



Happy birthday to you

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Proclaim

The hall at St Gregory's in Northampton was full as about 60 people attended our diocese's first follow up event for **Proclaim '15** on 19th September. We began with prayer before Alex Heath gave us an overview of the 5 parts of Proclaim '15 and some clips from the keynote speakers.

Our task is to **build missionary parishes**, so Alex encouraged us to consider 3 practical suggestions and, depending on our local situation, choose one to take back to our parish:

- organise a **parish evangelisation information evening** to envision first steps to practical action; or
- run a **parish evangelisation project** or mission; or
- form a **parish evangelisation team** to promote and run practical evangelisation projects.

Those of us who'd been at July's inspiring national event in Birmingham shared some of what we'd experienced in the full and varied day. We mentioned particularly:

- Prayer - this was compulsory as prayer must underpin all our efforts.
- Sharing the Gospel - Joanna outlined how understanding the thresholds of conversion described in Sherry Waddell's 'Forming Intentional Disciples' can transform ministry. Find out where someone is and help them to the next step: skipping steps doesn't work.
- Reaching the Unchurched - help your parish-

ioners discern the gifts that they can share joyfully. Perhaps your parish could set up a Seeker Team?

- Prayer Experiences - Jean shared some simple suggestions to help people pray where they are: Mass is not always the best start
- Cath from the Sion Community for Evangelisation outlined the resources and support that they can provide.
- Catherine and Elizabeth spoke of the Bible Timeline. It's such a powerful tool already being used with great success in our diocese.

After lunch we stopped talking and actually went out and did it! Real hands on evangelisation! The sun shone as we processed to Abington Park with the Blessed Sacrament to the area prepared near the bandstand. We used leaflets and smiles to invite the people in the park to 'Come to Jesus. Come to life!' We were delighted to find people very receptive, even when they'd already been approached by another team member.

'All activities are free: let us serve you' encouraged people to come and see:

- face painting for children - great for attracting families
- talk and prayer - both for individuals and to attach to balloons, released together at the end
- an opportunity to have your feet washed - it's what Jesus did all underpinned by
- quiet prayer and reflection - an hour's adoration with live music alongside.

(Taken from the diocesan website)



Above: Exposition
Below: musicians



Left: prayer tent and feet to wash



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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

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Lancaster



The Diocese of Lancaster welcomed Cardinal George Alencherry, the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, when he came to celebrate a special Mass to inaugurate two personal parishes erected for his Church in Preston (under the patronage of St Alphonsa) and for the rest of the Diocese (under the patronage of Ss Kuriakose Elias Chavara & Euphrasia). These personal parishes are the first for the Syro-Malabar Church in Europe.

A special liturgical blessing was given on the historic and 'saved' church and presbytery at St Ignatius', Preston which now serves as the worship, social and catechetical centre for the Syro-Malabar Catholics across the city and area.

The Major Archbishop also inaugurated the foundation in Preston of the Sisters of the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (CMC) who have only recently arrived from Kerala. This marks the first foundation of a community of Syro-Malabar Religious Sisters in Great Britain.

The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, headed by the Major

Archbishop, has now more than four million members worldwide and traces its origin to St Thomas the Apostle, who is said to have reached the shore of Kerala in 52 AD.

Around a thousand people, 20 clergy from the Syro-Malabar Church and 20 clergy from Lancaster Diocese attended the colourful service at St Ignatius which was accompanied by music and drumming.

Bishop Michael Campbell explained in his blog: "There is no doubt that the presence of the Syro-Malabar communities in the Diocese of Lancaster has brought many blessings to us, and we cannot but be impressed by the fervour of their religious practice and devotion to their faith."

Washington

on September 23 at the canonization of St. Junipero Serra, the 18th-century missionary who brought the Catholic faith to the West Coast.

An estimated 20,000 people attended the canonization—the first such ceremony ever celebrated on US soil—at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

"He was the embodiment of a Church that goes forth," the Pope said; "a Church that sets out to bring everywhere the reconciling tenderness of God."

The Pope, in his homily—delivered in Spanish—reminded the congregation that all Christians are "heirs to the bold missionary spirit" of those who spread the Gospel to new lands and new societies. He said: "A Christian experiences joy in following a command: Go forth and proclaim the good news."

The canonization of the Franciscan missionary had been criticized by some Native Americans, who argued that in establishing 21 missions in California, St. Junipero had suppressed the people's beliefs and culture. Pope Francis rejected that criticism, saying in his homily: "Junipero sought to defend the dignity of the native community, to protect it from those who had mistreated and abused it."

Pope Francis presided

Rome

Pope Francis has issued two documents reforming and simplifying the process for obtaining a marriage annulment.

The reforms, unveiled by the Vatican on September 8, eliminate the costs of obtaining an annulment, and the requirement—heretofore mandatory—for a 2nd review of any judgment that a marriage was invalid. In his most dramatic reform, Pope Francis also allows for a new, accelerated process leading to annulment in cases in which the evidence appears clear. The new norms will take effect on December 8, at the beginning of the Year of Mercy.

The main steps of the papal reforms are: Elimination of a mandatory review of every judgment of nullity. The Pope writes that "the moral certainty reached by the first judge according to law should be sufficient."

Hearing of cases by a single judge—always a cleric—appointed by the bishop, rather than a court of three judges. The bishop

himself retains the final authority as judge in his diocese. An accelerated process in which the bishop serves as judge with the help of diocesan assessors, for cases in which the evidence appears clear that a sacramental marriage never took place. Appeals in marriage cases may be heard by metropolitan tribunals, and in the final instance, cases may be appealed to the Holy See, to be heard by the Roman Rota. In his *motu proprio*, Pope Francis stipulates that the shorter process could be followed in cases where one or both partners showed a clear lack of faith; where the marriage had been brief and the couple divorced quickly; where one partner was engaged in an extramarital affair at the time of the wedding; where one partner concealed information about serious disease, infertility, or children from another relationship; or where the marriage vows were taken under pressure or without the use of reason.

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.

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Happy birthday to you

The school community of St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School in Milton Keynes was delighted to celebrate the school's tenth anniversary on September 30th. Past and present staff joined families and pupils at a Mass celebrated by Bishop Peter. The concelebrating priests were Fr Paul Hardy, Fr Ken Bowen, Fr Andy Ollard, Fr Allan Jones and Fr Ricardo Belleri, Superior General of the Canons Regular of the Immaculate Conception.

'You are celebrating ten years as a school,' Bishop Peter told the children, 'and I'm celebrating ten years as a bishop'. His first task at the Mass was to bless the brand new altar.

The Children's Chaplaincy Team played a key role in preparing for this special event and this is what they said:

'We were involved in organising the Anniversary Mass and had important roles during the day. During Mass, we brought down candles that had a special significance, representing those who have died, those who have left the school, current pupils and staff and future pupils and staff. We also brought down our school mission statement, school banner and lots of other important things.

We read the first reading and hand signers accompanied the psalm. Our school felt like a very special place to be, especially be-

cause Bishop Peter was present.

Our families came, so did the previous Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher and other staff who used to work at St Bernadette's. The ending of the Mass was very joyful because we all sang our special school song.

Ten years ago, all the pupils at the school planted a special daffodil bulb. There were 64 children back then, now we have 467 and each child will plant a bulb to celebrate this wonderful occasion.

The parent association worked really hard to bake cakes for every child in the school. They had the school logo on them and they were scrumptious.

We really enjoy being on the Chaplaincy Team because we get to help with fundraising, choosing different charities for our school to help and support the prayer life. Our school is a safe place with lots of learning opportunities. The best thing about our school is being part of it.'

The school opened in September 2005 under the leadership of Headteacher Mrs O. Byrne and her Deputy, Mrs Lake, Chairman of Governors was Mr John Brandon, and the chaplain was Fr Andy Ollard. All attended the tenth anniversary Mass. The school opened its doors to 64 pupils. Ten years on it serves 467 pupils and their families.



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*Pictures from top:
The concelebration: symbols in
front of the altar: planting bulbs:
the birthday cake*

Awards at St Paul's



The efforts and achievements of pupils during the 2014/15 Academic year were celebrated at a Key Stage 4 and 5 awards ceremony at St Paul's Catholic School on Thursday 17 September.

Guest of honour, MK Dons footballer Giorgio Rasulo, presented the awards. These included awards for outstanding achievement in subject areas, setting an example as a year leader and special awards for exceptional contributions by students to the school community.

Michael Manley, Headteacher at St Paul's, said: "We're very proud of all our nominees and winners. These awards demonstrate the excellence achieved in a wide variety of areas, and the commitment and enthusiasm of pupils and staff to do the best that is possible."

Special award winners included David Charter who received the Waitrose Cup For Excellence for the best results in public examinations. In his A-Levels David achieved A star grades in Biology and Chemistry and A grades in Maths and Physics. He also achieved an A* in his Extended Project on "What effect could Biotechnology have on the future of Computing?" David is going to the University of York to study for a Master's Degree in Biochemistry.

Enrique Rodriguez scooped three awards – KS5 Science, Chaplaincy Support and Year 13 Year Leader. Having achieved two A* and two A grades at A-Level, Enrique is starting a Master's degree in Chemistry at Imperial College London. Working with determination both in lessons and study time Enrique not only focused on his own work but supported others through his collaborative approach to learning. He also found time to give back to the school through his work as a Science Technician and other volunteering opportunities.

The winner of the Do The Best That Is Possible award, chosen by the Headteacher, was Anita Dzre. She epitomised a student who has done their very best and is a superb role model both in and out of class and a pleasure to work with. Anita has passed AS Levels in Psychology, Sociology, Health and Social Care and English. She has made excellent progress and her teachers were delighted by her grades. Anita always contributes to school life and thinks of others before herself. She has a real determination and focus to succeed and al-

ways has a smile on her face.

The student receiving the award for Service to the School Community and living up to the school motto "Love, Serve And Do The Best That Is Possible" was Serena Conway. Serena, who also won the Year 10 Year Leader award, is a friendly and reliable pupil who willingly accepts any opportunity to participate in the School Mass. She has a strong sense of responsibility and always eagerly takes part in anything she is asked to do whether during the school day or in her own time and always with a smile on her face!

Students received a certificate and trophy and category winners were also given vouchers.

Picture shows Giorgio Rasulo, MK Dons (left) presenting an award to Enrique Rodriguez. Enrique won awards for Science, Chaplaincy Support and Year 13 Year Leader.



Enrique Rodriguez scooped

Building good faith relations in Luton



Sister Maire backs Luton

Addressing the annual conference of the national justice and peace network at Swanwick, our diocesan co-ordinator, Sister Maire Hayes told of how faith groups are working together in Luton to bring harmony in the local community.

Sister Maire recalled the controversy when members of the Anglian regiment marched through the town and there were protests about the soldiers actions in Basra. The right wing English Defence League resulted from the protests. More recently the right wing group Britain First descended on the town in June, creating fear in the Muslim community.

Sister Maire told how despite these type of incursions Luton is a town where the people of different faiths pull together. She told

of an annual peace walk and sporting events, when the different faiths come together. Also how the different faiths placed flowers in remembrance of the murdered soldier Lee Rigby.

In another action, after a rabbi was harassed, members of the Muslim community walked with him to the synagogue for 18 months.

Sister Maire pointed out that despite the tensions, often stoked by people coming from outside, there was no trouble in Luton at the time of the riots across the country in 2011. "We strive to build community cohesion, working to empower Luton's faith and cultural

A message from all of the bishops

Cardinal Nichols and Archbishop Smith jointly signed a Pastoral Letter from all the bishops which was read in parishes on Home Mission Sunday, September 20.

They reminded congregations of the Christian task to pray for, participate in and support the work of evangelisation in England and Wales. We have the task of deepening, sharing and proclaiming our faith, sensitively and confidently, wherever we may be.

The challenges to faith today, the bishops said, are many and deep-rooted. They invited every parish to work on one or two of the challenges which emerged from the July conference, Proclaim 15.



Pope Francis they said, shows us that the true heart of faith is hugely attractive. He shows us how to let our faith be seen. He

does this by making clear the great mercy of God, the mercy that he has received and that he shows to all. The mercy of God is God's love in action, reaching out to every person, to each one of us in our weakness. Mercy is God's tender embrace in lifting us up and inviting us to start again. When Pope Francis was asked to describe himself he said, simply, "I am a sinner." As we receive God's mercy we are enabled to show mercy to others.

Our response to Pope Francis, say the bishops, is to make the task of proclaiming God's mercy the priority in our own efforts. This we will strive to do most especially during the Jubilee Year of Mercy in this December. He writes: *"How much I desire that the year to come will be steeped in mercy, so that we can go out to every man and woman, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God! May the balm of mercy reach everyone."* So we ask your help. Together let us Proclaim God's Mercy.

The Gospel Reading today from St Mark puts it very simply. When we live our lives with trust in God as a child trusts his parents, then we will be free of so many burdens. And then our faith will be transparent, evident to others in all its attractiveness. Then we will be proclaiming the Gospel for others to see and hear.

The key, then, to showing our faith in the way we live is to be ready to live constantly in the presence of God, knowing that God never takes his eyes off us, not to catch us out, but because he loves us so much. When we are constantly aware of that loving gaze which is upon us, and of the mercy

and encouragement that flows our way, then we are enabled to look on others in the same way.

These are the foundations of evangelisation. On them, other steps can be built: the opportunity to speak about our faith; the expression of that love in programmes of action towards those most in need; a loving care for those who have been hurt by life and hurt within the Church, for whom any return to the practice of their faith is particularly difficult. In this effort for evangelisation we seek out ways of accompanying others, through friendship, through prayer, through conversation, so that they sense in us the welcome that God most certainly extends to them. Our efforts need not be complicated or heroic. As Our Blessed Lady reminds us, through our humble efforts the Lord can do great things!

The bishops went on to thank congregations for the witness that they already give. Their presence at Mass today is a good example. By coming to Mass they not only give due worship to God but also publicly proclaim their faith to everyone who knows of their commitment and routine. 'We thank you for your daily efforts in family living, the patterns of family life that you work hard to sustain. The family is the



first and best school of faith, of prayer and of virtuous living. Thank you all indeed!' The bishops ended the letter with a reflection from Pope Francis. Together let us seek to live out the words of Pope Francis: *"The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew... I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelisation marked by this joy."*



Offering hope to people in prison

Many prisoners (as many as one in four) in a Youth Offenders Institution are held in conditions bordering on solitary confinement spending 23 hours out of 24 confined to their cells according to the Howard League for Prison Reform.

"One in four boys in Feltham Prison is spending 23 hours a day locked up in his cell in conditions which amount to solitary confinement". HM Inspector of Prisons This is widespread in our prisons as reported by HM Chief Inspector in February in his report on Rochester YOI in February this year and by the Prison Reform Trust in their report 'Strangeways 25 years on'² in March:-

"A prisoner who is unemployed because there is no activity available for him might spend 22 hours a day, and eat all his meals, with another prisoner in a small cell designed for one, perhaps eight foot by six foot, with an unscreened toilet" HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

Against this background, prayer groups become very difficult to organise, and prisoners struggle on their own. Roman Catholic Prison Chaplains are begging for Catholic Bibles and other catechetical re-

sources to support the prisoners in their care in their journey of faith, a faith re-awakened by their time inside and away from home.

"Thank you for the Catholic Bible. It is beautiful and has helped me with my faith. It has been a long journey and it has put me on the track to rightness, faith, hope and goodness" Mark HMP Isle of Wight The Catholic Truth Society launched its Prison Appeal 2015 at Easter this year with an Appeal to Members and Supporters of CTS. So far we have raised just over £12,000 of our target of £30,000 by Christmas 2015. There is some way to go! We wish to widen the Prison Appeal to all the dioceses and parishes in the country and need your help to do this.

[http://www.ctsbooks.org/filedepository/ap-peals/prison%20appeal%20\(interactive\).pdf](http://www.ctsbooks.org/filedepository/ap-peals/prison%20appeal%20(interactive).pdf) for donations to the CTS Prison Appeal 2015 via the CTS website

<http://campaign.justgiving.com/charity/catholictruthsociety/prisonappeal> for the leaflet which tells you more about the appeal and other ways of donating to the CTS Prison Appeal 2015

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Excellent A Levels

Students and staff at Cardinal Newman Catholic School and Newman Sixth are celebrating another year of excellent A Level exam results. The average grade score rose to a record high of 212 points per entry, equivalent to an average of just over a C grade for every entry.

As ever there were a number of outstanding individual performances with a number of students gaining A grades across all subjects. There was also a general increase in overall standards as the percentage of entries securing A*-B grades rose 3 points to 44%. The percentage of students achieving 3A*-E grades also increased to 93%, over 15% higher than the national average last summer.

Joe Richardson, Headteacher of Cardinal Newman Catholic School, commented:

"This is a fantastic achievement by students and staff in the school. We set very high standards for our students demanding high performance levels throughout the course and this is reflected in the results achieved this summer. We are particularly pleased to see so many of our students in such a strong position to progress onto University or secure employment. Cardinal Newman is a college where all students have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and I am particularly pleased to see so many students who came to Cardinal Newman from other schools doing so well."

Many students were overjoyed with their results. Elena Panepinto and Frances Welch both secured places at Nottingham University with top grades and commented on the high level of support available to them throughout their studies. Among



other students securing top grades were Eamonn Kitching, Emily Rand and Muhammad-Ismail Abdul-Karim. Muhammad achieved A*A*A across Maths, Further Maths and Chemistry and did this at the same time as completing Is-

lamic Studies. He noted the excellent support available from his teachers and recognised the way that staff at Cardinal Newman go the extra mile to ensure students achieve the best that is possible.

Memories of a mature organist

Jackie the organist says:- "Over 50 years ago, when my husband Chris had the flu and couldn't play the organ for Mass at St Teresa's in Beaconsfield one Sunday, he insisted I stand in for him although I had never touched an organ before. I was terrified and arrived in the choir loft where the choir were waiting. I sat down at the organ, my breast touched a key by accident and the Priest started the Mass thinking it was his note! The Choir had seen what happened and of course started to giggle and that helped to clear the air. When Chris could no longer play, I took over and for many years now you have heard whatever noise I like to make! When Chris died 32 years ago, I started to attend Mass at St Dunstan's Church in Bourne End regularly and Father MacRory had just taken over the Parish. He was unhappy in Bourne End and we looked after each other. One Sunday, there was nobody to play the organ and, after the service, I said that I might be able to help him if he was in that situation again, although I told him I wasn't marvellous – which still goes! The next Sunday, he came to me and asked if I would take over the organ playing every Saturday evening which I did. After a while (I can't remember how long) Brian, who played every Sunday, lost his wife, then moved to France, leaving no organist for Sundays so for a while I played every Saturday evening and Sunday morning until we had no more Saturday evening Masses. Since then, over the years, I have played



most of the organs in the Bourne End Churches when they were without an organist as I met all the Vicars and Ministers at the Churches Together meetings when I was Secretary. They knew I played at St. Dunstan's. Quite an experience to play for the different services. I even played for a friend's wedding in Slough.

My husband would probably be quite pleased that I am still playing. I owe him a great deal – he made me do things I had never tried as I was a bit mousey before and tried to hide it as it were. I do my best, of course, but will never be as good on the organ as I would like to be, but I would certainly miss playing if the time comes when I can no longer cope. Chris was a great musician and very clever at everything – I spent my life trying to keep up!"

Hall of fame for Alamma

Allama Griffin Jones Sharar (1924-1999) a famous Pakistani Catholic poet from Luton was inducted into the Luton Pakistani Christian community Hall of Fame on Saturday 12th September. It was celebrated at Holy Ghost Catholic Church on Westbourne Road, Luton and was attended by over 200 Pakistani Christians from all over the UK.

Allama Griffin Jones Sharar was a famous poet who settled in Luton in the 1960's and made his name in the Christian community for his superb and articulate poetry. He was honoured with the title 'Allama' which is reserved for only the highest scholars in Islam - which was a special honour for Griffin Jones Sharar who was the only Christian from Pakistan to receive such a title. His poetry was also commended by Prince Charles during Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilee.



Bletchley's Cracked the Code?



Excellent 2015 SATs results – the best ever?
 New Bletchley Catholic Schools Federation??
 Inspirational teaching with many outstanding teachers?
 Governing Body restructured and ready for some robust leadership?
 Marvellous buildings improvements that look great?
 Ambitious vision for the Bletchley Catholic learning community?

Bishop Parker Primary School and St Thomas Aquinas Primary School have joined together to form the Bletchley Catholic Schools Federation led by Executive Headteacher, Mr. Robert Mundy. The first set of 2015 SATs results under Mr. Mundy's leadership are very impressive. "First and foremost I congratulate the marvellous effort all the children put in to achieve this wonderful set of results. It is also important to recognise that these results reflect the hard work of the dedicated and loyal teachers, staff and governors who want the very best for each individual child. They are testament to the strong partnership between the parents and our Bletchley schools. SATs do not paint the entire picture and both schools can be very proud of the broad and rich Catholic curriculum they present to the children. We aim for great learning in a whole range of exciting topics and activities."

Bishop Parker's results are a big improvement on last year and the school was congratulated by Cheryl Eyre, the Milton Keynes Local Authority Head of School Improvement. She appreciated in her letter that these improvements are a result of a

"strong commitment to high quality teaching".

Bishop Parker School has got a new school emblem that reflects Bishop Leo Parker's episcopal shield which featured a lion. A new school badge featuring this lion was developed and approved by the children who confirmed that it stood for being strong, courageous and powerful and felt they would wear this new badge with pride. A new green and yellow colour theme is followed in the new badge, school signs, school website and the new school uniform. Every pupil in the school was given a new green school sweatshirt to begin the school year. When asked by visiting governor, Mr. Ron Graham, what they thought of their new uniform the whole of Year 5 gave it a unanimous two thumbs up.

St Thomas Aquinas School 2015 SATs results are the best in Milton Keynes and are likely to be in the top 30 maintained schools nationally. Quite an extraordinary achievement!?

Builders were busy in both schools during the summer upgrading classrooms, creating

new offices and library. The new Bishop Parker School entrance is really spacious and welcoming now.?

The Year 6 Leaver's Mass was held outdoors at St Thomas Aquinas School and attended by over 300 pupils and parents. It was very windy and Fr Christopher Perry was almost blown away when his vestments caught the wind. Holy Communion chalices were covered with cling film to stop the hosts flying into the air. It was an emotional service when pupils played a full part in the readings, psalms and some exquisite singing.?

Mass was followed by a prize giving and parish social evening with food and entertainment. A great time was had by all. Special guests included former Headteacher, Mrs Monica Basham, and former chair of governors, Mr John Mulligan.?



tion and the part they have played in helping the school grow in faith. The leavers mass is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the successes of the Year 6 children and? looking back at the photos of them through the years shows how much they have developed and become part of the STA family. They are excellent role models to the rest of the school and we wish them well as they transfer to secondary, as we do for the Year 6 children leaving BP

There are many challenges ahead for our? Bletchley Catholic Schools Federation and I feel confident that we have the support, resources and faith to meet them head on and continue the success of the last year in both schools."

Simon has been tireless in galvanising support for forming the Federation and led the community through all the many processes involved.

Executive Headteacher, Mr Mundy, and Mr Jim Kent from the Knights of St Columba present the "Des Murray" cup and medal to Becky for the wonderful effort she put into her learning and the many contributions she made to the school.?

Mr Simon Navin, the Chair of the Governing Body gave the vote of thanks to pupils and staff who were leaving and wished them good luck in the next chapter of their lives. "Once again we said farewell to a group of students who have left their mark on the school both through their academic dedica-

tion and the part they have played in helping the school grow in faith. The leavers mass is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the successes of the Year 6 children and? looking back at the photos of them through the years shows how much they have developed and become part of the STA family. They are excellent role models to the rest of the school and we wish them well as they transfer to secondary, as we do for the Year 6 children leaving BP

* Enigma is also a reference to local pride. The German cipher machines, called Enigma, were first cracked at Bletchley Park during World War 2.



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Calling all Parishes
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Over 70 people from 31 parishes attended the two supporter events in September 2015 held in Beaconsfield and Milton Keynes. Some like parish volunteer Pat Taylor (JHN – High Wycombe) encouraged four others from her parish to come along with her which was fantastic.

Tom O'Connor (CAFOD's change director) thanked supporters and gave an overall picture of CAFOD's work in Emergency relief, Long term sustainable development, Tackling the root causes of poverty and injustice via advocacy and campaigning and Building partnerships in the Catholic community of England and Wales. He reminded all that CAFOD wasn't just any charity but "YOUR charity and all we do is done in your name".

CAFOD's finances were explained by Susanna Webb from CAFOD's legacy team. Over the financial year 2014/15, our Diocese of Northampton raised about £720k and over £100k was from gift aid donations. All were delighted to hear that the UK government's £5m matched funding target was reached for Lent 2015. Our Diocese raised over £118k. This is just amazing! Thank you so much to all who donated.



bers of the community. Caritas Niger, CAFOD's partner, has helped Hamani and the community get the vital food they needed and also through their 'Pay for work scheme' provided wages to the villagers to work, ensuring that they became able once again to support themselves through the worst of the crisis and becoming more resilient for the future. Caritas Niger had also set up 12 integrated health centres which provides HIV testing, immunisations and a special focus on nutrition screening and treatment.

Teresa Williams, parish volunteer Christ the King - Bedford said, "Thank you for such an inspirational and interesting day. Every-

one should see what is going on in the various countries and just what CAFOD is doing to help. We felt really privileged to be invited. Let's hope we can give some of what we absorbed back to our parishioners and continue with more fund raising."

Jim Cargin (St Joseph Aylesbury) whose first time it was attending such an event added "I found the day most helpful, informative and encouraging. It was good meeting other supporters and I would really recommend it to everyone. I shall be very happy to be part of the CAFOD group in my parish now."



We were privileged to hear from Nick Harrop (CAFOD's world news officer) who had visited Niger (the focus country for the Harvest fast day). Nick recounted his meeting with 74 year old Harmani Fodi and his community and explained that the main problem for them was having a sustainable source of food. Year upon year of disastrous crop failure due to climatic conditions or infestation had impacted terribly on the already vulnerable mem-

"I am delighted that more people than ever attended and felt energised and inspired to do more to promote CAFOD's work in their parishes" remarked Deborah Purfield (CAFOD Co-ordinator for Northampton). "We could not do our great work without the support of such amazing and generous people". Our next supporters' day will be on Saturday, late January / early February 2016.

Healing Mass for the sick at Beaconsfield



The annual Mass for the Sick organised by the SVP took place on Thursday 10th at St. Teresa's Beaconsfield. It was concelebrated by Fr. Francis Higgins the Parish priest and Fr Henry Sanni, who will be conducting services at St. Teresa's and St. Dunstan's Bourne End while Fr. Francis is on a Sabbatical. The Mass was well attended and a high tea was held in the Parish Centre after the service.



Fifty years for St Joseph

On 6th September 1965, St Joseph's Catholic Lower School in Chester Road, Bedford opened its doors for the first time. In early September, the school had a special 50th Anniversary Assembly launching a year of exciting activities to mark this great achievement. Each class received a special balloon, and statue for their classroom, to mark the occasion.

The head teacher, Ms Lisa Sumpter, introduced Mrs Esther Anstee and Mr Mick Lyons who came to the school on its first day in 1965. They joined Carys Woodburn, who started at the school this week and Caitlin McLoughlin who joined the reception class 10 years ago.

Winning clubs

The annual Catenian 4 golf day contested by circles from Bedford, Luton, Milton Keynes, and Northampton Circles was held on 21st August at Bedford & County Golf Club. Hosted this year by Bedford Circle and organised by Bernard Waddingham (pictured end left). The Milton Keynes team won the Catena 4 Cup with Northampton Circle a close second. Shown holding the Cup is Pat Ward, who had the best score on the day; he also won the Neil Ward Trophy (contested in mem-

ory of his son) for the best score from Bedford or Milton Keynes. Standing left of Pat, is John Scott with the other winning Milton Keynes members Mal Nally and Mike Too-Chung front right. Also pictured are other prize winners; Mike Walsh second from the left and in the back row Paul and Viv Young, Bedford Circle, Andrew Langer, Damian Walls, Northampton Circle and Jim Keane also of Bedford circle. The Catena 4 golf day has been held since 1992 and attracts keen golfers from

across the Northamptonshire Dioceses, the 2016 event will be organised by Luton Circle. The Catenian motto is Faith, Family, Friendship and golf days are just one of a number of local and national social activities held throughout the year, for more information about the day or to find out more about the Catenian Association in your area, contact in the first instance Dennis Cooper denniscooper238@btinternet.com or visit www.thecatenians.co.uk.



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Marking the end of junior school

On Tuesday 22nd September, Thornton College played host to Year 6 pupils from Milton Keynes Catholic Liaison Primary Schools. Boys and girls from St Mary Magdalene, Bishop Parker, St Monica's and St Bernadette's joined Thornton's Year 6s for a day-long celebration to mark their final year as Juniors.

Thornton College Acting Deputy Head Juniors Mrs Darwin said: 'Remember to make the most of your last year as a Junior, this is the beginning of the next stage of your life,' as she invited the 200-strong group to enjoy a day of fun and laughter.

Pupils broke down barriers with team-building games before making prayer cards and hymn practise. The day culminated in a special Mass in the school's Chapel led by Father Brendan Killeen, parish priest for East Hunsbury and Towcester



CAFOD and the refugees

In the first eight months of 2015, more than 500,000 refugees and migrants entered the European Union, according to Frontex, the agency that coordinates EU border controls. This compares to 280,000 people for the whole of 2014. The increased number of refugees and migrants seeking a new life in Europe is largely a consequence of humanitarian crises around the world.

One of the refugees, 26 year old Abdalkarim Zahra from Syria said, "I walked so many roads, I crossed so many rivers. I went over so many hills and valleys. I lost my home, my belongings, literally everything." His journey has taken him to Turkey, Greece, Macedonia and Serbia. People smugglers have taken all his money. He has been pushed into an overcrowded boat to reach Greece. He has worn the same clothes for weeks. He has suffered hunger and thirst. He has been kicked by border police. "Can I still be called a human?" he asked.

How is CAFOD responding to the crisis in Europe?

We are responding to the crisis both in Eu-

rope and in many of the countries where refugees originate from, including Syria, Sudan, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Our sister agencies in the Caritas network are providing aid to refugees in almost every country in Europe. We are directly supporting Caritas Greece and Caritas Serbia, who are providing food, water, shelter and emergency supplies to thousands of refugees every day. The governments of both countries are struggling to cope with the crisis.

On 4 September, we also launched a campaign calling on the UK government to do more to help vulnerable refugees resettle in the UK as quickly as possible. Within a week more than 2,000 Catholics in England and Wales had emailed the Prime Minister calling for action.

How is CAFOD responding to the crisis in Syria?

We are supporting Church partners in Syria, who are providing food parcels, medical aid and relief supplies and helping people to find safe places to stay, in areas held by both government and opposition forces.



We are also working with Caritas partners in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan to ensure that newly arrived refugees have food, medical support, clothes and safe places to stay. We are working in Iraq to help our

Church partners to respond to the urgent needs of families forced from their homes. Our partners have supported thousands of people with immediate food, essential household goods, alternative housing, sanitation facilities, and psychosocial support to both children and adults.

Should the UK government accept more refugees?

CAFOD, alongside other agencies, has consistently called

on the UK government to accept more of the people most at risk.

While the UK has led the world in its humanitarian aid contribution to the Syria crisis, CAFOD believes that we have a moral responsibility to share the burden with countries like Lebanon and offer a safe haven for more of those in need of protection.

While we welcome the Prime Minister's recent pledge to take 20,000 Syrian refugees, we need the government to make steps to speed up the process of identifying and offering relocation to Syrians in the region and to ease the burden on neighbouring countries in the Middle East.

What can I do to help?

Pray for refugees facing exploitation around the world.

Donate to the CAFOD Refugee Crisis Appeal

Write to the Prime Minister asking him to increase resettlement places for the most vulnerable Syrian refugees.

Offer shelter, time and skills to support refugees through one of the organisations listed by the Catholic Bishops' Conference



The Church in dialogue

In early October Bishop Peter broke new ground. With Cardinal Vincent Nichols he was representing the Church of England and Wales at the Rome synod on family life. He prepared a DVD to be played in parish churches on October 4. He talked about his experiences at the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. He outlined the task facing the bishops at the synod. He also reminded congregations that the Year of Mercy would begin in December and that, next Lent, he would lead reconciliation services in each Pastoral Area.

On October 3rd he took over the Saturday Spiritual section in The Times, whose Catholic writer is normally Mgr Roderick Strange, former rector of the Beda college in Rome. Once more Bishop Peter talked about the synod.

‘With Pope Francis we shall be reflecting on the theme of vocation and mission of the family in the Church and in the contemporary world and asking what is God’s purpose for marriage and the family. What makes this synod different is that there has been consultation with the whole Catholic community’.

‘I have been inundated’, he said, ‘with a huge amount of correspondence. I have felt like a ball on a billiard table, being

bounced from one cushion to another. So many people are anxious that the teaching of the Church must not change. So many good people are looking for a solution to the impossible situations they or members of their family are in, and also for ways to heal their considerable hurt.

Pope Francis himself has indicated that he wants a more compassionate response to those who feel disenfranchised by the Church’s teachings on divorce and homosexuality. People who have remarried and are barred from Communion, or who are gay and are demanding a greater welcome from the Church eagerly await the synod’s outcome. That will be contained in the Apostolic Exhortation which will be published some time after the synod.

At the World Meeting of Families, I listened to two presentations emerging from the scriptures of the Church’s beautiful vision for all men and women. I completely embrace the traditional teaching of the Church, but the challenge is that it can be so remote from where people are at and from the position of those who simply do not comprehend that vision.

We need some kind of bridge to make connections, to enable people to be accepted and encouraged, to overcome po-



larisation, to give hope to those who feel so far removed from what Jesus wants for them as expressed by the Church.

I think that this will be one of the most urgent tasks of the synod under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is an urgent task to enable priests and all involved in the life and mission of marriage to provide consistent guidance and support to those seeking to love one another in their marriages, and in their families, as Jesus has loved us.

Surely it is the love of Jesus that the

ears of the bishops at the synod must be open to, in order to hear the cries of the wounded and of those who are alienated and feel that they do not belong. The family is the home for wounded hearts. It is the place for comfort and healing. In the same way, the Church must be the home for the wounded heart. Healing is central to the coming of the kingdom that Jesus preached. Where God rules, wounds are attended to, the wounds of everyone. Perhaps that is why Pope Francis has described the Church as a field hospital and is preparing to inaugurate a ‘Year of Mercy’ on December 8’.



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Blessing for Thornton Head

Members of school staff, pupils, parents, governors and representatives from NORES joined Mrs Jo Storey on September 17th to celebrate her induction Mass as the new Head of Thornton College.

The huge gathering in the school's chapel included members of Mrs Storey's family, friends and staff from her former school, New Hall, in Chelmsford. Mgr Kevin McGinnell concelebrated Mass with Fr. Mervyn Williams, Mgr Sean Healy, Fr Anthony McNeill and Fr. Lawrence Mulinda.

Pauren Hollis from Year 11 led the Gloria and Mrs Storey's daughter Sinead sang 'Make me a channel of your peace'. It was a beautiful occasion and a fitting start to Mrs Storey's commencement as Head of the school.



Up, up and away

Our last day of term and we celebrated a successful year by releasing 400 balloons at our end of Year Mass.

Our Headteacher Mr Jon Davis said: "This celebration is dedicated to our pupils' achievements from Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 through to Key Stage 2. We would like to share this good news with families, friends and our community. The children have achieved huge success this year and they are getting better and better."

The balloons also represent the aspirations for the children's future and to mark the fact that our children know that at St Gregory's the sky's the limit. We attached a note to the balloons asking that whoever finds them to email the details of where they have landed, the way the wind was blowing we hope to get replies from Denmark.

Miss Madeline Biggs

The 2015 Real Advent Calendar Launches

The Meaningful Chocolate Company is hoping to donate £15,000 from sales of its 2015 Real Advent Calendar to help fund a baby clinic in Kenya and support overseas farmers through Traidcraft Exchange.

However, it is not just the charitable donation that makes The Real Advent Calendar unique. This year it includes a 32-page Christmas story/activity booklet illustrated by Sophie Allsopp and designed to be used every day in Advent. The new booklet includes all the traditional nativity characters, gives more detail about the Christmas story and has seven Advent challenges. The calendar also comes with 24 Fairtrade Belgian chocolates and a line of the Christmas story behind each of the windows.

David Marshall, from The Meaningful Chocolate Company, said: 'Recent surveys show that knowledge of the Christmas story is fading. The Real Advent Calendar is part of a campaign which hopes to reverse this trend by finding

new ways to share the story. By buying this Advent calendar children, parents and Godparents can share the Christmas story throughout December.'

How to buy

The Real Advent Calendar costs £3.99. Churches, schools and groups can buy directly from The Meaningful Chocolate Company by visiting our special website at www.realadvent.co.uk and take advantage of a free delivery offer.

Retailers stocking the calendar include larger Tesco stores, Traidcraft, Eden.co.uk, Shared Earth, CLC Bookshops and a number of cathedrals. Details at www.realadvent.co.uk

Launching this year's calendar, TV presenter Diane Louise Jordan said: 'Not only is the calendar educational and made from Fairtrade chocolate but it's a great opportunity to raise funds to help equip and support The Funzi and Bodo Trust baby clinic in Kenya.'

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Bulk orders Churches, schools and groups can buy in bulk directly from us at www.realadvent.co.uk/shop Order from us before 1/11/2015 we will give you free delivery. We supply in boxes of 18. A range of independent retailers, bookshops and cathedrals have stocks of the advent calendars. Traidcraft, TLM, Eden.co.uk and Embrace the Middle East also have stocks and some can send bulk and singles.

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Tesco is the only supermarket selling the calendar, but only in their larger stores.

See website for details: www.realadvent.co.uk/shop