

March
2015

FREE

Catholic East Anglia



Newspaper of the Diocese of East Anglia

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'Peace be with you'

Easter message from Bishop Alan

Peace be with you!

These words are used by me as a bishop when I begin the celebration of Mass. They are the words of the Risen Christ.

And we shall hear them often in the first few weeks of Easter as we listen to Gospel stories of the events that took place after the Resurrection of Our Lord from the dead.

Peace be with you! Jesus says to his friends and to his apostles as he reveals the momentous truth that would change their lives and change the whole of creation – the truth that he has conquered the grave and has destroyed death for ever.

In that moment he takes away from them all the anxiety and torment they have been wracked with since experiencing his Passion and death on the cross

Peace be with you! This is the Lord's Easter gift to us – the gift of peace.

In all the complexities and challenges of life, the worries and anxieties we undergo, the Lord reassures us that there is no longer any need to be afraid, that there is no longer any need to feel overwhelmed or lonely.

He is alive! He is present with us in all that we face in our lives. In him sin and death have no more power!

This is at the centre of the Easter mystery which we celebrate each year and, in fact,



every Sunday.

For as we come together as God's family to celebrate the Eucharist, we remind ourselves of this awesome fact - that Jesus has indeed conquered sin and death and that he is indeed alive and reigns for ever and ever.

Those encounters that the women and the disciples had with the Risen Christ are not confined to history.

They were only the first of the meetings that the Lord would have and continues to have with his friends in every place and every generation.

We only have to have our hearts and minds open to recognise him.

If we strive to live out our Christian lives to the full and nourish within us the life of grace through prayer and lives of integrity, we can be certain that the Lord will say to us, *Peace be with you* and then we will begin to participate even now in the fullness of life and happiness which can be found in Him alone.

I wish you all a very happy and grace-filled Easter Season.

Alan †



Chrism Mass to begin at 7pm

The Chrism Mass on the Wednesday of Holy Week will begin at 7pm, half an hour earlier than in past years. This is one of the largest diocesan gatherings of the year at St John the Baptist Cathedral in Norwich and Bishop Alan hopes every parish will be represented as usual. There are no limits on numbers.

As usual members of the Diocesan and Cathedral choirs will join forces to lead the music and the congregation's singing.

"The visible unity of the Diocese is expressed vividly in the presence of Bishop, priests, deacons, religious and our people, as we prepare to celebrate the Sacred Three days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday," Bishop Alan said.

Bishop Alan will bless the Oil of Catechumens used during the Sacrament of Baptism and the Oil of the Sick which is used in the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

He will also consecrate the sacred Oil of Chrism used in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, the Ordination of Priests and the consecration of a new church and its altar.

The Oils of Catechumens and Chrism will first be used across the Diocese at the Easter Vigil adults are baptised, confirmed and welcomed into the Catholic Church.

Walsingham pilgrimage



The Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walsingham will take place on the May Bank Holiday Monday 4 May.

Pilgrims will meet in the Friday Market at midday for the Angelus and crowning of the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham before walking the Holy Mile to the shrine at the Slipper Chapel for Mass at the Chapel of Reconciliation.

Pictured above: the start to last year's pilgrimage.



Sacrament of the Sick at the Cathedral on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes

Celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes

The Sacrament of the Sick was celebrated in the cathedral by Bishop Alan together with priests from across the Diocese during the Mass in honour of Our Lady of Lourdes. It marked the worldwide Day of Prayer for the Sick.

The statue of Our Lady of Lourdes was carried in procession through the cathedral to the altar as the congregation sang the Lourdes hymn and other hymns from the shrine in the south of France.

In his homily Bishop Alan reflected on the visit of Pope John Paul II to Lourdes in his final years and during his sickness. He spoke of how the Pope came

as a pilgrim and dedicated himself to Our Lady offering up the witness of his frailty and suffering.

Bishop Alan paid tribute to the sick people who came to the Mass and who gave witness in their suffering and frailty. He encouraged them and assured them of the prayers of all present that God would grant them renewal and fullness of health.

The Bishop reminded them to unite themselves with the Passion of Christ - to offer their sufferings for the world or for an individual and to pray with Him, "Your will be done".

More pictures on page 2.

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News from communities and parishes around the Diocese



Gathered around the font at St Henry Morse before the consecration of the church and the later celebration

Church dedication at Diss

The new Catholic Church of St Henry Morse, Diss, was consecrated on 3 February during Mass celebrated by Bishop Alan.

Parish priest, Fr David Bagstaff, and the parish community gathered at the baptismal font with the bishop and priests and deacons from St Edmunds’ deanery. Bishop Alan asked for God’s blessing and sprinkled the people and the building with holy water.

During his homily, Bishop Alan said the dedication of a church took us right back to the Old Testament: how the Hebrew people came to understand how God had chosen them and how they became his

people and he became their God.

“We as a church are the new people of God in a special sacramental relationship with him,” he said.

He went on to place holy relics in the altar. The saints, he said, remind us of what is in store for those who truly love God.

He then anointed the altar with Chrism, making it a symbol of Jesus Christ who is the anointed one of God, and then purified it with incense and lit it with candles.

Twelve consecration crosses, specially commissioned from local craftsman and parishioner Peter Dunsmore – who also designed and

made the church benches – were anointed by Bishop Alan, Fr David and former parish priest, Fr Simon Blakesley. This marked the church as a place where heaven dwells on earth.

Fr David said everyone had looked forward to this day for a long time.

“It was a beautiful liturgy and a wonderful celebration for the dedication of the church,” he said. Bishop Alan added: “Great thanks to Father David and all of you to have the courage and hope to build a new church.”

A celebration in the community room followed.

Memories of seminary return

After Christmas, Bishop Alan invited all the seminarians and those applying to study for the priesthood with Vocations Directors Fr Michael Collis and Fr Pat Cleary to a lunch and meeting at the White House.

It brought back memories of a similar occasion in 1972 when Bishop Grant, Bishop of Northampton (we were still part of that diocese in those days) did the same, Fr Pat said.

“Some of the diocesan priests with whom I’ve shared priestly ministry over some decades, I first met on that occasion.”

“Bishop Alan invited us to share our story so far. It was a wonderful experience to hear how the Lord is working in the lives of those either engaged in their seminary course or intending to begin.

“I think people are far more open about sharing faith journeys than was perhaps the case years ago. Even so, it always assumes a degree of trust to share in this way. I always consider it to be a privilege to hear what is said and consider it as being invited to walk on holy ground.

“Sharing our stories and good food in a convivial atmosphere has a Eucharistic echo to it.

“The diocese has four seminarians as well as a further five who are in the process of applying as well as others who are considering whether they are being called to be priests. We keep them all in our prayers along with all in our diocese who are in a process of discernment in their lives.”

Vocations team holds open meeting



The vocations team recently had an open meeting when Bishop Alan invited people to come to his house at Poringland and discuss their calling. Several people from around the Diocese of East Anglia answered the invitation. Bishop Alan is working towards establishing a vocations culture across the diocese to attract more people into the priesthood and religious life.

Clergy appointments

Mgr John Armitage, former Vicar General in Brentwood Diocese and parish priest of the Royal Docks in London’s East End, is the new Director of the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. He took up this appointment on Ash Wednesday and will serve for five years.

“He will bring tremendous pastoral and practical skills to this position and will help Walsingham to play a major part in the work of the new evangelisation,” Bishop Alan said.

“I know that you will give him a warm welcome to the Diocese and support him in prayer.”

More on the new shrine Director on page 9.

Mgr Philip Shryane has returned from his sabbatical in Cambodia and has taken up the pastoral and spiritual care of Great Yarmouth and Gorleston parishes (including Acle and Caister) as priest in charge.

Bishop Alan said: “I would like to express my gratitude to **Fr Michael Rear** for taking care of the parish over this past year with such enthusiasm and energy.”

Fr Paul Maddison has been appointed parish priest of March. “I am grateful to him for looking after Wisbech over this past year,” Bishop Alan said.

Fr Brendan Moffatt is appointed parish priest of the Sacred Heart in Dereham in succession to **Fr John Barnes**.

Fr James Fyffe has returned to the diocese and has been appointed Parish Priest of Our Lady and St Charles Borromeo Wisbech.

Fr Karol Porczak MS (Missionary of our Lady of La Salette) has been appointed Parish Priest of Sacred Heart parish in St Ives replacing **Fr Edouard Tredota MS** who has worked there for some years and will now be moving to Dagenham to lead the parish team there.

Bishop Alan said: “I am most grateful to Fr Edouard for his outstanding pastoral care of the parish and wish him well for the future.

“Fr Karol has been the Provincial Secretary of the Order, speaks English extremely well and has just the sort of enthusiasm and commitment that is needed in the parish.”



Christmas Day in Norwich

Bishop Alan and the Cathedral clergy, above, visited the city’s St Andrews Hall on Christmas Day to witness over 500 homeless or lonely people enjoy enjoying a full Christmas dinner.

Started by two St John’s parishioners 20 years ago it is now co-ordinated by Linda and Colin Harper from the Cathedral aided by nearly 200 volunteers. The Lord Mayor and Sheriff of Norwich had visited the centre earlier in the day. After tea the guests received take home bags of non-perishable food, clothing and sleeping bags.

A large amount of items were contributed by parishioners of St John’s Cathedral and St Mark’s Lakenham. St Augustine’s School in Costessey nominated the event as their Christmas charity. Proceeds from collections at a carol service and nativity plays and donations ensured those in need in Norwich will receive the same loving care and attention next year.

Station Masses

Bishop Alan will be travelling around to the Deaneries of the Diocese of East Anglia to celebrate “Station Masses” in Lent.

This practice originated in Rome under Pope Gregory the Great (590 – 604) and was conceived as a daily pilgrimage in the footsteps of the martyrs and saints.

Pilgrims and penitents visited 40 churches in Rome on foot and performed penitential exercises and celebrated Mass in each “stopping place” or “station”.

They were also following the example of Jesus who went out into the desert and fasted for forty days and forty nights in preparation for his mission.

It is this “journey” which forms the spiritual background to the 40 days of Lent and the journey each of us has to make into the desert of our own hearts and lives. The Masses were given a new momentum by Pope John XXIII and have become part of Lent observance in East Anglia.

Some Masses have already taken place but here are others people can attend.

3 March	Our Lady and the English Martyrs in Cambridge at 18:00
5 March	St Felix’ Church in Felixstowe at 18:00
10 March	Our Lady and St Etheldreda, in Newmarket at 18:00
12 March	St Benet’s Minster Beccles at 18:00
18 March	St Joseph’s Sheringham at 19:00
20 March	St John the Baptist Cathedral at 19:00

Each Mass will be preceded by an hour of Adoration during which priests will be available to hear Confessions.

NEW EVANGELISATION

Parishes are power houses of prayer

Rebecca Bretherton talks to Karen Shurety from Haverhill for our series on women involved in the work of evangelisation.

You grew up as a Catholic?

Yes, I was brought up a Catholic - here in Haverhill in fact. Although my father was not a Catholic himself, he took the promise he had made when he got married to bring us up as Catholic seriously. This meant he got us out on a Sunday morning!

What was it like to be a Christian teenager?

I received the sacraments as I grew up, like any other young Catholic, but to be honest I never really developed my faith. In my teens, I became a bit wild and lost sight of God. Later I married but sadly I was divorced by the age of 25. I share all that with people now as I think it helps others to know that I have lived in completely the wrong relationship with God. But I know that during that time God never let go of me.

So how did you re-discover God in your life?

In my 40s I was a working single mum. My sons went to Catholic school and I started coming back to Mass. A wonderful woman took me under her wing and re-introduced me to church. The parish was my "greenhouse" and I grew in the community here. An advert in the parish newsletter led me to train as a bereavement counsellor and I got the study bug.

I studied theology at the Margaret Beaufort Institute in Cambridge which was an immersion into a world where Christians were exploring their faith and learning how to share it.

After the Margaret Beaufort Institute you worked as a pastoral assistant in Newmarket. Tell us about that.

I supported a very busy parish community, working



Karen Surety from Haverhill reveals her journey in faith and her commitment

alongside the clergy and the many parishioners who do so much. I visited people at home. I led prayer groups. I also started a programme for the mums and dads of the first holy communion children. That group was really successful as people really wanted to understand what their children were learning.

So what are you doing now?

Currently, I'm working with the Sion Community. We are a lay community that is trying to take

evangelisation seriously. Historically, missionaries went abroad to spread the Good News but we need missionaries here now. So in the Sion Community we work and pray together and go where we are needed.

Give us an example.

Well, back in 2012 the Sion Community joined the Church's outreach project for the London Olympics. Churches opened their doors and welcomed athletes and visitors in. *Night Fever* was one of the initiatives and was amazing!

What's Night Fever?

Churches open at night and parishioners go out onto the streets to invite people passing by to come in. In the church there is Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, often priests hearing confessions, and parishioners available to talk or support people in prayer. What was amazing is that it worked.

People came in and lit candles and took the opportunity to pray. They encountered Christ present in the Eucharist. Since 2012 a lot of parishes have tried Night Fever and some hold events regularly. OLEM parish in Cambridge has run it a couple of times.

Where is your work with the Sion Community taking you now?

Now I'm working as part of a parish mission team. It's giving me the opportunity to take my love for the parishes of Haverhill and Newmarket and share what I have learnt with parishes around the country.

Parishes are power houses of prayer. The communities we visit feel they need a boost, some support.

We work with them to develop a programme to fit their needs. We encourage the community to use their skills. Some start new prayer groups. Some want to go out into their towns to proclaim the Gospel. We know that once Sion's mission leaves the parish's mission starts.

Team working hard on personal renewal through the year

Back in September Bishop Alan set up the New Evangelisation team and asked it to help parishes deliver a three year programme of evangelisation: of self, of parish, and of the wider community.

Since then the team has been working hard to encourage personal renewal. In November the team worked with the Council of Laity, representatives from each parish across the diocese.

Listening to some challenging statistics and recent research about why many Catholics no longer come to Mass, the group reflected on the fact that in any given congregation people are at different stages in their personal faith: from generally seeking for some meaning in life to the first, faltering steps of faith in Christ, to resolute discipleship.

This led to a discussion of just how many different ways there are to evangelise: to share with someone else the Good News of Jesus Christ. The key seems to be creating the opportunities to talk about what we believe with other people.

In December, drawing on ideas discussed at the Council of Laity, the team drew up some ideas for Advent - including *Sharing your Faith* - and a suggested reading list.

The feedback from this initiative was so positive that the New Evangelisation team have produced a similar sheet for use in Lent.

One initiative that raised a few eyebrows was the Christmas cards. People who rarely come to church often come at Christmas. Family Masses and Midnight Masses are often full of "visitors": extended family, non-Catholic partners, those who choose not to practise every Sunday. What an opportunity for evangelisation!

And so the team produced a Christmas card to be given to everyone attending Christmas Mass, right across the diocese, with the opening words: "Happy Christmas and thank you for celebrating the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, with us."

The card went on to offer an invitation to come to church throughout 2015 and suggested two websites for those interested in deepening their prayer life or finding out more about the faith throughout the year.

If you have still got your card, why not leave it stuck to the fridge or on the kitchen table for a little bit longer. It might just be the thing that sparks a conversation and allows you to evangelise.

Parishes might choose to do their own special welcome for the visitors they will get at services over Good Friday

and Easter: perhaps you can suggest to your parish priest or pastoral council a local initiative!

Later this year and into 2016, a number of parishes will be joining a national scheme called *Crossing the Threshold*, aimed at encouraging 'resting' Catholics to return to church.

It is hoped that the fruits of this scheme will provide us with proven ideas for all parishes to use in the second year of the bishop's programme.

From next autumn, we are asked to focus on the evangelisation of our parishes.

Already we have religious communities around the diocese generously praying for the spiritual renewal and evangelisation of East Anglia.

Please join them and pray in particular for your own parish.

Now the New Evangelisation team are working on some resources for Pentecost and preparing for a Day for the New Evangelisation at Poringland on Saturday 27 June.

The team will be inviting each parish to send one representative to attend the day, who will then become the link person for their community.

If you are interested, speak to your parish priest.

Courses and conferences to support people's faith and formation

The Commission for the New Evangelisation continues to support a series of Learning Together study days on Saturdays across the diocese and details of all nine days can be found on the diocesan website.

The next one will be on **7 MARCH at the parish centre in WYMONDHAM**, when Maurice Lynch will speak about the Gospel accounts of Christ's Passion.

The Commission also supports, with the Margaret Beaufort Institute in Cambridge, the **Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies** - eight units, each taught over two Saturdays, each unit with an assessed essay. It is aimed at teachers and parish catechists.

But we are now introducing a much shorter 'taster'

course on six evenings to be run twice a year, once in Norwich and once in Cambridge and called the **Diocesan Certificate in Catholic Studies**.

In the autumn we will be rolling out a series of training programmes for catechists engaged in sacramental preparation (baptism, first holy communion, confirmation and RCIA) as well as a programme for those involved in children's liturgy.

Training will be made available separately in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. Our colleagues from the Commission for Marriage and Family are preparing a programme for those engaged in marriage preparation.

And during the year there will be two further

initiatives. **Crossing the Threshold** is a national programme which aims to encourage those who have drifted from regular sacramental involvement and the life of the Church to come back home. Five parishes in our diocese will spearhead this initiative.

Finally a great national conference in Birmingham on 11 July 2015 and we will taking 35 delegates to it. It is called **Proclaim 15! Building Missionary Parishes**.

Ite Missa Est as the Latin have it. Not so much *Go the Mass is ended*, as *Go it is the sending forth*. What we share at Mass is not just for ourselves. It is to be shared with the world. That is old and new evangelisation!

Professor Deacon John Morrill

Plea to help lonely people

Loneliness is perhaps the greatest social ill in our Diocese of East Anglia, or so the survey the Commission for Social Concern undertook 18 years ago, concluded.

The aim was to find out where energies should be directed in matters affecting the people in the diocese.

Commission chairman Bernard Segrave-Daly said: "It determined our strategy in helping to set up several parish "helping hands" or parish "visiting" teams.

"Loneliness was seen as particularly acute in rural areas, but on reflection it could be just as worrying in our towns and villages.

"It seemed to apply more to single people who live alone, but also those who are ill or just out of prison or mental hospitals, or, perhaps, those who are divorced.

"Loneliness can affect the young as well as the older people in our communities."

Bishop Alan in his Advent letter, asks all "to look out for and prepare for the coming of Jesus in Prayer, the Scriptures, the Blessed Sacrament and our encounter with those in most need".

He invites us to be challenged through the Scriptures "How can you help the poor, the needy, the disadvantaged in our society today?"

"How can we witness to the sanctity and dignity of human life? How can we work for justice in the world?"

Pope Francis spoke powerfully to the members of the European Parliament about where we are going wrong in our society- he did not pull his punches!

"In my view, one of the most common diseases in Europe today is loneliness, typical of those who have no connection with others....It is also seen in the many poor, who dwell in our cities and in the

disorientation of those who came here seeking a better future! That loneliness has become more acute as a result of the economic crisis".

He saw the European Union as "engaged in laying down rules, perceived as insensitive to individual peoples, if not, downright harmful".

He challenged them about the selfish lifestyles and our indifference to the poorest of the poor. He reminded them that "their great mission was to tend to those in need, which takes strength and tenderness, effort and generosity.

"It means taking responsibility for the present with its situation of utter marginalisation and anguish and bestowing dignity on it."

He identified the great importance of the family but warned that "too many of our elderly, who are often forced to live alone and are effectively abandoned as there is no longer the warmth of a family to accompany and support them.

"It is intolerable that millions of people around the world are dying of hunger while millions of tons of food are discarded each day from our tables."

It is worth noting that supermarkets give less than 2% of what they throw away to food-banks.

Bernard said: "We need to do something in our families and in our towns to respond to this seriously. Pope Francis reserved his greatest criticism for the subject of immigrants and asylum seekers.

He said: "The boats, landing daily on the shores of Europe, are filled with men and women who need acceptance and assistance."

Bernard adds this plea that "as a Catholic diocese we should do all we can to ensure that none of our neighbours is lonely this Easter".

NEWS

from

THE

CATHEDRAL
OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

Tribute to parish religious

A Mass in the Cathedral, celebrating the Feast of Candlemass and the worldwide Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life, was attended by some 80 men and women of Religious Orders and Institutes of Consecrated Life who live and work in the Diocese.

Bishop Alan said the diocese owed a debt of gratitude to those who had taken up the consecrated life offering their lives and gifts in a service of prayer, witness, teaching or mission in the Church, often working in challenging conditions or circumstances.

He recognised their commitment and courage to witness to poverty, chastity and obedience in a world where these values were seen as signs of weakness and not strength.

"During this year the religious men and women are asked to first reflect, in a spirit of renewal, and gain a deeper understanding of their first calling to consecrated life and their continued response," Bishop Alan said.

"Then second, they are asked to see what they can do in the light of the New Evangelisation and renew their communities. And last, they are asked to look to the future with hope and confidence in God.

The Mass also saw the celebration of the Blessing of the Candles a symbol of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, entering the temple at Jerusalem for the first time and welcomed by Simeon in his great prayer - the Nunc Dimitis.

The clergy and religious then repaired to the Narthex for a splendid lunch to mark their important day.

New team's mission of excellence

A new team has been appointed at the Cathedral which will seek to increase the use of the Narthex among both the local and the parish communities. Many events have been planned for the coming year.

Heading the new team is Stewart Doherty who has a background in hospitality and retail operations.

As the cathedral's new general manager Stewart's aim is to make the venue a centre of excellence to be enjoyed by the people of Norwich, visitors to the city and for the whole of the diocese.

The cathedral is central to the life and mission of the whole diocese. It is the Mother Church where the Diocese comes together for its most important celebrations.

Stewart has the task of attracting wider numbers of people through musical and other events in the cathedral, Narthex and the gardens.

The aim is to boost the income needed to support the complex and to maintain its position in the community.



Bishop Alan paid tribute to members of religious orders and institutes working in the parishes across the diocese



Thanks to everyone who sends in material but please give documents a descriptive name.

The newspaper is now on the web and can be accessed from the diocesan site. But please remember when sending photographs of children to make parents aware they may be used in the newspaper and on the website.

If you would like us to identify a child by name, written parental permission must be obtained for this. Send material to: Patrick Byrne, The Editor, Catholic East Anglia, The White House, 21 Upgate, Poringland, Norfolk NR14 7SH.



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Biggest ever pilgrimage

At this year's Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walsingham more young people are expected than ever before!

With the Ignite Festival running in Swaffham on the Saturday and Sunday before, the festival ends by joining the pilgrimage to Walsingham.

On the Monday morning, festival goers will be coached either directly to Walsingham or to Holkham beach to walk from there to the shrine, like the people shown in the picture above.

Those who choose to walk from the beach can be sponsored for World Youth Day.

"The Ignite Festival is open to everyone

in Year 9 and above, although priority will be given to those preparing for Confirmation," Hamish MacQueen, Director of the Diocesan Youth Service, said.

"With most Confirmation groups in the diocese planning to come, this is going to be a big event!

"So far we have confirmed that the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal and Steve Murray will be with us along with top class music acts.

"It's going to be an amazing weekend! Come if you can," Hamish said.

If you need more information see www.ignitefestival.co.uk



Gazing at sky after Epiphany Mass

The Wise Men may have been excited to see the star that led them to Bethlehem, but the firework display after this year's Epiphany Mass would also have had them gazing in wonder!

Hamish MacQueen said: "On Epiphany Sunday, young people from across the diocese joined Bishop Alan for a joyful celebration Mass by candlelight.

"The Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation



in Poringland was packed with families for this special Mass. Music led by the Cathedral's music group added to the inspiring and joyful atmosphere."

Bishop Alan invited children to join him around the crib as he explained the significance of the gifts presented to the newborn Lord. After Mass, all young people received their own Epiphany gift from a lucky dip.

The congregation then spilled out into the still night and the White House gardens to enjoy hot dogs, a bonfire, which lit against the odds, and the fireworks.

Dates for your diaries

March 7 - 'Flame' II (National Youth Event), Wembley
May 2/4 - Ignite Diocesan Youth Festival, Swaffham and Walk to Walsingham

May 30/31 - Celebrate Family Conference, Bury St Edmunds

June 14 - Regional Youth Mass in Cambridgeshire (time and church to be decided)

28 June - Regional Youth Mass in Suffolk (time and church to be decided)

August 3/8 - New Dawn Family Conference, Walsingham

August 27/31 - Youth 2000 Prayer Festival, Walsingham

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

Funds to attend Flame 2

Catholic youth from all over the country will be converging on Wembley Arena in March for Flame2, the largest National Catholic Youth event of 2015.

The Brothers of Norwich Circle hope their contribution of £160 will help to make it possible for several youngsters from the Diocese of East Anglia to attend and take part.

Charity officer and past president John McLean presented a cheque to Hamish MacQueen. More details can be obtained from Hamish.

Contact details

Diocesan Youth Office,
The White House,
21 Uppgate, Poringland,
Norwich, Norfolk NR14 7SH

Tel: (01508) 492202
Mobile: (0781) 2004934
Email: dys@east-anglia-diocese.org.uk
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Bishop Alan presenting certificates at St Benedict's

Grade 1 St Benedicts

The award of Grade 1 in the recent A Level Performance (ALPs) put St Benedicts High in Bury in the top 1% of schools nationally, parents, governors and students were told at a presentation evening.

It had also been a successful year for GCSEs and the occasion was hailed as a recognition of academic and other achievements.

GCSE and A Level students returned to the school to receive their exam certificates. There were also school prizes, subject prizes and tutor prizes.

Bishop Alan was the guest of honour and gave the opening prayer, a short speech and then presented the students with their certificates.

This was followed by delicious refreshments that had been prepared by Year 9 students.

St Benedict's GCSE results for 2014 were also hailed as the best in the past three years.

The year had seen a huge rise in the five A*-C pass rate over 2013.

The percentage of students achieving 5 A*-C grades including English and Maths is 69%, 16 percentage points better than 2013.



Insight into police

Year 10 students at St Benedict's school in Bury were given an insight into the work of a detective during a religious studies lesson.

Detective Constable Daniel Barker is a police officer from Suffolk currently working in CID in Kent.

Pupils were studying forgiveness and in particular how the law deals with this in response to crimes, as well as how the law implements restorative justice.

DC Barker spoke about when he had struggled to offer forgiveness to people he had dealt with and gave examples of when restorative justice had and hadn't worked well.

Religious Education Teacher Sarah Cobbold said: "It was a really enjoyable and informative visit and DC Barker provided an interesting insight into the complex issue of forgiveness."



Imams discuss their faith and pupils notice its familiarity

Children from St Louis Academy in Newmarket studied Islam last term and the school invited two Imams from a local Mosque to talk about their faith.

The children were very taken by the similarities between Islam and Christianity and the Imams invited the children to join them in prayer.

The headteacher said this is a good example of how we are helping children to develop tolerance and understanding of other faiths.

Below is a letter written by one of the children in response to the incidents recently in Paris.

"On Sunday after Mass Mum and I went to Cambridge.

"After the attacks that happened in Paris in the Charlie Hebdo offices by two Muslim brothers, there was a vigil and a peaceful protest on St Mary's Church Square in Cambridge. We were there to show our respect in memory of the 17 people who died and to demonstrate against terrorism.

"The two brothers that killed that day said that they were Muslims. I said to Mum, 'I thought Islam meant peace, not war, and that we were allowed to speak about

other religion

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Tribute to grandparents' fa

The call for grandparents to become more involved with schools has been welcomed at St Mary's Junior School, Cambridge with open arms.

A Grandparents' Afternoon in January revealed the amount of child-care they provide and their impact on the lives of their grandchildren.

Chris Hald, head of juniors, said: "Grandparents are playing an increasingly important role in modern family life and are often involved with looking after children while parents are at work.

"They have so much knowledge and life experience to impart and their involvement with school life should always be encouraged.

"This year's Grandparents' After-

noon was again a huge success. Each year our pupils look forward to showing their grandparents around their school and showcasing their great work.

"Our girls gain confidence from seeing their families take an active interest in the school and, consequently, we benefit from the involvement of a vibrant and friendly family community."

Strong rapport with families is central to the ethos and teaching at St Mary's School, Cambridge and the school believes this helps to reaffirm parents and family care givers as the first educators of the child.

One grandmother came all the way from Devon just to see her

granddaughter's school.

When asked how they thought learning had changed since they were at school many grandparents referred to the use of IT rather than chalk and a blackboard.

The school's Grandparents' Afternoon is to be followed by Living Histories days throughout the school year.

Mr Hald said: "Michael Morpurgo, the former Children's Laureate, said grandparents can teach students about their own histories and the life experience of grandparents is living history. So we have extended this invitation to our grandparents and look forward to our first session."



John Fisher students prepare for General Election

Aware that there is to be a General Election in May, students at St John Fisher Catholic High School in Peterborough have been getting to understand how the election process works in the United Kingdom.

Initially this was through a series of assemblies in which the process was explained and the 2010 results, both national and in the city, were examined.

Many Year 13 students will be able to vote for the first time in this election and so a series of question and answer sessions has been planned with candidates from the three main national parties.

First up was the sitting MP Stewart Jackson who was given quite a grilling by students, several of whom had researched his parliamentary record.

So that all students are involved and interested in the national election, a mock election will take place in the school after Easter.

Sixth Form students are being nominated as candidates and each will present their manifesto to house assemblies.

Students will then cast their votes on polling day in much the same way that adults will across the country.

"It will be interesting to see if there is any similarity between this outcome and the national one," the students said.

"The government has been making much recently of the expectation for schools to promote British Values, one of which is democracy.

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Parish members help pupils on popular 'Op

At St Mary's RC Nursery and Primary School in Gorsestun, there is always a buzz of excitement on the first Tuesday of the month.

This is because for the children in reception, year one and two it is "Open the Book" day!

"We are very fortunate to have some members of the parish come in and voluntarily help to lead the act of worship for the children," the school said.

"Open the Book is about sharing a bible story with the children in an interactive and engaging way, very often it involves groups of pupils dressing up and helping to retell the story.

"This helps the children to really empathise and think about what it is teaching us.

"The children are able to respond at the end of the session with questions and in prayer."

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Sunflowers on altar in memory

To mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of Notre Dame High School in Norwich 14 sunflowers were placed near the altar by students at St John the Baptist Cathedral.

Bishop Alan was celebrating a Mass at St John's Cathedral to mark the occasion and paid tribute to the Sisters of Notre Dame who played a part in establishing Catholic education in Norwich and how proud they would be to see the fruits of the foundations they laid in 1864.

The Bishop quoted from St Julie Billiart, who founded the order: "Be like the sunflower that follows

every movement of the sun, and keep your eyes always turned towards our good God."

In his closing remarks head teacher Brian Conway spoke of his pride in the school and the prospect of a future 150 years of dedication, innovation and, above all, having a leading role in the education of the local community.

The Cathedral was filled with the entire school community of over 1,500 who had walked there in the rain.

They were joined by students from Notre Dame High School Southwark who had travelled from London early that morning.



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on with debate

l hopes to meet this expectation while
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y, the school has had an emphasis on the
skill of debate, especially within RE whose
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as long as we root ourselves fully in the
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child commented: "I like to get to help act
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pupil added: "You learn a lot more about
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Younger pilgrims

Reception children from St Francis
of Assisi Catholic Primary School,
Norwich went on a pilgrimage to
Walsingham to celebrate the
beginning of their school journey.

Sr Jane Louise met them and
welcomed them to the shrine and Fr
David Ward celebrated Mass in the
Chapel of Reconciliation.

The gospel told of the time when
Jesus welcomed the children.

Fr David said God knows all of us
by name and loves us all. After Mass
the group followed in the footsteps of
pilgrims along the Holy Mile.

On returning to school the pupils
created their own picture of Our
Lady of Walsingham, pictured right,
in the prayer corner.



Acting out the past as a hunter and gatherer

Stone age lessons

Anyone being a fly on the wall in St Felix Primary
school hall in Haverhill in mid-January would be
forgiven for thinking they had been transported 450,000
years back in time.

They would have witnessed a team of 45
Neanderthals charging after a huge woolly mammoth,
two children working up a sweat pushing and pulling a
bowdrill in an attempt to start a fire and Stonehenge
being constructed!

These exciting activities were part of our WOW day
to kick off a new topic - Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron
Age.

Children had time to handle artifacts, such as flints,
animal bones, hides, fur and many other more obscure
items, which elicited lots of discussion.

Their prehistoric guest demonstrated how many
natural materials were used as tools.

They ranged from fashioning an arrow shaft with
deer antler, to flints used to cut open scalps to perform
healing operations at sacred sites.

The children's questions were answered by 'Telizan',
a prehistorian from Portals to the Past, and the pupils
were all left fired up about this huge span of history,
ready to unearth much more over the following weeks.



Exploring the woods

The Little Pedlars from Sacred Heart School in
Swaffham always enjoy going to the woodland area.
Recently they had noticed how dark it can be during
the day in the winter.

They took torches to the woods and explored how
dark it was and experimented with seeing the light
shining through the sticks and material.

They also made potions in a wood 'kitchen' When
digging the children found some worms. Some were
long and others were short! Pictured above is one
examining a leaf which was frozen inside a block of
ice. They worked together to move a branch.



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News from communities and parishes around the Diocese

Slavery and people trafficking close by to all

It is a frightening fact people in East Anglia are not very far from many caught in modern slavery - forced to work with little or no pay, kept in squalor, hungry, desperate and often without hope.

Unknowningly we may pass these people, often of Eastern European or Asian appearance, begging, selling or working in fields.

Some may have been trafficked from former communist countries or may have travelled to Britain in search of a better life only to be caught in a web of crime.

Those who travel further afield may also see the poverty that drives people into the search for a better life that can lead them into danger.

Michael McMahon, from the Cromer parish, is very heavily involved in the Food Bank movement which is more and more often finding desperate people.

Last year he was alerted to a group of families living in dire conditions in a run down house in North Norfolk.

The Food Bank group were able to provide some food but as they had no means of identification, under current rules, they were not able to get any official help.

Although none of them had any English Michael later learned that they were from the Baltic States, possibly Latvia. Several men from this Baltic State had been jailed recently for illegally forcing their compatriots to work in fields in Norfolk, Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire.

The court was told that the Latvians had promised men and women work but took away their passports and other documents, paid them about £1 a day, kept them in crowded houses in inhuman conditions and exploited them physically and, sometimes the women, sexually.

The story the people that Michael McMahon found paralleled this - they had no documents, had been treated like slaves, were desperate and abandoned.

Michael was just glad the Food Banks



Mark Little, another delegate, Cardinal Vincent Nichols and Home Secretary Theresa May

were able to help just a little but he believes it is just part of the problem.

Mark Little, from the Poringland parish, as chairman of the global action group of Rotarians against child slavery took part in the second Santa Marta Conference in London in December.

He was able to address one of the sessions on the issue of human trafficking and modern slavery.

The conference was jointly headed by Cardinal Vincent Nichols, the Home Secretary, Theresa May and Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner.

Mark said: "Although slavery is illegal in every country in the world, there are more slaves now than ever before - an estimated 36m and the practice is prevalent and increasing in every country in the world, including the UK.

"Making something illegal doesn't make it cease to exist. Making something illegal only causes it to vanish from view.

"Unfortunately, the majority of these hidden slaves are children who are increasingly being exploited by unscrupulous land, factory and plantation owners.

"Since my first encounter in India with survivors of child slavery 14 years ago, I have made a commitment to combat this terrible crime.

"I have looked into the eyes and hearts of scores of slavery victims who have

been rescued from slavery and excruciating servitude and felt their terrible pain.

"That is why I formed an action group of Rotarians six years ago to raise awareness of the use of children as slaves and to take action by supporting the work of anti-slavery organizations to protect children from slavery and its consequences."

Attending the Santa Marta Conference has enabled Mark to initiate partnerships with my organization and other UK based organizations which are providing shelter and rehabilitation facilities for the survivors of exploitation.

Bakhita House is a place of shelter and rehabilitation owned by the Archdiocese of Westminster and managed by Caritas Westminster.

Mark wants to encourage parishes in the Diocese of East Anglia to help support the project and other similar initiatives for the care and rehabilitation of women and girls trafficked into sex and other forms of slavery.

Our Lady of the Annunciation, Poringland and Loddon has already joined the struggle and during the last few years has morally and financially supported a Child Slave Rehabilitation Centre for Boys (Bal Vikas Ashram) in India. It was closed down last year because of lack of funds but had been operated by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Allahabad.

The current balance of funds is now being used to support a Trafficking Shelter for Girls (Asha Nepal) near Kathmandu.

"Later this month I shall be travelling to Nepal with another parish members to see how we can help further Asha Nepal and two other trafficking shelters in that country."

If anyone has stories about exploitation, slavery or trafficking please send them to the editor as this issue is becoming increasingly important across East Anglia.

Farewell Fr Michael



Parishioners packed the hall at St Peter's in Gorleston to say farewell to Fr Michael Rear who had been priest-in-charge of the Great Yarmouth and Gorleston parish for the last 11 months. His gentle sense of humour and willingness to involve himself so completely in all aspects of parish life will be missed, Bill Howell said.



Help for Honduran orphans

The parishes of March and Ramsey in Cambridgeshire have received an accolade from the Children of Honduras Trust for all the work they have done over many years to support them.

In January Rod and Catherine Logan from Ramsey collected a van to take generous donations for orphans in Honduras to a distribution warehouse in Derby to go into the last five containers of goods to be shipped to the central American country.

They stopped at the Logan's home in Ramsey where items were waiting to be collected and next to the Tinkler family in March to collect 27+ large boxes. Jeanette and her mother are outstanding charity workers. Finally they arrived at Our Lady of Good Counsel church hall in March where many volunteers helped to pack a huge amount of items, donated by parishioners, to fill the van.

Due to rising costs of transportation, help for the Children of Honduras Trust will, in the future, be financial. Gifts can be made to an individual child, schools, family and community projects.

For 'Giving' forms or further information please contact Rod and Catherine Logan on 01487 813360.



The Union of Catholic Mothers at St Neots celebrated 25 years. Pictured are President Sandra Clayton, Secretary Leigh Davis and Treasurer Francisca Shaw.

Newman Lent lectures

Lent discussions on Catholicism and English culture at the University of East Anglia.

March 2 - Professor Eamon Duffy speaks on John Henry Newman.

March 9 - Professor Henry Mayr-Harting on Confession: Yesterday and Today - both at the Lecture Theatre in the Queen's Building.

March 16 - Dr Karen Smyth talks about John Lydgate's medieval identities: Monk, poet and graffiti artist at the Harvard Lecture Theatre in the Julian Study Centre.

All are welcome and the lectures start at 6pm.



News from communities and parishes around the Diocese

New Rector arrives at Walsingham shrine

Mgr John Armitage has taken up the post of Rector of the National Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham. He succeeds Fr Alan Williams who was ordained Bishop of Brentwood last year.

Mgr Armitage was formerly parish priest of the Royal Docks in London's East End and has served for the last 11 years as Vicar General in Brentwood.

Bishop Alan Hopes said: "He comes to this appointment with tremendous pastoral and practical experience,

"He has a great devotion to Our Lady of Walsingham and is keen to help Walsingham to play its part in the New Evangelisation, particularly among young people and young adults."

Mgr John was born in Canning Town, and studied for the priesthood at Oscott College, being ordained on 16 June 1979 by Bishop Patrick Casey.

He was the first director of the Catholic Children's Society Brentwood, and then



vocations director for 10 years and chairman of the National Vocations Directors' Conference.

Mgr Armitage, pictured, said: "I first visited Walsingham as a seminarian in 1976, and since that visit have had a great devotion to our Lady of Walsingham."

"Each year I have attended the Youth 2000 Festival, and spent part of my holidays in the village. Although born and

bred in London's East End, I have a particular love for Norfolk, my great grandmother having come from Holt.

"I have lived in the East End for most of my life, where it has been a real joy to minister to the most wonderful people in the parishes in which I have served."

"I know I will find it hard to leave my parish, but as the local saying goes: 'you can take a boy out of the East End but you can't take the East End out of the boy'; I take them all with me in prayer as I go to serve this most ancient shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham."

"The message of the Annunciation is 'do not be afraid'; this proclamation, to trust in God's unconditional love, is the heart of Our Lady's 'yes'."

"In the spirit of the new evangelisation may Walsingham continue to play its part in calling all men and women to a conversion of heart, bringing healing, unity and peace in our lives."

Marriage and family life must be reaffirmed

Marriage and the family as the basic unit of society is a beautiful reality that must be reaffirmed, is the main message to come from the Pontifical Council for the Family (PCF) assembly held in Rome from 22-24 January.

Kerry Urdzik, the Marriage and Family Life Coordinator for East Anglia, attended the international gathering which represented some 80 family movements and associations.

The head of the PCF, Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, said: "The family is the first subject of the new evangelisation. Who might be able to communicate the gospel of the family better than families themselves?"

Citing marriage as the most powerful antidote to the rampant individualism present in our society, Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri said fundamental elements of marriage (faithfulness, indissolubility and openness to life) must be restated while at the same time accompanying

wounded families with love and patience."

While there were varying opinions on the issues discussed, it was generally agreed that the beauty of marriage and family must be reaffirmed, with confidence and conviction, Kerry said.

"Children must be welcomed as a gift and not seen as a burden, and families must be supported in their role as the primary educators of their children."

At the end of the assembly, Archbishop Paglia produced a 10-point draft report. It mentions firstly that we are in the midst of an unprecedented anthropological crisis.

For the first time in history, God, marriage and family are being deconstructed, leading to children without parents, for example.

Secondly, marriage must be tended daily with scripture reading and the Eucharist since "without the mass we can understand nothing about God".

Points three and four focused on the beauty of love between a man and a woman, open to life, and the generous welcoming of children, while the fifth encouraged fraternity between families for mutual support, to help offset societal problems.

Being like a domestic church, the family must rediscover the link between the family and the Christian community, leading to the seventh point which encourages strengthening the communication between the family and the priesthood, since each is understood better in the light of the other.

Archbishop Paglia made a special mention of the witness that divorced people who have not remarried give to the indissolubility of marriage.

Lastly, he mentioned that we should support and uphold our injured families and emphasised the need to improve pastoral care of the family generally.

Sister Barbara Brent + 20 March 1948 – 25 December 2014

It was with great sadness and shock we heard of the sudden death of Sr Barbara Brent RJM on Christmas Day.

Since arriving at St Mary's in Ipswich in September 2011 and having known Sr Barbara since 1997 it was a privilege to work with her in the parish, Fr John Warrington writes.

She had many talents and skills, many of which she shared with the parish community of St Mary's while living life to the full, as a member of the community of the Religious of Jesus and Mary in Ipswich and as a member of the parish of St Mary's.

Sr Barbara had just been appointed, a few days before she died, as the new superior of the community in Ipswich.

I had known Barbara since 1997, and shared trips to Rome and Toronto for World Youth Day in 2000 and 2002, and there are many stories of these which I am sure many people will remember.

Barbara's gift of working with young people was her life, as a teacher, a school chaplain, especially in St Bede's in Cambridge and at St Alban's in Ipswich, and as national director of the Association of Catholic Chaplains in Education (ACCE) for 10 years.

During that time she helped to produce the national guidelines for chaplaincy, and



inspired many people in their ministry working with young people.

She was a member of our Parish Pastoral Council and was on our steering committee. She worked with our Journey of Faith group leading the reflections at the end of each session.

Sr Barbara led our Confirmation programme and along with a small team helped to prepare our young people.

She led reflections and quiet days, helped to support and prepare readers and Eucharistic ministers while supporting and inspiring our Children's Liturgy Group at St Mary's and helped them to develop their skills of helping our young children to hear God's Word.

In 2004 before the World Youth Day in Cologne Barbara travelled to Gerleve and

established a link with the Benedictine Community there which would develop beyond the World Youth Day trip in 2005.

It became an international project and led to many retreats at Gerleve with young people, parish groups and confirmation groups.

Sr Barbara also worked in the local community for the past five years at Icen in Ipswich as a volunteer receptionist. Icen supports families in Ipswich and Suffolk to give children the opportunity to have a safe, healthy and happy start in life.

The group believes tackling the causes of addiction, poverty and other inequalities lies in effective targeted early intervention and addressing the unmet and inter-generational problems that are entrenched in deprived neighbourhoods in Suffolk. At her funeral part of the collection was for the work of Icen.

Sr Barbara has left a step-mum Zofia, sisters Sophie and Theresa and their families; her family of the Religious of Jesus and Mary here in Ipswich, those in Felixstowe, Thornton and other parts of the world and the parish community of St Mary's in Ipswich.

May she rest in peace
Fr John Warrington

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News from communities and parishes around the Diocese

Life changing work in Jamaica

Dom Tooth from Henry Morse Parish in Diss has just returned from Kingston in Jamaica where he lived, worked and prayed with the Missionaries of the Poor.

Dom writes: This was my first missionary work I did not know what to expect.

The first sight of the downtown slums took my breath away, and as we then pulled into the concrete walled compound I knew I was right in the middle of what is famously a haven for crime.

Jamaica is well known for Bob Marley, hot beaches and cannabis. It is proud of the first tow but not cannabis so much. But its effect on the country is devastating. As drug-addicted mothers give birth to deformed children who they cannot look after, and creating opportunities for gangs to control parts of the city.

The Brothers of the Missionaries of the Poor live a semi monastic life, inspired by Jesus to serve God in the poor, the handicapped, the abandoned and the despairing. Their routine certainly hits you hard at first! 5am rising with only cold water for showering & washing, then Morning Prayer with Mass, followed by adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for 45 minutes. Breakfast follows: it is a simple, very American meal, due to the number of American volunteers. Each of us is then assigned a Centre to serve in for the day. There are two for men, two for women, one for HIV positive patients and one for children, and one each for men and women alone. The centres range from having 60 to 125 residents, all with either mental or physical disabilities.

We then spend the day at our assigned centre – hosing down, washing and cleaning, then feeding the residents and socialising with them. For me the days at the men's centres were the most fun, for the residents welcome you as if they have known you for years. And the afternoons are spent being beaten at dominos and sharing pictures and music with them.

The evenings give you more time to socialise with your fellow volunteers, and time to pray and meditate on how the day has challenged you. What you have got out of it and how you want to spend your next day. Altogether, these two weeks, although busy and challenging, are the closest I have ever come to God. You cannot help but see Jesus in every Brother as you consider how they have dedicated their whole lives to caring for the neediest.

There are questions to ask on a larger scale though, over looking downtown Kingston, where the Brothers work, is the aptly named Beverley Hills. A neighbourhood for the rich and famous to drink cocktails and enjoy the sun. Yet the residents of the centres live off food donations close to their 'Best before Date'. I am not saying this is a problem only in Jamaica, but all over the world. Mother Teresa once said "If you can't feed 100, then feed 1." But I would like to add to that by saying if you can afford to feed 100, then why aren't you?

Travelling to Jamaica is one of the most changing experiences of my life, for my faith and my world view. I would recommend it to anyone.



Roisin McLoughlin (St Luke's, Peterborough); Myles O'Hanlon (All Souls, Peterborough); Elizabeth Hunt (St Peter's, Gorleston); Georgie Starkings (Sacred Heart, North Walsham); Dom Tooth (St Henry Morse, Diss); Charlotte Aguilar-Millan (St Mary's, Ipswich); Fr Michael Johnstone. Absent: John O'Connor (Sacred Heart, Peterborough).

Climate change alert

The parish of St Laurence in Cambridge was treated to a description of a scramble up a steep and narrow rocky path to caves in a glacier in Bolivia on Gaudete Sunday.

Parish priest Fr Pat Cleary said this tourist attraction is disappearing because of climate change melting the glaciers.

At the end of Mass, Mary Watkins, CAFOD parish organiser, explained how the campaign, One Climate, One World, gives everyone an opportunity to add voices to those around the world who are experiencing severe and unpredictable weather patterns.

Mary said: "We have been campaigning around climate change for some time and CAFOD has given the parish a great reason to come together to consider both the theology and practical implications."



Many parishioner wrote postcards to politicians to alert them to their feelings about neglect of climate change issues

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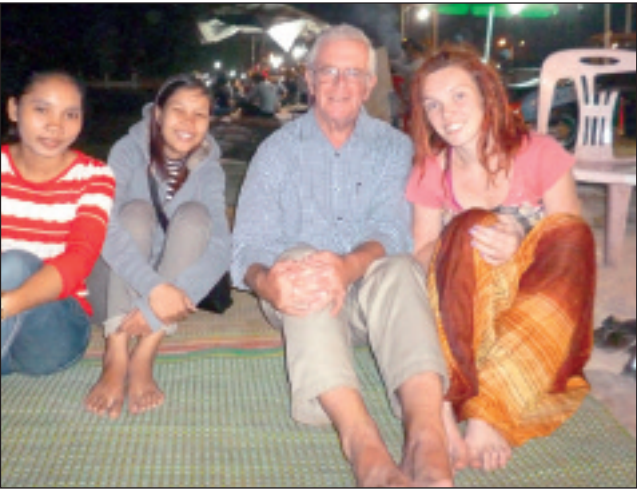
Reflections on a time in Cambodia by Fr Philip Shryane

I have been going to Cambodia for nearly 10 years, since Bishop Michael first twinned the Diocese with the Prefecture of Battambang and St Edmund’s parish Bury St Edmunds twinned with St John’s Parish in Siem Reap. I have taken two parish groups there and I have been twice on my own, but all of these visits were only for a short time, usually including two weekends. When Bishop Alan offered me four months sabbatical between moving from St Edmund’s and taking a new appointment, I jumped at the chance to spend a little more time in Cambodia.

Four months is short for a sabbatical, but quite a long time to spend immersed in another culture and in another way of being the Church. Many of you have read the blog I wrote while there and know that I spent time teaching English to groups of young people eager to learn, I spent time resting and relaxing, which is partly what sabbatical is about and I spent time with Fr Panus, parish priest of St John’s, visiting his communities with him.

The young people I taught were a joy and privilege to work with, they were very eager and hardworking. They are fresh and somehow innocent, even though they were mostly in their early twenties. We worked at English and we had good discussions about our different cultures, we had a lot of fun together and many wonderful smiles.

My visits with Fr Panus were on Sundays to the four centres he serves on a four week rotation, three of these communities are on Tonle Sap Lake, two are floating villages and one is a village on stilts; the fourth centre is the Jesus Farm.



A regular haunt for Fr Philip was 60th Street where one of his favourite dishes was chicken and deep fried crickets

All of them are very small communities of Catholics hanging on to the Mass and meeting together faithfully to hear the Word of God and share the Sacraments. The strength of their faith is very impressive especially when we remember that there is no background of Christian symbols, there are no other churches around or any Christian symbols, like there are here.

It made me think about why people make such an effort to get to Mass and what it means to them to stay in touch, even if it was only once a month. I wondered how they keep their faith alive in between getting to Mass. I was there for Christmas and I had to think about my own faith, stripped away of all the trimmings of our culture, no carols, no Handel’s Messiah, no well known



Bishop Kike at dedicated a new church at Poipet
Christmas pop songs, people going to work on Christmas Day as if nothing was happening.

How much of those trappings are a support to my faith and without them, how to focus on the Incarnation and the birth of the Saviour. These things bring comfort and



Devotional and inspiring Khmer dancing is part of many services in Cambodia
are “normal” for us, our faith must remain strong when they are stripped away. On Christmas Day I gave Ratana, my minder, a Christmas present, she was overjoyed, she had never had a Christmas present before in her life.What did I learn?



I think I learnt to live more simply, and I hope I can continue to do that. I learnt that the Church is alive and well in other cultures and maybe most of all, that young people can be trusted with working in the Church and are very generous in giving of themselves when they are encouraged. I learnt that people who have nothing are very generous and share the little they have. I saw the importance of family, both nuclear and extended. Yes, they have many of the same problems there as here,

drug and alcohol abuse, family breakdown and unemployment, but I also saw people making a great effort to improve their lot and to support their family. In their circumstances, they are doing really well and they are strengthened by their faith and by the contact they have with other Catholics from other parts of the world. It is true we may have a lot to offer them in financial support, but they have much to offer us in love and joy.

So, don’t forget Cambodia and if you get the chance to visit, go and enjoy a lovely place and a lovely people.

CAN YOU HELP?

Our two ‘Building Bridges’ projects this year are renovating the Taybeh Old People’s Centre in the Holy Land and a new formation centre for children, youth groups and adults at Battambang in Cambodia.

Would you like to support these projects? Cheques should be made payable to the ‘RC Diocese of East Anglia’.

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Registered charity no. 278742



Cyclists plan ride to Walsingham

Fr Seelan, from St John the Baptist Cathedral in Norwich, is planning a Cycling Pilgrimage to Walsingham on 25 May as he enjoyed so much the sponsored ride he made with five others to the Catholic Shrine last November.

He cycled with a small group of parishioners from the Cathedral to Walsingham as a fund raising exercise in aid of Tambogrande. This year the plan is to cycle both ways, 64 miles, and to involve as many cyclists and helpers as possible from mid-teens upwards.

Cyclists will be able to use the trip to obtain sponsorship for any cause but the main objective

is for the trip to be a pilgrimage.

Those who feel the whole trip is too long will be offered the chance of starting and ending their trip in Reepham. Cyclists taking part will be asked to pay a small registration fee which will be used to cover any costs involved in providing marshalling and assistance en route.

Helpers will be needed en route to provide support vehicles, first aid and refreshment stops.

If you are interested, either as a cyclist or helper, please contact Andy on 01603 250649 or email . As the planning progresses, information will be published on the Cathedral website.



Some of the cyclists who joined Fr Seelan last year

News Brief + News Brief

In volume two of Fr Anthony Foreman's autobiography, in a very frank and personal account, he hopefully lays to rest the myth that priests only work on Sundays and at Christmas or Easter as he describes his time as parish priest of Sudbury, Newmarket and Stowmarket. Copies of 'In at the deep end - 1976 - 2005' available from 'Wheelwrights, Lidgate, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 9PR cost of £12 including p&p.

Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, Cambridge, is seeking the opinions of Roman Catholic parishioners local to Cambridge who remember Vatican II (1962-65) and its immediate aftermath.

If you need more information and want to participate by answering a short survey, please contact Emma Harris (01223 741039).

Lord Rowan Williams, the retired Archbishop of Canterbury, is to address the annual meeting of Wisbech Interfaith Forum on 18 May at 7.30pm at the Boathouse Business Centre on the Harbour in the town.

His topic will be Our Peace, Our World - thinking global, acting local.

Confessions of a Confirmation class Catechist

One of this year's confirmation catechists has written of the experience, the preparation and the rewards of coaching young people as a parish catechist.

Looking around at the candidates as they arrived at their parish church to become confirmed by Bishop Alan I must confess that my initial feelings were those of relief that we had made in over the past eight months.

What was it like being part of a team preparing 20 young people aged 15-16?

Hmm - if I am honest, a mixture of all sorts of things that included fun, frustration, food for thought and finally satisfaction.

I think we must accept that the majority of teenagers, with notable exceptions, would not put themselves forward for Confirmation without family pressure / support.

This means accepting where they are in their understanding and acceptance of their faith and this varies widely.

Although many come along to weekly Mass and attend a Catholic school others do not and one cannot assume knowledge of the Scriptures or structure of the Mass.

Current good practice in teaching promotes group work. This can be effective but it takes time for everyone in a new group to develop the ability to work together.

Arranging a timetable that fits in with the many and varied commitment of family events, school work and sports that can raise problems. Meetings can be strung out and momentum difficult to maintain.

So perhaps a residential event would help to provide opportunities to get to know each other and form lasting relationships?

Well indeed it can - if you can get the young people to come along! Once seen as an exciting opportunity, my experience is that it can be seen as yet another set of pressures for those trying to fit in demanding exam preparation which is seen by many as taking priority.

On the positive side, it is very stimulating to have to review one's beliefs and assumptions in order to share them with others and to have these challenged on occasions.

I think one of the most important features of our programme was the opportunity for our young people to hear from and observe how catechists and others try to live out our faith.

Our team of catechists who range in age and gender, who come from a mixture of ethnic and class backgrounds, brought different experiences and approaches.

This was very important.

We heard from both men and women in religious life, including our parish priest, from those who use the creative arts such as music and drama to engage others in Christian life and glorify God.

Despite the competition of exam preparation and a burgeoning social life I think coming together as young adults provides an important space and a valuable rare opportunity, particularly for those not at Catholic schools, in which to develop understanding of faith at a deeper level.

It also can provide important support for parents in these challenging years.

Book Reviews

Freddie Freckles and the Sacraments

by Fr Tim Buckley C.Ss.R
ISBN 978082314180

Join Freddie as he goes on a journey where he learns more about the sacraments. This collection of short stories is written for children aged seven to nine and explore many rites from the Catholic Church - looking back to the significance of their baptism and forward to their confirmation. Along the way Freddie also learns the true meaning of Easter and Christmas and begins to have a better understanding of prayer and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. For each chapter Fr Tim has written helpful guides for when to tell each story along with scripture references. Ideal for small groups of children but also great for children to read on their own. Freddie Freckles is a gentle way to teach them about the sacraments.

Freddie Freckles and the Sacraments is perfect for children aged 7-9 and its entertaining stories will help children to be excited about their life in the Catholic Church



Being a Catholic Mother

Elizabeth Davies
ISBN: 9780852314104

It may be that the life of a Catholic mother has never been harder where faith is concerned. But if that is the case, it has never been more important that Catholic women take time out to think deeply about what it is they do as mothers, and how and why they do it. This book offers a way to begin to do that. The contemporary design and beautiful photographs make this a real pleasure to read with personal advice and anecdotes from many Catholic mothers.



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Father Tim has spent his adult life working as a parish priest, Vocations Director for the Redemptorists and Publishing Director at Redemptorist Publications. He currently has three books published - What Binds Marriage?, Take Heart: Expand Your Vision of God and The Adventures of Freddie Freckles. The new book Freddie Freckles and the Sacraments follows Freddie of his latest adventures.

