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Youth celebration lights up the Epiphany skies



The Epiphany Mass and fireworks at Poringland. See a full picture gallery at www.rcdea.org.uk



■ A youth celebration of Epiphany lit up the skies at Poringland near Norwich on January 6 when around 200 young people and their families from across the Diocese of East Anglia enjoyed a candlelit Mass, bonfire, hot dogs and fireworks.

The annual Epiphany Candlelight Mass took place at the church of Our Lady of the Annunciation in Poringland, organised by the Ignite team with attendees from across Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambs and Peterborough.

The Epiphany Mass, which marks the visit of the wise men to the baby Jesus, included a chance for participants to light a candle and donate a present to be given to children who are refugees in the UK.

In his homily, Youth chaplain, Fr Luke Goymour, said: "Tradition says that the three wise men came from different parts of the world, Persia, Asia and Ethiopia. This represented the whole of the known world at the time that Matthew was writing his Gospel.

"Epiphany is the showing forth, the revelation of God to the whole world. We celebrate that moment when the eternal, infinite God burst into our world as a little baby. God has come to us and been made man."

Fr Luke also spoke about the bright star which helped the wise men to navigate their way to where Jesus was. "Today we all have a spiritual navigation – the Holy Spirit - dwelling within us and guiding us," he said.

After Mass, everyone went outside to enjoy hot dogs, a bonfire and a firework display in the garden of the Bishop's White House.

Bishop Alan said: "The fireworks are part of our celebration of Christmas because we are lighting up the sky with our belief that Jesus Christ is the true light of the world. That is the faith which we share, drawing others into the light that gives such hope."

Youth director Hamish MacQueen said: "It was great to have a larger Ignite Lite team which really worked well together to carry off the event successfully. It is good to highlight Epiphany as a major event during the Christmas season. In the way that the wise men were on a journey to see Jesus, many of our young people are on a similar journey."

Diocese to bid for three new schools

The Diocese of East Anglia has announced its intention to submit bids to open three new voluntary-aided Catholic primary schools in areas of Cambridgeshire with increasing populations and is now asking for people to support the bids.

■ The three bids are in areas of significant housing development – Northstowe, Hampton East (Peterborough) and Great Haddon (Peterborough).

Under a new bidding round, bids have to be submitted to the Department for Education by February 1, 2019, and it is expected that the schools would open around September 2022 or 2023, depending on how quickly the new houses

are occupied.

Helen Bates, Assistant Director for Schools, said: "This bidding round represents the first opportunity to build new Catholic schools in East Anglia for many years. Our Diocese has some of the severest shortages of Catholic school places in the country and, whilst there are many parts of East Anglia where we would like new schools, they have to be in areas where there is also a general shortage of places.

"We have worked closely with both Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, to identify these three areas where we all want more school places.

"The Government has been very clear that only a small number of bids will be approved in this round, so we don't expect to get all three, but we think we do have three very strong bids.

"However, we need to show that there is widespread support for our bids by the time we submit them on February 1,

so we need as many people as possible to register their support and interest."

People can express their interest and support by going to the Diocesan website at www.rcdea.org.uk/vaschools by following us on Twitter @RCNewSchools and on Facebook at RCDEANewSchools.

In 2017, the Diocese was preparing to submit bids for eight new free schools but, following the General Election, was not able to submit them as the Government decided not to follow-up on its manifesto promise to remove the cap on faith admissions in new free schools.

The three new bids will be for voluntary-aided (VA) schools, where there is no cap on faith admissions. VA schools, like free schools, are state-funded. Decisions on bids are expected from the Government by the end of March 2019.

■ In a separate move, the Diocese has begun a consultation to open a new Catholic primary school in Swaffham – full story on page eight.

news in brief

Church joins in town street fair

■ Bungay Street Fair was held on Sunday December 2 and during the afternoon, 150 people visited St Edmund's church.

Being the first week in Advent the first candle on the Advent wreath was shining brightly. Sand trays for votive candles were set up around the church near various cribs and pictures. Visitors took time out of the hustle and bustle of the street fair to light a candle and contemplate. This was done in a respectful and appreciative way.

There were Traidcraft gifts on sale and home-made quilts. The candle donations for CAFOD raised £63. Visitors left many positive comments about the prayerful atmosphere and the beauty of the church. Sue Altarelli, who organised the event in the church said: "It is always important to be seen to be participating in this yearly town event."

Comments made by visitors to St Edmund's included: "I recently lost a loved one and wanted to light a candle ... it has been a real comfort coming in here." "I was brought up a Catholic and don't go anymore but this has made me think about returning."

Wall of prayer

■ A project to build a national monument in the UK with a million bricks, with each brick representing an answered prayer has been launched and stories of answered prayer are being requested. The project has land on a site next to a motorway in the Midlands, and now they are trying to raise funds and stories of answered prayers. Visit www.thewall.org.uk

Epiphany parish lunch

■ An Epiphany parish lunch was enjoyed by parishioners at Our Lady and St Charles Borromeo in Wisbech on Sunday January 6, when everyone brought a plate of food to share and a wrapped gift for the 'Secret Santa', reports parish priest Fr James Fyfe, who said: "A convivial time was had by all - young and old."

Catholic East Anglia

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EDITOR: Keith Morris
tel: 01508 488318 or
07712 787762

Pear Tree Farmhouse,
Wymondham Road,
Wrenningham, Norwich,
NR16 1AT

email: keith.morris@rcdea.org.uk

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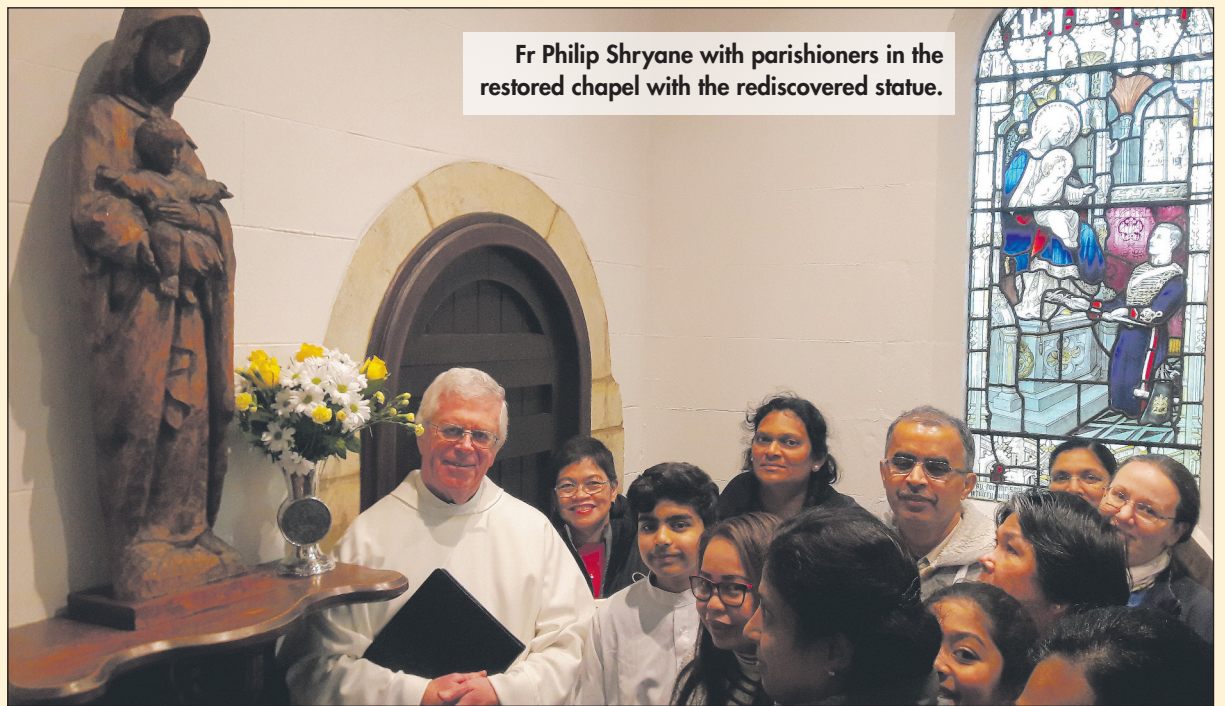
Hidden statue in restored chapel

■ A hand-carved statue of Our Lady which had been hidden in a cupboard for around 20 years has been blessed and placed in a newly-restored chapel at St Michael the Archangel church in Huntingdon.

On Saturday December 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary people who attended the Mass for the feast were invited

by parish priest, Fr Philip Shryane, into the newly-restored chapel of Our Lady for the blessing of the statue.

Fr Philip said: "For many years this chapel has been a storage area but it has recently been cleaned out and repainted, given a radiator and some new lights so that it can once more



Fr Philip Shryane with parishioners in the restored chapel with the rediscovered statue.

become a devotional chapel of Our Lady. The beautiful statue has been in a cupboard for around 20 years. It is hand-carved by Andre Lacome, a sculptor who lived near Lourdes and had his shop there, selling his own carved statues and medals.

"Along with a statue of the Good Shepherd, also by Lacome, the statue of our

Lady came from the Church of the Good Shepherd which used to be in the Oxmoor area of Huntingdon. The church closed and the site was sold in 1995, the lovely statue of the Good Shepherd is now in the Good Shepherd Room, the parish room for our parish. It is very good to have both the statues on view in the church again," said Fr Philip.

Simon is ordained to the diaconate

Diocese of East Anglia seminarian Simon Davies was ordained to the diaconate at St John's Seminary in Surrey by Bishop Alan Hopes on December 15. Here Simon reports on the occasion.

■ Above the great golden mosaic on the back wall of Womersley Seminary Chapel are the words that Christ spoke to His Apostles at the Last Supper, "Non vos Me elegistis, sed Ego elegi vos: You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

They are words addressed to all of Christ's faithful, of course, not just those who discern, with the Church, a vocation to the ordained ministry.

But they have resonated profoundly within my own heart recently, since before the altar underneath those engraved words, I received the sacrament of Holy Orders from Bishop Alan, on Decem-

ber 15, and thus became a deacon. Alongside me was a student of the Diocese of Portsmouth, Johnpromise Umeozuru, with whom I study in the seminary.

In his homily, the Bishop reminded us that in so calling those whom He wills to the ordained ministry, deacons, priests and bishops should always be mindful that their

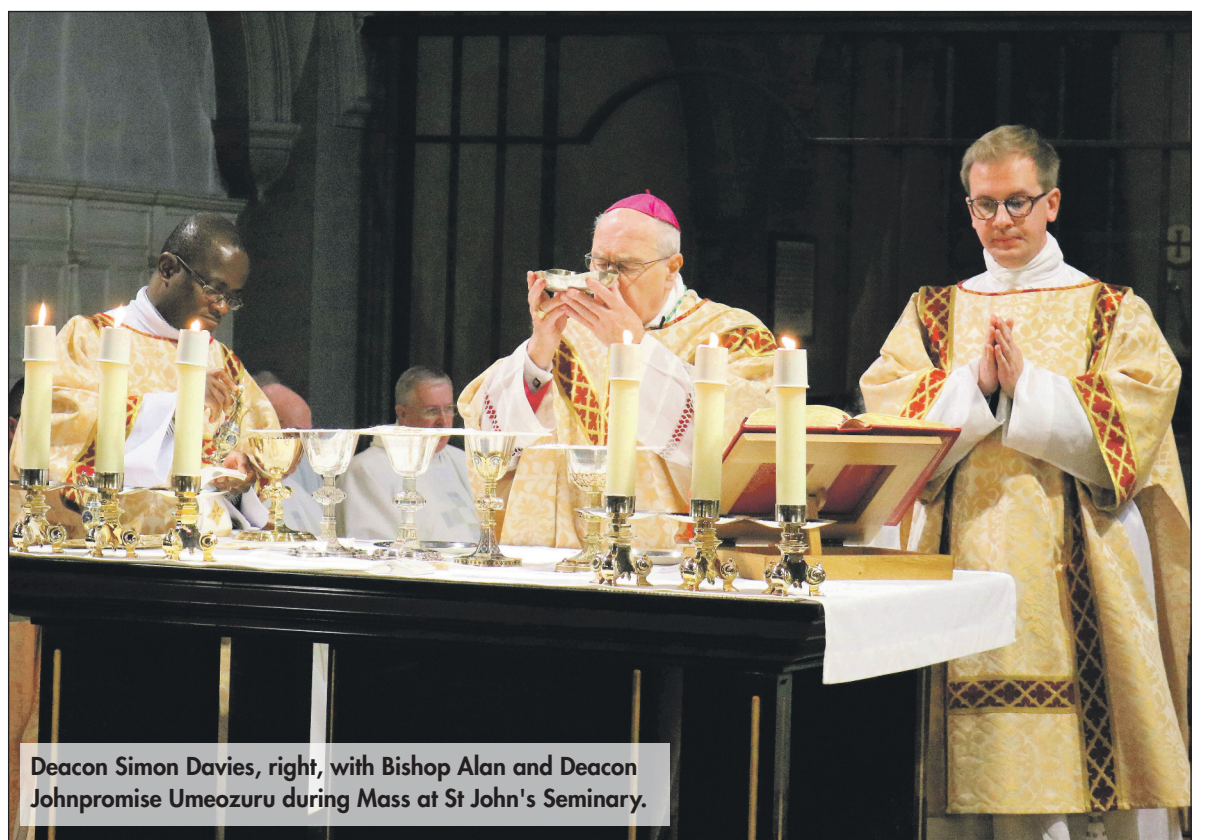
purpose is to imitate the Good Shepherd, who carried the flock upon His own shoulders.

Consequently, the Lord's ministers are called to be close to the people, and so must continually seek to understand the circumstances of their lives. Quoting the Holy Father, we are to smell like our sheep.

It is an indescribable joy to

receive this sacrament, and thus to become a diaconal servant in our diocese, at the service of the Lord and of His people, working alongside and in obedience to the Bishop, who is leading all of us here in East Anglia to our Shepherd King in heaven.

I will remain in the seminary until the end of the academic year.



Deacon Simon Davies, right, with Bishop Alan and Deacon Johnpromise Umeozuru during Mass at St John's Seminary.



Heritage funding boost for Southwold church

Sacred Heart Church in Southwold has received a great Christmas present with confirmation of a National Lottery grant of £210,000 and a grant of £10,000 from Historic England for the 'Crowning and Warming the Sacred Heart of Southwold' heritage project.



Southwold parishioners celebrate grants for the Sacred Heart of Southwold heritage project with Parish Priest Fr Roger de Lacy-Spencer.

■ The grants add significantly to funds already provided by the Parish and the Southwold Trust and will enable the repair and restoration of the church.

Investigations in 2015 revealed serious structural problems with the Grade II listed building. The National Lottery Fund provided £40,000 towards the £52,000 that was needed to make the tower of the church safe and to discover the reasons for the structural problems. With the new funding and the extra £10,000 from Historic England, work can now proceed to deliver both the permanent repairs necessary and some important improvements, heritage activities and displays which will enable more people to learn about and engage with the history of the building.

Built at the height of WW1, the church is a unique example of the work of priest and architect Fr Benedict Williamson, who built around 30 churches in the years from the late 1890s to the early 1920s, mostly in and around London. It is built in the Late Gothic style and its tower is a noteworthy feature of the

Southwold landscape. The view from the tower is outstanding, taking in the whole sweep of Sole Bay and the River Blyth out to Halesworth.

Parish Priest Fr Roger de Lacy-Spencer, said: "These generous grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic England will ensure that the church can continue to welcome both parishioners and visitors alike. The church is very much part of the Southwold scene and this grant will enable more people to come and share it with us."

Work will start in the next few months to repair the roof and structure of the tower, replace damaged stonework and manage more effectively the disposal of rain water.

Key improvements will include new lighting to enhance the important pictures in the church, interpretation of the church building using digital technology and the provision of a viewing platform at the top of the tower with an explanation of the history and geography of Southwold and its surroundings.

Parish project manager, Cedric Burton,

said: "This is a very exciting opportunity for the Sacred Heart Church in Southwold."

"The National Lottery fund grant will not only to secure its future for generations to come but also to describe its purpose and mission and to enable people to see the building in the context of its location and the history of the area."

"We are looking forward to working with our architects, Nicholas Warns Architects Ltd of Norwich, Historic England and the Centre for the Study of Christianity and Culture at York University, together with local partners. We aim to deliver an inspiring experience, whether of quiet contemplation or of the wide vista of the past and its connection to the present as part of our enduring 'Mission to a Seaside Place'."

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of HLF East of England, said: "We're delighted to support this important project which will help to protect a very special building. Thanks to National Lottery player's more people will be able to share the beautiful space and its stories."

news in brief

Event to celebrate Advent is a first

■ During Advent, St Mary's Church, Thetford, held its first 'Celebrate Advent' event, an occasion to bring all its parishioners together, in particular the children of the parish, to celebrate the season and to raise funds to support the church and its various social activities.

Held on the third Sunday of Advent (December 16), aptly named 'Gaudete', or Rejoice Sunday, parishioners gathered in the St Mary's Church Hall for food and refreshments, whilst the children received personalised bookmarks and sweets.

A prize raffle draw was held which raised over £1,162 for the parish. The church Parochial Parish Council, which organised the event, expressed their deep gratitude to those who helped in the preparations for the event and to all who made the raffle a success, including the individuals or businesses which provided prizes and those who bought tickets.

Refugee fund-raiser

■ Following a very successful concert in Wisbech the Mayor of Wisbech, Cllr Peter Human received a cheque for £501 from Bharat Khetani, Wisbech Interfaith Forum. The cheque was to assist those who are helping to look after refugees in Cambridge.

Keith Aplin, from St Peter's church, said: "In the week in which Prince Charles and his wife visited the Fens and saw how well voluntary organisations are working together this is an example of the faith community playing its part and showing that the 'capital of the Fens' has a concern for the wider world."

The Mayor, who had hosted a reception in the council chamber for the visiting Jewish choir, endorsed Keith's remarks and said that the past week had been fantastic for the town.

A fearless deacon

■ Rev Andrew Neate, Deacon of Our Lady and St Joseph, Sheringham & Cromer, braved the very chilly waters of the North Sea off the Cromer coast on Saint Stephen's Day, December 26.

He was supported by other members of the parish and there were hundreds of people either spectating or taking the plunge themselves! It was a dull damp morning and the sea was choppy – but Deacon Andrew fearlessly charged into the water – and ran out rather quickly as well.

It was all great fun and Deacon Andrew raised £300 for SVP funds.

Red Wednesday

■ King's Lynn Town Hall was floodlit in red on Red Wednesday, November 28, to show solidarity with Christians being persecuted for their faith throughout the world and especially in the Middle East. The floodlighting was made possible through the initiative of Lynn parishioner Tim Tilbrook who is also a Borough Councillor. At the same time there was a display of a large cross draped in red with a red flower arrangement in the London Road window of Our Lady's Church.

Bishop hosts seminarians' lunch

■ Bishop Alan Hopes entertained current Diocese of East Anglia seminarians for his customary annual lunch at the White House in Poringland on Saturday January 5, preceded by Mass in the adjacent church of Our Lady of the Annunciation.

Pictured, left to right, are Peter Wygnanski, Fr Patrick Cleary (Vocations Director), Deacon Simon Davies, Bishop Alan Hopes, Deacon Alan Hodgson, Mark Ashwood, Anthony Asomugha, Deacon Michael Brookes, Bienn Carlo Manuntag, Deacon Alfonso-Jude Belnas, Michael Smith, Fr Pádraig Hawkins (Bishop's Secretary) and Deacon Sam Randall.



Conducting a 40-year career

After 40 years as a parish priest, Fr Pat Cleary would like to consider himself as the conductor of an orchestra. Keith Morris reports.

■ On December 16, Fr Pat Cleary marked 40 years since his ordination on the same day that Bishop Alan Hopes officially installed him as the new parish priest at Our Lady and St Thomas of Canterbury in Wymondham.

One of the very first to be ordained into the fledgling Diocese of East Anglia, Pat was born and bred in Ipswich, leaving school aged 15 with no qualifications to join cotton and linen retailers John Hawkins & Sons.

Within four years, Pat was managing one of the firm's stores in Portobello Road, London, a position he had thought would take him until the age of 40 to reach.

"Having reached my career destination by the time I was about 18, I started asking myself fundamental questions such as 'what is life all about'," said Pat. "I did not see myself as just making money for a company – I was looking for something more worthwhile."

Pat went to his parish priest to ask if he could do missionary work for

the church in a foreign country. His parish priest, Fr Alfred Bull, asked him

if he had ever considered becoming a priest, which he hadn't due his lack of qualifications. Having been accepted as a candidate for the priesthood, Bishop Grant of Northampton sent him to a college in London called Campion House, run by the Jesuits, to brush up on his general education for two years before going to a seminary.

"I was then a full-time student for eight years, two years at Osterley and then All Hallows in Dublin where I did a degree course in Theology. I found studying quite exciting and gained so much from it," he said.

In December 1978, Pat became one of the first priests to be ordained in the new Diocese of East Anglia at St John's Cathedral. His first role was as assistant priest at OLEM in Cambridge, then Ipswich St Mary's, then briefly at the Cathedral, before becoming a parish priest at St Mary's Thetford.

"After six years in Thetford, I had just turned 40 and thought it would be nice to have another experience of church in another culture, different climate and language to discern what was essential and what was just cultural overlay," said Fr Pat. "I went to Santa Cruz in Bolivia for three years with the St James' Missionary Society, which was an amazing experience. It occurred to me one day in Santa Cruz that I was now doing what I desired all those years before, working in mission territory."

Fr Pat became the assistant director of the Society and spent five years in the USA in Boston, travelling to Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia where the Society served. He also organised mission appeals in 250 churches each year – quite a task.

He came back to East Anglia in 1999 and was sent by Bishop Peter Smith to Lowestoft as parish priest for a couple of years, then to St Neots for eight years until 2010, when he went to St Laurence

in Cambridge and earlier this year to Our Lady and St Thomas of Canterbury in Wymondham.

For the last four years, Fr Pat has also been the diocesan Director of Vocations, promoting vocations and accompanying those who are in seminaries in their studies, on behalf of the bishop.

"I visit every seminary where we have a student once a year and meet all our seminarians and their rectors. It's important work and a privilege to accompany our varied and talented group of seminarians."

"The average age of seminarians has gone up since I was at seminary. Then it was in the early 20s, now they are more likely to be older with some life experience which will help them in their pastoral life," he said.

Fr Pat has also helped oversee a positive current situation with a dozen seminarians in training.

"Bishop Alan encourages people to consider a vocation. He considers every applicant on their own merit," he said. "We are living in a far more materialistic and secular world. This, along with the abuse scandals of recent years, makes applying for the priesthood a counter-culture decision."

"Today people are encouraged to build lives based on themselves, being the star of their own show. Whereas if you have a

Christian dimension to life then Jesus is the star and we are followers not leaders. We need people with a personal commitment to the Lord, you can't just coast along."

"I remember a quote from Mother Teresa when she was interviewed by Malcolm Muggeridge and asked whether she had been successful that day. She said: 'I didn't set out to be successful, I set out to be faithful.' And that has to be our approach too, we are not just about getting bigger numbers in our churches and seminaries."

"You try to live a more faithful life and encourage people in the parish to do the same and then those things will sort themselves out."

So, at the age of 69, how does Fr Pat see the role of a parish priest today: "I see him as an orchestra conductor – he doesn't do everything or play every instrument, he can't. But he does want a harmony, something pleasant and worthwhile, not something discordant. And that is a beautiful model for a parish priest. A priest should be an enabler of the laity as outlined in Vatican Two. Mgr Tony Philpot used to say that being a parish priest was the most specialised job in the church."

Fr Pat quotes Pope Francis, who said: "When the church does not empower the laity, she is no longer a mother but a baby-sitter who puts the baby to sleep – she is a dormant church."

"The priest has an important role to play, but it is one of service and not of power. We are here to serve God and the people. We need to be faithful as disciples of Jesus," said Fr Pat.

"Today, the respect a priest has in the parish is not automatic. It is respect that has to be earned by the way we conduct ourselves. But when it has been earned it is far deeper than that given automatically."



Fr Pat Cleary inside Our Lady and St Thomas of Canterbury in Wymondham.



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Diamond celebration



Pictured left, Bishop Alan and children from Sawston cut the celebration cake. Picture by Mrs C Huebner.

The Community of Our Lady of Lourdes celebrated the 60th anniversary of the blessing of the first church in Sawston with a packed congregation at a solemn Thanksgiving Mass on Sunday December 9. Patricia Wallman reports.

■ Mass was concelebrated by Bishop Alan Hopes and Fr John Minh and there was also a blessing of a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes and a celebration cake.

The Community started with a small number in the Chapel of Sawston Hall. When the number of Mass participants kept growing, they had to say Mass in various halls, local churches, or private homes all around the southern parts of Cambridge in the early 1950s.

The Huddleston family, who owned Sawston Hall at that time, kindly donated a piece of land and two semi-detached cottages to Northampton Diocese. Fr Christopher Roberts was entrusted with the duty of shepherding a scattered congregation of about 400 people in more than 30 villages in the south of Cambridge. He and the early parishioners worked very hard to raise funds for a pre-fabricated church on the donated land, and used the cottages as the Presbytery.

It was such a good time for the Catholic Church in Cambridge area because there were two churches built in 1958: St Laurence's in the northern part of the city was blessed on August 24, and Our Lady of Lourdes in Sawston on December 8. The year 1958 was the first centenary of the apparitions in Lourdes, so Canon Stokes who came from Our Lady & the English Martyrs Parish to bless the Sawston church, dedicated it to Our Lady of Lourdes.

Wasting no time at all, on January 31, 1959 Fr Roberts submitted an application to the General Register Office for the church building to be recorded as an official place of worship for Catholics. On February 5, 1959, a certificate was issued by the Superintendent Registrar for the

solemnization of marriages at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Sawston. So the church building became established in the eyes of God and in the eyes of man.

In the summer of 1959, during a Eucharistic Procession within the grounds of Sawston Hall, Bishop Parker solemnly declared that Our Lady of Lourdes Church would be the 'hub for missions' in Sawston and the surrounding areas. To facilitate other social activities for parishioners, Fr Roberts built the hall in 1963. It was swapped with the original church in 2010 and is now used as the new church for the Parish.

Like other communities, Our Lady of Lourdes in Sawston have experienced good times and bad times. However, following the tradition of the holy martyrs such as St Nicholas Owen and St John Rigby, they have shown deep faith in God and loyalty to the Catholic Church. They have also imitated the generosity shown them by the benefactors, especially the Huddleston family. Over the last 60 years, the community have donated a good amount of money to charities, including a van to Mother Teresa and her Congregation. They tirelessly volunteer to help with many local projects like the OWL Cafe (now the Footprint) for the benefits of the disabled, and Hope into Action for the homeless and refugees.

For the Diamond Jubilee year, parishioners in Sawston prepared themselves spiritually with a special Jubilee prayer and patiently collected a good number of photos for a pictorial history of the Community. Some of them were on display in the church hall during the Jubilee celebration. Many more photos will be put on a CD and an album for the future generations to learn about the living Catholic faith in the areas.

In his homily, during the 11.15am, Mass, Bishop Alan said that the last 60 years were full of grace for everybody in the Community. This Diamond Jubilee is a good opportunity for all of us to give thanks to God, and to move forward as a Parish with the continued devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes and with the example of the faithfulness of Saint John Fisher.

The celebration was significantly marked by the episcopal blessing of a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, donated a

benefactor. Hopefully a shrine will soon be built to promote the devotion of the parishioners.

The Bishop and the children jointly cut a cake on this special occasion for everybody to enjoy with tea and coffee. Some parishioners who witnessed the blessing of the original church were also present at this Jubilee celebration. They are moved to see the good works started 60 years ago continue in the parish, especially in the lives of their children.

Dowry Tour is set for Norwich

■ The two-year Dowry Tour, intended to help prepare Catholics spiritually for England's rededication as the Dowry of Mary in 2020, is set to reach St John's Cathedral in Norwich from February 28 to March 2.

The statue of Our Lady of Walsingham will be leaving her hallowed seat in the Slipper Chapel at Walsingham as part of the tour.

The tour visit to St John's involves a three-day triduum of prayer. There will be talks on the Dowry of Mary, an evening of Adoration, and a day set aside for visits from primary and secondary schools. The full schedule will be available to view at dowry-tour.org.uk.

It is being jointly organised by the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham and the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom, a group founded in 1887 that seeks "the conversion of England and Wales, the restoration of the lapsed, and prayer for the forgotten dead".

The tour is part of the spiritual preparation for England's re-dedication as the Dowry of Mary around the Solemnity of the Annunciation in 2020. Both the Tour and the rededication have the support of the English Bishops. It is a call to a spiritual renewal to support the New Evangelisation in England.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols has called the rededication a "moment of great promise... for the Church in this country and for our mission."

For more details email: dowrytour@walsingham.org.uk ring: 01328 801007 or visit www.dowrytour.org.uk

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Mission for a bet

Two St John's Cathedral parishioners have spent a fortnight visiting Malawi with development charity Network for a Better World (N4BW). Mary Clarke reports.

■ At the end of September, two parishioners from the Cathedral parish of St John the Baptist spent two weeks in Sitima, a rural parish in southern Malawi where Fr Owen O'Donnell, a Montfort Missionary, has been working with N4BW since 2013.

N4BW has a house near the parish church to accommodate volunteers who oversee development and missionary projects. Working through the local administrative and church leaders, projects are identified which will benefit those in most need of support, whether that be physical, emotional or spiritual, and whether they be of any faith background or none.

During my visit with Angela Stone, we saw first-hand the ongoing projects currently being overseen by Marian, a volunteer from Kendal, who is reaching the end of a year-long placement. Amongst these projects are the construction and renovation of classrooms, school toilets with washing facilities, and teachers' houses, as well as the self-sustaining provision of solar lights and fuel efficient stoves, leased on a long-term HP agreement to local people. Also, emergency distribution of food aid, funding of sports leagues and an



irrigation project where 30 female heads of households can grow cash crops all year.

This project includes education on climate change, adult literacy, sustainable agricultural methods and business skills, available to the whole community, including schools.

There are also English classes, public health education and a local women's group which is

making washable sanitary products to distribute within schools - many girls leave school at puberty or at least miss one week a month.

An example of spiritual connection with people was a prayer meeting with a group of elderly widows; together we recited the rosary and sang the hymn 'Ave, Ave, Ave Maria' to the tune with which we are all so familiar. After



Thirty one parishioners from St John's Cathedral and friends from other parishes, led by spiritual directors Canon David Paul and Fr Andrew Eburne, recently completed a seven-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land reports John McLean.

They visited the holy places in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Bethany, Cana and Nazareth, as well as sites in Jericho and Capernaum. Pilgrims also renewed their Baptismal Vows on the banks of the Jordan, near Qmran.

Canon Paul and Fr Andrew concelebrated Mass every day, when intentions for the Parish, Diocese, friends and families were offered. The pilgrimage ended with a short voyage on the Sea of Galilee (pictured above).

Parish makes wonder

Do you ever get the feeling that you are about to experience something wonderful? The March and Chatteris parish pilgrimage to Rome was such an occasion reports Laurence Richardson.

■ The pilgrimage experience is both shared and personal; it is a journey of discovery, not only of a foreign land, but of the self and of one's companions; it feeds the soul and may gently take you closer to God.

Fifteen intrepid souls from March and Chatteris met up outside the church of Our Lady of Good Counsel & St Peter, March, early on October 1. It was also the very first time we would meet our soon-to-be parish priest, Fr Michael Ryan, who had bravely offered to lead the pilgrimage in advance of taking up his new appointment in the parish in mid-November.

Our itinerary was created by Pilgrimage People, a charity that traces its roots to a pilgrimage in 2000 to the Holy Land organized by Fr Paul Maddison, until recently our own parish priest. So a big thank you to Fr Paul for creating such a great pilgrimage for us.

Our friendly and spotlessly clean



guest house in Rome was run by the Congregation of the Institute Madri Pie and only five minutes' walk away from the Vatican. Dinner was across the road each night at La Vittoria, a traditional Italian restaurant.

There is not enough space to describe in detail all the wonders we saw in Rome and the Vatican City. A real highlight for me was attending the open-air mass celebrated by Pope Francis in St



ter world



One such family is that of Sarah, who is the aunt of four orphans, two of whom are disabled. The children are aged 8, 10, 12 and 14 and they live in a two-room brick house with a straw roof.

Sarah cooks, when food is available, on three stones. There is a pit latrine outside. When we saw Sarah, she was preparing to cook a small bowl of pigeon peas, the last food in the house, for the children. Through financial donations from St John's parishioners we were able to provide some food for a couple of weeks, some blankets (knitted by the Knit & Natter group at St John's), an eco-friendly stove, some clothes and a solar lamp (normally bed-time is lit by a small pile of straw being set alight in the corner of the bedroom, and total darkness prevails when this goes out).

We were also able to put Sarah's name forward for one of two vacant allotments at the irrigation project, so that she may secure an income in the future.

Other money given by parishioners and others was spent on the refurbishment of 30 desks for the top year students in one of the 17 primary schools in the area, whilst over £500 raised by a lady who also attends St John's, who ran a marathon earlier this year, was put towards some of the new toilets at another school.

For further information on N4BW, how to support our work or to become a volunteer, please visit www.n4bw.org.uk.

Mary Clarke and Angela Stone with Thomas and Veronica, the older couple, and some of their large family, nine of whom live in the two-roomed house in the picture, which N4BW has helped to renovate.

the meeting there was a sharing of food and singing in thanksgiving.

The aim of N4BW is to help people move from poverty so that they are able to access those things that we take for granted, such as food, education and health care. But at times a family may need a direct donation of goods to relieve immediate distress.

ful Rome pilgrimage



for cardinals and bishops in their red and purple attire. After mass, Pope Francis passed around the perimeter of the crowd in his popemobile.

Richard, our official guide, gave us very informative and good-humoured tours of St Peter's Basilica (spot the Michelangelo and Bernini), St John Lateran (the cathedral of Rome), the Catacombs of San Callisto (where we celebrated Mass below ground much like the early Christians), the Basilica of St Clement (built over early churches dating back to the 4th century), the Basilica of St Maria Maggiore (Our Lady of the Snows) and the Pantheon. Our itinerary also included the Coliseum, the Trevi Fountain and the Piazza Navona for good measure.

On our last morning, we visited the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls and the Pontifical Bede College where we received an unforgettable welcome from the Rector, Fr Philip, and his students, several of whom hail from East Anglia. We celebrated Mass together in the Bede's chapel.

A resounding thank you to Fr Michael for stepping into the breach and leading us magnificently. The feeling of unity and love that grew in the group was really special.

Peter's Square. The original plan was to attend a papal audience but, on this particular day, the general audience was replaced by the Papal Mass for the opening of the Synod of Bishops, focused this year on The Young, The Faith and Vocational Discernment.

Fr Michael got us in the queue early and we found ourselves seated in a forward section. We were treated to an awesome spectacle - you couldn't move



Alan Hodgson, right, with his host on the house roof terrace overlooking Beit Sahour.

Alan's six-week summer sojourn in the Holy Land

Diocese of East Anglia seminarian, Alan Hodgson, spent six weeks last summer in the West Bank in the Holy Land, gaining pastoral experience in two very different settings.

■ My time in Palestine was divided into two main sections; four weeks working in a parish setting and two weeks in an orphanage run by the Sisters of St Vincent de Paul in Bethlehem.

I had the privilege of staying with a Greek Orthodox, Arabic family in Beit Sahour (a small suburb of Bethlehem). I was extremely fortunate to meet and live with this incredible family and to be 'adopted' by them for four weeks.

My work placement did not disappoint either. I was to work with the mother's nephew who ran a non-profit, non-governmental organisation called the Masar al Ibrahim Khalil [tr: The Path of Abraham] (<https://masaribrahim.ps>). This organisation runs a hiking and biking trail that runs a distance of approximately 210 miles from the Rummana in the very north of the country to Beit Misir in the south west.

The beauty of this organisation is that it provides untold opportunities and employment for the many communities through which the Masar runs. All hikers who walk the trail are encouraged to stay with families, privately and locally-run guest houses and to visit the many women's cooperatives which the organisation has funded and assisted in setting up. Hikers also stay with Bedouin communities for part of the journey. There is a 'passport' system for pilgrims who are able to collect stamps along the journey - similar to the Compestela de Santiago in Spain. The Masar, in its entirety takes 21 days to complete and can only be done in March and November which are the cooler and drier months. Smaller walks of a few days can be arranged throughout the year.

My role with the organisation was to track the entire route and to link the numerous stopovers with any biblical, spiritual or theological event that may have happened in that particular place or near to it. This, we hoped, would add a further dimension to the walk, attract pilgrims along the way and, let's face it, use one of the best assets that the Holy Land has to offer - its Biblical history.

The research was fascinating and I was privi-

leged to be driven to many of the sites to photograph them and to write about them from first-hand experience. I had some extremely poignant and prayerful moments as I sat in the oldest church in Christendom - the very place where Christ healed the ten lepers, drank water from Jacob's well in Nablus, visited Zachariah's house in Jericho and the Patriarch's tombs in Hebron amongst many other powerful and fascinating places. I also helped the organisation launch a magazine which they hope to publish annually.

My last two weeks in the orphanage were difficult and emotionally draining. Living and working with approximately 36 children all under the age of six proved to be exhausting too. The Sisters of St Vincent de Paul do an incredible job in very difficult circumstances - adoption is forbidden under Sharia Law so these children will, realistically, be moved from one organisation to another until they are deemed old enough to fend for themselves. The Sisters give them the best start in life that they can and they ensure that they are educated, cared for and loved as much as they are able. I think, and hope, that the kids enjoyed having me around for those two weeks whilst we played games in the sun and laughed together.

I was fortunate in that my stay in Palestine coincided with a visit from Fr Paul Maddison who showed me around Jerusalem too. I visited some impressive organisations which also help the most vulnerable and isolated of society and witnessed, first-hand, the enormity of the work they do as well as the need for continual help and support. Fr Paul also took me around the rich tapestry of religious sites in Jerusalem and helped me to visualise and almost live the life, passion, death and resurrection of our Blessed Lord. A remarkable city and a profound experience.

My time in Palestine was only made possible through the inspiration of Bishop Alan and the generosity of our diocese and the many people that support and help us to gain knowledge, experience and understanding of our Church - education takes place in many forms. My happiness and memories of Palestine are completely down to the family I stayed with and the warmth, hospitality and love of the people I met. Please do keep the people of the Holy Land in your prayers.

DIOCESAN SCHOOLS IN FOCUS

Writing success for students

■ Students from a Suffolk Catholic High School and a Peterborough Parish have won awards in this year's Knights of St Columba East Anglia Province 27 essay and prayer writing competition and two went on to receive national accolades.

Niall McMorow took first place in the East Anglia and national KS3 Essay Competition winning £75 and a trophy for himself as well as being named overall winner in Key Stage (KS) 3 & KS4 and £250 for St Alban's School in Ipswich where he is a student. His essay was on Homelessness in the UK. Fellow St Albans students Ruth Westland and Felicity Moore won regional prizes for their entries. The awards were presented at St Albans on November 5

This year the Gigy brothers from Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Peterborough, entered both the Essay and Prayer writing competitions



James Gigy won the East Anglia Year10 KS4 prize for his essay on Good Citizenship and went on to take second place nationally for his KS4 essay and

third place for his KS4 prayer.

His brother Thomas took first place in East Anglia for his Year 7 KS3 prayer. The awards were presented at Mass in Peter-

borough on December 2.

Past Provincial Grand Knight, Brother Christopher Brooks, said: "It was great to have such a large group of high quality entries on diverse subjects to choose from in this year's essay competition. Many congratulations to the Year 7 RE class at St Alban's Catholic High School, Ipswich for providing the entries which is a credit to the School, their chaplain and RE teacher. Niall's offering was especially pleasing and fully deserves the national recognition gained for himself and the school.

"Hopefully the other Diocesan high schools will take up the challenge next year in both competitions as St Alban's say they will do for the prayer writing competition in 2019.

"Very well done also to the Gigy brothers, altar servers at Our Lady of Lourdes church Peterborough, who entered both competitions successfully this year, winning prizes for the second year running. They certainly rise to the challenge through their own initiative and prove that 'you have to be in it to win it', a good moral for a successful life journey."

Consultation opens on new Catholic school

The Diocese of East Anglia has begun a consultation to open a new Catholic primary school in Swaffham. This will be on the site of the current Sacred Heart School, a fee-paying school that is due to close at the end of the summer term 2019.

■ The consultation, which began on January 7, will run until February 15 and asks parents, staff and the local community for their views about opening a new Catholic primary school.

Helen Bates, Assistant Director for Schools, said: "The possibility of opening a non-fee paying Catholic primary school in Swaffham is extremely exciting and a very rare opportunity. We have not opened any new Catholic schools in Norfolk in decades. The nearest Catholic schools to Swaffham are in King's Lynn and Costessey in Norwich, which many parents feel is too far for primary-aged children to travel.

"If successful, this new school will build on the long tradition of excellent education and community service at Sacred Heart School.

"We need to hear from as many people as possible during this consultation to understand if there is widespread support for the new primary school."

Drop-in sessions are being held at Sacred Heart School where Diocesan officers will be available to answer questions and provide further information. There is one on Wednesday, February 6, 6.30pm-8pm

Sacred Heart School is also holding an Open Day on Saturday, February 9 between 10am and 12 noon which will provide an opportunity to have look around the school's first-class facilities.

The final decision on whether to open the new Catholic primary school will be made by Norfolk County Council and is expected by the end of April 2019.

There is a consultation document that provides more details and where you can register your views at: www.rcdea.org.uk/sacredheartva



Pupils at Notre Dame Prep School, Norwich, collecting for Street Child UK.

■ Pupils, staff and parents at Notre Dame Prep School, Norwich, have been taking on charity feats to raise money for charity Street Child which works in the world's toughest places to help some of the most vulnerable children have access to education.

Set a target of raising £1000, pupils elected 36 eager year five and sixes to stand as 'Street Child Pupil Ambassadors'.

Over Christmas and New Year the mini fundraisers planned to organise a host of events with ideas including a pupil-parent football match, a young enterprise day and recording their own charity single.

The charity fund-raising will continue into the new year as parents and a couple of members of staff, Mrs Bradbury and Mr White, will be taking part in the

Craft Half Marathon on Saturday February 2 in Thetford Forest.

Notre Dame Prep School is planning to establish a link with a school in Sierra Leone, one of the poorest nations in the world.

Anna Lloyd, of Street Child UK, said: "I've had the privilege of visiting some of the beneficiaries in Sierra Leone whose lives have been transformed by the generosity of fundraisers here in Norfolk."

Having just celebrated its tenth birthday, the charity, founded by Norwich church-goer Tom Dannatt, recently launched its Count Me In campaign, which is supported by the UK government's Aid Match scheme, meaning it will match all public donations up to £2m made before February 21.

Visit: www.street-child.co.uk

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YOUTH MATTERS



Bishop Alan with the WYD group from East Anglia.



■ You can see free live TV coverage of all the major WYD events in Panama at: www.shalomworldtv.org/wyd2019

Heading for Panama

A group of young people from the Diocese of East Anglia will be joining Pope Francis and up to half-a-million other young pilgrims at World Youth Day (WYD) in Panama at the end of January (22-27).

■ As well as a handful of young people, the East Anglia group will also include two very special members.

Fr Michael Johnstone (aged 85) from Norwich, who has attended eight previous WYDs since 1981 across Europe, Australia and North and South America, will be one of the oldest pilgrims.

Fr Michael said: "For young Catholics it is an eye-opener for them to be with a vast number of enthusiastic fellow Christians and be led by Pope Francis, reminding us of our unity in Christ."

"The crowd is always joyous and I remember Rio de Janeiro where most of us slept on Copacabana Beach for the final Saturday night before Mass for three million people was celebrated by Pope Francis. Language barriers break down in the swapping of scarves or T-shirts, rosaries or crucifixes, with other people from all over the world. First world countries pay a premium to enable young from the developing world to visit lands they would never otherwise dream

of going to."

The other special member is a replica of the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham, which will be making its very first visit to a WYD. It's particularly appropriate, explained youth director Hamish MacQueen, as the theme for this WYD is 'I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word'.

"This is a quote from the Bible when Mary responded to the angel Gabriel telling her she was going to have a son. Walsingham became a place of pilgrimage after a replica of the very house where this conversation between Mary and Gabriel occurred was built. So an international event with hundreds of thousands of people has an intrinsic link to the small village of Walsingham."

Jessica McCall, aged 23, from Ipswich, who is part of the Diocese of East Anglia's Ignite Youth Team based at Walsingham, is making her second WYD trip.

She said: "I had an amazing experience at World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland, three years ago. It was amazing to see so many young Catholics in one place and I am really excited about what we will see in Panama. I am expecting to meet Catholic young people from all over the world and to enjoy the teaching sessions looking at different aspects of the Catholic faith."

Clive Sheridan, aged 26, from Peterbor-

ough, works for a university community sports centre and has been to three previous WYD events.

"Every time I have been to World Youth Day I have had new experiences and it is great to hear the stories of different Catholic young people from across the world at the event and see them all celebrating their faith together."

"The teaching sessions are always really good when we hear from a bishop or a cardinal and other young people about their real life experiences and encounters with God," said Clive.

A prayer vigil in Peterborough is being planned to coincide with the WYD evening vigil in Panama with Pope Francis on Saturday January 26. It will take place at St Oswald's Catholic Church, from 7.30pm to midnight with people welcome to come and go throughout the evening.

Ignite team leader, Catherine Williams, said: "The vigil is aimed at those aged 16+ and there will be adoration throughout with some worship and reciting hours of the Divine Office. Our intention is to focus the prayer on interceding for the young people of the world and the people of East Anglia."

■ There will be full coverage in next month's paper and a regular blog will be published following the East Anglia group's adventure in Panama. Follow it at: www.rcdea.org.uk

Discipleship Days

■ The Ignite Team is launching a new series of retreats entitled 'Discipleship Days' for all those aged 16 – 35 who are interested in learning more about the Catholic faith. The first one to be run this year will



take place in Brandon on February 23, beginning at 10am and finishing by 5pm. Discipleship Days are free of charge. More information will be posted on our website (www.rcdea.org.uk/youth) soon, or contact Catherine Williams at: igniteeam@rcdea.org.uk.

Diary dates 2019

■ January 21– 29: World Youth Day in Panama.

■ March 2: Flame 2019 - Booking is now open for the biggest Catholic event in the UK at Wembley Arena.

■ May 4 – 6: Ignite Diocesan Youth Festival, Swaffham.

■ May 6: Pilgrimage Walk to Walsingham.

■ June 1 – 2: Celebrate East Anglia Family Conference, Bury St. Edmunds.

■ July 29 – August 2: New Dawn Family Conference, Walsingham.

■ August 22 – 26: Youth 2000 Prayer Festival, Walsingham.

■ August 23 – 30: Lourdes Pilgrimage.

■ August 23 – 26: Summer Camp for those aged 8 – 14, Bury St Edmunds.

For more details of each event, please see www.rcdea.org.uk/youth

Youth contacts

Tel: 01508 486236

Email: Ignite Team enquiries

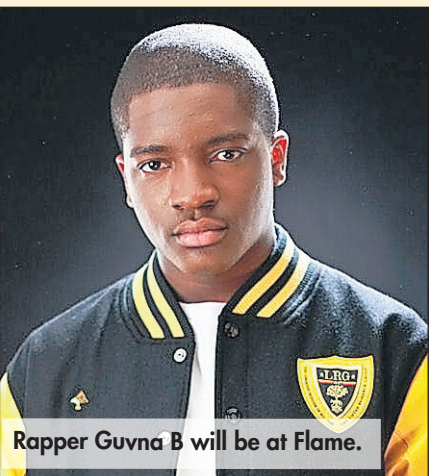
igniteeam@rcdea.org.uk

All other enquiries: dys@rcdea.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/igniteyea

Twitter: @igniteyea

Web: www.rcdea.org.uk/youth/



Rapper Guvna B will be at Flame.

Your chance to attend largest youth event

The largest Catholic youth event in the country: 'Flame Congress,' is back at Wembley SSE Arena on March 2 and the Diocesan Youth Service is running a coach to the event.

■ Diocesan Youth director, Hamish MacQueen, said: "This is a great celebration of Catholic faith, in a vibrant atmosphere, full of joy, with content presented in a way which resonates for young people."

This year Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche, will be giving exclusive video

input. Archbishop Eamon Martin, Primate of All Ireland, will be sharing his experience of the October Synod on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment. Offering a very different style of input will be the rapper Guvna B, and his wife Emma, who will speak into the issue of stress, mental health and wellbeing for our young people, as will Robert Madu, who is flying in from Texas.

Using material directly from Adoremus, RISE Theatre will present the powerful drama "Jesus is here" as an introduction

to Adoration, which will be led by Cardinal Vincent Nichols in the presence of almost all the Bishops of England and Wales. Music throughout the day will be animated by Tim Hughes, composer of "Here I am to worship."

The Diocesan Youth Service East Anglia will be taking a group with coaches picking people up from various points across the Diocese. Tickets are £25 which includes subsidised transport. To book your place go to: www.rcdea.org.uk/youth/

Medals to honour work of unsung Ipswich heroes

■ Ten parishioners have been honoured with diocesan medals in recognition of their work for St Pancras in Ipswich, reports Stephen Donaghy.

Fr Francis Leeder said: "As parish priest I know that St Pancras couldn't work without a lot of unsung heroes' efforts behind the scenes. It was lovely to recognise some of the people who contribute so much to the parish and what was great was that they all seemed to be surprised that they were being honoured for their contribution. That clearly wasn't the reason why they were doing it – and these were people who have been helping out the parish for decades."

He said the parishioners awarded medals were: Josie O'Halloran for help with children's instruction and catering; Jan Patrick and Doreen Batley for children's instruction and reading in church; Anne Abbott, organist and choir leader; Bernadette Wood for child protection, fire officer and child instruction roles; Vernon Scott, David Sparrow and Tony Turner for stewarding; Gerry Elliott for accounts; and Kathleen Vidal for catering and work on the "back-up team".

Mrs Vidal said: "Receiving my Diocesan medal was a huge surprise. I feel most honoured and humbled to receive such a precious award, especially for doing something that brings me so much pleasure. I must emphasise that I am part of a great team of volunteers at St Pancras."

Mrs Abbott said: "I was delighted to receive the medal. It's great to know the choir really is appreciated. We do our best and do it all for God."

Mrs Wood, who was presented with her medal in church, said: "I knew some people had been put forward for a diocesan medal but it did not occur to me I would be on that list. It was a lovely surprise to be called out to receive this award after Mass, and what a lovely response from the people at church that day who showed such love and happiness to me. We serve the parish in many ways, but so also does our wonderful Fr Leeder who has to put up with all sorts of our ideas and plans and he does so with great patience. Thank you to everyone."

Her daughter, Stephanie, said: "For all those days your daughters had to chase you round the church to get you to leave it for Sunday lunch. Well-deserved my mummy."

Modern slavery is focus of talk

■ Modern Slavery - a Christian Response, a talk by Jacinta Goode from the Medaille Trust will take place at St John's Cathedral, Norwich, from 7.30-9pm, on Thursday February 7. The Medaille Trust is a Catholic charity which supports victims of human trafficking and modern slavery.

The talk is being hosted by the Norwich Justice and Peace Group. Its chair, Sarah Ebelewicz, said: "It's such an important topic and one we haven't discussed before. It's a subject very close to Bishop Alan's heart and an issue that affects people who are victims of human trafficking for work here in East Anglia and throughout the UK."

Epiphany crib festival is held

■ St Helen's Hoveton held a wonderful Epiphany Crib Festival in aid of church funds on January 5 and 6. Organiser Liz Smith promoted it widely and it was even featured on Radio Norfolk's Treasure Quest. There were over 80 cribs displayed. Many of the visitors enjoyed home-made cakes and refreshments and said how much they had enjoyed viewing so many different crib scenes.



Bernadette Wood with her diocesan medal.



Sr Wendy Beckett, at Quidenham. Picture copyright of EDP.

Inspirational Sr Wendy

Tributes have been paid to Norfolk Catholic nun Sister Wendy Beckett who earned an international reputation as an unlikely art critic and television star.

Sr Wendy, who lived at the Carmelite Monastery at Quidenham for the last 40 years, died aged 88 on Boxing Day.

Born in South Africa in 1930, Sr Wendy was raised in Edinburgh where her father studied medicine.

At 16 she joined a convent and in 1950 was awarded a Congratulatory First Class degree in English literature from Oxford University. She later taught in

cities including Cape Town and Liverpool.

She began studying fine art in the 1980s and wrote a book on the subject to raise money for her convent. Contemporary Women Artists, published in 1988, was followed by more books.

She lived a hermit-like existence in a caravan at Quidenham until 1991 when the BBC commissioned her to present a television documentary on the National Gallery in London.

Sr Wendy became well-loved for her unique presenting style. She would stand in front of paintings in galleries around the world and discuss, without autocue, the work in detail.

Sr Stephanie Walters, Prioress of Quidenham Monastery, said: "Sr Wendy lived alongside us for

over 40 years and was a good friend, an inspiration and totally unique.

"With her openness to God in her writing and programmes she could communicate the love and mystery of God through art and literature to many who may not otherwise hear of it.

"Christmas was a beautiful time for her to return to her Lord and be with him."

Bishop Alan, said: "Although Sr Wendy lived as a hermit in Quidenham, her influence and impact on many, many people across the world was enormous as she spoke simply about the love of God expressed through art.

"I am sure that her influence will go on through her writings and her recordings."

Caritas East Anglia stalwart Val

■ Tributes have been paid to Caritas East Anglia stalwart Val Clark, from Roydon, Norfolk, who has died after a short illness.

David Livesey, who worked alongside Val at Caritas, said: "Val did so much to help establish and sustain Caritas East Anglia but this was just one of the many ways in which she helped both organisations and individuals to realise their potential as living stones of the Church.

"Gifted with insights and perceptions, she shared her views with good humour and modesty recognising that the successful fruits of her wisdom would have many parents."

Bishop Alan said: "When I visited Val in hospital she was very much at peace with herself and in the Lord. May she now rest in peace."

Val's family said she was a much loved Mother and Grandmother. Mum to Matthew and Grandma to Emily and Henry.



Val Clark.

Val was born in Woodford Green, later moving to Hemsby, Gorleston and lastly to Roydon.

Her funeral took place at St Henry Morse Church in Diss, on January 2.

BUILDING BRIDGES

St Felix pupils practice what they preach

■ Pupils at St Felix Catholic Primary School in Haverhill applied what they have learnt about their responsibility as stewards of the earth when making new Christmas decorations.

Head of School, Andi Dodds, said: "Using Cafod materials, pupils have learnt about Laudato Si since the papal encyclical was issued three years ago and the objective to live wisely and think deeply inspired staff to make it the focus of this year's Christmas decorations."

Staff and pupils saved their used milk bottles, tin foil, plastic bags, CDs and magazines since the beginning of term ready for today's creative extravaganza which is a regular joyous feature of the school's calendar on November 29.

The school's ongoing concern to make the children aware of the impact of their decisions on the environment has made them keen to talk about their responsibilities.

"It's better to re-use rubbish than throw it as litter on the ground or in the seas," said one pupil.

"I really like gluing and sticking so it's great to do it and recycle," said another.

David Attenborough, discussing his role in the climate change talks in Poland in December, spoke of "real people's futures" in his BBC interview on November 21.

Andi said: "Here at St Felix, where pupils are taking action to influence the lives of real people, the future certainly looks brighter for their efforts. It taught us something we can do again next year or at home."



Anne is honoured for 25 years of Missio service

A Norwich St John's Cathedral parish-ioner has been hon-oured for 25 years' service to Catholic overseas mission Missio with a medal and certificate.

■ Anne Clark has been a Local Secretary for APF-Mill Hill, which is part of Missio, for 25 years. Since volunteering for the role back in 1993. Missio is Pope Francis Official Charity for overseas mission and is part of the world wide Pontifical Missionary Societies.

In 1993, there were around 100 Red Box holders, but Fr Frank McCarthy a Mill Hill missionary conducting the appeal, took pity on Anne as she was the only person to volunteer to empty the boxes and suggested that she used envelopes to collect in the money. This idea has since been successfully rolled out to other dioceses around the country.

Over the years volunteers to help Anne have dwindled in number but an appeal earlier this year resulted in over 65 Red Boxes being distributed and with many new annual members.

Anne's father Dick Clark, had been the APF-Mill Hill secretary at St Mary's Ipswich, for over 25 years and she says that she had no idea why she wasn't daunted by counting all that copper, when helping her father.



Diocesan director for Mission, Deacon Chris Brighton, said: "Anne has worked tirelessly over 25 years to raise money for our brothers and sisters in the developing world, for missionary to spread the Good News of the Gospel, to communities mostly in Africa, Asia and South America. These Catholic communities are too young, too small or too poor to support themselves, and certainly need our help. Some risk their lives to remain faithful to the Gospel of Christ.

Anne says of her work: "So here I am still collecting and counting – but what a small task in support of those people who have the courage to put their faith into action."

If you want to find out more of the work of Missio, or would like a Red Box, please contact Anne Clark at the Cathedral or Deacon Chris Brighton, The Diocesan Director for Missio in East Anglia, at chris.brighten@st-mary.org.uk

■ Missio Lay Appealer Eileen Tompkins recently presented awards at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Sawston to Judy Searle promoter of the charity for almost 50 years, and Julie Beaton local secretary for 11 years. When Judy first started emptying Missio boxes, it was the custom to go to a box-holder's house and count the money there. Both Judy and Julie were presented with a framed certificates and bouquet of flowers. Eileen thanked parishioners for their generosity and new box holders were signed up.

Can you help build bridges?

The two current Diocese of East Anglia Building Bridges projects are support for the salary of a kindergarten teacher in the Holy Land and a new formation centre for children, youth groups and adults at Battambang in Cambodia.

If you would you like to support these projects, cheques should be made payable to the "RC Diocese of East Anglia".

First
Name.....
Surname.....
Address.....
.....
.....
Postcode.....
Amount enclosed
.....

Anything you give will be divided equally between Cambodia and the Holy Land unless you indicate by tick-ing the box below that all your money should go to that project.

☐ Cambodia ☐ Holy Land

GIFT AID
You can boost your donation by 25p in Gift Aid for every £1 you donate. Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay in the current tax year. Your address is needed, above, to identify you as a current UK tax-payer.

DECLARATION
I am a UK taxpayer and wish the RC Diocese of East Anglia to treat this donation as a gift aid donation. I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Signature:.....
Date:.....
Please send to: Building Bridges, 21 Upgate, Poringland, Norwich, NR14 7SH
Registered charity no 278742

News picture gallery from parishes around the Diocese



■ Fourteen altar servers turned out at St Felix' Church Haverhill on December 26 to celebrate the Feast of St Stephen by serving at the annual Mass for altar servers and to renew their promises as members of the Guild of St Stephen.

Deacon Huw Williams said: "We were delighted to enrol three new members into the Guild this year and an extra special award, the Diocesan Medal, was made to Brendan Grace."

"Brendan has helped us in St Felix' parish for many years being an altar server during the week as well as at weekends, and organising the maintenance and upkeep of our lovely church. He started as an altar server in Ireland 65 years ago at the age of 7 and is just as active and keen today, an example to our young people. We are delighted that he has made his home with us in Haverhill."



■ The Vigil Mass of Christmas saw a vast congregation in attendance on Christmas Eve at a packed St John the Baptist Cathedral in Norwich, when families filled almost every conceivable space.

The popular Mass included numerous children who joined in the Nativity scene in front of the altar and then crowded around the crib in the sunken chapel alongside the nave where a large crib was in place and where Cathedral Dean, Canon David Paul, spoke to them and led the singing of Away in a Manager. See a full picture gallery at www.rcdea.org.uk



■ Our Lady Star of the Sea in Lowestoft was bedecked with crib scenes over Christmas, many reflecting the multi-national community. Deacon Stephen Pomeroy said: "We have over 42 nationalities represented in our congregation from Poland to the Philippines and even the Seychelles. Several groups of parishioners helped to put up the cribs and they will remain in place throughout the 40 days of the Christmas season, which ends on the Feast day of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple and Purification of Mary on February 2, to remind us of the message of Christ Immanuel."



■ The 17th Norwich St George's Scout Group have had a busy few weeks according to its chair Gillian Hanley. "Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers were on parade for Remembrance Sunday, forming a guard of honour for St George's parish."

"They have also been busy raising funds, along with local businesses to buy and install an Automated External Defibrillator along with new security lighting on the outside wall of St George's Church hall."

"Finally the Scouts and Explorers assembled to pack 30 Christmas hampers, in conjunction with the local SVP group, and then distribute them to the needy. We are a very active group and enjoy helping others in the parish and the local community," she said.



■ The CAFOD team in Fressingfield (part of St Edmund's Parish Bungay and Harleston) have achieved their target of making £1000 for the development charity in 2018.

Present at the six produce markets in the Suffolk village, Mary Kirk, Shirley (pictured above) and Mark Kalinauckas inspired parishioners to bring cakes, scones, sausage rolls, jams, preserves, plants and garden produce to sell for Cafod's Connect2Peru appeal.

What helped them achieve the four-figure sum were the beautiful cot quilts made by Bungay parishioner Felicity Todd. "These have really boosted our proceeds," said Mary. "We can't thank Felicity enough."

"CAFOD is one of our parish's two chosen charities. A wonderful and dedicated team of a few people work hard every time we appeal for goods and produce for the stall. We're happy to collect items from anyone who is able to contribute and always welcome new volunteers. If you would like to help in 2019 get in touch with the St Edmund's CAFOD team on 01223, 07779 804252 or at eastanglia@cafod.org.uk