



St Michael's News

The quarterly magazine for the people of St Michael's Parish, Ashford

Issue 100

Christmas 2018

Love one another. As I have loved you

St John 15:12

by Mgr Jim

During my visit to Kolkata in November this year I had the great joy of visiting the Mother House of St Teresa of Kolkata and, with many others, praying at her tomb in the Chapel. I met Mother Teresa once at St Anselm's Church, Southall when she was visiting Father Michael Hollings, the Parish Priest. I was immensely struck by her presence, an impression of great holiness. Only on one other occasion have I felt the same impression of holiness, when, as a seminarian at the English College, Rome, I served at the Mass celebrated by St Pope Paul VI for the Canonisation of the Forty Martyrs in St Peter's on 25th October 1970.

In the Mother House in Kolkata there was great sense of peace, and the Sisters and novices were very joyful and most welcoming. I saw the very small, sparse room where Mother Teresa worked and slept, and where she died. On the ground floor there is a small exhibition which sets out the story of her life and work.

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IN BRIEF with *Mgr Jim Overton*

Mgr Jim writes

Benediction. Following on from the *Adoremus* Conference in Liverpool, Years 5 and 6 of St Michael's School came to the church for Benediction. It was a beautiful, prayerful occasion. Also Romain and Joanna Fernandes from Hounslow Parish led us in a service of worship songs, ending with Benediction on the Feast of Christ the King. Again it was a lovely occasion.

Building works update. You will be pleased to know that, finally (!) the leak into the sacristy has been fixed. The work required extensive, deep excavations. The leak was caused by a lead pipe that had broken in two places and had been leaking for years! So now the structure of the building is again secure.

New metal ladders providing access to the tower have been installed to replace the old, unsafe wooden ones. This work was a Health and Safety requirement. It does make climbing up inside the tower very much easier!

Clarendon Primary School visit. For the first time children from Clarendon Primary School made a visit to St Michael's church. They were extremely well-behaved, and asked lots of very good questions. They loved our church!

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. This autumn as only three people applied to be instructed in the Catholic Faith, they have combined with the RCIA candidates at Our Lady of the Rosary, Staines in order to benefit from being part of a larger group. They are enjoying the course.

November Cemetery visits. Every year in November, the month of the Holy Souls, I bless the graves of deceased members of parishioners' families in Long Lane and Staines Cemeteries. This year the visits took place on Saturday, 3rd November and it was good to see so many parishioners remembering and praying for their departed loved ones.

Christmas Tree and Crib. I would like to thank Joe Mascarenhas, Dominic DSouza and Victor Pinto for the putting up the Crib; and Clodagh John, Joan Berkeley and Shenda Holmes for decorating the Tree.

I pray that you and your family may enjoy a very Blessed and Peaceful Christmas!

Sunday Friends

Throughout Advent the children have been learning that Advent is a time of waiting and preparing for Jesus. Each week we have been telling the children the traditional and delightful story of Christmas using our colourfully illustrated Advent Calendar which holds 24 pull out story books. The story of Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus were told over the four weeks of Advent.

To complement our Advent Calendar, and to build on the Advent theme of waiting and preparing for baby Jesus on Christmas day, we used our big display board.

- * On the First Sunday of Advent the children's display board showed a totally bare stable.
- * On the Second Sunday of Advent we added animals to the stable.
- * On the Third Sunday of Advent, Mary, Joseph and the empty manger were placed inside the stable.
- * On the Fourth Sunday of Advent, baby Jesus and an angel were added to the collage, and with that the children were ready to welcome Jesus into their hearts on Christmas day.

Sunday Friends is always looking for new volunteers to join our friendly team, the work is light and it's great fun helping out, if you would like to join us, please text or ring Rob on 07905 249266.

Sunday Friends wishes you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

From the Registers

October – December 2018

Baptisms: Chloe Uy, Joshua Shanks, Oscar Kasperek, Esme Flaherty, Clint Randall, Kai Randall, Benjamin Schovsbo, William Rybinski, Auren Downie-Fudura, Matilde Costa, Mila Bantleman, Elizabeth Finn, Jessy Redman, George Thomas Pope, Liliana Matraszek, Louie George Kennedy

Marriages: Joseph Slark and Megan Keenan

Deaths: Marie Tacij, Patricia Coyer, Reg Thomas, Margaret Curran, Melissa Morgan

Slaves in our City

by Madeleine Menezes

On Thursday 22nd November, 2018, I attended 'Slaves in our City! This was a joint venture between Caritas Westminster and the Metropolitan police. Prior to this event, I had not realised how much work the Churches do alongside the Metropolitan police in tackling modern slavery in London. Throughout the evening, I learned of the Medaille Trust, the Santa Marta Group and we heard of the invaluable work of Caritas Bakhita House which is a 'safe' house for those vulnerable people who are trafficked into the country or who have managed to escape from the grasp of modern slavery.

What is truly terrifying is that the government now estimates there to be about 13,000 victims of modern slavery in the United Kingdom. We may all be aware of the high-profile cases which make news headlines, but that means there are so many other cases and victims who we are unaware of. Labour exploitation such as workers on a builder's yard and sexual exploitation are the most prominent forms of slavery, but there are also cases of domestic servitude within London.

We are asked to remain vigilant and watch for signs that a person may have been trapped into modern slavery, such as a person who is not allowed to speak for themselves. It was suggested that rather than giving money to people who are begging, we should instead buy them a hot cup of coffee or a sandwich, but giving money will inevitably go straight back to the traffickers. We were reminded that other key areas where workers may have been trafficked, are car washes and nail bars, so to consider this carefully if we use these businesses.

One quote from a 15 years old girl trafficked by her own family, brought a tear to my eye, 'Because of what has happened, I feel I trust a stranger rather than my own family'.

We can all be vigilant and if in any doubt we can call the modern Slavery Helpline on 0800 012 1700 or call the police on 999.



I would be happy to talk in more detail to anyone who is interested in this subject. I have a contact from the Santa Marta group who would come and make a presentation to the Parish, if there is interest.

Furthermore, we can pray to St Josephine Bakhita (pictured below) who herself was kidnapped as a child and sold into slavery.



St Michael's Repository...

...stocks a variety of cards and gifts for all occasions, including Mass Cards, Sympathy Cards, Birthday Cards, Get Well Cards and Baby Cards.

The Repository is open after all weekend Masses and on Tuesday and Friday mornings.

What do you see

*What do you see, nurses, what do you see?
What are you thinking when you're looking at me?
A crabby old woman not very wise,
Uncertain of habit with faraway eyes?
Who dribbles her food and makes no reply
When you say in a loud voice "I do wish you'd try!"
Who seems not to notice the things that you do,
And forever is losing a stocking or shoe...
Who, resisting or not, lets you do as you will,
With bathing and feeding, the long day to fill...
Is that what you're thinking? Is that what you see?
Then open your eyes nurse: you're not looking at me.*

*I'll tell you who I am as I sit here so still,
As I do at your bidding, as I eat at your will.
I'm a small child of ten... with a father and mother,
Brothers and sisters, who love one another.
A young girl of sixteen, with wings on her feet,
Dreaming that soon now a lover she'll meet.
A bride soon at twenty – my heart gives a leap,
Remembering the vows that I promised to keep.
At twenty-five now, I have young of my own,
Who need me to guide and a secure happy home.
A woman of thirty, my young now grown fast,
Bound to each other with ties that should fast.
At forty, my young sons have grown and are gone,
But my man's beside me to see I don't mourn.
At fifty, once more, babies play round my knee,
Again we know children, my loved one and me.
Dark days are upon me, my husband is dead:
I took at the future, I shudder with dread.
For my young are all rearing young of their own,
And I think of the years and the love that I've known.*

*I'm now an old woman ... and nature is cruel;
'Tis jest to make old age look like a fool.
The body, it crumbles, grace and vigour depart,
There is now a stone where I once had a heart.
But inside this old carcass a young girl still dwells,
And now and again my battered heart swells.
I remember the joys. I remember the pain,
And I'm loving and living life over again.
I think of the years ... all too few, gone too fast,
And accept the stark fact that nothing can last.*

*So open your eyes, nurses, open and see,
...Not a crabby old woman, look closer... see ME*

I am

*I am me and nobody else
I wonder if it's hard to not be yourself
I hear different voices
I see different people
I want to understand life
I am me and nobody else*

*I pretend to be another person
I feel like it's not right
I touch different things
I worry for different reasons
I cry because I am not perfect
I am me and nobody else*

*I understand we are all unique
I say we are all the same
I dream to be myself
I try it be brave
I hope that one day I will realise,
I am me and nobody else*

Kyra Fernandes

St Michael's Collectors in uniform for Remembrance Sunday Parade



Above: Nigel Jones and his two children Tom and Grace. (Nigel and Tom collect at the 9:15 Mass along with Andy who always wears his Kilt). Grace is usually a server. Right: The Rainbows, Beavers and Scouts are all represented in their packs at the Ashford parade.



BEAVER LEADERS NEEDED

We need your support to keep 7th Ashford Beavers Colony running within our local community

Two of our leaders are leaving at Christmas, and with nobody else coming forward, our Beavers are in danger of closing.

Their motto is 'Fun and Friends' and Beaver Leaders help them achieve that through facilitating a wide range of activities.

Other than a sense of fun, no special skills are required, but many skills which you have will undoubtedly be transferable. Much can be gained through exchanging ideas with other leaders. A great part of helping Beavers is that they are very receptive to new ideas.

Interested?

Contact Claire Clare on 07971 165 143
or email claire@clairepeach.com



St Nicholas – Who was he?

by Isabel Joce

Whist on holiday in Turkey I stayed near a city on the coast called Patara, famous for being visited by St Paul on his way to Jerusalem but also the birthplace of St Nicholas (born around 260 AD) and very close to Myra where he became Bishop.



At Myra I visited St Nicholas Church where it is reputed that St Nicholas is buried. Others believe that his body is in Italian city of Bari. The stories about St Nicholas, how he became known as Santa Claus and the traditions of Christmas are many and varied. What is not in doubt is that he was a kind and generous bishop. The most consistent story is that he gave a bag of gold to a poor family that had three daughters in order to provide them with a dowry. Without a dowry they could not be married and would be sold into prostitution.



In AD 325 St Nicholas is said to have taken part in the Council of Nicaea, the very first ecumenical council. More than 300 bishops came from all over the Christian world to debate the nature of the Holy Trinity. The Council produced the Nicene Creed which we still regularly say at Mass today.

It is possible that St Nicholas Church was built around 500 AD over an older Christian church

where St Nicholas was the bishop. Over the years the church fell into decline and was flooded and filled with silt. In the 6th century it was restored by the Emperor Justinian and in later centuries more work was done. In 1862 it was restored yet again by Tsar Nicholas 11. Excavations and restorations were done during the 1960s and continue today.

Turkey is a secular state, but Islam is the religion of the country. There are a huge number of important churches in Turkey but they tend to be treated as archaeological sites rather than sacred places.



The church itself was amazing to visit. It is still being restored and many parts of the church cannot yet be visited. It has a typical Byzantine structure with domes and several arcades. There are extraordinary wall frescos and marble mosaic tiled floors. There was a huge queue of Russian tourists waiting to kiss the sarcophagus where St Nicholas may be buried. St Nicholas is especially revered by Russians. According to the Russian Orthodox Church he has saved Russia from catastrophes on many occasions.

So apart from being in charge of Christmas and looking after Russia, St Nicholas is the patron saint of sailors, merchants, archers, repentant thieves, children, brewers, pawnbrokers, and students, a busy saint indeed.



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Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu was born in Skopje, Macedonia, Albania on 26th August 1910. Her father died when she was eight years old. His death brought economic suffering to his family and they experienced poverty. At the young age of twelve Agnes decided that she would become a nun, and she never wavered in her decision.

Agnes left home in 1928 at the age of eighteen to join the Sisters of Loreto at Loreto Abbey in Rathfarnham, Ireland, to learn English with the view of becoming a missionary. English was the language of instruction of the Sisters of Loreto in India. Agnes would become fluent in five languages, Albanian, Serbian, English, Bengali, and Hindi.

She arrived in India in 1929 and began her novitiate in Darjeeling, in the lower Himalayas, where she learnt Bengali and taught at St Teresa's School near her convent. Teresa took her first religious vows on 24th May 1931 and chose to be named after St Thérèse of Lisieux, the patron saint of missionaries. Because a nun in the convent had already chosen that name, she opted for its Spanish spelling, Teresa.

Teresa took her solemn vows on 14th May 1937 while she was a teacher at St Mary's Loreto high school in Entally, eastern Calcutta. She served there for nearly twenty years, and was appointed its headmistress in 1944. Although Teresa enjoyed teaching at the school, she was increasingly disturbed by the poverty surrounding her in Kolkata. The Bengal famine of 1943 brought misery and death to the city, and the August 1946 Direct Action Day began a period of Muslim-Hindu violence.

She was happy living and working as a Sister of Loreto, but on 10th September 1946, at the age of 36, during a train journey from Kolkata

MOTHER TERESA'S ROOM



Viewing Hours

8.30 a.m. - 12 noon
3 p.m. - 6 p.m.
Closed on Thursdays

Photos and videos not permitted.



to make her annual retreat in Darjeeling, Teresa experienced what she later described as "the call within the call". She had a clear sense of Jesus speaking to her, "I was to leave the convent and help the poor while living among them. It was an order. To fail would have been to break the faith."

Her superiors quickly gave her permission to leave her Order and she began her new missionary work with the poor in 1948. She replaced her traditional Loreto habit with a simple cotton white sari, with three blue borders symbolising the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. She adopted Indian citizenship, spent several months in Patna to receive basic medical training at the Holy Family Hospital and ventured into the slums. Mother Teresa said "By blood, I am Albanian, and by citizen, an Indian, but by faith, I am a Catholic nun".

She founded a school in Motijhil, Kolkata, before she began tending to the poor and hungry. At the beginning of 1949 Teresa was joined in her effort by a group of young women, and this laid the foundation for a new religious community helping the "poorest among the poor".

On 7th October 1950, Teresa received the Vatican's permission for the diocesan congregation which would become the Missionaries of Charity. In her words, it would care for "the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the lepers, all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, uncared for throughout society, people that have become a burden to the society and are shunned by everyone".

In 1952, Teresa opened her first hospice with help from Kolkata officials. She converted an abandoned Hindu temple into the Kalighat Home for the Dying, free for the poor, and renamed it Kalighat, the Home of the Pure Heart (Nirmal Hriday). Those brought to the home received medical attention and the opportunity to die with dignity in accordance with their faith: Muslims were read the Quran, Hindus received water from the Ganges, and Catholics received extreme unction. "A beautiful death", Teresa said, "is for people who lived like animals to die like angels, loved and wanted."

In 1979 she received the Nobel Peace Prize for her humanitarian work. One of her famous sayings was "Charity begins at home", and that is exactly how Teresa lived out her life.

By 1997 the 13-member Kolkata congregation had grown to more than 4,000 sisters managing orphanages, AIDS hospices and charity centres worldwide, caring for refugees, the blind, disabled, aged, alcoholics, the poor and homeless and victims of floods, epidemics and famine. By the end of her life Mother Teresa was operating 517 missions to evangelise and to look after the very sick and dying, not only in India but in more than a hundred countries.

For many years Mother Teresa suffered from poor health. She suffered her first heart attack in 1983 and later received a pacemaker. In 1996 she fell and broke her collar bone, and in August 1996 she contracted malaria and suffered the failure of her left heart ventricle. She died on 5th September 1997 in the Mother House, aged 87 and was given the rare honour of a State Funeral by the Government of India. She was buried first in Albania next to her parents' grave, but her body was later transferred to rest in the Chapel of the Mother House in Kolkata, India.

Her diary, published after her death, revealed that for over twenty years she did not experience the sense of God's presence in her life. This was a terrible period of spiritual dryness and suffering for her, but it was a suffering that produced great fruitfulness in the work of the Missionaries of Charity.

St Teresa was canonised by Pope Francis on 4th September 2016 and her feast day is kept on the 5th September, the anniversary of her death. *St Teresa of Kolkata, pray for us.*

Table Quiz at St Michael's

Question - Which country's Prime Minister took Maternity leave in June 2018?

Can you answer the question? Are you interested in current affairs, ... or do you enjoy sitting around a table experiencing a very enjoyable social evening?

The latest St Michael's Table quiz was held on Saturday 20th October with all proceeds going to a most and rewarding charity, Macmillan Cancer Trust. The participants were tested on their general knowledge, geography of Spelthorne, memory of music in colours and their appreciation for TV comedy characters. A wide range of challenging questions were circulated and only the collective knowledge of a team prevailed. More importantly than just answering questions was the fun, the competitive banter, teamwork and comradery experienced by all. The result was £233.00 raised for the noble Charity. It would be remiss of me not to mention the winning Team, 'The Pickovers'. Their all-around knowledge was very impressive.



The Winning Team

The preparations, prizes and hospitality were gratefully administered by Chief organiser Tina Gale.

St Michael's have a long-standing tradition of table quizzes. Jim and Lee Gibson were the ring masters for many years testing and puzzling the contestants and all returning home wiser and glowing with the warmth from the friendship gained from the evening's proceedings. One point was guaranteed if you answered every question "Newcastle United"!

No table quiz is complete without a raffle. We all like to win something regardless of its value. The raffle prizes are kindly donated by local traders and businesses in Ashford. Luck does not depend on intelligence and it's not unusual for attendees returning home with both hands

full. The raffle prizes are kindly donated by local traders and businesses in Ashford. Pre-set teams are not obligatory. Many teams are simply put together on the night to form formidable teams.

On Saturday night, 20th October, Paul Gregory and Richard Bartley teamed up to test the 10 x teams with 75 questions. The first Question was delivered at 19.15pm followed by 30 x current affairs questions. At the half time interval, a picture round was distributed to each team requiring them to name the persons in the photo. Following the interval their knowledge of music and TV programmes were tested to

the full. By 21.45pm the wrap up of the final question, the raffle and the announcement of the winners brought proceedings to an end.

The success of the evenings are not built on the quality of the questions nor the prizes, but by the warmth, good humour and generosity created by the attendees. New friendships and bonds are created. If you look forward to good social evenings with great chat in pleasant surroundings, look out for the next 'St Michael's Quiz'.

Answer – New Zealand

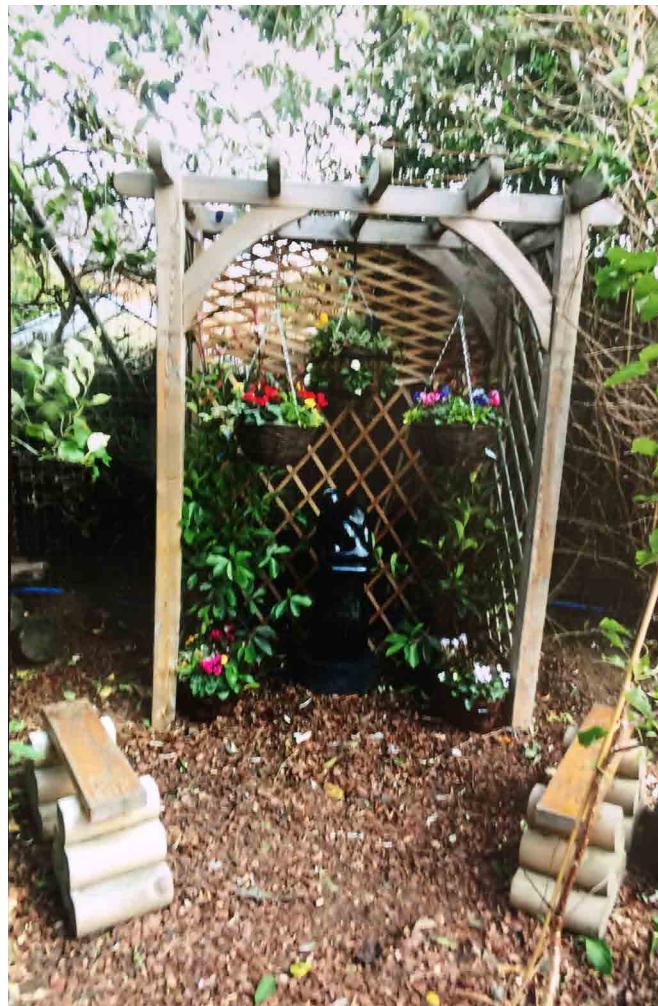
A Year in the life of the 'Peace Garden' at St Michael's School

by Andrew McLaren (Lollipop Man)

Shortly after becoming School Crossing Patrol Officer in September 2017, the headmaster Mr Lane mentioned that he had heard that I was interested in gardening and would I like to help in the school garden. I mistakenly thought that the garden was at the front of the school and was in the main staff car park with mature bushes around the periphery. A solution would be a few hanging baskets on the front of the reception, dining hall, kitchen and nursery wall. Add a few plant troughs and a self-irrigation system- no problem!

In early Spring 2018, Mr Broughton (Mr B), the school's Maintenance Manager, asked me if I would like a conducted tour of the school and as I had only ever been during the winter, at the road crossing, the assembly hall, staff room and changing area, I jumped at the chance.

It was on this tour that I realised my mistake when Mr B introduced me to the Peace Garden and what a delight that was. The headmaster had very cunningly allowed the garden to be slightly under used, to let the wild flowers and plants mature, run wild and flourish. He also implemented a refurbishment programme, including new decking surrounding the fish pond which is home to frogs, newts and some fish which we hope to see next Spring. A new gated



Pergola with Madonna and Baby Jesus

entrance has been cut in to the enclosure, this is a private entry for the sole use of the Nursery and Reception classes. Lastly a pergola has been erected top house a statue of the Madonna and Baby Jesus. This work was carried out by one very hardworking Mr Parsons and our own Mr B.

Now the hard work for the pupils began, the school has an Eco-Club membership which is fully organised by Mrs Heffernan and has many budding gardeners.

The plan was to give the Eco-Club a taste of how to grow colourful flowers at the front to the school in hanging baskets. Mr B very quickly and efficiently put up the hanging basket brackets and installed a self-irrigating watering system, then the Eco-Club swung into action.

The results were stunning. Four weeks after the mass planting by the Eco-Club pupils all the preparation work was coming to fruition and the 18 hanging baskets with colourful flowers were going into full bloom. Each of the baskets were tagged with the member's name, to be used at a later date. Visitors and parents were very complimentary about the Eco-Club's efforts of the floral display.

For my assistance at this period I was proud to be made an honorary Eco-Club member.

Now to the main focus, the Peace Garden. Firstly, to clear the garden pests that had found a home there. Mrs Lucas (Reception teacher) organised a massive 'creepy crawlie' hunt. Parents

and children of the Nursery and Reception classes searched out all the snails and slugs and relocated them all to the Bug Hotel located in the Playing Fields area. No pests were injured during this operations and now we have an enthusiastic team of Peace Garden helpers who weekly carry out this relocation process.

Armed now with the knowledge that there was a large number of 'green fingers' within the Eco-Club, we proceeded to start planting our Bee and Butterfly friendly plants eg lavender, heather, buddleia, sunflowers and many wild English blooms. These were planted into recycled planters (used car tyres) with our special compost. Our various types of grasses and plants were fed, our plants and bushes trimmed and a new play area @Dinosaur World' was created. The Learning Circle, the Water Cascade, the Reading Hut and the Wild Bird Feeding Station were all refurbished and finally all the cub members spread a chipped wood layer all over the garden. The garden was now ready and open for business.

Pupils could now play at lunchtimes (weather permitting) in the Dinosaur World and he Water Cascade, read in the Reading Hut , pray or contemplate at the Pergola. Teachers and Teaching Assistants could use the Learning Circle as an outdoor classroom.

One morning in early June I had the most delightful experience at the Peace Garden. After carrying out my Lollipop duties, I went to water the plants and there to meet me were the Nursery



Peace garden learning circle



Fish pond and reading hut

and Reception classes with their teachers, Miss Berry and Mrs Heffernan. Miss Berry was carrying a large cylindrical muslin covered basket with an opening lid. All the children were seated around the Learning Circle and were quietly excited about what was going to happen next. Miss Berry then asked me if all the Bee and Butterfly friendly plants had been planted and when I replied that they had, she then opened the lid of the basket and out fluttered a large number of butterflies, to the shrikes of the seated children. Shortly afterwards, when all the teachers and children had left the Peace Garden and I was left alone to water the plants. I was surrounded by all the various butterflies, fluttering through the bushes and trees, what a magical moment I shall treasure forever.

Prior to this it had been decided that the garden was so popular among the pupils that I might be a good idea to enter into the local Spelthorne in Bloom competition. The school entered in two categories:

- Best new entry into competition
- Best kept school garden

A lot of hard work by the Eco-Club eventually raised the garden to what I thought was an excellent standard, the judges duly arrived the week before Summer break and had a really good look round the whole school. This included the hanging baskets at the front of the school and in the judges' opinion Cian Down (Year 1) had the best basket. (Mr Lane presented Cian with a certificate at the annual prize-giving)

The next big event for the school was the visit of Bishop John Wilson on 9th October who was the Celebrant of the Mass in the school assembly hall and then went in procession to the Peace Garden along with staff and class Pastoral leaders. Here we had a Prayer Service and consecrated the statue of Madonna and Baby Jesus, another wonderful moment.

The time was now approaching fast for the Award Ceremony for the Spelthorne in Bloom competition, which was being held in the Orangery at Shepperton Studios on 15th October. Mr Lane had very kindly invited me to accompany him in my official capacity as honorary Eco-Club member.

The Orangery was packed and the atmosphere, tense with anticipation and only the competition judges knew the results. The results were at last being revealed, one of the first categories was Best New Entry and St Michael's Primary School was award 2nd place overall. We were both well satisfied with the school's achievement.

The presentation ceremony continued until we reached the schools Best Kept Wildlife and Sustainable Garden award and the winner is St Michael's Catholic Primary School, Ashford. Mr Lane and I could not believe it, the Mayor of Spelthorne presented us with the Certificates and garden gift token to the value of £80.00

A very satisfactory conclusion to our first year at St Michael's Peace Garden.

100 Years on – Remembering those who changed our world



On a bright sunny Sunday 11th November, one of the largest crowds for many years, turned out to mark a hundred years since the Armistice and to remember those who have fallen in the many wars that have followed.

Next year sees a hundred years since the signing of the Treaty of Versailles (28th June 1919) and eighty years since the UK and France declared war on Germany (3rd September 1939).



Fr Tim Dean who said Mass



The crowd gathers, one of the largest for many years



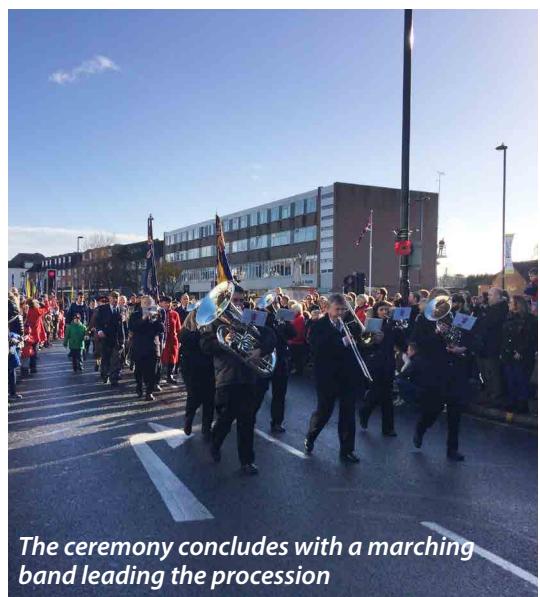
A familiar face for the past 40 years, the Parade Marshal (right), himself approaching 100



A symbolic reminder, a poppy on a post



Many wreaths are laid at the foot of the war memorial



The ceremony concludes with a marching band leading the procession

Bishop John Wilson Visits Our School

On the Tuesday the 9th October, Bishop John Wilson came to our school to celebrate Mass with us and bless our statue of the 'Madonna and Child' in our Grotto.

Our Mass, which we helped to prepare, was all about the wonders of Creation and reminded us about how we should care for the majestic world God has gifted to us.

After Mass, we, the Liturgy Leaders and the RE Followers, went outside to the peace garden with the Bishop to bless the grotto with holy water using a soup and a sprinkler. Mr McLaren, who designed and helped Eco-Club to plant the plants around the grotto, joined us for the celebration. He even got invited by Bishop Wilson to bless the statue!

All in all, it was an educational, exhilarating and exciting day. The Bishop made us think about our relationship with God and how lucky we are to have such an incredible school!



Written by: Thomas McCarthy, Ella McCarthy, Grace Lucas, James Mostyn and Isabella Abbey.

St Michaels Catholic Primary School Liturgy Leaders.

St Michael's Parish Council



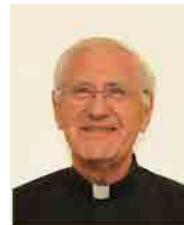
Louise Lloyd



Desmond DeSa
(PC Chairman)



Andrew McLaren



Mgr Jim Overton



Shenda Holmes
(Parish Secretary)



Lyndon Rodrigues



Pearse Conlon
(Vice PC Chairman)



Phillip Hazell



Ruth Jones

Followers – Give us a Go!

Followers is the parish's Children's Liturgy Group for the youngsters that have received their First Holy Communion and are progressing towards their Confirmation, usually in about Year Nine. We meet during 9:15 Mass every other Sunday and every week in Advent and Lent to pray together to talk about and understand the Gospel of the day.

It's the next rung up from the equally long running Sunday Friends and one that is intended to recognise that the children are a bit older and more able to understand deeper Gospel teachings. The children often know many of the other children that come through into St Joseph's Chapel and sitting with siblings and friends makes for everyone being even more engaged and participative.

One of the children volunteers to lead the group with a 'Sorry prayer' followed by another reading the Gospel and then the Followers Director and the group talk about its literal meaning and try to decipher its underlying messages.

We talk about the lives that the Lord wants us to lead, about helping one another and the importance of trying to do the right thing. It's very interactive and everyone gets a chance to say what they think and chip in to the discussion which is great and helps the whole group to take away a good understanding of that week's Gospel teachings.

I would like to encourage and invite all of the children of the parish that attend 9:15 mass and have received their First Holy Communion to come through and join us next time. You'll be very welcome and Amy, Clive and I are confident that your children will enjoy it and take away a better understanding of the Gospel than they had before.

And finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to say thanks to Co-Directors Amy James and Clive DeSouza who have with me been leading the group since all our children were pre-Confirmation age which is quite a few years now, my eldest was 26 last week and some of our others children older! And a thanks too, to all the adult Helpers that support us, without which we would not be able to operate. Thank you.

Colin Berkeley, Followers

Schools near Ashford Parish

St Michael's Primary School (Age 5-11)
Feltham Hill Road, Ashford, Middlesex
TW15 2DG Telephone: **01784 253333**
www.st-michaels.surrey.sch.uk

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School
Parish: Staines-upon-Thames
Distance: 1.1 miles
www.ourlady.surrey.sch.uk

St Ignatius Catholic Primary School, Sunbury Parish: Sunbury-on-Thames
Distance: 1.4 miles
www.st-ignatius.surrey.sch.uk

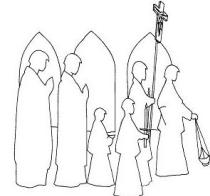
St Paul's Catholic College
Parish: Sunbury-on-Thames
Distance: 1.5 miles
www.st-pauls.surrey.sch.uk

St Lawrence's Catholic Primary School
Parish: Feltham
Distance: 1.5 miles
www.st-lawrencesprimary.co.uk

St Michael & St Martin's Catholic Primary School
Parish: Hounslow
Distance: 2.7 miles
www.stmichaelandstmartin.co.uk

Wanted – Altar Servers for the 9:15am Mass

Girls and boys who have received their First Holy Communion are welcome.



Interested?

To find out more, please contact Heather Nolan on **01784 256549**

or email: heather.nolan61@gmail.com

CALLING ALL PARISH GROUPS

Give us your news!

01784 252263 or email: ashford@rcdow.org.uk

Talks on the Catholic Faith. If you are interested in becoming a Catholic or in deepening your knowledge of the Catholic Faith, you are most welcome to attend the series of talks on the Catholic Faith on Tuesday evenings at 7.00pm in the presbytery meeting room.
Please just come along.

PARISH CONTACTS

Altar Servers	Heather Nolan	01784 256549	heathernolan61@gmail.com
Ashford Hospital Chaplain	Frances Castledine	01784 455915	ashford@rcdow.org.uk
Baptism	Lee Gibson	07713 760281	lee.gibson2na@btinternet.com
Charismatic Prayer Group	Frances Castledine	01784 455915	
Choir	Peter Turner	01784 252230	ashford@rcdow.org.uk
Church Cleaning	Anna Floyd	01784 248099	anna.floyd@sky.com
Church Flowers	Louise Lloyd	07896 698954	louise.lloyd@gmx.com
Church Gardens	Gavin Boyle	01784 254345	
Churches Together	Demetri Pavia	01784 251841	demetri.pavia@btinternet.com
Collection Counters	Pam Archer	01784 252230	ashford@rcdow.org.uk
	Margaret Dean	01784 252230	ashford@rcdow.org.uk
Confirmation	Clive De Souza	01784 246580	ashfordconf@rcdow.org.uk
Finance Committee	Chris Derby	07933 152612	chris.derby@sky.com
First Holy Communion	Sarah Davies	01784 251763	ashfordcomm@rcdow.org.uk
Followers	Colin Berkeley	01784 246514	colin.berkeley@sky.com
Folk Group	Sarah Walsh	07798 918064	glynn.sarah@gmail.com
General Intercessions Writers	Tess De Souza	01784 246580	tess.desouza@btinternet.com
Extrordinary Ministers of Holy Communion	Tess De Souza	01784 246580	tess.desouza@btinternet.com
Housebound and Sick Parishioners	Gavin Boyle	01784 254345	
Ladies Circle	Maysie Boone	01784 557165	maysie.boone@gmail.com
Missio	Maureen Meek	01784 251590	maureen.meek@talktalk.net
Newsletter	Shenda Holmes	01784 252230	ashford@rcdow.org.uk
Organist	Peter Turner	01784 252230	ashford@rcdow.org.uk
Parish Council	Desmond DeSa	07935 761550	desmonddesa@hotmail.com
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Repository	Patricia Gillespie	01784 252230	ashford@rcdow.org.uk
Safeguarding Representatives	Amanda McCarthy	01784 256810	ashfordsg2@safeguard.rcdow.org.uk
	Jennifer Parsons	01784 248314	ashfordsg2@safeguard.rcdow.org.uk
Sunday Friends	Rob Andrews	07905 249266	robandrews27@gmail.com
St Michael's News	Julian Game	01784 252230	juliangame@aol.com
St Michael's School	Stacy Rielly	01784 253333	info@st-michaels.surrey.sch.uk
Transport	Gavin Boyle	01784 254345	

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St Michael's News is always looking for interesting and diverse articles, so if you would like to contribute a piece to the next edition in as many or few words as you wish, please do so. You can remain anonymous if requested and you can be any age. The copy deadline for the next edition is **7th April 2019**.

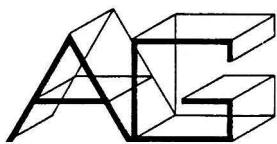
Alone at Christmas

In the depths of deep despair he sits alone in his armchair.
Contemplation is on his mind. An answer he now seeks to find.
No friends or family will pass this way, not even on the Special Day.
Loneliness is his companion, cloaked in pity, with good reason.
So many people tread this sad path, never a smile, never a laugh.
Too soon are gone, his fellow men, never here or ever when.
In his mind filled with confusion, he knows of answers, in profusion.
Pity those who lost their day along life's pointless barren way.
No joviality or conversation. No expectant exclamation.
His room is void of all décor. No paper streamers to the floor.
No silver bells, no tinsel too, hanging from a tree of blue.
No celebration from this space, nothing but a sullen face.
For all these people, we should care, to take the time to give and share,
our good wishes and company to cheer these souls with empathy.

by Roger Houlding

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For more information, you can read the full diocesan privacy policy on: rcdow.org.uk/diocese/privacy-policy



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Local hospital visits If anyone in your family is in hospital and would like a Hospital Chaplain to visit them, please contact Frances Castledine for Ashford Hospital on **01784 884488** or the Chaplain's Office for St Peter's Hospital on **01932 872000**. Hospital Chaplains will only know if one of your family is in hospital if you inform them.

Oremus – The Best Things in Life are FREE

This magazine is now a FREE publication! And it is our hope that it will continue to be so for many years to come. Everyone who now visits Westminster Cathedral, be they worshipper, pilgrim, wanderer or tourist, is most welcome to take home a copy of its official magazine. For more information and how to subscribe* please call **Oremus: 020 7798 9052** or go to Gift Shop On Line: www.westminstercathedralshop.co.uk and click on "Subscriptions".

A few copies of **Oremus** are available each month in the narthex

Regular weekly meetings/events

Sundays:

Charismatic Prayer Group, St Joseph's Chapel, 7:00pm

Wednesdays:

Choir practice, Organ Loft, 7:30pm;

Folk Group practice, St Joseph's Chapel, 7:30pm (alternate Wednesdays)

Thursdays:

Ladies Circle, 8:00pm, Parish Hall (alternate Thursdays)

Saturdays:

Antique Fair (3rd Saturday of month)

Parish Priest

Mgr James Overton

St Michael's Catholic Church, 112 Clarendon Road, Ashford, Middlesex TW15 2QD. Telephone: **01784 252230**

Email: ashford@rcdow.org.uk
Web: <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/ashford/>

Parish Secretary, parish registration, baptism enquiries and hall bookings contact:

Shenda Holmes

on **01784 252230**

Office Hours: Monday – Friday (not Thursdays), 9:00am – 1:00pm.

Usual Service Times

Sunday Masses

Saturday 6:00pm,
First Mass of Sunday;
9:15am (including Children's Liturgy of the Word); 11:00am and 6:00pm

Weekday Masses

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday 9:15am
No Mass on Thursdays

Holy Days of Obligation Masses

9:15am and 7:00pm

Eucharistic Adoration

Saturday 9:45 – 10:15am

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 10:15 – 10:45am

Sacrament of Baptism

Second Saturday of the month.
Contact Lee Gibson on 01784 252194 / 07713 760281 or lee.gibson.2na@btinternet.com

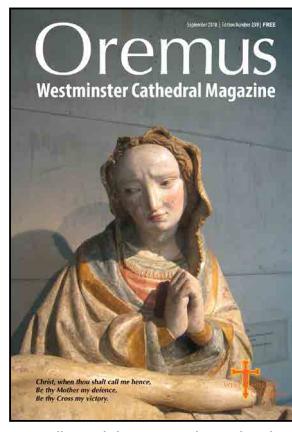
Pact the Catholic charity for prisoners and their families, is offering free training and support for parishioners interested in volunteering with them in prisons or in the local community. No experience necessary.

All enquiries welcome. To find out more please contact ParishAction@prisonadvice.org.uk

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St Michael's News

The quarterly magazine for the people of St Michael's Parish, Ashford

Issue 98

Feast of Ss Peter & Paul 2018

by Sarah Davies (First Holy Communion Catechist)

On Saturday 12th May, 47 children made their First Holy Communion at St Michael's. They began their preparation back in January and made their Reconciliation in February. Despite the nerves on the day, all of the children took part in the Masses and it was a very special occasion. We congratulate them all on making their First Holy Communion.



St Michael's News

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