



Northampton Diocesan News

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for Fr. Joe
Williams**

Bishop Peter's
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Lest We Forget



On January 9th, students at Newman Sixth Form had a presentation from Holocaust survivor, Joan Salter, as part of a visit organised by the Holocaust Educational Trust (HET).

Joan's presentation was followed by a question and answer session to enable students to better understand the nature of the Holocaust and to explore its lessons in more depth. The visit is part of the Holocaust Educational Trust's extensive all

year round Outreach Programme, which is available to schools across the UK.

Peter Fahy, Head of RE at Cardinal Newman, said: "It was a great privilege for our students to hear about the ultimate effect of prejudice, racist ideologies and the savage inhumanity that resulted, from an eyewitness, a survivor of the Holocaust who could speak first hand of what she experienced."

"She brought to life the horrific human cost for those who were

born Jewish in 1940s Europe as well as for those people who either dared to help the persecuted or tried to challenge the Nazi occupiers and their collaborators.

"Joan's message emphasised the key underpinning of our 6th form Religious Education programme that all people are created equal and that each of us has a duty to use our God-given gifts and talents for the well-being of all people, as well as a responsibility to challenge prejudice where

ever we encounter it." Head of Newman Sixth, Gail Hickman commented:

"It is a privilege for us to welcome Joan Salter to our Sixth Form and her testimony will remain a powerful reminder of the horrors so many experienced. We are grateful to Mr Fahy and the Holocaust Educational Trust for co-ordinating the visit and we hope that by hearing Joan's testimony, it will encourage our students to learn from the lessons of the

Holocaust and make a positive difference in their own lives."

The Holocaust Educational Trust educates and engages students from across the UK, from all communities about the Holocaust and there can be no better way than through the first-hand testimony of a survivor.

Picture: Joan Salter with Cardinal Newman school sixth form students and staff.

**Shrine of the
Miraculous Relic Image of
Our Lady of Guadalupe,
Bedford
Require:
A SHRINE
COORDINATOR
Voluntary position
A minimum one year post**



Following a successful 2012-2013 programme, our current Shrine Coordinator is to pursue his vocation and so, from 1 April 2014, we require a suitable candidate to succeed him. The position which is Voluntary would be suitable for a GAP year student, someone recently retired or an unemployed person wishing to gain work experience. The successful applicant would be needed to provide organisation and management of the Shrine-based devotional programme, centred on Bedford, and particularly the travelling pilgrimage programme which sees the Miraculous Relic Image visit Cathedrals parish churches and Catholic institutions throughout England & Wales.

Computer literacy skills essential.

For an information pack and an application form, please contact

Dr Sue Sarsfield,
74 Quenby Way, Bromham, Bedford MK43 8QP
01234 409739 or
sue.sarsfield@ntlworld.com
Closing date for applications: 18 March 2014

Plymouth

Plymouth Cathedral was packed for the Ordination Mass of Bishop Mark O'Toole on January 28. There were 38 bishops in attendance as well as Cardinal Cormac, the Most Rev Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster and the Archbishop of Southwark, the Most Rev Peter Smith. Her Majesty the Queen was represented by the Lord Lieutenant of Devon, Sir Eric Dancer, KCVO, CBE, KSJ, JP and distinguished guests included the Lord Mayor of Plymouth, Lord and Lady Clifford and members of the Weld family. The Holy Father was represented by the Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain, His Excellency Archbishop Antonio Mennini who formally introduced the new bishop to his flock. In his sermon Cardinal Cormac said that Bishop Mark O'Toole would be the kind of bishop Pope Francis spoke of in his address to Papal Nuncios about the human and spiritual qualities needed in bishops. The Holy Father (in June 2013) said that candidates should be pastors who are close to the people "gentle, patient and merciful, animated by inner poverty, the freedom of the Lord and also by simplicity and austerity of life." At the end of the Ordination Mass the new bishop said, "There are many in our society who search for truth, beauty and goodness, who need to know the touch of God's mercy and the love of Jesus." He said



that we must reach out to them in our own families and communities, adding: "This is our mission and its task; Jesus entrusts to us all. So let us begin to walk together." Bishop O'Toole now has the oversight of a diocese extending from the Isles of Scilly to Bournemouth. It includes all of Devon and Cornwall and most of Dorset being the greater part of the South West of England with an estimated Catholic population in excess of 58,000.

Twickenham

St Mary's University College, Twickenham has been awarded full university title by the Privy Council. This means that it will officially change its name to St Mary's University, Twickenham. Dr Arthur Naylor, Interim Principal, said: "These are exciting times for St Mary's and the granting of University title will facilitate its development both at home and abroad." St Mary's Chair to the Board of Governors Bishop Richard Moth said: "This is excellent news for St Mary's and recognises all that the University offers to students and staff alike." The news follows the announcement that St Mary's Board of Governors has appointed Francis Campbell as Principal. He will join the University in April 2014.

Rome

Move over Superman, it's time for Superpope. In the same week that he became the first pontiff to be featured on the cover of Rolling Stone magazine, Pope Francis has appeared in cartoon form on a building near the Vatican, his right fist clenched ahead of him in classic Superman style. He is carrying

a black briefcase bearing the word *valores*, Spanish for values, containing a scarf bearing the blue and red colours of his favourite Argentinian football team, San Lorenzo. The artwork, which has been pasted to the wall, is signed Maupal 2014.



Getting into print

Send news reports, photos and other material to the news editor, Mrs Margaret Busby, 1 Bewcastle Close, Bedford, MK41 8BQ: e-mail: vine02@globalnet.co.uk We promise to print your news as soon as we can find space for it.

Material should be e-mailed 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 minors are sent for publication.

Abruzzo



A reliquary containing the blood of Blessed John Paul II was stolen from a church in Italy on January 26. The reliquary, along with a crucifix, was found missing after a break-in at the little church in San Pietro della Lenca, in the mountains of the Abruzzo region.

Nothing else was taken from the church, and a caretaker suggested that the thieves may plan to seek ransom for the relic. The blood, shed by Pope John Paul II when he was shot in an assassination attempt in 1981, was saved by his private secretary,

Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz. The Reuters news service reports that Cardinal Dziwisz gave a vial of blood to the church in Abruzzo "as a token of the love [the late Pontiff] had felt for the mountainous region

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 by request.

The content of each issue is decided by the editor, Fr. Paul Hardy, email: vine01@bopenworld.com Views expressed in The Vine are not necessarily those of the editors or of the Diocese. The publisher of The Vine, Bellcourt, deals with advertising. Those wishing to place advertisements should telephone 01440 730399. Difficulties with distribution should be referred to Mrs Busby.



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The Union of Catholic Mothers' Rosary Rally this year was special because it is the year of our Centenary – yes, the UCM has been going for 100 years.

Our day at Great Billing commenced with Holy Mass but this year Bishop Peter celebrated with us.

After Mass we had coffee and a special celebration cake was enjoyed by all.

It was then time for our guest speaker, Edna Hunneysett, to reduce us all to tears with her account of the impact that mental illness can have on a family.

After lunch, there was adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Then it was time for our Rosary and the beautiful reflections written by Agnes Milne. The really moving experience was made even more poignant by the music played by Teresa Brown on viola and Brigid Hodgkinson on violin.

Benediction followed with Fr Damian who led us in the Divine Praises and gave us all a special blessing.

Petitions were written and collected for presentation at future Masses at Great Billing.

A rousing rendition of Our Lady of Walsingham ended our day.

Pictures: Bishop Peter and the cake. Right: Fr Damian cuts the cake.



Union of Catholic Mothers Centenary day



Corby school extension launched

Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Primary School, in Corby, has officially opened brand new facilities. The new £1.8 million development was opened by Rt. Rev. Peter Doyle, Bishop of Northampton and Canon Michael Griffiths on 10th January. Many governors, parents and staff attended the event at the school, which has recently been announced as the top performing primary school in Corby.

The scheme includes a new 'Little Learners' nursery building, with a range of play and learning spaces, sensory rooms, two external play areas and a wildlife garden. In addition, the arrival entrance to the school and external learning areas have been upgraded with new paving, parking, lighting, signage and fencing.

New classrooms have been created to cater for the rising student numbers, with new laptop computers, tablets and interactive whiteboards. The scheme has also included a complete refit of all the toilet and hall areas within the entire school and nursery, along with new staff, parent and community facilities.

Acting Headteacher, Rachael Byrne, said, "As

our school is continually growing in pupil numbers it is brilliant that we now have the facilities to cater for these children. The improvement to the buildings, as well as the ICT technology, that we have invested in will really help to improve and develop the way that we teach our children both now and into the future. We would like to thank everyone who was involved in the project, as it has made our school an even brighter and vibrant place to learn."

Tom Lyons, Partner at GSSArchitecture and Diocesan Architect said: "The developments at the School have created a new nursery that has a range of exciting and flexible learning spaces. The significant investment in Our Lady's represents a real vote of confidence in what is a very popular and successful school. With an existing reputation for being a very happy, friendly environment, these developments have now created modern, flexible school buildings and site, with state-of-the-art learning spaces and IT provision."

Jennifer Spencer



Heythrop College
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of the University of London



PASTORAL MINISTRY OPEN LEARNING SESSIONS

Open Learning Sessions are stand-alone units, open to all members of the public and will be of particular interest to those engaged in clergy and parish roles.

PROGRAMME FOR 2014

Saturday 22 March 2014, 10:15am – 4:00pm
WORKING AND PRAYING WITH ICONS IN A PASTORAL CONTEXT
Dr Joseph Gabor

Tuesday 6 May 2014, 5:00pm – 9:00pm
HEARING AND PREACHING THE WORD:
THE POWER OF THE HOMILY AS DIALOGUE
Dr Dominic Robinson SJ, Dr Con Foley & Dr Duncan McPherson

Saturday 17 May 2014, 10:15am – 4:00pm
ADULT FAITH FORMATION IN THE PARISH
Dr Dominic Robinson SJ

A **Certificate of Attendance** will be issued at the end of each session.
The fee for each session is £50.

To **register** for any of the **Open Learning Sessions** please contact the Conference Office on **020 7795 4163** or at **campus-services@heythrop.ac.uk**
www.heythrop.ac.uk/open-learning

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Outstanding pastoral and fraternal care

Bishop Peter's homily at the Requiem Mass for Fr. Joe Williams



Dear brothers and sisters, Four days after the burial of his friend, Jesus arrives at Lazarus' home in the village of Bethany. You can almost sense the anguish and turmoil and grief as Lazarus' sister, Martha, seems to remonstrate with Jesus. "If you had been here, my brother would not have died." For most of us, it was four days after Father Joseph disappeared that we learnt of his death. The concern and helplessness that we had been feeling was replaced by anguish, turmoil and grief at the news that he had been found dead while on a simple shopping trip. The shock of that news and the loss of one of our younger priests are profound and have reverberated in the hearts of everyone of us.

First of all, I want to express our heartfelt condolences to his family, to his brothers, Alban and Philip, here with us and, through them, to his parents and the family in and around Torquay from where Father Joseph hails. Then, I want us all to hear the words with which Jesus responded to Martha in the Gospel, "Your brother will rise again I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies, he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." That is our faith. That is our hope. That is our comfort. That is the basis for living life to the full in the spirit of Jesus. That is the answer for a bishop who asks the Lord why he has taken one of his younger priests. As the author of the Book of Wisdom writes, "People look on, uncomprehending; it does not enter their heads, that grace and mercy await the chosen of the Lord, and protection awaits his holy ones."

Of course, that hope does not inhibit the sadness that can overwhelm us and that I have seen in the many cards and emails sent to me by friends of Father Joseph and by parishioners in the parishes where he served both as a student and a priest especially here in St. Martin de Porres Parish, and by the new Cardinal

Elect, Archbishop Vincent Nichols, and the Apostolic Nuncio. It is a sadness shared with me by Father Joseph's brother priests both in the Diocese and further afield. Dear brothers, it is wonderful to see so many of you concelebrating this Mass. When the media reported Father Joseph's death, most prominent was the photograph of him vested and standing in front of this altar smiling shyly. At the centre of the priest's mission of sanctifying in the power of Christ is the celebration of Mass when the priest's ministry perfects the spiritual sacrifice of his people by uniting it to Christ's sacrifice which is offered sacramentally through the priest's hands. In the Rite of Ordination, the Bishop exhorts us "to know what we are doing and imitate the mystery we celebrate. In the memorial of Christ's death and resurrection we must make every effort to die to sin and to walk in the new life of Christ."

The Mass was central to the life and ministry of Father Joseph. He was a good preacher, preparing his homilies for weekday Masses as well as for Sundays. Surrounding the Eucharist he encouraged parish devotions. How poignant it was for me to bless the newly commissioned statue of Mary, Mother of God on New Year's Day. And he was conscientious in fulfilling his priestly duties. As we heard from the letter to the Romans, "The life and death of each one of us has its influence on others." That was certainly true of Father Joseph who was described by someone whose father he cared for in hospital as "the gentle, kind priest who followed Jesus dressed in black with the smart, white collar!"

Father Joseph attributed his priestly vocation to the example of one of his parish priests in his home parish of St. Mary Torquay. Why did he come to our Diocese? He completed his tertiary education in the south of the Diocese in Slough. That led to him being accepted as a student for the Diocese. After studies at Allen Hall

Seminary in Chelsea, he was ordained priest in the Cathedral in Northampton on 1 July 2000. He served as an assistant priest in Burnham and Kettering and as administrator of the parish in Biggleswade before becoming Parish Priest firstly at Our Lady of Lourdes, Milton Keynes and then here in St. Martin's two years ago. He was also the Diocesan Representative with *Missio*, the Church's foremost mission support charity raising awareness and funds for its missionary and pastoral work worldwide.

Another email I received spoke of Father Joseph's "outstanding pastoral and fraternal care, rendered in love, warmth, compassion and humour." To which were added these telling words, "tinged greatly by God's endowment of physical pain and suffering." I know that parishioners where he served, the hospital chaplaincy teams here in the L & D and in Milton Keynes, and neighbouring priests were very supportive of him in times of sickness. So, we give thanks for Father Joseph Williams and for his priestly ministry. We ask God to forgive his sins and to have mercy on his soul.

Before he died, Father Joseph enjoyed celebrating the feast of Christmas in the parish. He enjoyed Christmas Lunch with fellow priests and lunch the following day with friends and a brother priest. In the midst of our sadness and loss, he would want us to focus on the light of the birth of Jesus, the light of faith displayed by this parish community and by the Luton Pastoral Area at the Masses celebrated since his death. This what Father Joseph would have prayed in one of the Christmas Prefaces: "For through Christ the holy exchange that restores our life has shone forth today in splendour: when our frailty is assumed by your Word not only does human mortality receive unending honour but by this wondrous union we, too, are made eternal." Yes, this is our faith; this is our hope; this is our comfort.

The Year of Consecrated Life

At a press conference in Rome on January 31, Vatican officials outlined plans for the Year of Consecrated Life, which Pope Francis has declared for 2015.

The special year, which was announced by Pope Francis in December at a meeting with superior generals of male religious orders, was an answer to suggestions made by many religious superiors, said Cardinal Joao Braz de Aviz, the prefect of the Congregation for Religious. The year marks the 50th anniversary of the publication of the Vatican II decree on religious life, *Perfectae Caritatis*.

The Church recognizes that we are experiencing a "difficult and delicate" time in religious life, Cardinal Braz de Aviz said. The Year of Consecrated Life is designed to help religious face the future with confidence, he said. The cardinal encouraged members of religious orders to rediscover the original charisms of their communities, as set forth in their founding. Archbishop Jose Rodriguez Carballo, the secretary of the Congregation for Religious, mentioned some of the Vatican's plans for the special year, which will begin in October 2014. The solemn inauguration of the year will be marked by a Eucharistic celebration in St. Peter's basilica, with Pope Francis likely to preside, in November. That same month will see a plenary assembly of the Congregation for Religious.

During the year that follows, the Vatican will host meetings for young religious and novice and for spiritual directors, and an international conference on religious life. The year will conclude with another major ceremony at the Vatican, probably on November 21, 2015: the 50th anniversary of *Perfectae Caritatis*. Archbishop Carballo expressed the hope that before the end of the Year of Consecrated Life, Pope Francis would publish a new apostolic constitution on the topic, updating *Sponsa Christi*, which was released by Pope Pius XII in 1950.

Your next deadline: February 28

Festival Food From SVP

The Beaconsfield SVP held a Christmas lunch in St Teresa's Parish centre in December. Over seventy guests attended.



Apocalypse Revealed

St Teresa's, Beaconsfield, is running a series of Lenten Talks entitled 'Apocalypse Revealed' in the new Parish Centre (behind Waitrose in the New Town).

The talks are at 8.00pm on the three consecutive Tuesday evenings of: March 11th, 18th and 25th.

Fr David Sanders OP comes to share his findings, and what the Book of the Apocalypse means for us today. For many years a member of the Divinity Faculty of Cambridge University he is now teaching at Blackfriars Hall in Oxford. He has recently researched and written on this final book of the New Testament.

Highly recommended. No preparation necessary. Each talk is independent, so if you cannot come to all, come when you can. refreshments available. All welcome.



Parish Supports Funeral Director

The parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi, Shefford turned out in large numbers to support a member of their congregation who has just opened a new Funeral Directors.

Peter Cremin and his son Joseph have formed Benedict Funeral Directors Ltd.

To mark the open-

ing of this business Peter asked Canon Bennie Noonan if he would celebrate Mass at Benedict Funeral Directors Chapel of Rest in Arlesey, Bedfordshire.

During the Mass Canon Bennie said: 'I've been going in and out of Funeral Directors premises all

of my ordained life but this is the first time I've ever been invited to celebrate Mass in one'.

So many people turned up that not everyone could get into the Chapel of Rest, they were literally standing in the corridor. After the Mass Canon Bennie blessed

the rest of the premises.

Peter Cremin said: 'Since we have opened this business the support from my friends and fellow parishioners at St. Francis has been wonderful. However they all keep saying the same thing to me: I can have their custom, but hopefully not too soon'.



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Wednesday 2 April 2014

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Induction and Development

The SVP ran an Induction and Development Course for members in November in the St. Teresa's Parish Centre, Beaconsfield.

The Course was led by Philip Burrows and Steve Gill. It was well attended with members from St Joseph's Gerrards Cross, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Great Missenden, St Mary's,

Dunstable, St Aidan's, Little Chalfont, St Alban's, Winslow, St. Joseph's, Aylesbury, St. Teresa's, Princes Risborough, St. Teresa's, Beaconsfield, St Augustine's, Datchet, St. Dunstan's, Bourne End, St. Wulstan's, High Wycombe, Holy Family, Langley and St. Ethelbert's, Slough.



Pictures: Above, Philip Burrows. Below, Steve Gill



On the World Day for Consecrated Life, Pope Francis highlighted the great contribution that nuns bring to the Church. "What would happen", he asked, "if there were no nuns? No nuns in hospitals, in missions, in charitable institutions, in schools... Can you even imagine a Church without nuns...? No it is unthinkable!".



Holy Cross Holy Feast

Holy Cross Bedford SVP held their Christmas lunch at the Parish Centre on Saturday 11th January.

All the elderly in the parish who are visited or helped throughout the year by conference members were invited, amounting to thirty people.

Members were delighted to welcome Fr.

Patrick and District President John Flanagan who were able to join them. The event has been very popular over the past four years and the SVP hope to continue to host it in the future.

Everyone enjoyed the occasion and was very appreciative of the opportunity to come together and enjoy a full Christmas lunch.

Catenian Care for hospice



Keech Hospice Care is a charity which provides specialist care for children and adults with life-threatening conditions. Vital support is also offered to the families of patients.

Keech charity shops are located in Milton Keynes, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire and are generally run by volunteers.

The President of Milton Keynes Circle, Tony Ying, chose

Keech Hospice as his charity and at the Christmas Ladies and Clergy dinner at the Swan Revived Hotel, Newport Pagnell, the generous sum of £175 was raised.

Pictured is Tony

Ying, presenting the cheque to Amy Opalinski, manager of Keech shop in Newport Pagnell, with assistant manager Gayna Deacon on the right.



Wanted

The Diocesan Archives recently received a request from the British Library "Legal Deposit Office" for back copies of the Vine between 2007 and the end of 2013. While our Archive does now hold a complete set of at least one of each issue for that period, we do not have any spare copies of the following issues to enable us to send one to the British Library,

which is entitled to receive a copy of any newspaper published in the UK. Does any reader out there happen to have spare copies of the issues for January and September 2007, and March, June, August and September 2009, which they could send to Bishop's House for the attention of the Archivist ? who would be MOST grateful...

Old Girls' Tribute

Mary March joined the Northampton Notre Dame Association and Musical Society (fondly known as the 'Old Girls') after leaving school aged 16.

A very loyal member of the Association she later took on the role of Secretary, little realising that this would last for nearly twenty-five years.

To acknowledge her work Monsignor Tony McDermott, the

Association's Chaplain, presented Mary with a Papal Blessing at the Christmas Social. Arriving home, her husband Frank said: "I knew you would come home with flowers, but I didn't imagine there would be a 'thank-you' from the Pope as well!

The members of the Northampton Association are most grateful to Mary for her devoted years of service and look forward to continue



An Evening with G.K. Chesterton

'Chesterton and his Message to Our Times' takes place on Saturday, March 29th, the 140th anniversary of Chesterton's birth.

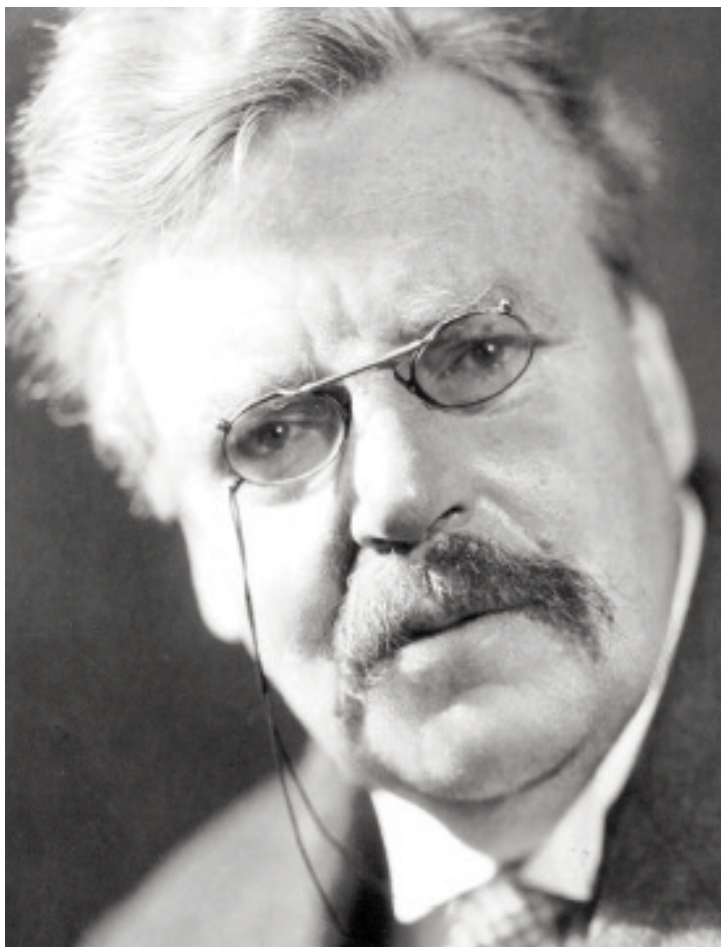
The venue is Borlase Hall, St Teresa's Parish Centre, Warwick Road, Beaconsfield.

Top notch speakers, including the Chairman of the American Chesterton Society, will focus, in this year of interest in his proposed beatification, on his message to our time.

The programme runs from 9.15am to 17pm. It is open to all, but booking is recommended.

Contact Martin Thompson for details and tickets 01582 521778 or 01582 575314.

Or chester-tin@thechilterns@ntl-world.com



Top Trainers



At St Thomas More Teaching School, as part of their Community Sports Leaders Award, this year's Sports Leaders Group has been busy undertaking courses and helping to set up, organise and run a variety of activities.

On 13th November all the Lower schools in the Bedford and Kempston School Sports Partnership came up to St Thomas More where they took part in a multi skills sports event. The purpose of the day was to help improve and develop the children's multi skills. The day was overseen and run entirely by our Sports Leaders. They did a fantastic job and all the children had a fun day.

On the 27th November, the group then completed an Emergency First Aid Course. In it they covered Mouth to Mouth Resuscitation, CPR, bandaging and much more. They were all successful and can now use their qualification to help run children's activities in and out of school. Well done to all in the group!

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Memory Lane

In 1913, Father Thomas Walker was transferred from Ipswich, where he had gained a reputation as a talented choral musician, to take charge of the Wolverton mission.

During his time there he developed the Mass station at Bletchley / Fenny Stratford begun by Fr Garnett, by providing an upper room at 44 Church Street for Mass, saving the thirty four Catholics the journey to Wolverton on Sundays.

In 1921 he was asked to go to High Wycombe, which had responsibility for the expanding suburban town of Beaconsfield, until a resident priest could be provided. He helped open a temporary church building there in 1927 and then prepared G K Chesterton for his first communion.

He became acquainted with the Catholics at Piggots and when priest at Gorleston he invited Eric Gill, who had designed the stations of the Cross for Westminster Cathedral, to help design the new



Artist Eric Gill

church.

It was cruciform in shape with a stone altar in the centre and a striking wooden cross above it. In one corner was placed a fresco of Christ carrying the Cross.

Father Walker served the North Sea town throughout the bombings of the Second World War when the old Church was destroyed. But stress led to his retirement in 1945. He died peacefully in 1949.

One Hundred Not Out

St Mary's Catholic Primary School in Aston le Walls is celebrating 100 years of the school.

Everyday a class finds out something new or does a new activity. They are making a book containing a wide range of facts and figures all based on 100 from Usain Bolt winning the 100 metres, through remembering the Senghendydd mining disaster, to making a collage of 100 fingers and writing a story in 100 words.

St Mary's already supports the Northampton Hope Centre - a day centre for the homeless and disadvantaged. The children thought it very appropriate to collect 100 cans

of food for the homeless especially at this time of year.

Every day the Hope Centre supports up to 100 homeless and socially disadvantaged people. These people need help for many reasons, some have alcohol and drug problems, others have suffered family breakdowns and have nowhere to turn, some are elderly or have mental health issues and are unable to cope, some sleep on the streets and most have been homeless at some time in their lives. The Hope Centre also tries to help people to 'move on' with their lives through a programme of education, training and development.

Song for a Saint

Local songwriter Cyril Curran has written a song for 'Dear Pope John Paul'.

He wrote it soon after the Pope's death and trusts that his storyline will be complete when the Pope is canonised.

Chorus:

Pope John Paul we all love you
You stood by your people all those years.
You're on a journey up to heaven
With millions of prayers and heartbreak tears.
He travelled the world to meet all the people
A mission of peace preaching and teaching
His word it is truth the folk they all love him

He won through to hearts of all the youth.

Twenty seven years of love and devotion
A Pope full of greatness for all the world to see
United in prayer from Nation to Nation
You are in our hearts eternally

Dear Pope John Paul we all will miss you
A saint in up in heaven a saint of the people
A smile so divine the blessings he gave us
To him we pray, in him we put our trust

Dear Pope John Paul.

CAFOD Reflection

CAFOD is holding a Day of Reflection on Saturday 15 March from 11am to 3.30 pm (coffee/tea from 10.30) at St Teresa's Parish Centre, 40 Warwick Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks HP9 2PL.

The speaker will be Brian Purfield from Mount Street Jesuit Centre.

It will be an opportunity to

come together to pray and reflect
Please bring your own packed lunch.

If transport is a problem please contact the CAFOD office for help.

To book:
northampton@cafod.co.uk Tel:
01604785254

A Busy Advent

The children and staff of St Margaret of Scotland Catholic Primary School in Luton have been very busy in our Advent term.

In October we held a special Harvest Assembly led by one of our Year 6 classes, 6 St Francis. We were joined by parents and the rest of the school for a truly fantastic assembly teaching us all about the importance of Harvest. This year we chose

to support The Luton Foodbank with our donations for the harvest appeal and we were truly overwhelmed by the generosity of our families.

In November we celebrated the Feast Day of our Patron St Margaret of Scotland. Sr. Clare gave a very informative assembly telling us all about the impressive life St Margaret led and of her generosity to the poor and children of Scotland. In November we also launched Operation Christmas Child in partnership with the Samaritans Purse. We were once again astounded by the generosity of our families and this year we collected enough items to fill seventy seven boxes, the most our school has ever collected.

In December we invited all our



Mrs Cassidy

families into school to work with their children making a felt stocking and decorating a handmade shortbread biscuit. The sessions concluded with the children singing carols and telling the Christmas Story. This was a lovely event to end our Advent Term and one that we all thoroughly enjoyed.

We sadly lost Mrs Cassidy our Headteacher in December 2013. Our school choir sang Voice of the Spirit at her Requiem Mass and the Children, Parents, Staff and Governors have been remembering Mrs Cassidy on our Memory Wall and in our Memorial Book. We know that Mrs Cassidy was really proud of all the things that the school had been doing. RIP Mrs Cassidy.



Obituary: Deacon John Thompson

Deacon Henry John Thompson died on the 18th December 2013. Known locally as Deacon John, he was born in Kings Langley in 1927 to a high Anglican mother and a father whom he described as a happy go lucky agnostic. One of the high points of his life however was to see his father received into the Catholic Church at age 85!

He was a convinced Christian from childhood but with a deep suspicion of Catholicism as a result of the 'Whig' history he had imbibed at school.

He wrote "to this day when I hear the word 'Jesuit the word 'seditious' immediately springs to mind. Years later after becoming a Catholic when I read Edmund Campion's 'Brag' I was moved to tears at the injustice that I had unwittingly done him and other blessed martyrs of the Society of Jesus".

He said he was forced to undergo a complete reappraisal of the version of history he was taught, and learnt to appreciate that Irish Catholics had a very different historical perspective. He wrote "I began to appreciate the Catholic Church was not an alien church but very much the natural spiritual home for English Christians." It was said by an old English priest that the Deacon's sermon on the English Martyrs was the best he had heard throughout his priestly life.

He joined the RAF at 18 and was trained as a

medical orderly. He subsequently trained as a Chiropodist, the profession in which he worked until retirement, and worked tirelessly to gain State Registration for that profession. Shortly after meeting Delia his wife, a pretty young Irish nurse with a powerful faith, he became a Catholic himself after great soul searching, and long discussion and instruction from Father (later Bishop) Brewer who became a great friend.

He started a Scout troop in St Joseph's as a young man, and took scouts on camps to the mountains in Ireland. Three of them became priests.

Canon Brewer, an expert on Catholic education saw John's potential and suggested he take advantage of his political acumen and become elected on the Luton Council. As a Conservative Councillor on Luton Borough he became Chairman of the Education Committee, Chairman of governors of several senior schools, and he fought and won the battle for substantial grant funds to build Cardinal Newman School and to enhance Catholic education throughout Luton. He subsequently stood for Parliament in 1972/73 at which point John felt his vocation to the Deaconate.

The Permanent Deaconate was not new. St Francis and St Stephen were Deacons. But it was restored by Lumen Gentium 29 for modern

times. Not many dioceses had taken it up, and Deacon John was what the Bishop at that time termed "his guinea pig".

Deacon John was supported greatly during his training by his parish priest, Canon Brian Frost, something of a visionary for the Deaconate. Deacon John was very enthusiastic and industrious, but in those early days he suffered much rejection from priests and people, who either felt threatened or were suspicious of yet more change and 'innovations'. He said that he might not have been able to see it through were it not for the great support and friendship from two or three young curates who remained life-long friends.

Once established, and his abilities now very evident, the new Bishop appointed him to spearhead and set up the Justice and Peace Commission in the Diocese. This was really a continuation of his principal work for the less fortunate in society whilst in politics.

Nearly 40 years on, the Permanent Deaconate thrives in the Diocese of Northampton, certainly in part due to the high regard in which this 'pathfinder' was held. Deacon John's Ministry was a great blessing to his wife Delia and children and to the Diocese. The experiment could certainly be deemed a success. In fact he has left a legacy.

Obituary: Bob O'Donoghue

The Diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour with its focus on the icon over the altar was established on September 8, the feast of the Birthday of Our Lady, in 2006.

The decree, signed by Bishop Peter Doyle, establishing the shrine, was brought in procession into the church that day by the Grand Knight of the local council 339

Northampton. That Grand Knight was Bob O'Donoghue accompanied by his successor as Grand Knight, Ray Clifford.

The Knights of St Columba had researched the history of the icon itself, the blessings that were accredited to it, and enquired of the Diocesan Canon Lawyer, Rev Dr Brendan Killeen, the canonical requirements necessary for the establishment of a shrine.

But in all honesty most of it was Bob's doing. He took on the task with relish and made it all his own and after the Shrine was established wrote many articles to promote it and a short history of the Icon for those who come on pilgrimage. All of us, not just members of the parish, but pilgrims across the diocese, have every reason to be grateful to this very good man.

Bob always had a love for Our Lady and sought in his early days to serve her as a priest. He studied at Valladolid in Spain from 1952-1957. He thrived as a scholar but eventually decided that the priesthood was not his calling, and that the Lord had other things in mind for him!

And that was his beloved Josephine with whom he brought into the world, Patrick, Siobhan, Daniel and Joseph - and was so proud to be a grandfather to Olivia and was looking forward to the birth of his second grandchild in May.

Bob always retained his great love for the Church, and his knowledge and deep spirituality was a feature of the many KSC Council meetings he attended.

As Grand Knight he encouraged the brothers to write to the papers on contemporary moral issues and not a few letters of protest winged their way to the Director General of the BBC.

But above all, many will be grateful for what he and the Knights did in establishing the Diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour.

There is no doubt that he will continue to promote the shrine from heaven - his legacy will last as long as the shrine lasts. May he rest in peace.



Eternal rest

grant unto them,

O Lord,

and let perpetual light

shine upon them.

May they rest in peace.

Important note



If you are providing photos with your news story (as we hope you will), please remember that pictures taken using a telephone often don't reproduce well in print.

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And the word was made flesh. And dwelt among us.

Feast of the Annunciation



Jesus says: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am among them." Matthew 18:V, 20

You are invited to a Rosary gathering/procession to honour the Immaculate Heart of Mary Tuesday 25th March 2014 at the Angelus time of 6pm. meeting outside

Christ the Cornerstone Church, 300 Saxon Gate West, Central Milton Keynes MK9 2ES
note: these devotions will not be cancelled due to bad weather. Praying in the wind, cold and rain is penance and reparation (wind and rain bless The Lord).
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[] Yes, please send me the free booklet on the Tyburn Martyrs
[] Yes I'm interested - please send me vocations details.
[] I'd like to help your Mission Foundations in other countries.
My gift of £ is enclosed payable to Tyburn Mission.
Name:
Address:
Please print
RETURN TO: RETURN TO: Mother General, Tyburn Convent, 8 Hyde Park Place, London, W2 2LJ. Phone: 020 7723 7262.

Book Review

Race with the Devil

by Joseph Pearce St Benedict Press

Joseph Pearce subtitles this moving account of his conversion as “My journey from racial hatred to rational love.” It is indeed an extraordinary journey: from a youth in which he was twice imprisoned for publishing material “likely to incite racial hatred” (Pearce was a keen young member of the National Front and editor of *The Bulldog*) and in which he had been a keen participant in race riots, into the Catholic Church in 1989. He dedicates his book to his father, Albert; his influence over his son’s political extremism was significant and he later followed him into the Church, a move which Pearce humorously comments, was “perhaps even more miraculous than my own.”

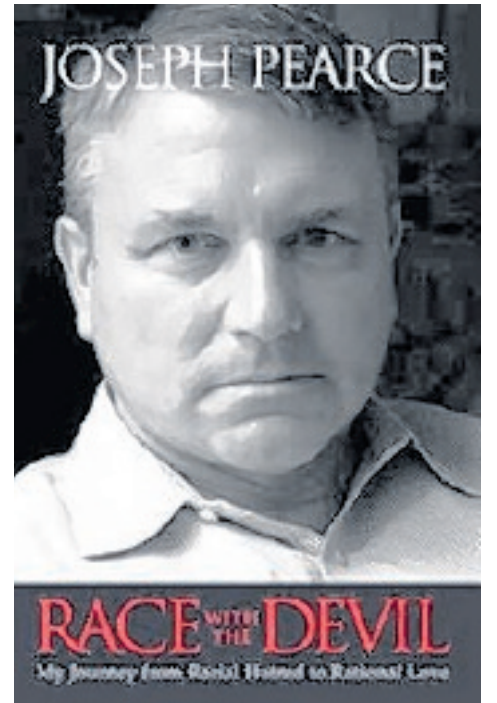
The seeds of Pearce’s narrow and bigoted nationalism were sown in childhood. A clever, argumentative and restless boy, his family moved from the peaceful Suffolk countryside to Barking in East London when he was 11; the change from a secure primary school in which he shone to a tough comprehensive where he struggled to find his feet, was critical in his emotional and political development. The patriotism, imperialism and xenophobia which he had imbibed from his father

coalesced when he was aged 14 in 1975, into an angry, neo-fascist, white supremacist position. The irony was that his father, in the usual muddled way of most human beings, managed to combine anti-Semitic and anti-Irish sentiments with a love of Shakespeare and traditions like Christmas. Pearce, an autodidact like his father, writes that “few men loved their fellow men more fully and more truly and with such Dickensian and Chestertonian exuberance” as his father. The young man started to work full-time for the National Front as a teenager in 197 and first went to prison for his racist writings in 1982. In solitary confinement Pearce started to read seriously. He had already encountered in his unsystematic fashion the writings of Richard Dawkins on evolution, Hans Eysenck on inherited intelligence, Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* and Solzhenitsyn’s *The Gulag Archipelago*; now he discovered GK Chesterton’s *The Outline of Sanity* which he “devoured”. GKC proved a providential encounter; the author disarmingly confesses that “even more unsettling to my own religious prejudice was the uncomfortable feeling that I wanted to like what Chesterton liked, even if I had

always believed that I didn’t like it.”

During the 1980s, Pearce admits that he was living a double life “in which I wrote hate-filled propaganda during the day and read the love-filled pages of Chesterton and Lewis at night.” Yet in his “race with the Devil”, the latter was slowing ceding ground as grace increased. With his personal life in a mess and imprisoned again in 1985, the author was at a crossroads, both spiritually and emotionally. When asked his religion by the prison authorities he told them, untruthfully, he was a Catholic. “I couldn’t believe what I had just said” he relates, describing the moment as a “baptism of desire.” This time in prison solitary confinement was welcome as it forced him finally to confront himself. He read Newman, Tolkien and the Jesuit philosopher Coplestone and resolved to resign from politics.

On entering the Church in 1989 Pearce decided to use his writing gifts as a personal apostolate, both to atone for his troubled past and to help others learn the beauty, truth and goodness implicit in Catholicism. Biographies of Chesterton, Belloc and Tolkien followed. His book provides fascinating insight into the rationale behind what



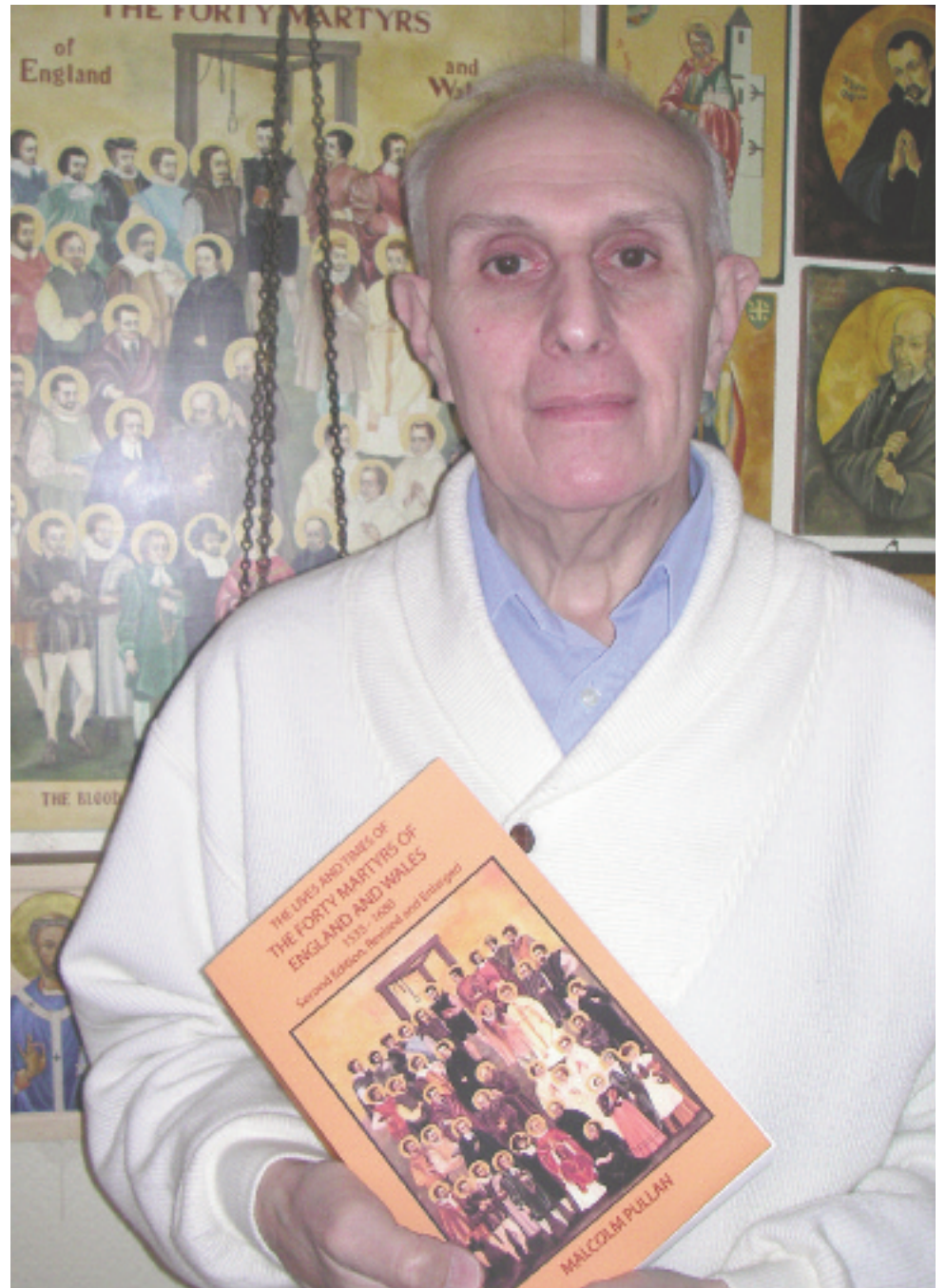
is now the British National Party. Above all, it is the story of a conversion, brought about, providentially, by the random kindness of strangers and the discovery of great Christian thinkers

Francis Phillips

Author Honours our Martyrs

Malcolm Pullan, a parishioner of Holy Family and St John the Apostle, Luton, first published his book *The Lives and Times of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales 1535-1680* in 2008. A second, revised and much enlarged edition of this comprehensive compilation of the lives and state murders of Catholics in the 16th and 17th centuries has now been published. Thirty years of research have gone into the writing of this moving, fearful and inspiring narrative. ‘How many of us,’ the author asks, ‘would have the fortitude to stand on a scaffold, a rope around our neck, facing the most gruesome of deaths and choose not to recant and live but to die for our beliefs?’ Pullan firmly believes that Catholic martyrs should not be consigned to some obscure corner of our consciousness. Their sacrificial witness should be extolled and celebrated. Their Faith lives still: they were true to it till death. At nearly 700 pages the book is available through all good booksellers and internet suppliers. Malcolm Pullan was born in Leeds in 1943. His family can trace their ancestry in Yorkshire directly back to the early 14th century. It was not until later in life that he discovered many of his 16th and 17th century forebears were recusants who suffered greatly for their adherence to the Catholic Church in penal times. Malcolm counts himself fortunate that he was first sent to All Saints, Church of England Infants School where he received a solid grounding in Christian teaching. All Saints belonged to the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Established Church and here Malcolm experienced a Catholic oriented liturgy. Throughout secondary school Malcolm won English and History prizes. He became interested in Catholicism and aged fifteen, having seen the film *The Song of Bernadette*, he requested that his prize be a biography of St Bernadette Soubirous. The following year Malcolm travelled to Lourdes for the first time on a pilgrimage with some Catholic neighbours. It was an emo-

tional experience for a 16-year-old and led to him taking up serious reading about the Catholic Church. By the age of eighteen, as a result of his reading – most notably Newman’s *Apologia pro vita sua* and *The Development of Christian Doctrine* – he became convinced of the truth of the Catholic Faith. After completing his GCE ‘A’ levels he began attending Mass and asked for formal instruction from Father Brian Green, a priest at St Anne’s Cathedral, Leeds. His reception into the church took place on 26th July 1961. Malcolm began thinking about the possibility of a vocation to the priesthood in a religious order. His parish priest counselled that he should approach the bishop with a view to training for the secular clergy at Ushaw, but Malcolm felt that he needed the guidance and discipline of a religious community. Shortly after his 21st birthday he was accepted at the “late vocation” house of the Capuchin Franciscans at Birkenhead. At the end of year exams Malcolm emerged top of the class in theology and was appointed dean of students. However, he came to realise that this was not the vocation for him. Malcolm’s interest in the English and Welsh martyrs intensified with the prayer campaign for the canonization of forty of them in the 1960’s. He travelled to Rome for the canonization ceremony in St Peter’s on 25th October 1970 and secured a close-up view of the proceedings. He vividly remembers Pope Paul VI, who after walking down the length of the basilica stood within two or three feet of him and the two looked directly at each other. The expression in the Pope’s eyes has been forever etched in his memory: the lips were smiling but the eyes were full of the most profound sadness. Malcolm’s devotion to the English and Welsh martyrs grew over the years and he undertook serious research into their lives. He also commissioned the beautiful ikon of the Forty Martyrs which was blessed by Bishop Alan Clark of East Anglia who had encouraged him to write



his earlier book.

Although pleased to have it in print he was never entirely satisfied with it and now Malcolm

feels his second, revised and enlarged edition is a more fitting tribute to his beloved martyrs.

There was too much Lourdes Water

The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes and the small part of town catering for the many pilgrims who flock there somehow seems apart from the rest of the World, even from the Lourdes habituated by its native population. It can sometimes seem a concentrated soup of society and religion where the best and worst characteristics of humanity are bought into intense focus.

I travelled from Northampton on my second trip with ACROSS to Lourdes in the middle of June and whilst anecdotal stories of the worst of humanity were heard (looting, business people rubbing their hands in glee at the prospect of profiting out of the misery of others), we witnessed only the very best of which humankind is capable.

It was a cloudy, cool spring day as we left. Arriving in Lourdes it was warm and sunny. The Spring had been wet and cold and we hoped that the good weather greeting us was the return to the usual clement weather of this part of France.

Saturday was warm and dry. Sunday only reinforced these thoughts as the sun beat down under clear blue skies. Monday began warm and sunny as we headed towards Gavarnie, but by the time we got there the mountains were shrouded in cloud and rain. Later, thunder and lightening rolled around the village and the river boiled and frothed angrily: a harbinger of events to come. Tuesday saw no respite and the river in Lourdes rose higher so that it was not much more than a couple of feet from breaching the wall. Tree trunks and debris floated passed at frightening speed.

After lunch the decision was taken to send our sick and disabled pilgrims (the VIPs) shopping, away from the river and harm's way. A small

team stayed behind to pack everyone's belongings to prepare for a swift exit and transfer to another hotel once the order to evacuate was given.

Dinner eaten and the VIPs (bar one) safely tucked up in bed a few of us relaxed in the bar, reviewing the day's events. A little after 10pm the power went out and the hotel was plunged into darkness for a few short seconds before the emergency lights kicked in. After a team of 12 carried the last VIP up 5 flights of stairs to bed (oh thank the Lord it was only one VIP we had to carry up!) we all soon went to bed. Power was not restored until after lunch the next day.

The devastation and havoc caused was heart breaking. Sad enough as it was to see the grotto and surrounding area still under water and the bridge near the Grotto ripped apart and strewn with debris, it was the human tragedy that was hard to take. At least two people had lost their lives. People's livelihoods, if not completely ruined were dealt blows that will take years to recover from.

With the Sanctuary closed and the weather still not great, the decision was made to return home a day early. Following a singsong in the bar the night before, the group boarded the Jumbulance and headed home. And the sun shone.

I will remember my second trip to Lourdes for a very long time. Not so much for the dramatic events that unfolded, but more for those small moments that made me feel humble, where I was lifted by the innate goodness within us and where I was moved to tears of joy or sadness and where the uniqueness of an ACROSS pilgrimage shone through.

I'll remember one of our VIPs singing 'Daisy,

Daisy' and the joy, warmth and love that not only our group but others in the bar showed towards her and the happiness she felt when everyone applauded and cheered her. I shall remember how our singing lifted the spirits of a group travelling from Ireland whom initially thought they'd lost all their possessions in the floods and how they joined in and later sang 'Old MacDonald Had a Farm' complete with actions!

I'll also long remember the story of one of our VIPs and how life changing her first trip to Lourdes was. Then she was virtually paralysed from the neck down by an illness and psychologically devastated by its effects. She returned home more confident in herself and with the determination to fight for the treatments and support that would enable her to regain movement. Two years ago she could not feed herself. This week she could not only feed herself but could stand for a short time with support.

Many people think of Lourdes as the place of miracles, of the place where people suddenly get out of the wheelchairs and walk again or come back from the dead: A place of instant miracles. Though there have been a few such miracles confirmed, I think this image distorts and hides the many thousands of miracles that happen each year when people travel to Lourdes – the miracle where someone with severe learning difficulties has the confidence to sing in a packed bar: where the laughter is with them and not at them and where they receive unbridled love and affection. The miracle where someone returns with a new resolve and confidence to fight illness and adversity, and has the strength to win through – or the miracle where people travel to Lourdes and find themselves, discover deeper



pools of strength or where they reconnect with or find Faith. In many respects, for me, these are the miracles of Lourdes.

I don't think I'm blinded by the fact that I work for ACROSS or that I have a special affection and a belief in what we do, but I do believe that what we do offer is an experience that, if not unique, very few offer. Travelling such a long way by road, caring for our VIPs 24/7 instead of putting them in hospitals overnight, creating an environment where people are safely taken out of their comfort zones and challenged, whilst ensuring the VIPs are well cared for and have as fulfilling a pilgrimage as we can make for them is quite a feat. It is through creating this environment that miracles can happen.

Sean Copley

If you would like to find out more about travelling with ACROSS please contact Sean at sean@across.org.uk or call on 07769 316599.



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The ongoing successes of St Gregory's Middle School, Bedford, continue apace and are reflective of their high performing learning community.

The recently published Key Stage 2 performance tables show St Gregory's as the 'best in Bedford Borough' at Level 4+ in Reading, Writing and Maths. The results also appeared in The Times 'Best Schools' edition in December ranking them in joint second place across the whole of the Local Authority.

The Department for Education Comparison Tables placed St Gregory's in the top 30 of schools nationally, a truly wonderful achievement.

St Gregory's has gained the Bedford Borough Sporting

School of the Year Award 2013, for the second time in three years. The school has an outstanding PE department who's members, alongside other staff, organise a varied range of opportunities for the pupils at local, county and national levels, promoting fair play, participation and excellence. 92% of the pupils have taken part in at least one extra-curricular activity this year, reflecting the inclusive nature of the school.

Headteacher, Frances Topa, acknowledged the hard work and dedication of the staff and pupils: "St Gregory's is a community of aspiration, participation and celebration where all live life to the full."

'Sing with Confidence', says Teresa



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