



Northampton Diocesan News

FREE Every Month

Corpus Christi walk

Great Billing continues a long tradition.

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Greeting the Spirit

Children welcome Pentecost in paint

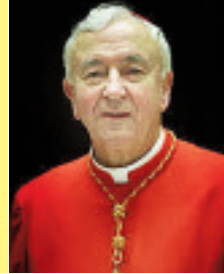
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The Cardinal's church

Great Billing claims another distinction

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Celebration number 37

Thornton welcomes MK teenagers again

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Bumper summer for Deacons



Tony Falcon was ordained a Permanent Deacon by Bishop Peter on Saturday 28th June in his parish church, Sacred Heart, Leighton Buzzard.

Tony grew up in Archway, in North London in the parish of St. Joseph's, Highgate Hill, and he went to school to St. Joseph's primary school which was run by the Passionist Order.

Later he gained admission to St. Aloysius College, a catholic grammar school for boys. The school, situated in Hornsey Lane, was run by the De La Salle Brothers and while there Tony was active in a young Christian Students group which was involved in visiting and helping old folk.

Tony left school in the late '60s and joined the NHS working initially in medical science and he trained in all the pathology disciplines. He qualified in Histopathology and Cytology and in the 1980's he completed a second MSc in immunology.

Tony and his wife Marilyn were married in 1969 and they have four children. Initially they lived in Edgeware but since 1978 they have made their home in Leighton Buzzard. Now that Tony is an ordained Permanent Deacon he looks forward to being even more active and involved in parish activities.

Noel Guina

Michael Gudge and Peter Hurrell were ordained together in Northampton Cathedral on July 5.

Jim Hannigan was ordained at St. John's, Luton on July 26. Pius Amaoko was ordained deacon at Oscott College in June and will be ordained to the priesthood next summer.



David Curtis and Graham Jones were both installed as acolytes and will be ordained to the Permanent Diaconate next year. Pictures: top, Jim Hannigan, below, Graham Jones, below left Tony Falcon.

Note

All stories and pictures for publication in The Vine must be sent directly to the editor, Fr Paul Hardy: vine01@btopenworld.com

Pictures must be sent as independent jpgs, and not embedded in the text



See page 4

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Send news reports, photos and other material to the news editor, Mrs Margaret Busby, 1 Bewcastle Close, Bedford, MK41 8BQ; e-mail: vine02@

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

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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@btopenworld.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.

Korea

An 81-year-old US missionary priest has visited North Korea 51 times since 1995, according a *Catholic Herald* report. Father Gerard Hammond, who serves as Maryknoll superior in South Korea, brings food aid and medicine into the Communist nation. Security forces monitor conversations with patients, and discussion of God is forbidden. "You're present to a people whom you cannot speak to and they can't speak to you, but it's the old adage: 'heart speaks to heart,'" said Father Hammond. "They see compassion. Well, they're in a country where they're told that [the late dictator] Kim Jong Il gives them everything. But then they see, well, in this case he isn't. So you're also creating a thought pattern in their own life: 'What do these people help bring us? What are they doing here?'"

Manilla

The Vatican has confirmed dates for Pope Francis' second visit to Asia will be scheduled for next January. The Pope will visit Sri Lanka and the Philippines - the first visit by a pontiff to the two countries in 20 years.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle in Manila confirmed in a Vatican statement that the pontiff will reach the Philippines on 19 January.

The Cardinal said: "I'm sure that desire of the heart will push him to get in contact with the people."

The Pope is expected to visit the central Philippines where Typhoon Haiyan killed at least 6,300 people in November. More than 6,000 people are still living in tents in Tacloban City, Save the Children reported earlier this month.

"Nobody could deny the effect of Haiyan, so the Holy Father said plainly that he was one with the suffering people, that we should not be afraid to ask God why," said Tagle.

Last month, the cardinal said the trip might also include a visit to Palo Cathedral in the central province of Leyte which lost its roof but otherwise remained intact following the typhoon. The Pope is also scheduled to visit a youth rally at the Catholic University of Santo Tomas (UST) in Manila.

"UST has always figured as one of the sites especially for the pope's interaction with the youth and students, so we are coming from that historical datum," Cardinal Tagle said in an interview. It will be the fourth visit by a pope to Santo Tomas, which was established by the Dominicans in 1611 and declared a pontifical university in 1902: Pope Paul VI visited in 1970 and Pope John Paul II made two trips there in 1981 and 1995. The finalized schedule for Francis' five-day visit to the Philippines would be confirmed by the end of the year, Tagle said on Tuesday, as President Benigno Aquino's office announced full government cooperation. "Filipinos will most certainly accord to Pope Francis the warmth of their hospitality and manifest the fervor of their faith as they welcome the first pontiff from South America," presidential spokesman Herminio Coloma said in a statement issued from Aquino's office on Tuesday. The Pope's landmark visit to the Philippines coincides with the 20th anniversary of the World Youth Day celebration in Manila led by Saint John Paul II on January 14, 1995, the last papal visit to Asia's most populous majority Catholic nation. The day after World Youth Day in 1995, John Paul II offered Mass to a crowd estimated at between four and five million people in Manila's Luneta Park, the biggest papal crowd ever

Knights needed

KNIGHTS REQUIRED = NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!

On his visit to the U.K. in 2010 Pope Emeritus Benedict appealed to the laity 'to assist in the mission of the Church by becoming more involved in the work of parishes and communities'. In Aylesbury a number of men have answered that call by forming a Council of The Knights of St. Columba.

The Knights' worldwide history of Catholic fraternal service, based on the principles of **Charity, Unity and Fraternity**, stem from humble beginnings in 19th Century America. In 1919, in Glasgow, Patrick Joseph O'Callaghan gathered 24 Catholic men together with the same aim. Adopting the name 'Knights of St Columba' the Council initially sought the social, economic and spiritual welfare of its members, together with the defence of Catholic principles and interests. Unique within the Catholic Church, we owe much to the inspired vision of our founders of nearly a century ago. For them it would have been easy in those dark days just after the Great War to be inward looking, caring solely for the welfare of its own members and families. Instead they placed devotion, dedication and assistance to the Church, coupled with faith, at the heart of their new organisation. Those ideals have continued to the present day.

Knights are Catholic men, who are committed to making their community a better place, while supporting their Church through service.

Could you imagine yourself joining them? The harvest is great but the labourers are few. You can help change that.

In practical matters, the Knights assist local parish life in a variety of ways. Today Commitment, Sacrifice and Service no longer appear to be popular concepts, but remain very important.

Our small group of Knights is beginning to prove that the spirit of commitment and service is very much alive in Aylesbury; please think of joining us, do not let it pass you by.

We meet on the third Monday of the month, 7.30pm at St Joseph's Church Hall, High Street, in Aylesbury. We look forward to greeting you on 20th October our next monthly meeting.

Tom D'Arcy
Aylesbury Council 972



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Poland

Sunday Mass attendance has fallen below 40% in Poland, according to statistics published in *L'Osservatore Romano*. Nonetheless, some statistics are positive: the nation, for example, has more seminarians than any other in Europe. According to the report: 39.1% of the baptized now attend Mass on Sunday, down from 57% in the 1980s and 50% in the 1990s 42% of those who attend Sunday Mass receive Holy Communion, up from 14% in the 1980s. Since 2003, the number of Poles who attend Sunday Mass has fallen by two million. However, 2.1 million Poles have emigrated since the nation joined the European Union in 2004, and many of them attend Mass in Western Europe. The number of diocesan and religious priests in Poland continues to rise as ordinations outpace deaths.

Northampton Catenians Charity night

The President and Brothers of Northampton's Catenian Circle hosted a Charity Presentation Evening following their July meeting and dinner with their ladies. Cheques totalling £7463.51, the proceeds from last year's President's and Circle charities, were presented to four worthy causes, being the proceeds from last year's President's and Circle charities.

Former past President, Frank Sudlow, presented two cheques to CAFOD totalling £5487.20 and a cheque for £743.91 to the Beds and Northants MS Therapy Centre. Circle charity cheques were presented by Circle President, Edward Smyth, to Nazareth House, Northampton, for £616.20 and four cheques totalling £616.20 to SVP.

Further information about the Catenian Association can be found at www.thecatenians.co.uk or by contacting Northampton's Membership Officer, Mr Eric Walls, Tel. 01604 408310.

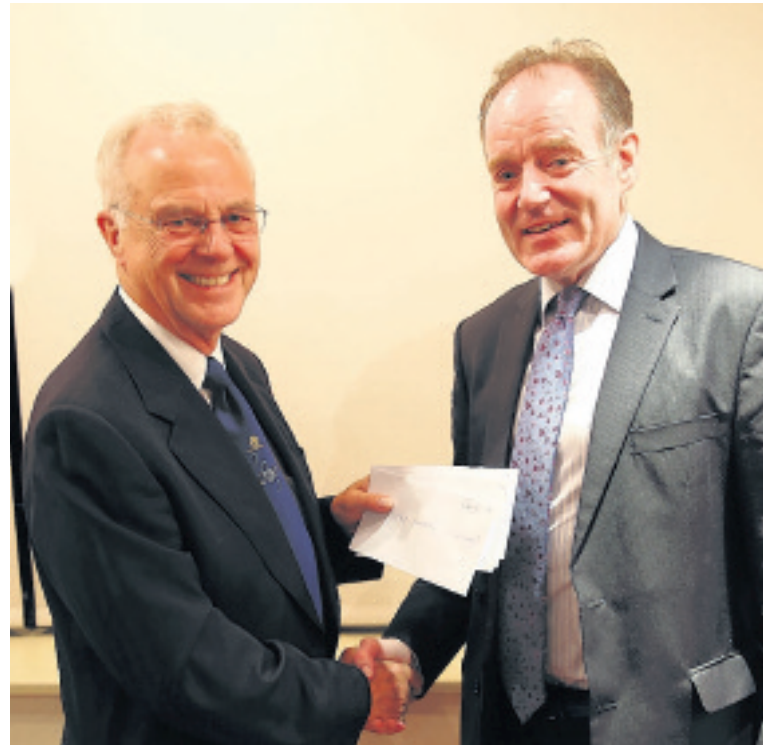
Pictures

Top left: President Edward Smyth (right) presenting a cheque for £616.20 to Christine Faulkner representing Nazareth House, Northampton.

Top right: President Edward Smyth (right) presenting four cheques totalling £616.20 to Brother Angus Walker on behalf of SVP.

Bottom left: Past President Frank Sudlow presenting two cheques totalling £5487.20 to Deborah Purfield representing CAFOD.

Bottom right: Past President Frank Sudlow presenting a cheque for £743.91 to Val Wood and Kay Taylor, representing the Beds and Northants MS Therapy Centre.



Who are you?



We have the picture, but not the story! If you know who these distinguished ladies are, please do tell us.

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Bletchley's Beckett plans a picnic



When I casually asked in the planning committee of the picnic what one brought to a picnic these days I was told "oh, bring a sandwich and something to drink. Oh and maybe a chair to sit on!". Not having been on a picnic for years I duly turned up clutching my ham sandwich, a bottle of water and a chair. Well, I soon realised that I was in the company of serious picnickers.

Thanks to the hospitality of Cliona and Paul who invited us to use their wonderful garden near Milton Keynes about sixty of us turned up. There were the people who knew how to picnic. Every type of food you can think of was brought and obviously everybody thought of feeding everybody else. Unlike me!

We had planned in the committee to have a day designed around the needs of the young disabled people. And it was fantastic. We had bouncy slides, much better than bouncy castles for the disabled young people but we had a bouncy castle for

those who could use it also. There was a "quite room" complete with balls and lights in case the excitement was too much for the young people. Music was provided by Paul and Cliona. The magician was excellent as he involved as many of the young and not so young people in his act. We had face painting and nail painting.

One of the highlights of the afternoon was a presentation to Canon Kevin O'Driscoll on the occasion of his 40th Anniversary of the priesthood. They were many gifts for Kevin including a scarf for his favourite football team, Luton Town.

The parish of St. Thomas Aquinas and All Saints Bletchley have a wonderful collection of toys for the young people, each Christmas. who attend the monthly Luton Mass. Angela White who usually organises this was meant to come but could not at the last minute so her bouquet of flowers was brought to her. So thank you very much Angela.

Cathy Scott who has organised the monthly Mass for over 20 years was also presented with a bouquet.

The one person who did not get a presentation and who was mainly responsible for organising the day is Seán Ballantyne who was tireless in his efforts to make sure the day went without a hitch, right down to organising the portable toilets. Thank you so much Seán. And a big thanks again to Paul and Cliona for actually making the space possible for such a great day. Even the rain obliged us by not arriving until we were packing up to leave. I think I can fairly say a good time was had by all.

Sr. Marie Power HFB

Pictures by Cliona Devereux & Noel Guina



Deacons meet

The Permanent Deacons of mid-Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire held one of their periodic meetings in Sacred Heart parish, Leighton Buzzard on August 6. Ten deacons attended, including the newly-ordained Jim Hannigan and Tony Falcon.

After the group said Evening Prayer together they discussed matters of diaconal interest, and were addressed by the CAFOD Diocesan manager, Deborah Purfield. Deborah gave them an interesting talk about the work and future plans

of CAFOD and appealed for their help in furthering the work. She also urged them to help promote the 'Fair Trade' movement in the parishes wherever possible, commenting that it would be a wonderful thing if the whole diocese became a 'Fair Trade' zone.

When the meeting was over the deacons were joined by their wives and went off to dinner at a local restaurant famous for its Italian food.

Noel Guina



New Catenian links

Milton Keynes Circle of the Catenian Association recently welcomed two new brothers: Simon Navin and Bill McKay. Simon is a member of St Thomas Aquinas and All Saints Parish in Bletchley, Milton Keynes. He works as a chartered surveyor and is a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. He is married to Dawn and they have two sons, Thomas (10) and Isaac (3). Simon enjoys running and

recently completed a half-marathon in very good time. Bill lives in St Albans and works in Milton Keynes where he is a businessman. He is married to Tracey and they have two children, Jack and Peggy Sue. Brother Mike Too-Chung was on hand to record the occasion.

L to R: Bill McKay, Mal Nally (Circle President) and Simon Navin

Team work in Biggleswade

Team work is the anchor stone to successful outcomes, which is what Rosario di Marco, Carolyn Blake (pictured here) and friends have achieved at St Peter's Church in Biggleswade over the past year.

From biblical text in gold, painted onto to walls and now pebble and stone mosaic work. Watch out, there is so much more to come.

Carolyn Blake



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Corpus Christi walk

A wonderful day was experienced at Great Billing, a day filled with many graces and blessings for those who took the time to respond to Our Lord's call.

Many families attended, at least one hundred, at the Diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour at Great Billing on the feast of Corpus Christi.

The shrine is also the shrine of Divine Mercy having the very first relics of Saint Faustina (1995) in the UK.

The children who made their first communion weeks earlier were a fitting testimony to the growth and development of the Catholic Church.

It was the first public outing for Fr Ephraim Nwchukwu of the Sacred Heart Weston Favel. Also present were Fr Andrew Behrens of St Gregory's and Fr Brendan Killeen from Saints Francis and Therese and the Dean of the Shrine Fr Damien Walne.

The guest preacher was Deacon Peter Griffin who came with his choir group "Edzplozion" from Our Lady's in Wellingborough

Bernhard & Marion Grabowiecki

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It is not every day that you see a Priest, wearing a short-sleeved clerical shirt and sunglasses, sitting outside a temporary Chapel eating an ice-lolly; sadly, no photographs of this exist! This was however the sight that confronted many people at the recent ecumenical holiday camp in Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire. The Priest in question was Father Wayne Coughlin (the Parish Priest), who accompanied by Michael Bates (a seminarian), found themselves as chaplains for the day at this annual event. Now in its twenty-seventh year this Christian festival is called "Lighthouse" and is organised and staffed by Christians from all the local churches in Great Missenden and Prestwood.

The aim of the week, which is open to young people from all faiths, is to not only tell but also demonstrate the limitless love which God has for all His children. With a strong emphasis on retelling stories and parables from the Bible, the week-long event enabled the youth and not-so-young (!) to look afresh at their lives and to see how God is speaking to them. The Christian ethos even spills over into the craft activities, sports and games that everyone is encouraged to be a part of. This year it was decided that the local clergy should have a more prominent visual presence at Lighthouse by supplying a photograph of themselves; the resulting display also highlighted where each Church could be found and the times of services, etc. At the Catholic Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary it was decided that every effort should be made to encourage visitors to Lighthouse to also call into the Church; the offer of free brightly coloured rosary-beads certainly seemed to persuade some people! The result was that each time a parishioner walked into the Church they were confronted by the wonderful sight of a bank of votive candles! The final 'Catholic' element to the festival was a Youth Mass at which everyone present was asked to write a petition and to lay it before the Altar; so popular was this that at Mass the following Sunday people were also encouraged to do likewise! Those who wanted to wrote their intention on a sponge hand or foot as a reminder that the sacred hands and feet of Jesus were pierced for love of us. Finally, the display created for the Youth Mass became the focal point for the commemoration of the outbreak of the First World War.

Lighthouse in Great Missenden



Farewell, Fr Willie

Any plans that Father Willie Strain had of slipping away quietly from High Wycombe, unnoticed, into retirement in his native Donegal have been pushed aside by recent events at St Augustine's High Wycombe.

On Sunday 17th August, the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Wycombe District Council both attended the 11 am Mass and afterwards, the Chairman – Cllr Lesley Clarke OBE addressed the congregation and presented a very surprised Parish Priest with a plaque commemorating his many contributions to life in the town and the district. Recounting a number of amusing anecdotes, Councillor Clarke painted a picture of an industrious Parish Priest who has endeared himself to many people in the area, Catholic and non-Catholic alike. She said he would be sadly missed, a sentiment echoed by all present. Father Willie's Farewell Mass was on Friday 29th August.



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dream of great things!"*

Pope Francis



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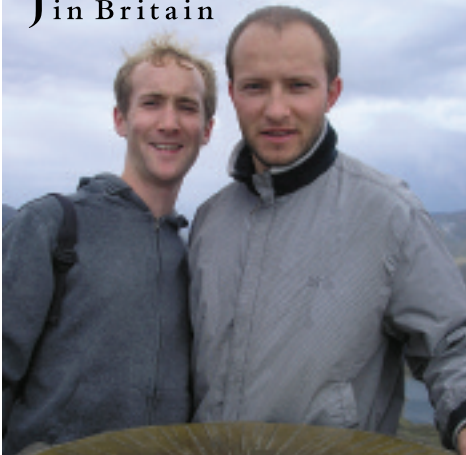
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If you are providing photos with your news story (as we hope you will), please remember that pictures taken using a telephone often don't reproduce well in print.





Immaculate Heart of Mary Church (Great Missenden) and St Anne's Church (Wendover)
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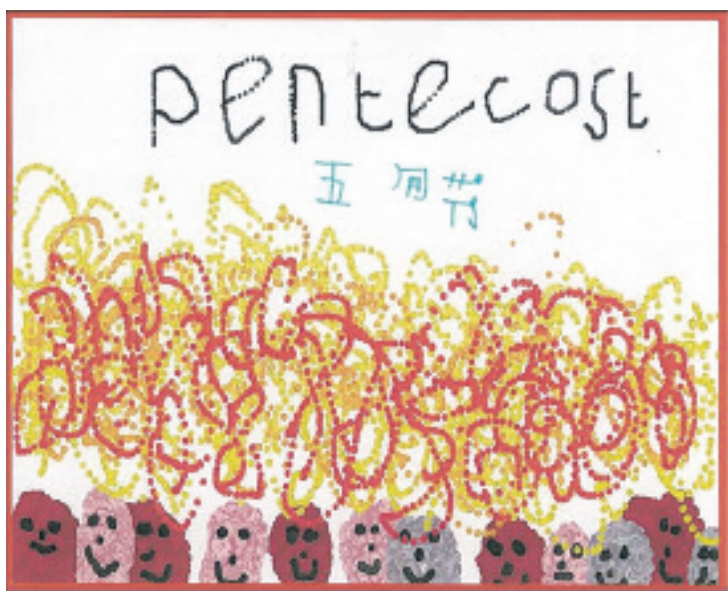
When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place..." Acts 2:1

Over the last three years the Northampton Diocesan Evangelisation Team, which is part of the ongoing work of NORES, have been producing resources to help our communities prepare for and celebrate Pentecost. Our hope is that by encouraging people to engage in prayerful preparation for Pentecost (especially during the nine days of novena leading up to Pentecost) many will come to a renewed appreciation of the person and work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Just as at the first Christian Pentecost this in turn, we believe, will lead to a renewed sense of mission. The Pentecost resources are designed to be used flexibly to enable people to pray in the way that best suits the demands of their busy lives. This year as well as providing a variety of resources for parishes we also offered to schools an Act of Worship and a Pentecost Art Competition. While as a Diocesan community we may not, like those first disciples, be able to gather in one place, we can and have been united in prayer during this special time of the Church's year. We trust that our prayers for a New Pentecost will empower us all for a New Evangelisation. This year a number of parishes made use of the various prayer materials which included the novena prayer service, prayer cards and also a shorter form of the novena prayer service which could be prayed before or after Mass or during parish meetings. Pentecost novena prayers took place in various places including High Wycombe, Northampton, Great Missenden, Gerrards Cross, Slough, Luton, Rushden and Milton Keynes.

Art Competition- Key Stage 1 Winner

Isabel Gikami from St Joseph's Lower School, Bedford created this wonderful picture entitled *Languages*. The disciples were given the gift to speak different languages to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to all nations and Isabel has captured this idea really well. The Chinese writing on the picture means 'Pentecost' and you can just imagine the disciples filled with the fire of God's love going out full of joy to announce the Good news of Jesus. Well done Isabel!

Thajen Kalaranjan from St Bernard's Preparatory School, Slough won the Key Stage 2 section of the Pentecost Art Competition with his picture which he entitled *Let us uphold our love for the Spirit*. The imagery is really striking as it captures the truth that the Holy Spirit lives in our hearts reminding us that we are all temples of the Holy Spirit. The presence of the cross of Jesus reminds us too that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth who is always leading us deeper in our relationship with Jesus Christ. Well done Thajen



Art Competition- Key Stage 3 Winner

Daria Szmitka from St Thomas More Catholic Teaching School, Bedford produced this stunning picture of the Holy Spirit. The picture almost seems to fly off the page and captures a sense of the power and dynamism that the Holy Spirit brings to believers in Christ. As well as the striking symbol of the dove, whose eyes seem to capture the gaze of the viewer, there are also the flames that border the picture which remind us that the power of Pentecost is offered to each of us today. This is the power in which we are sent out to witness to our faith in word and deed. Well done Daria! A big thank you to all in our parishes and members of staff in our schools who helped us with facilitating the art competition in schools. All three of our competition winners receive a £20 Amazon Gift card as well as some Chaplaincy resources for their schools, presented during assemblies. Together we celebrate the fantastic achievements and gifts among all of our students at Catholic Schools. The Holy Spirit has truly given us some great gifts to share in our diocese!



Obituary

Martin Stephen Robert Elwes May 1948 - March 2014

Martin Elwes was born in 1948 when his father, Robin, was still serving in the 60th, King's Royal Rifle Corps. He was the eldest of three surviving children.

The 1950s was a traumatic decade for his family. First, following a sailing accident in 1956, Martin's mother, Sue, was partially paralysed and lost her facility for speech, and then two and a half years later his father died at the young age of 36. From 1960 Martin spent his teenage years in Great Billing. The Billing estate had been sold by the Elwes family after the war and only the cedar wood Herewyt House, formerly used as a 'dower house', remained in family ownership. It was to this house that Martin's family then moved.

Martin's great uncle, Monsignor Valentine Elwes, retired from being the Catholic Chaplain at Oxford University and took up an appointment as Parish Priest in Billing in order to be near the family to help their recovery.

Martin attended Farleigh House prep school in Hampshire. He continued his education at Ampleforth College where his house master was the hugely influential Dom Basil Hume, later Abbot and Cardinal, who remained a life-long friend. Martin's first forays into the world of work

were with an animal feed company in Dublin where he spent two enjoyable years, punctuated by hunting and parties; he then switched to insurance broking in the City of London where he spent four years, more attuned to amateur acting and London social life than the business of the City. But at the age of 24 he joined John D Wood and soon found his niche as a central London estate agent. Over the next 40 years it was in this field that he was to become accomplished and highly regarded by both his peers and his clients. In 1978 Martin became a partner of Maskells where he remained until 1991; he subsequently worked for Friend & Falke for ten years, and Boyle & Co for five years before leaving estate agency to set up his own property search company from Oxfordshire.



Martin Elwes addressing the congregation at the inauguration of the diocesan shrine at Great Billing, September 2006

Martin was appointed a Knight of Malta in 1978 and served on the Board of the St John and Elizabeth Hospital. He was a keen fisherman and enjoyed many aspects of country life, sailing and other sports. His family moved out of London to Oxfordshire in 1996, but returned to London shortly before his death. In 1984 Martin married Sarah Worsley and is survived by his wife and their three children, Jamie, Sophie and Hugo.

Aid for the Philippines

Nine months on from the typhoon that caused devastation in the Philippines, parishioners united in Leighton Buzzard to remember the victims.

The Justice and Peace Group (Sacred Heart - Leighton Buzzard) organised an evening in its new parish hall to consider the effects of the disaster and to join in solidarity with those affected in looking to the future.

Typhoon Haiyan killed over 6,300 people and tore apart the communities of more than 14 million people, leaving at least five million homeless. Many homes, schools and roads were destroyed. The rebuilding process is likely to take years. The event was very well supported by Sacred Heart parish. Some Filipinas, journeying by bus, from All Saints and St Thomas Aquinas parish (Bletchley) were also present to show their support. Deborah Purfield (CAFOD Diocesan Manager) gave an update on CAFOD's work in the Philippines since the typhoon struck on the 8 November 2013. She thanked the parish for its continued sup-

port and commitment to helping those in greatest need. CAFOD's work has included:

- Supporting local priests and church volunteers in providing thousands of food packs and shelter kits to devastated communities across the nine worst affected dioceses in the country
- Delivering food, shelter and emergency kits to remote islands, using convoys of local fishing-boats
- Providing more than 100,000 people with emergency hygiene kits to help prevent the spread of disease
- Supplying clean water to devastated communities - including installing 49 hand pumps and regularly trucking water to 17 'water bladders' in some of the worst-hit areas
- Preventing the contamination of water supplies and the spread of disease by constructing or repairing safe communal latrines, including specially-adapted latrines for disabled people
- Establishing "Cash-for-work" schemes, which have employed people to clear

debris and restore farms in exchange for money to pay for food and repairs to their homes

Supplying tools, seeds and training to thousands of farmers whose crops had been destroyed, to help them rebuild their lives.

Providing fishing-boats to replace those that were destroyed on Palawan island

Deploying CAFOD water engineers and protection specialists to provide expert support to our Church partners.

The evening continued with a fine selection of Philippino dishes made by Vilma and Anthony with the help of other parishioners from Sacred Heart Parish. Deborah said: "This is a wonderful expression of the Catholic community's solidarity and support with our brothers and sisters in the Philippines."

The event raised a fantastic sum of £666.81 (of which £555 was gift aided). On behalf of CAFOD, Deborah thanked all those who organised the event and those who supported it.



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The Cardinal, the Redemptorists and the church at Great Billing

Devotees of the Diocesan Shrine to Our Lady in Great Billing were delighted when news reached them that the titular church of the newly elected Cardinal Vincent Nichols was that of St Alphonsus Liguori in the Via Merulana in Rome.

It is the church that houses the original icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour of which the icon at Great Billing is an authentic hand-crafted copy and therefore possessing the same powers as the prototype.

The icon at Great Billing is a special gift given to the squire of the village, Valentine Elwes, on his reconciliation to the Catholic Church in 1876 by Pope Leo XIII. It was honoured by the Vatican Chapter with a golden crown in recognition of the many blessings that were attributed to Mary's intercession. When the little Italianate church in Great Billing was opened and consecrated in 1878 the icon, temporarily housed in Billing Hall, was installed. In the year 2006 it was established by a decree signed by Rt.Rev. Peter Doyle as the Diocesan Shrine to Our Lady with its focus on the icon.

The original icon is one of a type of the Virgin of the Passion and is said to have its origin in Crete dating back to the 13th Century. It adorned a church on that island until the year 1495 when it came to Rome in the hands of a merchant. It is said the reason for this was the threat of invasion by the forces of Islam following the fall of the Byzantine capital, Constantinople in 1453. At the time the island of Rhodes was also under siege.

The merchant kept the icon in his own home until when dying his conscience got the better of him. He asked his wife to display it in a church as it had always been.

However, his dying wish was not adhered to and the lady of the house kept it to herself.

It was then that the Virgin Mary appeared to their six year old daughter with the specific instruction that the icon be displayed in the church that stood between the two great basilicas of St Mary Major and St John Lateran. The church happened to be St Matthews and was run by an Irish branch of the Augustinians.

Furthermore, Mary told the young lady that she wished to be invoked under the title 'Holy Mary of Perpetual Succour'. This is a title that engenders much confidence in her maternal intercession as she promises to hasten to our aid every time we ask her (just as she hastened to her cousin Elizabeth (Lk 1.39) .

As a result the image was placed in the church of St Matthew in 1499, and remained there for 300 years until the armies of Napoleon destroyed the church along with thirty others. The icon was rescued and placed in another Augustinian church, St Mary in Posterula. But instead of being displayed openly it was placed in a private chapel and eventually forgotten. At the request of Pius IX, the Generalate of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer was transferred to Rome. This was due to the pope's admiration for St Alphonsus Liguori and the Order's devotion to Mary.

The new church dedicated to their founder and built in the years 1855-9 happened to be on the site of the destroyed church of St Matthew. The Superior General and Rector, Fr Nicholas Mauron on learning of the miraculous icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour petitioned the Holy Father for its return. As a result the icon came back in a triumphal procession dur-

ing which a child was cured of paralysis.

Soon after its translation it is alleged that the Blessed Virgin herself, appeared to Pope Pius IX asking that she should be made known under this title. It was a time too of great missionary endeavour and the Holy Father himself gave each Redemptorist missionary a copy of the icon which he blessed personally as they set out around the globe.

The icon has now become the focus of many famous novenas such as those in Manila in the Philippines and Limerick in Ireland where thousands attend every week. The novena in Great Billing is a much more modest affair!

Another cure that occurred on the day of the icon's translation along the Via Merulana was that of a student at the Venerable English College, Richard Lacey. The nature of his cure is unknown. When he was appointed the first Bishop of Middlesbrough after the original diocese of Beverley was split into both the diocese of Middlesbrough and Leeds in 1878, he significantly placed both dioceses under



the local parish church.

Some years ago His Eminence went to St Alphonsus church in order to add to the commentary on Pope John Paul II's Easter Message and Blessing. In his company on that occasion was Fr William



the patronage of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and they remain so today.

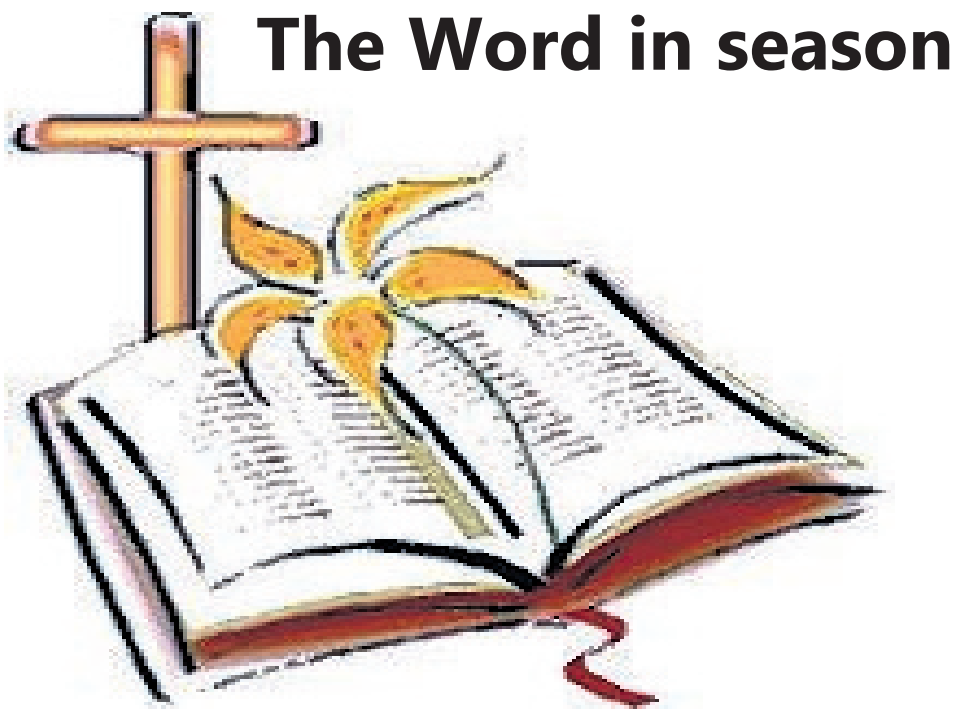
The fact that the church of St Alphonsus was built by a Scotsman, George Wigley, who as a friend of Frederick Ozanam introduced the Society of St Vincent de Paul to this country and the fact that it has strong connections with two English dioceses does in some way make it an appropriate titular church for our new Cardinal.

Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly still, the Cardinal has always had a devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour which he recounts as playing a much loved part of his life. The image had a permanent place in his home in Liverpool and in

Maram, an English Redemptorist priest, who has died since that time. On Easter Monday both priests celebrated Mass at the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and were then welcomed by the Redemptorist Community for lunch after which they were given a tour round all the premises including the Alphonsianum University next door.

On the icon itself Cardinal Vincent shared these thoughts.

"It sometimes strikes me that the reverse side of the icon is the recognition of our perpetual need. When we lose sight of our need—for God's mercy and for Mary's protection—then we lose sight of such an



The Word in season

The scriptures for October

Why did Pope Francis choose the name “Francis”? Some people think it was intended to recall St Francis of Assisi, especially his mission: “Francis, rebuild my church!” When the saint received this calling, he began to labour with his hands to restore the damaged church of San Damiano, till he realized that he was called to rebuild God’s community of faith. Today Pope Francis is labouring to rebuild a faith community that is in many ways threatened and damaged.

ch a situation is not new. St Matthew was writing his gospel at a time after the Jewish temple had been destroyed (AD 70) and Jerusalem had been devastated by the Roman armies. Matthew sees the fall of Jerusalem as the result of Israel missing the opportunity to welcome the Messiah. Yet he shows that out of the ruins of Jerusalem a new people of God was emerging, as we see in the Sunday

gospels for October. On 5 October (27th Sunday of the Year) we hear the parable of the Tenants in the Vineyard. Jesus’ story echoes Isaiah’s parable, whereby God made Jerusalem like a fertile vineyard. However, because this “vineyard” produced no fruit, it would be destroyed. But Jesus’ parable has a different ending. The vineyard owner even sends his own son, who is killed, but this “rejected stone” emerges triumphant as the keystone—a reference to Jesus’ resurrection. Instead of the old tenants, the vineyard will now be leased to new tenants, who will deliver the produce when the season arrives. Do we produce good fruit for the Lord?

The image of a wedding feast appears in the gospel parable on 12 October (28th Sunday of the Year). Prophets such as Isaiah often spoke of the time of salvation as being like a wedding banquet. But in

Jesus’ story the king’s invitations to the banquet all receive an unexpected refusal. The reaction of a Roman king to this refusal would be swift and cruel. He would send his troops to destroy those who had refused his invitation and to burn their town—a reference to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Then the king seeks a fresh set of wedding guests and sends out to the byways to gather the new guests. Free food and drink will be provided!

But at least the wedding guests must make some effort to get ready for the feast, and not just walk off the street into the wedding reception. The unprepared person is quickly turfed out of the wedding banquet. Are we preparing ourselves for the great wedding feast?

The power of Caesar is the background to the gospel for 19 October (29th Sunday of the Year). In the first century, Palestine was a land occupied by the Romans, who imposed heavy taxes. But in AD 66 a group of Jewish zealots began a revolt against this alien power. Not surprisingly, the Romans fought back, and in AD 70 the revolt was cruelly crushed.

Paying taxes to Caesar was a hot political issue, even in Jesus’ day. For the zealots this action meant denying God’s promise

of the Holy Land to Abraham’s descendants (Genesis 15:18). What does Jesus say? When he asks which money they use, they hand him a Roman coin, signifying their practical acceptance of Caesar’s power. So Caesar deserves what is his, but God deserves what belongs to him. At the end of his life, Jesus submitted to cruel death at the hands of Caesar’s representatives, but thereby also gave his life back to God his Father. Do we give God what belongs to him?

“Love is all you need!” This seems to be the gospel message for 26 October (30th Sunday of the Year). One of the temple supporters asks Jesus to identify the most important command in the Law of Moses. Jesus begins by quoting the Jewish daily prayer, called the Shema, taken from Deuteronomy: “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart.” But from the midst of all the religious regulations in the Book of Leviticus, he also draws out a second great command: “You must love your neighbour as yourself.” For the Christian life both commands are linked. For Jesus they were not just words. Soon after he said them, he showed the depth of his love by offering up his life on the cross for us. Do we show our love in our actions?

Jeremy Corley



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Celebration2014

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The youngsters got to grips with serious issues. Why did the war start? Was it right to send so many men over the top? Was it right to execute men with shell-shock? What were conditions like in the trenches? What is a just war? Can Christians even go to war?

There were diversions too, of course. They learned some of the Tommies' songs (not to be repeated at home). They watched episodes of Blackadder Goes Forth, with the group leaders diverting their attention away from the rude bits. They even dressed up to look like war-wounded. The swimming pool was a great success, especially on the Sunday, which was almost warm. The annual and inevitable 'flour festival' was a classic, thanks to a generous donation of flour from Bletchley's Irish Centre. Religious education wasn't always like this.

Pictures bottom left: flour power; below, wounded soldiers. Top right, the pool.



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