

St Pancras

Christmas Times, 2021



The Nativity by Antoniazio Romano

Free, with a Merry Christmas to all

Dear all, well if you are reading this then, in the words of the Japanese film that inspired The Magnificent Seven: “We survived again”.

However, even if, like me, you’ve lived a relatively blessed life there are many people who have suffered losses; still have to stay isolated because of health concerns and pandemic fears; and struggle to keep

Next issue

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition of the magazine. It is available free to all households but any donations to costs of production may be made in clearly marked envelopes to the presbytery.

Now is the time to start sending in words and pictures for our Easter issue. Please get contributions to me by Sunday, March 6. They can be emailed to sdonag9@gmail.com.

If you do not have access to the internet please submit contributions by Saturday, February 26 so there is time to have them put online. They can be posted to me at 62 Weyland Rd, Witnesham, Ipswich IP6 9ET or handed in at the presbytery in clearly marked envelopes. Please always include your contact details in case of any queries. Thanks.

Diary dates

Sunday December 19, 4:30pm
Carols by Candlelight followed by tea and mince pies in the parish hall

Monday December 20, 7pm
Penitential Service, with individual Confession

Christmas Eve
Mass: 10am
Carols: 11:30pm
Midnight Mass

Christmas Day Mass at:
8am (Tridentine Mass)
9:30am & 11am

Sunday, January 2, 4pm
Candlelight Epiphany Mass for Young People, Church of the Annunciation, Poringland, followed by fireworks and hot dogs

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a roof over their heads and food in their stomachs.

Articles by Patricia al-Salih and Theresa Cleary in this magazine show that hard times are nothing new. Parishioners have been through testing times before. With the help of God we will bounce back from Covid-19.

There has already been a lot of work to get the presbytery and organ, for example, ready physically for the future. Fr Joseph has

suggested daily Bible reading and the diocese is planning for the Church’s 2023 synod to improve our spiritual preparedness.

It’s never too late to start. As Christians we know that decades after this year’s video games and other so-called must-have toys are forgotten we will remember our family, friends and the birth of Our Lord.

Happy Christmas everyone,
Stephen Donaghy



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A fresh start in a new

To Make an End is to Make a Beginning

T.S. Eliot

By Fr Joseph Welch

Most priests experience a little anxiety when their bishop summons them to an interview. Have they done something wrong? Has a parishioner complained? Are they to be sent to a new parish?

In my case, it was the latter. On Thursday, December 17, 2020 Bishop Alan asked me to take charge of St Pancras from January 10, 2021, the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord. The next Monday, December 21, I made my way for the first time in my life to Ipswich, despite having been born and brought up just outside Norwich. I moved in on Thursday, January 7, the day after the feast of the Epiphany. I had a couple of days to sort myself out before my first public Mass on the Saturday. And now, it is almost a year later, and what a year it has been!

From the outset I received a warm, generous and friendly welcome, and have thoroughly enjoyed being here, but there was lots to do. I felt a thrill at producing my own parish newsletter. It gave me a chance to stamp my own ideas on how things might be. Pure vanity, I suppose. Looking at that first newsletter I see that nearly a quarter of it was taken up with guidelines and protocols for dealing with pandemic restrictions in our church. While many of the notices around the building were necessary, it seemed to me that the priority was to focus on supernatural concerns rather than physical and material ones, however real the coronavirus threat was. Thankfully, much has changed since regarding Covid-19, although we are not completely out of the woods yet.

Within days, I had obtained permission to offer Mass in the Extraordinary Form (the old Tridentine Mass in Latin), I had the stairs in the house carpeted, met



Fr Joseph Welch

several parishioners via Zoom, commissioned a redesigned website for the parish, undertook my first funeral at St Pancras and began to plan Candlemas, Ash Wednesday and Lent. Candlemas has long been one of my favourite feast days, perhaps, in part, because it marks the anniversary of my Baptism. This year it was tinged with sadness as my mother, in a care home for the preceding two years, died that day. I have her to thank for my Catholic faith and my devotion to God's holy Church and the sacred priesthood. May she rest in peace.

After some consultation with as many parishioners as I could make contact with (there were only 18 people at each of the Masses on my first weekend in the parish) a new schedule of Mass and Confession times was agreed and started on the day after Ash Wednesday. Restoring the 12.15pm Mass on Thursday was a deliberate move towards re-establishing the Thursday lunches, although they have still to materialise.

Ash Wednesday Masses were better attended than Sunday Masses had been and Lent got off to a good start. We were able to have Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament after the Saturday morning Mass each weekend throughout Lent, ending with Benediction at noon. On Fridays in Lent we prayed the

parish

Stations of the Cross after the 10am Mass, and again on Sunday afternoons. In March we ended the Wednesday evening Mass at 6pm each week with devotions to St Joseph during the Year of St Joseph. Midweek evening Masses were something of an innovation at St Pancras I was told. I had always assumed that every parish had at least one midweek evening Mass, but no, not here, so I shouldn't have been surprised when the total number of people attending hovered around four. Gradually, the numbers have picked up.

Holy Week was soon upon us, and although the numbers were down because of the pandemic, the services were deeply devotional and prayerful. We began Palm Sunday 11am Mass at the back of the church for the blessing of Palms and the procession. There were Stations of the Cross on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday after the 10am Mass. Maundy Thursday, always my absolute favourite Mass of the year, was very moving, and followed by watching before the Altar of Repose until late into the evening. And Easter was, as it always is, glorious. The Lord is risen: Alleluia!

All along, there had been attempts to curtail the extent to which non-parishioners used our car park. There were times when churchgoers couldn't park because so many shoppers were using the spaces. So, while plans to install a gate were mildly controversial, one was installed in July. By and large, the space is now used only by parishioners.

During Eastertide, Saturday morning devotions to Our Lady of Ipswich and to St Pancras resumed, having begun before Lent but been suspended for the holy season due to Adoration.

Two "Dona" digital collection plates were installed in April so that

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parishioners and visitors alike could make cashless donations. And in May we welcomed Bishop Alan and Fr Padraig for our patronal feast of St Pancras, and to mark the 160th anniversary of the opening of our church in 1861. It drew the largest number of people to a Wednesday evening Mass so far. The early summer sun poured through the great west window and drenched the sanctuary with a scarlet light the colour of martyrdom. Afterwards, members of the parish council hosted refreshments for our visitors. Our only disappointment was that pandemic restrictions limited the number of people who could attend.

Just ten days before the Bishop came to Ipswich, new doors for the aumbry on the sanctuary were fitted. Now, after a break of many years, the holy oils could be kept secure and in a manner befitting their sacred nature thanks to the generosity and carpentry skills of



one of our long-standing parishioners.

In June, the feast of Corpus Christi was marked with devotions in the afternoon, and a few weeks later two children made their First Communion, celebrations held over from last year, again because of the pandemic.

The parish council reconvened and met to assist and advise on how things used to be, should be, or might be. Parish rotas began to be re-established and work continued on the house. At the time of going to press, the parish office has been moved out of the presbytery and into a newly converted former laundry room at the back of the house. The former dining room has become the priest's study and been redecorated. The kitchen has been gutted and refitted, and three other rooms have been decorated but not yet furnished. It is hoped that the priest may even have an armchair and somewhere to relax before



Before and after pictures show the laundry converted to an office and how the kitchen has been opened up



Christmas. Who knows? Work on the church organ began in early July. The plan was to reduce the size of the bellows, clean the pipes, and turn the organ around 90 degrees to reveal more of the west window and make maintenance safer. Work has been slow but it is hoped that all will be completed soon after the New Year.

Self-isolation hit the priest in July after he was pinged by an NHS e-mail. Fr Chris Dobson, a retired priest from Arundel & Brighton diocese who lives near Woodbridge, stepped in to take two funerals and two of our three weekend Masses, the other being celebrated by Fr Bineesh.

Things were quieter in August but in September there was a drive to restart parish life given that many pandemic restrictions had been lifted. Sunday, September 12, saw the annual pilgrimage walk from St Peter's Church on the Quay to the Shrine of Our Lady of Grace in St Mary Elms church in the town centre. A new series of catechetical talks for adults, "In the Cool of the Day", based on the first three chapters of Genesis, was launched in mid-September. Three days later the parish held its first Day of Recollection for some time. Entitled "Let All God's Glory Through", the meditations were drawn from Gerard Manley Hopkins' poem, *The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe*.

At the beginning of October, Confirmation and First Communion classes resumed for the first time since before Covid-19 hit the globe. We have 20 First Communion children and two Confirmation candidates. October also saw the parish celebrate the 60th anniversary of the consecration of our church in 1961, the hundred-year wait from 1861 to 1961 occasioned, it is thought, by outstanding debts. The Church's Canon Law does not allow a church to be consecrated while there are any debts still to be paid.

After the 11am Mass parishioners celebrated with a bring and share lunch in the parish hall, an event seen as the reopening of parish life after the easing of pandemic restrictions. A new Mother and Toddler group did not draw the expected numbers but we may try to

Continued on page 5



Turning the organ 90 degrees will allow maintenance work to be carried out safely and allow parishioners to enjoy a fuller view of the west window that was installed for the millennium

The moving of the merry organ

Sweet singing in the choir

By Stephen Griggs

You may remember that almost five years ago we launched *Alive in Faith* and one of the parish projects was to carry out work on the organ.

There were three drivers behind this: one, the instrument masked almost half of the “stained glass” window that had been installed to celebrate the millennium; second, the organ needed attention to restore it to full working order and third, our organ builders were no longer prepared to risk life and limb working on it.

To access the organ for tuning or

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relaunch it. Meanwhile, October devotions of the rosary and Benediction proved popular. October also saw our only wedding of the year: Catherine Griggs and Craig Wisbey each said “I do” Congratulations to the newlyweds.

We were delighted to welcome back Fr Russell Frost at the end of November for the 9:30am Mass on the feast of Christ the King to present the award of a diocesan medal to Anne Pickering for her many years’ work on the parish finances and running our Gift Aid. This has helped recoup thousands

other maintenance work one had to remove the pipes from the front and then climb in it from a precariously placed ladder.

The plan was to turn the organ through 90 degrees to address the safety issue and reduce the instrument’s depth to reveal as much of the window as possible.

While the organ was dismantled essential work could be carried out from the chancellor for parish funds. Congratulations to Anne, and a big thank you. Sadly, the Advent Day of Recollection had to be cancelled at the last moment but as we go to print we still have events to look forward to: our Carols by Candlelight and Blessing of Cribs service on December 19; a Penance Service the next day; and Christmas itself with Midnight Mass preceded by carols.

May I thank everyone associated with St Pancras for a warm welcome and enjoyable first year, and wish you all every grace and blessing from our new-born Saviour. *Puer natus est!* Merry Christmas.

to ensure that it provided many more years of service.

After much deliberation the work was entrusted to W & A Boggis of Roydon near Diss. As work began in July the organ was dismantled quickly and I was optimistic that it would be completed in time for my daughter’s wedding in October.

However, as with all projects, there were problems. The biggest was the removal from the organ loft of a radiator, which was taking up space and would be unreachable once the organ was rebuilt if it had been left in situ.

The frame of the organ had been cut and joined, probably when rebuilt after an arsonist started a fire at the back of the church on Christmas Day in 1985. It has now been reconstructed from scratch, the bellows have been re-leathered and reduced in size – don’t worry it will still be as loud. The swell box, which contains all the pipes for one of the keyboards, has been mounted

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From page 5

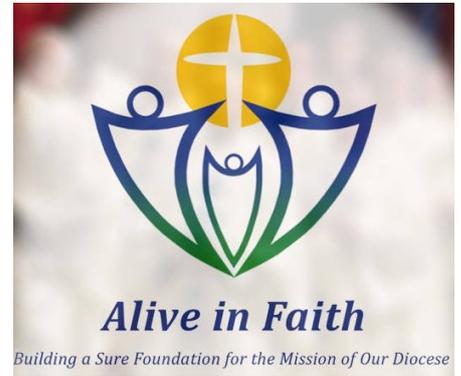
higher than its original position. This has allowed the “great organ” which is all the pipework for the other keyboard, to be moved under the swell and reduce the footprint of the whole instrument, thus revealing the west window.

The organ has tracker action, which means that when a key is pressed a series of rods and levers operate the valve to allow a pipe to

speaking. Changing the physical location of the swell box has meant that all those linkages have had to be remade.

I am pleased to say that progress has been made over the past few weeks and there is light at the end of the tunnel.

The work is unlikely to be completed in time for Christmas but I am told that the organ may be playable then: let’s hope so.



Honouring Our Lady

By Jean M Johnson

It seems hard to believe that next year will mark 20 years since the Ipswich shrine of Our Lady of Grace was restored. More recent parishioners may not know that three people who worshipped at St Pancras were the main figures behind re-establishing the shrine.

The project’s roots can be traced back to 1975 when Stanley Smith, author of *The Madonna of Ipswich*, organised a pilgrimage to Rome. Judy Fell, long-standing St Pancras parishioner, was on that pilgrimage and can tell you more than I can. They had a wonderful day in Nettuno, where they visited the church which contains what is believed to be our original statue.

It was taken, in the dark days of the Reformation, to be burnt, but we believe it was rescued and ended up in Nettuno. It has silver shoes, like the Ipswich statue, and is inscribed: “Thou art Gracious”.

The next step came on the feast of saints John Fisher and Thomas More in 1977, when Stanley and Maire (Doc) Heley organised a meeting of Catholics and Anglicans at her house, to discuss a possible restoration of the shrine. I am the only one left who was at that meeting.

Soon after, the Guild of Our Lady of Grace was established, to pray for unity of all Christians and re-establish the shrine. This is where Robert Mullamphy joins Stanley and Doc in the St Pancras trio. He carved the beautiful wooden statue which is a copy of the one in Nettuno.

The shrine is in St Mary at the Elms in Elm Street, the nearest

The Ipswich shrine to Our Lady received its first recorded mention in 1152. In its time it was almost as important as Walsingham. Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of Edward I, was married in its chapel in 1297.

Between 1517 and 1522, Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon paid separate visits to the shrine, as did Sir Thomas More and Ipswich-born Cardinal Thomas Wolsey. But in the Reformation the shrine was suppressed and the original statue of Our Lady sent to London to be burnt. Legend has it that the statue found its way to Nettuno, about 40 miles south of Rome.

church to Lady Lane, where the original shrine stood. St Mary at the Elms is a beautiful old church that is open all day. If you have not been, do go and light a candle and pray there.

The rededication of the shrine will take place there on Saturday, March 26, at 11am. The date is in our diocesan diary and Bishop Alan has promised to attend if he is still in post (he has reached retirement age and awaits an announcement on his successor). We also have acceptances from the Anglican Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, the Bishop of Dunwich and the Bishop of Ebbsfleet, and from the Lord Mayor. Put the date in your diary. An exciting programme of events is being planned for 2022. More will be in the next magazine. Josie O’Halloran and I are on the planning committee and will be pleased to tell you of proposed activities.



The ecumenical shrine of Our Lady of Grace is in St Mary at the Elms Church, the closest church to Lady Lane where the original shrine stood



⁷ The first row of Christmas

By Stephen Donaghy

My parents were sticklers for the tradition that the Christmas decorations went up on Christmas Eve and not before.

Unfortunately this led to a family tradition of our own: a row on the night before Christmas.

Dad worked all the hours that God sent and, naturally enough, when his fellow workmates adjourned to licensed premises to slake their thirst at lunchtime on Christmas Eve he was not a misanthropic Scrooge but joined the company in a, sometimes alcohol-fuelled, spirit of fellowship.

This did mean, though, that he sometimes arrived home somewhat, I believe the popular phrase is, “worse for wear” in less than optimal condition for Christmas decoration erection. Coupled with the time-honoured annual tradition of the Christmas tree lights fusing and, as tradition demanded, only finding out that they weren’t working after all the shops were shut, when the chances of buying new ones were zilch I don’t know how, looking back, the decorations ever got put up at all: maybe house elves were involved.

Our family traditions continued on Christmas Day. Dad would set off to the pub for a “swift half” at noon with a stern warning from Mum that dinner would be on the table at 1pm come hell or high water. Invariably, Dad would be detained, Mum would delay serving to wait for him and burnt turkey and dried gravy became part of our traditional festive family Christmas. I don’t believe we were alone in this. On one occasion a tardy



It can be hard to keep a traditional, family Christmas on track

husband rang his wife from the pub payphone – this was in the days before Star Trek communicators, never mind mobiles – asking: “Is my dinner still warm, love.”

She replied: “Not unless the dustbin is on fire”.

I could never understand why my mum would not move dinner to tea time but then, as I have said, my parents were sticklers for Christmas traditions.

In later years I returned from university, determined that we would all sit down, as a family, for

Christmas dinner at lunchtime. One year I left the house about 12:30pm to winkle Dad out of the pub. Sadly my mission was not entirely blessed with success. Suffice to say that at about 3:30pm Mum was presented with not one but two inebriated males on her doorstep.

“But”, I explained to my irate mother: “Joe Downes [a neighbour] was singing.”

She was not mollified. “I’ve heard Joe Downes singing,” Mum said, somewhat witheringly, I thought, as she turned her back on us.

I fear that I may be giving the wrong impression of family life chez Donaghy. There were rows but seldom serious. I grew up in a supportive environment and treasure a visitor’s comments that the house seemed full of love. My heart goes out to people who did not have that solid foundation of a loving family, the greatest Christmas gift of all.

Merry Christmas!

Christmas crackers

Why wasn't Our Lord born in Colchester?

They couldn't find three wise men.

Why are atoms Catholic?

Because they have mass.

What do you call a priest in charge of the school play?

The spiritual director.

What do you call a snowman with a six pack?

An abdominal snowman.



Soldiers played football in no-man's land during a Christmas Truce in 1914

Peace and goodwill

to all

By Patricia al-Salih

My memories go back to wartime Christmases and the austerity that followed. No matter what the official stats say, in my memory there were several feet of snow on the ground and mum had trouble finding enough rationed coal to keep out the chill.

My grandfather would spend all year raising a couple of chickens, feeding them on vegetable peelings or whatever he could find. Finally a few weeks before Christmas he would announce that tomorrow would be the day.

My siblings and cousins and I would stand solemnly around the wire chicken coop as granddad came

down the garden path, axe over his shoulder, dragging the artificial leg that was a souvenir of the Great War.

Some instinct must have alerted the poor beasts because they huddled inside their small shed flapping and clucking. Granddad entered the shed. Loud flapping and clucking. Silence. Granddad exited the shed carrying two beheaded chicken corpses. These would hang upside down in his work shed until plucking and evisceration by my mum and aunts.

On Christmas Day Mum would make a stuffing from hoarded sausage meat, bread crumbs and sage that I can taste until this very day. Paxo? Rubbish! The smell of that chicken roasting was incredible,

and the taste unequalled. Missing from the Christmas dinner table was my soldier dad – but so were the dads of all my friends. It was many years before I would reflect on what was happening to children in Europe while we were feasting.

Mum managed to hoard enough rationed sugar to bake a few sweet treats for tea and, God bless her, to share some tea and sugar with neighbours lucky enough to have a husband or son home on leave.

Our presents very often came in Red Cross parcels donated by children in America and the Dominions. One year I got a one-legged doll – no doubt much loved by a little girl thousands of miles away. We were never allowed to forget why we were celebrating. I can remember looking out of the window on Christmas Eve and gazing up to heaven believing I might see the Christmas star.

We knew that a war was raging. Frequent air raids reminded us – but I do not recall being afraid. God bless us – everyone.

Wartime letter – see page 19

One starfish at a time

One day a man was walking along the beach, when he noticed a boy hurriedly picking up and gently throwing things into the ocean.

Approaching the boy, he asked him: “What are you doing?”

The boy replied, “Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don’t throw them back, they’ll die.” The man laughed to

himself and said: “Don’t you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can’t make any difference!”

After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said: “I made a difference to that one.”

*Adapted from The Star Thrower
by Loren Eiseley*

9 Green light our quiz

Dogged MC Jess asks, or barks, the questions

Woofs and tail-wagging greetings to everyone, Alex has brought a “tree”. It’s not real. One sniff and I knew that. Us K9s are simply the best at scent detection. Next came a box of bright shiny balls. Now this looked promising, time for a game?

Imagine my disappointment when Alex hung them on the “tree”. Were they fruits? Even more puzzling! I was all ready to attack this strange intrusion but opted for restraint. Then Alex draped a piece of “string” with beads around the “tree”. Suddenly the beads became bright. All this stirred a memory. Then Alex said: “Come on Jessie, let’s make our Christmas card list”.

So, here I am pen in paw. There’s Jack, the Jack Russell up the road. His human gives treats to all the dogs that pass. My favourite is Joe the greyhound. His human has made him pyjamas. Brrr, us sight hounds have fine coats and feel the cold. Then there’s Bella my lookalike. When we run past eight white-tipped paws flash by, followed by two black tails: question marks with white ends. Mustn’t forget all my friends, and their humans.

I have noticed that the dark comes early, something to do with the winter solstice. It’s all too complicated for me but I do love the lights in town and trees with bright beads in windows. Alex says they brighten up the darkest time of year and remind us of the birth of Jesus who brought light into the world.

Even I know that without light we cannot live. So here goes, time to illuminate with my quiz on the subject. Have a barking brilliant Christmas, Jessie

1 Who wrote the words of the hymn, *Lead kindly Light*?

2 Give the date of the longest day.

3 Name the title of the song performed by Katrina and the Waves



for the Eurovision contest in 1997. The last time the UK won.

4 What does the word “solstice” mean?

5 What colour Advent candle is lit on Gaudete Sunday?

6 Which soap brand has a name that means “light”?

7 Which Shakespeare play opens with the lines: “Now is the winter of our discontent, made glorious summer by this sun of York”?

8 What is the name given to the use of strong light and dark contrasts in painting?

9 If someone asks for a lucifer what
Continued on page 10



Question 12
Christmas
crackers

I've heard that a well-known company making dog food is in financial difficulties. They've had to call in the retrievers.

I went to the bank and the teller was singing *Downtown*. She was a peculiar clerk.

My son wouldn't stop climbing over the back of the boat so I gave him a stern warning.

I've just had a new *Lord Of The Rings* themed kitchen fitted. I particularly like the hob bit.

The Bayeux Tapestry isn't an accurate historical record at all. The whole thing was embroidered.

A man was walking down the street with a 9ft book. A passer-by asked him what it was all about. He replied that it was a long story.

Met a 7ft lumberjack today. I thought, he's a tall feller.

Swallowed a load of maggots while out fishing. Now I'm sitting in A&E with baited breath.

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is it that they are asking for?

10 When does Candlemass fall?

11 What is the quotation by Turner, printed on the back of a £20 note?

12 Name the painting that has Christ holding a lantern and knocking on a door overgrown with weeds?

13 How long in minutes does light from the sun take to reach the earth?

14 Where, according to the song, is the House called the Rising Sun?

15 What was the nickname of the French king Louis XIV?

16 Which composer wrote the *Moonlight Sonata*?

17 Which prayer contains the words: "Light from Light"?

18 What is the name for a person who makes candles?

19 Which lighthouse was one of the wonders of the Ancient World?

20 What is the brightest star seen from earth?

21 Which nursery rhyme has the words: "Here comes the candle to light you to bed"?

22 Which part of the home did the Romans believe to be at the heart of family life?

23 What is the speed of light?

24 According to Genesis, on what day was light created?

25 Saints are often depicted with a circle of light around their heads. What is this called?

Answers, page 27

Berry good fudge



By Anna Smith

This fudge recipe was inspired/adapted from one by Mary Berry. It keeps for a long time and the pieces can be put in decorated jars for Christmas.

Ingredients

- 6oz (170g) can evaporated milk
- 3oz (85g) butter
- 1lb (450g) Granulated sugar
- ¼ pint (125ml) water
- ¼ tsp. vanilla essence

Method

- 1 Butter a shallow 7in (18cm) square tin.
- 2 Put the milk, sugar and water into a heavy pan.
- 3 Heat slowly, without boiling, until the sugar has dissolved.

4 Then boil steadily, stirring constantly to 114C or until a small amount of the mixture dropped into a glass of water forms a soft ball. If the water becomes cloudy and the mixture dissolves the fudge is not ready.

5 Remove from heat and add the vanilla essence.

6 Cool slightly, then beat when the mixture thickens and begins to crystallise on the spoon.

7 Pour into the tin and leave to set.

8 When firm cut into 36 squares and store in an airtight tin.

Note: Nuts, chopped peel, sultanas or chopped glace cherries can be added with the vanilla essence.

11 Children's corner



Christmas crackers

What do you sing at a snowman's birthday party?

Freeze a jolly good fellow!

Why did Rudolph get a bad school report?

He went down in history.

What sweets are favourites with Christmas trees?

Ornamints.

What goes "oh, oh, oh"?

Santa walking backwards!

What does a cat on the beach have in common with Christmas?

Sandy claws!

Knock Knock.

Who's there?

Mary.

Mary who?

Mary Christmas!

ADVENT



WORDSEARCH

MARY
ANGEL
JESUS
ADVENT
CANDLE

JOSEPH
PURPLE
WREATH
BELIEVE

REJOICE
SAVIOUR
EMMANUEL
GOODNEWS
ISRAEL



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In Dr Seuss's poem the Grinch is a bitter creature with a heart "two sizes too small" who lives in a cave on a mountain near Whoville, home of the Whos. He is annoyed by all the noisy Christmas fun in Whoville and decides to "stop Christmas from coming". He disguises himself as Santa Claus and travels to Whoville where he steals all the presents.

As dawn breaks on Christmas Day the Grinch expects to hear the Whos crying but is shocked to hear them singing a joyous Christmas song instead. He puzzles for a moment until he realizes that perhaps Christmas "means a little bit more" than just presents and feasting, causing his shrunken heart suddenly to grow three sizes bigger.

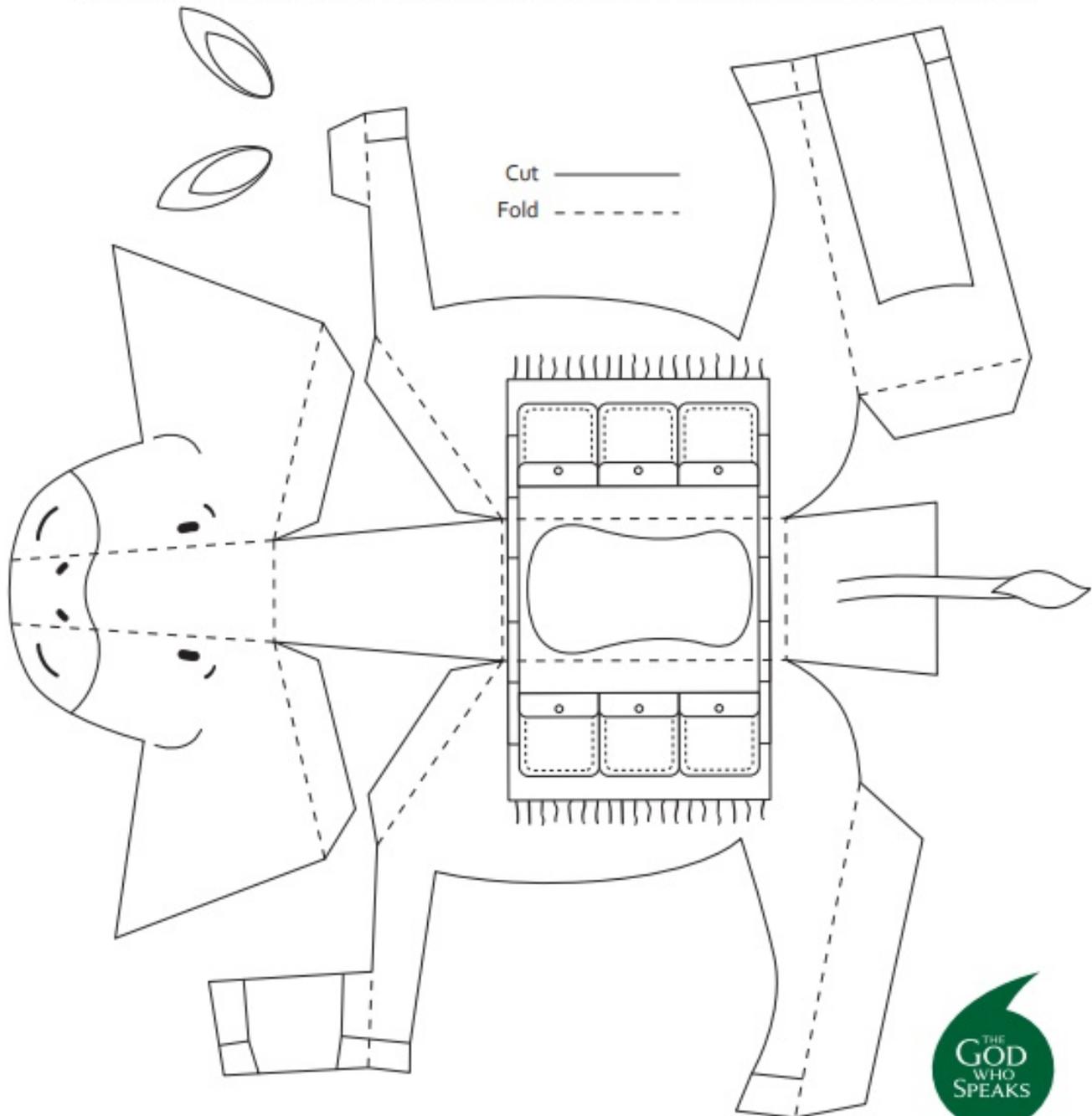
From How the Grinch Stole Christmas

Every Who down in Whoville, the tall and the small,
Was singing! Without any presents at all!
He HADN'T stopped Christmas from coming! IT CAME!
Somehow or other, it came just the same!
And the Grinch, with his grinch-feet ice-cold in the snow,
Stood puzzling and puzzling: "How could it be so?
"It came without ribbons! It came without tags!
"It came without packages, boxes or bags!"
And he puzzled three hours, till his puzzler was sore.
Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before!
"Maybe Christmas," he thought, "doesn't come from a store."
"Maybe Christmas ... perhaps ... means a little bit more!"...

by Dr Seuss

Advent donkey detective

The story clues:



Cut out the donkey making sure not to cut the dotted lines. Don't forget the ears! Fold along the dotted lines – you'll start to see the shape of the donkey come

together. Glue together using the tabs. The God Who Speaks website has a story about the donkey detective travelling from Nazareth to Bethlehem as he

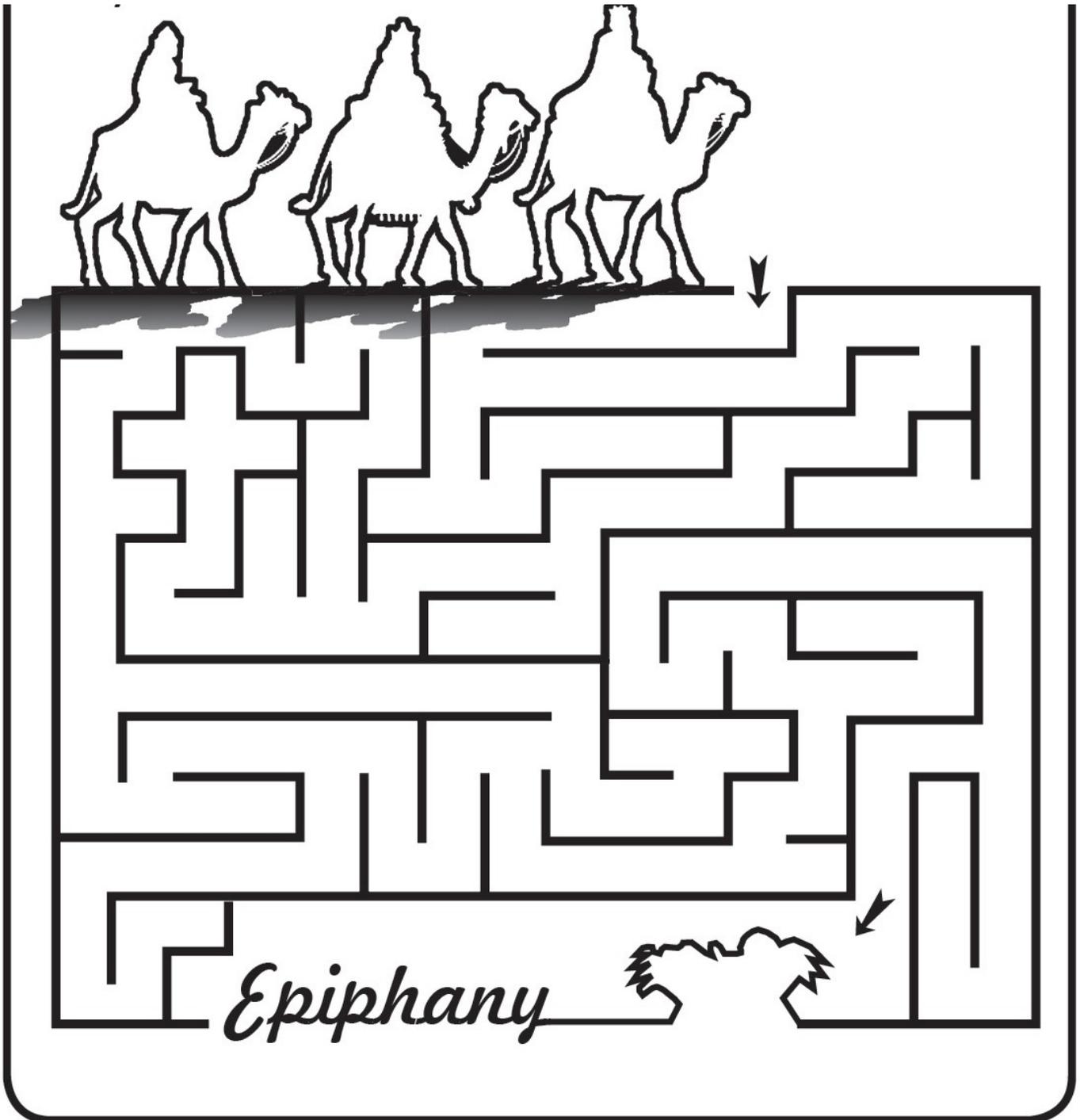
works out the Christmas story. Pick up clues along the way and store them on his saddle.

Go to godwhospeaks.uk/the-christmas-donkey for the story.



Epiphany, Matthew 2: 1-12

Wise men came from the East, searching for Jesus. They travelled from far away to meet him. The wise men followed a star and finally found him in Bethlehem. They adored him and gave him special gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. What gift would you like to give Jesus this year?



Words on the wise

By Fr Joseph Welch

There are many wonderful Christmas and Epiphany customs that are beginning to make a comeback. One, originating in Bavaria and Austria, is the tradition of blessing the door of the house with chalk which, in turn, is blessed at the feast of the Epiphany.

As part of the celebration of the arrival of the wise men at the stable in Bethlehem, the custom grew up of marking the lintel of the front door of Catholic homes with the initials C, B and M for Caspar, Balthasar, and Melchior, the names traditionally given to the “three kings”. The letters also stand for *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, which means “May Christ bless this house”. The roots of the idea can be traced back to the instruction of God to the People of Israel, when they were about to leave their life of slavery in Egypt, to daub the lintels and doorposts with the blood of the sacrificial lamb so that, when the angel of death flew over Egypt, he would see the blood and “pass over” those houses. The chalk letters today serve as a blessing on



Chalk marks honour the kings

Catholic homes, asking for God’s protection and delivery from harm, as well as a sign of welcome to visitors, just as the Holy Family welcomed the Magi.

Another Epiphany custom – this time, a French one – involves baking a special cake (recipes can be found online) called a *galette des rois*, the cake of the kings. The cake is essentially a frangipane tart and inside is hidden what the French call a *fève* (bean) that is actually a small trinket or, more commonly these



A German painting of the Adoration of the Magi from about 1480

days, a single almond nut, just as the English used to hide a sixpence in the Christmas pudding. Whoever gets the almond wears the crown and becomes king, or queen, for the day.

In Mexico, they have a similar tradition except the cake, known as the *rosca de reyes*, the kings’ bread, is a sweet baked in a ring to resemble a crown, with a mini statue or figure of the baby Jesus inside representing the Holy Family’s need to hide from Herod.

In southern California, they have



A galette des rois

the same custom as in Mexico except that whoever finds the baby is responsible for preparing and hosting the feast on Candlemas, February 2.

Children in some countries receive their presents on the feast of the Epiphany, rather than on Christmas Day, once the wise men have been to drop them off.

Did you know that the coming of the Magi is foretold in the psalms? “The kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents: the kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts” (Ps 71:10).

Also, did you know that Tharsis is identified by some scholars as the Iberian peninsula? If that is correct – and there is a village called Tharsis in Andalusia, west of Seville, near the border with Portugal – then at least one king may have come from Spain. To have come “from the east to Jerusalem” (Mt 2:1) he would

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have had to travel west overland through modern-day France, Italy, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Turkey, and then south through Syria and the Lebanon and so to David's city. Perhaps he sailed across the Mediterranean, arrived at Tyre and then travelled down the Jordan valley to meet up with the

other two kings before moving east to Jerusalem and on to Bethlehem. And did you know that their visit is also foretold in the Book of Isaiah? "The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Madian and Epha: all they from Saba shall come, bringing gold and frankincense: and showing forth praise to the Lord" (Is 60:6).



Christmas poems

The Burning Babe

As I in hoary winter's night stood shivering in the snow,
 Surpris'd I was with sudden heat which made my heart to glow;
 And lifting up a fearful eye to view what fire was near,
 A pretty Babe all burning bright did in the air appear;
 Who, scorched with excessive heat, such floods of tears did shed
 As though his floods should quench his flames which with his tears were fed.
 "Alas!" quoth he, "but newly born, in fiery heats I fry,
 Yet none approach to warm their hearts or feel my fire but I!
 My faultless breast the furnace is, the fuel wounding thorns,
 Love is the fire, and sighs the smoke, the ashes shame and scorns;
 The fuel Justice layeth on, and Mercy blows the coals,
 The metal in this furnace wrought are men's defiled souls,
 For which, as now on fire I am to work them to their good,
 So will I melt into a bath to wash them in my blood."
 With this he vanish'd out of sight and swiftly shrunk away,
 And straight I called unto mind that it was Christmas Day.

Robert Southwell SJ (1561-1595)

Upon Christ His Birth

Strange news! a city full? will none give way
 To lodge a guest that comes not every day?
 No inn, nor tavern void? yet I descry
 One empty place alone, where we may lie:
 In too much fullness is some want: but where?
 Men's empty hearts: let's ask for lodging there.
 But if they not admit us, then we'll say
 Their hearts, as well as inns, are made of clay.

Sir John Suckling (1609-1641)

Illumination

Ground lapis for the sky, and scrolls of gold,
 Before which shepherds kneel, gazing aloft
 At visiting angels clothed in egg-yolk gowns
 Celestial tinctures smuggled from the East,
 From sunlit Eden, the palmed and plotted banks
 Of sun-tanned Aden. Brought home in fragile grails,
 Planted in England, rising at Eastertide,
 Their petals cup stamens of topaz dust,
 The powdery stuff of cooks and cosmeticians.
 But to the camels-hair tip of the finest brush
 Of Brother Anselm, it is the light of dawn,
 Gilding the hems, the sleeves, the fluted pleats
 Of the antiphonal archangelic choirs
 Singing their melismatic pax in terram.
 The child lies cribbed below, in bestial dark,
 Pale as the tiny tips of crocuses
 That will find their way to the light through drifts of snow.

Anthony Hecht (1923-2004)
Poems submitted by Fr Joseph

Sign up for synod

By Stephen Donaghy

Pope Francis has launched what The Tablet called “the most ambitious Catholic renewal project in 60 years”. A two-year “synodal” process will culminate in a gathering of bishops in Rome in October 2023.

The overall theme is: “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission”.

Each and every Catholic has been invited to take part.

As the Bishop of East Anglia, the Rt Rev Alan Hopes, wrote in his pastoral letter about the synod: “The Holy Father has asked the whole Church – lay people and religious, clergy and bishops – the entire Holy People of God – to participate in the preparations”.

He went on to say that “synodal” was the Pope’s way of describing how the Church journeys towards Christ, never alone but with Our Lord and one another.

Our bishop added that the Church is not a democracy and the synod was not a way of changing or challenging its teaching authority or doctrine.

The Vatican says the synodal process is guided by a fundamental question: “How does this ‘journeying together’ take place today on different levels (from the local level to the universal one), allowing the Church to proclaim the Gospel? and what steps is the Spirit inviting us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church?”

Fr William Clark, writing on the Conversation website, said the synod was in part “designed to make church governance more open and inclusive of all its members”.

He said the theme of the 2023 assembly was: “How the church can learn to rely more fully on this kind of consultation-and-discussion process – how it can become more “synodal” in its governance.”

The Vatican’s handbook for the synod urges dioceses to include “all the baptized” in the process, including those on the margins of Church life. It said: “Special care



Pope Francis launched the synod in Rome this year

should be taken to involve those persons who may risk being excluded: women, the handicapped, refugees, migrants, the elderly, people who live in poverty, Catholics who rarely or never practice their faith, etc.”

One certainty about our participation in the synod is that because we are human it will not be perfect.

It is easy to be intimidated by the sheer size of the task – how do we participate in allowing the Church to proclaim the Gospel?

However, as Catholics we face the enormous mystery of our faith all the time, at Mass for example, and, particularly at this time of year, as we celebrate God becoming incarnate.

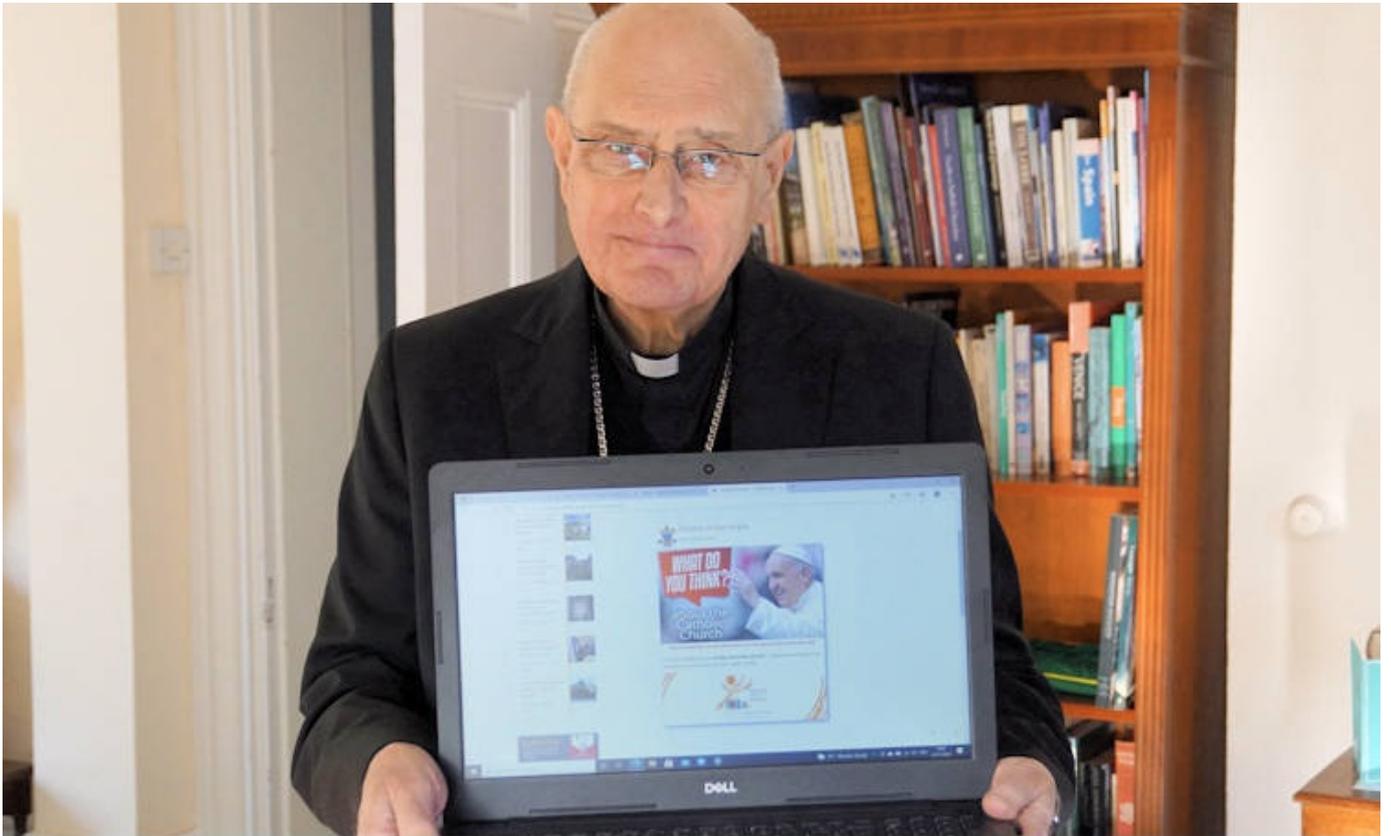
I feel we have a duty to take part in the synod process and would ask

my fellow parishioners to spend time considering their responses to the questions presented to us by the bishops.

As parish representative for the synodal process I will be seeking advice on how we at St Pancras can do our bit to meet in the new year and ensure that we respond to the diocesan survey by March 8. Please feel free to contact me using the details on page 2.

To quote Kate Keefe, a composer, writing in the Tablet: “If we all love the Church, then we all want her to be the best she can be, and if we don’t jump to conclusions, the Holy Spirit has space to act. “This should be a colossal opportunity, so we must not waste it.”

Bishop launches synodal pathway online survey, page 18



The Bishop of East Anglia, the Rt Rev Alan Hopes, launched the online Synodal Pathway survey

Bishop launches synod survey

By Angela Wilson

The Synodal Pathway, which began in the Diocese of East Anglia on Sunday, October 17, has taken another step with the launch of an online survey by Bishop Alan.

We are being asked to explore ten main topics but there is one unifying theme: how can the Church better fulfil her mission of offering hope to all people? Each person's contribution will be valued, but you do not need to answer every question posed, they are there to guide the discussions.

Pope Francis is using this worldwide listening exercise to prepare for a synod of bishops in Rome in 2023. The responses from our diocese will go forward to the worldwide synod but will also be used in East Anglia as part of a pastoral plan of renewal. Parishes

are invited to gather in small group meetings to discuss these questions with each other and then to respond individually via the online survey, which can be found on the rcdea.org.uk website.

It is not so much a matter of sharing opinions; it is much deeper. We are being invited into a process of personal renewal and listening to God with humility, as disciples of Jesus on a pilgrim journey through life, as individuals and as part of God's family.

So we are not only listening to the Holy Spirit speaking to us in our hearts, but also speaking to us through our brothers and sisters. Respectful, attentive listening to their insights will strengthen our bonds of charity. As we journey together, we are walking on the path with Christ, who reveals to us the truth of our lives and who gives us life in Him. Every Christian

shares this prophetic office with Christ and each of us shares His mission, the mission of the Church.

At the heart of the listening process are three words which Pope Francis has chosen as the theme of the synod:

Communion
Participation
Mission

As sons and daughters of the one Father, we are in **communion** with each other. We are members of the Body of Christ, Jesus, and we are temples of the Holy Spirit.

Participation means our role as missionary members of the Church. Each member of God's family needs to discern how they can contribute to building up the Church.

Mission is the purpose of the Church. Jesus died to take away our sins and bring us to eternal life. New evangelisation involves re-proposing the Gospel to a society that has been

Wartime for family

profoundly influenced by Christianity, but whose members have fallen into indifference and scepticism. The synodal team hope that our diocesan family will take this opportunity to be part of the renewal that began with Vatican II, and which continues to shape the Church in the 21st century.

Responses from participants should be submitted by Tuesday March 8, 2022 to be included in the responses which go forward to the Bishops' Synod in 2023.

You can contact the Synodal Pathway Team at: synodalway@rcdea.org.uk



The ten questions to be considered by parishes as the diocese embarks on the Synodal Pathway are:

1 How welcoming is our parish?

2 How good are we at listening?

3 How good are we at communicating?

4 How well does the Church's liturgy inspire a deeper encounter with the risen Lord?

5 How well do I understand and participate in Church's mission?

6 How well do we engage with the wider world?

7 How good is our relationship with other Christian traditions?

8 How well do we work as a team in our parish?

9 How open are we to God's will and the Holy Spirit's guidance?

10 How well do we hand on the faith?

By Theresa Cleary

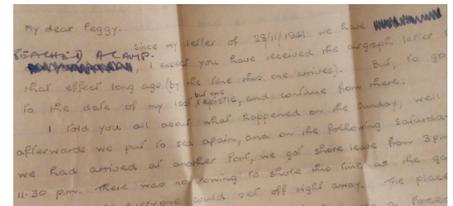
Our family has been fascinated to read the letters that our father, James Daniel Cleary (Dan), sent home to our mother, Margaret Mary Cleary (Peggy), when he was called up to serve in the Second World War.

A letter he wrote 80 years ago, on December 8, 1941 has an envelope stamped with "Passed by Censor". The proof of that is evident, with certain words scribbled out in heavy black pen.

Dad was called up in 1940 but allowed to stay at home until my birth on November 2, 1940. He left home on January 16, 1941 but for the first eight months he was still in this country in various bases undergoing training. He even managed a visit home in July that year but by September he was sent abroad and was away from home for three years and eight months. In early November 1941 he had sent Mum a letter card with pictures of Durham but, as with the letter of December 8, the name of the



Letters were censored



location was blotted out. Wherever Dad went, he would find out where the Catholic Church was and do his best to get to Sunday Mass if that was possible, given his Army duties. Sometimes it was impossible but if he was free in the afternoons he could sometimes get to Benediction. He loved the sense that wherever in the world he was, the Catholic Church was the same.

In the letter Dad refers to Phyllis, who was a family friend. I remember as a child being shown

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Suffolk Land Army girls took part in London Lord Mayor's Show

From Page 19

the factory on Foxhall Road where she worked on munitions.

Dad refers to nicknames: he was Big Bear, Mum was Gobble and I was Baby Foal. Mother and Kitty were my mother's mother and sister, with whom Mum and I were living. The letter has kisses at the end: 22 for Mum, her age at the time, and 13 for me, as I was 13 months old.

We do not have the letters Mum sent to Dad. He had to get rid of them as there was only so much he could carry in his kit bag as he moved from place to place.

We owe a great debt to the men, women and children whose family lives were so disrupted by defending our country from Nazi tyranny.

My dear Peggy

Since my letter of 28/11/1941 we have reached a camp, I expect you have received the airgraph letter to that effect long ago (by the time this one arrives).

... we put to sea again, and on the following Saturday, as we had arrived at another port, we got shore leave from 3pm until 11.30pm. There was no rowing to shore this time as the gangway was down so everyone could set off right away. The place wasn't so interesting as the other places, but there was a Forces canteen there called XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, and a Catholic Mission Church, the latter was a very Oriental-looking building from the outside. I thought it was a temple of Allah at first, but fortunately the main door was open and I could see it was a Barque of Peter. There was a black man inside dusting the pews (it was Saturday afternoon, you see) and the parish priest was walking round the building deep in meditation. He was very tall and thin with a long beard, like a Patriarch. There were cuttings from the London Universe up in the porch.

The canteen was a roomy place and I had a nice meal there. The difficulty when making any purchase is that one has to get their English money changed into local money and it is a bit confusing. Early in the evening it began to rain, only lightly at first but later on it started to pour in torrents, so much so, that Mancunians were heard to say it reminded them of home. Anyhow, there was a rush back to the ship hours before 11.30 and so ended another day, and the following morning we moved out into the bay so did not go on land there any more.

Well things went on as usual until Thursday of the same week, when we came to the final port and disembarked. Then followed a long train ride through the desert. There are not many curves in the railway lines here, they run straight for long distances, there is nothing in the way to curve round, only sand and isolated villages. When passing a village the train has to go very slowly through, because the natives run along beside the train with their hands out begging for money, or with trays of trinkets made in Birmingham, but looking very eastern. As we came along, there was occasionally to be seen what I supposed to be a family, travelling along the road, a man with his wife and child, all wearing long robes typical of the country. The man would be seated on a donkey and the wife walking behind carrying the child. Quite a nice little arrangement, thinks I. The same scene could quite easily be enacted in, say, Bramford Road. "Big Bear on bicycle with Gobble walking behind carrying Baby Foal, travelling east, time 10.30 Sunday morning."

You will be interested to know that the Catholic Womens' League in England have a canteen only 15 minutes walk from my tent. There is also attached a chapel and a resident parish priest (sorry, army chaplain). The chapel is open all day until 9.45pm and the parish priest conducts night prayers every evening at 9.30, and one prayer is specially for our families and homes. All this is at 7.30 Ipswich time. We can hear the 6 o/c news from London (8 o/c here) in the canteen.

There are two more canteens close by, a Naafi and YMCA, also two open-air cinemas. The first morning we were here we went on a short route march and, lo and behold, one of the first things we passed was the CWL buildings and there was me thinking I'd have miles to walk to Mass.

I was glad to get onto dry land again, the journey on the ship got very tiring towards the end. Troop ships are crowded things and there is no privacy at all, but when on land there is more room to spread out a bit.

How is Phyllis getting on at the munitions factory? I do hope she is liking it better now. Tell her the factory language isn't half as strong as the army variety, and convey to her my best wishes.

Well dear, I will say goodbye once again, with love to Mother and Kitty, and not forgetting Theresa.



Sandbags protect Hadleigh post office in the Second World War

Writing home

lots of love XXXXXXXX
Your loving husband XX+XXXXXX
Dad. Baby XXXXXXXX+XXXX

The good book

How sweet are thy words

“How sweet are Thy words to my palate! More than honey to my mouth” (Ps 118:103)

By Fr Joseph Welch

Fourteen years ago, at Midnight Mass 2007 and one month after my ordination to the diaconate, I preached my first sermon. It was a milestone in my life and my vocation. Others have told me that I can come across as composed to the point of appearing nonchalant. However that may be, as I sat in my deacon’s chair listening to the first reading, and the choir singing the psalm, and then to the second reading, my hands were shaking violently enough for the priest next to me to glance down and then give me an encouraging look.

I rose, asked for the priest’s blessing, ceremonially collected the Book of Gospels from the altar, and processed to the ambo to sing the Gospel. I got through that without mishap but even holding my hands in a gesture of prayer, palms pressed together, I could not stop them shaking as I climbed the steps to the pulpit.

I had suffered a similarly distressing attack of nerves a few years earlier when, for the first time, I had to address the parents of the newly arrived pupils at the beginning of the September term at the school where I had just taken over as head. I had spent much of the afternoon, in all likelihood to the amusement of other members of staff, pacing up and down in the staffroom rehearsing my lines in order not to have to refer to my notes too often. They were clever parents, well educated, and posh, or at least wealthy. Among them were senior civil servants, surgeons, solicitors and barristers, a couple of television and radio personalities, and a well-known actor or two. Many had been up at Oxbridge and, for the most part, they had shared backgrounds in the arts and the humanities which meant, or so I had thought at the time, that they

would probably click their tongues were I to split an infinitive or end a sentence with a preposition. As it turned out, working with such a demanding body of parents helped steady my nerves considerably when I moved to Oxford, except for that first sermon at Midnight Mass when I was conscious that two out of every three members of the congregation were likely to be college dons.

Perhaps to suffer from that level of nervousness is a symptom of pride. Certainly, I had in mind that I needed to put on a good performance on both occasions, but I would have done better of course, and especially when delivering my first sermon, to have heeded Our Lord’s words when He said: “Do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to

say, for what you are to say will be given you in that hour” (Mt 10:19). In fact, after that Mass, people were kind in their praise, which only served to inflate my pride. *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam*: “Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to thy name give the glory” (Ps 113: 9). Even so, I suffered a third attack of nerves when I began to encounter Evangelical Christians whom, I was always led to believe, knew the Scriptures back to front and inside out. Perhaps some of them do but most of those I met, and with whom I discussed matters of faith, had learnt a significant number of quotations by heart, it was true, but seemed to have no coherent theology by which they could link up the various quotations to form a theological synthesis. My own reading of the Scriptures was not, after all, something of which I needed to be ashamed.

All of which leads me on to encourage readers to make ever greater use of the Bible as part of your spiritual reading during the coming year. By and large I am not a great devotee of New Year resolutions, not least because they usually last until about January 3 or 4 before being quietly swept under the carpet and forgotten. You would be amazed at how many people take out membership of a gym at the beginning of January but who never visit the place after the middle of the month. It works wonders for the balance sheets of the company, I’m sure! Notwithstanding this reservation, I would still urge you to read the Scriptures more in 2022.

Of course, the Scriptures on their own do not necessarily lead us towards the Truth. After all, as we know, even the devil can quote Scripture. No, what is needed is a good Catholic commentary rooted in the words of the Fathers of the Church, and the great saints and doctors too. Still, reading the



Many new year resolutions, like getting fit, do not last

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Scriptures is a start, and to this end it seems worthwhile to mention one or two editions of the Bible for those who might be wondering where to begin.

My own favourite is the Douai-Rheims translation of the Vulgate. The Vulgate is the translation by St Jerome in the fourth century, into Latin, of the Greek Septuagint Bible. The Septuagint was, in turn, a translation into Greek, from the Hebrew, of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, that is, the Torah (or Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible) along with the deuterocanonical books, in the third and second centuries BC by 70 Jewish scholars (hence Septuagint from the Latin *septuaginta* (70)). This translation came about at the behest of the Pharaoh Ptolemy II Philadelphus, also known as Ptolemy the Great (285–247 BC), on behalf of the Jewish community in Alexandria. Following St Jerome's translation of the text, the Vulgate became the official Latin version of the Bible promulgated by the Church, and remained so until the late 20th century. As such, it is the version of the Bible quoted by all the saints, doctors, scholars, theologians, and philosophers of the Church for more than 1,500 years. The Douai-Rheims translation into English was carried out by members of the English College in Douai, with the one-volume New Testament published in 1582, and the two-volume Old Testament being published in 1609 and 1610.



A 1633 Douai Rheims Bible

The text was revised by Bishop Richard Challoner and published in the middle of the 18th century. This is the text still used today.

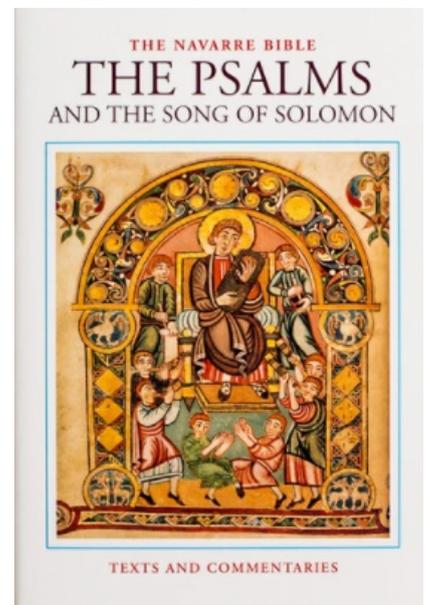
The great advantage of the slightly archaic sounding vocabulary and syntax is precisely the fact that, not being the English we use in common and daily parlance, the wording and structure make us stop in our tracks and think about what we are reading or hearing. Given that it is the history of Divine Revelation, and the story of our salvation, it is fitting that a sacral language is used rather than the slang of *EastEnders* or *Coronation Street*. I warmly recommend it if you have never read it before.

Most people probably read the Revised Standard Version (RSV) of the Bible or one of its successors, or the Jerusalem Bible, which is, at the moment, the text we hear during the readings at Mass, although the bishops of England and Wales are on the verge of officially approving a new translation, closer to the RSV, for the revised lectionary, a change which may well come into force in time for Advent 2022. Many of the more recent versions of the Bible have the advantage of modern scholarship and, therefore, more accurate translations. Yet many scholars will probably tell you that certain books of the Bible are more accurately translated in this or that version, while other books are more accurately translated in different versions. For example, one priest I know always said to read the Grail translation of the psalms (which we use at Mass every day and in the Liturgy of the Hours) but Monsignor Ronald Knox's translation of St Paul's Letters. Not being a biblical scholar, and having no biblical languages on the tip of my tongue, I must sit this discussion out, but debates will go on for as long as there are scholars to debate the matter.

Incidentally, some of the books in the Douai-Rheims translation have some idiosyncratic titles. For example, what we call 1 and 2 Chronicles are, in the Douai-Rheims translation, still called by the older and more traditional title of 1 and 2 Paralipomenon (from the Greek, meaning "of things left out" of other

books). In the Douai-Rheims Bible we still have 1,2,3 and 4 Kings, which appear in more recent translations as 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings respectively. Some of the psalms are numbered differently too because some follow the Greek Septuagint and some follow the numbering of the Hebrew Masoretic Scriptures. So, when you see, for example, 110 [109], the 110 refers to the Hebrew text numbering (favoured by Protestant denominations and, increasingly, by Catholic scholars too) while the 109 refers to the psalms as they are numbered in the Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate of St Jerome, and therefore the Douai-Rheims translations (by and large, the preference of the Catholic Church, at least up until the late 20th century). It can be confusing!

Baronius Press still publishes the Douai-Rheims translation of the Bible, whereas there are many publishers of other translations. Ignatius Press publishes several editions of the RSV text including the Ignatius Catholic Study Bible which includes detailed footnotes as well as introductions to each book. The Navarre Bible, edited by the Theology Faculty of the University



Navarre has many volumes

of Navarre in Spain makes use of many quotations from patristic sources, quoting the commentaries of the Fathers of the Church. Solidly Catholic, it is published jointly by Four Courts Press in Dublin and Scepter Publishers in Princeton, New Jersey, America but be

warned: it comes in several hardback volumes.

For the sheer poetry of the language I also have on my shelves a copy of the King James Version (sometimes known as the Authorised Version) of the Bible published by the “special command [of] James, by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith” in 1611. The KJV is the only version, I think, that uses the phrase “the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys” in chapter 2 of the Song of Songs. (The Douai-Rheims uses “lily of the valleys” but not “rose of Sharon”) This, in itself, is interesting because it is where we get some of our imagery from for Our Lady: from an Anglican Bible!

Monsignor Ronald Knox’s translation of the Bible in the 1940s was officially approved for use in Catholic churches by the bishops of England and Wales, but is rarely heard, which is unfortunate because it, too, has some rather fine turns of phrase and some beautiful wording.

In addition, a contemporary scholar, the Jesuit priest Nicholas King, has also, and recently, completed another translation of the Bible. It, too, is worth reading not least because, by using unfamiliar phrases where we are used to something quite different, it can bring new light to bear on tried and tested sounds.

One wit, with the King James Version of the Bible in mind, dubbed Nicholas King’s translation the “King Nicholas” translation, a pun I suspect that the good Jesuit has heard many times by now.

There are more versions of the Bible to discuss than can possibly be included in this article but I will conclude with mention of just two more. First, an edition of the RSV translation published by Ascension in West Chester, Pennsylvania, America, and subtitled by them “The Great Adventure” Bible. It is packed full of introductions, notes on key events, charts, and maps, and uses many subheadings to help the reader navigate around unfamiliar books of the Bible. It provides a timeline of Old Testament history, and breaks down complicated narratives into easy-to-understand sections without losing the flow of

the story. In addition, it clarifies ideas and themes in the Bible with the use of reader-friendly charts. For example, it shows how the covenant made by God with the human race through Adam involves only one holy couple, Adam and Eve, but the covenant made through Noah involves one holy family; that made through Abraham, a covenant with one holy tribe; through Moses, one holy nation; through King David, one holy kingdom; and the covenant made through Jesus involves one, holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. I’m afraid this version is very expensive, but if you can afford it, it’s well worth the cost.

Second, and finally – and in fact the whole point of this article – is the *Bible in a Year: Your Daily Encounter with God*, published by the Augustine Institute, Colorado, America. It uses the Ignatius Press RSV text, and is broken down into

366 sections, one for each day of the year including leap years. Each day’s reading includes three chapters from the Old Testament, one chapter from the Psalms or Wisdom literature (Psalms, Proverbs, Book of Wisdom and so forth), and one chapter from the New Testament. The tremendous advantage is that the text is broken down for you according to the calendar – January 1, January 2, January 3, etc – rather than the reader having to shuffle from place to place to make up the daily quota. Each day’s entry concludes with a reflection from the editor too. Notwithstanding my earlier hesitations about making resolutions for the New Year, the *Bible in a Year* really might be a good place to start if you would like to make daily Scripture reading part of your spiritual life once the Christmas festivities are over.



The Nativity by Antoniazio Romano from about the 1480s

Good news

By Stephen Donaghy

The December edition of the *God Who Speaks* campaign newsletter features a wealth of Christmas articles as part of its aim to encourage more Catholics to engage with the Bible.

This month’s focus is on dreams and revelations. Articles include David McLoughlin, Emeritus Fellow of Christian theology, at Birmingham’s Newman University looking at what we can learn from St Joseph.

Fr Michael Hall, a parish priest in Leeds, asks why Our Lord wasn’t born in the Temple, arguing that Luke’s Gospel shows

how Jesus was coming to reclaim his Temple. There are also a selection of Nativity animal paintings, an Advent Wreath resource by the Bishop of Wrexham, the Rt Rev Peter Brignall, and a nine-day retreat for Advent from Friday,

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December 17 to Christmas Day. Other resources include a Jesse Tree Advent Calendar showing 25 images from Catholic churches across Britain to trace Our Lord's

²⁴ family tree back through the Old Testament and help prepare for Christmas. It was put together by David Ashford, project manager of Lo & Behold, a virtual art gallery featuring biblical images

found in Catholic churches across the UK. The God Who Speaks website has a wealth of resources and you can sign up for a monthly newsletter to let you know as material is added.

Light in darkness

By Magdalene de Santos

The storyteller's soul is sometimes weighed down by the darkness because she mistakenly thought that God had abandoned her when, in fact, it was she who got distracted.

With His grace she shall conquer those negative forces that bewilder and inhibit her. The eyes of her humanity see only the darkness but the empathy of her soul brings forth the light and she says to Him, the Son of the Living God, in prayer: "There are times when the act of loving Thee is a perpetual battle that is killing me."

My Lord, my God, the fire of your love cuts so deep, leading her into the mystical land of longing, for she does love thee and echoes those timeless words of St Augustine: "Late have I loved Thee, O Beauty so ancient and so new."

She is always praying and says to the Lord: "Do you know how much she loves thee?" And in response she can sense His pleasure and answers her own question with: "Of course He knows, silly. He is God."

My Lord, my God, we the creatures of Earth are living through troubled times. We are battling with a deadly virus. There are catastrophic events throughout the world: earthquakes, storms, and soaring temperatures that are causing drought, famine and war. Many of our problems are self-inflicted through our human greed and bigotry. And yet Lord, people point the finger of blame at you, saying it is God's anger that crushes this world. Not so, says the storyteller, for God is love and He is without guilt. It is man who is full of deceit, selfishness and ignorance. Among all this doom and gloom there is excitement in the air, for He, the light, the merriment of the prophets, is coming. The king of



St Augustine wrote in his Confessions 'Late Have I Loved Thee'

redemption, the conqueror, our Saviour of the world. God, you fill this storyteller with such happiness and she praises you.

Let us be ready for the time is here, says the Lord. The time preordained from the beginning. That time is now upon us: the birth of the Son, Emmanuel, is imminent. So let us make the preparation for His coming, says Fr Joseph, challenging the people of the parish to discard their newspapers, their non-religious books and switch off

their televisions, put aside all non-essential undertakings, before daring the people to be still and listen to the silence, and to ponder the coming of our King, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Immaculate Mary, our hearts are on fire, for she, the storyteller, is reminiscing of a time long ago when she was a small child and you, Holy Mother, set her heart on fire when you whispered your motherly words of love and courage into her soul. Yes, she recalls that day in May when she, the orphan, was given the

A winter visitor



honour of crowning you with the blossoms of May.

In these latter days she finds herself reflecting on the magnitude of your faith. Blessed be the womb of the sweet-hearted Mary for you did enflame the storyteller with a fire that charred her soul. Blessed is her holy womb that hailed the salvation of humanity, a reflection echoed throughout time. Now it is the storyteller's time to trace the blessed steps of Mary's journey as she lifts up her hands in prayer.

Never will this storyteller cease seeking His essence for she longs for Him to be the light that illumines her soul. Again she cries out, late has she loved thee, for these are the words that have travelled through time, and in His presence they fill her with great joy! Now she wants to tread in the footsteps of her ancestors, those present at the birth of our Lord Jesus in Bethlehem. Sweet heart of Mary! So willing a servant! Yielding to the will of God as the Holy Ghost overshadowed her with His breath and made her conceive the Son of God.

Let her also give fitting praise to Joseph, the quiet man of history, for by the grace of God, Joseph saved Mary, for without his intercession she could have been sentenced to death by stoning as this was the sentence for an unmarried woman with child at that time. Mary a woman of such beauty, a woman who was filled with the love of God, and daughter to a human mother and father. Mary, a woman who suffered the most unspeakable pain. Mary, the woman of purity who in her dying was lifted into paradise and crowned Queen of the Heavens and Empress of the Earth. An honour beyond compare! And we, the inhabitants of this world, will for ever venerate Her blessedness and mission, as decreed by God, to save the world. Amen.



Illustrations by Gillian Mobb

Digging in my garden one cold grey winter's day,
I heard a rustling in the dry dead leaves that carpeted the clay.
Looking up, right by my side,
A friendly robin I espied.

Like thistledown, his feathers fluffed, delicate, small and neat,
He hopped about so close to me on dainty little feet.
Surveying all with his brown eyes, intelligent and bright.
He was in contrast to the day a joyful, happy sight.

So entranced, I kept quite still hoping he'd stay around,
The robin seemed to understand and rummaged in the ground.
The two of us together worked, it was a happy meeting,
Companionship and harmony but sadly only fleeting.

Suddenly he flew away, I missed his presence so,
The sky was darkening, it was late, I knew he had to go.
Yet now, when Christmas comes and greeting cards appear,
My thoughts turn to the robin who brought me such good cheer.

Anna Smith



Fr Joseph married Catherine Griggs and Craig Wisbey at St Pancras in October

From the register

The parish register shows 12 baptisms this year up to the point of going to print in mid-December:

Eric Gherca on February 21,
 Georgina Barbado on March 14
 Arabella Burgess on August 1
 Kosisochukwu Igwe on August 8
 Grace McGinn on August 21
 Stella Lomas on August 28
 Elijah Benfield on September 5
 Penelope Ventura on September 18
 Andrea Tjiraso-Pangilinan on
 September 19
 Liana Lambert on November 14
 Tobias Lexmann on November 28
 Isaac John Cullen on December 5.

Two children made their First Communion this year:

Henry Rhode
 Maya Terlecka.

There was just one wedding in our church this year, largely owing to postponements because of the pandemic:
 Catherine Griggs and Craig Wisbey were married on October 23.



Up to the time of going to press the following funerals have taken place in our church this year:

Anna Pinelli on January 25
 Doreen Bowers on March 10
 Constantine Papas on March 23
 Thomas Brosnan on April 16
 Neil Ward on July 21
 Christopher List on July 23

Mary Mummery on August 6
 Jean Orme on October 11
 John Ross on November 12.

One more funeral has been arranged:
 Sheila Alcock on December 22.
 Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
 and let perpetual light shine upon
 them. May they rest in peace.

Next door's news

Greetings to you all from the church family at Christ Church. We hope all is well. In mid-November, I was thinking about buying a new Christmas jumper. My old ones seem to have ended up in other family members' drawers! To be fair, they look better on them than they did on me. So, the search begins as I head on to the internet.

As I begin to type in the search box, Google offers me helpful suggestions to complete my phrase to try to save me typing it out in full. As I type "Christmas" a list of possible second words and phrases, based on popular searches, appear below. The "second word" options were interesting: songs, markets, hampers, pyjamas, gifts, tree, decorations and wrapping paper.

However, guess what was top of the list of options! Yes, it was "jumpers". How did Google know? Anyway, the Christmas jumper search began well (but no new jumper quite yet), and some of the other options were of interest. I'm sure many of us will be buying and/or enjoying some of these listed Christmas items over the coming weeks. I have to say though, it is also surprising what is not in this most helpful of lists!

Will you be embarking on any search this Advent and Christmas time? Perhaps you'll also be using the internet to help you with some of your Christmas preparations and purchases. Perhaps some of you will be searching for that Christmas decoration or early bought gift that you stored so well that you can't now remember where it is! Or is it really just us who do this? OK, our Advent will no doubt include some

Light quiz answers

1 St John Henry Newman
2 June 21 3 Love Shine a Light
4 Sun standing 5 Pink/rose 6 Lux
7 Richard III 8 Chiascuro 9 A match
10 February 2 11 "Light is therefore colour"
12 The Light of the World by William Holman Hunt
13 Eight minutes 14 New



Rev Neil Coulson, the minister at Christ Church

of those search engine suggestions. But I would like to add the following suggestions to our search! What about the wonderful Christmas story of God's love for humanity? What about Christmas hope, Christmas joy, Christmas peace and Christmas mystery?

Friends, let the search begin! I hope you find everything you are looking for. This Advent, I hope that for each of us there is that deep searching, deep longing for the coming of God into our world through Jesus with his wonderful gifts of redemption and renewal. Let

us be open to God's presence in this season of searching and sensitive to the Spirit's leading as we seek to share God's love with others.

Then on Christmas Day we will rejoice as we find what we are looking for: "Hail! Thou ever-blessed morn! Hail, redemption's happy dawn! Sing through all Jerusalem, 'Christ is born in Bethlehem!'" We will celebrate as in many ways our search is over! We delve into a great mystery and find Jesus, God with us – we find a Saviour! We are not left alone. Before our search even begins, in love, God also goes on a search, and He comes among us who once were lost but now are found. Christmas reminds us that we have much to be thankful for and much to share with others. We hope you and your loved ones have a great Christmas!

With our love and very best wishes to all at St Pancras,

Neil

Orleans 15 The Sun King
16 Ludwig van Beethoven 17 The Nicene Creed
18 A chandler 19 The Pharos of Alexandria
20 Sirius 21 Oranges and Lemons
22 The hearth 23 186,000 miles per second
24 The first day
25 A halo



Getting organised

Work on organ unveils millennium window, page 5



Illuminate

Light up your brain cells with our quiz, page 9



Donkey detective

Page 13

Special day

There was only one wedding at St Pancras this year, From the register, page 26

