



Walsingham
is coming

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Newman
marks 50

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Sister
Wendy RIP

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Gathering the great and the good



A lady who had been present at the Feast Day Mass for Our Lady of Guadalupe at the Shrine in Bedford on 12 December wrote the following day: 'I wanted to thank you for a beautiful evening for Our Lady of Guadalupe and a spiritually uplifting occasion for us all. The Feast Day Masses are always special, but the 2018 was exceptional because we were honoured to have His Excellency Archbishop Adams, Papal

Nuncio, as our Principal Celebrant. A congregation of some 500 filled the Shrine to capacity.

Among the special guests were Bishop Peter Doyle, Bishop Richard Atkinson, Anglican Bishop of Bedford, the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire Mr Julian Polhill, Supreme Grand Knight Bertie Grogan, his Deputy Joe Rodriguez, a number of Provincial Grand Knights and support-

ers from all over the country. A number of visiting priests concelebrated with Archbishop Adams. Director of Music Michael Moloney had written a beautiful new Mass setting and the choir was in fine voice to perform it.

The many Guardians of the Shrine from all over the country gathered in front of the altar to renew their promises to serve our Lady of Guadalupe in the coming

year.

In his homily Archbishop Adams reminded us that Our Lady always points us away from herself to her Divine Son, Jesus.

At the end of the Mass, a presentation of a picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe was made to Archbishop Adams.

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A reception was held at nearby St Frances Cabrini church hall; there was a queue stretching the length of the hall wanting to meet the Papal Nuncio. He had a few words for each one.

During the reception an announcement was made by Bertie Grogan concerning the partnership between the Knights of St Columba and SPUC in promoting a Rosary for Life in every parish in the country, for which cards will be distributed.

A happy hour or so was spent as old friends recognised each other and others met for the first time. Representatives from All Saints Travel in Swindon, who organise tours to Mexico to see the original Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, were on hand to advise.

Another visitor commented: "Just to be able to join in the celebrations was a Great, Great Grace from Almighty God and a Great Blessing from Our Lady" and many other positive comments were written in the Visitors' Book.

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News beyond Northampton

Michigan

Irving Houle and his family were parishioners at St. Joseph and St. Patrick Church in Escabana, a city of over 12,000 on Michigan's Upper Peninsula. In addition to his five children, he had seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildr

Irving Houle said he received his mission in visions from Jesus and Mary: to suffer the Passion every night to save sinners and to bring people back to confession and to the Eucharist. He began a healing ministry, often in churches after Mass. He would pray and place his hands on people's heads. His travels took him across Michigan, to South Dakota and, one time, to Fatima. He never took payment for the healings. Though the healings were often spiritual, rather than physical in nature, some people reported immediate physical cures as well. He prayed over one wheelchair-bound woman, a cancer patient given only four months to live. Five months later she came to him, walking, reporting that she was free of cancer. An eight-year-old boy suffering leukemia also reported healing after his prayers. Witnesses, including his wife Gail, said Houle first received the stigmata in 1993, at the age of 67.

Houle said he suffered the Passion and

had visions every night, with the pain beginning at 12:30 a.m. and lasting 35 minutes. He would then have visions until 2:30 or 3 a.m., he told Father Robert J. Fox in an interview. His wife Gail never witnessed this part of her husband's life, though several people including his brother did. She believed that her habit of falling asleep quickly was God's way of shielding her. In one May 1993 vision, the Virgin Mary told him: "My beloved Son: I come to you this night to tell you how much your prayers and suffering have meant to my Son and me. Your suffering has been long, my child. You have pleased my Son and me. We will be close to you. The graces have been given to you. Satan is trying to cause confusion among you. But I tell you, he will not succeed..."

Houle said he would feel intense pain, at times feeling as if he were being torn apart. During this time God would show him who and what he was suffering for, like civil wars, abortion, homelessness, murders, and abused women and children. He saw the people for whom he suffered, but not their names. He would say "it usually goes back to the sins of the flesh," according to the National Catholic Register blog post. Saunders said that all of Houle's suffering was "for the conversion of sinners."

Bishop Doerfler has appointed Dr. An-

drea Ambrosi, an expert from Rome, as postulator of Houle's cause. Ambrosi is involved in overseeing other canonization causes, including that of the American archbishop and television personality Ven. Fulton J. Sheen. At its June meeting, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will review the cause of Houle's canonization and give its opinion on whether it should move forward. The Congregation for the Causes of Saints will then review the case to determine if he led a life of heroic virtue. Should the congregation and the Pope approve, he will then be given the title "venerable."

He could be beatified following sufficient proof of one miracle, and canonized upon sufficient proof of another miracle. Father Fox was an observer of Houle's sufferings and estimated that Houle prayed over 200,000 people. The priest founded the Fatima Family Apostolate and retired near the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Hanceville, Alabama. In 2003, he hosted Houle on his EWTN radio show "Reclaiming Your Children for the Catholic Faith."

The Irving C. "Francis" Houle Association has been formed to promote Houle's canonization cause and to help raise funds for expenses, including for the work of Ambrosi and others. It currently has between 100 and 150 members.

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).

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

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The content of each issue is decided by the editor.

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Refugees are welcome

St Paul's Catholic School has signed up to become one of six schools in Milton Keynes to commit themselves to achieving Refugee Welcome Schools accreditation. Students made their pledge at the breakfast launch of the Refugee Welcome Schools initiative on Thursday 29th November, hosted by Grant Thornton LLP and Dentons LLP ULMEA.

This initiative promotes and supports a new standard for the awareness, welcome and action, which a school pledges to undertake in support of refugee and other new students in their school. During the event students Annie, Leo and Bevan spoke about why it is important that we welcome refugees into schools. Annie said: "We have some children in the school who can't speak English when they get here, so we have an EAL Department which helps them. This help means they feel less isolated and part of our community."

Students and teachers from St Paul's were

very moved by the testimonies of Syrian refugees who spoke about how their children had missed out on years of education because of war and how much they valued the warm welcome they had received since settling in Milton Keynes. They talked about some of the support which was valuable to them, such as assistance with the English language, and how students in class should have an active role in helping new students to cope.

The event was attended by 40 people from 18 institutions and was organised by Citizens:mk, in partnership with NASWUT. It was co-chaired by Kurshida Mirza and Hala Afify, members of the Citizens:mk Leadership Group.

Pictures show Annie, Leo and Bevan from St Paul's Catholic School speaking at the event, as well as the six students who attended from the school.



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Dancing for Ecuador



Eight months after St Patrick's Night and exactly one year after the Spanish Fiesta, the joint social committee of the parishes of St Columba's in Chesham and Immaculate Heart of Mary in Great Missenden, put together another successful themed social event, this time celebrating the Italian culture, its glorious gastronomic tradition, music and folklore.

A scrumptious 3-course meal comprising a selection of antipasti, home made lasagne and tiramisù was served to the 140 guests, who were welcomed into the main hall of Our Lady's School in Chesham Bois by the captivating tunes played by Paolo Arrigo on his accordion and a glass of Prosecco.

As if by magic the hall seemed to turn into an Italian Piazza with colourful tables adorned with small pots of herbs, Italian flags and tea-lights, ready for a lively summer festival.

Families with children as young as babies were part of the jolly crowd, singing 'Volare' and dancing together

when the Tarantella – a popular folkloric dance from Naples - was announced by the presenter. This family-oriented social event was promoted and supported by the two parishes and local school as a marvellous community building exercise.

'As well as having a good time' – says Fr Alessandro – 'we also raised over £4,700 for our ongoing charity focused on Ecuador, which is a great achievement and incentive to continue on this path'.

In fact, this event is part of a fundraising effort undertaken by the parishioners of St Columba's and Immaculate Heart of Mary under the leadership of their charismatic priest in charge, Fr Alessandro Renò, to bring a group of young Ecuadorian missionaries over to the UK at the end of June 2019, and involve them in every aspect of our community life in the South Bucks Pastoral area. But this is material for another article... watch this space!



Balancing Act

By Julia Beacroft

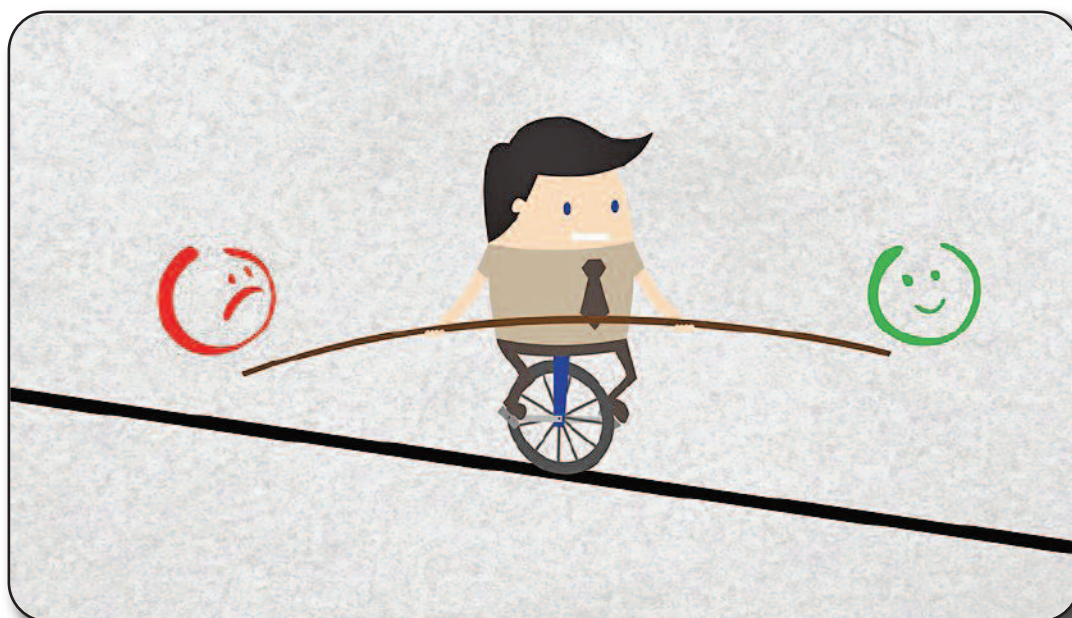
It seems incredible that not only are we now in the new year of 2019 but are already in the second month of it! However, in common with most people I have to admit that I find February somewhat dull, cold and dreary with little to recommend it. The celebration of the Presentation of the Lord at the beginning of the month offers a glimmer of light in these grey days, but after this we are left to await the commencement of the wonderful season of Lent.

Yet whilst consulting my diary for this month, I was yet again struck by the fact that my late fathers' birthday and the anniversary of my father-in-law's death share the same date. Significantly, one a cause for celebration and the other for remembrance and some sadness. But even in this simple occurrence there is evidence of perfect balance by the Almighty.

So often we hear of grandparents and great-grandparents dying just as the younger generation come into the world. Disappointments and missed opportunities can be followed by new beginnings, life changes and sustainable prospects. Trauma often precedes peace and contentment and of course love is the constant which holds the world in perfect balance. Even our notable church dates demonstrate a melding of sadness and happiness which are held in synchronicity and equilibrium. We celebrate the season of Christmas with great joy as our Lord and Saviour comes into the world, but only a short matter of weeks after this we are already in the penitential season of Lent and preparing for Easter. And of

course, during Easter itself we are plunged into gloom as we face the darkness of Good Friday but go on to rejoice at the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday.

'There is a time for every event under heaven-- A time to give birth and a time to die; A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted. A time to kill and a time to heal; A time to tear down and a time to build up. A time to weep and a time to laugh; A time to mourn and a time to dance. A time to throw stones and a time to gather stones; A time to embrace and a time to shun embracing. A time to search and a time to give up as lost; A time to keep and a time to throw away. A time to tear apart and a time to sew together; A time to be silent and a time to speak. A time



to love and a time to hate; A time for war and a time for peace.' (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

And so at this rather gloomy time of year we can be assured that we are enlightened by Jesus, the Light of the World, who holds us, our actions, our lives and all of creation in perfect balance.

Celebrating Mary

Youngsters at St. Edward's, Milton Keynes, marked the Day of the Immaculate Conception by performing a favourite Colombian tradition of lighting candles. Sara and her family taught them how it was done. The activity officially starts the Christmas season in Latin America. For every candle burned, you're supposed to think of the bad things you want to eliminate from your life and pray to replace them with good things. When the candle blows out, poof! Your bad habits go, too. It's a great way to mark Advent when we spiritually prepare ourselves for Jesus's birth and the new year in the Church.

The kids seemed to like it and joined in prayer and singing whilst we watched the candles burn. It made a lovely end to the evening.

O God, who by the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin prepared a worthy dwelling for your son, grant we pray that, as you preserved her from every stain by virtue of the death of your son, which you foresaw, so, through her intercession, we too may be cleansed and admitted to your presence. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ your son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.



Walsingham reaches Northampton

The statue of Our Lady of Walsingham begins the second year of its tour of England's Catholic cathedrals with a visit to Northampton from February 7-9. The tours are intended to help prepare Catholics spiritually for England's rededication as the Dowry of Mary in 2020.

Each visit will take place between a Thursday and a Sunday and involve a three-day triduum of prayer. There will be talks on the Dowry of Mary, an evening of Adoration, and a day set aside for visits from primary and secondary schools. The full schedule so far is available to view at dowrytour.org.uk.

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

the forgotten dead".

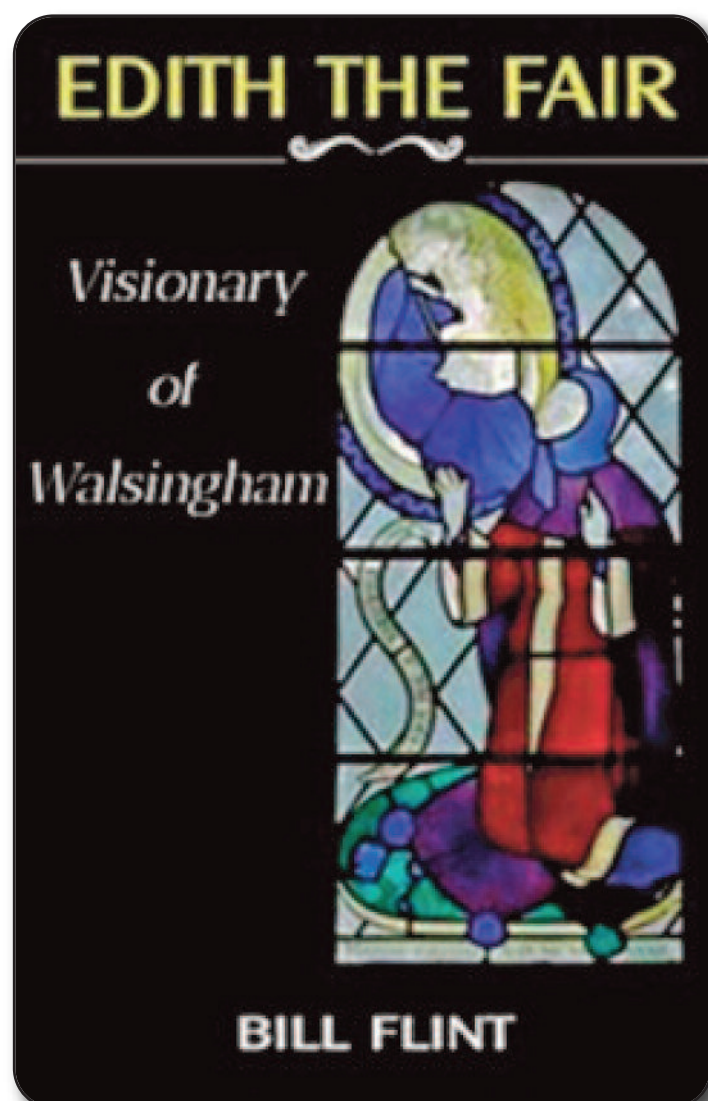
The term "Dowry of Mary" is thought to have originated in the 11th century. It means that England has been "set apart" for Mary. In 1350 a mendicant preacher remarked in a sermon that "it is commonly said that the land of England is the Virgin's dowry". An artwork known as the Wilton Diptych depicts the 14th-century King Richard II setting aside England as Mary's "dos", or donation or dowry.

The country was dedicated as the Dowry of Mary by Cardinal Bernard Griffin in 1948.

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



Was it Richeldis or Edith?



The origins of the shrine of Walsingham are lost in the mists of antiquity, it seems fair to observe. It is a very old shrine, that is beyond doubt: it was founded some time in the reign of Edward the Confessor, making it one of the few things in our country that predates the Norman Conquest. However, that word "founded" raises a few questions. How do you found a shrine? Nowadays, I believe, shrines are erected through a due canonical process; but back in the day, shrines, one has the feeling, emerged, and the myth of foundation may well postdate the actual start of the shrine by many decades if not centuries.

These thoughts occur to me as I have been reading *Edith the Fair, Visionary of Walsingham* (Gracewing) by the late Bill Flint, a book which represents the fruits of his investigation into the origins of Walsingham. Whereas the standard account says that the shrine was built following the vision of a lady called Richeldis, or Rychold, Mr Flint has identified this mysterious figure with none other than Edith the Fair, wife of King Harold, who fell in the Battle of Hastings.

The history of late Anglo-Saxon England is, to put it mildly, complex. Any historical narrative is dotted with names that seem to have come straight from the pages of Tolkien – a particular favourite of mine is Thorkell the Tall, who was Edith's father. He was a Dane, and his wife, Edith's mother, was a daughter of King Ethelred the Unready. So Edith was the granddaughter of an English King, and the daughter of a Danish father, at a time when the English throne was ricocheting back and forth between Danes and Anglo-Saxons. Just to make things even

more complicated, this Edith was not Edith the wife of Edward the Confessor, who was Harold's sister. Thus it is that the last two Queens of Anglo-Saxon England were called Edith. But herein lies a controversy. Edith the Fair (or Edith Swan Neck, as she is often called) is often described as Harold's mistress not his wife; it seems they were not married in the Church but "in the Danish manner", more *danico*, whatever that quite means. But Bill Flint is insistent that Edith was Harold's true wife, and that Walsingham was Harold's property, and Edith was the visionary who founded the shrine.

Edith did not have a very happy life. She had the melancholy task after the Battle of Hastings of identifying King Harold's body, which was so badly mauled that only she was able to identify it according, it is said, to certain marks on it that she alone knew. There were children from the union and they, like her, spent their lives exiled in Europe. Indeed, many of the Anglo-Saxons, dispossessed of their lands, did take to wandering through Europe, and many made their way to Constantinople where they formed the Varangian Guard serving the Emperor, who particularly prized such soldiers for their prowess and stature.

Bill Flint's book opens up a chapter of history that is little known, and that we are in danger of forgetting. Anglo-Saxon England, in its twilight, seems a fair country from this distance in time. We should not let its persistent memories be lost to us. And Edith the Fair's legacy is with us still in the shrine of Walsingham.

Alexander Lucie Smith

Newman's birthday year



The first major event celebrating the 50th anniversary of Cardinal Newman Catholic School, Luton took place on Wednesday 10th October when Bishop Peter joined us to celebrate his 14th consecutive Year 7 Welcome Mass. During this year we are giving thanks for the blessings received over these 50 years and students had reflected on the blessings in their own lives which were displayed behind the altar. The Year 7 students participated in Mass with great reverence and their singing was exceptional.

Headteacher Joe Richardson said, "It has been a pleasure to spend time in recent weeks celebrating the distinctive nature of our school and the service we have provided to the Catholic community of Luton over the last 50 years. Bishop Peter's message to our community that 'God wants them to be the best person they can be' was perfect! It is the message we have tried to share for the last 50 years and will continue to share for the next 50 years too!" Our new Year 7s were excited to see their former Headteachers and Year 6 teachers from across the St Alban Catholic Schools' Partnership, who in

turn were reassured to discover how well their children had settled into their new community in such a short period of time. We were delighted to be joined by priests and deacons from the Luton parishes too and all enjoyed a celebration lunch together after Mass.

Other dates for our year of 50th anniversary celebrations are as follows:-

Wednesday 13 March 2019
A concert at the Library Theatre
Luton in conjunction with the
Irish Forum
Saturday 4 May 2019
A social evening at the school for
former students and staff
Saturday 6 July 2019
A celebration Mass with Bishop
Peter followed by tours of the
school, light refreshments and
speeches

Further details are available via
the school website
www.cardinalnewmanschool.net
and on Facebook and Twitter

Jane Porter
School Chaplain



The Shrine of Saint Jude was founded in 1955 and is served by the Carmelites. The Shrine distributes a quarterly newsletter called Carmelite News, written by the Prior Provincial, Fr Kevin Alban. If you would like to receive a copy of our free newsletter, please send your contact details to: newsletter@stjudeshrine.org.uk, or call 01795 539 214.

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Key stage 5 prize winners

Present and former students from St Paul's Catholic School in Leadenhall gathered for an awards ceremony to celebrate their achievements at Key Stage 5. There were awards for individual subjects as well as for special efforts for year leader, chaplaincy support and outstanding work in an area of school life.

Notable winners included Kaelyn Doyle who won the category of 'contribution beyond the curriculum'. His nominees said that Kaelyn's maturity is to be commended and he shows great enthusiasm for events and opportunities outside of school. These include reading with younger pupils and serving as a rugby coach. He is also a Sixth Form ambassador and World Challenge participant.

Qualification Award for her fascinating EPQ project. She successfully induced lucid dreaming and applied the full scientific method to her work. Teachers said her experimental work was astonishing and her final essay looks and feels like a published piece of academic writing. In fact, a famous neuroscientist at Cambridge University, who specialises in sleep, said her finished article was "outstanding".

The Year Leader Awards for Year 12 and Year 13 went to Mercy Anifowose and Sara De Almeida. Both girls won their awards for being excellent role models to other pupils and for displaying the ethos of the school at all times.

Omideyi who is a criminal barrister and a choir director. Anu delivered an inspiring motivational speech.

Miss Fiona Nodwell, Head of Sixth Form, said: "It was wonderful to be able to acknowledge the achievements of our students in this way - we're proud of all our nominees and winners. We were pleased to catch up with a number of our former students who attended and to learn about the next phase of their lives at university or in new careers."

Picture shows students attending St Paul's KS5 Awards with Mrs Jo-Anne Hoarty (centre) and Ms Anu Omideyi (extreme right).

Emily Sturgess won the Extended Project Guest speaker at the evening was Anu



Eternal rest

Held annually, the six-province mass for deceased brothers of the association is a significant day in the Catenian Calendar. The mass celebrated by Bishop John Wilson, assisted by two Deacons, themselves Catenians, Gordon Nunn a member of Ealing Circle and Tony Barter of Mid Herts Circle was witnessed by a packed congregation of Catenians, wives and family members.

The six provinces are those surrounding London in the South East and comprise forty percent of the Catenian membership in Great Britain.

This year's mass and lunch was organised by Province 14, which has circles in Luton, Milton Keynes, Bedford, Mid Hertfordshire, Westminster, London Charterhouse, London North West, London Northern Heights, North London, Southgate, Highgate, Bishop Stortford, and Broxbourne. The six-province mass for deceased Catenians is held in November each year at Westminster Cathedral

Picture: Bishop John Wilson with Catenian Tony Barter to his right and Gordon Nunn.

Dennis Cooper



Celebrating the Presentation

On February 2 the Church celebrates the feast of the Presentation of the Lord which occurs forty days after the birth of Jesus and is also known as Candlemas day, since the blessing and procession of candles is included in today's liturgy. Many Catholics practice the tradition of keeping out the Nativity creche or other Christmas decorations until this feast.



On February 2nd a quaint tradition unfolds, known well to schoolchildren and adults alike. The fate of Spring hangs in the balance as a burrowing animal looks for its shadow. But where did this tradition come from? See the link below for an article that explains this tradition.

The Readings

Simeon and Anna were two venerable elderly people dedicated to prayer and fasting and so their strong religious spirit rendered them able to recognize the Messiah. In this sense we can see in the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple an extension of the 'Pro Orantibus Day' (For those who pray) that is celebrated on the feast of the Presentation of Mary (21 November). On this day, the Church demonstrates its gratitude to all those in the community that dedicate themselves in a privileged way to prayer, to those who have a particular religious vocation to the contemplative life. In the figure of the venerable Simeon, Jesus' presentation in the temple, also reminds us that prayer and contemplation are not just a waste of time or an obstacle to charity. On the contrary, time could not be better spent than in prayer as true Christian charity is a consequence of a solid interior life. Only those who pray and offer penance, like Simeon and Anna, are open to the breath of the Spirit. They know how to recognize the Lord in the circumstances in which He manifests Himself because they possess an ample interior vision, and they have learned how to love with the heart of the One whose very name is Charity.

At the end of the Gospel Simeon's prophecy of Mary's sufferings is emphasized. Pope John Paul II taught that, 'Simeon's words seem like a second Annunciation to Mary, for they tell her of the actual historical situation in which the Son is to accomplish his mission, namely, in misunderstanding and sorrow.' (Redemptoris Mater, n16) The archangel's announcement was a fount of incredible joy because it pertained to Jesus' messianic royalty and the supernatural character of His virginal conception. The announcement of the elderly in the temple instead spoke of the Lord's work of redemption that He would complete associating Himself through suffering to His Mother. Therefore, there is a strong Marian dimension to this feast and so in the Liturgical Calendar of the Extraordinary Form it is called the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This refers to the other aspect of the presentation that consists of the ritual pu-

rification of Jewish women after they had given birth. In Mary's case this purification was not necessary, but it indicates the renewal of her total offering of herself to God for the accomplishment of His Divine Plan.

Simeon's prophecy also announces that Christ will be 'a sign of contradiction'. St Cyril of Alexandria, in one of his homilies, interpreted the words 'sign of contradiction' like a noble cross, as St Paul wrote to the Corinthians 'a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles' (1 Cor 1:23) [...] It is a sign of contradiction in the sense that those who loose appear as foolish while in those who recognize its power [the cross] reveals salvation and life' (c.f PG 77, 1044-1049).

Excerpted from Congregation for the Clergy

Presentation of the Lord
The feast was first observed in the Eastern Church as "The Encounter." In the sixth century, it began to be observed in the West: in Rome with a more penitential character and in Gaul (France) with solemn blessings and processions of candles, popularly known as "Candlemas." The Presentation of the Lord concludes the celebration of the Nativity and with the offerings of the Virgin Mother and the prophecy of Simeon, the events now point toward Easter.

"In obedience to the Old Law, the Lord Jesus, the first-born, was presented in the Temple by his Blessed Mother and his foster father. This is another 'epiphany' celebration insofar as the Christ Child is revealed as the Messiah through the canticle and words of Simeon and the testimony of Anna the prophetess. Christ is the light of the nations, hence the blessing and procession of candles on this day. In the Middle Ages this feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or 'Candlemas,' was of great importance.

"The specific liturgy of this Candlemas feast, the blessing of candles, is not as widely celebrated as it should be, except of course whenever February 2 falls on a Sunday and thus takes precedence. There are two ways of celebrating the ceremony, either the Procession, which begins at a 'gathering place' outside the church, or the Solemn Entrance, celebrated within the church."

*From Ceremonies of the
Liturgical Year*

Until 1969, the ancient feast of the Presentation of Our Lord, which is of Oriental origin, was known in the West as the feast of the Purification of Our Lady, and closed the Christmas Cycle, forty days after the Lord's birth. This feast has for long been associated with many popular devotional exercises. The faithful:

gladly participate in the processions commemorating the Lord's entry into the Temple in Jerusalem and His encounter with God,

whose house He had come to for the first time, and then with Simeon and Anna. Such processions, which in the West had taken the place of licentious pagan events, always had a penitential character, and were later identified with the blessing of candles which were carried in procession in honor of Christ, 'the light to enlighten the Gentiles' (Lk 2, 32); are sensitive to the actions of the Blessed Virgin in presenting her Son in the Temple, and to her submission to the Law of Moses (Lk 12, 1-8) in the rite of purification; popular piety sees in the rite of purification the humility of Our Lady and hence, 2 February has long been regarded as a feast for those in humble service.

Popular piety is sensitive to the providential and mysterious event that is the conception and birth of new life. Christian mothers can easily identify with the maternity of Our Lady, the most pure Mother of the Head of the mystical Body — notwithstanding the notable differences in the Virgin's unique conception and birth. The feast of 2 February still retains a popular character. It is necessary, however, that such should reflect the true Christian significance of the feast. It would not be proper for popular piety in its celebration of this feast to overlook its Christological significance and concentrate exclusively on its Marian aspects. The fact that this feast should be 'considered [...] a joint memorial of Son and Mother' would not support such an inversion. The candles kept by the faithful in their homes should be seen as a sign of Christ 'the light of the world' and an expression of faith.

Excerpted from Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy

Things to Do:

Ask your parish priest to bless the candles that you will be using on your home altar this year.

Have a family Candlemas procession, found in the prayer links.

Read Luke 2:22-35, the account of the presentation including the Canticle of Simeon.

Meditate on the constant fiat of Our Lady of Sorrows, who embraced the will of God even as Simeon predicted that a susee what the connection between Candlemas and Groundhog Day.

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Please hold in your prayers the "Year of Missio" which is being celebrated in our Catholic schools! Each school will receive monthly resources to observe this special year and to help us celebrate our 175th anniversary of foundation.

To invite someone from Missio to your school or parish please contact the Diocesan Director:

Fr Wayne Coughlin
parishpriestbedford@gmail.com
(01234) 352607

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Pastoral Letter for Holy Family Sunday

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I hope that Christmas at home and in the parish is going really well. During this holy season, we celebrate the birth of Jesus, God becoming man, so that we might share in the eternal life of God.

As the days and weeks of our lives fly by, we are invited to open our hearts to that mystery. How much richer our lives can become when we walk in the company of Jesus. Our thoughts, our words and our actions have a deeper meaning when they are our response to God's love for us.

During this Christmas time, we hear how Jesus embraces our own human experience, and walks with us, in his birth, and as a member of the Holy Family. In our own uncertain times, it is good to remember how Mary and Joseph fled with Jesus from the threat of persecution, and how they lived as refugees in Egypt before returning home.

And Mary and Joseph had to wrestle with the mystery of their Son. Like all parents, they agonise when he goes missing on their journey back from Jerusalem. When they find him in the temple, they must have been perplexed, if not hurt, by what Jesus said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know I must be busy with my Father's affairs?" Yet he goes down with them to Nazareth and lives under their authority, while Mary stores up all that had happened in her heart.

As we listen to the story of the Holy Fam-



ily, our thoughts turn naturally to our own families. All of us have our ups and downs, our failures and our sufferings, our successes and our tragedies. No family is perfect. As I have mentioned before, I have an alcoholic brother and a lovely niece who got married in a hotel and whose two boys have not been baptised. Yes, there are so many influences that take those we love and cherish away from Christ and his Church.

What must we do? We must continue to love and cherish one another within our families. Embrace them whatever their

situation. And in our parishes we must find ways constantly to pray for and celebrate Sacramental Marriage with the renewal of vows and special anniversary blessings. Week by week, we should try to support one another in our families, those recently arrived in the parish, young families, one parent families, couples coping with children leaving home, and couples in old age, and those who are widowed, and those who are separated and divorced. And do not forget those of us who are single, living out our precious vocation.

Is the parish involved in preparing couples for marriage, encouraging them in the early years of marriage and continuing to support them? Is there a care for parishioners whose marriages have broken down and those in second marriages? This should not be another job for "Father" but, with his blessing, perhaps there is some small initiative you could take, to build up marriage ministry in the parish. To support us, we now have a Diocesan Marriage and Family Life Commission and a Project Worker.

From the beginning the union of one man and one woman has been God's plan. It is the school of love and faith. It is the building block of our society and, at a time when there is so much marriage breakdown, marriage ministry is a priority. There are times when we are dismissed as irrelevant. But what could be more relevant than a community supporting marriage sensitively and with compassion?

A new year lies ahead. Let us place ourselves in the heart of the Holy Family that, whatever the year brings, we may seek to be like them, trusting in God and trusting in one another. That call to trust and live with integrity is a big "ask" at a time when there is little trust and everyone claims their own truth. Through the intercession of Mary and Joseph, may we become more like Jesus, growing in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and with one another.

Happy New Year!

+ **Pete: Bishop of Northampton**

National honour for Thornton technician

Dr Rachael Connall, Thornton College's Science Technician, has received a prestigious Salters National Award for Science Technicians in recognition of her skills, experience, personality and, not least, her dedication to the school.

These annual awards are run by the Salters' Institute with its aim being to highlight the importance of technicians in enabling high quality practical work in science in schools and colleges, with the emphasis on promoting and supporting the professional learning and upskilling of technician teams.

In Thornton's case, Dr Connall is the only Science Technician at the school and, as a consequence, makes a huge and invaluable contribution to science at the college. This contribution was recognised by last year's Year 13 cohort presenting Dr Connall with an 'Unsung Hero' Award at the end of term.

In support of her nomination, Chris George, Head of Science at Thornton

College, commented: "Having taught for 23 years as a Chemistry teacher I have worked with many excellent Science technicians, but none share Rachael's passion for what happens in the classroom, setting her apart from all I have worked with before."

"Rachael thoroughly deserves this award."

Dr Connall has a first class honours degree in Biological sciences with molecular genetics, awarded by Warwick University. She stayed at Warwick to do a PhD in Molecular Microbiology, before becoming a research scientist for nine years, working for both the Medical Research Council and University College London.

During this time she had two children and decided to become a stay at home mum for four years. When her youngest child started school she joined Thornton.



Obituary

Sister Wendy Beckett (Nun and Art Historian)

February 25, 1930–December 26, 2018

On the feast of St. Stephen, a much loved Catholic Nun died. Sister Wendy Beckett became an art critic and TV presenter during the 1990's. Sister Wendy wrote numerous books, and Pope John Paul II commended her for giving a positive image to the church. Sister Wendy's obituary in The Times said St. Thomas á Becket; the 12C saint and martyr, and one of the patrons of the Northampton Diocese; was a distant ancestor of this popular nun.

Sister Wendy Beckett never owned a television, although she presented TV programmes including Sister Wendy's Odyssey, Sister Wendy's Grand Tour and Sister Wendy's Story of Painting. Sister Wendy was a TV natural and she was at ease speaking spontaneously without a script.

Sister Wendy became hugely popular on television. People became fascinated by her, especially when they learnt she was a hermit living in a mobile home in the grounds of a Carmelite Monastery in Norfolk. As a hermit, Sister Wendy prayed for many hours a day.

I had occasional correspondence with Sister Wendy, and just before Christmas I received my last Christmas card from her. The card was unusual; a painting by an English artist; Mary Newcomb, who painted the Norfolk countryside. The painting was called Sun and Rain for the Lamb (1975). The picture was of a tiny black lamb, almost invisible, hidden in its mothers fleece. Inside the Christmas card was a beautiful commentary

from Sister Wendy :-

It was to bring this glory down to earth that the little lamb renounced His royal state in the heavens and came to live among us, as unprotected as any human baby ever was. From now until His final sacrifice and He moves back into His natural brightness, He will not only bring the glory of the Son to earth, but will take us into it. We do not just see, but in Jesus we live the Glory of God.

Sister Wendy Beckett's life and words demonstrated her deep love of God to so many people in the world. A holy lady who believed, "Jesus is the meaning of Christmas. He is its joy."

**Mary Newcomb,
Sun and Rain for the Lamb**

Sister Wendy Beckett
Born in South Africa
Moved o Edinburgh
Joined Sisters of Notre Dame
First class Oxford degree in
English Literature
Taught for 17 years in South Africa
Her health broke
She became a hermit at Quidenham
Made her home in a caravan
Translated medieval Latin manuscripts
Became involved in fine arts



CROSSWORD ... FOR THOSE EAGER WORD BUFFS AMONG OUR READERSHIP



You can use both sets of clues to solve the puzzle: the solutions are the same. So, if you want to try the CRYPTIC puzzle, for instance, but are unsure, use the QUICK clues to help you work out the solution. Similarly, if you try the QUICK clues, use the CRYPTIC clues to help you prove the solution

CRYPTIC Across

- 1 Face crisis of mistaken identity in ritualistic killings... (10)
- 6 ...horse transport is to the fore at this point in the massacre (7)
- 7 Correct final word at the onset of death (5)
- 9 Reciprocate – redact reference to duke (5)
- 10 Shriek as I opened up old shell (7)
- 11 They have branches for senior church officers (6)
- 13 Friar found among Dachau's tinsmiths (6)
- 16 Every single politician in the first place is to blame (7)
- 18 Local network in the old days for French white (5)
- 20 Irish town's particular court being defaced... (5)
- 21 ...it's the Welsh place to hold the drunk over (7)
- 22 Blessings of 60s music – duet is not in tune (10)

CRYPTIC Down

- 1 Modern country, once a biblical one, since has fallen away (5)
- 2 Monks, collectively, have writer's block? (7)
- 3 Goats one leads on times with flying things swarming about (6)
- 4 Type of savings account, one belonging to Esau (5)
- 5 Ivory source pub cancelled for good – that's cool (7)
- 6 This is me, article broke,... (9)
- 8 ...in nomadic order? (9)
- 12 Mozart, he wrote with (the odd note at the foot of) a flipping little book (2,5)
- 14 The Archers stripped of raison'd'être in

defiant stance? (7)

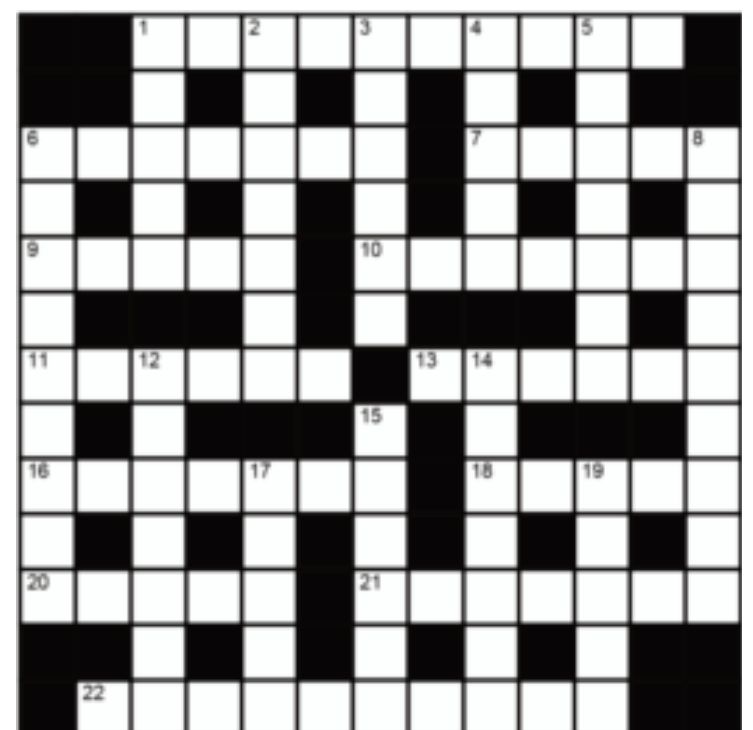
- 15 Isle's lord, the third-lowest ranked among magnates (6)
- 17 What the precursor to 4's savings account set-up means? (5)
- 19 Beetle duck's in with admits it and confesses (5)

QUICK Across

- 1 Acts of killing (an animal or person) in order to propitiate a deity (10)
- 6 Savage and excessive killing of many people (7)
- 7 Make better (5)
- 9 Change chemically (5)
- 10 Yell (7)
- 11 Officials in the early church; officers of various Protestant churches (6)
- 13 English adjectival variant of Augustinian (6)
- 16 Charge a politician with an offence committed while in office (7)
- 18 Mel -----, lead voice for Warner Bros animation, known best for Bugs Bunny (5)
- 20 Main town of Co Clare, Ireland (5)
- 21 Place in Mid Wales, its name redolent of Stevenage or Harlow, perhaps (7)
- 22 Eight sayings of Jesus at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount (10)

QUICK Down

- 1 Roman province of the NT, capital Antioch on the Orontes (5)
- 2 Ecclesiastical assembly of the monks in a monastery (7)
- 3 Types of mountain goat (6)
- 4 Son of Abraham (5)
- 5 Svelte; chic (7)
- 6 White Friar... (9)



- 8 ...Black Friar (9)
- 12 Lorenzo -- -----, Mozart's librettist for The Marriage of Figaro, etc (2,5)
- 14 Not vanquished or overcome; free (7)
- 15 Isle of Kent, but no longer an island (6)
- 17 Source of strength: holding (5)
- 19 Pledges; acknowledges (5)

SOLUTION

14 Unbowed, 15 Thanet, 17 Asset, 19 Avows.
4 Isaac, 5 Elegant, 6 Carmelite, 8 Dominican, 12 Da Ponte, 21 Newtown, 22 Beattitudes. Down: 1 Syria, 2 Chapter, 3 Ibexes, 11 Elders, 13 Austin, 16 Impeach, 18 Bianc, 20 Ennis, Across: 1 Sacrifices, 6 Carnage, 7 Amend, 9 React, 10 Exclaim,

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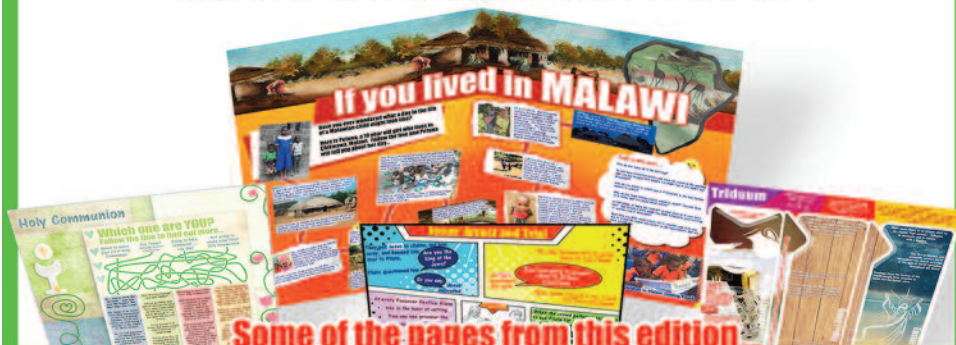
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School Improvement Director

Required for September 2019

Salary Band (L25-28)

The Board of Directors of St Luke Academies Trust are seeking to appoint a School Improvement Director with a proven record of accomplishment in leadership and school improvement and a commitment to the Catholic ethos of the Trust.

St Luke Academies Trust is a Multi-Academy Trust consisting of four schools in Kettering and Corby: St Thomas More, St Edward's, Our Lady of Walsingham and St Brendan's Catholic Primary Schools. The Trust has worked hard over its first four years to develop and embed effective systems, foster a shared vision, and establish effective collaboration between schools and leaders. Many successes have been achieved and The Trust is now poised to take its next step forward. Our new School Improvement Director will need to work collaboratively with our Board, the diocese and schools to continue our journey of improvement and the next phase of our development.

Our School Improvement Director must possess strong interpersonal and communication skills, sound judgement and problem solving skills, be able to lead from the front and also to motivate and develop effective teams. The successful candidate will demonstrate a clear vision for education and be passionate and knowledgeable about teaching and learning. The successful candidate will need to demonstrate the capacity to lead and maintain positive relationships with a range of stakeholders in a growing organisation. There will be interim responsibility for financial oversight and the Accounting Officer role, so knowledge of effective financial leadership and management would also be desirable.

This role is an exciting opportunity for an experienced leader, backed by a supportive Board and an enthusiastic team, to make a real difference to the lives of young people.

For an informal discussion about the role and any queries you may have, please telephone Nicola Vaughan on 01536 203251 or 07794919533 or email Nicola.Vaughan@st-luke-at.co.uk

Please return your completed application form by email to Eamonn McAuley, Chair of the Board, at Eamonn.McAuley@st-luke-at.co.uk

The directors welcome any candidates who would like to visit the Trust and meet the staff. Should you wish to arrange an appointment, please call the Trust office on 01536 203251.

Application close date: Monday 11th February 2019 at 12.00pm

Interview Date: Week beginning 25th February 2019

St Luke Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. All appointments are subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS check.