

# The Vine

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December 2018

Issue No. 354

Northampton Diocesan News

FREE Every Month

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Poppy**

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## Schools Mass 2018



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# News beyond Northampton

## Rome

The Vatican has announced that Albino Luciani – better known as Pope John Paul I – has moved forward on the path to sainthood, and can now officially be called “Venerable” by faithful around the world. Announced in a Nov. 9 communique from the Vatican, the Pope's decision to green light the cause was made the day before, during a Nov. 8 meeting with Cardinal Angelo Amato, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. With Francis' approval of his heroic virtue, “Papa Luciani,” who until now has held the title “Servant of God,” can be called “Venerable,” which is the step before beatification.

Born Oct. 17, 1912, in Italy's northern Veneto region, Albino Luciani was elected Pope Aug. 26, 1978, and took a double name after his two immediate predecessors, St. John XXIII and Bl. Paul VI. He sent shock waves around the world when he died unexpectedly just 33 days later, making his one of the shortest pontificates in the history of the Church.

The first Pope to be born in the 20th century, he is also the most recent Italian-born Pontiff and is often referred to as “the Smiling Pope”



by those who knew him or remember his election.

In 1958, Luciani was named Bishop of the Vittorio Veneto diocese by St. John XXIII, and was consecrated by the Pope himself in St. Peter's Basilica.

Luciani was among the bishops present from around the world for the opening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962, and he attended each of the four sessions before the Council's close in 1965.

In 1969 he was named Patriarch of Venice by Bl. Pope Paul VI, one of the few patriarchates in the Latin Church. The Archbishop of Venice is typically made a cardinal, and Luciani received his red hat from Paul VI in 1973.

## Jesolo



Although sand castles and sculptures usually conjure up images of hot summers on the beach, the Vatican will unveil a massive Nativity scene made entirely of sand during the cold Roman winter.

According to the Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, the Nativity scene displayed in St. Peter's Square will feature a 52-foot wide sand sculpture from Jesolo, an Italian seaside resort town roughly 40 miles

north of Venice.

The intricate sculpture, along with a 42-foot-tall red spruce tree donated by the Diocese of Concordia-Pordenone in the northern Italian region of Veneto, will be unveiled at the Vatican's annual tree lighting ceremony Dec. 7. Bas-relief sand sculptures, like the one that will be featured in St. Peter's Square, are a tradition in Jesolo which, since 1998, has been the home of an annual sand sculpture festival.

## Catholic Basics Course

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a sense of humour!

Launch and Part I: January 31 2019, 10am-3pm (arr. 9.30am for refreshments). NORES Centre, Holy Ghost Parish, 33 Westbourne Road, Luton, LU4 8JD. To book, contact admin@nores.org.uk or phone Jackie on 01582 723312.



### Advertisement for Director of Heritage Centre Nottingham, England

#### Overall purpose: Management and development of Heritage Centre

The Little Company of Mary (LCM) is an International Congregation of Religious women, founded by the Venerable Mary Potter in Nottingham, England in 1877. We invite applications for a Director for the Heritage Centre in Nottingham. The role is required to ensure the provision of a unique, innovative and interactive service that honours the legacy of Mary Potter and the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary. The centre opened in 2010, is home to the artefacts of the LCM and provides an interactive experience journeying with the Founder, Venerable Mary Potter. The centre depicts the life and spirituality of the founder as she began the LCM in Hyson Green, Nottingham and how the story continues to the present day. It provides space for individuals, local and international groups to meet with guides and avail of the experience.

The successful applicant will:

- Promote the life and vision of Mary Potter and the Mission and Spirituality of the LCM by working on projects and programmes that will assist the LCM to further develop the Centre.
- Be accountable for the day to day operations of the Heritage Centre and work with LCM Sisters on future programmes and opportunities.
- Ensure effective and efficient operation of the Heritage Centre, is responsible for the overall monitoring of planned maintenance, staff and resources inclusive of budgeting.
- Further develop the Heritage Centre by means of networking and promoting the Heritage Centre locally and internationally.

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**Method of application:** Initial enquires to the Province Leader to request a Position Description via e-mail at lcm.ef@btinternet.com or via the website at www.lcmsisters.org.uk

Applications close: 17 December 2018 at 5.00 pm

Interviews: Week commencing Monday 28 January 2019

## Getting into print

Send news reports, photos and other material to the editor, Fr. Paul Hardy, St. Edward's, Burchard Crescent, Shenley Church End, Milton Keynes MK5 6DX (vine01@btopenworld.com).

We promise to print your news as soon as we can find space for it. Material should be emailed whenever possible. If this cannot be done for digital pictures they should be sent to us on disc. Send photographs in jpg format, as separate attachments, and not embedded in Word documents. Urgent and dated items should reach us by the first Sunday of the month before publication.

A booklet of advice on writing news reports for The Vine is available on request.

Parental permission must be sought before photographs of children are sent for publication. While we accept unsolicited feature articles, we reserve the right to edit the text or not to publish. Letters for publication must include a name and address, which will be omitted on request.

The content of each issue is decided by the editor.

Views expressed in The Vine are not necessarily those of the editor or of the diocese. The publisher of The Vine deals with all advertising. To place an advert ring 01440-730399. For difficulties with distribution contact the editor.

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# Olney's Poppy Memorial

You probably remember the magnificent display of ceramic poppies at the Tower of London in 2014 that commemorated the centenary of the start of the First World War. It was very popular, particularly the way the flowers were arranged to flow, symbolising blood flowing from the 'weeping window'.

This display caught the imagination of a number of communities who decided to create something similar to commemorate the centenary of the end of this dreadful war. Knitting and craft projects were launched across the UK and the Commonwealth creating poppy displays

at churches, museums, libraries and in public spaces.

A church in Grimsby has 8,000 knitted poppies adorning the tower and libraries across Norfolk are hosting displays. A field of 62,000 knitted poppies has been created at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and a community in Calgary, Canada has decorated its church with over 7,500 knitted poppies.

The knitting group at Our Lady Help of Christians & St Lawrence Church in Olney has undertaken a number of charity knitting projects over the past year,

and we decided that we would like to create a poppy installation for our church, to commemorate those from the parish who gave their lives in the war. There are 328 names of servicemen (and they are all men) from World War 1 recorded on the war memorials in Olney and 18 villages in the parish served by our church; our poppies are in thanks for the sacrifice they made.

We agreed with Father Malcolm and Deacon Peter that the font would be an appropriate place to display the poppies, in the heart of the church. It is where Christian life begins, and the poppies represent those who died in order that others may continue to live in freedom, reflecting the cycle of life.

Our knitting group has 9 members, and other parishioners helped by making poppies for us- we are grateful for their help. We also thank Viv Young who helped us with the display, and made the 'skirt' on which they are placed. The display has over 200 poppies – we hope you enjoy it.

*Janet Goodland*



## The Flanders Poppy



The remembrance poppy was inspired by the World War I poem "In Flanders Fields". Its opening lines refer to the many poppies that were the first flowers to grow in the churned-up earth of soldiers' graves in Flanders, a region of Belgium.[2] It is written from the point of view of the dead soldiers and, in the last verse, they call on the living to continue the conflict.[3] The poem was written by Canadian physician, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, on 3 May 1915 after witnessing the death of his friend, a fellow soldier, the day before. The poem was first published on 8 December 1915 in the London-based magazine Punch.

In 1918, Moina Michael, who had taken leave from her professorship at the University of Georgia to be a volunteer worker for the American YMCA, was inspired by the poem and published a poem of her own called "We Shall Keep the Faith".[4] In tribute to Mc-

Crae's poem, she vowed to always wear a red poppy as a symbol of remembrance for those who fought and helped in the war.[2] At a November 1918 YMCA Overseas War Secretaries' conference, she appeared with a silk poppy pinned to her coat and distributed 25 more to those attending. She then campaigned to have the poppy adopted as a national symbol of remembrance. At a conference in 1920, the National American Legion adopted it as their official symbol of remembrance.[2] At this conference, Frenchwoman Anna E. Guérin[5] was inspired to introduce the artificial poppies commonly used today. In 1921 she sent her poppy sellers to London, where the symbol was adopted by Field Marshal Douglas Haig, a founder of the Royal British Legion. It was also adopted by veterans' groups in Canada, Australia and New Zealand.[2] James Fox notes that all of the countries who adopted the remembrance poppy were the "victors" of World War



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# Chesterton a Saint for our times?



*Before the Roman  
came to Rye  
or out to Severn  
strode,  
The rolling English  
drunkard  
made the rolling  
English road.  
A reeling road, a  
rolling road,  
that rambles round  
the shire,  
And after him the  
parson ran,  
the sexton and  
the squire;  
A merry road,  
a mazy road,  
and such as  
we did tread  
The night we went  
to Birmingham  
by way of Beachy  
Head.*



## G. K's life and times

Gilbert Keith Chesterton, KC\*SG (29 May 1874 – 14 June 1936), was an English writer, poet, philosopher, dramatist, journalist, orator, lay theologian, biographer, and literary and art critic. Chesterton is often referred to as the "prince of paradox". Time magazine has observed of his writing style: "Whenever possible Chesterton made his points with popular sayings, proverbs, allegories—first carefully turning them inside out."

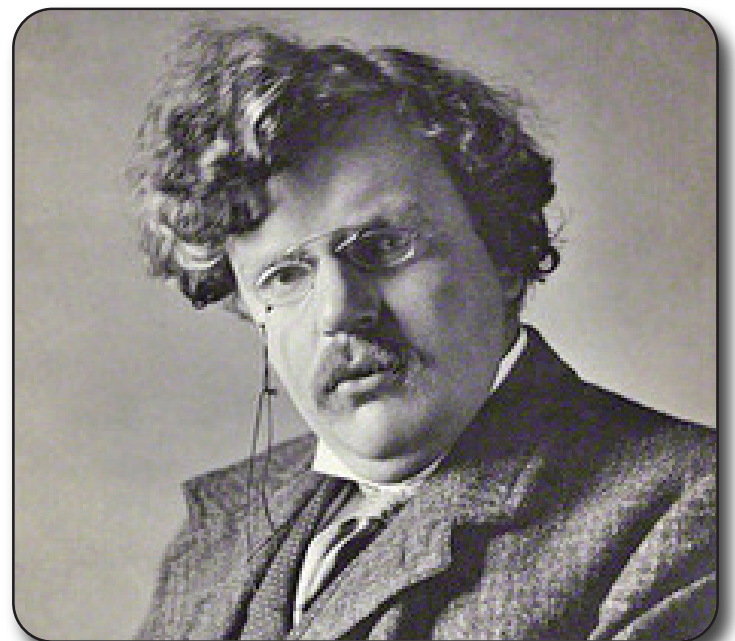
Chesterton is well known for his fictional priest-detective Father Brown, and for his reasoned apologetics. Even some of those who disagree with him have recognised the wide appeal of such works as Orthodoxy

and The Everlasting Man. Chesterton routinely referred to himself as an "orthodox" Christian, and came to identify this position more and more with Catholicism, eventually converting to Catholicism from High Church Anglicanism. George Bernard Shaw, his "friendly enemy", said of him, "He was a man of colossal genius." Biographers have identified him as a successor to such Victorian authors as Matthew Arnold, Thomas Carlyle, Cardinal John Henry Newman, and John Ruskin.

Chesterton died of congestive heart failure on the morning of 14 June 1936, at his home in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire. His last known

words were a greeting spoken to his wife. The homily at Chesterton's Requiem Mass in Westminster Cathedral, London, was delivered by Ronald Knox on 27 June 1936. Knox said, "All of this generation has grown up under Chesterton's influence so completely that we do not even know when we are thinking Chesterton." He is buried in Beaconsfield in the Catholic Cemetery. Chesterton's estate was probated at £28,389, approximately equivalent in 2012 terms to £1.3 million.

Near the end of Chesterton's life, Pope Pius XI invested him as Knight Commander with Star of the Papal Order of St. Gregory the Great.



# The basket of thanks is never full

These were the words with which Archbishop Odama from Gulu in Uganda finished his powerful talk at NORES in Holy Ghost Parish Centre, Luton on 11 October. An audience of 16 clergy and 15 volunteers/supporters came to hear him share his amazing experience. Jane Trott (CAFOD schools' volunteer) writes:

"The Archbishop had been invited to talk with clergy and volunteers from CAFOD and MISSIO in the Diocese. Bishop Peter welcomed him to the diocese. Archbishop Odama shared how the complementary and integrated approach of CAFOD and MISSIO have helped to develop his country and its people. He explained that:

"CAFOD is an open-hearted organisation who has always been standing alongside us, working for peace. They have a sense of solidarity with humanity especially during the bad times. CAFOD has stood by us to provide support when we needed it most". He then went on to say that: "MISSIO is more than sharing our faith; by helping us rebuild the churches damaged during the war, they are helping our Church to be there for people who have come back to Uganda to rebuild their lives. Our children can go to school again".

He thanked his brother priests, bishop and laity saying, "Thank you to all of you, for your sacrifice. You are keeping the heart of Jesus alive in your communities and ours." For many, the most compelling part of his talk were descriptions of his own upbringing and his work for peace in a country riven with strife and beset by economic injustice.

His father, although determinedly not baptised himself, taught his son vital lessons which brought the Archbishop to his work for peace. His father imbued in him a need to respect others, to treat everyone in the same way he treated his own family and to not cre-

ate enmity. He learned of service, love, compassion and equality. These principles, which are the fundamentals of social justice, drove the Archbishop to take physical risks in order to bring peace and justice to his country.

He gave the assembled visitors hair-raising accounts of going into the bush, alone, to face Jo Kony and other leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) with only his faith in God for protection. He went alone so as not to endanger anyone else! His work also included trying to get justice for refugees in Uganda. Over twenty years ago, Ugandans from the north of the country had to escape into neighbouring Sudan and live there for years as refugees. Archbishop Odama showed solidarity with the stateless by sleeping out of doors to raise the profile of the situation to the world.

Now the political situation is reversed, and Uganda is welcoming refugees from Southern Sudan. The Archbishop is still working relentlessly, demanding action from local leaders to put an end to this appalling situation.

The Archbishop quoted Pope St John-Paul whose view on giving was that we should "give to others even when we don't have enough". This was a fantastic message for our over consuming world, a message of true sharing and selfless donation.

Archbishop Odama showed us in one short hour how he lives out these principles, in a life trusting completely in God's love and protection and the power of prayer. He was insistent that he couldn't do any of this on his own and sent prayers and thanks to those who support him and his country. As he said, "the basket of thanks is never full."

To find out more about the work of CAFOD and Missio, please visit [cafod.org.uk](http://cafod.org.uk) and [missio.org.uk](http://missio.org.uk).



**Feast Day Mass of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
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# The Annual Diocesan



# in Schools Mass: 2018



It was a work of perfection. There wasn't a seat to spare in St. Mary's, Dunstable, on October 12. All the performers had been drilled to perfection. Even the young prima donnas who sang the responsorial psalm showed a skill beyond their years.

The readings told the story of the call of Samuel and the call of the apostle Matthew. Bishop Peter talked about the challenges of hearing God's call and having the courage to

answer it. He described a classic painting of the call of Matthew. Jesus is looking directly at Matthew. But Matthew, the tax collector, has his eyes only on the pile of his money on the table in front of him.

At the end of Mass Sixth Form students from Cardinal Newman school, Luton, presented the bishop with gifts from the schools of the diocese to mark his thirty years of priestly ministry.



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#### Christmas 2018 Schedule

**Mon Dec 10:**

Service of Reconciliation/Confessions @ OLG 7.30pm

**Sun Dec 16:**

Choral Concert @ St W 4.15pm

**Christmas Eve 24th Dec:**

Carols 4.30pm followed by Mass with  
children's activities @ OLG 5pm

Carols, followed by Midnight Mass @ St W 11.30pm

**Christmas Day 25th Dec:**

Mass @ St W 9.00am

Mass OLG @ 11am

**Jan 1:**

International Thanksgiving Mass @ OLG 10am

**O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us  
who have recourse to thee**

### Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary



you are invited to a  
**Rosary procession/gathering**  
To be celebrated on  
**Monday 10th December 2018**  
at the Angelus time of 6pm.

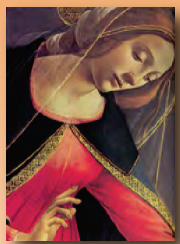
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# Our amazing volunteers

***"What are we, as a Church,  
going to do together?"***

In his video to the diocese last year, Bishop Peter first challenged us to change from asking "what is the Church going to do for me" to "what are we, as a Church, going to do together?" Our Year for Prayer and Vocation has been a rich time for exploring how we, as Church, move forwards, recognising that everyone has a part to play in our future. Across the diocese, thousands of people are involved in making church happen in our local communities, from the people we all recognise leading the music or reading at Mass, to those getting on quietly in the background, taking communion to the sick, cleaning the church or helping with the confirmation programme.

Driving around the diocese, I have the privilege of meeting lots of our volunteers and hearing their stories. Stacey and Kelsey, at Our Lady of Walsingham parish in Corby, help run the parish youth group. They do it because they want to give back, and because they're passionate about young people staying part of the church. Ged, from St Joseph's parish, Gerrards Cross, loves volunteering with Cafod because he's putting his faith into action, helping to make a real difference, and meeting new people. Dave, from Guardian Angels parish in Aylesbury, was inspired to

become a volunteer hospital chaplain after his wife recovered from a severe illness, and now takes communion in even on Christmas Day to help those that can't get to Mass. Joan, Holy Cross, Bedford, has helped with children's liturgy, first communion and confirmation programmes and now runs Alpha and Bible Timeline courses. Mattie, a young volunteer at St Anne's, Wendover, loves being part of the music group because he likes getting involved in the community and because it's a lot of fun.

People do lead busy lives these days, but we all make time for the things that are important to us. Getting involved in your parish

\*Helps you to meet new people, even if you've been going to the same parish for years.

\* Gives you a feeling of being at the heart of the parish

\* And helps you to make a real difference to people's lives

\* You can learn new skills which can help with working lives, even leading to a new career, eg helping with children, visiting the sick in hospital, book keeping or computer skills.

Going forward into the future, we can make such a difference by leaning in and getting involved. There are going to be new roles and new training for them. If you want to do more in your parish, speak to your parish priest, or ask around in the parish to see what jobs need doing. If you're struggling to get volunteers, a volunteering workshop for the parish or pastoral area can help with getting new people, keeping the ones you have, and dealing with tricky situations.

Pat Fuchter, from St Joseph's in Aylesbury, runs the homeless project for the parish, providing hot meals once a week. She loves the fact that the parish can make a difference for the poorest people in the town. How will you answer Bishop Peter's challenge: "what are we, as a Church, going to do together?"

For more information on volunteering, or to book a volunteering workshop, contact Avril on [avril@northampton.com](mailto:avril@northampton.com) or 07823 778 310.

**Avril Baigent**  
Pastoral Ministry Advisor  
Diocese of Northampton  
07823 788 310

# The Youth Synod

For 25 days in October, 267 Cardinals, Archbishops and bishops joined 36 young people and Pope Francis daily in the Vatican to discuss 'young people, the faith and vocational discernment'.

For four weeks the synod fathers, and young auditors focussed their attentions on the pre-synod document, 'Instrumentum Laboris'. The document is split into three parts; recognising, interpreting and choosing. Each of the first 3 weeks concentrated on each of these three parts. Monday to Wednesday in large group discussion, Thursday in small language groups and Friday sharing what was discussed in those groups. At the end of each week a document was produced and these documents went on to form the final document presented to Pope Francis on October 28th.

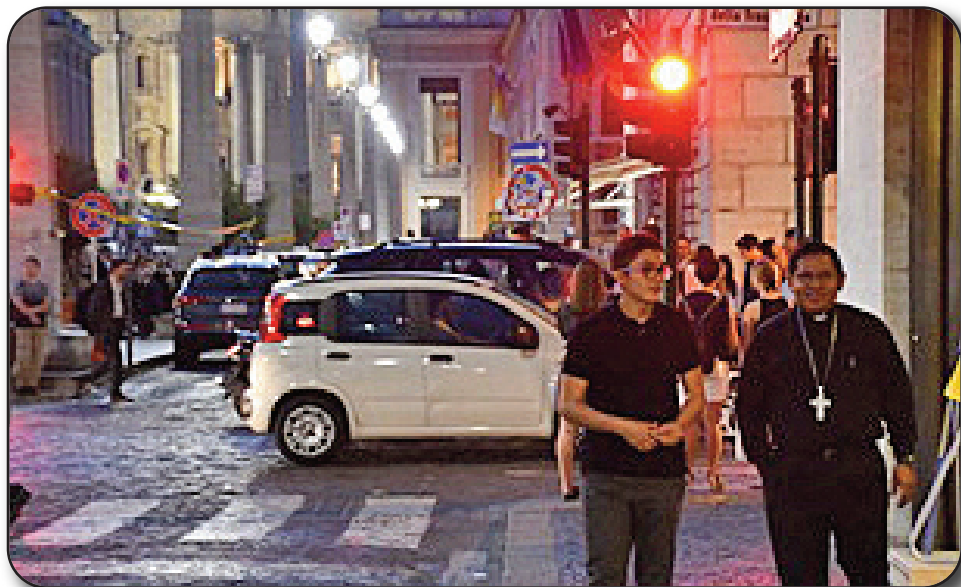
Everyone attached in any way to this synod said the same thing, this synod is different! Indeed it was. It was different because the young people were there – in fact not just there but fully a part of the process and decision making. It was a joy to watch and a joy to share in it.

There were many excellent interventions – short four minute inputs- from the synod fathers. However, it was the testimonies from the young auditors that really made an impact. The young people aged 21-30 yrs from all over the globe made their voices heard through their clapping and cheering of the synod fathers comments that they felt represented their own desires.

It was a pleasure to watch the development as the synod progressed. To witness Cardinals and Bishops walk, chat and drink coffee with young people of faith, to see the listening taking place in reality and the change that was occurring as this synod taught us all how to trust the will of God and allow the young to offer a glimpse of the future. We are encouraged from this synod to place the young in positions where they will not just influence decision making but where they will be the decision makers.

No subject was avoided as everything from gender, sexuality, the sex abuse scandal, martyrdom and much more was discussed. I have been asked many times "what difference will this synod make?" I can only say that it has changed me and I hope as I share more of my experiences of what I witnessed it will change us all! The passionate, authentic faith that we all desire was so visible in the young people and clergy I met in Rome. The desire from all for an open, prayerful church where the love of our Father is our driver and we recognise our own need for His mercy, young and old.

**Neil Roseman**



**Top: the synod hall**  
**Above**

**Joseph Tri. the youngest auditor at the synod, from Vietnam. He is interviewing Archbishop Comensoli of Melbourne.**  
**Below: Pope Francis greets the delegates**



Speaking on behalf of all adult Catholics, Pope Francis formally closed the Synod of Bishops by asking young people for forgiveness.

"Forgive us if often we have not listened to you; if, instead of opening our hearts, we have filled your ears. As Christ's church, we want to listen to you with love" because young people's lives are precious in God's eyes and "in our eyes, too," the pope said in his homily Oct. 28.

The Mass, celebrated in St. Peter's Basilica, closed a month-long synod on young people, faith and vocational discernment. The pope thanked the 300 synod members, experts, observers and ecumenical delegates for working in communion, with frankness and with the desire to serve God's people.

"May the Lord bless our steps, so that we can listen to young people, be their neighbors and bear witness before them to Jesus, the joy of our lives," he said in his homily.

**JOE WALSH TOURS**  
PILGRIMAGES 2019

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# Pagan traditions for Christmas

Every year, almost without thinking about it, we incorporate certain plant species into our Christmas celebrations. The most obvious is the Christmas tree, linked historically in England to Prince Albert – but its use in British homes goes back to at least 1761 when Charlotte wife of George III put up a tree at the royal court.

(It's probably worth noting here that the first artificial-brush Christmas tree was produced using the same machinery that was originally designed to produce toilet brushes.)

Three other plants are intimately associated with Christmas: holly, ivy and mistletoe – and in all cases their ecology is closely linked to their cultural uses.

Of all the trees that are in the wood Holly, like ivy and mistletoe, is a winter green and the bringing of green vegetation into the home is closely linked to rebirth both of spring and of Christ. It is the holly that most closely bears the crown – its spiny leaves and red berries link to Jesus' crown of thorns. But such a link does not explain why holly is linked to Christmas rather than Easter.

## The Holly and the Ivy



Holly was an important element in deer parks and old hunting estates – and the name holly still survives in modern place names such as Hollins, Holm Hodder, Hollyoaks and Hollywood – and were important for winter food. In the New Forest, in southern England, holly is still cut down as browse for the ponies.

The spiny dense canopy of holly also meant that it was useful as protection. It was sometimes planted next to saplings of valuable tree species to provide some protection from grazing animals and it is not unusual to see holly growing next to oaks and other trees, either from deliberate planting or a result of seeds being deposited by birds roosting on the branches above.

Holly has also been thought to protect the home – the holly you put around the door acting as flypaper for fairies, trapping any evil spirits who try to enter.

Holly and Ivy are often linked together at Christmas; this goes back much further, to the idea of the holly (male) and ivy (female) being burnt together at the pagan festival of Beltane.

Ivy, like holly, is an important evergreen edible plant species in UK woodland. One of only five woody climbers, like mistletoe it can form dense growths in canopies that can cause harm to the host.

Poinsettia is linked with both Christmas and romance. Ivy is unusual among these species in being associated with death and melancholy as well as rebirth.

## Mistletoe: fertility plant



European mistletoe *Viscum album* is a partial parasite; it draws some nutrition from the host tree but also makes its own energy through photosynthesis. It is unusual in being a parasitic species that was deliberately spread by humans as it was thought to encourage fruiting in orchard trees. Pliny believed that mistletoe seeds had to be eaten by birds to germinate, indeed the name mistletoe means dung on a stick.

Mistletoe is most often associated with love, romance, courtship and the snog at the Christmas party. Its early associations are rather more sexual and when

you look at its distinctive shape it is fairly easy to see why. Mistletoe has pairs of woody short stems coming off at right angles with two or more whitish ball-like berries at the junction of the stems. The berries when squashed secrete a white sticky liquid.

## Poinsettia Plants



Poinsettia plants are native to Central America, especially an area of southern Mexico known as 'Taxco del Alarcon' where they flower during the winter. The ancient Aztecs called them 'cuetlaxochitl'. The Aztecs had many uses for them including using the flowers (actually special types of leaves known as bracts rather than being flowers) to make a purple dye for clothes and cosmetics and the milky white sap was made into a medicine to treat fevers. (Today we call the salateix!)

The poinsettia was made widely known because of a man called Joel Roberts Poinsett (that's why we call them Poinsettia!). He was the first Ambassador from the USA to Mexico in 1825. Poinsett had some greenhouses on his plantations in South Carolina, and while visiting the Taxco area in 1828, he became very interested in the plants. He immediately sent some of the plants back to South Carolina, where he began growing the plants and sending them to friends and botanical gardens.

One of the friends he sent plants to was John Bartram of Philadelphia. At the first Philadelphia flower show, Robert

Buist, a plants-man from Pennsylvania saw the flower and he was probably the first person to have sold the poinsettias under their botanical, or latin name, name 'Euphorbia pulcherrima' (it means, 'the most beautiful Euphorbia'). They were first sold as cut flowers. It was only in the early 1900s that they were sold as whole plants for landscaping and pot plants. The Ecke family from Southern California were one of, if not, the first to sell them as whole plants and they're still the main producer of the plants in the USA. It is thought that they became known as Poinsettia in the mid 1830s when people found out who had first brought them to America from Mexico.

There is an old Mexican legend about how Poinsettias and Christmas come together, it goes like this:

There was once a poor Mexican girl called Pepita who had no present to give the the baby Jesus at the Christmas Eve Services. As Pepita walked to the chapel, sadly, her cousin Pedro tried to cheer her up.

'Pepita', he said 'I'm sure that even the smallest gift, given by someone who loves him will make Jesus Happy.'

Pepita didn't know what she could give, so she picked a small handful of weeds from the roadside and made them into a small bouquet. She felt embarrassed because she could only give this small present to Jesus. As she walked through the chapel to the altar, she remembered what Pedro had said. She began to feel better, knelt down and put the bouquet at the bottom of the nativity scene. Suddenly, the bouquet of weeds burst into bright red flowers, and everyone who saw them were sure they had seen a miracle. From that day on, the bright red flowers were known as the 'Flores de Noche Buena', or 'Flowers of the Holy Night'.

The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves are sometimes thought as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The red colored leaves symbolize the blood of Christ. The white leaves represent his purity.

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# The gift of life and laughter

When pupils at Sacred Heart Primary School in Luton organised a non uniform day for the Luton and Dunstable Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Alice Birmingham one of the pupils decided to donate her birthday money, all £25 of it, to this very worthy cause.

Pupils organised the event to say thank you for the care and treatment received by Evie Rose Shambrook, the daughter of one teachers at the school. Evie was born at 24 weeks in 2017 and weighed less than one pound at birth. She is one of the smallest surviving babies on record.

Evie's Mum said 'Evie is a miracle. We are very grateful for all the pupils and staff at Sacred Heart Primary who prayed for Evie and for the staff at Luton and Dunstable NICU who cared for her.'

Evie has now celebrated her first birthday and is full of life and laughter. Alice and all the pupils at Sacred Heart Primary were delighted when Evie visited the school with her Mum, Charlotte Shambrook, to collect a cheque for the £407 raised.



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*The staff and pupils would like to wish readers of the Vine a Happy and Holy Christmas*

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