

FASTING AND FEASTING

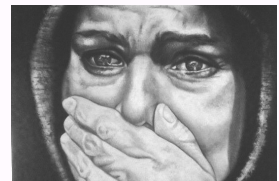
Fast from judging others; **feast on Christ living in them.**
Fast from emphasis on differences; **feast on the unity of all life.**
Fast from apparent darkness; **feast on the reality of light.**
Fast from thoughts of illness; **feast on the healing power of God.**



Fast from words that pollute; **feast on phrases that purify.**
Fast from discontent; **feast on gratitude.**
Fast from anger; **feast on patience.**
Fast from pessimism; **feast on optimism.**
Fast from worry; **feast on trust.**

Fast from complaining; **feast on appreciation.**
Fast from negatives; **feast on affirmatives.**
Fast from unrelenting pressures; **feast on unceasing prayer.**
Fast from hostility; **feast on non-resistance.**

Fast from bitterness; **feast on forgiveness.**
Fast from self-concern; **feast on compassion for others.**
Fast from discouragement; **feast on hope.**
Fast from lethargy; **feast on enthusiasm.**



Fast from thoughts of weakness; **feast on promises that inspire.**
Fast from shadows of sorrow; **feast on the sunlight of serenity.**
Fast from idle gossip; **feast on purposeful silence.**
Fast from problems that overwhelm; **feast on prayer that sustains.**

Fast from everything that separates us from the Lord
FEAST ON EVERYTHING THAT DRAWS US TO THE LORD

– Attributed to William Arthur Ward



EDITORIAL TEAM

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We accept letters by post (c/o Parish Office, 1 Hamilton Road, Sidcup DA15 7HB, marked "The Voice"), or email to either of the abovementioned email addresses. Please include your name, address (postal and email), and telephone contact details.

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Editors' Note

Dear Readers,

Although we may be a quarter of the way through 2018, it is never too late to share goodwill. So, happy New Year to all, and if encouragement is needed to be resolute with those resolutions, keep going!

This being the Spring issue, hope must spring eternal as all thoughts turn to some kind of "awakening". The physical evidence is all around: buds springing forth, trees regaining their foliage, and longer light-filled days (the 'Beast from the East' and Storm Emma notwithstanding!). For some, though, you take whatever light you can get, or even go chasing after it, as young Ethan Pereira so vividly recounts of his trip to Norway (Pg. 10).

Spring is also a time for our spiritual awakening through the preparation of Lent, leading to the ultimate victory that is Easter. The 'Fasting and Feasting' poem on the Cover Page shared by Lucy Labeja, reminds us that there is a different – more grace-filled way - of sharing thoughts, words and deeds.

Easter also brings into even sharper focus the virtue of service as personified by that greatest exemplar, Our Lord Jesus Christ. In that vein, we honour two such individuals, Terry Gibbs and Mary Hawes, for their long-standing service and commitment, which have enriched our parish immeasurably (Pgs. 28 and 34 respectively).

Did St. Peter write more than two letters? His namesake on Pg. 24 may provide the clue.

To practise what one preaches is a challenge: Mark Castelino, the inspiration behind the idea of faiths-sharing, proves it is possible. He and his friends, through their inter-faith appreciation, show us what a universal "church" could look like (Pg. 17).

*Celebrate and rejoice in the glory of Easter. A reminder at the same time to get 'cracking' and send us your submissions for the Summer issue! **Deadline: 18th May.***

Joan and Sheila



Joan



Sheila





St Peter Chanel Catholic Primary School

Inspire, Challenge & Empower
So through Christ we make a difference



St Peter Chanel Pre-School

Thank you to all parishioners who donated toys at Christmas to St. Peter Chanel Pre-School. We were overwhelmed by the response. The children are really enjoying playing with the toys and games.

St. Peter Chanel Pre-School is on the grounds of St. Peter Chanel Catholic Primary School. At St. Peter Chanel Pre-School, we strive to create a warm and stimulating environment where learning is fun. We engage in activities that promote and extend children's curiosity and awareness of their world.



Toy Sunday: 17th December, 2017

A very healthy response to requests for toys for the Pre-school group (just about enough room in front of the altar to contain them all!)



Exploring outside at Pre-School

Our primary focus is learning through play and exploration where we encourage children to grow in confidence, self-esteem and independence.

St. Peter Chanel Pre-School is an important part of the church community of St. Lawrence's, and we would like to develop this. We will be holding a baby/toddler session half-termly (once every 6 weeks) in the church hall after 10am Mass on Sunday. Please check the church newsletter for the next session, and pop in and say hello.

Grainne Edwards
Extended Services Manager



Inspire, challenge, empower, so through Christ we can make a difference



ST. LAWRENCE'S PARISH NOTICES

'CLAIMING FOR CHRIST' AS WE WELCOME INTO OUR PARISH FAMILY IN BAPTISM

Aoibhinn Aimé McCarthy	02.12.17
Esme Nia Simisola Pomaa Kwakye	10.12.17
Joshua Agu Lamina.	16.12.17
Farida Balogun	16.12.17
Leona-Rae Onwuka	16.12.17
Ella Kay Graimes.	11.02.18
Csenge Varga	25.02.18



MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

"For we know that when the tent we live in on earth is folded up, there is a house built by God for us, an everlasting home not made by human hands, in the heavens."

[2 Corinthians 5: 1]

◆ Arthur Frederick Thomas	04.11.17
◆ Ester Boyle	30.11.17
◆ Mary Agnes Sullivan	09.12.17
◆ Noel Bernard D'Cruze	10.12.17
◆ Anne Melia	01.01.18
◆ Cuthbert Perry Jean-Louis	11.01.18
◆ June Pryce	12.01.18
◆ Marian & Frederick Coe	12.01.18
◆ Barbara Flanagan	14.01.18
◆ Patricia Mary O'Keeffe	20.01.18
◆ Jean Mary Buckley	10.02.18

Anniversaries:



One year

Wenceslaus Joseph Reginald (23.10.52 - 12.02.17)
[Memorial Service held on 10.02.18]



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PARISH NOTICEBOARD

What's ^{up} in the parish...

A FEW HIGHLIGHTS OF 2017...

CHRISTMAS FAYRE
SATURDAY, 18TH NOVEMBER



Remembering Trudy Custy, parishioner who sadly passed away in September '17, and was well-known for her delectable confections, especially in support of the church fair



Young Amelia with 'Fr. Christmas' and a very happy-looking 'elf'



Has Deacon Peter (in the middle of photo) drawn the lucky ticket for someone (as Fr. John looks on expectantly)?



No need for a wedding at Cana!

OVER £4,000 raised!

ADVENT SUNDAY

Celebrating with our brothers and sisters of,
THE PARISH CHURCH OF HOLY TRINITY, LAMORBEY
Sunday, 3rd December



Our very own **Christmas Carol Service** was held at St. Lawrence's on 21st December at 7.30pm: a very well orchestrated event that combined readings, carols, a sermon, as well as Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.



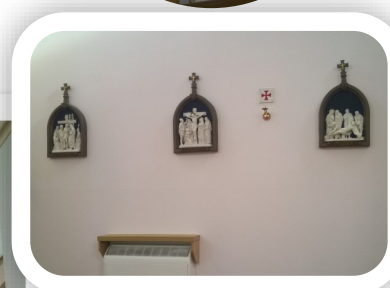
The reception in the hall rounded off the warm feelings of joy and anticipation - nurtured by the service just celebrated, and not solely attributable to the mulled wine on offer, of course!



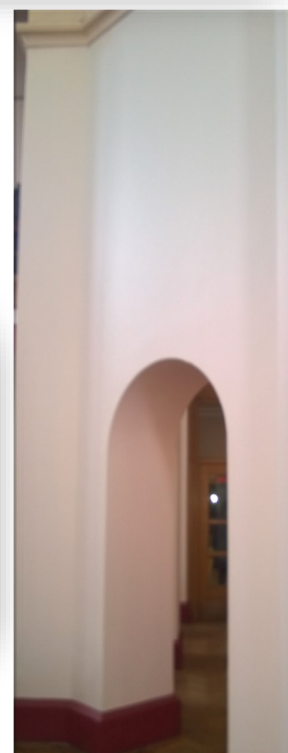
NEW YEAR, NEW CHURCH!

As mentioned in our Autumn 2017 issue, the church was undergoing a facelift at the time. Over the course of some five weeks in September last year, the whole interior of the church was given a fresh coat of paint, which was sorely needed. Although undertaking such major works are usually an upheaval and inevitably involve a fair amount of disruption to normal schedules, the project was well-executed such that any inconveniences were kept to a minimum. In fact, Fr. John expressed his gratitude to the congregation for their understanding whilst the works were taking place (after all, it was for our collective benefit too!).

Almost as soon as the decorators had arrived with all their scaffolding and specialist machinery, they were gone and left behind a fresh, clean and crisp-looking church as the following pictures will testify!



**WET
PAINT**



LIGHTING UP WITH THE BIBLE

In early January, a newspaper article caught my eye, stating that as a result of the smoking ban in many UK prisons some prisoners were finding novel uses for Bible pages - ***to make cigarettes!*** [The article appeared in *The Daily Telegraph*; 06.01.2018.]

The prisoners in question were from HMP Garth, and it was a letter from one of the inmates to *Inside Time*, a prisoners' magazine, denouncing the practice, which was being reported on in the newspaper. Following is the actual letter as it appeared in the magazine:

Holy smoke

I am writing to highlight a problem that, as a committed Christian, I find highly offensive. I am referring to the use of pages from the Holy Bible being used as cigarette papers when smoking nicotine patches. Now, I know that the smoking ban is several shades of crazy and highly illegal. However, when did people think it was ok to rip The Bible up and effectively burn it? This is not OK.

Just for the record, I would feel exactly the same way if it was a Quran or the Torah or indeed any holy book. I would urge those doing this to stop immediately if they have any respect for other people's religions or beliefs.

"I am not sure whether this is an infringement of the Equality and Diversity Act, but if not then it should be."

I would also like to challenge any Christians who are doing this. I'm not judging you for doing it either, I am just saying that if Jesus was alive now do you think he would be ok with you tearing and burning his father's words? Also, if you are a Christian and are struggling with quitting then pray to god to help. Ask for forgiveness for destroying His word and as long as you are genuine he will forgive you.

[Published in *Inside Time* on Friday, 22nd December, 2017]

My reply (abridged) sent to the Publishing Editor of *Inside Time* on 08.01.2018:

"My initial reaction, as a practising Christian (same as the prisoner who highlighted the issue in the first place), was that it is NOT OK to deface a holy book – any holy book as he rightly stated - in this way...

I find this whole episode utterly abhorrent and intolerable, and now that this has come to light I cannot - in all conscience - let it go without saying something. I suppose I am grateful to the prisoner for making this issue known and to your newspaper for printing it.

I am co-editor of our local parish magazine, '*St. Lawrence's Voice*', and would like to feature the prisoner's letter in the next issue of the magazine - due out in March. My view in doing so is that something is broken and we need to fix it. Offensive as the actions are, I am not seeking any kind of retaliation - that would not be in the Christian spirit. I would like to put it to our readers to see if there was some way to redeem this situation, where prisons can still uphold the smoking ban and prisoners affected by it, find better ways of coping. More importantly, they (the prisoners) need to know that their behaviour is profane and disrespectful. Perhaps they ought to read the page of the Bible they have torn up before using it as a cigarette. Could we get some kind of dialogue going in a spirit of forgiveness, and maybe make a difference to inmates' lives? These are just some of my thoughts which I am hoping will effect positive actions to an issue which can potentially divide people into straightforward 'good' or 'bad'."

[As of going to print, I have not received any response/reaction to my letter.]

Sheila Pereira



CHILDREN'S VOICES

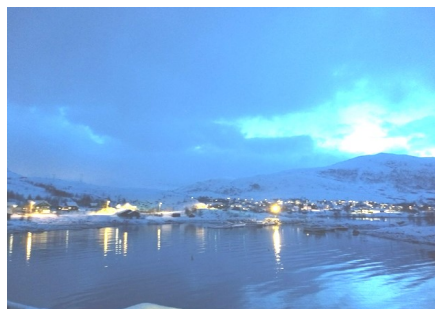
The City of White & Lights

By Ethan Pereira (13)



For me, our short four-day family trip to Norway was a break from reality and a step closer to a winter wonderland. That sense when a snowflake hits your face and the snow swirls around in blizzards is just magical. We landed at 5.00 o'clock in the evening at Tromsø Airport, Langnes, and were greeted by a snowstorm! Being a child living in a country where snow is a rarity, it was the best surprise ever. The airport was modern and well-decorated although, to my surprise, not cold. In order to make the most of our short stay, my parents hired a car so that we could see as much as possible. Finding the car initially was a challenge - it was buried under a blanket of snow in the parking lot!

We soon cleared the barrier from the parking lot to the motorway and were on the open road. After saying the Angelus, a short 15-minute drive brought us to our apartments at Ersfjordbotn in Tromsø. The location was ideal: near water with rolling snow-laden mountains in front and behind us. We settled down, had a nice warm meal and slept.



Tranquil view from our apartment

The next morning was delightful; we expected the sun to rise and Tromsø to become very bright but that was not the case! Even at 10.30 in the morning there was only a small amount of light. By the way, Tromsø is pronounced T-r-u-m-s-u (it's like you say trum-p su-shi, so *Trumsu*). Then we all got in the car and went to the Tourist Centre in the middle of the city. At the Tourist Centre we did advance bookings for a cross-country ski tour as well as a dog-sledding tour; we were told to meet at the Radisson Blu Hotel for both the activities. After a short pitstop at Eurospar (supermarket), we went to a small coastal town called Sommerøy and returned home at about 5pm, when we decided to go Northern Lights hunting.

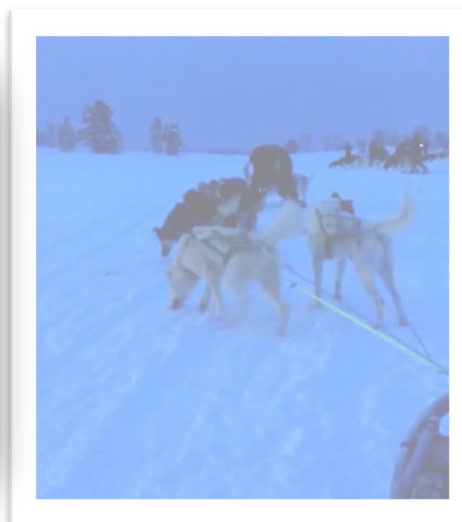
Having driven around for 30 minutes, we decided to take a small break just outside of Sommerøy. My older brother, Joshua (he's 15), and I left the car and started to walk around. In the space of minutes, I looked up and saw a swirl of colourless gas that soon started to appear green. I bashed on the windows to draw mum's and dad's attention; we all looked up and were delighted to see the **Northern Lights** for the first time! After a short journey home, we enjoyed a peaceful sleep that night, dreaming, no doubt, about the extremely beautiful scene we had witnessed earlier. Overall, it was an outstanding day.



The next two days were packed with activities, the first of which was cross-country skiing (as mentioned earlier). This took place in an official winter skiing park in the centre of Tromsø, and lasted for three hours! Tough on the whole body though it was, I learnt the basics of skiing and feel prepared for whenever I go again. No trouble falling asleep that night!



Joshua (my brother, the tall one!) and me at a puppy shelter



Dog sledding with the huskies

The following day we were up early, and by 7.30am already out the door, ready for our two-hour dog sledding excursion. Once again, the Radisson Blu Hotel was the meeting point: a bus for the dog sledding excursions picked us up from here and took us to a large lodge and dog shelter in Kvaløya.

We stood around and met a few of the dogs and then we were off in our own personal 'sleighs'. The sheer thrill and exhilaration of being whizzed along by a team of dogs was an unforgettable experience, with the whole ride lasting about 45 minutes. The rest of the time was taken up by visiting a puppy shelter and also a Norwegian hut, called a **Sami**. These highlights were a great way of bringing our stay in Norway to a close.



L to R: Joshua, Dad (Selwyn), Mum (Preeti) & me, outside a *Sami* (Norwegian hut)

We returned to the apartment, packed the final things and shortly after were on a plane back home.

Thankfully, we had the weekend to recover before school on Monday; no dogs or skis for transport - only the *No. 51 bus*!





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CHURCHES TOGETHER IN SIDCUP (CTiS)



RECENT EVENTS

Unity Service

Prepared by churches in the Caribbean with the theme, *That all will be free*, this year's service took place on a cold, wet January evening, but those who braved the unfavourable conditions heard Paul Weston deliver a stirring address, while his New Generation colleague – and current CTiS Chairman – Simon Dubbey, ably hosted proceedings. Despite the comparatively low turnout, this was, as ever, an occasion that lifted the spirits of all present.

Ministerial Changes:

Rev. Stephen Sealy has left the parish of St. John's to take up a new post in Norfolk, his replacement being Alyson Healy. As one of the most pro-active CTiS supporters of recent years, Stephen will undoubtedly be missed in Sidcup.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Lenten Lunches

Hosted by Christ Church on following Wednesdays in Lent from noon to 1.30pm: 21 February, 28 February, 7 March (lunch provided by St. Lawrence), 14 March and 21 March.

Good Friday Walk of Witness

Friday, 30 March, St. John's Church, Church Road. Gather from 9.30am for 9.45am sending off. Refreshments afterwards at Christ Church. All welcome.

AGM at Avery Hill Fellowship on 19 April is when Executive Committee appointments are made and this year it's the turn of the Catholic Church to provide a candidate. Anyone interested in filling this role (which involves attending 5 meetings per year), should contact Mike Conway (mjc999@hotmail.com) or Tom Baker (appledoreman@yahoo.co.uk) for further details.

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'Voices' that Speak...

A page for you to share all those inspiring moments, which ultimately deepen our relationship with God. The inspiration may come in the form of a particular prayer, picture, thought, what someone said, even mirth-inspiring jokes! - *anything* that makes an impression on you, and which may similarly inspire others. There is a certain joy and fulfilment that comes from wonderment, especially when it is totally unexpected, and gives rise to a generosity and selflessness that cannot be contained. That in itself is a beautiful prayer offering.



A husband phoned his wife and said, "No need to cook today; I will bring dinner from the Second Wife." When husband came home and knocked at the door, wife opened it. That's the only thing he remembered; husband now in ICU!

Identity of *The Second Wife*?



A restaurant!

CATHOLIC DOG

Muldoon lived alone in the Irish countryside with only a pet dog for company. One day the dog died, and Muldoon went to the parish priest and asked, 'Father, my dog is dead. Could ya be saying a Mass for the poor creature?' Father Patrick replied, 'I'm afraid not; we cannot have services for an animal in the church. But there are some Baptists down the lane, and there's no tellin' what they believe. Maybe they'll do something for the creature.' Muldoon said, 'I'll go right away, Father. Do ya think £5,000 is enough to donate to them for the service?' Father Patrick exclaimed, '**Sweet Mary, Mother of Jesus! Why didn't ya tell me the dog was Catholic?**'

DON'T QUIT

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low, and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but **don't you quit.**

Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As everyone of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about,
When he might have won had he stuck it out.
Don't give up though the pace seems slow,
You may succeed with another blow.

Success is failure turned inside out,
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far.
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit,
It's when things seem worse, that you must not
QUIT.



Perhaps that's what happens when one can't find a "Room to RENT"!

[Notice posted on boundary wall of store, on busy shopping street]



HOME-ILY

Taking the priest's words home for reflection

Your opportunity to share what struck you about the homily you heard, and why...

Simple rules:

1. Give a brief outline of the background to the homily i.e. whether a particular feast day, normal Sunday Mass etc.
2. Name of celebrant, and church Mass was celebrated in e.g. 'Fr.X of so-and-so church'. This is optional, so you can keep these details general but focus on the actual message instead.

The editors reserve the right to edit contributions for reasons of brevity and **fair comment** (for any of us, constructive criticism is useful - taking pot shots isn't). Well-deserved encomiums have a worthy place too - share them! Contact details on Page 2.

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle B): 11th February 2018

Today, being the last Sunday before Lent, there was no homily; instead, Fr. John (of our parish church, St. Lawrence) read a pastoral letter sent by Archbishop Peter Smith, which was to be read at all the Masses this weekend.

For me, the readings, Gospel as well as the Archbishop's message, were all interlinked. One sentence in particular stood out: the first line of Mark's gospel where the leper is pleading with Jesus and says, **"If you want to, you can cure me."** I thought it was a beautifully simple way of making a request while leaving the response entirely open. Most times just because we ask, we *expect* Jesus to do our bidding in the way we ask and for Him to be sharp about it! We are not so willing to accommodate a different plan of action because that would require a lot of patience as well as a very great leap of faith.

The Archbishop, in his letter, pointed out that while we may be tested during our days of fasting and six weeks of penance, the message of Lent is very clear: it is a message of **hope**. We begin to learn to trust more deeply in the person of Jesus, who says to each one of us, "I am with you till the end of time."

The letter went on to say: "Every day we can grow in the light and in the love of Christ. We can come closer to him through the narrow gates of prayer, fasting, of giving and using our time worthily. Jesus said, 'If you want to be a follower of mine, then take up your cross and renounce yourself'". However, there is always that time of temptation when we want to give in, when we want to think only of ourselves and to ignore the poverty and needs of others. Lent nudges us back into losing ourselves and to becoming more aware of Christ in the person of others.

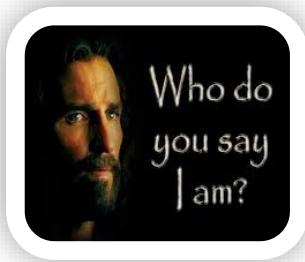
If the Lenten message is one of hope, Archbishop Peter also asked that we heed Pope Francis' call to renew our relationship with the Lord, or at least be open to having a communication with Him because 'the Lord does not disappoint those who take the risk.'

The letter concluded by saying: **"Lent is essentially an opportunity to be reborn and to grow in God's spirit. If we simply open our hearts to God through prayer, we will receive the gift of God's love and mercy."**

Going back to the scenario with the leper and his question to Jesus, perhaps through the observance of Lent we can give the same wholehearted and enthusiastic reply as Jesus did: **"Of course I want to!"**, to similarly express our unequivocal willingness to continually renounce ourselves and follow Christ.

Sheila Pereira





C. H. R. I. S. T.

Christian Hope Rests In Solidarity Together

A CELEBRATION OF MUTUAL LOVE AND RESPECT

Religion tends to be viewed as a journey towards enlightenment, the latter which can be interpreted for good or heinous intent. Mark Castelino's refreshing philosophy, one which he obviously practises as he preaches, is the *willingness* to learn and celebrate a commonality of faiths, born from his own perspective as a practising Roman Catholic. His words - and deeds - and that of his friends, bode well for the future of humanity where a belief in "God" allows for interpretation and celebration as unique and personal as each individual is.

In the testimonies that follow, Mark (and friends) present the prospect of being a believer that is both spiritually uplifting as it is liberating.

Mark's 'Gospel':

"I am a parishioner of the Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Bermondsey, a wonderfully warm and welcoming parish. For me, one of my church's most beautiful services is its annual Remembrance Mass, which is held the Monday following All Souls' Day. Names of loved and lost ones are painted onto scrolls, which are laid out in the aisle for the bereaved to lay flowers on, with the name of each person being read out. The scrolls from previous years are hung up on the walls around the church.



Mark Castelino:
bringing faiths together

The entire ensemble of music, hymns, getting together afterwards at the back of the church (with wine and nibbles), is such a special communal way of celebrating the love we have for our loved ones. Over the years, friends have started to join me regularly – not just Christian friends, but those who are Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and non-believers too.



This led me to suggest that we visit each other's parishes and worship together. During Advent [2017], we did exactly that: St. Mary's of Walthamstow (Church of England (CoE)), St. Andrew's Hampstead (United Reformed), St. Barnabas' Kensington (Anglican). We also visited the Central London Synagogue during Chanukah for the lighting of the candles, and attended a tour of the Hindu Temple in Neasden.

[Continued on Page 25]

CHILDREN'S MASS

At the 10.00am Mass on Sundays, during school term time, the children are offered a Children's Liturgy. After the first hymn and welcome from Fr. John Diver, the children are invited forward and then proceed out of Mass by the catechists to the St. Lawrence's Community Centre ("SLCC"). Here they can learn about the Gospel stories in ways suited to their age and needs.

7-year-olds and younger

Large upper room in SLCC

(Parents are welcome to attend with pre-school children, if necessary, where they can participate in the Liturgy of the Word with their children.)

All the Catechists are CRB-checked.

Parishioners who would like to volunteer as a catechist are always welcome. Please contact Fr. John Diver.



ST. LAWRENCE'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH CHURCH DIRECTORY

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website: www.stlawrenceschurch.org.uk

Deacon: Rev. Peter Varnes

Parish Priest: Fr. John Diver

Secretary: Mrs. Bridget Edwards

SERVICES

Sunday Masses: 6.30pm (Sat Vigil), 8.30, 10.00 & 11.30am

Weekday Masses: Mon-Sat 9.30am

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Wed 10.00am-12 noon & 5.00-7.00pm

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Sat after 9.30am Mass, 11.00am-12 noon,
6.00-6.30pm, and at call.

Benediction: 1st Friday of the month, following half-hour Adoration after 9.30am Mass

Rosary: Sat 9.00am



ST. LAWRENCE'S DIRECTORY

Parish Council Team

(Correspondence with Councillors via the suggestion box at the back of church)

Fr. John Diver

Rev. Peter Varnes, Deacon

Marie O'Grady-Hills

Kevin Dadswell

Doris Afreh

Fabiola Mestriner

Derek Ferris

Mike Crowhurst

MINISTRIES

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Marie Gurhy

Altar Servers:

Parish Team

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion: Peter Varnes

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Welcomers:

Pam Dennis 8309 0439

Readers:

Jill Martin 8302 7263

Denise Baldwin 8300 4984

Choir & Instrumentalists:

Caron Tragheim 07505 617607

Flowers:

Anne Maxted 8300 1215

Parish Library:

Mary Townsend 8302 1155

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Marriage Preparation:

Baptismal Programme:

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Children's Liturgy (age 0 – 7): Wendy Boyle

QUEEN MARY'S HOSPITAL.

RC Chaplain

Fr. John Diver

Holy Communion Coordinator:

John Wilsdon

ST. LAWRENCE'S DIRECTORY (continued)**CHRISTIAN UNITY****Churches Together in
Sidcup (CTiS):**

Mr. Mike Conway

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**Deanery Developing World
Group:**

Susan Grace

Marist Way

Tom Baker

07719 338375

Mothers' Prayers:

Heike Varnes

Monday 4.30pm

8300 5074

Parish Magazine Editors:

Joan Coles

8309 5110

Sheila Pereira

8309 5913

St. Lawrence Charitable Fund: Nick Wells**St. Lawrence's Prayer Group**

Tony Regan

8300 6656

SCHOOLS & HEAD TEACHERS**St. Peter Chanel (Primary)**

Mrs. S. Gower, Head Teacher

8302 6029

CTK: St Mary's

(Christ the King College)

8309 4760

Shireen Razey, Associate Principal

YOUTH**Brownies (age 7-10):**

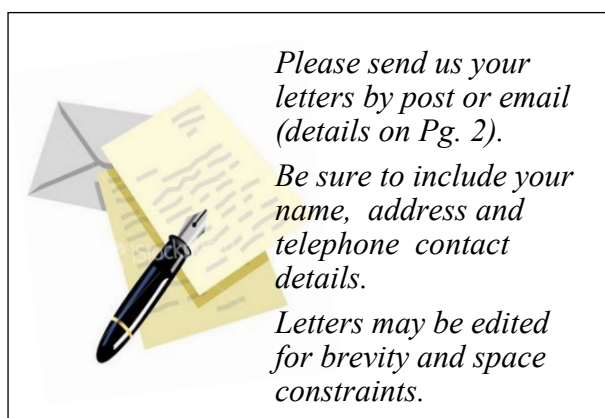
Rebecca Crisp

07833 501196

Guides (age 10-14):

Kate McGranghan

07891 559419



Your opportunity for feedback, comment, views and opinions

Encouraging more elbow grease!

Editors,

I have always read the 'Voice' magazine and thoroughly enjoyed doing so.

What I find exciting is the eclectic content of the magazine: events, parish news and information, parishioners' stories of their special experiences, devotional highlights, adventurous journeys, pilgrimages, interesting activities of people outside the parish, and much more!

In addition, our high street is opened up to us by virtue of the various businesses advertising in the magazine, as we get to know of their existence in this way and can benefit from the services they provide.

The 'Voice' is engaging and interesting; it contains everything you would expect from a local parish magazine, and really makes a good read.

Well done, Editors - *more grease to your elbow!*

Cordelia Rice (Mrs.)

Kent DA14 5PB

Works of charity making a real difference

Editors,

It was good to see the double-page spread that your parish magazine gave Margaret Hebblethwaite to describe the work being done by the Santa Maria Education Fund (SMEF) in Paraguay.

We are a small charity doing big work, and if it wasn't for people like your parishioners, we would not survive in a world of large charities with their sophisticated methods for getting funds.

I am a trustee of the fund and honorary secretary, which means that I receive postal donations and thank donors. I got involved after reading Margaret's interesting articles in *The Tablet*. As a parent and former teacher, I could relate to what Margaret was trying to do.

Our budget is limited and every small donation helps. I love being part of this charity. I can see how the money is spent and the value it adds to the lives of the young people.

Thank you, St Lawrence parishioners!

Catherine Brady

SMEF

2 Beck Crescent

Loughborough LE11 2UT



Synchronising schedules to maintain topicality

Editors,

Thank you for the Autumn 2017 issue of the 'Voice'.

I think "Children's Voices" is an excellent idea, and hope it proves successful - could be just what the parish needs. I also enjoyed "Voices that Speak" and the St. Jude Thaddeus item, in particular, though the whole magazine is bright, informative and entertaining.

My only negative thoughts relate to mine and Mike Conway's CTiS (Churches Together in Sidcup) article, which reads ridiculously out-of-date as five of the seven supposedly 'future' events have already passed, due to the two-month gap between deadline date and publication. I realise 40 pages is a lot to produce inside a month but perhaps you could make the magazine a bit shorter and then, if it came out within a month - or even a fortnight, if possible, it would be that much more topical? The only other alternative otherwise would be for Mike and me to refer to events three or four months in advance, which wouldn't be that easy, or even possible, most of the time.

As I say, to my mind, you both are doing a grand job, but I just hope you can appreciate my viewpoint on this matter.

Tom Baker

London SE9 2EX

EDITORS' REPLY:

We thank Tom Baker for his very favourable comments as well as constructive and valued feedback. In fact, when planning the Autumn 2017 magazine, we (editors) did discuss the very same issue of out-of-date content that he has highlighted. However:

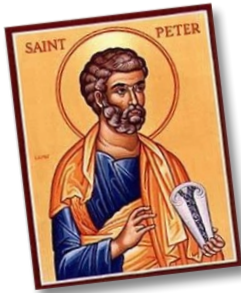
1. as it was not possible to change the publishing schedule (given our own individual commitments and other practical considerations), and
2. despite making the request of a CTiS member, we were not informed of any new dates in the actual week of going to print,

we therefore had to print the article as given. That notwithstanding, we fully appreciate Mr. Baker's point about topicality and couldn't agree more (it is frustrating when events are out-of-date!).

As a possible solution, we have agreed that for the future, we will send both Mr. Baker and Mr. Conway an advance email giving them an idea of the publication date in order that they are able to tailor notification of the dates of CTiS events accordingly. They are satisfied with this proposition.

As regards the length of the magazine, this will remain at 40 pages as it allows for a variety of articles to be featured, including an appropriate level of advertising, thereby giving a 'meatier' read whilst still being topical as well.





AN EXCERPT FROM A RECENTLY REDISCOVERED THIRD LETTER ATTRIBUTED TO ST. PETER



1 To the brethren gathered together in the Church of Sidcup.
²Grace and peace be with you all. ³I have longed to write to you all of my joy at seeing your faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴to whom be glory now and for evermore. ⁵I never cease to tell of the great welcome I received when I was among you, and from your presbyter, John the Elder.

⁶Time is now growing short. ⁷The days of Easter joy are soon to be upon us. ⁸And yet our Lord continues to wait upon you, giving you time to engage more in prayer, fasting and almsgiving. ⁹Use the time well and I am certain that His grace will abound among you all the more.

¹⁰I know that some of you may have fallen from your early fervour. The fast so enthusiastically begun may have fallen by the wayside. ¹¹But, be of good cheer for with the Lord there is always another chance. I charge you, begin again! ¹²And He will surely reward you.

¹³And, finally, as the great day of Our Lord's resurrection approaches, ¹⁴do not miss the last opportunity to confess your sins, to be at peace with Him when he comes. ¹⁵Nothing renews the heart of a believer like the sincere confession of sins. ¹⁶So have courage, and be assured that our Saviour waits for you in the person of His presbyter.

¹⁷Once again, dear brethren, hold firm in the faith, ¹⁸praying for one another at all times to grow more and more in the likeness of Jesus Christ. ¹⁹Greet one another with a holy sign of peace as you gather in the Eucharist. ²⁰May God be with you all.



Deacon Peter Littleton



Different faiths, a common heritage (continued from Page 17)

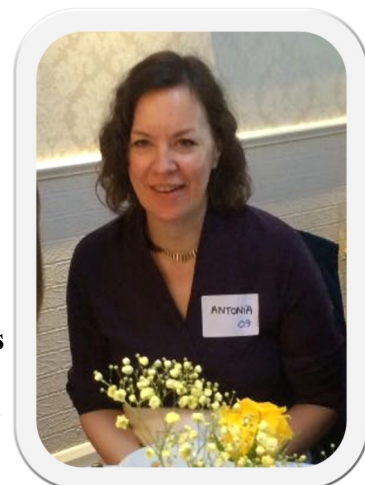
This “communal” experience gave each of us much food for thought. For me, attending the CoE services made me more aware of the themes of ‘praise’, ‘thanksgiving’ and ‘almsgiving’ (Catholic Masses tend to be more solemn with an apparent emphasis on contrition/repentance). The focus on the Bible at St Andrew’s resulted in me downloading a Bible App which I can read more easily. The topic covered in the sermon was also interesting: *Christmas: What was in it for St Joseph?* Attending a Jewish service made me think about our common heritage - the Old Testament – but, also, the meaning of the ‘Good News’. Reflecting in the temple made me question what all of us seek from and in our faiths, and how they differ.

Ours was a wonderful Advent journey. We now have plans to continue with more joint worship and also visits to other churches (Coptic & Orthodox) in London. I would encourage all people, even those without a faith, simply to experience the joy of being in a place of worship.”

Antonia Merrick, CoE, expresses on behalf of the group, what it meant to take part in this collective journey of faith:

“A few years ago, my good friend, Mark Castelino, started a wonderful initiative for his friends who go to church services, to attend each other’s churches. This has been a very enriching experience. It is so easy to become used to the same spiritual style of service and sung worship, familiar church congregations, and even to take the beautiful church buildings for granted.

By going to each other’s churches we learn so much and also re-energize our spiritual sides: seeing new buildings and finding inspiration in their beauty; hearing new or unfamiliar religious rubric that can resonate; be inspired by a new style of preaching and different hymns being sung, and being part of a new congregation.



Antonia Merrick

‘worship is a collective activity...’

All this is very uplifting and therefore helps one’s growth in faith. As a group we have all felt very welcomed into the new churches and, as a person of faith, it is a lovely gesture to take friends to one’s own church. Worship is a collective activity and it is very special to be visiting each other’s churches.

Personally, I have always enjoyed different styles of worship and new spiritual places; however, in our busy lives it is easy to stick with the familiar and this has been a most positive initiative and one that, I hope, continues.”

SOLIDARITY: LIKE-MINDEDNESS, AGREEMENT, ACCORD, HARMONY





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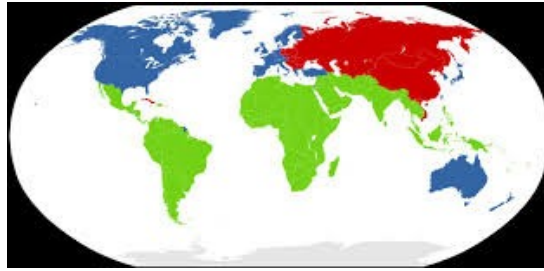
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BEXLEY DEANERY DEVELOPING WORLD GROUP

By Susan Grace

At the AGM in October, we agreed to try and help eleven projects this year. We have managed to support three of these projects so far: the first was Sreepur Village in Bangladesh. This is an established village that supports destitute women, children and babies. At present, they are also helping the Rohingya refugees from Myanmar (Burma).



The second was a parish in Gokwe, Zimbabwe. This parish only has a dilapidated shed in which to have Mass, so we have sponsored the start of a building project to provide a more substantial building to be their church.



The third project we have funded is the building of a pump and reserve tank, to a well in Ekorezok, Cameroon, that serve 300 families. Currently, the boys of the village turn the pump by hand and at times the well runs dry, hence the tank.

The outstanding projects include a project in Rulindo, Rwanda, where vets provide poor women with livestock (goats, pigs, rabbits). They breed the animals to provide protein for their families and to grow the herd. The animal dung provides fertilizer for the gardens to grow crops and then when their herd is big enough, they pass two animals on to another family.

The Kumi Community in Uganda will get a grant to provide wheelchairs and prosthetic limbs for disabled children. They also support the education of these children.

I will report again in the next 'Voice' on further projects.

It will be a challenge to raise sufficient funds for all these projects, so please do not forget the box at the back of the church. In addition, if you are able to, please support future events.

Thank you.





FIDELITER SERVIENTI MEDAL

TERRY GIBBS

Fittingly, during the weekend of the first Sunday of Advent, the mood for celebrating seemed to already be underway - thanks to Terry Gibbs! Before the final blessing at the 6.30pm Mass on Sunday, 3rd December 2017, Fr. John had a very special announcement - and presentation - to make.

Terry, accompanied by his wife, Carol, were invited to come up to the middle of the church where Fr. John, with the assistance of Deacon Peter (Littleton), presented him with the *Fideliter Servienti Medal*.

Fideliter Servienti, meaning '**Faithful Servant**', is a Diocesan Award established by Archbishop Peter Smith to acknowledge the faithful services offered by so many people in the diocese. Terry, therefore, was a very worthy recipient of this award, especially in recognition of his service to the parish, involving the ministries of serving and reading, and being the Chair of the St. Lawrence Charitable Fund.

Congratulations, Terry, from your 'St. Lawrence family' and we wish you every happiness in your retirement - you've certainly earned it!



Fr. John & Deacon Peter making their way towards the Gibbses for the presentation

Fr. John presenting medal to Terry



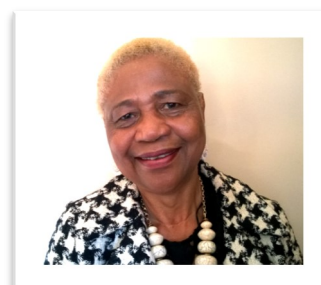
**A little something
for Carol, too!**



Terry, the 'Faithful Servant', proudly displays his medal as wife, Carol, looks on

The follow-up meditation exercise first suggested by Cordelia Rice in our Autumn 2017 issue.

**“BROTHER WIND AND THE DANDELION”
PART 2**



It was Autumn, and I was raking leaves in the garden and generally tidying up when I came upon my old adversary - the dandelion - and decided to have another little word in an attempt to try and persuade it to leave my garden.

Hello, dandelion, I notice you are still around! But you don't look too well; are you dying - at last?

No!

You look quite shrivelled and your beauty seems to have disappeared - no flower or seed head now, I see; I just about recognised you by your leaves!



Do you always go by first appearances?

Well, I find they tell you a lot, so, I have to say, yes, I do; and it is not hard to see that yours is not very good at present. Does that mean you will be leaving soon - forever, I hope?

No, and appearances can be very deceptive; even the smallest things can be helpful, you know: take my seeds, for instance...

Thank you, but no!



Can I at least tell you about my friend, the mustard seed?

Well, all right; I suppose that I won't be able to shut you up now that you have started anyway.

The thing is, the mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds but when it grows, it is the biggest shrub of all and is able to give shelter to the birds of the air in its branches. It is hard to imagine all of that life in one of the smallest of seeds, don't you think?

Umm, a bit like yourself.

Oh, thank you for saying so, but my seeds are much larger than a mustard seed.

But you spread everywhere; you are just prolific in a different way. By the way, do not invite your mustard seed friend into my garden - you are bad enough! Anyway, I am glad to see you are looking very frail.

I see you have not remembered what I told you in the summer.

Oh, and what was that? You tend to say so much.

I told you that when I look weak, then I am strong.

Come on, that makes no sense! Either you are weak or strong - which is it?

You can only see part of me - the weak part.

Well, it seems to me that your Brother Wind has left you with nothing but a few leaves to your name, and they are looking brown and very shrivelled up.

But, don't you know anything? I would not be here at all if it were not for Brother Wind who blew me here to this spot.

Yes, my garden!

It is very rich soil, I can grow a hundredfold here. Brother Wind certainly knows what is best for me.

Yes, I remember you told me that.

Now you understand.

Not really. It seems to me that your Brother Wind is quite fickle because now you are on your own - and in *my* garden!

You have forgotten my strong bit.

Oh, yes, about that...

It is my roots, you see - hidden deep in me. Have you got parts that are hidden deep?

No! What you see is what you get, and you are so small I can easily stamp on you with my foot. In fact, I think I...



Stop! It will make no difference - my roots will survive all your stamping. As I said, in little things there is much goodness and strength.

Ahh, here we go again. I know you are full of fragrance, nectar and good things - you have already told me that. But you are still a weed, and you are still in my garden!

I am the good news of springtime, and my bright flowers cheer everyone up.

Except me!

And my nectar feeds the insects and strengthens them and...

You modesty never ceases to amaze me!

If I were to praise myself, it would count for nothing. I am part of a whole family: praise belongs to the one who blew me here! I do not care for myself, I leave it all to Brother Wind. Do you know that it takes me all winter to get to the point of flowering again?



I do know that.
[continued overleaf]

What you cannot see is my roots - they lie deep in this rich blessed soil. This is my quiet time; I am being transformed bit by bit during this time, you see. As long as I am attached to my roots I have life in abundance, but if I am separated from them I will shrivel up and die - my hope keeps me anchored to my roots. I had to die to what I was in order to grow into what I am meant to be. Do you do that too?

No! That makes no sense to me. When you are dead, you are just dead!

Oh, how sad for you! I never die.

You will if I dig up your roots!



Even if you can - and that is debatable - all my brothers and sisters go on living around me.

The only nice thing about you is your rich yellow colour in the spring, so I can agree with that bit. But, as for the rest...

That is when I bear my particular fruit - you always know a plant by its fruit, you know.

Mmm. It's those seeds though...

Yes, that is when my transition takes place. I give all my fruit away with Brother Wind's help; even if the birds eat me, I don't mind - they carry me elsewhere too. So, you see, all are my friends.



Rocks are not your friends.



I always try to bloom where I am planted but it is true that my roots cannot grow very deep there, so, many times I shrivel up and die. But it's the attempt that counts, surely?

Brother Wind does you no favours, blowing you among rocks!

I would never blame Brother Wind; I am just a part of the whole family, and for as long as I can - even among rocks - I will share my nectar and beauty.

You never give up do you? You do not seem to see yourself as you are - a poor forlorn little thing - but as one who is being transformed. To me, you look as if you have lost everything, yet you remain as cheerful as if the opposite is true. I can only think that in your secret roots you are very rich indeed, and in this hidden 'strong part' of you, you feel all is well!

Yes, all is well. In your garden I have the best: I am wrapped around with this rich earth which supports me, and even now I am being transformed in its embrace, ready to begin again.

What do you give back for all this richness that you think you have received?

Nothing but...myself.

I must say, I have to admire your peace and acceptance of what you are.

Yes, I always make the best of myself.

OH, GROW AWAY!



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THE “GUVNOR”

Mary Hawes

A lifetime of dedicated stewardship and service
to schools and music



It is a well-known fact that women are able to multi-task, but this becomes an even greater challenge when sometimes all you want to do is to focus on the one.

This is exactly how us editors, Joan and Sheila, felt when one weekday morning we had the pleasure of “interviewing” Mary Hawes for this article in the cosy comfort of her living room. We could have let the morning drift away quite happily as *we* got lost in Mary’s



Mum: Dorothy

thoughts, so fascinating it was to listen to her life story. We did manage to discipline ourselves, however, to undertake the twin-tasks of listening as well as furiously recording a richly-lived life of 84 years (Mary will be 85 in April), and were proud to be given the privilege to do so.

Mary’s long association with Sidcup began when she was six weeks’ old, the family having moved here from Peckham in June 1933.



Dad: Terry

She was one of two children, being the younger sibling to her older brother, Brian (now deceased). Her parents: mother, Dorothy, and father, Terry, were a great influence in her life, as parents generally are, and imbued in her a love of service to others.

Mary’s father worked in the family tannery where they used to manufacture specialised leathers; unfortunately, due to the Depression the firm went bankrupt. Mary’s mother Dorothy was teaching at the English Martyrs School in Woolworth, when the Second World War broke out in 1939. The whole school was evacuated, and transferred to a school in Shaftesbury, Dorset; Mary and her brother Brian went with their mother. Her father by then was working in the War Office in Hastings. Mary went to Notre Dame Convent in Southwark for one year. Due to the V1V2 bombing raids over London, Mary’s parents transferred her to the then new grammar school ‘Chislehurst and Sidcup’.

The Marist Fathers were a huge part of Mary’s life, particularly as they were great friends with her parents. Terry was a great organiser and arranged lots of activities in the parish: “whist drives, bingo, dances and the bridge club,” Mary recalls.

Fr. Bill Salmon, started the parish youth club in 1945. You had to be 14 to join the club, and most of the teenagers stayed in it until they got married! Fr. Salmon was very musical and is credited with being an early musical influence on the young Mary who, herself, joined the youth club as a 14-year-old. Within a year she was on the committee, enjoying her first taste of such committees, and stayed on until *she* got married!

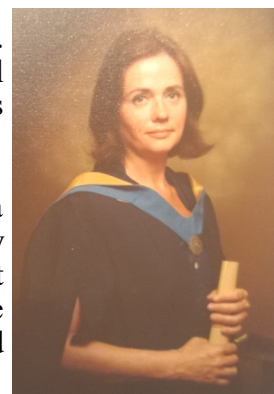
With four good ‘A’ levels to her name, Mary left school at 18. Whilst many would have appreciated her organisational skills, not so the headmistress, who thought her “flighty” because she used to organise meetings with the boy’s school!



Tony & Mary Hawes' wedding: 14th July, 1956

Once qualified, she got a "lovely job" in a primary school in Deptford. With the abolishment of the Greater London Council (GLC), individual boroughs could not afford a full-time music teacher and, sadly, Mary was not able to continue in this role.

Soon Mary was to take on a role that would see her make it such a success: playing the organ at St. Lawrence's, which she did - originally starting out in the choir loft. She remembers fellow parishioner, Pat O'Hanlon, as being a very good music teacher, and the one responsible for organising the choirs for all the different Masses. When Pat stepped down from her role, Mary stepped into the breach.



The vicissitudes of employment notwithstanding, Mary's association with schools and music was her destiny. In fact, in November 1975 she was appointed the first Parent Foundation-Governor of St. Mary's Grammar School for Boys, an appointment which should have lasted for three years. The reality was more like 20! In that time, Mary was witness to a lot of changes: the school doubling in size, becoming non-selective and co-educational, linking up with St. Joseph's Convent to become St. Mary's and St. Joseph's School. As if one governorship was not demanding enough, Mary served as Governor, as well as Clerk to the Governors, at St. Peter Chanel School for many years.



Youngest son, Matthew's, christening outside St. Lawrence's in 1970, with his five brothers present

Not one to take any responsibility lightly, Mary was keen to stress that singing in a choir was more than just being able to sing or play music – having the right *attitude* was equally important, if not more so. Vatican II brought about a whole new approach to music, it was a **ministry**. Therefore, there were certain responsibilities associated with being a Minister of Music: "You are not giving a performance – you are encouraging the congregation, [Continued overleaf]

[Continued from Page 35]

to sing as well,” Mary explained. This is what gave her real pleasure, and it is her hope that that unity between choir and congregation carries on. She added that following her retirement from the choir and now as a member of the congregation, she could discern that unity even more.

During her long involvement with the choir, spanning some 30 years plus, Mary has been joined by other professionals and in this regard, she paid tribute to Peter Mitchell, a respected musician in his own right, and who helped with practice and arrangements for special events. She also recalled fondly Maurice Hearn and Trudy Custy, two original members of the choir who started at the same time as her but are, sadly, no more.

“The choir is in good hands and the future is bright,” Mary said as she spoke warmly of the duo, Caron Tragheim and Joseph Llanes, who have taken over leadership of the choir following her retirement (Mary’s failing eyesight played a big part in her decision to relinquish that role). It is fitting praise indeed from one who received the Benemerenti Award from the Pope in 2007, an honour conferred in recognition of her long and faithful service to the Catholic Church.



The Benemerenti Award

As our interview drew to a close, we asked Mary if we could take a photo of her. Where else except at her beloved piano, and as her fingers danced across the keys the familiar tune of “Danny Boy” filled the air. It is her music as well as her other interests, such as the theatre and listening to her audio books, that sustain her indefatigable *joie de vivre*.

Thank you, Mary, for giving so generously of yourself and your many talents. Perhaps for your forthcoming 85th birthday you will decide to take things a little easy! Happy birthday, and may your life continue to be filled with God’s love and blessings. You have enriched not only our community here at St. Lawrence’s by your selfless service, but far and wide as well. In gratitude, we can but echo Fr. John Collier’s words when he wrote to you following your resignation from the Board of Governors of St. Peter Chanel School:

“We are deeply grateful for the loyal and efficient service you have given. Many people are truly in your debt.”

We salute you, Mary.



Mary's "sounds of music" legacy...



Mary (centre) with choir members
Standing l-r: Fr. Des (parish priest) and Peter Mitchell



Mary (front left) at choir practice



Fr. John presents gifts - with the help of his two young assistants, Angelica and Francesca (left), to Mary at the Sunday 10am Mass (10.12.2017).

In expressing his deep gratitude for all Mary's hard work, especially when preparing for celebrations such as Christmas and Easter, Fr. John concluded by saying: *"I can honestly say there are many priests envious that we had such a lead through you."* A fitting acknowledgement and appreciation of one woman's selfless ministry.



FILM REVIEW

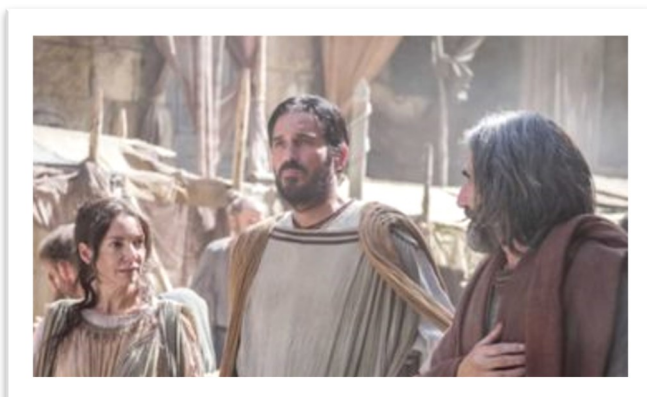
By Alan Pavelin

By the time you read this, two biblical films will have come out, though at the time of writing they are yet to appear. The first is **Mary Magdalene**; there is probably a lot of imaginative reconstruction of her life because little is known about her from the Gospels. The film has a starry cast, however, so is probably worth seeing.

The other film is **Paul, Apostle of Christ**, which has plenty of New Testament material to use. It was filmed in Malta, where St. Paul was shipwrecked.

There was a strikingly original film in 2017 called **A Ghost Story**. Neither spooky nor scary (though the music is haunting!), it tells of a man who dies suddenly and thereafter sees everything from his point of view as a ghost. He cannot communicate and he cannot be seen by anyone else. He is effectively imprisoned in his home in a sort of purgatory, and he sees his wife move out and various other families move in.

He can go many years forward and back in time, but cannot move away from his location, until he is finally released in the very last moment of the film. Some people found the film irritating and walked out after half an hour; there is very little dialogue with long scenes where not much seems to be happening, but I found it a very moving portrayal of loss and grief. Not a religious film, but very thought-provoking.



Paul, Apostle of Christ



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