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Bishop Alan commissions the Caritas East Anglia team at St John the Baptist Cathedral in Norwich. Picture by Eldred Willey.



Caritas East Anglia team commissioned

The work of Catholic social action organisation Caritas East Anglia was formally commissioned by Bishop Alan Hopes at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich on Sunday November 17, followed by a special celebration lunch. Hugh de Las Casas reports.

■ Caritas East Anglia is the latest addition to the worldwide federation of Caritas Internationalis, which is the second biggest humanitarian organisation in the world and was commissioned during the 11am Mass on the World Day of the Poor.

In his homily, Bishop Alan said: "In all that we do for the poor, we must always remember that we are taking the Lord and his message to them – doing so often without words for it is the Lord Himself, working through us, who is welcoming and listening, who loves them and brings them his message of hope and reassurance."

Caritas East Anglia will be focussed specifically on those within the Diocese of East Anglia who are in need of help. Bishop Alan went on to say: "The Alive in Faith campaign has raised a significant sum of money which is already being applied to projects across the Diocese which seek to assist those who are undergoing severe hardship."

"The St Edmund's Fund also seeks to assist individuals who find themselves in a crisis or emergency situation."

After the homily, the 22 members of the Commission, drawn from priests and laity within the diocese, were called up to the altar for a blessing of their work and a crystallisation of the preparatory work which has been going on for over a year.



caritas
east anglia

Fr John Warrington, chair of the Commission, said after the Mass: "This launch is the springboard to encourage people and priests from across the diocese to share their involvement with the work of Caritas and how we can move forward together as a diocese, and as Caritas East Anglia."

Mass was followed by a lunch in the Narthex for representatives of every parish in the diocese along with clients of St Martins Housing Trust who have benefitted from the remarkable work that the charity does. One of their members remarked, in a video presentation: "This place is my safe haven."

Caritas East Anglia is led by its development worker, Jacinta Goode, who is now busy organising 'festivals' in Norwich, Newmarket and Peterborough.

■ Story continued on page two



Christmas word by Bishop Alan

■ In the Gospel which will be read across the world on Christmas Day, St John describes the coming of Jesus Christ in the Nativity as a struggle between light and darkness: a struggle in which there is only one victor:

The Word (that is Jesus Christ), was the true light that enlightens all men and women... a light that shines in the darkness, a light that darkness could not overpower.

As we journey through this winter month of December, the nights draw in and the days grow darker. It may seem to us, too, that the world around us is darkened and clouded by injustice in the form of poverty, hunger and homelessness, in the form of uncertainty and dissension.

Deep divisions seem to shadow our society and our communities; divisions too about our nature and identity as a country and its place in the world, with no clear path visible where those who have disagreed might learn to walk forward together.

By way of contrast, our television and computer screens are full of bright but garish and deceptive lights: the lights of celebrity culture, and of consumerism, that lead us up blind alleys and cul-de-sacs, where Christmas is valued only in terms of what we buy and spend and consume.

How we need the clarity and the simplicity of St John's vision! The light that the apostle John saw is not a glittering object that momentarily distracts us from the darkness. It is a Person – the Person of Jesus Christ, who steps into the darkness and difficulties of our world and of our lives to brighten them and lead them with God's love.

How we need the optimism of St John! Jesus Christ comes to us in vulnerability and frailty, as a helpless child. Yet the love he embodies and proclaims cannot be defeated, not even by death itself, and will, in the end, be the only answer to the questions troubling our uncertain world. The path that He illumines will always lead to unity and peace, to love and mercy.

A light shines in the darkness, a light that darkness could not overpower.

May the Light who is Jesus Christ, guide and bless you and your family this Christmas and throughout the coming year.

With my good wishes and blessing for a peaceful and joyful celebration.

Bishop Alan Hopes

news in brief

Patronal Mass is celebrated

■ The patronal Mass to commemorate the feast of St Edmund took place on Sunday November 17 at St Edmund's Church, Bury St Edmunds. Present were dignitaries from West Suffolk Council and Bury Town Council and Matthew Vernon, Canon Pastor from St Edmundsbury Cathedral.

Displayed on the altar was a relic of St Edmund which was kindly given to the parish by previous parish priest, Canon Mark Hackeson. The occasion was also marked by the use of a chalice of 16th-century origin that was presented last year to the church by the nephew of Fr Joe Collins who had been chaplain to the American air force during World War II.

An extremely impactful sermon was delivered by Canon David Bagstaff, highlighting the life and martyrdom of Edmund and his enduring importance to the local community. This will particularly be remembered in 2020 which marks the 1000th anniversary since the founding of St Edmund's Abbey, one of the largest and most powerful Benedictine monasteries in Europe.

Mass included excellent singing by the choir of an anthem to St Edmund, which had been composed by Fr John Barnes during his time in the parish. Following the service, members of the congregation gathered in the Crypt for the traditional St Edmund's Day lunch.

Mission to Jamaica

■ A group of seven parishioners from the Diocese of East Anglia will be travelling with Fr Michael Johnstone to Kingston in Jamaica in January to work with the Missionaries of the Poor, who care for about 600 impoverished people, from new-born babes to the very elderly. The volunteers leave on January 15 for a stay of either two or three weeks. There is still time for others to join them. Ring Fr Michael on 01603 664118 for further details.

Catholic East Anglia

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Caritas East Anglia commissioning

■ Story continued from page one

These festivals will bring an opportunity to make contact with individual parishioners around the diocese and encourage everyone to be involved.

Speaking on Radio Suffolk, Jacinta said: "Today is World Day of the Poor which Pope Francis has designated as a special day for us to think about what we can do for the poor. Not just to pray for them but to do something for them."

"In Caritas East Anglia we are looking at where the Lord is working in our churches and our communities and discerning where the Holy Spirit may be leading us to share God's love with others through our actions and through prayer."

"Social outreach is already happening across the diocese and there are many people working with the poor, the homeless and the marginalised – working in night shelters, visiting those who are isolated, working with ex-offenders, for example."

We are looking at where that is already happening, bringing people together and highlighting where people might get

involved and serve. There is massive work which needs to be done with refugees and asylum-seekers for example," said Jacinta.

"In this role my faith has already been strengthened by meeting people and seeing them interacting with those they are serving. They are not just making lunch for people, they are talking to people, they

Bishop Alan serves lunch to one of the lunch guests from St Martin's Housing Trust at the Caritas East Anglia commissioning. Picture by Eldred Willey



are walking with them and that is what we are called to do. Jesus walked with the poor and the marginalised and we need to follow his example and do what he did."

You can find out more on the Caritas East Anglia website, where there is also a questionnaire for each parish to fill in:

www.rcdea.org.uk/caritas

Prayers said for 39 Vietnamese victims

Prayers have been said in Peterborough in memory of the 39 Vietnamese victims found dead in a lorry container in Essex recently.

■ After the Vigil of All Saints, parishioners gathered together in the church to pray especially for the repose of the souls of the 39 Vietnamese people who died in the container in Essex while making their way to the UK.

Parish priest, Fr Arockiya Seelan, began the Holy Hour and Eucharistic Adoration by asking the congregation to entrust the souls of the victims to the Lord and to All Saints and to pray for their families.

Then he sent his deepest sympathy and condolences to Peter Ho who is also Vietnamese and is doing a pastoral placement in the parish. He reminded the congregation that there are also two



Fr Seelan in front of the Blessed Sacrament and Peter Ho leading the prayers.

Vietnamese priests working in the Diocese of East Anglia, Canon John Minh and Fr Paul Chanh.

The Holy Hour was also joined by a group of young people from the parish of Saint Peter and All Souls. They brought their instruments and sang the worship songs.

During the adoration, the congregation

lit 39 candles in front of the altar to represent the number of the victims. Then Peter Ho led the congregation in prayers and read out the names of the victims in Vietnamese.

Fr Seelan ended the Adoration by giving the blessing of the Blessed Sacrament and thanked people for joining in.

Anthony receives the Ministry of Acolyte

■ Seminarian Anthony Asomugha received the Ministry of Acolyte on 26 October at a service at Allen Hall in Chelsea.

Anthony, from St John's Cathedral in Norwich, is now in his fifth year at seminary, and is due to be ordained Deacon in June of next year.

He and his family came to the UK in 2006 from Lagos, Nigeria, and settled in London. In 2011 he went to Norwich to study Economics at the University of East Anglia. He attended Mass regularly at the UEA chaplaincy and the Cathedral and came to love the city. Towards the end of his degree he applied for priestly formation for the Diocese of East Anglia, was accepted and started seminary in 2014.

Pictured, right, is Anthony Asomugha after receiving the Ministry of Acolyte. With him is Bishop Mark O'Toole of Plymouth.



Teachers' new look at Humanae Vitae

Teachers, priests and religious from around the diocese met recently in Newmarket to study the Church's teaching on marriage and family life.

■ Fr Paul Grogan of Leeds Diocese and Dr Bonnie Lander Johnson, the East Anglia Marriage and Family Life Coordinator, led the day on October 2, which looked especially at Pope Paul VI's 1968 encyclical Humanae Vitae.

Bonnie said: "It has now been over 50 years since the publication of Pope Paul's encyclical. In many ways the world has changed considerably, but some of the social and moral concerns that motivated the release of this encyclical are still very relevant, if not more relevant, for young people today."

Yet, she points out, the teaching in Humanae Vitae is rarely discussed. "The release of this document in 1968 created such passionate disagreement among Catholics, that many still carry very real wounds. Out of proper sensitivity to that hurt, the Church in this country has remained largely silent on the document. But today's teenagers and young adults had no direct experience of that trauma, and the Church's silence on this teaching in particular might no longer be of service to them. Young people today have troubles of their own to face, and it is possible that Humanae Vitae might provide some of the answers they need."

"We have all witnessed the reality of increased divorce rates and sexual licence, the rapidly changing culture of identity politics, and more significant levels of loneliness, depression and anx-



Dr Bonnie Lander Johnson and Fr Paul Grogan in Newmarket.

ity. For those just embarking on their romantic lives, much of this new culture has created a deep uncertainty about how to configure significant relationships.

"Humanae Vitae offers a vision of true love as the total gift of the self in loving union between husband and wife.

Together with other marriage and family encyclicals, such as John Paul II's Familiaris Consortio, it describes the human family as a school of holiness and social virtue, a place in which children, together with their parents, are called to a special kind of communion in which they can flourish to their full dignity and discover their deepest selves."

Bonnie noticed that the teachers at this Newmarket event were particularly keen to hear more about how the Church's teaching tradition could help them to support families in crisis.

"Our teachers routinely witness the pressures on young people through social media and the internet's highly sexualised, and widely available, content," she said. "They witness families who feel powerless to help and direct their children. For teachers in particular the diocese will be running subsequent events focussed on key issues relating to gender identity, the use of technology, and the dignity of the human person."

news in brief

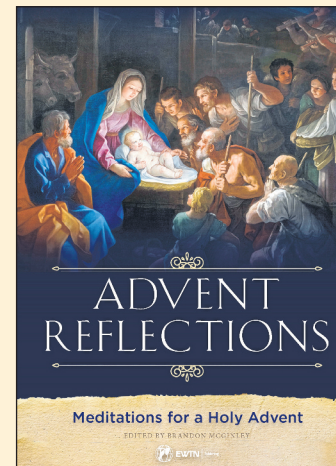
Bishop Alan's Advent thoughts

■ Bishop Alan has contributed to a book of reflections on Advent, which has just been published by the Catholic media network EWTN.

The 160-page illustrated book is entitled Advent Reflections: Meditations for a Holy Advent. It is available on Amazon and costs \$14.95 in paperback or \$10.06 on Kindle.

In one of his contributions, Bishop Alan writes:

"While we are of course saved as individuals, we must beware of making ourselves the centre of the story, because we are



part of a community... This communal aspect is a key part of the Catholic understanding of salvation, and if we miss it, we end up placing ourselves at the center of the universe."

The compiler of the book, Brandon McGinley, works for EWTN and lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

He writes: "Amidst the hustle and bustle of the secular pre-Christmas season, these Advent reflections invite you to slow down and reflect on the season's spiritual and liturgical themes. Shared over the years with grateful EWTN audiences by good priests and bishops from the United Kingdom and Ireland, they will help you do just that."

"Let these holy bishops and priests take you on a refreshing spiritual journey through Advent, bring you the deeper reality of the season, cut through the secular distractions and anxieties, and deliver you to the Christ child."

Cathedral Christmas

■ There is something for everyone at St John the Baptist Cathedral in Norwich this Christmas.

The Christmas celebrations begin with Solemn Sung Latin Vespers at 3:15pm on Christmas Eve, which helps us prepare for the coming of Christ in a unique way, by uniting ourselves with the Prayer of the Church, followed by a 4pm Old Rite Latin Mass.

At 6pm on Christmas Eve is the Family Vigil Mass, where children are invited to join in the nativity play, and during this Mass the children will go to the crib, where Fr Paul will bless the nativity figures, and place the baby in the manger.

At 11:30pm is the Carol Service, featuring the Cathedral Choir singing 'O Holy Night', and readings and carols. Midnight Mass with the Bishop is always a special occasion at the Cathedral. The Choir will be singing Haydn's 'St Nicholas Mass', and there will be traditional carols for everyone.

On Christmas Day, there will be a 7:30am Mass in Tamil and English, a 9am Mass with Traditional Carols, and a Sung Solemn Mass at 11am.

www.sjbcathedral.org.uk

NEW EVANGELISATION



news in brief

Christmas songs for Samaritans

■ Songs at Christmas – a concert by the Bury Community Choir – will be held at St Edmund's Church in Bury St Edmunds on December 19, in aid of the Bury branch of Samaritans.

The choir will be directed by Mike Berridge and accompanied by Matthew Foster and the concert starts at 7.30pm at St Edmunds, 21 Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 1QG. You can reserve your ticket by emailing Viv at vivbewley1@gmail.com

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Course gives confidence in faith

A Southwold grandmother has described her new confidence in speaking about her faith, after successfully completing an online diocesan course in Catechetics.

■ Laurette Burton, from the Sacred Heart parish in Southwold, said she studied for the Diocesan Catechetical Certificate because she was "sometimes

needing to answer searching questions from members of the family".

Having now completed the course, she said: "I can highly recommend it, not least because as a cradle Catholic I assumed my knowledge of the faith to be comprehensive, and yet I have learnt so much."

Laurette was also motivated to take the course by a desire to equip herself with the knowledge necessary for evangelisation.

"The course is divided into a number of modules," she explained, "covering a wide spectrum of the faith including study of the basic tenets, the

liturgy, the significance of Sacred art and the place of the media in evangelisation."

Other participants commented:

"Thank you so much for this wonderful course. I have learnt so much and deepened my faith in ways I had not expected."

"The course has been an enriching journey for me and I am deeply blessed to have been one of the participants. This grace

■ If you are interested please talk initially with your parish priest.

■ Applications can be made via the website: www.theannunciation.org.uk/catechist-training

■ If you have further questions please contact the course co-ordinator for East Anglia, Fr Andrew Eburne (andrew.eburne@rcdea.org.uk).



Carol Ann Harnett, the course tutor, with a group of students at a study day in May, including Laurette Burton (far right).

has been a life-changing experience."

The course is based on distance learning over 18 months, with attendance at 6 non-residential study days.

There is a balance of teaching, liturgy, social time and prayer at the weekends. The cost can be met by the local parish.

As a final word of encouragement, Laurette added: "If you are already a catechist, a parent, or a grandparent wishing to pass on the faith, or if you want to delve more deeply into its riches, this is a wonderful way of learning which is open to you."

What happens when we hear God in Scripture

Continuing our series about the year of The God Who Speaks, Rebecca Bretherton writes about when God started speaking directly to her through Scripture.

■ "The older I get the more I learn from Scripture." This passing remark by an elderly friend changed my life. As a church-going Catholic, I had heard the readings at Mass for years but I hadn't given them much thought.

If I'm honest, I had always considered the Liturgy of the Word at Mass to be the boring bit we needed to get through before we reached the Eucharistic Prayer. Being a bit dim-witted, I didn't realise that God was speaking to me directly through the Bible, especially at Mass.

My friend's comment intrigued me: here was an old man finding fresh inspiration from the Bible. I started to listen to Scripture. I realised that Scripture was where I would find the answers to my questions about what God wanted for me. The listening became prayer and led to more detailed study of the texts and the

Church's interpretation of them. Once I started to hear God's message during the Liturgy of the Word, I discovered that His Word is proclaimed throughout the whole Mass.

Two moments particularly remind me that we worship with Scripture at Mass. We sing 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty' with the angels and heavenly creatures whom Isaiah and St John saw in visions (Isaiah 6:3 and Revelation 4:8). We join John the Baptist's recognition of Jesus as the Lamb of God from St John's Gospel (John 1:29). The Bible texts are part of our Catholic life outside Mass. Our traditional prayers are based on Scripture. When we pray 'Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you,' we are using words from Luke 1:28.

God speaks to me through the Scriptures when I am praying with other people. The text comes alive when read aloud. I love listening to others reading at Mass and have become a reader myself. Our parish prays with Scripture at our Gospel Sharing meetings. In those informal gatherings, each of us can be inspired by other people's thoughts and love of the Gospel.

On a global scale, I remember a power-

ful sharing of the Gospel at World Youth Day. We heard the Gospel proclaimed by priests in the languages of all the different countries represented at that Sunday Mass. It was an inspiring witness for the young pilgrims of the message of Christ's universal Church.

I can now say, with my friend, that: "The older I get the more I learn from Scripture." I am still challenged by my friend's simple declaration of his love of the Bible and by the Gospel story. How can I proclaim God's Good News in a way that will help others?

That's why I'm delighted that 2019/20 is The Year of The God Who Speaks. The Church invites us to learn more and to share what we learn from the Bible's message with people in our everyday lives.

Diocese of East Anglia contacts:

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Peterborough: Rebecca Bretherton, evangelisation@rcdea.org.uk

Cambs: Sr Tamsin Geach OP, tamsingeachop@gmail.com

www.godwhospeaks.uk

John Franklin, centre, with family and friends in the crypt at St Edmunds in Bury St Edmunds.



John celebrates a remarkable century

A Bury St Edmunds parishioner with an intriguing life story has celebrated his 100th birthday at a special Mass, two years earlier than he expected to. John Sanders reports.

■ It is rare for someone to be able to celebrate their 100th birthday at Mass, but the story of Mieczyslaw Frackiewicz, known as John Franklin, is rarer still.

John has lived in Bury St Edmunds for 70 years, having been a restorer of fine antiques and a maker of bespoke furniture.

In 1939 his hopes of studying to become a doctor were dashed because of the outbreak of World War II. He was dispossessed and displaced, being rounded up with other young men by the Russians and sent to a Siberian labour camp to work on building railways.

Life in Siberia was harsh with extreme cold and little food. Prisoners slept in railway carriages with straw as blankets, resulting in many men perishing.

In 1941 Stalin granted an amnesty to these Poles, allowing the formation of the Polish armed forces. In 1942 John was sent via Uzbekistan, Persia (Iran) and Africa in order to reach the UK. His memory of this long journey has faded, but he recalls boarding the boat in South Africa and arriving in April 1943 in Blackpool. The Polish recruits were processed and John elected to join the Royal Air Force.

In August 1944 he was assigned to Squadron 304, initially as part of the crew flying Wellington bombers over Germany and later undertaking reconnaissance missions focussed on anti-submarine warfare. He was decorated for his actions.

At the end of the War it was clear that it would be dangerous for Polish people to return to Poland due to the country being under Soviet influence. As a result of the Potsdam agreement the boundaries of Poland were redrawn. The territories in the east became part of Belarus, Ukraine and Lithuania. The area of Grodno in Eastern Poland where John was born became part of Belarus, and remains so to this day.

The 1947 Polish Resettlement Act allowed people connected to the armed forces to stay and work in the UK. John was discharged from the

RAF, intending to undertake an apprenticeship. It was at that time that a discrepancy in his date of birth was discovered. All of his documents issued by the Polish Forces and the RAF recorded his birth date as November 7, 1921.

Facing an uncertain future, he was obliged to adopt this incorrect date of birth and his new name of Michael John Franklin in order to move on with his life. He held on to the hope that his faith as a Catholic would one day resolve matters. He had lost his family in Poland, had no original documents, could not return to his homeland and had to make a new life for himself in a foreign country.

He was demobbed, gained British Citizenship and settled in Bury St Edmunds. He forged strong connections at St Edmund's Church and was responsible for making a processional cross. His marriage to Pam led to them having two daughters, Linda and Stephanie.

It was not until May 2019 that he received a visit from an attaché from the Polish Embassy in London who wanted to hear about John's history and his experiences in the Polish Forces and British RAF. He was advised to apply for his service records which he had not previously seen – these showed that his true birth date was November 3, 1919.

So it was that at Sunday Mass on November 3, two years earlier than John had even dreamed of, that Fr Mike Brookes briefly recounted John's background before the choir led the congregation in the singing of Happy Birthday to celebrate a remarkable centenary. Afterwards, a further surprise awaited John. Accompanied by his daughter Linda and son in law Tony, members of the Polish community gathered in the Crypt, sang 'Sto lat!' and presented flowers and cake.

Poppy waterfall marks Remembrance Sunday

■ Parishioners at St Mary's, in Woodbridge Road, Ipswich marked Remembrance Sunday with a waterfall of poppies around the church door.

Jean McSorley from St Mary's writes: "Could we make a Poppy Waterfall for St Mary's? Would we have time? Would people help with the knitting and crocheting of the poppies?"

"All these thoughts were going through the mind of Pat Chamberlain, the flautist in our music group.

"Of course we will help, we can knit, we can crochet, how hard can it be?"

"So way back in September a group of ladies and one man gathered together with their knitting needles and crochet hooks to discuss the logistics of this. Fortified by cake, teas and coffees, the team began work on the first batch of poppies.

"Other people who couldn't make the afternoon sessions brought their contributions in to Pat, and before we knew it not only did we have enough poppies for St Mary's but also enough for the Holy Family and St Michael church at Kesgrave as well.

"On Remembrance Sunday both churches proudly sported their waterfalls.

"We had a great time making these poppies. We had red for remembrance, purple for the animals that were lost during the conflicts and white for peace.

"With the help of Pat's husband Bob, Sandra's husband Bob, plus Ralph, the waterfalls were put up outside both churches."



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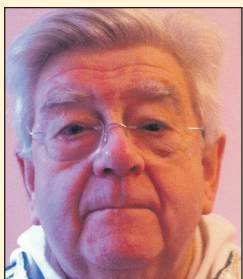
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reflection

Shout the Good News from rooftop

The good news that Jesus is risen and with His people is not a secret to be hidden but a truth to be shouted from the rooftops, says Deacon Peter Coates from Woodbridge, in his monthly reflection.

■ There is a tradition that the Pope ordains men chosen to be Bishops during the Holy Mass of the Epiphany. The first Bishop of Chisinau, Anton Cosa, was ordained on January 6 2000 by Pope John Paul II.



In turn, I was the first person Bishop Anton ordained exactly a year later at the end of the Holy Year. I cannot help being proud of my heritage. But both the Bishop and I are very aware of the responsibilities of these privileges.

His diocese is very young and growing rapidly. This is a cause for real joy but also presents the difficulties that enthusiasm can bring. We discovered that Paul's letters to his young churches provided us with very useful descriptions of our own situations.

I was ordained to preach and could not proceed to ordination until I could preach in Romanian and I was ordained to serve those in need and at the altar. I also had to preach in English for our foreign visitors and workers. It was made very clear to me that I was to preach the gospel and call people to follow Jesus.

The Feast of the Epiphany is loaded with symbolism which turns the world upside down. The Christ-child, born of a practising Jewish mother, is shown to some Gentile astrologers who not only recognise Him as King and Martyr but realise the dangerous position in which this immediately places Him and themselves.

Next to nothing is known about these visitors but we must assume that they arrived sometime after Jesus' birth. The new family were in a house and the baby boy had been circumcised by the time they returned to their eastern origins.

The Church teaches that this is the "Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles", showing from the very beginning that Jesus came for the whole world, for hoi polloi – the many.

The gospel changes everything. There is an excitement about Epiphany which should not be lost. Paul exploits that excitement in his letter to the Galatians, who have been misled into thinking that to be a Christian you had first to become Jewish. He asks who has bewitched them, suggesting that such teaching is thoroughly reprehensible.

This is true today. The gospel is offered to all. The good news that Jesus is risen and with His people is not a secret to be hidden but a truth to be shouted from the rooftops, by each of us in the way God opens for us.

Archives set to

In the former sacristy, down a spiral staircase, deep under St John's Cathedral in Norwich, are hundreds of boxes comprising the Diocese of East Anglia Archive. There the archivists, Michael and Gillian Hill, are working hard to maintain the Archive and to develop an accessible online archive catalogue.

■ "Bishop Alan appointed my wife Gillian and I to be the archivists in March last year. We are the latest in a long line of people to be passed the Archive baton," says Michael.

They work as a team: Gillian enjoys history and researching the backgrounds of archival items and helping people to find documents and information; Michael's focus is the new IT system for the public catalogue. The couple are happy to assist parishes develop their own archives – and Michael has written a guide to help them do so.

"Our role is to retain and organise the documents and artefacts which form part of the history of the diocese. Indeed, we are required to do so by a Vatican directive to all clergy to maintain proper records. The Archive tells the story of the journey from the past to the present and helps inform the future," said Michael.

"We maintain the Archive for the diocese as a whole and exist to support its 51 parishes with their own records/archives. Any material, document or artefact, presented to us will be assessed for its relevance to the diocesan story before being retained in the Archive.

"Here, we have some 300 boxes containing around 20,000 separate documents; we have clerical vestments used by bishops, canons and priests; somewhere in the region of 1500 photographs. We have deeds, wills and the Papal Bulls which set up the Diocese of East Anglia and which introduced each Bishop. Also some artefacts including a sculptured head, portable altars, relics, and recusant chalices," said Michael.

"Currently the written word is the bedrock of the archive," said Gillian, "but today's communication systems, such as email, text and messaging apps, present a significant challenge to all archivists trying to preserve the record for future researchers."

"We must assess the items we receive critically to be satisfied they provide a relevant picture of the past and are worth retaining for the future," she said. "We can only do this effectively if each item has some provenance i.e. it is described and accompanied with, at least, an outline history. Once in the Archive, ownership transfers to the diocese."



Michael and Gillian Hill in the diocesan archives deep inside St John's Cathedral in Norwich.

"Buried in the archives are lots of little stories about people, about places and about items," Michael said. "It is our job to help researchers find those stories." The couple try to find answers to people's questions and have a lot of requests relating to family history, original documentation and helping parish priests build a history of their parish.

"Since last year we discovered a priest missing from a parish's history; we helped parishes to start creating their own histories; we even discovered two new relatives for a family researching their predecessors," said Michael, who used to work with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport helping libraries develop digital resources.

Following an appeal from an Italian researcher to help solve a 19th century paintings mystery con-

nected with the Cathedral's benefactor, the Duke of Norfolk, Michael appeared on BBC Radio Norfolk to talk about the appeal and the work of the Archive.

The couple are in the early stages of producing the online catalogue and the 5 parishes completed represent over 1300 records on the widely-used AtoM (Access to Memory) system.

AtoM was originally developed for the Canadian Government to implement international archival standards. A visit is necessary to see the actual documents.

The archive is available online at: <http://104.41.220.117/>

Michael and Gillian are happy to hear from parishes with material to offer, and people with an historical query or to visit. You can contact them at archive@rcdea.org.uk



go digital



The three new Postulants, Jolanta Wasag, Niamh Rodda and Jennifer Kamps.

Trio of new vocations boost Norfolk convent

Three young women have been accepted as Postulants with the Daughters of Divine Charity at their convent in Swaffham. The Sisters – who became well-known through the Channel 5 reality TV series ‘Bad Habits’ – welcomed the newcomers at a special service on September 8.

■ Jolanta Wasag, Niamh Rodda and Jennifer Kamps had been staying with the Sisters for a year as Candidates, and discerning their vocations. They will now continue their formation as Postulants for a year before they enter the Novitiate.

Jennie (Jennifer) shared: “I can remember leaving the National Youth Congress ‘Flame’ in the summer of 2012, with this phrase on my heart: ‘I never even asked God what He wanted me to do with my life.’ These words have stayed with me ever since.

“During sixth form, quiet, gentle thoughts kept surfacing: ‘What if I became a religious sister?’ However, I went to university and these thoughts became lost to the noise of life. Until I was in the summer of my third year, when the gentle whispering became so frequent and clear that I couldn’t keep walking my own path, the path I thought I wanted. I couldn’t ignore this prompting. I began a journey of acceptance and, in time, grew to desire this path God was encouraging me to take.

“Many friends, family, priests and religious have supported me with encouragement, guidance and prayer, which gave me the courage to ask to enter the Congregation of the Daugh-

ters of Divine Charity. I have just been received into Postulancy and I can say with confidence, God is good. He is certainly full of surprises, but He has given me the grace to know that I am not alone.”

Sr Francis Ridler, of the Daughters of Divine Charity, said: “We are thankful for these new vocations and ask for your prayers for their perseverance, and for new vocations.” The Sisters can be contacted on fdcsisters@gmail.com or on Facebook @ Daughters of Divine Charity England.

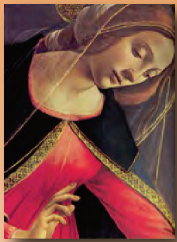
The Sisters in Swaffham are beginning a new phase in their apostolate. After 105 years of teaching in Swaffham at the Independent Sacred Heart School, they have leased for a peppercorn rate a large proportion of their land and buildings to the Diocese of East Anglia. The new VA Primary School started at the beginning of September 2019.

“This is a great achievement on behalf of the Sisters, the Diocese and Norfolk County Council,” said Sr Francis.

“One idea for the convent is that the Diocesan Youth Team would run retreats for young people in the Convent Building,” said Sr Francis.

“God always works in mysterious ways and sometimes He tests our faith,” she added. “The Sisters, and many people in the area, would also like us to be able to keep the Barn with its theatre, art, pottery and music facilities for use by the people of the town. This building would also require a sponsor and local support. God is never outdone in generosity, so the Sisters wait in anticipation of a small miracle. If he can provide three willing girls to give their lives wholeheartedly to Him he can inspire more generosity.”

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SCHOOLS IN FOCUS

New Catholic school plan is backed but support still needed

A consultation has shown that there is strong support for the establishment of a new Catholic primary school in Hampton East, Peterborough, with supporters now urged to write to Peterborough City Council by December 19.

■ Helen Bates, Assistant Director of the Schools' Service for the Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia, explains:

"The Diocese is asking as many people as possible to write to Peterborough City Council to show their support for the proposed new school. A detailed proposal has been submitted and there now follows a consultation period when anyone can write to the City Council about the proposal. Even if you have shown your support before for this proposal, we would urge you to do so again directly to Peterborough City Council by December 19."

Expressions of support can be emailed to consultations@peterborough.gov.uk or by writing to Schools Admissions Team, People & Communities, Peterborough City Council, Sand Martin House, Bit-

tern Way, Fletton Quays, Peterborough, PE2 8TY. Correspondence should be marked "Response to Proposed New Catholic Primary School".

In the recent consultation by the Diocese, 82% of respondents (941 people) said that they 'strongly agreed' with the proposal to establish the Catholic school, compared to just 8.4% (96 people) who said that they 'strongly disagreed' with

the proposal.

Out of those responding, 27.4% identified themselves as a parent or guardian, 48% came from the wider Peterborough Community, and 9.6% came from the Hampton community itself.

In addition to the 1,146 responses received, a petition in favour of opening a new Catholic primary school in Hampton East was signed by 321 respondents.



Bishop Alan talking to pupils during a recent visit to St Thomas More Catholic Primary School in Peterborough

Brothers win essay-writing competition

■ Altar-serving brothers Thomas and James Gigy have been presented with certificates and prizes as winners in the Knights of St Columba essay-writing competition.

The brothers each won personal prizes of £82 as individual winners of the KS4 (James) and KS3 (Thomas) groups of the Provincial and National rounds of the 2019 Essay Writing competitions with James receiving a trophy and special certificate as overall winner.

The awards were presented by Provincial Grand Knight of East Anglia Province, Bro Jason Wickard assisted by Past PPG Bro Chris Brooks.

At the end of Mass, the brothers each presented a donation of £200 from the Knights for the benefit of the Parish of St Peter and All Souls Peterborough.

Bro Brooks announced that details of the KSC 2020 Easter Scene, Prayer and Essay Writing competitions will be circulated to schools and parishes in the Diocese for the New Year.



Pictured are James Gigy (left of centre) and Thomas Gigy (right of centre), with their family, Parish Priest Rev Fr Adam Sowa MS and Bros Jason Wickard and Chris Brooks.

YOUTH MATTERS

Exciting events for the new year

A candlelit Epiphany Mass at Poringland will launch a rich series of events which the Diocesan Youth Service is running for young people across the Diocese in 2020. Eldred Willey reports.

■ Young people and their families are invited to the special Epiphany Mass at Poringland, which will be followed by a bonfire with fireworks and hot dogs.

Primary aged children as well as teenagers are welcome at the event, and parishes which are running confirmation groups are encouraged to bring them as part of their programme.

The celebration will run from 5pm to 7pm on Sunday January 5 at The White House, 21 Upgate, Poringland, NR14 7SH.

As part of this Epiphany event the Diocesan Youth Service is collecting gifts for children in Norwich who are refugees; the gifts should be wrapped and labelled to say what age child the gift is for, and whether for a boy or a girl.

This year Hamish McQueen, Director of the Diocesan Youth Service, asked the Red Cross if it was really useful to be collecting toys for refugee children, or whether it would be more sensible to bring things like tins of soup. The Red Cross replied that things like toys which were not a necessity were really appreciated, because they made refugee children feel significant.

"Jesus was a refugee," commented Hamish, "so we felt that this way of collecting gifts was especially meaningful at Epiphany, when we remember the Wise Men bringing gifts to Him."

"We have now run this candlelit Mass for several years," he said, "and we find it is a really uplifting way to end the



■ The Norwich Circle of the Catenian Association followed their 56-year tradition of entertaining Catholic students at the University of East Anglia on the third Sunday of October after the 6pm Mass on October 20.

This year's Mass was celebrated by the University's Catholic Chaplain, Rev Andrew Eburne aided by his Assistant Chaplain Joseph Beakhouse. Phil Hoy, the Circle's current President, led a contingent of Brother Catenians plus their wives.

Pictured left to right are students Lara Dela Cruz and Marya George, Phil Hoy, Rev Andrew Eburne, student Emike Nasamu and Joseph Beakhouse.

Christmas season – it is the best antidote to the sense of anti-climax which people sometimes feel after Christmas Day itself."

This year the Diocese is putting on a bus and providing subsidised travel from Peterborough, King's Lynn and Swaffham for those who would like to come. The coach leaves St Luke's Peterborough at 1.30pm, St Oswalds,

Peterborough at 1.50pm, Our Lady of the Annunciation in King's Lynn at 3pm and Our Lady of Pity in Swaffham at 3.30pm. For tickets (£8 each) please contact please contact Hamish MacQueen at dys@rcdea.org.uk

On the Friday before the event (January 3) the Ignite Lite team of young volunteers will gather at Walsingham for a weekend of formation before travelling

together to Poringland to help run the event. Young adults who would like to help at Epiphany are welcome to get in touch with Hamish and have the option of joining the retreat which precedes it.

The Ignite Team is also putting on three Glow days in early 2020. The aim of these is to bring something of the annual Ignite Festival to young people at a more local level.

This year Glow events will be held at St. Mary's Church, Woodbridge Road, Ipswich from 10am to 5pm on Saturday January 18; at St Peter and All Souls Church, Geneva Street, Peterborough on Saturday February 15, and in Cambridge on March 15. You can book online at www.rcdea.org.uk/youth/events.

A Glow day typically consists of worship, adoration, and a mixture of workshops, activities and talks. Members of local youth groups with musical gifts or other skills are often invited to help lead the sessions. In Norwich the Youth for Christ group (which is linked to Couples for Christ) has provided young people able to assist in providing music and talks for these events.

Ciaran Losasso, Ignite Team Leader, said: "These Glow days are an opportunity for young people to go deeper, whether that means theologically or in their discipleship. The talks and the worship are designed to help them take that next step in their commitment. We are especially aiming at young people who have recently been through confirmation, as we find that there is often little laid on for them."

The Ignite Team appreciates prayer for its work, and people of all ages are welcome at Ignite Prayer Network Meeting to pray for young people in the Diocese. It will be held at the Diocesan Conference Centre, 21 Upgate, Poringland, Norwich, NR14 7SH at 10.30am on Saturday February 2. RSVP to igniteeam@rcdea.org.uk

Diary dates 2020

■ May 8-10, 2020: Ignite Youth Festival – Sacred Heart Swaffham



■ June 20-21, 2020: Celebrate East Anglia – St Benedict's High School, 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

Instagram: @igniteyea

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

Epiphany Candlelight★ Mass

Followed by hotdogs, a bonfire and fireworks
For all young people from across the Diocese

5pm – 7pm Sunday 5th January 2020
at The White House, 21 Upgate,
Poringland. NR14 7SH

We are collecting gifts for children who are refugees.

Please bring a wrapped gift, indicating on the outside whether it is for a boy or girl or either, and the approximate age it is suitable for.

Organised by East Anglia Diocesan Youth Service. Tel: 01508 486236 Email: dys@rcdea.org.uk

news in brief

Bishop blesses new classrooms

■ St Benedict's Catholic High School in Bury St Edmunds welcomed Bishop Alan recently to bless the six new classrooms that have been opened this academic year at the school in Beetons Way.

The school successfully transitioned to a single site from St Andrew's Street South during the summer and Bishop Alan was pleased to tour and bless the new facilities. He was able to meet students and staff after celebrating Mass in the school hall. Sixth Form theology students were also able to enjoy a question and answer session with the Bishop, asking a range of questions regarding their faith.

Christmas street fair

■ Crowds flocked to St Edmund's church on Sunday December 1 during the Bungay Christmas Street Fair to light a candle for a loved one or for a special intention and buy crafts and Christmas cards.

The fair was organised by the CAFOD team from the Bungay end of the parish (Sue Altarelli and Jenny Beaugeard) and all proceeds from the 20p candles went to CAFOD. The candles and a craft stall selling cards by Sue Altarelli, and cot quilts by parishioner Felicity Todd, made £76.32.

Over 180 people visited the beautiful grade I church to pause a moment, reflect, look round and listen to Gregorian chant playing.

Sanctity of life pilgrimage

Over 1000 pilgrims braved heavy rain to take part in a pilgrimage to Walsingham of reparation and prayer for the Sanctity of Life reports event organiser Janet Baker.

■ Pilgrims joined the event on October 6 from several areas of the Diocese of East Anglia, despite flooded roads in the surrounding area.

Our Holy Mother did not let us down. With vigorous encouragement from Mgr Armitage, delivered in his own inimitable style, we "offered it all up" in Reparation. The outcome was a very blessed day, with pilgrims in good spirits enjoying something of an adventure.

The team at the Shrine worked tirelessly all day. There was not room in the Chapel of Reconciliation for everyone to attend Mass there, and sitting outside was not an option (except for a few hardy souls who chose to do so). Fortunately, most others were able to squeeze into the two halls where they shared in the Mass through a live stream.

The Holy Mile was impassable in some places, causing the procession into the village to be cancelled; Bishop Mark O'Toole, who intended to take



Pilgrims brave heavy rain at Walsingham.

part, was unwell and had to cancel at the last minute.

Mgr Armitage read out the Bishop's homily, which began by referring to a recent visit to Africa, where the coming of the Gospel had brought a new respect for humanity.

At Mass the people sing a Gospel anthem, reported the Bishop: "Praise to the Gospel for it... showed us that girls could be educated... it taught us to accept twins... it taught us to recognise the dignity of every human being..."

The homily recalled the far-reaching effects of the 1967

Abortion Act which has led to over 8 million abortions in the UK.

"In the face of such a relentless pursuit of death-dealing, we can sometimes feel overwhelmed," wrote the Bishop. "This is where the parable of today's Gospel and the example of the mustard seed should give us courage. Our faith may seem small but the Lord does not abandon us. He can bring an abundant fruitfulness out of the smallest beginnings."

"In this holy place, we recall the holy house of Nazareth,

where Mary showed she was open to the Gospel of Life, as she gave a home for The Word of God to become flesh and to be born into our world."

This year coaches came from Leeds, Kent, Central and East London, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire. Next year the pilgrimage takes place on Sunday September 27, and will be led by Bishop Marcus Stock of the Leeds diocese.

Full details will be available on www.prolifepilgrimage.org

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Jesus' Ancestresses in Word and Art

Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba and Mary

Thursday afternoons, 16th January–6th February 2020, *Course leader: Dr Rosalie Moloney*

The genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:1-17 names only five women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba and Mary. For centuries people have been intrigued by the inclusion of these diverse and often unorthodox women. Exploring their individual stories through Scripture, commentary, literature and art offers an opportunity to understand their significance both in their own context and in the context of Matthew's genealogy. The four-week course will include a visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum, which contains works of art in a variety of media depicting all five biblical characters. Reading Matthew's Gospel may never be the same again.

Living the Life of Christ

Engaging the Imagination in Spiritual Practice

Thursday afternoons, 13th February–5 March 2020
Course leader: Dr Louise Nelstrop

CCRS Spirituality Study Day (open to all)

18th Jan 2020 10.30 - 3.30 at Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology
Come and join the CCRS students and Dr Louise Nelstrop. £15 pay on the day. Bring your own lunch. To book: email mbitadm@hermes.cam.ac.uk

www.margaretbeaufort.cam.ac.uk

12 Grange Road, Cambridge, CB3 9DU, 01223 741039

Embroidery skills appeal

A parishioner from St John's Cathedral is appealing for people with the skills and willingness to help repair vestments across the Diocese of East Anglia.

■ Barbara Scrutton, from Norwich, has been repairing vestments for an amazing almost 70 years – from the age of 15 to her present 84.

She said: "Four years ago, when approaching my 80th birthday, I retired from work in the Cathedral to look after my disabled husband; he sadly died last year.

"I had been sacristan for over 12 years and during that time, and before, made repairs to vestments. I also created a number of new vestment sets with some ladies who, with me, formed St John's Embroiderers.

"We also extended this work to include other churches in the area: Gt Yarmouth, Lowestoft, Poringland, Dereham, Sheringham and Walsingham.

We even repaired vestments from Church of England parishes in Hethersett and Great Melton. These ladies have mostly moved on and the skills needed are not widely taught these days.

"I have been asked to take back the repair of vestments. This is not a problem whilst I am able, but I am thinking of the future. Vestments will always need repair so I would like to form a group of people who will be available and have the skills to do the work when

needed – or who are happy to learn them."

If you are interested and would like more information, please contact Barbara at barbara.scrutton1@virginmedia.com

Pictured above is part of an embroidered Centenary History of St John's, created by Barbara Scrutton.



Bernice writes about her five-day pilgrimage on foot

Bernice Zieba, a mother of eight, has written a book about her five-day pilgrimage on foot from home in Cambridgeshire to Walsingham. She describes the journey in her own words.

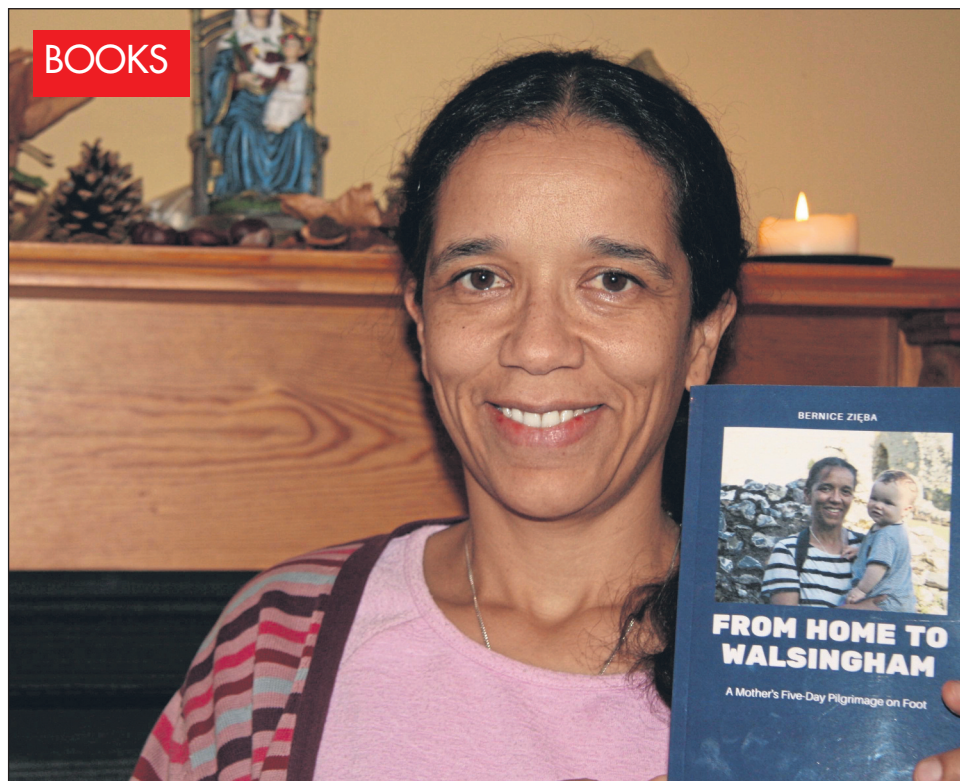
■ Every time we went on a pilgrimage to Walsingham, we travelled by coach or by car. But I felt a pilgrimage should be something that challenges you physically. I wanted to feel the hardship of the road under my feet, and get the sense of how people did pilgrimages hundreds of years ago.

I had important prayer intentions for one of my children and for the conversion of England. I also thought of the rededication of England as the Dowry of Mary which is to take place in March 2020.

Sixteen years ago, I converted to the Catholic Church (I was a Protestant before). I believe that when you take the Catholic faith seriously, you cannot do without devotion to Mary. As a convert I learnt a lot about the Catholic faith and gradually got rid of prejudices, such as those about the Catholic approach towards Mary.

The Marian apparitions in Medjugorje helped me to not only intellectually grasp the Catholic faith, but also to embrace it with my whole heart. Before we moved back from Switzerland to the UK in 2016, we implored the help of Our Lady of Walsingham to find a new home.

After our first visit to Walsingham, when we were living temporarily in a caravan, we soon found a family who was willing to rent us their house. From then



on we were able to get established in the UK. We have visited Walsingham a few times with our parish and privately since then.

During the pilgrimage I felt free and I was motivated to walk on and on. Walking for hours in the glaring sun (it was the hottest part of the summer then), enduring hurting muscles and sometimes heavy road traffic, made the journey on foot at times challenging.

I thought about Jesus and Mary and life in general. That's because on such a pilgrimage you have almost all day to

think and pray; there are hardly any distractions, no household chores and hardly anyone talking to you.

Bernice was born in Gloucester and lived for over 30 years in Switzerland before returning to the UK. She now lives in Caxton, Cambridgeshire, and usually attends Mass at Our Lady and the English Martyrs in Cambridge and St John Fisher in Cambourne.

■ From Home to Walsingham. A Mother's Five-Day Pilgrimage on Foot and is available for £6.47 from Amazon at <https://amzn.to/2KrILpv>



Newman, a new English saint

John Henry Newman is one of the great figures in the story of the Christian faith in England. Here is the third of a brief six-part biography of the new English saint.

■ The teachings of John Henry Newman, who was canonised on October 13 in Rome, are preserved in the several books, sermons and lectures which remain for posterity.

Many of his Anglican sermons were published as Parochial and Plain Sermons and Sermons on Subjects of the Day.

His thoughts on university education were published in book form as The Idea of a University.

His religious autobiography was published in 1864 under the title Apologia pro vita sua.

His theology is best known from his book An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent.

Newman was also a poet. His most famous, rather long, poem was entitled The Dream of Gerontius, which was set to music by Sir Edward Elgar, and continues to be performed today. The very famous hymn Praise to the Holiest in the Height comes from Gerontius.

Two of Newman's other hymns are Lead Kindly Light and Firmly I believe and Truly, also from Gerontius.

John Henry Newman was a great scholar and a deeply learned man. But first and foremost he was a devout Christian. We may never be able to match his learning, but we can learn from his example of wanting to be God's faithful servant. One of his most loved meditations is useful for each one of us:

God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments.

Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me. Still, He knows what He is about.

www.newmancanonisation.com

A pilgrim's guide to Rome

Diocese of East Anglia priest Fr Michael Rear has written a Pilgrim's Guide to Rome, reviewed here by Fr Tony Rogers.

■ I devour travel literature, but find guide books rather hard going. So often they are laid out with lists of buildings and sites to visit in a disjointed way. But Michael Rear, a retired priest of our diocese has given us a book which is a joy to read from beginning to end – which I did in almost one sitting – so enthralled was I by every aspect.

At the beginning and end of the book there are some wonderfully helpful tips on getting around – and Michael's knowledge of the Roman buses and Metro system leaves no stone unturned.

He divides Rome largely into time zones, advising the pilgrim to try and cover particular eras in a single day – the

book is designed for a week's pilgrimage, and among his helpful advice is a caution to try to cover as much as possible within a single area, rather than hopping from one place to another and wasting time.

The British dimension is very thoroughly referred to throughout the book, with great background on the Stuarts connection with the city. It's clearly a book for pilgrims – peppered throughout with appropriate and simple prayers – and texts connected with particular places and people.

One of the most endearing features of the book is what I call the italic paragraphs – the links between getting from A to B with little asides about particularly good coffee stops, restaurants and ice-cream parlours, with the wonderful piece of advice 'Beware of being tempted into Sorello Adamoli, the marvellous house and kitchen shop across the road.' His observation on St Peter's is that when it is busy it can feel like 'King's



Cross in the rush hour.'

People and places come to life in a way that the reader will find snippets to treasure. He tells us about Napoleon's annexation of the Papal States and of the imprisonment of the sick Pius VII for six years in Savona, near the French border. But it was the forgiving Pius VII who pleaded with the British Government to alleviate the harsh conditions under which Napoleon lived in exile on St Helena, sent a priest to be his

chaplain and offered a refuge in Rome for members of the Bonaparte family.

This is what makes Michael Rear's book so special and so endearing. He clearly cares for the welfare of the pilgrim in Rome, with handy hints about where bags can be left, security issues, accessible places and difficulties for people with mobility problems, travel passes and charges for entry. This is a book which I hope will find its way to the suitcases of all future pilgrims to the Eternal City. If you don't cover all the places he invites us to visit, there is always another occasion to do more.

The price is reasonable, the text inspiring, uplifting and very humorous, and the beautiful illustrations by Hilary Griffiths, who are found in abundance throughout, evocative. Michael is clearly a man who knows his Rome inside out, and loves it. A thoroughly good read!

■ Rome: A Pilgrim's Guide by Michael Rear (Gracewing, 2019, £14.99)

News picture gallery from parishes around the Diocese

■ Fr Paul Maddison, former Parish Priest of March, has taken a further step in his vocation as a Benedictine monk at Douai Abbey, near Reading.

Under his new monastic name of Fr Gregory, he took his simple vows during a Mass on 15 October.

These vows are offered after a year's Novitiate and are a commitment to three more years continued formation as a Benedictine monk.

The three vows which Fr Gregory took are obedience to the Abbot, Conversatio Morum (conversion of life according to the Rule of St Benedict), and stability, that is, being part of the Benedictine community in the monastery of St Edmund at Douai.

Fr Paul was well known in the Diocese of East Anglia as the CEO of the charity Pilgrimage People, which organised trips to the Holy Land and ran practical projects for the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Pictured right, is Fr Gregory (third right) with his family and Abbot Geoffrey Scott.



■ Pictured above, Bishop Alan celebrated Mass with diocesan priests at the Belsey Bridge Conference Centre in Ditchingham during a Study Day for Clergy on November 7.

■ A photograph of sunshine and incense after the Solemn Sung Mass on the first Sunday of GMT (30th Sunday in Ordinary Time). St Mary's, Thetford, which is the oldest free standing Catholic Church in East Anglia. Opened in 1820 – before Catholic Emancipation, the older Chapel is the Sunken Chapel at St Edmunds, Bury St Edmunds (1685 & 1791). Both churches were founded and served by the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) from 1685 until 1837.



■ The Diocese of East Anglia provided an opportunity to learn more about finance at a special seminar in the Narthex at St John's Cathedral on Saturday November 16. Matthew Fernandez-Graham, Diocesan Director of Finance and Resources, reports.

More than 70 Parish Treasurers, Clergy and other members of Parish Finance Committees attended from across the Diocese.

The day started with Mass and then Matthew Fernandez-Graham presented an overview of the Diocese's governance and finances. He consulted those attending on proposed changes to finance procedures and there was lots of useful discussion and feedback.

There were also presentations from the Diocese's auditors, Price Bailey, on "How to Survive an Audit" and from NatWest bank on the plethora of financial scams that are sadly prevalent in today's society. Canon David Bagstaff, the Vicar General for the Diocese, chaired a Question and Answer session.

Anne Emblem, Parish Treasurer for St Joseph's Church, St Neots, commented: "It was an excellent opportunity for both new and 'old' Parish Finance Committee members to learn/re-learn what we should be doing and why. We found it very useful."

Further finance events and training are being arranged for 2020.



■ Bishop Alan travelled to Peterborough to join parishioners of The Sacred Heart and St Oswald in celebrating a special Mass of Thanksgiving for the 60th anniversary of St Oswald's Church on Friday October 25, reports Frances Swanson.

Bishop Alan concelebrated the Mass with Fr Seelan (Parish Priest) and Fr Jude (Assistant Priest of St Luke's, Orton). It was a very prayerful, reflective and memorable celebration.

Following the Mass, Bishop Alan spoke to many of the parishioners before joining them in the parish hall for a cheese and wine reception. Bishop Alan was then invited by Fr Seelan to cut the 60th anniversary cake. It was an evening enjoyed by all and the start of a year of many anniversary events.