

St Nicholas

Catholic News

MORE THAN 23 YEARS OF BRINGING THE NOTTINGHAM DIOCESE TOGETHER

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We wish all our readers a holy and peaceful Christmas

Christmas reflection

What a year it's been! Nobody could have predicted that the effects of the coronavirus, first felt in March, would still be with us nine months later as we prepare to celebrate the joyful Feast of the birth of Our Saviour. I welcome this opportunity to thank the Catholic community across our diocese for the creative ways in which parishes, chaplaincies, schools, and individuals, responded to the safety restrictions that the government placed upon our churches being open for private and public worship. Back in early March there were probably not many in our community who had heard of 'Zoom' and 'live-streaming'. I'm so proud of the live-streaming of Masses, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the rosary, and of the facilities to listen in to Mass by phone, that quickly emerged in so many of our parishes, as well as the phone calls made by both clergy and laity to ensure that those shielding at home were cared for. I'm so grateful to all those who made this

possible. Who could have imagined that there would come a time when we would be asked to book, online or by phone, to come to Mass?! Thanks also to David Aldred who devised and managed our diocesan online Mass booking system.

I'm also proud of the ways in which our teachers responded so courageously when schools remained open for the children of front-line workers, and for their creativity in devising lessons online for children at home. What great resources, too, The Briars Youth Centre produced by way of support for children, young people and families throughout this time. I acknowledge the many Catholics, clergy and lay, who have served generously and courageously on the frontline in hospitals, care homes and other services. I have also been impressed by parish, school, and individual initiatives to offer little acts of practical care to the more vulnerable members of the wider communities across our diocese. These are all examples of the

Catholic community putting its faith into action, of Christian discipleship being lived out!

This year, more than ever, people everywhere have been looking for hope, for something positive to believe in, as the effects of the coronavirus took its toll. For us, as Christians, Christmas is a grace-filled time when we open afresh our hearts and minds to the Christ-child, and allow Him to be within us, what He wishes to be, our Lord and our Saviour, the one we seek to serve generously in our daily lives. No matter what difficulties you have experienced this year, and it's been a tough year for most people, Christ-Jesus is the one who, in and through our lives, carries forward God's plan for our world. As his disciples, we're asked to continue to play our part in the creating of a more gentle, just and better world. He is therefore the one in whom we once again place firmly all our hopes, because we know nothing can stand in his way.



This Christmas may He renew hope in all our hearts! God bless you!

**+Patrick
Rt Rev Patrick McKinney
Bishop of Nottingham**

Remembering our loved ones

This November we held a special online Memorial Mass on All Souls Day to pray for our supporters and loved ones who have died.

For most of us, 2020 has been one of the most challenging years we've ever experienced, and the loss of our loved ones during these difficult times may have seemed unbearably hard.

At a time like this it's important for us to remain a virtual community and stand together in prayer to remember those who are no longer with us. With all the restrictions still affecting our churches, we hosted a special online Memorial Mass on All Souls Day.

At Mass we presented a Book of Remembrance which includes names of supporters who have sadly passed away during the year. We would be honoured to remember your loved ones in this way, so please don't hesitate to add the names of your loved ones that you would like us to pray for. Include their name at www.cafod.org.uk

Maggie Mairura CAFOD Nottingham



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**MORE THAN 21 YEARS OF
BRINGING THE
NOTTINGHAM DIOCESE
TOGETHER**

The monthly paper for the
Diocese of Nottingham

**The
Catholic News**

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Wanted - Parish Correspondents

The Catholic News is looking for a
Parish Correspondent in your parish
to send in local news for publication in
this newspaper. All items to be
emailed to
johnclawson@icloud.com
before 10th of the month

FRANKLY SPEAKING

Fifty years ago a new Catholic Prayer Book was printed. This new publication had a green cover and cost ten shillings (50 pence). Much of the contents will still be familiar should this book be re-published today. Working in industry at that time I purchased a copy which I found most helpful as I had just arrived in the East Midlands to start a new chapter in my life. I mention all of this because the Prayer Book had an introduction from Cardinal Keenan and incorporated the words "Being a Christian is not easy, it is not meant to be".

As we approach Christmas and the second year of a new decade perhaps in 2021 and the new year we may choose to reflect on the most difficult year most of us have experienced. All who have lost loved ones will need our compassion and we should never forget those who had special needs before Covid-19. These people are not just statistics and 2020 will have made life more difficult with extra support needed from those who are in good health. Much has been said and written about the NHS but all who are looking after the sick will face a difficult start to 2021. When matters get awkward some MP's speak of "Challenges". Perhaps they should spend some time working in a hospital or a care home!

At the start of Advent the full implication of a disastrous year for the British retail trade

Pope at Mass: 'Faith is a love story for people in love!'

By Linda Bordonni

Pope Francis and the new Cardinals created during Consistory concelebrate Mass on the First Sunday of Advent inviting the faithful to get close to the Lord and to serve their neighbours.

Celebrating Holy Mass on the First Sunday of Advent together with 11 new Cardinals who received their red hats from him just hours earlier, Pope Francis invited the faithful to ask the Lord to awaken within them the desire to pray and the need to love. The celebration came on the heels of a Consistory on Saturday afternoon during which the Pope created 13 new cardinals from different continents. Two of them, Cardinal Cornelius Sim from Brunei and Jose Advincula from the Philippines, were unable to attend in person because of covid-related travel restrictions.

The Church's new cardinals – who's who? At the heart of the Pope's homily was the plea to God "to rouse us from the slumber of mediocrity" and "awaken us from the darkness of indifference."

He drew inspiration from the liturgical readings of the day that, he noted, propose two key words for the Advent season: closeness and watchfulness: God's closeness and our watchfulness.

The Pope explained that the prophet Isaiah says that God is close to us, while in the Gospel Jesus urges us to keep watch in expectation of his return.

Closeness

Reflecting on the word Closeness, as it is conceived by Isaiah, the Holy Father said "Advent is the season for remembering that closeness of God who came down to dwell in our midst."

He recalled the prophet who goes on to ask

God to draw close to us once more invoking Him to "tear open the heavens and come down!" (Is 64:1).

The Pope said we prayed for this in today's responsorial psalm and explained that "the first step of faith is to tell God that we need him, that we need him to be close to us." Reiterating that this is also the first message of Advent and the liturgical year, the Pope said "we need to recognise God's closeness and to say to him: 'Come close to us once more!'"

Noting that God wants to draw close to us, but will not impose Himself, he said it is up to us to invite Him into our lives today. Advent, he said, reminds us "that Jesus came among us and will come again at the end of time," and he invited the faithful to recite the traditional "Come, Lord Jesus" prayer at "the beginning of each day and repeat it frequently, before our meetings, our studies and our work, before making decisions, in every important or difficult moment of our lives: Come, Lord Jesus!" Being watchful

Pope Francis then focused on the idea of "watchfulness" explaining that "If we ask Jesus to come close to us, we will train ourselves to be watchful."

In today's Gospel reading, Mark presents us with the end of Jesus' final address to his disciples, which, he said: "can be summed up in two words: 'Be watchful!'"

"It is important to remain watchful, because one great mistake in life is to get absorbed in a thousand things and not to notice God," he said, pointing to the very real danger of being so "drawn by our own interests, and distracted by so many vain things, we risk losing sight of what is essential."

The fact that we need to watchful, Pope Francis explained, "means it is now night," in fact we are "awaiting the dawn, amid darkness and weariness. The light of day will come when we shall be with the Lord."

Living in hope

In the certainty that the shadows of night will be dispelled, the Pope said "Being watchful in expectation of His coming means not letting ourselves be overcome by discouragement. It is to live in hope." "If we are awaited in Heaven, why should we be caught up with earthly concerns? Why should we be anxious about money, fame, success, all of which will fade away? Why should we waste time complaining about the night, when the light of day awaits us?" he said.

But Pope Francis observed that staying awake is not easy: "at night, it is natural to sleep."

He recalled that even Jesus's disciples did



Pope Francis celebrates the Eucharist with new Cardinals
(Vatican Media)

not manage to stay awake even though he told them to, to the extent that they dozed off on various occasions and denied Him, letting Him be condemned to death.

"That same drowsiness can overtake us. There is a dangerous kind of sleep: it is the slumber of mediocrity. It comes when we forget our first love and grow satisfied with indifference, concerned only for an untroubled existence," he said.

The power of faith

Faith, the Pope explained, is the very opposite of mediocrity: "it is ardent desire for God, a bold effort to change, the courage to love, constant progress. Faith is not water that extinguishes flames, it is fire that burns; it is not a tranquilizer for people under stress, it is a love story for people in love!" Asking the question "How can we rouse ourselves from the slumber of mediocrity?", the Pope answered "With the vigilance of prayer."

Prayer, he said, makes us lift our gaze to higher things; it makes us attuned to the Lord.

"Prayer allows God to be close to us; it frees us from our solitude and gives us hope. Prayer is vital for life: just as we cannot live without breathing, so we cannot be Christians without praying," he said.

And warning against the slumber of indifference, the Pope said those who are affected by indifference are unconcerned about those all around them, indifferent to the needs of others.

He said night descends in their hearts, and immediately they begin to complain about everything and everyone; they start to feel victimized by everyone and end up brooding about everything.

The watchfulness of charity

The way to rouse ourselves from the slumber of indifference, the Pope continued, is with the watchfulness of charity.

"Charity is the beating heart of the Christian: just as one cannot live without a heartbeat, so one cannot be a Christian without charity," he said.

Being compassionate, helping and serving others, he explained, "are the only things that win us the victory, since they are already aiming towards the future, the day of the Lord, when all else will pass away and love alone will remain."

"It is by works of mercy that we draw close to the Lord."

Pope Francis concluded reminding Christians to pray and to love: "Let us now call out to him. Come, Lord Jesus, we need you! Draw close to us. You are the light. Rouse us from the slumber of mediocrity; awaken us from the darkness of indifference. Come, Lord Jesus, take our distracted hearts and make them watchful. Awaken within us the desire to pray and the need to love."



Melton Mowbray parishioners and townsfolk unite to renovate historic window

When Melton Mowbray parishioners heard that the East window in their beloved Grade 2 listed church of St. John the Baptist was in urgent need of restoration and re-leading, they were determined that somehow they would raise the necessary sum of £12,000. The heritage charity, "Friends of St. John's Church" had already launched a public appeal as soon as the perilous state of the window had been identified, and the people of Melton responded generously, since the church is dear to both Catholics and non-Catholics alike. The "Friends" group were able to give the Parish Priest, Mgr. Tom McGovern, a cheque for £3,600, the largest single donation.

Meanwhile, the parishioners themselves came up with a scheme by which each of the individual pieces of stained glass in the window was offered for sponsorship. For a donation of £25, a piece of glass could be dedicated in the name of the donor, or in the name of a loved one, and the names will be entered in a book which will be kept in the church as a permanent record. In this way, the entire parish could be involved, and the window become a parish memorial for future generations. The idea was taken up enthusiastically, and in a few short weeks, over £7,000 was raised.

Mgr. Tom McGovern said, "When the window was removed for restoration in November, I thought it impossible to raise such a large sum in a short time. But with the VAT refunded, we have now reached our target. It is an amazing achievement, and I most sincerely thank Friends of St John's, the people of Melton, and most importantly the parishioners for the great encouragement they have given me by uniting in an enthusiastic and generous response to my appeal for help. I am proud of them."

The window was made in 1842 by Thomas Willement to a design thought to be by A.W.N. Pugin, the celebrated Victorian church architect, and it contains the martlet



Friends of St. John's Church presenting the cheque for £3,600 to Mgr. Tom McGovern. Left to right: Frances Levett, Chairman; Fr. Tom, Parish Priest; Ann Kirby, Treasurer; Sheila Sulley, Secretary
Photo copyright: The Melton Times.

which was his symbol. Thomas Willement was himself an important figure. He was Heraldic Artist to King George IV, and became Artist in Stained Glass to Queen Victoria. He contributed significantly to the neo-Gothic movement. St. John's window is considered a fine example of his work, with the church's patron, St John the Baptist, under a canopy in the centre, and the principal founders, John Exton and Fr Tempest, in separate lights on either side. John Exton had kept Catholicism alive in the area by

running a secret chapel during penal times at his home in Eastwell Hall. Thus the window is important, not only to the Catholic community since it represents the history of Catholicism in the area, but also to the local community in view the national significance of the artistic and architectural connections. The window was restored by local stained glass artist Derek Hunt, who kindly allowed the Catholic junior school children to visit his studio to see the work in progress.

By a strange and unexplained quirk, the window was originally installed backwards, so that the writing could only be read from outside the church at night with the light on. It has now been installed correctly, and can be viewed as intended for the first time in 178 years!



The East Window

Buckfast Abbey Trust Registered Charity number 232497

'Listen, my son'

Rule of St Benedict

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Buckfast Abbey

God calls to us constantly, longing to guide those who yearn for life and desire to see good days into the way of peace. The Rule of Saint Benedict helps us to hear God's voice, in the Holy Scriptures, in the sacred liturgy and in our brothers in community. If you are a single man longing to live your Catholic faith in a way which brings great joy as it demands the best of you, consider whether God is calling you to be a Benedictine monk at Buckfast Abbey. Please reach out to us, and we will do all we can to help you.

The Lord's Day

The Watermead Apostolate offers this helpful guide and background to the readings used at our Catholic Mass each Sunday. Watermead began in 1992 as a voice for people who wish to share understanding of living their faith through their various God-given gifts and talents. We frame these gifts by publishing them as books, cards and resources - and we record and publish the music. We also arrange retreats and pilgrimages. For information about the work of our apostolate, to download our resources or to offer contributions, do feel welcome to contact us at: Watermead Apostolate, The Watermead Centre, c/o St. Joseph's, 12 Goodwood Road, Leicester LE5 6SG : Telephone 0044 (0)116 220 7881 / 7880

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MIDNIGHT MASS

First Reading - Isaiah 9 : 2-7

Chapter 8 has told of the desperation of the people, turning against God and king (especially verses 21 ff.), but in chapter 9 there is new hope. Galilee was conquered in 732 BC (the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali dwelt in Galilee) but is given new hope by the promise of a child who will become king under God's protection. The suffering of Galilee becomes a prophecy and image of the later suffering and conquest of Israel (721 BC) and Jerusalem (587 BC), and the wonderful reassurance of today's reading becomes a promise for the whole nation and people.

Second Reading - Titus 2 : 11-14

Titus was a co-worker with Paul and a strong influence in bringing about reconciliation with the Church at Corinth (2 Corinthians 7:6-14). Now he is bishop in Crete and this letter, written by one of Paul's disciples (writing under Paul's name), indicates the honoured position Titus held in the Christian Church. Today's reading rejoices that God has revealed divine love in the person of Jesus, inviting the world to become the people of God.

Gospel Reading - Luke 2 : 1-14

Augustus Caesar was emperor 27 BC - 14 AD. There is nothing in Roman history to indicate that a universal census was taken during his reign, so the details of Luke's account of a necessary journey to Bethlehem are puzzling. Respect for Joseph makes us believe that he would not have imposed on Mary an unnecessary and difficult five-day journey. They would have travelled in good time. That Joseph's family in Bethlehem would have rejected a young girl about to give birth to her first child seems impossible. The story is not history - it is Gospel, full of symbolism (e.g. the shepherds symbolise the great shepherd leaders of the Old Testament: Abraham, Moses, David, rejoicing for their people).

There are three celebrations of mass on Christmas Day.

The tradition began in the Holy Land with Midnight Mass at Bethlehem, Dawn at Jerusalem and Day at Bethlehem. Rome continues that tradition with Midnight Mass at St. Peter's, Dawn at St. Anastasia's and Day at St. Mary Major's. Parishes may celebrate mass three times

DAWN MASS

First Reading - Isaiah 62 : 11-12

We are in the final part of the Book of Isaiah, chapters of joy and universal salvation. The Zion hill in Jerusalem, on which the Temple was built, becomes the centre of the world and all peoples are invited to come there to the Lord. Jesus, our Saviour, leads us and we become the Holy People, the Lord's redeemed.

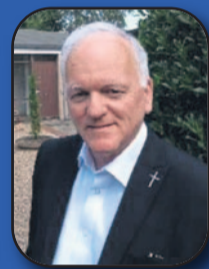
Second Reading - Titus 3 : 4-7

We are near the end of the letter. "Paul" has been practical in advice to Titus - making careful appointments, guarding the people against false teachers, pointing out the essential ideals by which a Christian community should live, and then comes today's reading about the kindness of God - revealed through the birth of Jesus, our Saviour, and confirmed by the gifts of the Spirit poured out on us. With joy we look forward to eternal life.

Gospel Reading - Luke 2 : 15-20

The shepherds, symbolising the great leaders of the Old Testament, hurry to Bethlehem. They "tell everyone" what they had been told in the angels' message - which indicates a large crowd present with Mary, Joseph and the baby. It is what we would expect - family joy and support at the birth of a first child. The people listen with astonishment, but Mary listens with wonder and treasures what she hears. The picture is idyllic, the pain and loneliness of the midnight mass Gospel story now gone. But it is the suffering servant (of the Book of Isaiah) who has been born and Mary's heart, full of wonder, will later be pierced.

THE CHAPTER CORNER



The Provost

The post pandemic disciple

What a different experience of Church we have all been having in the last nine months! Church buildings have been closed but we have discovered new ways of being Church, of keeping in touch, of reaching out to one another as a Church, of building a caring, merciful community beyond the immediate church community. As we reflect on the last year, what changes will emerge to our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ?

We've learnt to share our resources as a growing number of households struggle to afford sufficient food. Phone calls, and the various communication apps have become invaluable life-lines for many families, neighbours and parishioners to keep in touch. Encouraged to exercise more, we've walked around the neighbourhood, seeing people and places that previously we'd barely noticed when we'd rushed to work or the shops. Clapping for the NHS revealed neighbours with whom we now shared a common purpose where previously there was just a nodding acquaintance. We've become so much more aware of our dependency and interdependency as a human race: on the NHS, on other front-line workers; on people who run essential services, such as shop & supermarket workers, school teachers & staff, those who deliver on-line shopping to our front doors; on developing a vaccine available for the whole human family. How will our dependency and interdependency as a Church in the modern world develop in our lives as missionary disciples?

How will we sustain the benefits of online meetings and conferences? In particular, the benefits of the local streamed Masses and prayer events and being guided in our personal prayer by on line resources. Our Bishop with his daily streamed Masses has led us and fed us with his insights. Canon Malachy Brett and his Team at the Cathedral, as the Mother Church of the Diocese, have reminded us with their

daily streamed Masses that we are one Diocesan Family. And in our spiritual hunger for Jesus, the Bread of Life, we have re-discovered the benefits of making a daily spiritual communion with helpful traditional prayers and more recently composed prayers.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of continuing to have more time on our own because it can affect us in two ways? We can become more reflective disciples and thankful to God, giving us an opportunity to become more aware of the sights and sounds of creation, and seeking the presence of our incarnate God in the heart-beat of Creation, in our own hearts and in the hearts of those around us, especially in the most needy. But, also, time on our own can heighten the isolation and anxiety of the disciple, affecting our mental health, and reminding us of the fragility of every human being. It is then we discover how invaluable is our daily routine, having a healthy, creative life-style and the readily available listening friend.

The post pandemic disciples will emerge through engagement with caring and merciful works, through the use of the new media - especially with those who are housebound for whatever reason, through working together more with those on whom we depend and with whom we share interdependent lives. And when we do physically meet again together, surely we will discover how absence has made the heart grow stronger. Will we notice each other with greater care and attention, longing to see the unmasked face and a brotherly and sisterly smile, happy to contribute to a more integrated human family with our fellow missionary disciples?

Provost Jonathan Cotton
jonathan.cotton@dioceseofnottingham.uk

Day Mass

First Reading - Isaiah 52 : 7-10

Chapter 51 has foretold the salvation of Israel - a conquered people will be set free. The Lord seems to have been in a deep slumber, unaware of the suffering of the people, but awakes in order to console them. Jerusalem must awaken to the dawn of a new promise and prepare for the coming of a saviour. In today's reading he comes, bringing good news, peace and happiness. The world is saved (v.10) and shares the joy of a redeemed Jerusalem.

Second Reading - Hebrews 1 : 1-6

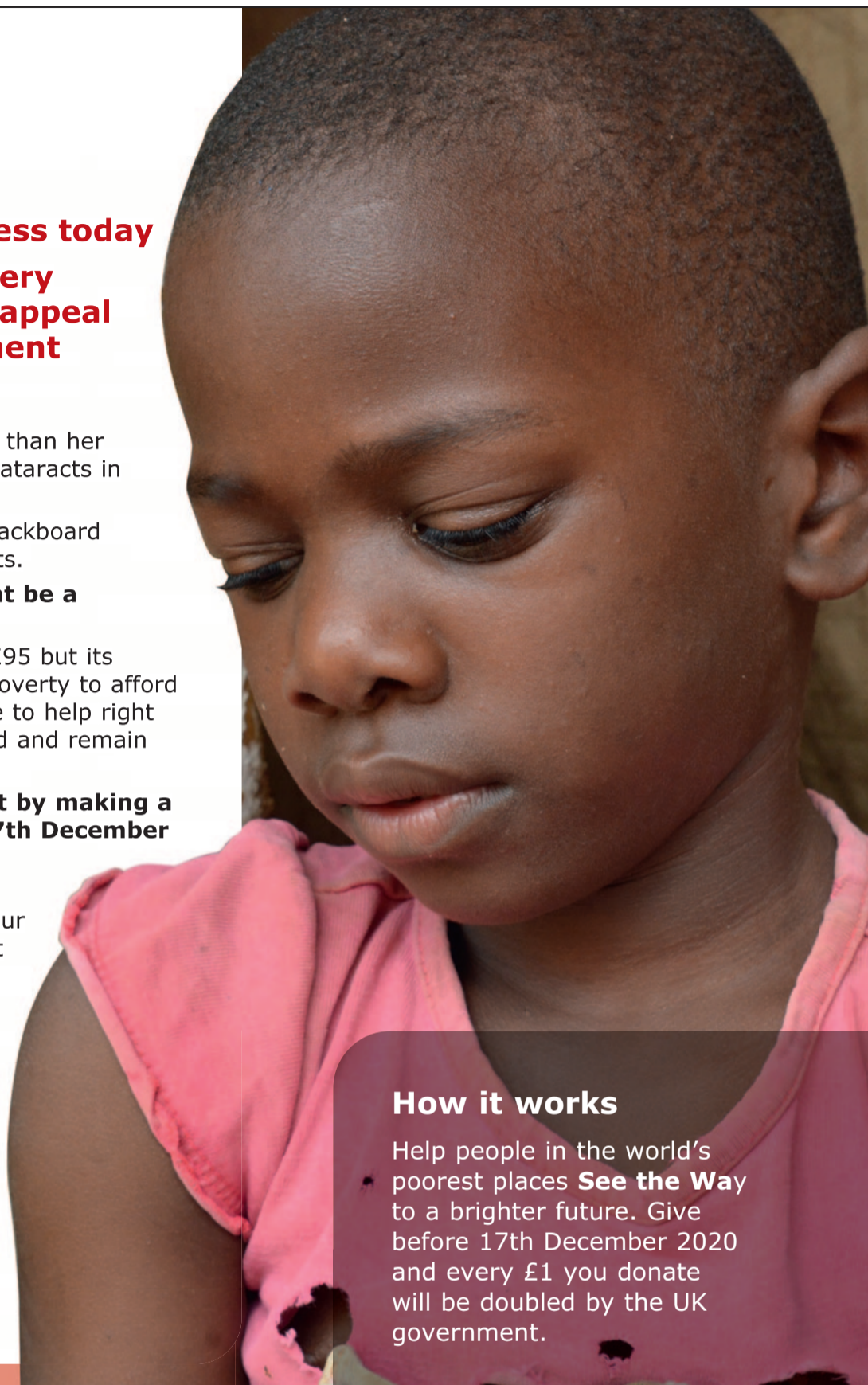
We do not know the author of this letter but we know him to have been a Greek scholar who wrote in a beautiful style. He wrote for Hebrew Christians, longing to show them that Jesus was everything the Scriptures had foretold - the Messiah, a Saviour, King of an eternal kingdom. The prophets foresaw only dimly, but now Christians acknowledge the Messiah as Son of God, the Word of Creation, begotten of the Divine Father, First born Son. The wonder and awe are palpable.

Gospel Reading - John 1 : 1-18

John's Gospel was written in the early part of the second century, put together by his disciples. It reflects John's love for Christ and Christ's love for John ("the disciple Jesus loved"). John was Jesus' cousin, and to read today's prologue to the Gospel is to catch the wonder in John that the Jesus he had known from boyhood was truly the Son of God. The ordinariness of Jesus' life is in contrast to the divine revelation he has brought with him, and his casual rejection by the people is because they are not interested in anything outside their everyday concerns. Reverence for John the Baptist (v.15) is evident - and we remember that John was a follower of John the Baptist (John 1:35-59).



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No Samosas online!

In a different world, the Poor Clare Colettine sisters in Nottingham would be holding their annual Christmas Fair and sharing their work in the parish hall of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Bulwell. This year, lockdown means that they will not be making cakes, serving refreshments or selling Samosas and welcoming those who come live; instead, they are going online.

Between praying for the world and being there for others, the sisters knit and crochet, make cards and do craft work. They are able to put low prices on their work since most of the wool comes to them as a gift. They do a lovely line in kidswear. You can have a look at their work on www.marianhouseoftheholyspiritcc.org

Poor Clares work with their hands in the times given them but their main gift to the church is adoration and intercession. They welcome hearing from you, have a daily prayer post called Little Hearts and can be found on Facebook.

They hope to have their usual celebration for

the first Sunday of Advent on You Tube, so keep an eye out for their Website and Facebook pages. They ended their annual newsletter with this message:

"And for all the heartache in this strange world of ours there is still room for laughter and togetherness, and the hopes that our fragmented society will have learned from the epidemic. As Pope Francis rightly says, We all need each other, none of us is an island, an autonomous and independent "I," separated from the other, and we can only build the future by standing together, including everyone.

"We are deeply grateful to God for the privilege of being able to enter into your joys and sorrows so as to hold them before him, and for the encouragement and support we receive in your own prayers for us. We deeply appreciate your loving generosity and acts of kindness in so many ways. In the darkness of these times, may the Christchild bless you with His light and hope for the future, now and in the coming year."



Brigid of Kildare

I have always liked the cross of Brigid, with its simple or elaborate intricate 'crisscrossing'. Below are a number of samples of ones that I have made. I have endeavoured to be as creative and instinctive as possible and on occasion what I set out to create has ended up being very different. This occurs with the individual use or mix of painted wood, aran wool and icons of Brigid. Her name and cross is highly represented amongst the Irish Abroad, whether in churches, schools and GAA clubs. London was the source of the evolving St. Brigid Festival now celebrated via the Embassies and Consulates of Ireland worldwide.

by Gerry Molumby

For more information or to purchase a Cross of Brigid email fmolumby@aol.com

Who is St Brigid?

Born in Dundalk in 450 AD St Brigid was the founder of the first monastery in County Kildare, Ireland. Her father was a pagan chieftain of Leinster and her mother was a Christian. St Patrick inspired her to deepen her father and spread the word of God.

February 1st 2021 is Imbolc (end of Winter and beginning of Spring), which celebrates the first day of Spring in Ireland. It is an ancient Celtic feast & is marked in Ireland as St Brigid's Day, it's Christian re-incarnation. In schools children make St Brigid's crosses to celebrate it.



Christmas is Coming (Our Saviour is Born)



A Catholic Family of 8 from Our Lady of Lincoln Parish, Lincoln, have written, performed and professionally recorded a song which will be available on iTunes and Amazon in time for Advent. Christmas is Coming (Our Saviour is Born), is a song which will uplift people and give them hope in these strange times and despite the talk of Christmas being cancelled due to covid, Christmas IS Coming! Euan (13) plays Cello and Trombone on the track, Leo (12) Drums and Violin, Pearce (9) Viola, Vincent (8) Violin and the youngest Edith & Micah (5&3) on glockenspiels. Mum, Fiona, sings the

lead vocals and plays piano, while Dad, Mark, local teacher, also took part playing the tubular bells adding to the Christmas feel of the song. "We want the song to remind people of the real reason for the season, Jesus is our Saviour". As well as spreading some good cheer, the Braddish family hope with every download they will raise money for March for Life.

You can follow the Braddish Family on twitter, facebook & instagram for up to date information and photos.

A parish walk and the question “And who is my neighbour?” (Luke 10:29)

Pope Francis in his new encyclical *Fratelli tutti* reminds us we are, whether near or far, all brothers and sisters in Christ



The start - St Augustine's, Wellingore



The end - SSPP, Lincoln (Kathleen behind the camera)

Whilst the parish has been helping local 'brothers and sisters' in our community during the pandemic, for example, by supporting the city food bank and delivering medicines and shopping, a parishioner, Stuart, wanted to ensure those further afield were not forgotten and came up with the idea of a sponsored walk/pilgrimage for the charity "Aid to the Church in Need" and in particular for those affected by the blast in Lebanon earlier this year. So on a rainy Wednesday in October, five parishioners and the parish priest, Fr Jarosz, set out on a ten mile pilgrimage walk from the former Roman Catholic Chapel of Ease, St Augustine's, Wellingore, along the Viking Way, to our parish church of St Peter and St Paul, Lincoln.

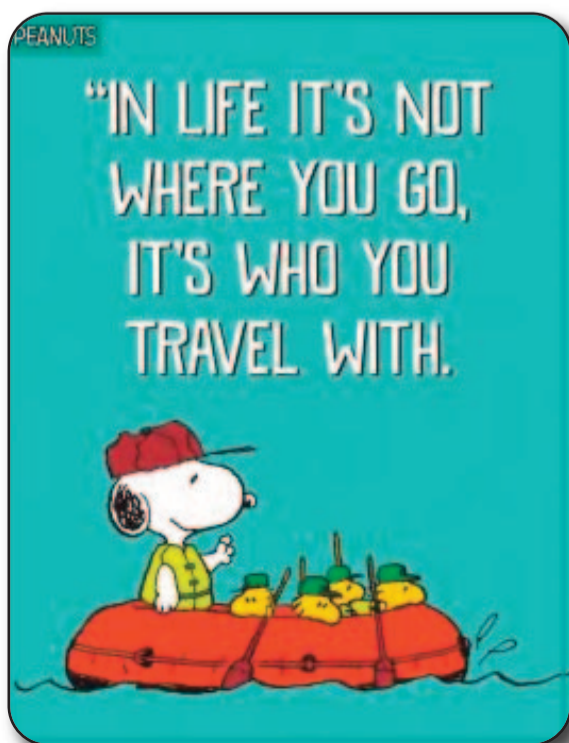
Apart from providing an opportunity to love and serve fellow Christians thousands of miles away, the pilgrimage also afforded many opportunities for us to love and serve those near to us within the parish, for example by words of encouragement, sharing of conversation and refreshments en route, offers of rescue should the rain prove too much, supporting prayer and donations made all ordinary but wonderful acts of kindness, goodness, generosity and fraternity. After the walk was completed and a much needed short rest, Mass was celebrated, enabling us to give thanks to God.

As the photographs show, at the start, we stood apart, at the end we stand together; an apt symbol, not only for this one day pilgrimage but for the pilgrimage of life we are all undertaking as we journey towards unity in Christ. Along the way, may God grant us the grace to recognise each person as our brother or sister and the grace to extend the hand of friendship and to help one another in times of need, both those far away and those right next to us.

To date, over six hundred pounds has been raised, if you would like to add your support and make a donation, to help the people of Lebanon, please go on-line to:
<http://www.justgiving.com/owner-email/pleasesponsor/StAugustine>

With thanks to Stuart for organising the walk, Fr Jarosz for participating and then celebrating Mass afterwards and to everyone who gave support in any way.

**To God be the glory,
SSPP Church (Lincoln)**



Ashes to Ashes

By Julia Beacroft

ONCE AGAIN IT'S that time of the year when we scratch our heads and desperately try to think what we can buy our loved ones for Christmas. I don't know about you, but I find that not only does this seem to become more and more difficult, but I also struggle when asked what I too would like..!

TAKEN ABACK

When I recently visited a glassworks and was thinking what lovely Christmas presents some of the objects there would make, I became aware of a lady standing near me who was in conversation with the glass-blower. It transpired that he was custom-making a paperweight for her. Interested in this, I whispered to my husband about what was happening, but as usual I must have been a bit loud because the lady in question turned around and looked at me. Feeling rather embarrassed at appearing so nosy, I immediately said, "Sorry, but I just overheard that you were having your paperweight made especially for you while you wait." With this, the lady smiled and came over to me. "It's going to go on my dressing table", she said. "My dear friend has just recently died, and I've had some of her ashes put in to the paperweight." Now if ever there had been a moment when I could not only have offered her sympathy, but also the consolation of the Lord (evangelised), this was one of them! But I was so taken aback, what did I say instead? "Er...oh, that's lovely!"

Since then I've been doing some work on evangelisation – an activity which sadly gets so much bad press – but in this



broken world is so very necessary. Jesus told us to 'Go out and make disciples of all people' and to spread the Good News, so we have actually been given our apostolic mission, which of course, the first apostles initiated.

SEEDS OF FAITH

So as well as trying to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ in my everyday encounters with others, I will also be trying to evangelise in the giving of my presents to friends and family this Christmas. I have just sent two shoeboxes to Europe for under privileged children, but this year I have also enclosed two children's crosses in my shoeboxes. In each of my Christmas gifts I intend to include a prayer card, because who knows what seed of faith and enlightenment this may just plant?

I'm not really sure about the notion of having ashes incorporated into an ornament, but I am one hundred percent sure about introducing others to the Lord and helping them to come to know him and love him.

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THE DAY OF PRAYER TO END PANDEMIC

As we approached our second national lockdown in England to contain COVID-19 virus, our Bishops appealed for a special day of prayer and fasting on the 21 Nov, Vigil Christ The King, to pray to end this pandemic. Inspired by this request we decided to promote this widely throughout our parish and welcomed anyone who wanted to visit.

Working within Covid restrictions, we managed to get a workable program in place to assist our visitors, making their visit more meaningful as they engaged in private worship.

Our day included recordings of the rosary, posters displaying Eucharistic Miracles (work by Blessed Carlos Acutis) regular

short spiritual readings, the Divine Mercy Chaplet in song with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 11am-9pm.

All visitors were encouraged to light a candle and place it on the altar rail. There was a steady flow of visitors throughout the day, some popping in for a short visit and others spending many hours, many deep in prayer, the silence in the church was profound.

All of this was made possible by the supervision of our dedicated stewards throughout the day who were able to assist as needed and made everyone very welcome.

Special attention was given to the entrance of our church, the stairway was lined with potted plants decorated with lanterns, sig-



nifying the Light of Christ drawing all to His Church.

It proved a wonderful day and was appreciated by many.

Submitted on behalf of The Good Shepherd Church, Nottingham



Derby Parishioners Knit Teddies and Nativities for St Mary's School



Following the devastating fire at St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy in Derby, which resulted in the children losing nearly everything, parishioners have taken up their knitting needles to put a smile back on the children's faces. Every FS2 child now has their own individual Prayer Bear and the classes have wonderful knitted Nativity scenes. Indeed, the School has been overwhelmed by the generosity of local people, organisations and businesses during this difficult time - they have received donations of books, toys, equipment, and even a bag of

goodies for every pupil and staff member from St Benedict Academy. Premises to enable the children to be taught face to face have been selflessly offered by The Diocese, St Benedict and Christ the King Church, Mackworth. The School is hoping to move into long term temporary accommodation early in the new year, while they wait for a new St Mary's School to be rebuilt at Highfields.

Fran Wickes



A tryptic of Yorkshire Abbeys

Canon Edward Jarosz

During the month of October I spent a few days on retreat at Ampleforth Abbey in North Yorkshire. It is a place and a monastic community I have got to know very well over my twenty-seven years as a priest. Ampleforth is a living monastic community, present on that site for over two hundred years, but with its roots going back to monastic life in England before the Reformation, indeed claiming a historic link with the monastic community that once existed at Westminster Abbey.

One of the first acts of Henry VIII religious reforms was the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536-41. Monks and nuns were driven out of their monasteries and convents. Some of them fled to continental Europe where they continued to live out their monastic vocations. It was another major political upheaval, the French Revolution, that led to their return to England at the end of the Eighteenth century. Ampleforth and its sister monasteries in the English Benedictine Congregation represent the continuation of a monastic life in this country going back many centuries but interrupted by some 250 years of exile overseas.



Ampleforth Abbey

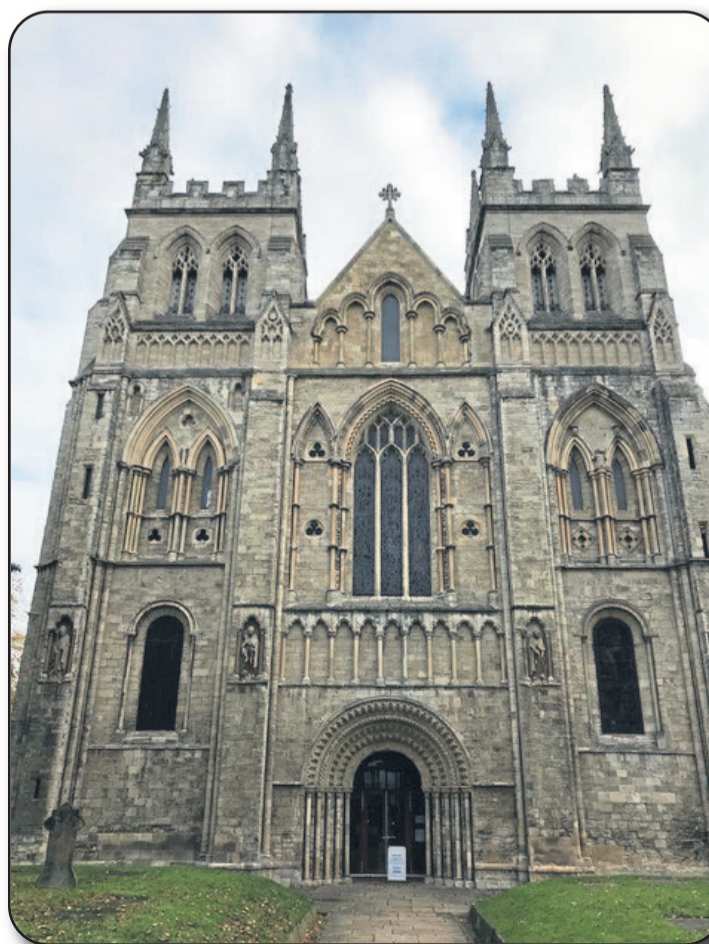


Rievaulx Abbey

As the monks left the monasteries the buildings were left behind and given to new owners. In many cases they took what they wanted and then allowed the rest of the site to fall into disrepair. Hence the presence of many monastic ruins around the countryside as well as many place names that tell of a monastic past that is no longer visible. Some ten miles from Ampleforth lie the remains of Rievaulx Abbey. This is now a site run by English Heritage and I was able to visit it from Ampleforth. Enough of the site remains to give an impression of how it must have looked in its heyday. It was founded in 1132 and survived for 400 years before the dissolution. Perhaps its most famous monk was St Aelred who was the second abbot of the monastery. He wrote a number of significant spiritual texts including a work on Spiritual Friendship extracts of which now appear in the Liturgy of the Hours (The Divine Office). In the gift shop as well as the usual tea towels and fridge magnets I was able to pick up a book giving the life of St Aelred and having asked the shop staff if they had any of his writings for sale. I was told that they often get asked this but unfortunately they don't at the moment. So it is not only the stones that bear witness to the past, but the legacy of the monastic past lives on in the continuing interest and influence of the life and writings of St Aelred.

Having finished my retreat on my journey home to Lincoln I stopped in Selby and visited Selby Abbey. Selby Abbey was also the home to a monastic community prior to the dissolution but the building did not fall into disuse and disrepair because it continued, and still continues, to serve the people of Selby as a parish church but now under the auspices of the Church of England. Looking around the church it appears to be a thriving church community and I received a very friendly welcome from the stewards. Walking around the church there are various displays including some which recount the monastic history of the site. I am sure that the current community do see themselves as spiritual descendants of the monks, continuing to bear witness to the Gospel even if in a different way.

So three sites and three different stories but each in their own way a witness to the enduring influence of monastic life in this country not only in history but also in our present time and hopefully for the future too.



Selby Abbey

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The Christmas Story

The Nativity stories in Matthew and Luke are very different and have in common only the names of Jesus, Mary, Joseph, Bethlehem. The stories are full of symbolism, the evangelists writing them with different purposes in mind. But if, if, we wanted to link them together, might the story run like this? . . ."

Joseph's home was in Bethlehem. He travelled north to Galilee, probably for work in the new administrative centre being built by the Romans at Sepphoris, a few miles from Nazareth. He and fellow tradesmen would have found lodgings in the local villages, and we guess Joseph lodged at Nazareth.

He and Mary met. They fell in love and became betrothed. It's a familiar story. People travel for work or studies and meet the one with whom they will share life. It happened to Joseph and Mary. We meet them in the gospel as an engaged couple.

God comes into the story. Mary is asked to be the mother of God's son. She accepts. Joseph is overwhelmed. The girl he had hoped to marry has been chosen by God. He, Joseph, must move out of the story.

Matthew tells of Joseph's agonising. If he breaks the engagement officially in court, the proper way, everyone will know the child Mary is carrying is not his. No one will believe the child is the son of God. Mary would be condemned as an adulteress, even stoned to death.

Joseph decides to divorce her informally, simply breaking the engagement (as a man had the power to, but not a woman) and leave Nazareth. He would be despised for deserting Mary and could never return. Matthew tells us that was his decision – as God comes again into the story.

Joseph is reassured he may still take Mary as his wife and be father to the child – even to name him. Joseph accepts, as Mary had,

and their home is made.

The Romans call a census – not a counting of people but registration of land and property for taxation purposes. Joseph has to return to Bethlehem to ensure his property is not over-taxed or confiscated. He and Mary decide to travel together and the baby will be born in Bethlehem, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Micah – the only prophet who cites Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah.

They travel in good time. It's a long journey, over a hundred miles, and they must walk. Follow their journey on the map at the back of your bible...

South from Nazareth to the border with Samaria, east to the river Jordan (no Jew would travel safely through Samaria), across the Jordan, down the eastern bank as far as opposite Jericho, cross into Judaea and on to Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

No sane man would take his wife on such a journey just before she was to give birth. They made the journey comfortably and in good time. What a welcome would have awaited them, young couple, awaiting the first child. They would have stayed in Joseph's own house – the one on the property that the Romans would be taxing.

"Whilst they were there the time came for Mary to have her child," says the gospel according to Luke. There is no panic, there is no stable. The family would have surrounded them with love. Luke mentions the family as they listen to the shepherds tell their story of how and why they have come.

The shepherds – who are they? They symbolise the leaders of God's people – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David – all shepherds. Luke is weaving symbolism into his story of the birth of Jesus. He allows the family of Joseph, who witness the birth, to speak with the shepherds of Israel who longed for the birth. This is gospel, beyond

story or history. A family scene of a birth is seen through the fulfilling of the faith of a waiting people.

Joseph and Mary stay for a while in Bethlehem (Circumcision, Presentation in the Temple) and then return home to Nazareth, Joseph probably selling the Bethlehem property. Matthew, too, blends symbolism with the birth, but where Luke sees the shepherds of Israel witnessing the birth of the Messiah, Matthew sees the world coming to acknowledge their saviour – as the final part of the Book of Isaiah saw the world coming to Jerusalem to honour God and bringing gifts of gold and frankincense.

Matthew adds a third gift – myrrh. Myrrh! For a baby! Myrrh is for burial – not a gift for a baby. The gift is symbolic, like the other two. Isaiah had prophesied the world's acknowledging God as king (gold) and God (incense), but Matthew knows the full revelation: not Jerusalem, but Bethlehem; not only God and King but also Saviour – the myrrh. The wise of the world can see in a baby born in Bethlehem their God, their King, their Saviour.

The Wise Men enter the house (there is no stable) and offer their gifts, then return home rejoicing. They have seen the revelation of God's love. They are wiser.

The Christmas story seems a simple love and family story of Joseph and Mary seen through the prisms of Mary's grace and Joseph's agonising and woven with symbolism of Israel's longing in Luke and the world's waiting in Matthew. But is it simple?

How do we find words for the three-fold mystery of Mary's virginal conception, the moment of the virgin birth, and her virginal marriage with Joseph – mystery that our Christian brothers and sisters refuse to share with the Catholic Church. Are there words to persuade them?



Some consider the Infancy narratives as myth – story told to convey religious truth, and see them as introductions to the good news preached by Jesus which starts at chapter three in both Matthew and Luke. This is the pattern of the Book of Genesis where the first eleven chapters are myth: 1-3 Creation, man and woman, the first sin; 3-4 Adam and Eve, their family and the people of the Land of Nod; 5-9 Sinfulness, the two stories of the Flood, Noah and his family from whom the human race is descended; 10-11 the Peoples of the earth, and in chapter 12 the history of Israel begins with the call of Abram (Abraham) – just less than two thousand years before Christ or about four thousand years from today.

John Daley IC



Christ the King Alferton renovated hall and church during lockdown

Christ the King parishioners used the time of the unwanted visit of lockdown to defeat the Covid 19; as a time to decorate their church and hall. Father James Early with a nod to his surname told us "Our centenary is coming down the line in seven years time and we had plans to celebrate with fresh colours of paint and varnish to credit our forefathers, we decided to bring all these plans forward and use the 'early' summer days during the various lockdowns to renovate our church and hall".



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Desert Island Hymns

I suppose most people have a favourite hymn, including many who don't attend church regularly. Hymns, like all kinds of music, arouse memories of times, people, places, events, both good and bad, happy or sad. It is said that St Augustine declared "To sing is to pray twice", although some scholars doubt this. BBC "Songs of Praise" which began in October 1961 continues to be popular and is regularly watched in our house.

You have been able to switch on your wireless and listen to Roy Plomley's "Desert Island Discs" since January 1942, and recent restrictions the consequences and effects of the coronavirus have resulted in many people in 'lockdown' feeling as though they are alone on a desert island!

With this in mind I have taken the opportunity to think about some of the hymns that have impacted on my life evoking a mix of memories ...

'Eternal Father, Strong to Save' - (The Navy Hymn) appeared in the first edition of Hymns Ancient & Modern in 1861. Whenever I hear it brings to mind one of my earliest childhood memories.

Back in January 1952, aged 5, I would walk with friends after school to my Gran's house. Sometimes I would go and see her next door neighbour an old man called Mr. Turner. He always had a newspaper and I remember being drawn to the dramatic pictures of the 12 day events unfolding out at sea 400 miles west of Land's End. A cargo ship the "*Flying Enterprise*" sailing from Hamburg to New York sent out an S.O.S on 28th December and was in serious trouble, having been hit by a freak wave in very heavy seas, was capsizing. The crew and 10 passengers were rescued and one of the ships trying to help was a tugboat called the "*Turmoil*". The 27 year old mate Kenny Dancy from the tug unbelievably leapt across to the Enterprise and with her captain Henrik Carlsen were the only two on board the heavily listing ship as desperate attempts were made secure a towline. The events gripped the nation and each day I would go to Mr. Turner's and watch how the rescue attempts were going. In the afternoon of 10 January Carlsen and Dancy finally abandoned ship jumping off the ship's funnel, the 'Enterprise' was almost lying on its side by then, and less than an hour later, she finally slipped beneath the waves.

(Conspiracy theories still exist today that amongst the ship's varied lost cargo was a consignment of zirconium intended for America's developing nuclear programme. Kenneth Dancy died aged 88 on 3 August 2013).

'All Things Bright and Beautiful' – the words written in 1848 for children by Cecil F Alexander was set to a 17th century tune 'The 29 of May' by John Playford. I remember this Hymn in particular as it was during the choir singing practice of this children's classic at my primary school that

it was decided I was singing 'flat' and was told to leave the hall and return to my class. This instruction came from a lady, (can't recall her name, who was not a teacher but came into school to help with singing; like the nit nurse she only came into school now and again). Of course the 1950's was a time when inclusivity was not seen as particularly important. We were taught geography from a map of the world a quarter of which was coloured pink and belonged to us! You didn't build an empire being sentimental nor tolerate anyone out of tune in the school choir. Thankfully she didn't pick the school football team - Mr. Ley did!

Abide with Me - (Football's hymn) the lyrics were written by Henry F Lyte close to his death in 1847. He wrote several hymns including "*Praise my soul, the King of Heaven*". It is sung to the melody 'Eventide' composed by William H Monk in 1861.

It has been sung prior to the kick-off at the football's big day since 1927. I heard it for the first time in 1951 watching my first FA Cup Final at my Uncle Harry's on his 9 inch black & white television set along with half the men on his street. In the 1950's the FA Cup Final was special, it was the only football shown live on TV and always featured on the front page of the weeks' Radio Times.

Prior to the kick-off fans sang along from their Daily Express song sheets the community singing led by Arthur Cager on his podium in the centre circle resplendent in his white suit.

Nowadays in the world of the Premier League and the Champions League, for the top teams, the FA Cup seems something of a nuisance. In the 1950's no 'big' club played a "*weakened*" team, today some teams turn out a side consisting of fringe and Academy players, the kit man, and the bloke who had come to read the meter! To be in the 'The Final' was every players dream, and each final used to involve a host of different clubs. But since the Premiership the 28 Finals have featured either Arsenal, Chelsea, or Manchester United a total of 26 times – BORING!

First Saturday of May was FA Cup day, the special end to the season and then cricket could begin.

'Hark the Herald Angels Sing' – the words by Charles Wesley were written over 280 years ago when the opening line was "*Hark how the welkin rings!*" (A welkin meaning the sky/or heavens) and words adapted more to what we know today by another Methodist minister George Whitefield in 1758.

The music originally comes from a piece originally composed by Mendelssohn, and adapted by Waltham Abbey organist William H Cummings in 1855 to as it is now.

By the late 1950's I was at Grammar School – hated most of it, everything in fact except



sport, English and History. This carol must have been the favourite of the school music teacher Mr. Longstaff – known affectionately as "Wimpy" because he looked like the character in the 'Popeye' cartoons. It was always sung at the final assembly before we broke up for the Christmas holidays, and to be looked forward to. Nowadays, 'In the

bleak mid-winter' is my favourite carol.

Dave Yates, Ansdell

+++++ **Editors note:** It would be great to hear from readers which hymns have a special place in their hearts. Please let us know by e mail at johnclwson@icloud.com



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Faith in Families are feeling the struggle as our voluntary income has taken a huge hit due to Covid-19. Can you help bring a smile to faces of vulnerable children who need our help. Here is what one of our supporters had to say:

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Staff celebrated at first ever St Ralph Sherwin Trust virtual staff awards

The first ever St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust virtual awards event saw the tremendous work of staff from 25 schools celebrated.

More than 250 nominations were received from staff across the Trust for their peers and there were 33 finalists including 11 winners.

The event was held virtually after a planned event at Pride Park had to be cancelled because of Covid restrictions.

Sean McClafferty, Trust Chief Executive, hosted the event along with speaker David Wells and Trust Chair Jacqueline Rodden.

Mr McClafferty congratulated all of the staff involved.

He said: "This is an evening when we came together virtually and celebrated and recognised the tremendous work carried out by all our colleagues who work across the Trust.

"We had over 250 nominations, nominations for site managers, TAs, cleaners, catering staff, technicians, admin staff, teachers, head teachers governors, Trust central team staff, in fact probably for every role that is carried out within the Trust.

"Eleven of those colleagues were nominated



Tom Miller

to receive these awards. The task of selecting the 11 from 250 was carried out by our Trust Board and me –it was a really tough task simply because we have so many wonderful people working within the Trust –it was both humbling and a privilege to read through the nominations. Every one of the 250 deserve an award."

The event sponsor was Teaching Personnel and the Trust's two charities, Rainbows Hospice in Loughborough and Bluebell Wood children's hospice in Sheffield, were supported throughout the evening.

The 11 winners were:

Primary Teacher of the Year –
Miss Drayton (St Mary's Derby)



Reg Tabb

Achievement Award –
Mr Miller (Holy Rosary, Burton-on-Trent)

New Teacher of the Year –
Mrs O'Brien (St George's Derby)
Staff Member of the Year (academic and pastoral) –

Mrs Ball (St Thomas, Ilkeston)
Staff Member of the Year (academic support teams/central business services) –
Ms Raiseborough (English Martyrs', Long Eaton)

Team of the Year –
Creative and Performing Arts (Saint Benedict, Derby)
Teacher of the Year (secondary) –
Mrs Vause (Saint Benedict, Derby)



Fran Vause

Governance Award –
Reg Tabb (All Saints/St Margaret's, Glossop)

Leadership and Management (primary/secondary) –
Miss O'Leary (Blessed Robert Sutton, Burton-on-Trent)

Outstanding Contribution to Catholic Life –
Rachel Rose (Saint John Houghton, Ilkeston) Inspirational

Member of Staff –
Jacquie Boddey (St Joseph's, Derby)

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Melton Mowbray Gift Day Success

St. John the Baptist parish, Melton Mowbray, has been searching for alternative ways to raise funds, given that the present situation with coronavirus has meant that their usual Christmas Fair, and well-attended Wreath Festival, could not take place. The parish church, which is a Grade 2 listed building, is in need of alteration and re-decoration, so something had to be done. It was decided to try a Gift Day on 23 November. Parishioners were asked to make a monetary gift contribution to the parish to boost the much-needed funds. However, hopes for the event fell when lockdown number 2 was introduced, and the church was no longer open for communal worship. But parishioners rose to the occasion, and so far £1,586.60 has been donated – and more is still coming in!

Parish Administrator Mrs Jo Anderson said, "This is a wonderful result. Last year's Christmas Fair made less than £1,200, so this Gift Day has exceeded our expectations. We can't thank parishioners enough for their community spirit and their generosity, especially as so many people are struggling financially at present. Thank you all."

Bala @ Home 2020 Melton Mowbray supports CAFOD Pritchletts Sponsored Camp out



Homemade CAFOD hoodies

Every summer the Pritchard family (Dad – James, Mum – Sarah, Tabitha – 10, Noah – 7, and Fabian – 4) head to Wales for a fortnights Camping holiday at Bala Lake. This year however it was cancelled due to the pandemic. The 3 children, were understandably devastated, and so they decided to combine their camping holiday, and the summer challenge of raising money for CAFOD, set by their school – St. Francis Catholic primary in Melton Mowbray, by having a sponsored camp out in their back garden for 3 nights.

The children produced a poster, which was sent digitally to all parishioners of St. John's in Melton Mowbray, asking for donations via the CAFOD just giving link. After the initial realisation that a family of mice had taken residence in the family tent over the winter, the much smaller "old faithful" tent was used, which meant that Noah and Fabian slept together in one side of the tent, and Mum and Dad



Jumping for Joy

squashed into the other side of the tent for 1 night, and then decided they would take turns sleeping in the tent and in the house for the other nights. Tabitha had her very own tent, and even managed an extra 2 nights outside completely on her own.

The 4 days and 3 nights were filled with days splashing in the paddling pool, eating BBQ food, crafting, and playing traditional garden games. No electronics were allowed.

The Pritchard family were over whelmed by the support of Fr. Tom and the whole parish of St. John's, as well as their family, friends and neighbours. A goal of £100 was set by the children, but this soon raised to £250 and even that goal was smashed. A total of £310 was raised for CAFOD, and the donations link is still open <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/pritchlettscampout>