election have agreed to take part in a hustings organised by Churches Together in Malvern, to be held at Lansdowne Methodist Church on Saturday 8 December from 2.30 to 4.30. Come along and bring your written questions with you. The emphasis will be on exploring the candidates’ personal values rather than party lines so questions should reflect that.

## Our Common Home

St Joseph's church held a very successful first Climate Meeting on 23rd October. The group came out of the meeting with a timetable of ideas and thoughts on how individuals and the parish as a whole can work together to help reduce our damaging impact on this earth. Our guidance came from Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si - Care for Our Common Home*, in which he reminds us of Saint Francis of Assisi's teaching that, 'Our Common Home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us'. *Laudato Si* was written in May 2015, and in it Pope Francis stresses that 'The Time is Now' for action. We recognised that if the 'time was now' in 2015 we certainly need to have an action plan in place at the end of 2019.

Ian, from Transition Malvern Hills, gave a talk on the facts surrounding climate change and the damage that has been done to our planet by our reliance on fossil fuels. He explained that, although the challenge of reducing our carbon emissions can be overwhelming, we can make a difference. He went on to say that the main areas we need to focus on are how we use transport, energy, goods and source our food. If everyone aims for low carbon choices of these everyday resources, it will help reduce our own personal carbon footprint that will then have a positive impact on the global emissions. Climate change is very rarely on the front page of our newspapers so we must start and continue conversations with family, friends and work colleagues to make change happen. There is not an easy way out of this climate emergency, we all have to be part of the solution. Although a daunting challenge, *Laudato Si* has given us a prayer that can motivate and inspire our work:

Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope. *Prayer no. 244.*

So, where do we start? The group made a list of ideas for an energy audit of the church buildings and where we can make simple changes to reduce its energy use, for example, during the winter months, making sure doors are closed, lights switched off when not needed and radiators are running efficiently. CAFOD have produced, as a response to *Laudato Si's* call for action, a 100 Livesimply award campaign, that will inspire and encourage practical actions for groups and individuals. The climate group will use this template to create a parish guide to help produce a document that fits for St Joseph's. For further information go to <https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign>.

Also, in the new year, there will be a showing of the film, *Global Caring: Living in harmony with God's Creation*. This is an introduction for individuals and groups to Pope Francis' *Laudato Si': Care for Our Common Home*. This new DVD, produced by the Bishop's Conference, is intended to introduce parish groups and individuals to Pope Francis' teaching in *Laudato Si*.

The group discussed the need to be mindful of the impact climate change has had on the more vulnerable populations throughout the world. We acknowledge that our prayers and gifts must continue to flow to the many countries that are now exposed to excessive flooding, droughts and famine, resulting in an increase of displaced people on the move. CAFOD's work is even more vital to help and support these marginalised communities.

We would like to get as many young people as possible involved to help with this climate emergency, as we recognise the huge contribution they can offer through their energy, inspiration and positive ideas. We would welcome help to create posters, displays and talks from the young people of the parish, so please do come along to our meetings.

It is a paradigm shift that needs to happen to reduce our use of fossil fuels, so we must all work together. We are part of the solution.

For more information about the climate group please contact:

***Ginny Lee 07989439117***



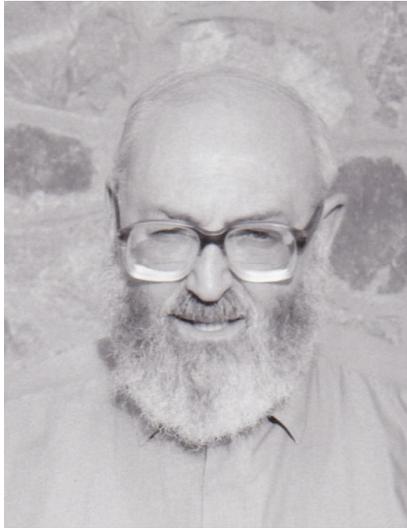
## **St Wulstan's Christmas Cards**

This year's stunning new design features the Annunciation, as depicted in one of the church's Victorian stained glass windows.

The cards cost £4 for a pack of 10, and are available after Sunday morning mass here at St Joseph's as well as at St Wulstan's. They are also available at the Midlands Charity Association Christmas card shop on Avenue Road.

Proceeds from the sale of these cards will go to the St Wulstan's restoration appeal.

## Dom Nicholas Broadbridge



Fr Nicholas, who died 22 October 2019 at the age of 90, was our parish priest from 1990 to 1994, and always described St Joseph's as 'the best parish in England'. Parishioners remember him for his enthusiasm for the Sacrament of the Sick and for the Ministry of Inner Healing. He continued to develop this interest during the rest of his life, running workshops, family healing sessions and retreats after his return to Douai. A few years ago he published a book on the subject, *Our God Heals*. (New Life Publishing £9.99)

A few memories...

I visited him about three years ago, and his love of and interest in the ministry of Inner Healing was clearly as strong as ever and he devoted himself to it for as much time as he was allowed to give, once back at Douai full time for the last 20 years of his life.

*Pauline Kirton*

We think it is an indication of how much Fr Nicholas meant and gave to St Joseph's that, looking back, it seems incredible that he was only with us for four years. His impact was immediate and his ministry sincere and always reflected the presence of the Holy Spirit.

I, Chris, can remember his powerful and caring healing ministry and his great belief in the saving power of God. A committed priest who I know is now with his Lord.

I, Liz, will remember his constant gentle nature and positive acceptance.

*Liz and Chris Burger*

Father Nicholas was full of the Holy Spirit, no question about it. He radiated love and warmth. He had an inner awareness of the resurrected Lord Jesus. He believed and demonstrated that the Holy Spirit gives us power and the ability to fulfil the purpose for which we were made. The Charismatic Renewal had obviously touched him but he moved in a gentle, peaceful, loving, deep, and balanced theological ministry.

I first met Fr Nicholas in the 1990s when he established evening healing services in St Joseph's Church. He gave interesting and helpful reflections and bible teaching, and offered the laying on of hands and anointing with Holy Oil. He prayed with people. A few of us helped from time to time. . . and me an Anglican! He emanated the love of God and it flowed out into the community.

Several of us began meeting in various homes with a group of people suffering from M.E. - Myalgic Encephalomyelitis. I remember driving Fr Nicholas to one such meeting. He asked me are these people Christians and I said I didn't know. He answered, let's pretend they are! So on arrival he greeted them with his usual warmth and twinkling eyes and offered prayer.

There were times when Fr Nicholas prayed in what sounded like a foreign tongue. He said when evil was around, his prayers were thus in the Spirit's direction.

One of his beliefs was that we all need to forgive our mothers. I'm a mother! He went on to give personal experience.

Fr Nicholas's prayers helped bring the power of God to people needing release from oppression and other conditions.

Fr Nicholas will be sadly missed but oh so fondly remembered. On my particular life's journey, I consider it a privilege to have known him. He pointed away from himself to God., a God who can be trusted and whose loving friendship and power knows no bounds.

*Susan Wray*

Some of the young people in the parish thought Fr Nicholas bore a strong physical resemblance to Padre Pio and indeed he did.

At the end of 1990 he asked me if I would take up the position of Parish Pastoral Assistant. Initially, I said no. He asked me three more times so eventually, at the end of 1991, I said I would.

He was very keen to set up prayer groups within the parish and had an interest in the power of healing, probably because he had experienced healing in his own life.

Going into school and talking to the children, bringing his faith to them, was very important to him. On one occasion he asked me to go with him and he introduced

me as the Parish Pastoral Assistant. Apparently, one of the children told her parents I was Fr Nicholas's Pastoral Insistent!

He touched a lot of lives in his short time here and I know he went on to fulfil his ambition to set up healing groups when he went back to his monastic community at Douai Abbey near Reading. *Ruth Hopkins*

One of Fr Nicholas's legacies to the parish was this magazine. A feature of parish life at the time was being summoned to the sacristy before Mass, a summons I at least always answered with some trepidation as it usually involved a request to do something. Having already turned down a couple of requests because I felt I wasn't the right person, I was almost relieved one morning to be asked to re-start the parish magazine. I hadn't a clue how to do it, but felt I was prepared to give it a try. Eighty six issues later I'm still trying. *Margaret Rank*

May he rest in peace.

## **A Beautiful Death**

I would like to reflect on the mystery and dignity of death, by sharing with you what it was like to be at the death bed of Pamela, my much loved Mother.

Pamela had led a good and simple life, and like many thousands of people, at the end of her life she was not greatly known, having moved many times and not having many contacts. However in small invisible and unsung ways such people have done great things.

Pamela had suffered with dementia for many years. She had had and still had a life, hopes, and dreams. And the condition did not take these away, she just became illogical. I am grateful that at St. Joseph's Home Birmingham, where she was, many of the qualities necessary for the treatment of dementia were evident. These were qualities such as care, understanding, sympathy, respect, and maintaining the residents' self respect and dignity. Pamela usually responded well to that. And over the years her carers felt loved by her in spite of the times when her dementia led her to become unreasonable and unfriendly and very difficult to look after. The reason why I mention this here is to emphasise how good it was that Pamela had been known by the people looking after her at the time of her death.

Many of the carers felt pain when they heard that she was dying, and during that week we could feel a sadness in the corridors as Pamela drifted into a

phase of semi-awareness. She seemed to be in a different level of existence although still giving indications of response to all the people who kept popping into her room. In the last two days she drifted into a sleep. It was difficult to know where she was at this stage, yet in the room there was an aura of peace and quiet. It moved and attracted people to come. They came in throughout the time at regular periods and the aura of peace and tranquillity pervaded the experience. It was like walking into a church to pray.

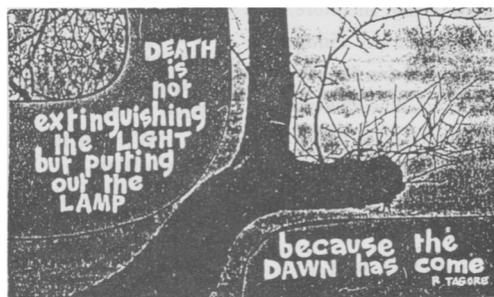
The nuns in charge of the Home are very aware of the sacredness of this special time that the resident is living and make sure that everything necessary is set in place. They themselves were always present when needed (and sensitive to the time when they should leave!), praying at the side of the bed., comforting relatives and ensuring that the staff had the time needed to spend with Pamela. During this time Pamela had the sacrament of the sick which was a great comfort to all of us. Her faith had been strong all her life.

The bedside of a dying person is truly an amazing place to be, where someone is making the big journey that, really, we were all born for. If well-prepared and dignity and reverence is maintained and we are in a receptive place we can begin to see what is really happening. An amazing presence was there as Pamela passed into the fullness of life. Peace and love abounded. It was a quiet and very gentle death. Her legacy was love.

The funeral Mass was held in the chapel of the sisters which is in the middle of the home. As the coffin was being taken out of the chapel many of the carers stood on either side of the wide corridor bowing their heads in respect. A gesture which was so comforting to us, her children and grandchildren.

This experience raises for me many questions of how we as a society think about death. And the consequences of this at the time of death. But that would be another topic.

*Francesca Townson*



# The Young Magazine



In this season of Advent, we prepare to celebrate the birth long ago of a very special baby called Jesus. Born in Bethlehem to a humble girl called Mary, he was proclaimed the Saviour of the world by a huge group of angels, worshipped as the Son of God by the local shepherds, and offered gifts by the three Wise Men who had come from

afar. The Bible tells us where he was born but not when; there was disagreement over the exact date until the early fourth century, when the Church fixed it as December 25. We continue to rejoice on Christmas Day because we believe that Jesus is with us still. Although he lived in one time and place, his love for God's people did not stop there and then.

There are pictures of the Baby Jesus on Christmas cards and models of him in Christmas cribs, but as we can't actually see him in person here and now, how do we know that he is with us still? How do we feel his presence amongst us, not just at Christmas but all year round?

We can answer these questions by reflecting that sometimes it's not possible for us to see all of our friends but we learn about them and what they are doing through the messages they send us. Similarly, we can't see Jesus, but we can learn about him by reading those parts of the Bible which recount the story of his life: not just his birth on the first Christmas Day, but also his years of ministry, his death and his resurrection. Although the Bible was written a long time ago, it still has meaning for us now; the Gospels are especially important because they are the Word of God as revealed by his own Son.

In our everyday life, we learn that we can come to know Jesus through God his Father, by turning to Creation to see the wonders he has made for us. Nature speaks of his greatness, in the gentle sighing of a breeze just as much as in the crashing of powerful waves, in the petals of a delicate flower just as much as in the majesty of huge mountains. We sing hymns of praise to thank God for the beauty of the natural world that he has given to us. 'The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.' (Psalm 19:1-2)

We read in the Bible that God our Father loves our world so much that he shares the gift of his Son with us. We are so grateful that we want to

offer gifts as well. This is evident in our celebration of the Mass, which is itself an act of thanksgiving; we bring bread and wine to show our love for God because of all the good things he has bestowed upon us. It is natural for us to express our deep thankfulness by giving presents, especially at Christmas, because it marks the day when God sent us his Son.

We know Jesus by many names: Christ, the Messiah, the Lord, the Saviour, Prince of Peace, Son of God, Bread of Life. This last title refers to the gift of the Eucharist (meaning thanksgiving), in which we are united with Jesus; receiving him in Holy Communion, we are aware of his real presence. We are filled with joy, the wish to share the love he gives and the hope of being more like him in our everyday lives.

Some people go to church only once a year, and that is for Midnight Mass. It is part of their Christmas tradition. As Catholics, however, we believe that going to Mass every Sunday gives us the opportunity to come together and pray for all the members of our Christian family, helping us to grow in love for God and for each other. At Mass we talk to God in our prayers and he talks to us in the readings. Sometimes it is hard to understand but we can try to listen carefully with open hearts and minds. The message of Christmas is not just about welcoming Jesus on his birthday but choosing to follow him and become more like him each and every day. We can do this in different ways:

- by reading about Jesus (it doesn't need to involve a lot of working your way through the Bible, just a willingness to ask God to help you understand it better)

- by spending time with other people who are his followers (it is always easier to trust in God when you are with friends who can set you an example)

- by praying (it doesn't matter if we talk out loud or if the prayers are in our head; Jesus will always listen. We don't have to use lots of fancy words but instead just talk about the things that matter to us and ask him to help us in our life).

If we do this, we will discover that Jesus is not just the baby asleep in the manger so long ago but a very good friend now, one we can trust, one who sticks with us, one who said he would never leave us, one who loves us more than we can ever know, one who accepts us, one who never changes. He cares for us, he listens to us and he strengthens us; truly a very special gift for Christmas!

*Helen O'Connor*

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

Which nut sounds like a sneeze?

A cashew.

What did the peanut report to the police?

That it had been assaulted.

What kind of nut has no shell?

A doughnut.

Why did the tomato go out with a prune?

Because he couldn't find a date.

What's covered in custard and complains a lot?

Apple grumble.

Why did the banana go to the doctor's?

It wasn't peeling very well.

### **A Prayer for a Burnt Finger**

O teach all those whose candles shine

For light and grace athirst,

With cheerful flame before thy shrine,

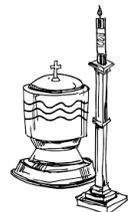
*To fill the back row first.*

**Welcome** to the following small new Christians and congratulations to their families:

Luka Anton James Mikula Hughes, the son of Ian and Alena, who was baptised 8 September;

Orla Kay Pawlik, the daughter of Matthew and Natalie, baptised 12 October.

**Thank You** as always to all our contributors, both the volunteers and the volunteered, perhaps especially the latter, who always respond so generously when approached. Apologies to those whose contributions have been held over until next time for space reasons. Please keep the copy coming. Watch the bulletin for the next copy day.



And finally, from a 7 year old boy who was asked what love is: 'Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen.'