



The Bishop in Burma

Bishop Peter represents UK at the centenary celebration

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Fifty years of progress

Diocese celebrates search for unity

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Gone to his reward

Death of Fr George McCann

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You may or may not

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Marathon man



*Pictures:
Left, Fr David ready to run.
Above, Fr David with
Bishop Audo SJ of Aleppo.*

The priest in charge at St Aidan's, Northampton is Father David L Clark who is currently on loan, from the Brentwood diocese. Fr David is an energetic American, ordained for the diocese of Oregon but resident in the UK for almost two decades. When he's not exercising his priestly ministry in Northampton, he can be found doing a spot of lecturing at Cambridge university, specialising in Byzantine Architecture. As an academic, with a string of degrees and doctorates after his name, he is, by his own admission, 'different' but dry as dust his sermons are not!

Fr David can sometimes be spotted pounding the highways and byways in and around Northampton, clad in jogging kit with sweat dripping from beneath his headband. This is in preparation for the 2015 London Marathon on April 26. Fr David is no rookie on such runs, having taken part in a number of similar events. This year, Fr David is running to raise much-needed

cash for two objectives. First, he is running for the Christian Churches of Aleppo, Syria, and Irbil, Iraq. He plans to help those who have remained, and immigrants displaced and taking refuge with other Christian families in those Dioceses.

As an archaeologist Fr David has spent many years working in Syria on 'digs' so he knows at first hand what life is like for those suffering Christians. He is also running for Prostate Cancer UK

Fr David is looking for sponsorship so if there are any individuals, parishes, Catenian Circles or other organisations, willing to send him a few £££ as he 'pounds' the streets of London, then give him a call please on (01604)715661 or an email to parishpriest@staidansnorthampton.org.uk and he will give you further information.

'In my old age', comments Fr David modestly, 'this is the sixth marathon, and I'm just hoping to finish'.

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The Christian World seen from your editor's desk

Getting into print

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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.

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.

Rome



Pope Francis has decided that each newly appointed metropolitan archbishop should be formally vested with the pallium at a ceremony in his own archdiocese, rather than the ceremony traditionally held at the Vatican basilica each year on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul.

The pallium is a white woolen strip, worn around the neck in liturgical functions, symbolizing the union between a metropolitan archbishop and the Bishop of Rome. For years, each new archbishop has received his pallium directly from the Pontiff, during Mass on the patronal feast of the Church of Rome, on June 29.

However, Pope Francis has said that each arch-

ceive the pallium in his own archdiocese, from the apostolic nuncio, the Pope's representative in the country. Msgr. Guido Marini, the master of liturgical ceremonies, explained

in a letter to new archbishops that Pope Francis thought this ceremony would "greatly favor the participation of the local Church."

The local ceremony, highlighting the role of the metropolitan archbishop, will also help to reinforce the understanding of synodality in the government of the universal Church, the Pope suggested. Despite the change, Pope Francis has invited each of the new archbishops to join him in Rome on June 29, and celebrate Mass for the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul. The Pope will bless each pallium, and if the archbishop is present he will present the vestment to him privately after the Mass. But the formal installation will take place in the archdiocese.

London

Nominations have opened for the Catholic Women of the Year 2015. Any Catholic woman can be nominated. It only requires a letter listing the reasons why she should be put forward for this honour. The Committee is looking for the "unsung heroines" - women who care for the frail and elderly, who teach children the Catholic faith in schools or parishes, visit prisons, raise funds for charity, or are involved in community projects... women who are good neighbours, who defend and up-

hold Christian values, who care for the common good...women who are married or single, or vowed in religious service, women in all walks of life.

The Catholic Women of the Year Luncheon is a popular event, held now for over 40 years. The four Catholic Women of the Year are chosen by secret ballot by a committee drawn from representatives of Catholic organisations in Britain. There is no actual award - just a special welcome at the Luncheon, which seeks to celebrate

and honour the contribution made by Catholic women to the life and work of the Church in Britain.

Nominations should be sent, by email to the Chairman, Mrs J Woodford at mijamajoje@ntl-world.com or by post to 22 Milton Road WARE SG12 0PZ before April 10th 2015. The letter doesn't have to be long or elaborate. Please make sure it includes your full name and an address/tel number at which they can contact you!

Ukraine

During his general audience on February 4 Pope Francis called for prayers for Ukraine, saying that dialogue was "the only way possible to bring peace and harmony to that martyred

land."

Turning his words directly to the people of Ukraine, the pope told them to think about what they were doing.

"This is a war among Christians. You have the same

baptism. You are fighting among Christians. Think about this scandal," he said.

The pope asked people to pray "because prayer is our protest before God in wartime."

White Rabbit

HelpaChild (Africa) and Fr Wayne are delighted to welcome a professional Christian theatre company, who will be performing their brand new, original play 'White Rabbit' at Immaculate Heart of Mary Great Missenden, HP16 9AA Friday 13th March 2015 at 7:30PM (Doors)

7pm 'White Rabbit' is a powerful story about two people and their journey to faith - an imaginative and moving tale of love, loss and self-discovery. For trailer visit www.risetheatre.co.uk

For tickets please email Clive@HelpaChild.org.uk Or

buy online at www.ticketsource.co.uk/risetheatre £10 (£8 concessions) Includes White Rabbit play and afterwards a taste of African food along with songs from local artists This performance is suitable for adults and ages 12+.

NOTE

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vine01@btopenworld.com

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United in Biggleswade

St. Peter's in Biggleswade was packed on the evening of Sunday 18th January for a Churches Together in Biggleswade service to mark the start of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Congregations from the town's Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, New Life and Pentecostal churches joined together for a service with

the theme "The Well is Deep", created by churches in Brazil and being used world-wide. As well as prayers and hymns, those present also enjoyed a vibrant and thought provoking talk by Vince Williams, Leader of Biggleswade Pentecostal Church. A collection was held for an All We Can (the Methodist Relief and Development Fund) project to improve access to water and sanitation facilities in rural Uganda.



A change of scenery

Bishop Peter travelled to Myanmar (Burma) before Christmas to represent the Bishops of England and Wales at the 500th anniversary of the establishment of Catholicism. The main Mass lasted five hours.



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Double your money

CAFOD Lenten fundraising will have double the impact this year because we have been awarded UK Aid Match funding by the government for our Lent 2015 appeal which runs from Ash Wednesday 18 February to Sunday 17 May. This means that

During two well-attended CAFOD supporters' meetings held in January at Princes Risborough and Milton Keynes, supporters from around the diocese heard about how cyclone Nargis affected 58 year old Kyin Nu, destroying her small business, home



for every pound donated to CAFOD by individuals, communities, parishes and schools the government will contribute another pound up to a total of £3.5m during this period

Commenting on this year's Lenten activities, Deborah Purfield, CAFOD's Northampton Diocesan Manager, said "This year's Lenten theme is focusing on extreme weather events. Currently over 400 million of the world's poorest people, which is more than the total population of the UK and USA, are most at risk of climate change."

CAFOD's Lenten focus this year will be on Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) and how one community has recovered from Cyclone Nargis.

and killing two of her children. She was left with just her youngest daughter and husband. Destitution faced her. However CAFOD, working in partnership with Caritas Karuna, ensured that Kyin Nu and her family were able to regain some form of normality.

At the Princes Risborough meeting, Sister Eugenie Paul, a sister of St Paul from Myanmar, spoke of her own experience growing up in the country and said, "I am so grateful to CAFOD and all the supporters for helping me and my community over the years. Due to CAFOD's help I have had the opportunity to study English in the UK". Sr Eugenie is now a refugee in the UK.

At the Milton Keynes meeting Clare Dixon



(CAFOD's International Division) explained how CAFOD has and is helping the Burmese community. She fed back from her recent visit to Myanmar saying, "Our partners, Caritas Karuna, were so touch by all the support they have received from people in the UK and wanted me to tell all our supporters that 'CAFOD was the first organisation to help us and we are so grateful you. We will always hold you dear to our hearts'".

Both speakers' accounts of CAFOD's work in Myanmar left very strong impressions on their audiences – many were unaware of the work being done in that country as CAFOD could not speak out about it much due to the political situation there. Harry Brophy, CAFOD volunteer - Sacred heart

Northampton said, "We really enjoyed the meeting, it was well set up with terrific content. I was really moved to action after the talk and we are now planning to set up an event in our pastoral area to promote CAFOD's work."

Deborah Purfield adds, "This Lent we are asking schools and parishes to 'cut it out' e.g.: 'Cut out biscuits,' 'Cut out wasting water', 'cut out using I.T at the table and chat to your family' etc..." A wide range of resources is available on the CAFOD website including prayers and liturgy for children over Lent. If you need help accessing resources please get in touch 01844 274 723 or northampton@cafod.org.uk

Pictures: above, Sister Eugenie. Below, the gathering at Milton Keynes.





Generous Christmas hampers in Newport Pagnell

For some years the members of the St Bede's Conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society and volunteers have delivered Christmas Hampers to elderly and needy families, in and around the Newport Pagnell area. This year was no exception and a total of 38 hampers were distributed on Saturday, 20th December. St Bede's Church has traditionally funded the project with proceeds from the Parish

Bazaar but additionally donations of food and money have come from the local community. This year members of St Bede's Conference were delighted to receive a gift of chocolates from Thornton's to include in the hampers. Thanks to the generosity of friends of a parishioner of St Bede's, some 40 children each received an individual present.

The Good Society in Dunstable



Since our last report to the Vine about our first Big Society meeting in June 2011 the Churches in the South West Beds constituency of MP Andrew Selous have been meeting regularly. Our first concrete action was to set up the Dunstable Food Bank. There are now 20 Churches involved in this and in the Street Pastors initiative which helps young people stay safe when clubbing on Friday and Saturday nights. Speakers at our meetings have included those from Church Action on Poverty, CAFOD and Tearfund, and Christians against Poverty. One of our chief aims is to support one another and to present a united Christian presence to our town. We are looking how to be more proactive e.g. in helping people who might resort to food banks to manage their money better through debt counselling and budgeting, expanding on the work already being done by the Salvation Army; and to look at how we might provide our young people with an alternative to the clubbing and 'binge' drinking culture.

We have now decided to change our name to the 'Good Society' and are thinking what the Vision of a Good Society might be. Throughout we have been increasingly inspired by the

Churches Social Teaching and by Pope Francis emphasis on being a Church of the poor. At the last meeting on 30th January 2015 we decided on two actions first to organise a 'Hustings' in Dunstable for all Candidates for the election at which we will put to them our concerns as Christians. Secondly we are going to organise a day's Conference for all Christians to think more what a Good Society in Dunstable might look like and how we can work with our Local Authority of Central Bedfordshire on specific issues to fight poverty and to reduce the gap between rich and poor in our area.

The provisional date for this is Saturday 27th June between 10am and 3pm. We will advertise this again nearer the time as we would like to see many Catholics from our Pastoral Area of Central Bedfordshire at this meeting. Our Catholic Social Teaching provides us with so many treasures to offer our fellow Christians.

Agnes Milne
(convener) of Churches Together in Dunstable 'Good Society' Initiative

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Marking fifty years together



Has Northampton cathedral ever seen such a night? On January 21 Bishop Peter gathered around himself a galaxy of the great and good. Filling the seats normally occupied by concelebrants were the Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham, Bernard Longley, a Greek Ecumenical Patriarch, four Anglican bishops, the Catholic national Ecumenical Officer, and the leaders of the United Reform Church, Baptist Union, Methodists, the United Church of God and the Pentecostals. Supporting them were members of the secretariat of Churches Together in England, representatives of the Ordinariate, the Church Army and area Ecumenical Officers. Members of the Diocesan Ecumenical Commission provided some more familiar faces. And even the fifty-strong choir, in the care of Teresa Brown, was entirely ecumenical. The singers came from twenty three communities across five denominations, Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist and Pentecostal. 'I'm grateful to all of you for joining us', said Bishop Peter to his guests.

It was the middle of the annual week of prayer for Christian unity, but the service was celebrating a Catholic milestone. It is fifty years since the Bishops at the Second Vatican Council issued *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the Decree on Ecumenism. The document commits the Catholic church to accepting and working with the other denominations as we search together for unity.

Bishop Peter read two short extracts from the decree. 'There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. For it is from a renewal of the inner life of our minds, from self-denial and an unstinted love that desires of unity take their rise and develop in a mature way. We should therefore pray to the Holy Spirit for the grace to be genuinely self-denying, humble, gentle in the service of others, and to have an attitude of generosity towards them'.

Towards the end of the service Bishop Peter quoted from the conclusions of the document. 'It is the urgent wish of this holy Council that the measures under-

taken by the sons and daughters of the Catholic Church should develop in conjunction with those of our separated brothers and sisters so that no obstacles be put in the ways of divine Providence and no preconceived judgements impair the future inspirations of the Holy Spirit'.

Bishop Peter introduced the one action which unites us. He blessed bowls of water set around the cathedral and invited guests and congregation simply to dip a hand into the water. Then came the readings from scripture, delivered by His Eminence Archbishop Gregorios, archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain and Rt Rev Donald Allister, bishop of Peterborough.

The centrepiece was the address from Archbishop Longley, described by Bishop Peter as 'the leading light in the Church for ecumenism'. The Archbishop said that *Unitatis Redintegratio*, marked the first time that the "teaching authority, the Magisterium of the Pope and Bishops assembled together, had formally and with humility recognised the graces and gifts bestowed by Christ beyond the communion of the Catholic Church." One of the impacts of this decree was that Catholics "need no longer be fearful" that engagement with other Christians would be seen to be "dangerous to their spiritual well-being or at least peripheral to and a distraction from the Church's true mission." The prayer and work for Christian unity "was to be understood as integral to the life and mission of Catholics everywhere."

The Archbishop went on to say that "*Unitatis Redintegratio* was only the beginning of our ecumenical pilgrimage together. As Catholics we had to learn new ways to pray and engage with each other in ecumenical settings and to find an ecumenism of the heart that would enable us to deepen our ecumenical friendships with one another."

The celebration ended with a great sign of peace, accompanied by a rousing Hallelujah chorus. Another turn of the Handel on our pilgrimage to unity?






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Pictures: top, ecumenical guests. Right, choir. Left, Rt Rev Donald Allister, Bishop of Peterborough



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Obituary

Fr. George McCann

Fr George McCann died on January 27 in Northampton General Hospital. Ordained in 1953, Fr George served in Burnham, Northampton, Norwich, Great Yarmouth, Shefford, and in Beaconsfield between 1983 and 1996, from

where he retired. He celebrated his Diamond Jubilee at Bishop's House in June 2013. His funeral was to be held at St. Edward's, Kettering, on February 17.



Luton's new Catenian

President of Province 14 Kin Wang (left) and Luton's Circle President Richard Daly (right) welcome new brother Anthony Donovan (centre)

Former Electronics' Engineer Anthony accidentally became involved in voluntary work, through the Rover Scouts, it lead to him changing careers to Day Care, Residential Care, Field and Hospital Social management helping people with learning disabilities and older people needing direct care. He retired from full time work and is now a part-time charity worker providing day time social activities to older people with short term memory loss

and those experiencing the early signs of a dementia illness. He is a Trustee of a charity providing a Day Centre funded by a local authority and enjoys music, especially jazz, reading, exercising his brain and body and playing with his grandchildren.

Anthony is married to Hilary, a Baptist, and has two married daughters. Sarah has a BA in English and Sociology and became a social worker before having two children, Joanna qualified as a Doctor of Medicine and later trained as a teacher and also has two children.



Schools get together

Diocesan schools are beginning to amalgamate. St Joseph's Infant and St Joseph's Junior Schools in Luton have merged with effect from 1 January 2015 to become St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. The head teacher is Mrs Jacqui Lee who was the junior school head.

Our Lady's Infant and Junior Schools in Wellingborough have also merged from 1 January to become Our Lady's Catholic Primary School. The head teacher is Mr Clive Robinson who was the infant school head.

St Thomas Aquinas and Bishop Parker Catholic Primary Schools in Milton Keynes are now a federation of the two schools with one governing body. The recently appointed head teacher, Mr Robert Mundy, took up his post in September.

Reflecting on the moves Mgr Kevin McGinnell, Episcopal Vicar for education, says 'It is sound educational policy to

have one school for primary years. It enables there to be a much clearer continuity and progression for the child and much easier liaison between the teachers of a child through those years. The same is true for the governors of the primary school in their strategy and planning. It also means a child joining a school at 4 or 5 will be guaranteed continuity of education through to 11. At present a family has to reapply for a place when the child moves from infant to junior schools. We have merged most of our infant and junior schools in recent years, for example St Martin's and St Margaret's in Luton'.

'In the case of Bletchley', says Mgr Kevin, 'the two schools are one form entry, whereas most primary schools are 2 or more forms of entry. To have one head teacher for the two schools in the one parish enables many of the advantages I've already mentioned'.

Ordinariate plans to buy church

The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham is launching an appeal for funds to help it to buy a redundant Methodist church in Torquay, Devon. If it succeeds, the church will be the first the Ordinariate has bought for itself since the structure was established by Pope Benedict in 2011 to allow former Anglicans who wish to enter the full communion of the Catholic Church to do so, whilst bringing with them aspects of their Anglican patrimony and heritage.

In an appeal leaflet being sent out to potential supporters of the project, the Ordinary of the Ordinariate, Mgr Keith Newton, the former Anglican bishop of Richborough, says:

"If we are to grow and flourish in the way that Pope Benedict intended when he set up the Ordinariate, we need to acquire

buildings of our own so that we can establish them as centres for our particular mission and purpose. The purchase of this church provides a wonderful opportunity to do just that. I warmly encourage you to help in any way you are able, to preserve this church as a place of Christian worship from where the Torbay Ordinariate Mission can reach out to the local community and minister to both its spiritual and material needs".

Fr David Lashbrooke, a former Anglican priest, now a Catholic priest of the Ordinariate, who leads the Torbay Ordinariate Mission, says the venture is particularly exciting because the site has all the necessary space for a mission community to lead a full liturgical life as well as being able to provide teaching of the faith and offer hospitality to the local community.

Fr Lashbrooke said: "Earlier this year we began conversations with the local Methodist community who are vacating their site at Chelston, Torquay. In a very moving final service the Methodist minister passed on a light from a candle to express his hope that we might be able to keep the Christian flame burning on this site. But we need to act quickly before the church has to be put on the open market". The Methodists are asking £150,000 for the site, which, as well as the church, includes halls and a building which could be converted to become a presbytery to house an Ordinariate priest. Renovations will cost a further £110,000. Currently the Ordinariate, which has 87 priests and about 40 groups of lay members the length and breadth of the country, has the care of two churches, both in London.

Guide to funerals challenge and response

Dear Editor,

I was disappointed to read in December's *Vine* about the Diocesan Liturgy Commission's new rules for funerals.

I was unable to find the guidelines on the diocesan website but trust that *The Vine* has reported accurately what has been written.

For anyone who missed the article, the guidelines say that, among other things, flowers should not be laid on the coffin, nor should Mass cards or personal mementoes of photographs. Any secular music should be played outside the funeral liturgy. A short eulogy (up to 3 minutes) is reluctantly permitted but it must be seen beforehand by the priest. Ashes must be buried, not scattered. Families should not come to the priest with funeral plans already made: decisions should be taken by the priest and family together.

Reasons for disappointment are these;

Is it necessary to establish rules for everything in this degree of detail? This reminds me of the ruling from Rome about the sign of peace: that the priest should not come from the sanctuary to shake hands with parishioners, and so forth. There is a parish in the diocese

where a great deal is made of the sign of peace and where it an important feature of the liturgy. Why is there need for uniformity and not variety?

Funerals are a time of great emotional turmoil for friends and family. What if the family is consoled by personal mementoes, flowers on the coffin, the playing of 'secular music' which meant something to the deceased, the reading of a favourite poem?

Why in these days when the role of the laity is seen to be becoming highly important is so much control given to the priest? Vetting the eulogy? Negotiating the readings? Can parishioners not be trusted to organise how they wish to part from their loved ones? What if the priest and the mourners disagree?

I have been to funerals where the eulogy has been most moving: where a man's three daughters all expressed their love, where a wife spoke bravely about her husband. Neither was restricted to three minutes.

Can anyone see the logic in burying, not scattering ashes?

Last year my wife died suddenly and together with members of my family I composed a funeral service: the readings, hymns, bidding prayers, music to be played at the crematorium (Dvorak and Tippett). One of my sons spoke movingly about his mother (not limited in time). On the coffin my children had laid a beautiful spray of flowers; my contribution was a wreath of red roses. I felt that by the funeral we were fortified by the rites of Mother Church. I did not feel the need to negotiate what was to happen: I took it as a right that as a member of the Church my farewell to my wife should be what I wanted, not anyone else.

I suppose if you have to have a commission it has to meet. The danger then is that instead of thinking up imaginative liturgies or beautifying our services with some of the rich culture of our nation, it sits and devises petty rules which may cause distress and benefit no-one.

I read somewhere about an officer who did not obey all orders, only those the general would have given if he had known what he was talking about. I hope the clergy will look at these rules in a similar way.

Michael Stothard
Leighton Buzzard



Dear Editor,

I appreciate the opportunity to try to respond to your correspondent about the diocesan *Guidelines for Funerals*.

They were produced in response to many requests for something to help people and clergy at this very difficult and sensitive time to explain how the Church understands our funeral rites. After lengthy consideration they were agreed by the Council of Priests and offered as guidance, which obviously can be reviewed with time. Many people had commented that there was need for help to bring together what had become very diverging practices, so that there was a degree of shared understanding about what a Catholic funeral celebrates.

At the heart of the funeral liturgy is the proclamation that God has created each of us for eternal life, which is achieved through

the passion, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. The funeral rites are "to offer worship, praise, and thanksgiving to God". The Church "commends the dead to God's merciful love and pleads for the forgiveness of their sins" and "brings hope and consolation to the living." These quotations, like much of the content, are taken directly from the *Order of Christian Funerals* (1988) which was mandated by the Bishops of England, Wales and Scotland for use from Easter 1991 in our communities. The Guidelines try to implement these aims for all whose funeral we celebrate.

We welcome comments on the Guidelines and hope that in reading them people will find the answer to the questions they have raised.

Mgr Kevin McGinnell
Chair, Liturgy Commission.

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The Little Oratory; A Beginner's Guide to Praying in the Home.

By David Clayton and Leila Marie Lawler.

Sophia Institute Press

This book addresses the question: how do we live our Faith outside Mass on Sunday? It is a question every Catholic parent must reflect on; the authors, both fired with a sense of what Catholic culture is about, provide an answer. They emphasise that they are only making suggestions to help other families start to pray together, something surprisingly hard to establish in the hurly-burly of home life. Interestingly, both authors are converts; thus they come to faith and how to incarnate it at home with fresh, invigorating ideas. They say half-humorously: "How does one manage to fit in daily Mass, the Divine Office, the Rosary, the Divine Mercy chaplet, the Jesus Prayer, devotion to the Sacred Heart and everything else – on top of a family life?"

The answer is, within the Church's liturgy and much-loved devotions, you prioritize. Their own preference is incorporating the Liturgy of the Hours into the prayers of the little oratory as, after the Mass, it is the most important form of the Church's worship. But they are also at pains to say that each family must find the right form of family prayer life appropriate to them. What matters is to create a "sacred space" at home that is central to family life yet also uplifting, so that the supernatural becomes part of the natural activity of the "domestic church".

David Clayton is also a painter. Several well-known icon pictures are included at the end of the book for

framing in a little oratory. The point of an oratory is harmony: holy objects that have a personal and sacred resonance, along with candles and flowers on a table or shelf, that are kept loved and cared for, rather than a clutter of holy pictures in a neglected corner. Harmony matters because ideally an oratory should radiate its aura throughout the home. It should also be beautiful. The authors believe "we should avoid the ugly, the superficial, the sentimental and the downright kitschy." Having grown up with sickly representations of the Sacred Heart I know what they mean – but I also know an old Irish Catholic lady whose home is full of highly sentimentalised religious art, brought back from pilgrimages to which she is devoted, so I think we must also recognise that good taste and bad taste are less important than the presence of the Holy Spirit in the home.

The authors point to the important role of fathers in leading prayers at home: "The present crisis of fatherhood will be resolved only in families, where the father is allowed to regain his position of servant leader." They also give sensible advice on the difficulties of praying as a family – unruly children and a chaotic house, for example. They conclude, "The important thing is to pray, not to 'say prayers.'" This is a book to ponder, on a crucial subject too often neglected.

Francis Phillips



Freddie Freckles and the Sacraments

by Fr Tim Buckley C.Ss.R

ISBN 978082314180

Join Freddie as he goes on a journey where he learns more about the sacraments. This collection of short stories is written for children aged seven to nine and explore many rites from the Catholic Church – looking back to the significance of their baptism and forward to their confirmation. Along the way Freddie also learns the true meaning of Easter and Christmas and begins to have a better understanding of prayer and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. For each chapter Fr Tim has written helpful guides for when to tell each story along with scripture references. Ideal for small groups of children but also great for children to read on their own. Freddie Freckles is a gentle way to teach them about the sacraments.

Freddie Freckles and the Sacraments is perfect for children aged 7-9 and its entertaining stories will help children to be excited about their life in the Catholic Church



Being a Catholic Mother

Elizabeth Davies

ISBN: 9780852314104

It may be that the life of a Catholic mother has never been harder where faith is concerned. But if that is the case, it has never been more important that Catholic women take time out to think deeply about what it is they do as mothers, and how and why they do it. This book offers a way to begin to do that. The contemporary design and beautiful photographs make this a real pleasure to read with personal advice and anecdotes from many Catholic mothers.



Father Tim has spent his adult life working as a parish priest, Vocations Director for the Redemptorists and Publishing Director at Redemptorists Publications.

He currently has three books published - What Binds Marriage?, Take Heart: Expand Your Vision or God and The Adventures of Freddie Freckles. The new book Freddie Freckles and the Sacraments follows Freddie of his latest adventures.



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In search of Eden

It was both interesting and heartening to read Virginia Bell's article on the exploitation of animals today. Factory farming has reached an unprecedented scale. Over '700 million farm animals (hens, pigs, rabbits and ducks) are caged every year across the EU.' (Farm Animal Voice Issue 192 pub Compassion in World Farming) This does not include the milk farms, more of which are threatened to appear in the UK and of course caged animals worldwide. For example, the demand for pig meat in China has resulted in mass intensive farming. Desperate pigs crammed into cages built with Western technology. Vast new pig cities pumping out toxic waste into areas adjacent to farmland. All this could be changed overnight with a change of diet or at least a swing to meat reared humanely in organic farms. Yes the meat would be more expensive but it would be free from antibiotics.

From a Christian point of view animals are part of creation and it is logical that humans should respect both them and the environment. 'And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creaturescattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds" and God saw that it was good.'(Genesis 1 24 25) Great saints

such as St.Francis of Assisi understood that we are all united through our common origin in God and are thus interdependent. As we exploit others whether human or animal so we degrade ourselves. To inflict cruelty albeit in an oblique way diminishes each and every one of us. The greatest teaching Jesus gave was that of genuine love and compassion and yet this is rarely applied to all creatures. We are custodians of our planet it is our responsibility to maintain what God has given us and yet this seems to have been largely overlooked. The current system of meat production is immoral and inhumane as Virginia Bell makes clear in her article Right or Wrong, but if this argument is not enough then is it safe? The answer should be clear NO. The 1990s saw one of the worst scandals in the British meat industry ever, as BSE infected cattle across the country and subsequently found its way into the human food chain causing CJD. Then there was the foot and mouth epidemic when smaller local abattoirs were closed in favour of larger more profitable ones. The transportation of infected animals to these centres contributed to the rapid spread of the disease. No thought was given to the fact that cramming animals into lorries for the

long haul added to their abject terror and suffering. There was also the 'contamination' of beef products with other meat. This is done in the name of greed, hardly a sentiment which any Christian should support.

The effect on the environment is devastating. 'According to Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, head of UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, livestock production contributes up to 18% of global greenhouse gas emissions – more than every single car, train, and plane on the planet' (Guy Watson, Riverford Organic Farms)

As Virginia emphasises it is a case of the strong exploiting the weak – those who cannot speak for themselves. As Christians we should lead by example go veggie or at least buy meat sourced from animals allowed the freedom to graze and live naturally. It should be remembered that all creatures lived in harmony in the garden of Eden as God intended. Let us look to recreate that idyll and return to a more compassionate way of life, in which we understand as did Francis that we are all part of God's created family.

From Anna Mansfield Smith
5 Brookland Crescent NN1 4SS



SNSI Justice towards our fellow creatures

Dear Editor,

You may remember I sent you a leaflet I wrote called Christianity and Animals. Readers may be interested to know that I have started an online petition asking the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales to set up a Committee "on matters of Responsibility and Justice towards our fellow creatures". The petition can be found on the Care2 website, where readers can search for the petition by name - "Call on the Catholic Church to do more for Animals". Readers' comments are welcome at vrbell18@yahoo.co.uk

*Yours sincerely
Virginia Bell*



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New move coming

The Safeguarding and Welfare Office is planning the launch of a new Safeguarding initiative through the network of the volunteer Safeguarding workforce in each parish, the curial offices and the Religious working in the Diocese.

In conjunction with the Safeguarding Offices of the Diocese of Portsmouth and the Diocese of Arundle and Brighton, "Responsible Caring" cards have been produced to assist all who are working or in contact with vulnerable groups in good Safeguarding practice.

The launch of the Responsible Caring initiative will be in the Spring with posters

and literature being sent out, to be followed by the cards coming into parishes, offices, schools and Religious houses through designated Safeguarding volunteers and Safeguarding staff.

Neil Roseman, Youth Ministry Co-ordinator and member of the Safeguarding Commission says

"These cards will underpin the great work of volunteers across the Diocese. They are compact and accessible and will give confidence to ministry. NYMO will certainly be introducing the cards to staff and volunteers at all of the Lux events, in our parish work and in our work in schools".

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St. Joseph's singers

In December, the choir from St. Joseph's Catholic Lower School took part in the Carol Singing Festival at St Paul's Church in the Market Square in Bedford. Each year, St Paul's holds a Christmas Tree Festival inviting local schools and groups to decorate a small Christmas tree which is then displayed in the church for a few

weeks before Christmas. As part of the Festival some schools are invited to sing. The children sang a number of carols confidently to an audience who had come to look at the Christmas Trees. The children made themselves and the school very proud.

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