



The Vine

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April 2017

Issue No. 334

Northampton Diocesan News

FREE Every Month

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Day**

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The first Pope to enter a Anglican church



Pope Francis enjoys his first visit to an Anglican church. The first pope to enter an Anglican church which is not a cathedral, he attended Evensong at the Anglican Centre near Rome's Spanish Steps on November 1.



On a hill far away stood an old
wooden cross, the emblem of
suffering and shame.



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Rome

Robert Innes, the Anglican bishop in Europe, reflected on Pope Francis's visit to the Anglican church in Rome.

As far as we are aware, the first time a Roman Pontiff has visited any 'ordinary' Anglican parish.

Innes added: We gathered to celebrate 200 years of Anglican worship in Rome ... At the beginning of the 19th century Anglican worship in the city was illegal. The first public services took place in 1816. Gradually, but reluctantly, the authorities allowed public worship to be celebrated. But police were posted, presumably to make sure that the Catholic faithful were not tempted to join in.

Now the community of All Saints has a centre near the Spanish steps, a woman priest and state recognition.

Jerusalem



Restoration work at the site of the empty tomb in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre will be finished by Easter, the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land has announced.

Restoration work on the "Edicule"—the shrine at the site where Jesus was buried—has taken nine months and cost \$3.3 million. The costs were borne by the Franciscan Custody, the Greek Orthodox Church, and the Armenian Orthodox Church. Jordan's King Abdallah II made a personal donation to support the work, as did Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. An ecumenical celebration on March 22 will mark completion of the work.

Although the Edicule itself is now stable, experts say that another extensive renovation project is necessary to address the problems that damaged the structure: the excess humidity and smoke from candles in the ancient Jerusalem basilica. The Vatican has promised "substantial" support for that project.

During the restoration of the Edicule, workers who were close to Jesus' tomb reported odd phenomena, including a "sweet aroma" and malfunctioning of electronic instruments, suggestive of a powerful electromagnetic force.

Medjugorje

Bishop Ratko Peric of Mostar-Duvno, in whose diocese Medjugorje is located, has issued a public statement repeating his insistence that "there have been no apparitions of Our Lady in Medjugorje."

Bishop Peric, who has consistently argued against the validity of the reported apparitions, made a public reminder of the stance taken by his diocese, after investigation of the phenomena: "The position of the chancery of this diocese has been clear and decisive: there are no credible apparitions of the Virgin Mary."

The bishop did not give a reason for the timing of his statement. But earlier this month, Pope

Francis named Archbishop Henryk Hosier of Warszawa-Praga, Poland, as his special pastoral envoy to Medjugorje. The Polish archbishop was charged with "acquiring a deeper knowledge of the pastoral situation there and above all, of the needs of the faithful who go there in pilgrimage, and on the basis of this, to suggest possible pastoral initiatives for the future."

In 2014, a special Vatican investigative commission concluded its four-year study of the alleged apparitions and passed on its findings to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. To date the Vatican has made no comment on the results.



Correction

Mgr. Paul Donovan, of St. Augustine's, High Wycombe, died on February 8, 2017, and not as previously stated.

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We promise to print your news as soon as we can find space for it. Material should be emailed 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 children 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 on request.

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Sharing the light of Christ

Evangelisation teams, potential teams and Bible Timeline Leaders gathered from all over the Diocese for an Evangelisation Day on Saturday 4th February at St Mary Magdalene Church, Stony Stratford. The day was led by Alex Heath and members of the Diocesan Evangelisation Team.

We began with Mass in the Church after which we heard a reading from Luke 4:16-21, which showed us the need to being open to the Holy Spirit's anointing when we evangelise.

Maria Heath, a Pastoral Worker in the diocese, gave a talk on evangelising in our everyday life. She used Moses as an example as one who was called by God but did not want to go and made excuses. But God said he would be with him, and if we step in out in faith the Holy Spirit will be with us to guide and inspire us.

We discussed amongst ourselves what our excuses were! Maria pointed out that we are qualified because of our baptism, that we do not need to know it everything before we begin, and that we all have a story to share of what Jesus has done for us. Maria made the point that many Catholics can be uncomfortable speaking about their faith in God, but that our faith is not a private affair. She gave very practical examples from her own life on how to speak to others about our faith. She encouraged us to ask people, when the opportunity arises, simple questions prompting people to think about God.

The afternoon was focused on practical ideas from parishes in the diocese and ways to go forward in our own parish. It was stressed whatever we do we must discuss and have the approval of our parish priest.

Teresa Carvalho talked about her new role at the Home Mission Desk, which is to support and resource evangelisation. Kevin Drew from Luton spoke about how his parish had set up an evangelisation team after the Proclaim '15 Conference in July 2015 and some of the initiatives they had undertaken since.

We heard from High Wycombe about the 'Try Praying' initiative. This is a simple resource for churches or anyone who wants to share their faith. A simple booklet is read and passed on. It has been very successful

in towns and cities where churches of different denominations have together used it and paid for banners on buses and outside churches with the logo trypraying. (www.trypraying.co.uk)

Jean Merriman from Sacred Heart Parish in Northampton spoke of how they put on, with other Christian churches, a 'flash mob' in the shopping centre at Christmas. They acted out the Nativity and carols were sung, many joined in, and baubles were given out with invites to a Christmas Carol Service. Also, they ran a free gift wrapping service to highlight the truth that Jesus is the free gift of God to us all.

We also heard Sr. Dymna from Bedford who shared about the Bible Timeline Groups they have been running very successfully, and how this has grown.

Bernie Garfitt from Burnham, Slough shared how she is using 'Landings' in her parish, having experienced the course herself. It is a listening and sharing programme, which offers returning Catholics a safe environment to reflect upon, explore and grow their faith. It promotes fellowship in Christ and a sense of belonging.

The day ended with scripture and prayer to go out and share the Good News.

Two of us who attended from Towcester and returned full of renewed enthusiasm and ideas of what we can implement in our parish and in our everyday life. It was good to share with others and encouraging hearing what was going on around the diocese.

'We will go out to share the light of Christ'!



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Pastoral Letter for Lent

In his Pastoral Letter for Lent 2017 Bishop Peter stressed the mercy of God. 'God never forgets us, and God never stops loving us. But do we really believe that? We can be all too conscious of failure, of weakness and of sinfulness. We feel unworthy to be Christ's servants, and unable to open ourselves up to God's loving and forgiving embrace.

Yet, the Good News we are called to believe is that our God is a God of mercy and compassion. That is our faith, and that is what we should be reflecting in all that we do and say in our parishes this Lent. Sinners, like you and me, should feel welcome and given the confidence to turn back to God. Then we can celebrate happily the Sacrament of Penance and fulfil our Easter duties.

Pope Francis speaks of generating 'a culture of mercy'. None of us likes to be a failure. Yet how many of us feel that we are failures even though we appear able to cope? That is why a culture of mercy is so important in your parish or school. Then we can accompany one another in turning back to Christ. We can be confident in inviting people on the edge of our family or of our community to join us on the constant journey of repenting and being converted'.

Bishop Peter encouraged us to accompany one another; new members of the Church and priests taking on extra responsibilities. 'Be positive in your outlook this Lent and give them to pray with real faith and with real belief'.

The Bishop reminds us that we see and hear bad news about the Church in the media. 'Wrongs done in the name of the Church must be put right. But that necessary process can undermine faith and obscure all the good that you, the priests and people, do in the service of Christ. Keep going, trusting in the God who never forgets us'.



Annual Mass for Religious

Thirty two sisters and priests attended the annual Mass for Religious in Northampton Cathedral. Held on the second of February each year, it was arranged by Vicar For Religious, Sister Yvonne Pilarski of Milton Keynes.

'Today we give thanks to God for those who live out the call to holiness in a special way in the consecrated life, our religious sisters, brothers and priests' said Bishop Peter in his homily. He went on to reflect on the presentation of Jesus in the temple..

'Last week I was in London for meetings at Archbishop's House, and there on the main staircase and in the Cardinal's chapel were Christmas cribs which will only be taken down after today's feast, this feast which completes the Christmas festival of light.

If you remember, we began Midnight Mass with the words of Isaiah - - "The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light. On those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone." The Christ child born in Bethlehem and laid in a manger, visited by shepherds and wise men from the East who knelt before him, the light of the world to whom the wise men gave everything on which they had to live as they came on pilgrimage to seek God's will for them, is now carried by Mary and Joseph into the Temple, in accordance with the law of the Lord, as a first-born to be presented and consecrated to almighty God.

The places of the shepherds and the wise men are taken by two elderly and faithful people, Simeon and Anna. They

were faithful to God's promises and, therefore, were open to the fulfilment of those promises. The Gospel speaks of the Holy Spirit resting on Simeon and that, prompted by the Spirit, he went up to the temple. Somehow he knew that the child he took from Mary's arms was the fulfilment of God's promise, "a light to enlighten the pagans and the glory of God's people, Israel." But he also prophesied that the fulfilling of God's promise would be a hard road. The shadow of the cross falls across the scene - "You see this child: he is destined for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel" - above all, the dying and the rising of Jesus himself, and the suffering that would also be endured by his mother, Mary.

The eighty-four year old widow, Anna, who served God day and night in the temple with fasting and prayer, recognises Jesus, too, as Saviour.

In a way this episode in the Gospel of Luke champions the role of the elderly within the Church in their witness to Christ through their prayerfulness, their wisdom and their perception. But, whatever our age, each of us has a part to play in reflecting the light of Christ and the hope he brings.

Reflecting that light and hope is a challenge as we can walk in darkness when the inner soul of our being is darkened by our personal sin and addiction. It can take a long time and often something shattering needs to happen before we recognise the darkness in which we are walking and our need for help. Likewise, Isaiah also speaks of people living in a land of deep shadow. It seems that



it is not just a people living in deep shadow, but the whole world. There is fear and uncertainty like never before even about our identity, about our gender, and about truth. People are feeling insecure and we can react defensively and aggressively. the light of Christ That is why it is so important to hold onto the light of Christ, to pray for a deepening of faith that Jesus is the truth, the way and the life. That is what gives us hope, and, if we are people of hope, the light of Christ will shine out of us.

That witness to Christ, that living out of holiness is a call common to us all who are baptised. Today we give thanks to God for those who live out that call to holiness in a special way in the consecrated life, our religious sisters, brothers and priests.

At the end of the Year of Consecrated Life this time last year, Pope Francis urged the religious to be faithful to the call they had received, and to grow in love, in giving, and in creativity. The Holy Father offered three words - prophecy, proximity and hope. He asked that you be prophetic, that in

your life and in your words you speak God, you speak the reality of God, and that your speaking is rooted in prayer. He asked that, like Jesus, you may be close to people, sharing with them their joys and their sorrows, showing with your love the paternal face of God and the maternal caress of the Church. Then, by your speaking of the reality of God and by being close to people, you will instil hope, reflecting Christ our light in your honesty and compassion, in your goodness and in living a simple, essential and meaningful life.

On this feast of the Presentation of the Lord when so many of you took important steps in embracing the consecrated life, I want to salute you and thank you, dear sisters and brothers, for all you are and all you do and have done in the Diocese. I am so grateful that you have come together for this Mass.

Let us ask the prayers of Mary, who presented Jesus in the temple, may, by the power of the Holy Spirit, be bearers of Christ in simple and profound ways to our families and friends and to all among whom we live.

Bedford Catenians celebrate marriage

On Saturday 11 Feb 2017 at the church of Christ the King, Bedford, Bishop Peter Doyle presided at a Mass in Celebration of Marriage.

During the service, three Catenian Brothers from the Bedford Circle (177) were presented with Certificates to celebrate a total of 160

years of Marriage. Bro Peter and Pam McPoland (60 years), Bro Hal and Ann Cawley (50 years) and Bro Lino and Carol Perla (50 years).

All three Brothers are very active members of the Bedford Circle and have held a number of

“Officer Roles” within the Circle. Between them they have 8 children, 17 grand children and 5 great grand children.

The attached photo shows Left to Right, Hal and Ann Cawley, Bishop Peter Doyle and Carol and Lino Perla.



Fatima centenary comes to Billing



upon the messages and devotions of Fatima for our lives and that of our families and communities, especially at this time of great change in this nation and in Europe.

100 years offers us the window to seek God through the intercession of Our Lady, together, on pilgrimage with the saints to echo the call from Our Lady to Pray, Pray, Pray. Let us open our hearts to renew our lives, our families and our nations, consecrating them afresh to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

There is no cost to the pilgrimage but only 100 places are available and booking is essential. Mass will be celebrated as well as opportunity for adoration, Fatima devotions and talk, Rosary, veneration and a procession.

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100 years of Our Lady of Fatima is to be celebrated in the Diocese of Northampton with Bishop Peter Doyle on her feast day of 13th May at our Diocesan shrine of Our Lady in Great Billing. On this centenary, this pilgrimage offers a special opportunity for those not able to attend Fatima, to bring the intentions of their families to the shrine, where one of the few authenticated hand-crafted copies of the original icon of Our lady of Perpetual Succour in Rome is housed.

100 years offers us the opportunity to reflect

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THE VIRGIN EYE

by Robin Daniels

The Virgin Eye by Robin Daniels inspires us to see the world anew through the innocent eyes of a child, so as to become more aware of God's presence in everyday life and encounters.

This book offers insights into contemplative prayer and mindfulness; making wise decisions; enjoying a creative relationship; slowing down; and managing change and stress. Daniels demonstrates how we can put St Paul's challenge request to 'pray without ceasing' into practice. He explores how we can turn suffering and trial into opportunity and growth, as we learn to see God, ourselves and other people with a pure heart and a pure eye

This book is a treasure.
Sister Wendy Beckett, Art Critic, BBC's Sister Wendy's Odyssey

I wish it had been available years ago. It should be required reading.
Roy Godwin, Executive Director, The Flaid-y-Brenin Trust and author of The Grace Outpouring

Highly recommended!
Brian M. Noble, Emeritus Bishop of Shrewsbury

It is less a book and more a journey which will not fail to transform your relationship with God, self and others.
Teresa Onions, Director of Pastoral Care UK for the Association of Christian Counsellors

It will be a blessing for all into whose hands it happens to fall.
Canon John Udris, Spiritual Director, St Mary's College, Oscott

This wonderful book is a fount of wisdom.
Fr Vincent O'Hara, OCD, Director of the Avila Centre

Called and chosen for Easter

Northampton Cathedral saw its usual excitement on the first Sunday of Lent. Candidates for baptism, and those preparing for full membership of the Church were clearly touched by the formality, and the informality, of the occasion. They saw bishop and deacons vested in Lenten splendour. They were formally recommended to Bishop Peder by godparents and sponsors. They queued in the cathedral aisle to sign the Book of the Elect. And then those precious moments of conversation with the Bishop.

Today I will be giving the thumbs up to those of you who are going to be baptised and those of you who are being received into the Church. This is only possible because of all those who have sup-

ported you. Its something of a mystery how we come to this point. Sometimes it's a mystery to me why I'm standing here. Well, the whole of the Christian life is a mystery. But we know that God is with us. We need to ask whether we are listening to God's call, and listening attentively. That is what the word obedient means: to listen attentively.

Afterwards they proudly showed family and friends their names inscribed in the Book of the Elect. They may have hoped that our photographer, Steve Harris, had caught them in his lens. And hope beyond hope they may even have wondered if the editor The Vine would put them on his centre pages.



Pictures by Steve Harris of Nymo



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Creation and new creation

Scripture in the liturgy for Easter

The first reading we hear at the Easter Vigil is the great story of creation from the opening chapter of Genesis. In his recent document *Laudato Si'* (On Care for our Common Home), Pope Francis states that the Genesis creation accounts contain profound teachings about human existence, expressed in their own symbolic and narrative language. According to Pope Francis, these accounts indicate that human life involves three interconnected relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself. The Bible also shows how human sin has disrupted these three vital relationships.

God originally created human beings in his image and likeness. The ancient Israelites understood that because humanity is made in God's image, there was no need for any idols to represent the divinity. Genesis teaches us that there is no need for carved images of God, as human beings are made in God's likeness.

Ancient oriental societies often regarded the king as God's deputy, and the king was represented all over the kingdom by means of statues. But Genesis 1 democratizes this notion: all humanity was made in God's image. In early societies, the monarch had dominion over the whole land. But in Genesis, the command to have dominion over all living things was given by God, not just to kings, but to all humanity.

Because Genesis democratizes the ancient oriental idea of kingship, God commands all humanity to have dominion and subdue the earth. However, some environmentalists have criticized this mandate. They think the Bible allows human beings to exploit the planet by aggressively mining for metals, polluting the atmosphere, cutting down

rain forests, and allowing the extinction of rare animals. Instead, most biblical interpreters see Genesis as offering a mandate for human stewardship of the earth.

Pope Francis sees environmental destruction as an external symptom of human sin in mistreating the world made by God. "The harmony between the Creator, humanity and creation as a whole was disrupted by our presuming to take the place of God and refusing to acknowledge our creaturely limitations. This in turn distorted our mandate to have dominion over the earth, to till it and keep it. As a result, the originally harmonious relationship between human beings and nature became conflictual."

The first chapter of Genesis reminds us that we are creatures and not God. Indeed, the earth was here before us and it has been entrusted to the care of humanity. To be sure, because the Genesis account speaks of human beings having dominion over the earth, some authors have blamed Judeo-Christian thinking for encouraging the unbridled exploitation of nature by painting humanity as domineering and destructive by nature. According to Pope Francis, this is not a correct interpretation of the Bible as understood by the Church.

The pope admits: "Although it is true that we Christians have at times incorrectly interpreted the Scriptures, nowadays we must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God's image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures." Instead, the biblical texts need to be read appropriately in their context, recognizing that the second chapter of Genesis tells us to till and keep the garden of the world.

The environmental movement has led to a renewed appreciation of the interconnectedness of all creation. As

human beings, we have become more aware of our identity as creatures living within a global ecosystem. Hence the Pope says: "In our time, the Church does not simply state that other creatures are totally subordinated to the good of human beings, as if they have no worth in themselves and can be treated as we wish. The German bishops have taught that, where other creatures are concerned, we can speak of the priority of being over that of being useful."

We read this opening chapter of Genesis at the Easter Vigil in the context of our celebration of Christ's resurrection. By rising again, Christ restored us to life, so that we can truly become the image of God. As the catechism says: "It is in Christ, Redeemer and Saviour, that the divine image (disfigured in humanity by the first sin) has been restored to its original beauty."

At the beginning of Lent, we recalled God's words to sinful Adam: "Dust you are and to dust you shall return." Yet now we are offered the promise of eternal life with God in heaven. Alleluia. "Almighty ever-living God, you are wonderful in the ordering of all your works. May those you have redeemed understand that there exists nothing more marvellous than the world's creation in the beginning—except that, at the end of the ages, Christ our Passover has been sacrificed."

[For weekly notes on the Sunday readings see: www.tarsus.ie]

[For Pope Francis' document *Laudato Si'* online, see: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html].

Notes by
Fr Jeremy Corley

Miracle for Cambridge

A wooden Italian doll has been hailed as 'a miracle'. The 15th century doll of the Christ Child was due to be an exhibit in the Spring exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. It had never left Italy before.

But then an earthquake struck the Marche area of Italy last October, destroying large parts of the Franciscan convent in the town of Camerino, where the figure is an object of veneration. Crowds of people gathered to honour it on the feast of the Epiphany.

Yet despite all the destruction the Christ Child survived. Mother Chiara Laura Serboli, mother superior of the

religious community, was able to take a photograph and send it to Cambridge. 'It adds another miracle to the exhibitions title', said a spokeswoman for the museum.

The figure was created for Camilla Battista da Varano, a fifteenth century mystic who is said to have experienced visions of the Madonna kissing and nursing the Christ Child.

The figure will be the highlight of the Fitzwilliam Museum's show 'Madonnas and Miracles: the Holy Home in Renaissance Italy, which runs from March 7 to June



CAFOD Volunteers and supporters get inspired



More than 65 volunteers and supporters from over 34 parishes in the Northampton Diocese attended the two CAFOD Supporters' days held at St Martin de Porres (Luton) and St Joseph (Gerrard's Cross) in February. We were thrilled to have several teenagers attend too which was marvelous!

These meetings are wonderful opportunities for people to meet others from their parish and pastoral areas and gives them a chance to build friendships and ask for /offer support to others. Monica from the SE Bucks Pastoral Area said, "I feel so much more supported having now met volunteers from my pastoral area".

The day started with an opening reflection on the Beatitudes which included the six "additional" Beatitudes, put forward by Pope Francis on All Saints Day in 2016, to "recognize and respond to new situations with fresh spiritual energy". Many found this so inspiring and asked to share it in their parishes.

There was a thank you video message from Bishop Peter, followed by a speaker for each day from CAFOD's programme work in Southern African and Colombia. All were invited to leave messages of solidarity to be sent to our friends in Colombia.

Deborah Purfield (CAFOD Coordinator for the Northampton Diocese) gave an update on donations received from Harvest 2016. Nationally parishes, schools and individuals raised approximately £1.4m, £103k and £252k respectively. In the Northampton Diocese we raised £48k, £6k and £9k respectively. Thank you to all

who supported the Fast Day. We couldn't do our great work without your amazing generosity and help!

Throughout the day people had opportunities to chat and share ideas. Sheila, a new volunteer from St Augustine's High Wycombe said, "I got to meet others from my parish for the first time which is great. We were able to discuss how best to promote CAFOD in the parish and I felt all geared up to go!"

Deborah spoke about CAFOD's vision of a world transformed to reflect the Kingdom of God where the rights and dignity of every person are respected, where all have access to basic needs and where the gifts of creation are shared by all for the common good. She spoke of CAFOD's work in Zambia (the Lent fast day focus country) which helps people become self-sufficient by running their own artisanal businesses such as fish farming and bee keeping. These projects have transformed the lives of people in some of the world's poorest communities.

The day concluded with a shared lunch where more discussions took place. Dinah's (Our Lady - Kempston) feedback seemed to reflect the general feeling from both days, "it was a really terrific and worthwhile day. I felt so inspired and want to do so much more now! Thanks so much"

If you are interested in CAFOD's work or would like to volunteer in schools or in your parish please get in touch with Deborah Purfield northampton@cafod.org.uk or call 01844 274 723.



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Growing older gracefully

We know we are all “Beloved Disciples of Our Lord”, but it can be easy to forget as we move on in life - into the Third Age and beyond! Pope Francis has been reminding us all that ‘older people are a treasure’. And this short course confirms that and affirms and encourages those who might be doubting their infinite worth and value.

Parish Priest Fr Paul Hardy at St Edward

the Confessor Milton Keynes agreed to run this profound and enjoyable course which comprised four 1.5 hour sessions over four weeks. Pauline Gray and her team led 15 of our ‘mature’ parishioners who felt it would help them to feel new value and serve with fresh confidence.

The course involves a DVD with Key speakers David Wells and David Payne plus en-

gaging testimonials from older people around the UK. Opportunities to share the impact of the messages and personal experiences are built into the sessions which helped parishioners grow closer and learn from each other.

DAVID WELLS is a Schools' Advisor in the Plymouth Diocese. A sought-after speaker whose contemporary theology, humour and story-telling reach out to the head and to the heart. He has written two very popular books.

DAVID PAYNE is the Director of CaFE helping people to get more out of their faith. He is an inspiring speaker, author of four books and regularly leads parish missions & retreats.

What participants said about this course: “The combination of DVD to watch and questions for discussion in an informal

setting helped us to share openly how we felt about our faith and our relationships with God.”

“We found it spiritually enriching, also fun and good to explore faith in our mature years with fellow parishioners.”

“A very illuminating and thought provoking short course. I found David Wells’ and David Paynes’ narratives and insights very positive regarding the part that members of the older generation can contribute to the Church and the community. The gentle humour underpinning the video made it easy to watch and enjoyable. The drama of the “Photographer Father” was extremely emotional and left our group speechless as it was so moving. I would recommend this to all parishioners.”

I will be showing this to another two groups.

A thought provoking short course. The discussions generated were interesting and faith confirming.

“All Parishes should offer this course – and it’s definitely worth watching more than once!”



**Your next deadline?
April 3**

Can you help?



Mothering Sunday Sacred and secular

Mothering Sunday is a holiday celebrated by Catholic and Protestant Christians in some parts of Europe. It falls on the fourth Sunday in Lent, exactly three weeks before Easter. Once observed as a day on which people would visit their "mother" church, it has become an occasion for honouring the mothers of children and giving them present. It is increasingly being called Mother's Day, although that has always been a secular event quite different from the original Mothering Sunday.[1] In the UK and the Republic of Ireland, Mothering Sunday is celebrated in the same way as Mother's Day is celebrated elsewhere.

During the sixteenth century, people returned to their mother church, the main church or cathedral of the area, for a service to be held on Laetare Sunday. This was either the church where you were baptised, or the local parish church, or more often the nearest cathedral. Anyone who did this was commonly said to have gone "a-mothering", although whether this term preceded the observance of Mothering Sunday is unclear. In later times, Mothering Sunday became a day when domestic servants were given a day off to visit their mother church, usually with their own mothers and other family members. It was often the only time that whole families could gather together, since on other days they were prevented by conflicting working hours, and servants were not given free days on other occasions.[3]

Children and young people who were "in service" (as household servants) were given a day off on that date so they could visit their families (or, originally, return to their "mother" church). The children would pick wild flowers along the way to place in the church or give to their mothers. Eventually, the religious tradition evolved into the Mothering Sunday secular tradition of giving gifts to mothers.

By the 1920s the custom of keeping Mothering Sunday had tended to lapse in Ireland and in continental Europe.[4] In 1914, inspired by Anna Jarvis's efforts in the United States, Constance Penswick-Smith created the Mothering Sunday Movement and in 1921 she wrote a book asking for the revival of the festival; Constance was the daughter of the vicar of Coddington, Nottinghamshire, and there is a memo-

rial in Coddington's church. Its widescale revival was through the influence of American and Canadian soldiers serving abroad during World War II; the traditions of Mothering Sunday, still practised by the Church of England and Church of Ireland were merged with the newly imported traditions and celebrated in the wider Catholic and secular society. UK-based merchants saw the commercial opportunity in the holiday and relentlessly promoted it in the UK; by the 1950s, it was celebrated across all the UK.

People from Ireland and the UK started celebrating Mother's Day on the same day that Mothering Sunday was celebrated, the fourth Sunday in Lent. The two celebrations have now been mixed up, and many people think that they are the same thing.

Lady Day fell on the vernal equinox. In Roman Times, this was symbolically equated with the mythical resurrection of Attis.

Consequently, the Romans celebrated the feast of Hilaria, at this time of year, dedicated to the mother goddess Cybele. In remembrance of the mythical death of Attis, Hilaria was preceded by approximately two weeks of fasting, like Mothering Sunday (in the form of the first half of Lent).

The other names attributed to this festival include Refreshment Sunday, Pudding Pie Sunday (in Surrey, England), Mid-Lent Sunday.[10] Simnel Sunday and Rose Sunday. Simnel Sunday is named after the practice of baking simnel cakes to celebrate the reuniting of families during the austerity of Lent. Because there is traditionally a relaxation of Lenten vows on this particular Sunday in celebration of the fellowship of family and church, the name Refreshment Sunday is sometimes used, although rarely today.

Rose Sunday is sometimes used as an alternative title for Laetare Sunday, as is witnessed by the purple robes of Lent being replaced in some churches by rose-coloured ones. The 1913 Catholic Encyclopedia asserts that "the Golden Rose, sent by the Popes to Catholic sovereigns, used to be blessed at this time, and for this reason the day was sometimes called 'Dominica de Rosa'." This Sunday was also once known as the "Sunday of the Five Loaves", from the traditional Gospel reading for the day.



Prior to the adoption of the "common" lectionaries, the Gospel reading for this Sunday in the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Western-Rite Orthodox, and Old Catholic churches was the story of the feeding of the five thousand (for instance, the Anglican Book of Common Prayer stipulates St

John's Gospel 6:5–14).

The Epistle for the fourth Sunday in Lent as set out in the Book of Common

Prayer and The 1962 Missal of Roman Catholic Church give a special place to the theme of maternal love: Galatians 4:26 states that "Jerusalem which is above is free; which is Mother of us all." [1]

Another tradition associated with Mothering Sunday is the practice of "clipping the church", whereby the congregation form a ring around their church building and, holding hands, embrace it.



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