
Talkabout

DECEMBER 2018

St. John Fisher Parish Magazine 



Cover: This Tree of Jesse carving is from St Peter's Cathedral in Worms, Germany. The Tree of Jesse is depiction in art of the ancestors of Christ, shown in a tree which rises from Jesse of Bethlehem (King David's father.) It was a very popular subject in Medieval Christian art.

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Deadline for articles to be included in the next edition of
Talkabout **must** be with the Editorial Team before

FRIDAY 1ST MARCH 2019

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WELCOME TO TALKABOUT

CHRISTMAS JOY

Christmas is with us again, this wonderful time of the year when almost the whole world celebrates. This is a great festive season which brings that lovely smile on the faces of people.

One of the most popular carols which captures well the mood of this season is "Joy to the World", written by Isaac Watts in 1719. Watts was right when he titled his carol "Joy to the World", for Christmas is not just joy to one group of people. It is not a racial joy, it is not a cultural joy. It is not joy to the rich-it is not financial joy. It is not joy to the educated - it is not intellectual joy. It is not joy to the happy - it is not emotional joy. It is not joy to the healthy - it is not physical joy. It is joy to the world. It is universal joy.

But what is the essence of Christmas joy! Is it the gifts under the Christmas tree, the lights on the streets and in the windows, the cards in the mail, the turkey dinners with family and friends, snow in the yard, and shouts of Merry Christmas to those who pass us in the streets? Is this really Christmas joy!

The joy of Christmas is much more profound than the excitement generated by those aspects of this festive season listed above. It's much deeper than the merry making and family gatherings that take place during this season. It's the joy of welcoming the Saviour in our lives who comes to share with us God's gift of life, to renew our hope, bring us new vision and fresh understanding.

This is the joy that Mary and Joseph experienced when Jesus was born in the stable at Bethlehem, the joy that the angel announced to the shepherds (Lk.2:10), the joy that the Wise men received when they saw the star (Mt. 2:10). All shared in the excitement of knowing that the Saviour had been born. They knew he was no ordinary baby

I hope this will be the experience of us all here at St. John Fisher when we celebrate Christmas this year! I wish you all in the Parish, a blessed Season of Advent, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Fr Matthias



ADORATION

WHO ARE ADORERS? ANSWER: ALL OF US.

Earlier this year, Archbishop Peter invited Brendan Cleary to come over from Ireland to help form the Apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration in our Diocese. After training and commissioning, members of the Presentation teams are now visiting parishes aiming to form groups of parishioners who would be prepared to spend one hour with Jesus.

During late summer we had Mary Anne and Teresa from St Joseph's Colliers Wood and Maria from Sacred Heart Edge Hill, come to our parish to extend the invitation for our parishioners to spend one hour a week in the company of Jesus. All parishioners received invitations which gave days and times and they were asked to fill in the cards with details of when it would be most convenient to attend. 64 cards were returned with Thursday being the most popular day. Adoration now starts at 9.30am after the morning Mass and ends with Benediction around 7.15pm.

Why do we need adoration? You only need to look at any news broadcast to see stories of fighting and starvation in Yemen, stabbings in London, Rohingya refugees, climate change, ill health and poverty, acts of terror and so on. People are constantly asking 'what is happening to the world?'

For us we can help through the power of Prayer. And the finest way to do this is in the presence of Jesus. You can pray or have a conversation with Jesus. To be in the Presence of Our Lord is truly calming and uplifting, and helps lead us to inner peace in such a troubled world.

"Will you not pray with me for one hour?"

Please if you would like to become an Adorer just sign your name on the list in the Narthex against a time that suits you.

Robert Roy

MOTHERS' PRAYERS

This new parish prayer group meets on
Thursdays at 10.00am
in the Day Chapel.



Please come along and pray for your child/children/ grandchildren. Anyone who wishes to attend is most welcome.

NEW HYMN BOOKS

The Choir and Music Group have chosen a new hymn book "Laudate". Parishioners have the opportunity to dedicate one of the new hymn books to the memory of a loved one or in thanksgiving for family and friends.

The cost of the dedication is £10.

If you would like to dedicate a hymn book then please complete an envelope which can be found at the back of the church. Your details will then be added to a bookplate which will be inserted inside the front cover of one of the books.

Thank you.



YOUR PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED FOR

All those recently Baptised

Noah Nicholls
Alexander Kavanagh
Rory Hartman
Taliah Cleeton
Amelie Cole
Joshua Pettersen
Megan Pettersen
Eva Nowak
Ciaran Doyle



Jacob Newell
Oscar Loumpos

All those who have recently celebrated the sacrament of Holy Matrimony



George Longworth and Eleanor Chong-Leung
Danial Martin and Emily Forster

All those recently called home to Heaven

Kathleen Sales	Anna Simon
James Kennedy	Deborah Farrell
Bridget Hartnett	Gemma Shanahan
Pat Dillon	Milton Rosario
Patricia Anderson	Jim Galea

Grant them eternal rest, Lord, and let perpetual light shine on them.



PARKING NEAR THE CHURCH

Please remember to be considerate of our neighbours when parking your car for Mass at the weekends. Do not obstruct driveways or park on grass verges.



Please also keep the church entrance clear and refrain from parking by the church wall alongside. In an emergency an ambulance will need to get around the car park. Thank you.

PLEASE PRAY FOR ALL OUR NEWLY CONFIRMED PARISHIONERS

Oliver Zasadziaski
Rose Cassar
Grace Matema
Giandominic Grossi
Tiago Antonio
Samuel Dhoomun
Emma Mirandola
Anna Maria Newman
Christina Lewis
Joshua Kapfunde
Nathan Gabriel Davison
Jacob Patrick Trow
Eire Mac Mahon
Ted Ferreira

Tilly Allen
Daniel Craughwell-Jones
Milly Hardy
Filip Piotr Ospelt
Lara Gomes
Oliver Brierly
Frankie Dennis
Emily Mistry
Lucas Mingle
Sharmi Ravendran
Harish Robin
Heidi Bounds
Alexander Sosnowka

Zane Stefka
Charlotte Paterson
Cesare Buttaci
Amelia Russell
Alrnat Sances
Enrica D'Andrea
David Truchel
Daniel Wong
Katie Pryor
Julian Matyja
Marie Antoinette Oliva
Nicolas Szafran
Nyah Felix
Rhy's McCarthy

Tristan Chandler
Sophie Nelson
Chloe Anderson
Sixtine Thiollier
Niamh O'Connell
Victor Lobato Garcia
David Kroj
Julia Slawska
Matthew Liam-Royce
Nimer
Finn Deegan
Chloe Offer-Simon
Kyra Stone

THE MASS OF WELCOME FOR FR. MATTHIAS KIZITO

TUESDAY 4TH DECEMBER

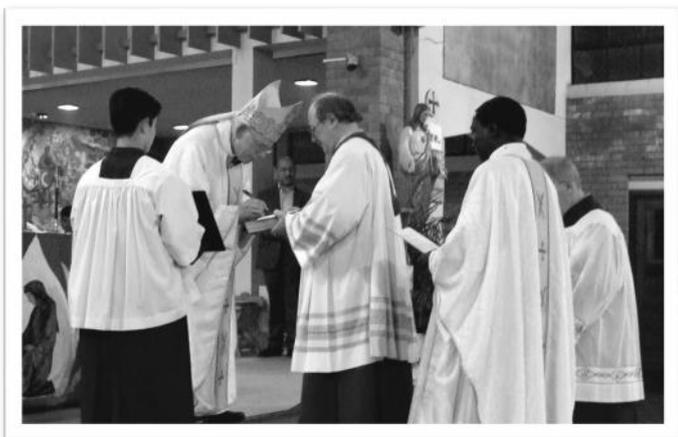


From the moment we entered the church we knew we were about to experience an uplifting, spiritual event. The rhythmic sounds from the choir, the soft drum beat, the decorated church, the glittering gifts laid out in the narthex, the arrival of parishioners, friends and relatives of Fr. Matthias, were a prelude of what was to come. We were not disappointed. Bishop Paul Hendricks greeted us all and introduced the many clergy including Bishop Tripp, Canon Acton and Fr. Charles Kaweesi who left his monastery in Northern Ireland to join Fr. Matthias in the celebrations.

With much clapping Fr. Matthias thanked all those who helped prepare and bring about the wonderful liturgy of the evening. We were then welcomed to the hall for entertainment and refreshments. The hall was laid out as if for a wedding with chairs covered in white, and beautiful African fabric tied in a bow at the back. Balloons and ribbons added to the festive look. The refreshments included the usual abundance and variety of drink, and many dishes prepared by Sr. Catherine and her helpers. A great number of Ugandan dishes were presented by Fr. Matthias' family and friends, hot and delicious, not too spicy, they were enjoyed by all. The disco, led by Canute, was mainly of Ugandan music which gave a lovely new dimension to our experience of a wonderful evening. Two cakes were cut, one from the parish and one made by Fr. Matthias' sister.

We all wish Fr. Matthias every grace and blessing in his time and work with us in our parish, and we also offer a big welcome to Fr. Hyacinth who no doubt will be a great asset to us and Fr. Matthias.

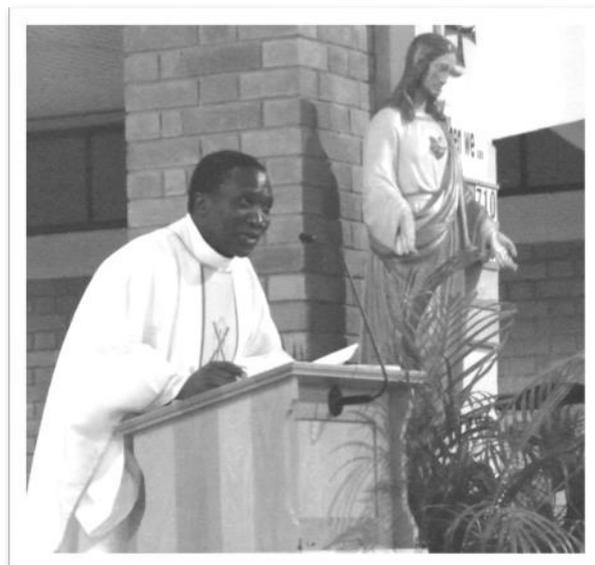
Teresa Pollard



The choir, numbers enhanced by members of the Ugandan community, led us to fill the church with wonderful sound. Fr. made his profession of faith and his promises to his bishop, the people of our parish, those representing other Christian communities, and the constituency of the Borough of Merton, and we responded with our promises.

The highlight of the singing was the offertory procession. This was sung by our Ugandan brothers and sisters and was rousing and full of joy each line ending in Alleluia.

The procession was led by four dancers in traditional dress who moved slowly to the rhythm of the music with smiles and gestures that drew us into the spirit of the offering. They were followed by those bearing the sacred vessels and the glittering wrapped gifts carried by the children from St. John Fisher School.



Photos by Jose Geremia



OUR NEW ALTAR SERVERS



Since September seven youngsters have been in training to serve on the Sanctuary. They have now started to Serve at Mass. This, in their own words is why they wanted to Serve:

"I want to be an Altar Server because I want to help Jesús. I also want to be an Altar Server because I want to help the parish & help the Priest."

~ Massimo Buttaci

"I want to be an Altar Server because you get to hold the Bible and because you can hold the Four jingly bells which are shiny Gold."

~ Johnny Faundez

"I would like to be an Altar Server because I will be closer to God. It would be more interesting at Mass. It would be my first job & I am very proud to be an Altar Server and I would be proud to serve God."

~ Francesco Pucino



"I would like to be an Altar Server because I get to serve God & be close to my friends and spend more time with them. I also really enjoy being an Altar Server."

~ Claudio Parisi

"I want to be an Altar Server because I would be with my friends and bring up the special candles up to the Altar area. And help with the Body and Blood of Christ. Finally we will be the first to get the Body of Christ."

~ Boaz Seglio

"I want to be an Altar Server because I want to help and support the parish and the community."

~ Nathaniel Slawska

"I want to be an Altar Server because I want to serve God and I want to respect Jesus's family."

~ Ethan Yadav

On the Feast Day of St Stephen (Boxing Day) at the 10am Mass the following Servers will be enrolled into the Guild of St Stephen: Joshua Brierly, Natasha Zinyuke, Herish and Jerish Robin, Grace and Arron Matema.

Elizabeth Nwobu, Nathan Sheehy and Kavinash Mautadin-Marin will also receive their certificates for Serving for 5 years as enrolled members of the Guild.

We ask you all to pray for them and anyone who is involved with the Ministry of Serving at the Altar, under the guidance of St Stephen, the Server's Patron Saint.

Robert Roy

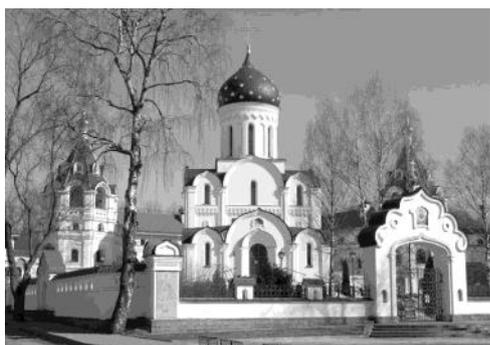
VISIT FROM THE BELARUS NUNS

On the 29th September we were treated to the heavenly experience of a monastic choir of nuns from St. Elisabeth's Convent in Minsk, Belarus. The singing, unaccompanied, was spirit lifting and enthralling and even though there were only eight nuns the sound filled the church. Those privileged to attend spoke highly of their experience. We were treated to chants and songs, all in Russian. As the programme progressed one of the nuns introduced each item with a short explanation. There was a lovely touch towards the end of the concert when the choir sang the French Christmas Carol. Some of the nuns had heard this Carol at another concert and thought it so beautiful they translated it into Russian and they treated us to their rendition to the delight of all present.



The choir performing at St John Fisher

During the interval we had time to look at their products and crafts. The convent, founded in 1999, has a metochion (a farm) about 30 kilometres from Belarus. It is a rehabilitation centre for those who have suffered from drugs and alcohol addiction. The nuns run the farm and the patients work in the fields, gardens and building sites. They also have many workshops and studios where icons, vestments, candlesticks, and wooden toys are made with love and prayer which is the ancient tradition of the icon painters. They also make furniture, metalwork and mural or fresco paintings. The community believe that these items bring blessings to their owners.



St Elisabeth Convent in Minsk

We were able to choose gifts from a large selection laid out for us in the narthex. These items included beautiful organic face creams and soaps at very reasonable prices. They included the rich ingredient royal jelly and perfumes of wild flowers and fruits.

It would seem that singing and creating such amazing items was not compatible with the principal work of the sisters. But their life is dedicated to the old Russian tradition of caring for those in need of spiritual and social help. This care extends to the rejected by society, the handicapped, those with tuberculosis and psychiatric problems.

Not far from the convent the nuns work in a boarding home for children. Most of the two hundred children are orphans and are diagnosed as Down's syndrome, having birth traumas and congenital internal physical disorders. This work must be very painful for the sisters as the lives of these poor children tend to be very short.

The convent's patroness is the Grand Duchess Elisabeth. Her father was the Duke of Hessen-Darmstadt, Ludwig IV and her mother Princess Alice, daughter of Queen Victoria. Elisabeth married Grand Prince Sergei Romanov, son of the Russian Tsar Alexander II, at the age of twenty. Elisabeth had a great love of Russia and its people and was drawn to join the Orthodox faith. Her marriage ended sadly when her husband died at the hands of terrorists. But her new found faith led her to found a community in Moscow whose ministry was to follow Mary, who sat to hear the words of Jesus and so they go to people with prayer and consolation. Like Martha they serve Christ by ministering to the sick and homeless. Elisabeth did not think she was doing anything extraordinary.

By 1918 the Bolsheviks executed the Tsar and his family. Princess Elisabeth was martyred when the Bolsheviks threw her and another sister Barbara into an old deserted mineshaft. Her remains and that of Sister Barbara were later found and removed to the crypt of the church of Saint Mary Magdalene in Gethsemane.

Visitors are welcome at the Convent both for individuals and for groups up to 50. Trips to holy places are organised in Belarus. Please email the nuns at elisabeth.convent@gmail.com

Teresa Pollard

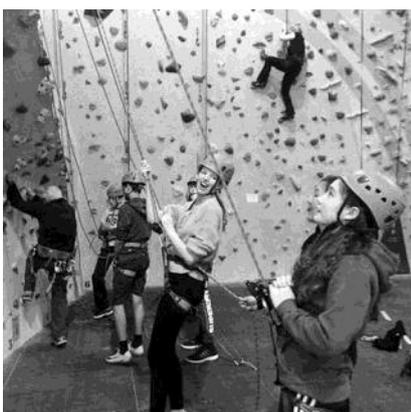


REPORT FROM THE FLYING PENGUIN'S EXPLORER SCOUT UNIT (FPSEU) 2018.

This year we took receipt of three new members from the 1st Morden plus a number of new members from the 5th Morden scouts, and said good bye to Theo Carter, Oliver Redford and Antony Newman who now join the Network Scouts.

During the year our Explorers had a chance to experience fencing and duelling under the supervision of an ex-UK Olympic fencing coach. The explorers were well and truly put through their paces with some good examples of controlled lunge and parry along with some wilder gyrations of the foil. In every case the explorers had enormous fun and quickly came to realize that there is a lot more to the noble art than meets the eye.

From February to April we focused on training for Bronze Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) expeditions, with map work, route planning and a practice hike in the North Downs to put their skills to test. Two teams (10 explorers) from our unit took part in the Bronze DoE qualifying weekend in April which passed off very successfully. Both of our teams then carried out the award hike in August and despite terrible weather managed to navigate themselves around a challenging route to finish the hike triumphantly. We were the only explorer group in the district to successfully complete the bronze DoE qualifying hike this year. Our Silver DoE team have been training hard for their expedition by canoe and have now achieved the 2 star level required to undertake their practice expeditions that we hope to organize early next year. In May we took part in the District Hill walking weekend in the Peak District. We had fantastic weather and combined a good hike over the hills with rock climbing for a really good weekend. In June, with the pressure of GCSE



and A-level exams, a number of our explorers took time out to concentrate on their revision, so we had slightly fewer attending in the second half of the summer term. None the less we managed to raise an elite team of athletes to defend our District Scout Sports Day trophy and blew away all the competition to secure a fourth District sport champions title in the last five years.

For our evening sessions we had a great night out at the white spider climbing centre, a session paddle boarding on the River Wandle in the late evening sun (thanks to Dave Bixby). We spent several nights out on the Common playing ultimate Frisbee and rounders, had a movie night, played trading post, pitch and putt at the Dino Golf centre, spent an evening canoeing and kayaking on the Thames, and are looking forward to evenings of indoor go-cart racing and ice skating before the year is out. Over the last year several of our explorers (Riccardo D'Andrea, Oliver Redford, Alex Yip, Oliver Sansum, and Amelia Newman) were nominated for Jack Petchy awards providing funds to support a wide range of activities including a trip to the Thorpe Parks Fright night (Riccardo D'Andrea), climbing at White Spider (Oliver Redford), petrol go-cart racing (Oliver Sansum). For next year we are looking forward to indoor skiing/snowboarding (Amelia Newman). All in all another busy year full of activity and learning for our young people.

Finally we would like to express our thanks for the support of the Parish council and for the use of the facilities at St John Fisher parish hall. Without this support we would not be able to provide the young adults of the parish with opportunities for self-development, skills training and fun.

Tom Carter (ESL)
Andy Newman (AESL).

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FROM SCHOOL TO PARISH

There wasn't room in the 80th Anniversary booklet to include this in full, so we are sharing it with you now

In the 1980s, many changes took place in the Sacramental preparation of children and adults.

The first change was that a Baptismal Programme was introduced into the parish. Parents, priest and catechist worked together to prepare for this sacrament – the gateway to all the Sacraments. These meetings are still going well and are offered to parents three times a year. They are well attended and appreciated. This led to a Special Service for all those baptised during the year. This service takes place on the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord. There is also a celebration in the Hall where young parents meet up and exchange ideas.

The next change was to introduce First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion into the parish. Under the leadership, guidance, support and encouragement of Canon Acton we set about working towards the Bishops of England and Wales request of making these Sacraments parish-based. As can well be imagined, several meetings took place and eventually we had a programme suitable for this Group.

Our next step was to prepare Catechists. Here again we owe a deep debt of gratitude to Canon Acton whose advice, encouragement and ability to listen and gently guide us was invaluable.

We began with eight Catechists trained, enthusiastic and ready for action. These Catechists took little groups of children into their homes and worked very diligently with them. Catechists met frequently to discuss the Programme and also to update it. We decided to write our own scheme, so a group formed (Mary Hrekow, Catherine Dooley, Magdalen Spooner and Sr. Catherine) and worked very hard until we got the scheme off the ground. Magdalen has now written two important follow-up books which we use with the groups. We also like the parents to use these books with the children as they are clear and excellent.

We have, to date, a group of excellent Catechists. We always work very well together. Each Catechist is respected and their input appreciated. It is really wonderful what can be achieved when we all work together and appreciate the gifts and talents God has given us.

We next set about preparing the young people for Confirmation. Six Catechists now prepare the young people for this Sacrament. The preparation takes

place on a Saturday. We also visit St. Georges Cathedral and undertake a Sponsored Walk for a chosen charity.

We based all the Sacraments on the R.C.I.A. model. Liturgies play an important role e.g. Service of Commitment, Presentation of the Creed and Our Father and Rite of Election.

Parents of all the Sacrament Candidates attend a course of four sessions. These are always well attended and we appreciate how difficult it can be for busy parents. We are happy to know that our parents try their best to be "the first and best educators of their children in the ways of faith."

The Rite of Christian group prepares adults for reception into the Church and also adults for Confirmation. This is a very rewarding course where we pray, study the Sunday Gospels and the main topic for the Evening followed by discussion and prayer. Many people have been received into the Church and some of them are Readers and Eucharist Ministers.

The Sacrament of the Sick is celebrated in or around the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes during a Mass of Healing. The housebound are also given this Sacrament each month, and, of course, anytime the Sacrament is requested, the priest is always available.

Marriage preparation did take place in the parish but now takes place at Deanery level, or whenever there is a course available. Married couples are encouraged to attend key events in their married life e.g. 25th, 50th Anniversaries. These are celebrations which take place at the Cathedral. Some married couples also renew their marriage vows at St. John Fisher.

All our lives is a journey to Heaven and here in our parish we celebrate a Special Service of Light on the Feast of the Holy Souls. During this service the name of each person who died in the parish during the year is called out and a member of the family lights a candle in front of the altar for their loved ones.

We also put the names of our departed loved ones in a basket which is brought to the altar and left there for the month of November.

We ask God to help us always to work together as we continue our journey to our Heavenly Home.

Sr. Catherine

JUSTICE & PEACE IN ST JOHN FISHER PARISH

www.sjf-justiceandpeace.org.uk

sjf.justiceandpeace@gmail.com

Food Collections (serving the Homeless and Needy) First weekend of each month (after all Masses)

The following charities are very grateful
for your generous donations:



5th/6th January

Faith in Action

Drop-In for the Homeless

They appreciate:

- Cans of Meat or Fish with a ring-pull opening
- Cans of Tomatoes
- Jars of Coffee, Marmite, Peanut Butter and Nutella
- Tea, Sugar & Cereals



2nd/3rd February

Wimbledon Foodbank

Feeding Families in Need

They need:

- Sugar
- Ketchup
- Fruit Juice & Squash
- Tins of Soup & Meat
- Tins of Fruit
- Custard
- Washing Powder
- Toothpaste



2nd/ 3rd March

Christian Care

Feeding Families in Need

They appreciate:

- Cereals
- Biscuits
- Cooking Oil
- Tins of Tuna, Tomatoes & Fruit
- Lunch Box items.

NB Please choose vegetarian food with long sell-by dates. *Christian Care rarely need soup, tinned spaghetti, mushy peas, marmalade or curry sauces.*

At present more people than ever are being fed by charities.

ETHICAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE MONTH OF:

January

Bring your used stamps to Church for the Jesuit Missions



February

Buy Fairtrade wherever possible and support Fairtrade Fortnight



March

Try a vegetarian/vegan diet for two days a week - donate to CAFOD any cash saved



FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 2019

Monday 25 February - Sunday 10 March

Make a note in your new diary and check the Fisherman's Herald for details nearer the time!



CONNECT AND ENCOURAGE - SENDING CHRISTMAS CARDS TO PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS



Very many thanks to all those who responded to our invitation to send Christmas cards to persecuted Christians around the world.

Many of the people chosen are victims of violence, intimidation or harassment. All of them need encouragement. By sending cards and letters of support, you can stand in solidarity with them in a very special way. Receiving a personal letter reminds each person who gets it that someone, somewhere cares about their suffering.

Although some letters may be intercepted, most will reach their destination. Even if the letter doesn't reach them, it can still have a powerful effect by reminding governments that their case is not going unnoticed by the rest of the world.

It has been seen many times that a prisoner's conditions improve once they start getting post from abroad. They've received extra food, more exercise, and much-needed medical care – as a direct result of your cards and letters. What's more, Pastor Truong in Vietnam was able to share his faith with his prison guards after they asked him why he was getting so many cards!

If a prisoner receives lots of post from abroad, the prison authorities know that people outside the country have heard about this prisoner's case, so they can't get away with mistreating the prisoner.

In some countries it can put people's lives at risk if you write to them. Please pray especially for Christians in these countries, such as Egypt, Sudan, Central African Republic and China.

Thank you for writing last year to Christians in Burma. Two ethnic Kachin Christians, who were imprisoned in 2017 for assisting journalists reporting on the bombing of a Catholic Church by the Burma Army, were freed on 18th April along with approximately 34 other political prisoners. Please keep praying for them as they adjust to life outside prison. However, at least 90 political prisoners remain in jail.

Your cards really make a difference. Gloria from Cuba told us, "Sometimes I ran out of the strength to pray myself. In the darkest moments, when we felt totally

hopeless, alone and desperate and we couldn't even pray for ourselves, it was alright because we knew there were people all over holding us up in prayer, when we ourselves could not."

Imagine thinking you're facing a horrific situation all alone. Maybe your husband is a church leader who was shot dead after he refused to stop preaching. That's what happened to Gloria's husband. Or maybe you've been imprisoned because of your faith – and then you get a card from a person on the other side of the world who's thinking about you. Your cards could be a lifeline in someone's darkest moments, just like they were for Gloria.

You can read more about Christian Solidarity Worldwide's campaign for religious freedom at www.csw.org.uk/getinvolved

They also publish a prayer diary where you can pray with others for specific countries.

CSW everyone
free to believe

Justice & Peace Group

Saint John Fisher
Justice and Peace Group

invite you to a

PEACE SERVICE



Tuesday 1st January 2019

7.30 pm

St John Fisher Church
207 Cannon Hill Lane
SW20 9DS

'Good politics serves peace'

Pope Francis - World Peace Message 2019

**Please join us for refreshments
after the Service**

DONATING FOOD

We are often asked to provide food for families who, for example, have no benefits or grants, or where there is long-term illness. In 2017-18 our **Family Support** scheme helped 69 families. Unlike the Foodbank we deliver food regularly. We appreciate the donations we receive from churches and from schools, mainly from Harvest Festivals. We spent £18,000 last year on buying groceries and fresh food, baby milk, nappies and Oyster cards. The full list of the items which we most frequently need to fill the food bags is on our website at christiancaremerton.org.uk

DONATING FURNITURE, BEDDING & KITCHEN ITEMS

The **Furniture Project** collects good quality second-hand furniture for free distribution to needy families. In 2017-18 we helped 85 families, 30 more than the previous year. Beds, sofas, tables and chairs, chests of drawers and wardrobes are the priority items. Some families need TV tables, coffee tables, desks, bookcases, bedside cabinets, etc. Soft furnishings and mattresses must comply with fire safety standards. [For safety/health reasons we no longer take electrical goods, gas appliances, duvets and pillows, but we may purchase them in situations of great need.]

We are often asked for bedding, duvet sets, sheets, towels, tea towels, and make up kitchen packs of crockery, cutlery, glasses, cooking utensils, pots and pans.

DONATING BABY & CHILDREN ITEMS

The **Baby, Children's and Household Project** started from Barbara Moreland's home six years ago. She now has storage sheds at her church hall as well. Last year she helped 76 families, ten more than the year before. We accept cots and bedding, buggies, high chairs, baby-carrying seats, Moses baskets and bedding, baby baths, changing mats, sterilisers, baby slings, blenders and baby bouncers. We also collect baby clothes and children's clothes up to age 11. Barbara would love to recruit some residents of Merton Park to help her with washing, sorting, packing and storing donations.

FINANCIAL DONATIONS

BECOMING A FRIEND OF CHRISTIAN CARE

Last year our total annual expenditure was £48,000. At the moment we have no grants for our work and depend on donations from individuals and churches. If you become a Friend we will send you prayer cards and special newsletters at Christmas and Easter; you become part of the Christian CARE 'family', those who surround and support the families and the volunteers with love and encouragement and prayer as well as gifts.

Contact Gillian on 07932 628840, or call the Christian Care Office on 020 302 0181 or email christiancaremerton@gmail.com

We receive some grants for our work, but most of our income is from donations given by individuals and churches. Cheques (made payable to Christian Care Association) may be sent to the Treasurer at the Office. Please right-click on the Gift Aid Declaration Form and select 'Save target/link as ...' to download the Gift Aid form from our website. Thank you.

If you would like to support us regularly, to receive an annual report, invitations to our AGM and other events, prayer cards and information-updates, please contact the Office for an application form.

Christian Care Merton

Stamp Collection

A reminder that there is a box at the back of the church for your used postage stamps. These stamps are passed to the *Jesuit Missions Stamp Group* who meet monthly to sort the stamps. They are then sold to a dealer and the proceeds used to fund *Jesuit Missions* projects. This raises a considerable sum for the Missions.

Thank you for your donations!

JESUIT
MISSIONS 



WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

A WOMEN-LED GLOBAL ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

COME - EVERYTHING IS READY! - SLOVENIA

FRIDAY 1ST MARCH 2019



For many years this movement has been known in England and Wales as Women's World Day of Prayer. However, in most other countries it has been known simply as World Day of Prayer and now here in England we are the same, emphasising that although the service is written and led by Women, all are welcome.

- WDP is ecumenical: the largest ecumenical movement in the world, the only one supported by Catholic and Protestant, Orthodox and Evangelical churches.
- WDP is global: alive and well in more than 120 countries worldwide
- WDP is women-led: no longer 'Women's i.e. belonging to women in the same way as a church's *Women's Fellowship* or *Women's Own* magazine, but instead belonging to everyone – but led by women, women's gift to the whole Church. As someone said to me recently, "We men will no longer feel unwanted!"

- But, above all, WDP is a prayer movement, a group of people for whom prayer is fundamentally important and who know that prayer changes things. There is no need to ask why we pray!



In 2019 the service is written by, for and about Women in Slovenia. Modern Slovenia became independent on 27 June 1991. It lies at the heart of Europe, bordered by Italy, Austria, Croatia and Hungary. It is a land of immense natural beauty, great variety of scenery and varied climate. One of the smallest countries in Europe (it is 20,273 km², roughly the same size as Wales), it has a population of just under two million people (about twice the population of Birmingham). Almost half of the people live in cities, and over a quarter live in the capital, Ljubljana.

Slovenia may be a new country, but the region has a long history; for 600 years, from the 13th century to 1918, the Slovene territories were part of the huge Austro-Hungarian Empire. After World War II Slovenia was one of six federal states making up the new Yugoslavia. In 1991 Slovenia declared its independence from Yugoslavia.

Christianity was introduced in the first century AD, and there was an increased Christian presence in the 3rd and 4th centuries. During the communist years, religious conviction was persecuted with imprisonment and restricted access to jobs. In 1991, when Slovenia became independent, the religious institutions regained their social role.

Services in the Wimbledon area will be at

10.30am St Saviours Church,
Grand Drive, SW20 9DL and

8.00pm Wimbledon Congregational Church,
1 Fairlawn Road, Wimbledon, SW19 3QR,



PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND

13TH - 20TH OCTOBER 2018

On Saturday 13th October, two groups (37 people) from the parishes of St John Fisher, Merton and Our Lady and St Peter, Wimbledon Common accompanied by two spiritual leaders, Fr David Gummatt and Fr Philip De Freitas, eagerly set out on a life-changing experience to the Holy Land.

Day 1 - It was an early start for 27 of our pilgrims while another 10 were lucky to leave on an afternoon flight, arriving in Tel Aviv at 11.30pm. We were welcomed to Israel by our tour guide, Peter Sabella, a Christian born and raised in Jerusalem who stood out of the crowds at the airport holding a *St Peters Pilgrimages* sign. We were transferred to Nazareth for dinner and an overnight stay, and met Suu who accompanied us to our hotels.

Day 2 - We awoke at dawn to prepare for breakfast where we joined the rest of the group. At 8.30, we were ready to meet our coach driver, Aimen, who ferried us to all our destinations. We were each given a copy of *The Holy Land, a Pilgrims Companion*, an excellent booklet with hymns, Mass, readings and prayers. However, as Pilgrims, we have to remember that our Lord did not have all the conveniences we enjoy today. We have to accept the challenges and ponder over them as they will help us to discover our real self, for the Lord works in mysterious ways.

Our first visit was the Church of the Beatitudes followed by Mass in the gardens on the Mount of the Beatitudes where Jesus preached his first sermon. We also visited Capernaum, Jesus' town and home of the first disciples where Jesus reinstated Peter as chief of the apostles.

In the afternoon, we went to the Church of the Five Loaves and Two Fishes before having lunch at the Hermitage Oriental Restaurant where the main course included Tilapia (also called St Peter's fish).

Our visits included a trip to Mensa Christi (Table of Christ) a slab of granite where Jesus dined with his disciples after his Resurrection.

At the end of the day we were able to relax with a pleasant boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, a picturesque lake set among the hills of northern Israel where Jesus began his public ministry, teaching in the synagogues and healing the sick.

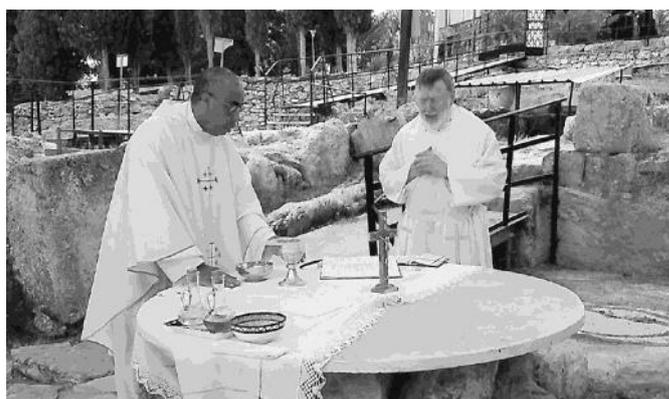
Day 3 - Soon after breakfast we made an early start to the Church of the Annunciation where the Angel

Gabriel appeared to Mary to give her the message that she had been chosen to be the Mother of the Son of God. Huge mosaics of Mary, from around the world, are on display behind the main altar. We celebrated Mass in the Church of St Joseph.

We then visited the original home of Mary's parents, Joachim and Anna, in the city of Sepphore, before proceeding to the Wedding Church in Cana where Jesus performed his first public miracle turning water into wine. Married couples were given the opportunity to renew their wedding vows and received certificates signed by our spiritual leaders, to commemorate the event.

Day 4 - On our way from Nazareth to Bethlehem, we saw the River Jordan where John the Baptist baptised Our Lord. We stopped in Jericho, the oldest town in the Bible where Jesus healed the blind beggar, and site of the parable of the Good Samaritan. At the Mount of Temptation, some of the pilgrims enjoyed a camel ride.

We paid a visit to the Church of the Good Shepherd and had a barbecue lunch in Jericho. We then stopped in Qmran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. In the afternoon, we were free to relax on the shores of the Dead Sea. We had dinner and spent the night in Bethlehem.



Mass is celebrated in Shepherds Field



The Grotto of the Nativity

Day 5 - Visit of the Nativity Church and the Grotto, Church of Saint Catherine, Jerome's Cave, Manger Square and Mass was celebrated in Shepherds' Field

which commemorates the Angelic announcement to the shepherds of the birth of the Son of God. We then saw the village where Mary visited her cousin, Elizabeth, which is also the birthplace of John the Baptist. We returned to Bethlehem for the night.

Day 6 - Before a Palestinian lunch, we visited the Old City of Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives, the Church of Pater Noster, the Chapel of Dominus Fleet (Tear Drop Church), the Tomb of the Princes de la Tour d'Auvergne, the Church of all nations, the Rock of Agony, and enjoyed views of Jerusalem. The afternoon was spent visiting the Jaffa Gate and the Western Wall, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Olive Tree, and we had Mass where Jesus prayed before he was arrested.

After dinner, a Palestinian Priest gave us a very interesting and informative talk about his life in Palestine. We were invited to support his mission.

Day 7 - We rose at 4a.m and set out with a packed breakfast to walk the Way of Sorrow (Via Dolorosa) or "The Calvary Way". We had Mass in the Holy Sepulchre followed by visits of the Chapel of St Helena, finding of the Cross, Stone of the Anointing, Entrance of Christ's Tomb, Orthodox Chapel of St Joseph of Arimathea and St Nicodemus and the Church of St Peter in Gallicantu on Mount Zion.

Day 8 - After a late breakfast in the city of Petah Tikva in Tel Aviv, Mass was celebrated on the 18th floor of the hotel. We gave thanks for a wonderful spiritual journey and shared readings, Rosary, hymns and prayers, knowing we had been part of something deeply meaningful to each one of us individually and had lived an unforgettable few days. Time soon came to say our final farewells and board the coach to the airport for a safe and comfortable flight home.

If you have never been to the Holy Land and you long to encounter a spiritual experience, when God knocks on your door to deliver a personal invitation to visit His Land, make sure to open it. He will help you achieve your dream in amazing ways.

Someone asked me to explain the Holy Land. Familiar Scriptures coming alive was the highlight of my daily

experiences. The Holy Land is unique. As I gazed at the most holy places which played such an important part in Jesus' life, Our Lord revealed himself to me both spiritually and emotionally. I felt incredibly blessed.

Having sensed the problems of the land and the plight of its people, I know we have to support them with our prayers for their future and pray for peace.

Shirley Donaghue

NEW DIOCESAN COAT OF ARMS

The new coat of arms for the **Diocese of Southwark** appears inside the weekly Fisherman's Herald. The Archbishop has approved this design as a logo for the Diocese. It incorporates symbols which represent the patrons of Southwark.

The principal patron of our diocese is **Our Lady, conceived without sin**. She is represented in the upper segment by a silver fleur de lys on a blue background. Both the fleur de lys and blue are symbols traditionally associated with Our Lady.

The lower left segment represents **Saint Thomas Becket**. It shows three Cornish choughs (birds of the crow family), as seen on the crest of St Thomas Becket. The lower right segment represents **Saint Augustine of Canterbury**. The Augustine cross, has been associated with Canterbury since at least 850AD. It was there that St Augustine was bishop in the early years of the seventh century.

Above the shield is a bishop's mitre with its two lappets. There are three metropolitan crosses, indicating that Southwark is a Metropolitan Archdiocese - the province includes Southwark, Arundel and Brighton, Portsmouth and Plymouth.

The colouring has its own symbolism. The blue upper segment with its wavy line refers to the waters which form a major part of the diocesan boundaries - the Thames and the Kent coast. The right lower segment is green, symbolising Kent, and the left lower segment is yellow, symbolising London.



ADOREMUS



When I first heard the mention of a Eucharistic Congress, I was immediately taken back to my childhood many moons ago. In Malta, where I grew up, there is a very main road called Eucharistic Congress Road. I remember asking my mother what these big words meant and her explanation

also telling me about such a congress happening in Malta before I was born. Of course, when Sister Catherine invited me to attend with her I, immediately, said yes. I also had a vested interest as I serve the Parish as a Eucharistic Minister and as a Catechist for Confirmation. We decided to attend on Friday the 7th September which launched the Congress and which we felt had most to offer us in our roles as Parish ministers.

The day started very early with a 7 o'clock train journey to Liverpool from Euston Station. We arrived at the ACC arena on a rather cold and gloomy morning but that immediately changed when we started to queue to get into the arena. Immediately there was a sense of belonging, a sense of excitement and expectation, everybody was so eager, friendly and ready to engage in conversation.

The morning started with an introduction and three lectures. At this point everybody was gathered in the great arena (I never saw so many clergy and religious gathered in one place including Bishops and Archbishops and even the Apostolic Nuncio.) There was this extraordinary feeling of the strong bond of faith and you could feel the Holy Spirit at work. The first talk was **The Scriptural Context of the Eucharist**. Canon Tower talked about how the Scriptures give us insights into our human nature, including central aspects intertwined with the Eucharist. Then he examined the Biblical historical, linguistic and specific Jewish contexts and backgrounds to the Eucharist. Next was Canon Oakley with his talk **The Eucharist in the Life of the Church**. In his speech Canon Oakley made many references to the writings of Pope Emeritus Benedict on the Eucharist. The most powerful message for me was that, *'Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction. The Eucharist*

is not a fact to be proven but the announcement of a Person to encounter.' Next was Sr Margaret Atkins OSA with her talk **Teaching The Eucharist**. This was of particular interest to me in my role as a Catechist. Sister Margaret's most powerful message was that *"The Eucharist won't make sense unless it is taught from a lived context that makes sense of it"*

After this it was lunchtime. As one can imagine after such a heavy morning we were all ready for lunch but not before the Southwark members were all called together to remember and pray for Father John Mulligan who passed away the day before. We were joined by Archbishop Peter Smith and other clergy and were reminded of the hard work Father Mulligan had put in to ensure the success of this event.

In the afternoon we met in smaller groups which offered different presentations on topics which we had chosen to attend beforehand. I chose topics which I felt would help me in my role of Catechist and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.

Dora Nash gave a talk about **Preparing Children for the Sacrament of Initiation**. She concentrated on First Holy Communion. However, much of what she said applies to the other Sacraments of Confirmation and Reconciliation. She said that: *"It is of course true that many of the parents will not be regular Mass-goers; and even those who are won't have received any formation in the faith since their schooldays – and that, even if it was good, will have been at least a decade ago. We must not of course be sniffy about this. I am strongly opposed to the idea that parents should have to pass some sort of test of their Catholic practice before being 'allowed' to bring their children to the altar. All Catholic parents have the right to bring their children to the sacraments. What we must recognise, therefore, is that First Communion preparation is an opportunity to catechise not just the children but also their parents and, yes, even the catechists!"* A very powerful message!

My next presentation was **Teaching Children to Pray before The Eucharist** by Julie Rourke sharing ways in which we can teach children to pray before the Eucharist. Julie again gave a very powerful talk about different ways to teach children to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. She also had a very colourful exhibition of children's work and handed out some very beautiful and helpful resources. I shall certainly be using these resources.

My last and final talk was **Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion: Ministry and Practice** given by Fr Chris Thomas and Sister Moira Meeghan. Fr Chris stated his talk by telling us that through our Baptism we are all called to serve. One of the ways in which we're being called to serve is as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Through that ministry and, more than anything else, what we communicate is the presence of Jesus. He went on to say that Christ's presence is in the world around us, in the people we gather with and meet each day, in the word we hear, and in the sacrament we receive. No one presence is any greater than the other. He then asked us to reflect on...

- **Where have I encountered the presence of Christ?**
- **Where do I communicate that presence?**

We all work in different environments and minister to many different people who are in various states of illness, and there are many different reasons as to why they are unable to join the community in celebrating the Eucharist at the church. How we celebrate the sharing of Eucharist is really important. How do we bring the community to the person? How do we enable the person to feel that they are part of the community and not isolated? There are different ways of doing this, many already share the newsletter. We need to enable people to know what's going on, to speak about parish events - making sure where possible that people do get chance now and again to join services whenever possible. This presentation was also interspersed with wonderful stories and personal experiences of the speakers and also from guests from their communities.

Our very long day ended in the early evening when we boarded the train back to London. It was the most amazing day full of encounters, listening and learning, at times very emotional but above all, totally inspiring and very uplifting. I am very privileged and thankful I was a small part of it all. I am sure that my mother from heaven is very proud of me!!

Miriam Davis

" Gifts of time and love are surely the basic ingredients of a truly merry Christmas."

Peg Bracken



FRIDAY FARE



Wigilia, literally meaning "vigil", is the main focus of a Polish Christmas. This meatless Christmas Eve meal, also known as the Star Supper, doesn't begin until the first star appears in the sky. Freshwater fish, usually white fish, carp, lake perch, trout or pike, is always part of the dinner.

WIGILIA FISH POLISH STYLE

Ingredients:

- 2 carrots
- 2 celery stalks
- 1 onion, quartered
- 10 peppercorns
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 tsps. salt
- 1 large whole freshwater fish

Topping:

- 1/4 cup butter
- 4 tablespoons fresh dill, chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 6 hardboiled eggs, finely chopped

Method:

1. Place vegetables, fish, dry seasonings, and enough water to cover the fish in a saucepan or shallow fish pan. Boil gently for about 15 to 20 minutes or until the fish flakes easily.
2. For the topping, heat the butter in a skillet and add the chopped eggs, lemon juice, dill, salt, and pepper. Cook 5 minutes, stirring frequently. When the fish is cooked, remove it gently from the fish pan and set on a warm platter. Spoon the topping over the fish and serve immediately.



ASK THE CLERGY:

WAS JESUS BORN ON DECEMBER 25TH?

This is an important question. We are human beings living in space and time. We search for meaning for our lives and for what we believe in. A theologian once asserted that theology is *Fides quaerens intellectum* (Faith seeking understanding). As Christians, Jesus Christ is the most important person in our lives. The Council of Chalcedon declared that Jesus is human and divine. We believe that article of our faith. Striving to know more about the humanity of Jesus, we ask question about when he was born and make researches to satisfy our human curiosity.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem. He lived with Mary and Joseph. As a young adult man, he walked the streets of Galilee, Palestine and Jerusalem preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God, calling all of us to repent and live good lives and to prepare for eternal life with God in heaven. He called many people to follow him and they did. From these followers he selected his 12 apostles. His preaching attracted many friends and some enemies. Rather than give up loving us and give up preaching the good news, he gave up his life for us. He died on the cross on Good Friday. No wonder John tells us: "God so loved the world that he gave us his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." (John 3:16)

I will approach this question ("Was Jesus born on Christmas day?") in two dimensions. In the first dimension, I will try to answer the question "Was Jesus born into this world?" In the second dimension I will try to answer the question "Was 25th December the exact date of Jesus birth?"

WAS JESUS BORN INTO THIS WORLD?

With regard to the first dimension, I will say Yes. Jesus was born into this world, to the family of Mary and Joseph. Here are biblical quotations about the birth of Jesus:

Now at this time Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census - the first- took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's house and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a Son, her firstborn.

She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the Inn. In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified, but the angel said; Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you; you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. And suddenly with the Angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host praising God and singing; Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace to men who enjoy his favour.
(Luke 2:1-14)

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being an upright man and wanting to spare her disgrace, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said; Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins. Now all this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet; Look! The virgin is with child and will give birth to a son whom they will call Immanuel, a name which means "God-is-with-us". When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do; he took his wife to his home; he had not had intercourse with her when she gave birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

(Matthew 1:18-25)



WAS 25TH DECEMBER THE EXACT DATE OF JESUS' BIRTH?

Church Fathers, Theologians and Scripture scholars disagree on this question. Some say Yes and a great number say No. Hippolytus (170 - 236AD) will support those who argue that Jesus was born on 25th December. As we search for the appropriate answer to this question, let us remember that the main purpose of Jesus' infancy narratives is to present to the believing community that Jesus was born, lived and died on the cross. His life and preaching had a great impact on the lives of billions of people. The light and salvation that Jesus brought has had great impact on many human lives. Think about the monks and nuns, Priests and Religious, lay Christians who spread the good news of Jesus Christ in many outstanding and quiet ways especially during this Christmas season.

Many Church Fathers, Theologians and Scripture Scholars will argue that 25th December is not the exact birthday of Jesus. Irenaeus will argue that Jesus was born on the 41st year of the reign of Augustus. Eusebius (264 - 240AD) will posit that Jesus was born around the 42nd year of the reign of Augustus. This 42nd year goes from the autumn of 2BC to the autumn of 1BC. Other scholars will argue from the viewpoint of shepherds who were "living out of doors and keeping watches in the night over their flocks". These scholars remark that the flocks lived in the open air from "the week before the Passover (late March) through mid-December." Furthermore, "They passed the winter under cover; and from this alone it may be seen that the traditional date for Christmas, in the winter, is unlikely, to be right, since Luke says that shepherds were in the fields."

An important question as we discuss about winter and shepherds being out in the field is; Does climate change in anyway affect this discussion? We might ask Archaeological historians and experts on climate change like David Attenborough. While in Poland discussing the need to pay attention to climate change, David forcefully declared; *"If we don't take action; the collapse of civilizations and extinction of much of the natural world is on the horizon"*.

IF 25TH DECEMBER IS NOT THE EXACT BIRTHDAY OF JESUS CHRIST, THEN WHY DESIGNATE THAT DAY TO BE HIS BIRTHDAY?

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* postulates that ecclesial leaders selected this date; "to coincide with the pagan Roman festival marking the birthday of the

unconquered sun, at the time of the winter solstice. During the Easter midnight Mass we sing that Jesus is the morning star that never sets. Jesus Christ is the Sun that sheds light on all human beings. Celebrating Christmas on 25th December is a way that Jesus Christ sheds his peaceful light on all humankind. Furthermore, The *Encyclopaedia Americana* argues that many scholars believe that they chose the date "in order to make Christianity more meaningful to pagan converts".

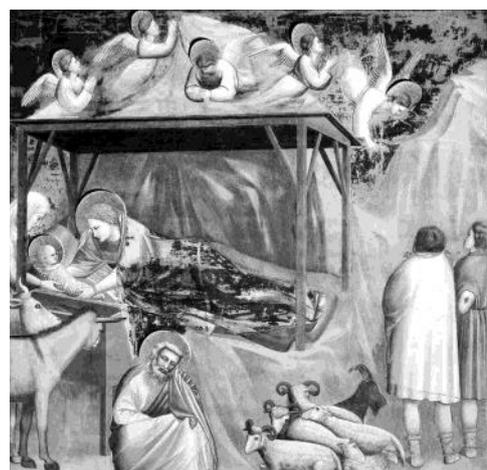
This is not meant to be an exhaustive academic presentation but a simple erudite answer from a clergyman busy with advent Masses, confessions, sick calls, etc. If you have a better and more exhaustive academic and theological answer to this topic, please feel free to email me at hedokwe@yahoo.com or call me on 07440 076 120.

My simple suggestions to help make advent and Christmas season more meaningful to you are

1. Take time to read about Jesus Christ in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
2. Ask Jesus to help you come to a personal relationship with Him.
3. Take time to go to confession or receive the sacrament of reconciliation during this Advent and Christmas season.
4. Make effort to participate in Christmas Eucharistic celebrations.
5. Make effort to participate or listen to Christmas carols and songs.
6. Arrange to have Christmas meals with family and friends.
7. Reach out to family and friends through phone calls, Christmas cards and text messages.

As you read this article, may Jesus shower his abundant blessings and healings upon you and your family. I wish you a blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Father Hyacinth Edokwe CSSP





PROUD TO BE PRO-LIFE'

Very many thanks to all who supported those of us who walked the ten bridges of London for Life. We were lucky; after a very wet morning, the rain stopped by 2 pm and we even saw the sun before we finished. We managed to raise the magnificent sum of £805, plus gift aid.



Your money is being very well spent as Life goes from strength to strength. Since the relaunch of Life in 2016 there has been a massive increase in calls for help to the *Pregnancy Matters* online service. In 2017-2018 Life responded to more than 6,500 individuals, many of whom needed ongoing support and assistance. That's 18 people a day who have been helped through their crisis pregnancy or needed practical help or counselling.



We were delighted to welcome Clare Plasom-Scott to St John Fisher on 22nd November and hear her speak on how she is "Proud to be pro-Life". She is Life Matters Officer for Life Link Three, which covers the London region and includes eight Life houses and a Care centre, as well as working with the media and giving talks in schools and other venues. It was inspiring to hear of the response to her talks to young people, especially in secondary schools.

One of Clare's media tasks has been the campaign against the Diana Johnson MP "10 minute rule bill" seeking the House of Commons' approval to remove sections 58 and 59 of the Offences Against the Person Act and thus "decriminalise" abortion.

Life needs you to directly lobby your MP ideally in person, or by writing a letter, to vote against the removal of sections 58 and 59 of the OAPA whenever legislation comes before the House – both in the 10 Minute Rule Bill and if an amendment is added to the Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill.

You can read more about the dangers and even see Clare herself at:

<https://lifecharity.org.uk/proposal-to-repeal-abortion-laws/>

Friends of Life

BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Our small Scripture Group has been meeting together, reading every fortnight the Gospel of St. Luke. It has been a very enjoyable voyage of discovery, following the birth, infancy and mission of Jesus. We have become closer to the person of Jesus by being with Him through his teaching, healing and miracles and then accompanying Him in spirit through His passion, crucifixion and resurrection. At each stage of this journey we have been able to share our thoughts and discovered truths in the Scriptures we never knew were there.

We are now starting the Acts of the Apostles which was also written by St. Luke. This is the amazing story of the immediate sequel of events, beginning with the Ascension and Pentecost and the very beginnings of

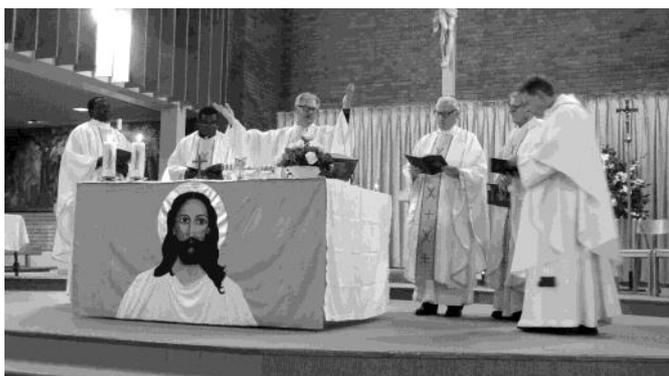
the Church in which Jesus is still with us. Later we will be following in the very exciting footsteps of St. Paul as he carried the message of Salvation to all.

We would like to invite you to join our friendly group – no knowledge or experience needed. We meet every two weeks on Monday afternoons from 1.30 to 3.00pm. To find out more, please contact Tony or Julie Brook on 020 8286 0463 or 07835 262 460.'

Julie Brook

ST JOHN FISHER, MERTON

CELEBRATING 80 YEARS



Our 80th birthday celebration began appropriately with a Mass celebrated by the Vicar General, Mgr. Matthew Dickens who concelebrated with Fr. Matthias, Fr. Hyacinth, Canon Acton, Bishop Tripp and Fr. Scott. It was uplifting and celebratory, with a lively and inspiring homily by Mgr. Matthew on the Sunday readings. We were reminded also of God's gift to us in the wonderful, generous community that is St. John Fisher Parish.

After Mass came the excitement of the reception in the hall. There was food and drink in abundance with the best of company. Our photo shows Mgr. Dickens, Paddy Beynon (who attended the first Mass) and Fr. Plummer whose sister was also at the first Mass



As always there was a celebratory cake which every one partook of with enthusiasm.



The booklet to commemorate this happy event was organised by John Golden, written by parish members and edited beautifully by Marianne Haynes. It is a valuable keepsake, not only for its history but as a timeline which connect with important events worldwide. Some generous contributions were made towards the cost of printing.



The following Saturday, to complete these events, Mrs. Bruton organised a fantastic musical evening. The 42nd. Street Swing Band played extracts from well known musicals and we were serenaded by a male soloist at intervals. The dance floor was very busy and the raffle for CAFOD was the source of great demand for tickets resulting in a magnificent result of £737 for the charity.

Teresa Pollard

Photos by John Golden



A POSTSCRIPT TO THE BOOKLET...

THANK YOU SISTER CATHERINE!

Celebrating 80 years of Mass at St John Fisher Church and reading the booklet to accompany the occasion, My family were struck by one huge omission, that of Sister Catherine, although she is briefly mentioned riding her bike in Cannon Hill Lane which is a memory many of us have.

My family moved into Merton Park in 1961. We were part of St John Fisher Parish. We attended Mass at the Tin Hut on Kingston Road, now the site of Building Blocks Nursery. The nuns lived next door on the corner of Mostyn Road.

My first real memories of Sister Catherine were when my mother died and my father needed help looking after me. By then the nuns had moved to Mostyn Road and I found their loft to be an endless adventure, I loved rummaging through all the assortment of junk left behind by the previous owners. The garden was beautiful, the Chapel so peaceful and the Convent always smelled of homemade baking. At this time I was 6 years old and Sister Catherine asked me what I wanted to be when I was older. I replied "A nun!"

My brother did not attend a Catholic School and was therefore expected to attend Sunday School, being the younger sister I was sent as well. We were rascals for many of the teachers there. I remember us all giving changed names on the register, but Sister Catherine getting us back in groups, just calmly reading out our proper names, as she knew us all. She was firmly in charge of this group.



Going to St Catherine's School, Sister Catherine was my form teacher, she sat me right in front of her desk, she had

obviously noticed that I was not destined to become a nun! I was not the brightest at school and struggled to get my O levels, Sister Catherine helped me with biology and I got an A.



Bringing up my children, Sister Catherine has had a finger in every pie, being there teaching the children all their sacraments, Baptism, Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation (times

3!) She also ran excellent parenting classes, and prayer groups. She is always involved in so many groups within the parish right across the age range, knowing all the children, adults and their families. As well as this Sister Catherine prepares the Altar for Masses, organises the Christmas party and all other functions and does countless jobs behind the scenes.

Personally, I don't see how St John Fisher Parish would have managed without her over the last sixty or so years as I know that my story is not a particularly special one and throughout the years she has been there for generations of families just like mine, never wanting praise but just working tirelessly for the people of the parish.

God Bless you, Sister Catherine.

Pippa Lindsay

[Editor's Note: Sister Catherine was part of the team responsible for creating the 80th Anniversary booklet, so her usual modesty prevailed and she would not countenance her inclusion in it - so thank you to Pippa for highlighting the many things that Sister has done, and continues to do, for the parish. Thank you Sister, from us all!]

" He who has not Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree."

Roy L. Smith



NEWS FROM ST. JOHN FISHER PRIMARY SCHOOL



EDUCATION SUNDAY

We started the autumn term with a very special event in the church calendar - Education Sunday on 9th September. This was a wonderful start to our school year, bringing school and parish together to give thanks for the gift of education and all the opportunities this gives us, and it was pleasing to see so many children and families at the Mass giving thanks for our wonderful school community; pupils, staff, parents and governors.

ACHIEVEMENTS RECOGNISED



For the fourth year in a row, we have been awarded the *MSSP (Merton School Sports Partnership) GOLD award*;

reflecting the school's dedication to ensuring that being active and participating in an ever widening range of sporting activities is central to wellbeing and learning. Alongside this, we also learned that we had been nominated for and achieved the school 'Music Mark' award. We were nominated by Merton Music Foundation in recognition of the value that we place on music. Thank you to all our subject leaders, who all contribute so much to the sporting and musical success of the school.



In recognition of the work the school does to embed a culture of 'speak up, speak out' around bullying, the school has been awarded the *ABA (Anti-Bullying Alliance) 'Gold' standard* for their 'All Together' programme. This programme has been developed over the last three years and includes a

special focus on reducing bullying of disabled children and those with SEN but aims to reduce bullying of all children and young people.



Most recently, in November some pupils and their teacher took the bus and tube to the London Oval

to collect our *2018 Gold STARS Award*. This is an achievement for schools that get pupils to travel to school safely by ways that are more active and better for the environment (e.g. walking, scooting, cycling.)

HARVEST FESTIVAL

It was wonderful to see the children sporting all their bright colours and patterns as part of our 'Brighten up

Harvest' celebration in October. The donations made by the children went to the CAFOD Harvest Appeal. We also collected donations for our local food bank before half term, and were delighted again this year with the amount of non-perishable food items which we have been able to donate to support the growing number of families in our local community who, due to financial challenges, often struggle to provide basic nutritious meals on a daily basis.

THE MAYOR'S CHRISTMAS CARD

The Mayor of Merton kindly invited our school to design her official Christmas card this year. It was a great honour to be asked to represent our borough in this way, and many children took part in the competition to create the winning design! Madam Mayor was welcomed to a Friday assembly in September, when Year 6 children introduced the competition to the rest of the school. Madam Mayor thanked the children for agreeing to take part, and said that the winning design would be sent to every borough in London! Recently we were delighted to welcome her back, as she announced the winning design and runners up. Huge congratulations to Emily Campbell, whose winning design is displayed below. Her design has already been sent to over 500 recipients across London!



BOXES OF LOVE

In November, pupils had an assembly about how creating a Box of Love can change someone's Christmas - with the aim of bringing a smile to an elderly person in our parish. The boxes will be distributed by Sister Catherine later this month.



JOSETTE MEETS ...

FATHER HYACINTH EDOKWE

By the time *Talkabout* is published, most of you will have met Father Hyacinth who joined St John Fisher as Assistant Priest in October, but there is a lot more behind his generous smile and welcoming manners. Having met Father socially, albeit briefly, I was very curious to find out more about this warm and gentle man and guessed he had an interesting career.

It is my pleasure and privilege to pass on to you what Father shared with me:

"I was born in Onitsha, Nigeria, on August 4, 1962, to Augustin and Christiana Edokwe, a deeply religious and committed couple, and was baptised on the 17th of August 1962. My parents who belonged to the Legion of Mary Society were very prayerful and we prayed the Rosary as a family, together with my four brothers and four sisters, almost daily. I was enrolled into the Legion of Mary aged 10 and attended a Junior Seminary, called Holy Ghost Juniorate, graduating in 1981 with excellent results.

In October 1981, I entered the Novitiate of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. The Novitiate consisted of one year of intensive spiritual experience, intensive life of prayer and study of Holy Scripture, Canon Law and life of the saints, and what it means to be a member of the Holy Ghost Congregation. On 6th November 1982, I did my first religious profession in the Holy Ghost Congregation. From there, I proceeded to the Spiritan School of Philosophy, ISIENU, Nsukka where I started studying philosophy, and later transferred to Duquesne University in Pittsburgh United States of America where I obtained a B.A. Degree in Philosophy.

I returned to Nigeria in 1986 and did my NYSC (National Youth Service Corps) at the Holy Ghost Juniorate before joining the Spiritan International School of Theology which is affiliated to the Duquesne University.

I was ordained a Catholic Priest in my home parish of St Peter Claver, Otolu Nnewi, on 20th July 1991 and was awarded a M.A. Degree in Theology by

Duquesne University, also in 1991. From August 1991 to April 1992, I served as Secretary to my Religious Superior. In May 1992, I was sent as a Missionary to the U.S.A. Working within the Archdiocese of Miami was a great experience (May 1992 to June 2000) and I had the honour of becoming an American Citizen. I spent 5 years in Canada where I did some missionary work and studied Sacred Scripture before returning to Nigeria in 2005 where I worked in several parishes.

I was made Parish Priest of St Christopher's parish and was also appointed Episcopal Vicar for the Religious Men and Women of Nnewi diocese. In August 2012, I was honoured to be appointed to teach at the Senior Seminary called Spiritan School of Philosophy, ISIENU, Nsukka, where I taught Introduction to Sacred Scripture. I also served as Spiritual Director from 2012 to September 2018."

When we paused, I asked Father whether his very full life allowed for hobbies and relaxation. Laughing, he replied that he enjoys lawn tennis and table tennis. He also plays the guitar and the piano (we know he can also sing) and relaxes by listening to religious music and Reggae music. Father is also a polyglot and speaks, not only his native tongue - Igbo - and English, but also Greek, Spanish and French. He loves nature and sees God everywhere, finding everything "beautiful". His infectious Joy in the Lord and love of God were made manifest as the conversation went on:

"I have been granted a 2 year sabbatical and am delighted to have been appointed as Assistant Priest to Father Matthias. This is my first visit to London and I am still learning my way and gradually adjusting to life in England. I thank Father Matthias, Deacons Fred and Tom, Sr Catherine, Melissa and indeed all the parishioners for their cordial welcome.

I was delighted to meet Msgr Matthew Dickens when he celebrated the 80th anniversary of the first Mass at St John Fisher, in October, together with Canon Acton, Bishop Tripp and Father Scott. The social gathering



and buffet which followed also gave me the opportunity of meeting more of you socially. On the same Saturday, Sr Catherine, the catechists and I had taken the Confirmation candidates to St George's Cathedral in Southwark, and we had a good time. So I already feel part of this community.

I take this opportunity to wish all of you, and your families, a very happy Christmas. Christmas is a time when we remember the birth of Christ as our Saviour. It is a time when we send members of our family and friends Christmas cards but also a time of gratitude when we thank God for choosing the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the Mother of Jesus, and a time for

thanking Jesus for accepting to come into the world and share our human condition. In summary, Christmas is a time of gratitude when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

I am delighted to be here and am excited to serve the people of God at St John Fisher's. I hope we shall have a great time together."

I thank Father Hyacinth for giving me so much of his time. It was indeed a blessing to interview him and I feel we will all benefit greatly from his presence among us.

Josette Kisnorbo

NEWS FROM ST JOHN FISHER PRIMARY SCHOOL - CONTINUED

ANTI-BULLYING WEEK

One day during Anti-Bullying Week in November the pupils were encouraged to wear odd socks to help raise awareness of this year's theme, 'Choose Respect Over Bullying'. In assembly, it was explained how everybody can show respect to each other. We must show respect as Jesus taught us, no matter our differences or appearances. There are different types of bullying and it can affect somebody's daily life as it is persistent. Shaving foam offered a practical demonstration of how hurtful words can pour out easily but once out, are very difficult to take back.

BUILDING UPDATE

Tucked over in the corner of the playground, out of sight to most, the dust has been flying, the rubble mounting and diggers lifting and loading, as slowly but surely the new classroom has taken shape. We have waited with eager anticipation - seeing the walls rise from their foundations - on our yet unnamed new classroom.

Our 'Buy a Brick' campaign is supporting the school to raise the 10% of the funding we have been allocated for the project (as a Voluntary Aided school we are expected to raise 10% of all major works such as this).

ANOTHER TIME CAPSULE

Recently the company who have been causing all the disruption on Grand Drive over the last few months, SGN, came to school—along with LOTS of their equipment—to tell us more about how gas travels to our homes and to remind us of some very important safety rules about gas—inside and outside of the home. SGN left us with another challenge, to fill the Time Capsule (that you can see in the photo) with our work, drawings and hopes for the future. The team will be returning soon to excavate a deep hole opposite



the school on Grand Drive and our time capsule will be buried... ever to be discovered?

CHRISTMAS

Our wonderful Christmas Fair was a great success - thanks to the hard work of our PTFA and the generous donations from our families. There were a wide range of stalls with opportunities for festive games and shopping and, of course, a rather special guest made a flying visit from the North Pole too!

The School Choir are performing in various locations across the borough in the lead up to Christmas, including the Mayor of Merton's Christmas Carol event at Sacred Heart Church on Tuesday 18 December and at St John Fisher Church on Sunday 16 December. So please show your support if you see them on their Christmas Choir tour!

As *Talkabout* heads to the printers, the children are getting very exciting about a special treat that the PTFA have arranged. A special performance of "Cinderella" by Panto-in-a-Day will be coming to the school on Friday... "Oh yes it is!"

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas!

Miss Janine Kenna, Headteacher

THE PARISH SURVEY 2017

PROGRESS REPORT

The Parish held a survey in the autumn of 2017. Davide Buttaci published an overview of the results in last year's December edition of Talkabout. As always there were many who agreed we needed change but few who were willing to put their shoulder to the wheel. Some of the main items led to the setting up of 'working groups' within the Parish Advisory Council to tackle some of the issues raised:

- A social committee
- Engaging Parish Youth
- Constitution of the St John Fisher Parish Advisory Council
- Refurbishing or remodelling the Parish Hall
- Making Homilies more relevant to Mass audiences
- Improving communications
- Health, Safety and Fire.

Each working group consists of two or more members of the PAC and they are encouraged to co-opt members from the wider parish community.

The working group on the Constitution has circulated a draft paper to the PAC but need formal approval from them before they can be circulated further. Deacon Tom has kindly written a response to the issues raised about Homilies - which you can read opposite.

Those interested in refurbishing the Hall are making efforts to discover what the needs of the Parish actually are before considering how to meet those needs. Health, Safety and Fire is largely a matter of following advice from our Insurance Company, and the Group reports these actions to the PAC.

Improving communications is seen largely as improving the Parish website and using social media, and these are now in hand. A couple of social events have been organised, but support has been more from friends of the organisers rather than parishioners.

Engaging with youth was proving to be a very difficult nut to crack. However a group of volunteers have now come forward to lead a youth group which is now running again, regularly on Friday evenings for children in Year 7 and above.

"WHAT COULD WE DO BETTER?"

The following is a summary of the common responses to the first of the four questions asked of the parishioners in the survey. Please bear in mind when

reading through, that this survey was in Autumn 2017.

The responses to the question "What could the parish do better?" have been ranked below by their main theme. Please note, only answers which appeared more than five times have been ranked, and the numbers refer to the relative placement of that response.

- 1 Improve friendliness (perhaps organise social club) particularly for newcomers (welcome pack); greeting people who arrive for Mass/ too clique
- 2 Involve/ Support/ Have a group for teenagers (in particular 12-18 year olds)
- 3= Engage more with children/ involve them more at 9:30 mass/ tailor 9:30am mass to young audience
- 3= Encourage children to participate more/ get more involved (as Readers, Eucharistic Ministers, Welcomers, etc.)
- 5 Mass too long (mainly 9:30am)
- 6= Interesting/ more engaging sermons (& shorter/relevant for younger people/clearer language/spontaneous not read)
- 6= Bring Gospel to real life situations relevant to today
- 6= Family Mass to be more tailored to children (perhaps relate to what happens at school)
- 9 More involvement of parishioners in church activities
- 10= Communication should be improved
- 10= More Parish gathering/ community activities (e.g. social events: country dance, BBQ, etc)
- 12= Improve existing hall (smarten it up)
- 12= Silence in church (phones off/ make parents aware of children's room/ no talking when leaving after mass)
- 14 More Readers, Eucharistic ministers & helpers
- 15= Better parking facilities/ Better organised parking
- 15= Preach for the people and not to them (listen rather than preach/ engage more with parishioners)
- 15= More active in the wider community

John Golden
PAC Charirman

SERMONS

The clergy have noted what was said by parishioners in last year's survey and will bear the comments in mind when preparing homilies etc. However, it is not always easy to know what can be done both because the comments are sometimes very general and non-specific and, perhaps inevitably in a survey such as this, list what are perceived as problems without offering solutions. And no comment was made by more than a minority of the respondents.

But in response there are some points to be made:

- A sermon is an occasion where the homilist is inevitably preaching to the people. It is not an occasion for a discussion nor an opportunity to listen to the people. If that is wanted, some alternative forum is needed.
- It is not right to say homilies in the parish are overlong. They are normally under ten minutes and within church guidelines. For many parishioners that is the only time they have any catechesis. It is surely not unreasonable to expect them to listen for that length of time.
- The Church's guidance for homilies says that they should be based largely on the readings at Mass. That limits the subject matter on any specific weekend. Inevitably the messages are not always comfortable because Jesus expects his followers to be challenged and not simply to conform to the secular fashions of the times in which we live.
- Very few people can preach spontaneously successfully. Homilies need preparation. And even our top politicians and business people read their speeches. They have the advantage however of high-tech aids to make it appear they are not doing so.
- The parish tradition of calling children to the altar during the homily at the 9.30 Sunday Family Mass will be maintained as requested. Clergy do seek to make these homilies understandable to the children. School age children also have special Masses for them in the school and younger children have the dedicated liturgy for them at the Family Mass. One complication is that this is the only Mass that many parents attend in any week and there can be a difficulty in providing something which is beneficial to both children and adults.

Deacon Tom

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

2ND MORDEN ST JOHN FISHER RAINBOWS

After running Rainbows for over 13 Years, Sue Green has reluctantly decided to leave as Rainbow Leader in July 2019. This is due to her having to work on Fridays.

Unfortunately, the other Rainbow Leader Mabinthy Kanu will also be leaving in July, as her daughter is moving up to Brownies.

Both Sue and Mabs have enjoyed their time as leaders and will be sad to leave.

Please if you are interested in running or helping out occasionally please let Sue know. Sadly, if no one steps forward then the unit will have to close after the summer term.



Sue Green
sigreen@live.co.uk

CENTRE FOR CATHOLIC FORMATION

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS



The *Centre for Catholic Formation*, the Archdiocese of Southwark's catechetical centre in Tooting Bec, celebrated its golden anniversary this year. Since its official opening by Archbishop Cyril Cowderoy on 19 June 1968, staff at the CCF in Tooting Bec have provided talks, courses and events to serve the ongoing formation of the lay people in the Archdiocese.

Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies

The Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) offers an introduction to the central teaching and beliefs of the Catholic tradition. The modules are taught through lectures and group discussions in a friendly environment. The CCRS is managed and awarded by the Board of Religious Studies (BORS) on behalf of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales; it is open to anyone who wishes to deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith. For more information visit the Centre for Catholic Formation website at www.ccftootingbec.org.uk

EXTRACT FROM "THE MISHNAH"

Imagine an unborn child in his mother's womb were endowed with a fully developed intellect and perfect senses. It would doubtless regard the dark, confined space within the mother as its entire world and the period of foetal growth as its life-time.

Now imagine there were twins, and they started arguing and speculating: "What is to become of us after we leave the womb and depart from our universe?"

Now imagine one twin has faith and claims some knowledge - by tradition or intuition - of a future life after leaving the mother, whilst the other is a sceptic, believing only what his senses and mind can perceive - only in "this world" which he can see and feel.

The first will argue: "I have faith, sustained by a long tradition which has come down to me, that on leaving the womb, we will enter a new life of much broader dimensions."

But the other twin will laugh and scoff at this "simpleton", saying: "Only a fool can believe all these imbecile stupidities and idiocies which the mind cannot grasp." "And according to you," asks the child of faith, "what will happen to us after we leave the womb?" "That is simple and obvious" answers the "enlightened" sceptic, "when we depart from this world of ours, our food supply will be cut off and we will fall into the abyss from which there is no return."

As they talked, the womb opened. The "simpleton" departs first. The "rational" twin still inside trembles with shock and grief at the "misfortune" that befell his brother. As he bewails the loss of his brother, he hears a terrible shriek from his fellow-twin just outside the womb. The brother inside shakes with terror and exclaims: "Woe, this is his final agonizing death cry as he gives up his life!"

And while this yet unborn twin grieves and wails over his brother's "death", there is rejoicing and festivity in the home of the new-born. The parents and relatives begin to celebrate and greet each other: "Mazal Tov, Maal Tov - a son is born to us!"

Lord Immanuel Jakobovits
Former Chief Rabbi
(1921-1999)



RED WEDNESDAY 2018

Wednesday 28th November 2018 was 'Red Wednesday', a day to show solidarity with our Christian brothers and sisters suffering persecution throughout the world

People all across the UK and the world took part in this year's #RedWednesday – with cathedrals, churches, schools, colleges and universities all Making a Stand for Faith and Freedom.

In London, iconic buildings and landmarks including Marble Arch, Lambeth Palace and the Houses of Parliament were all flood-lit red as people joined a candle-light procession to Westminster Cathedral.

In front of the cathedral, emblazoned in red, guest speakers Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra (Assistant Secretary General of Muslim Council of Great Britain) and Bishop Angelous (Bishop of Coptic Orthodox Church UK) spoke out against religiously motivated persecution.

During a live video link with Aleppo, people in the cathedral piazza came face to face with Antoine, a Christian man from Aleppo supported by *Aid to the Church in Need* who described how he was held by Daesh (ISIS) for 62 days before making a miraculous escape.

Earlier that day, the #RedWednesday red bus had criss-crossed the streets of London, starting at Southwark Cathedral, and stopping at St George's Cathedral, Southwark, St Paul's Cathedral, All Souls, Langham Place, St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square before winding up at Parliament Square where a gathering took place with speeches and an opportunity for people to meet Parliamentarians.

Cathedrals across the UK floodlit red including St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, Norwich Cathedral, Portsmouth Cathedral and Wrexham Cathedral. In Scotland, St Mirin's Catholic Cathedral, Paisley, Scotland went red, and in the Scottish Parliament there was a #RedWednesday event including a presentation of ACN's Religious Freedom in the World 2018 Report.

Other countries participating in #RedWednesday included France where the Grand Mosque of Paris and the Great Synagogue of Paris went red, as did the Rialto Bridge, in Italy, Venice, and in the Philippines, 47 cathedrals and 29 basilicas were also floodlit red.

Aid to the Church in Need

LITURGICAL CALENDAR FOR 2018-19

Calendar of Feasts and Fasts:

The Nativity of Our Lord - Christmas Day	Tue.	25th Dec.
The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph	Sun.	30th Dec.
The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God	Tue.	1st Jan. 2019
The Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ	Sun.	6th Jan.
The Baptism of Our Lord	Tue.	8th Jan.
The Presentation of Our Lord (Candlemas)	Sat.	2nd Feb.
Ash Wednesday **	Wed.	6th March
Saint Patrick	Sun.	17th March
Saint Joseph	Tue.	19th March
The Annunciation of the Lord	Mon.	25th March
Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord	Sun.	14th April
Maundy Thursday	Thu.	18th April.
Good Friday **	Fri.	19th April
Easter Sunday	Sun.	21st April
Saint George, Protector of England	Tue.	23rd April
The Ascension of Our Lord	Thu.	30th May
The Feast of Pentecost, Whit Sunday	Sun.	9th June
The Most Holy Trinity	Sun.	16th June
St John Fisher & St Thomas More	Sat.	22nd June
The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ	Sun.	23rd June
The Nativity of John the Baptist	Mon.	24th June
The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus	Fri.	28th June
Immaculate Heart of Blessed Virgin Mary	Sat.	29th June
Saints Peter and Paul, apostles	Sun.	30th June
The Transfiguration of Our Lord	Tue.	6th August
The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Thu.	15th August
All Saints	Fri.	1st Nov.
First Sunday of Advent (Sunday Cycle: A)	Sun.	1st Dec.
The Nativity of Our Lord - Christmas Day	Wed.	25th Dec.
The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph	Sun.	29th Dec.

Bold entries above denote Holydays of Obligation (and every Sunday too).
 ** Days of Fasting and Abstinence.

CYCLE OF PRAYER

In the Cycle of Prayer, the liturgical year has been divided into six periods. Please pray for the intentions stated - not only on a particular day, not only at Mass, but throughout the period, especially in your own private prayers.

Advent & Christmas	Migrants & Refugees <i>especially on Migrants' Day (3 December)</i>
	Openness to the Word of God <i>especially on Bible Sunday (9 December)</i>
	Expectant Mothers <i>especially on 23 December</i>
Ordinary Time: Winter	Peace on Earth <i>especially on Peace Day (20 January)</i>
	Christian Unity <i>(especially 18 - 25 January)</i>
	Victims of Trafficking & Those who work to combat it <i>especially on the Feast Day of St Josephine Bakhita (8 February)</i>
	Racial Justice <i>especially on Racial Justice Day (17 February)</i>
Lent	The Sick & those who Care for them <i>especially on World Day for the Sick (11 February)</i>
	The Unemployed <i>especially on Day for the Unemployed (3 March)</i>
	Candidates for the Sacraments <i>especially on the Sundays of Lent</i>
	Women <i>especially on Women's World Day of Prayer (1 March)</i>
	The Needy & Hungry of the World <i>especially on Lent Fast Day (15 March)</i>
	Penitents & Wanderers



www.liturgyoffice.org.uk

THE POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR 2019



Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

The intentions are keys to live our faith in daily life, joining action to our prayers. Each intention presenting a challenge that gives purpose to the month.

JANUARY

Evangelisation - Young People

That young people, especially in Latin America, follow the example of Mary and respond to the call of the Lord to communicate the joy of the Gospel to the world.

FEBRUARY

Universal - Victims

For a generous welcome of the victims of human trafficking, of enforced prostitution, and of violence.

MARCH

Evangelisation - Christian Communities

That Christian communities, especially those who are persecuted, feel that they are close to Christ and have their rights respected.

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4 days by Air from **£450**
8 Dec (4 days, from £350)
18 Apr (Easter 2019)
24 May (Month of Mary)
7 & 25 June, 27 July

Medjugorje Retreat
5 days from **£399**
**5 Apr, 24 May, 28 June
26 Jul, 23 Aug, 6 Sept**
Incl: Return flights to Split, 4 nights in Medugorje, half board

Rome & Assisi
5 days from **£699**
22 Apr, 24 June, 23 Sept
Incl: Return flights, hotels on half board, guided tours with our local tour manager

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For more information contact Sr. Catherine Mulcahy
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Bing Crosby



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The school, in partnership with parents and the parish of St John Fisher offers to each one of its children, a Catholic education centred on Christ, which enables them to develop their talents in accordance with Christian values and principles and which throughout all aspects of school life presents Christ's ministry of love and reconciliation.



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The school holds tours for prospective parents once a month; please visit the school website or contact the school office:

St John Fisher RC Primary School
Grand Drive, West Wimbledon, London SW20 9NA

Telephone: 020 8540 2637

Email: school@st-johnfisher.merton.sch.uk

Website: www.st-johnfisher.merton.sch.uk



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*We are based in the Scout hut in Bow lane, Morden
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on:

07957 577145

or

07894 883629

**ST JOHN FISHER
PARENT & TODDLER GROUP**

**Thursdays (term time only)
9.30 - 11.30 am in the Parish Hall**



The Parent and Toddler Group invite pre-school children and their parents to come along and create new friendships within our church community.

£3 admission (includes refreshments and a new craft activity each week). Admission is limited to 30 children to ensure a fun and safe environment.

Any questions?

Please contact Pippa at pipnlindsay@gmail.com



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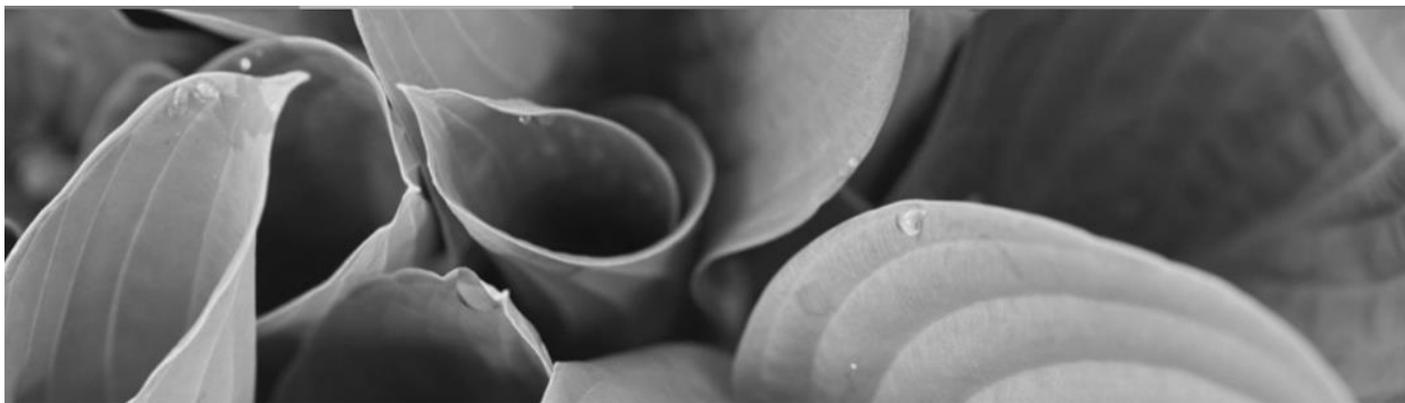
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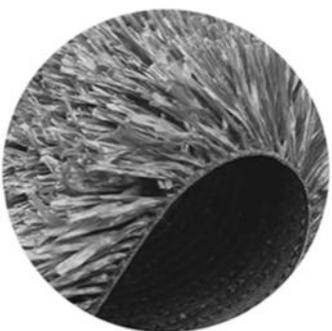
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EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION ROTA

22ND DECEMBER 2018 - 31ST MARCH 2019

Date	6.00pm Vigil	8.00am	9.30am	11.00am	6.30pm
22-23 Dec	Jane Gracias Richard Croke	Kevin McCullagh	Deacon Ursula O'Byrne	Deacon John Golden, Neville Desmier Evelyn Chiejina, Christian Faundez	Ann Vaz Margaret Birch
29-30 Dec	Magdalen Spooner Tony Walsh	David Cullen	Deacon Miriam Davis	Deacon Rosaline Adenyin, Michael O'Brien Carmala Rajasooriyer, Menalis Burt	Breda Conway Ann Vaz
5-6 Jan	Carol Louzado Jose Geremia	Christine Norman	Deacon Aileen Douglas	Deacon Talissa Pothunna, Felicity Berry Bernadette Brydges, John Golden	Margaret Birch Breda Conway
12-13 Jan	Deacon Ann Powell	Deacon	Deacon Delia D'Aguiar	Deacon Neville Desmier, Evelyn Chiejina, Christian Faundez, Rosaline Adenyin	Deacon Ann Vaz
19-20 Jan	Jane Gracias Richard Croke	Kevin McCullagh	Deacon Francis de Lima	Deacon Michael O'Brien, Carmala Rajasooriyer Menalis Burt, Talissa Pothunna,	Margaret Birch Breda Conway
26-27 Jan	Magdalen Spooner	David Cullen	Deacon Ursula O'Byrne	Deacon Felicity Berry, Bernadette Brydges John Golden, Neville Desmier	Ann Vaz Margaret Birch
2-3 Feb	Tony Walsh Carol Louzado	Christine Norman	Deacon Miriam Davis	Deacon Evelyn Chiejina, Christian Faundez Rosaline Adenyin, Michael O'Brien	Breda Conway Ann Vaz
9-10 Feb	Deacon Jose Geremia	Deacon	Deacon Aileen Douglas	Deacon Carmala Rajasooriyer, Menalis Burt Talissa Pothunna, Felicity Berry	Deacon Margaret Birch
16-17 Feb	Ann Powell Jane Gracias	Kevin McCullagh	Deacon Delia D'Aguiar	Deacon Bernadette Brydges, John Golden Neville Desmier, Evelyn Chiejina	Breda Conway Ann Vaz
23-24 Feb	Richard Croke Magdalen Spooner	David Cullen	Deacon Francis de Lima	Deacon Christian Faundez, Rosaline Adenyin Michael O'Brien, Carmala Rajasooriyer	Margaret Birch Breda Conway
2-3 Mar	Tony Walsh Carol Louzado	Christine Norman	Deacon Ursula O'Byrne	Deacon Menalis Burt, Talissa Pothunna, Felicity Berry, Bernadette Brydges	Ann Vaz Margaret Birch
9-10 Mar	Deacon Jose Geremia	Deacon	Deacon Miriam Davis	Deacon John Golden, Neville Desmier Evelyn Chiejina, Christian Faundez	Deacon Breda Conway
16-17 Mar	Ann Powell Jane Gracias	Kevin McCullagh	Deacon Aileen Douglas	Deacon Rosaline Adenyin, Michael O'Brien Carmala Rajasooriyer, Menalis Burt	Ann Vaz Margaret Birch
23-24 Mar	Richard Croke Magdalen Spooner	David Cullen	Deacon Delia D'Aguiar	Deacon Talissa Pothunna, Felicity Berry Bernadette Brydges, John Golden	Breda Conway Ann Vaz
30-31 Mar	Tony Walsh Carol Louzado	Christine Norman	Deacon Francis de Lima	Deacon Neville Desmier, Evelyn Chiejina Christian Faundez, Rosaline Adenyin	Margaret Birch Breda Conway

If you cannot fulfil your commitment as shown on the rota, please arrange for someone to cover for you.

Please check the rota at the back of the church to find your name and when you are needed as a minister.

Please could ministers hold back and make sure that the correct minister is going up.

WEEKEND MASS READERS' ROTA

Saturday 6.00 pm (Vigil Mass)			Sunday 8.00am		
Davide Buttaci	22nd Dec.	2nd Feb.	Fran Fenwick	23rd Dec.	10th Feb.
Teresa Pollard	29th Dec.	9th Feb.	Jacqui Mannion	30th Dec.	17th Feb.
Paul Spooner	5th Jan.	16th Feb.	Barry Laker	6th Jan.	24th Feb.
Jane Gracias	12th Jan.	23rd Feb.	Barbara Morgan	13th Jan.	3rd Mar.
Salomé Humanes	19th Jan.	2nd Mar.	Devina Paul	20th Jan.	10th Mar.
Tony Walsh	26th Jan.	9th Mar.	Manda Bell	27th Jan.	17th Mar.
			Graham Bennett	3rd Feb.	24th Mar.
Sunday 11.00 am			Sunday 6.30pm		
Christine Davis	23rd Dec.	3rd Feb.	Ann Vaz	23rd Dec.	3rd Feb.
Mark Lobo	30th Dec.	10th Feb.	Julie Sheahan	30th Dec.	10th Feb.
Robert Sierra	6th Jan.	17th Feb.	Tracey Eaden	6th Jan.	17th Feb.
John Golden	13th Jan.	24th Feb.	Sophie Poole	13th Jan.	24th Feb.
Chris Onof	20th Jan.	3rd Mar.	Mark Eaden	20th Jan.	3rd Mar.
Carol Pringle	27th Jan.	10th Mar.	Liz Pierson	27th Jan.	10th Mar.

Please arrange to swap with another Reader if you cannot read on the day allocated. Thank you.
If you would like to read at Sunday Mass, please speak to a member of the Clergy

ROTA FOR COUNTERS OF OFFERTORY COLLECTION

24 Dec.	31 Dec.	7 Jan.	14 Jan.	21 Jan.	28 Jan.	4 Feb.
Shirley Renée Clare	Maura Sandy Magda	John II Paul Marcia	John Sean Julie	Shirley Renée Clare	Maura Sandy Magda	John II Paul Marcia
11 Feb.	18 Feb.	25 Feb.	4 Mar.	11 Mar.	18 Mar.	25 Mar.
John Sean Julie	Shirley Renée Clare	Maura Sandy Magda	John II Paul Marcia	John Sean Julie	Shirley Renée Clare	Maura Sandy Magda

Notes

- Collection Counting is on a Monday morning in the Presbytery.
- **We are trying to recruit more counters which would change this Rota, possibly at short notice.**
- If you would like to join the group please contact Father Matthias.
- The rota is administered by John Golden - please tell him if you need any permanent change.

PARISH GROUPS

	Who for?	When?	Where?	Run by?	Contact Details?
Altar Servers	Parishioners (post-First Holy Communion)			Robert Roy	raroysms@gmail.com
Choir 11am Mass	Church Choir	Practice: Tuesday 3.00-4.30pm	Church Choir Loft	Kevin Deegan	kevin.deegan@blueyonder.co.uk
Crusaders	Post-First Holy Communion Young People	First Tuesday each month 4.00-5.00pm	Day Chapel	Sister Catherine	020 8542 6484
Folk Group 9.30am Mass	Singers and Musicians		Family Mass	Mary Farrell	mary@tarmon.co.uk
Guild of Our Lady	Parish children (Year 5 & above)	Monday evening	Day Chapel	Sister Catherine	020 8542 6484
Justice & Peace Group	Parishioners	Once a month	Venue varies	J&P Team	sjf.justiceandpeace@gmail.com
Over 60s Club	Parishioners	Thursday 1.00-3.00pm	Parish Hall	Sister Catherine	020 8542 6484
RCIA	Anyone wishing to learn more about Catholicism	Tuesday 8pm	257 Cannon Hill Lane	Sister Catherine	020 8542 6484
Readers	Please speak to the Clergy if you would like to read	Mass	Church	Clergy	207 Cannon Hill Lane merton@rcaos.org.uk
SVP (St Vincent de Paul Society)	Needy parishioners	Help available as needed	By arrangement	SVP Team	Sean Deane 020 8715 7972
Talkabout	Parishioners	Editorial Team meet quarterly	Venue varies	Editorial Team	talkabout@blueyonder.co.uk
Teams of Our Lady	Parish Families	Each Team meets monthly	Homes of members	Davide Buttaci	davide011974@gmail.com
Toddler Group	Children (birth - 4 yrs)	Thursday Term Time 9.30-11.30am	Parish Hall	Pippa Lindsay	pipnlindsay@gmail.com
Youth Group	Parish children (Year 7 & above)	Friday 7.30– 9.00pm	Parish Hall	Clergy	207 Cannon Hill Lane merton@rcaos.org.uk
UNIFORM GROUPS		<i>Uniform Groups Coordinator:</i>	Jaki O'Neill- Ford		jakioneillford@yahoo.co.uk
Rainbows	Girls (5 - 7 yrs)	Friday 4.30-5.30pm	Parish Hall	Sue Green <i>Rainbow Leader</i>	sigreen@live.co.uk 020 8544 1167
Brownies	Girls (6 - 9 yrs)	Monday 5.30-7.00pm	Parish Hall	Leanne Kennett <i>Brown Owl</i>	LKennett75@virginmedia.com 07957 470 943
Guides	Girls (10 - 14 yrs)	Tuesday 6.15-7.45pm	Parish Hall	Sandy Brown <i>Guide Leader</i>	san.brown8@hotmail.co.uk.
Beavers	Boys & Girls (6 - 8 yrs)	Friday 5.45pm	Parish Hall	Marcia Butacci <i>Asst. Beaver Leader</i>	mmissse@hotmail.com
Cubs	Boys & Girls (8 - 10½ yrs)	Wednesday 6.00-7.30pm	Parish Hall	John Line <i>Cub Scout Leader</i>	07906 844749
Scouts	Boys & Girls (10½ - 14 yrs)	Wednesday 7.30-9.30pm	Parish Hall	Elaine O'Keefe <i>Asst. Scout Leader</i>	elaineokeeffe@hotmail.com 07886 474 669
Explorers	Boys & Girls (14 - 19 yrs)	Tuesday 7.45-9.30pm	Parish Hall	Tom Carter & Andy Newman <i>ESLs</i>	dtjambo@yahoo.co.uk

PARISH DETAILS

ST JOHN FISHER PARISH



Parish Admin.
Fr Matthias
Kizito



Assist. Priest
Fr Hyacinth
Edokwe



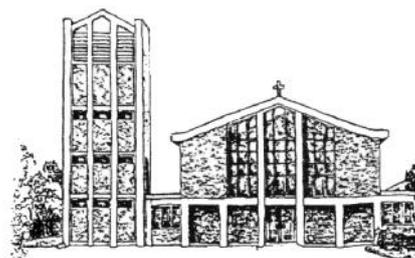
Deacon
Fred
Carter



Deacon
Tom
Kavanagh



Sr Catherine
Mulcahy
OLSH



Address: The Presbytery
207 Cannon Hill Lane
Merton Park, London SW20 9DB

Telephone: 020 8542 6355

E-mail: merton@rcaos.org.uk
talkabout@blueyonder.co.uk

Website: www.stjohnfishermerton.co.uk

Parish Office: Parish Secretary, Melissa Russell
9am - 2.00pm Monday - Thursday

Parish Business: 7.00 pm Mondays

Baptism: 3:00 pm First Sunday of the
month by prior
arrangement

Reconciliation: Saturday 10:00 - 11:00 am
5:30 - 5:50 pm

Mass Times:

Weekdays: 9:00 am

First Fridays: 8:00 pm

Holydays: 6:00 pm (Vigil), 9:00 am & 7.30 pm

Saturday: 9:00 am & 6:00 pm (Vigil)

Sunday: 8:00 am
9:30 am (Family Mass)
11:00 am (Sung Mass)
6:30 pm

Repository: Open after the 9.30am Mass on
Sundays, until 11am, and after the
6.00pm Vigil Mass on the first Saturday
of the month All occasion cards,
Baptism, Holy Communion and
Confirmation items available.

ST JOHN FISHER PARISH ADVISORY COUNCIL

Next PAC Meeting: Monday 21st January (*Minutes of the meeting will be on display in the narthex after*)

Fr. David
• President

Fr Matthias
• Ex-Officio

Deacon Fred
• Ex-Officio

Deacon Tom
• Ex-Officio
• Apostolate

Sr Catherine
• Liturgy
• Adult Formation
• Evangelisation
• Over 60s Club

John Golden
• Chairman

Davide Buttaci
• Vice Chairman
• Teams of Our
Lady

Mr Paul Spooner
• Acting Secretary

Peter Nash
• Justice & Peace

Pippa Lindsay
• Parents &
Toddlers

Ursula O'Byrne
• Parish
Safeguarding



Sean Deane
• St. Vincent de
Paul

Jaki O'Neill-Ford
• Uniform Groups

Simon Bruton
• Elected Member
/Music

Eoin O'Connell
• Elected Member

Rob Roy
• Elected Member

Judith Benedict
• Elected Member



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