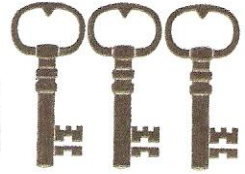


THE THREE PARISHES MAGAZINE



NEWS & VIEWS OF THE STEVENAGE ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISHES OF:
THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD, ST JOSEPH'S AND ST HILDA'S



The School in Earlier Years

Congratulations to St Margaret Clitherow School on its 50th Anniversary

Welcome to this fourth edition of the 'TPM'! It has been sometime since the previous edition, six months in fact! But we can only produce a new edition when we have enough material to print. So we publish 'as and when possible'. We rely mainly on our fellow parishioners to write something, so we do thank those who have contributed this time. And a reminder to everyone that we would appreciate an article from you! *Your life story: Why you have come to Stevenage from another country: A funny story, or a sad story, a poem, a favourite recipe, a prayer, a viewpoint, the changes you would like to see..... or anything else that would be of interest.* There must be an author inside you wanting to get out! But please keep it to 500 words or less. Please send to your Parish Office.

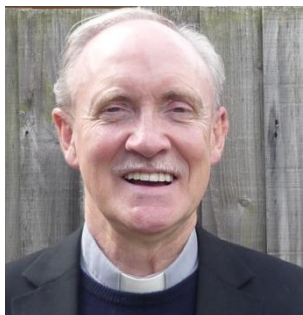
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A Special Thanks

A particular appreciation is due to Bishop John Sherrington. When Bishop John was in Stevenage recently, we asked him if he would write something for our magazine. Within days, his secretary contacted us to ask 'what is the Bishop's deadline?' Now we are not used to giving 'deadlines' to Bishops! So we replied "whenever he can". A very short while later his article arrived by email. As they say *"If you want a job done, ask a busy person!"*

You will notice that the magazine now has a few adverts for services offered by parishioners. We invited these some time ago and we hope they are helpful. They are free (at least for the time being) so if you would like to place a small advertisement, please contact your Parish Office.



St Joseph's Parish Church is the central Catholic Church of Stevenage, nestled in the trees at the head of the beautiful Fairland's Park, it stands as one of Stevenage's most elegant buildings. It has a large and diverse congregation and a lively liturgy under the charge of Fr Vincent Dike. The Church is beside our Parish School, St Vincent de Paul, of whose great work and achievements, under the leadership of Mr Peter

Keane, we are all very proud.

As a Parish our main focus at the moment is the proposed enlargement of St Joseph's. Crowded congregations, particularly at Christmas, Easter and the major celebrations, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, large Funerals and Weddings etc, means that we need greater space for worship. Plans are being looked at, one to include a large new adjacent Parish Hall and another which would have a smaller meeting hall. The Buildings Department of Westminster is currently working on the costings of these two alternative plans.

So at the moment we are waiting for the Diocese to complete its two sets of calculations, a longer and more complicated process than I had envisaged. But, of course, the cost and the way we fund the plans is crucial for how we move forward, and great care has to be taken.

I ask Parishioners of all three Parishes to keep these plans for St Joseph's in your prayers. I pray daily to St Joseph that these plans go well. As a carpenter himself, he is a Patron Saint who will understand more than most the process we are going through and the challenges we are facing.

Remember Nepal?

Only a few weeks after the earthquake it has slipped out of the headlines, but its people are still suffering and dying. CAFOD and other aid agencies are doing what they can, but need your continued support. CAFOD's campaign theme this year has centred on climate change. The Pope's new statement on this subject could not be more timely. You can contribute by contacting CAFOD on 0303 303 3030 or at: Romero House, 55 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JB

Message from Bishop John Sherrington (Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster)



Almost four years ago I was appointed by Pope Benedict XVI as an Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster and given the title of bishop of Hiltā. People often ask me the whereabouts of Hiltā. We know very little about this diocese but it was once part of the metropolitan diocese of Carthage in the Roman Province of North Africa. Today the city of Tunis occupies this site. The name Hiltā reminds me of that part of the world where today life is very fragile and many Christians are suffering. Ecumenical friendship with Bishop Angaelos of the Coptic Church unites me with these Christians and the recent martyrs in Libya. I urge you to pray fervently for peace so that Christians may live in freedom. As I reflect over these four years, it has been a privilege to serve Cardinal Nichols as Archbishop and be given particular oversight of the parishes of Hertfordshire and the work of Catholic Education Service in the diocese of Westminster.

Bishops are invited to model their lives on Jesus the Good Shepherd who leads flock to good pastures and feeds them. Like a good shepherd, bishops sometimes walk ahead of the flock leading them by teaching and prayer, sometimes walk in the middle of the flock listening to the lives of his people, and at times walk with those at the back of the flock who may be limping, struggling on the journey of faith and life and need encouragement. The bishop sometimes has to make unpopular decisions for the good of the whole flock.

The celebration of the sacrament of confirmation in the parishes is always a time of great joy. I am encouraged by the enthusiasm and the energy of the young people and by the way in which they wish to deepen their Catholic faith in order to follow Jesus more closely by living and breathing his words. They wish to play their part in his Body, the Church and serve others generously. The projects, including KISS, in which many are involved at John Henry Newman School are very inspiring. The pilgrimages to Walsingham and St. Edmund's College for the confirmed are opportunities to deepen the life of faith, hope and love together. As the shepherd who leads them, I pray that the young people in Stevenage can deepen their lives as missionary disciples of Christ both in their parishes and schools. FLAME2 at Wembley was a wonderful celebration of faith; I hope many will travel with me to World Youth Day in Krakow next year.

Parish visitations give me an opportunity to see the many ways in which the priests are leading their communities, encourage a deepening of faith, build up the body and reach out to others in love. To convince others of the truth of Jesus Christ into the future will need faithful witnesses to the gospel who love generously and attract others to develop the seeds of faith deep within. Think of the example of Pope Francis over the last two years!

I ask your prayers for myself and pray that your three parishes may grow together to serve the needs of all the people in Stevenage.

Fr Christopher Luoga SDS

Resident Priest at Transfiguration



Having said a fond farewell to Fr Auson in January, we were delighted to welcome Fr Christopher Luoga at Transfiguration. He was born on 7 July 1963 in the Mtwara region of South Tanzania, the first child of devout Catholic parents. In the years that followed, he was joined, at roughly two year intervals, by five brothers and then, after another 5 years, by a sister ! Traditionally, as the first son in the family, he would normally have been given the tribal name 'Bambo' but, in recognition of his Christian heritage, he was baptised Christopher ! His father was Headmaster at an Anglican college for the blind and had previously spent two years in the UK learning Braille. Blindness from Trachoma is still endemic and widespread in Tanzania.

From the ages of 7 to 14, Fr Christopher attended a State primary school in Masasi. He then joined the Salvatorian novitiate in Namiungo for 2-year period of candidacy as a postulant. From there, he went to the Benedictine junior seminary in Hanga for 4 years to receive his secondary education, and then to the Franciscan seminary in Maua to undertake A-level studies in economics, maths, history and geography. At the age of 27, he entered the Diocesan major seminary to read Philosophy for 2 years and Theology for the remaining 5 years. It was in the seminary, that he learned English - a real challenge for a native Swahili speaker! Fr Christopher was ordained in Nakapanya on 14 June 1997. After one year as a priest in the Tanzanian Capital, Dar es Salam, he went to the Salvatorian Formation House in Namiungo where he was responsible for students aged 14 to 19 years. He went from there to serve as Parish Priest for 10 years in the parish of St Maximillian Kolbe in Dar es Salam. It served six thousand parishioners, with 5 Sunday masses and 2 out-stations. In 2006, he spent 3 months in Canada and then returned home to become Parish Priest for 2 years

at St Saviour's church, Mkuranga. Fr Christopher came to the UK in 2013, spending just over a year in Wealdstone Parish before coming to Stevenage in January 2015.

While in the UK, Fr Christopher is studying Finance and Accountancy at the Greenford School of Management which will lead to him becoming a Chartered Accountant. On return to Tanzania, his accountancy skills will be applied in financial management within the Salvatorian Order. Outside his priestly duties and studies, Fr Chris has a huge passion for electronics, Arsenal FC, and cowboy films on TV! As for his family back home, all five of his brothers and his sister still live in Tanzania and are married with children. His youngest brother remains at home to look after his widowed mum but, in his spare time, he is a Disc Jockey on local radio!

St Joseph The Man

Fr Fred de L'Orme

St. Joseph. The three main charisms. Faith, hope, obedience. When the angel first appeared to Joseph as we read at the beginning of St. Matthews Gospel, he had no idea of what he had to do to support Mary. Yet his faith led him to hope and obedience. His courage was amazing. What would the neighbours say? What would his family say? And Our Ladys family? So St Joseph was the first father of the Church. With all the problems in the world, in the Church, in our families, in our parishes, we should always go to Joseph, would it not be wonderful if every parish had a novena to St. Joseph. As we so often do with the Rosary St. Joseph should also be the patron of Eucharistic Adoration because we do not know how many hours Mary and Joseph must have spent in adoration of Our Lord.

We could also adopt St Joseph as the patron of pro life, because he was asked to protect Jesus while still in the womb, and afterwards. St. Joseph should also be adopted as the patron of pilgrims and travellers because of protecting the Holy Family on the treacherous journey through the desert from Israel to Egypt and back, while Jesus was still a babe in arms. St Joseph is also Patron of the homeless after desperately searching for accommodation in Bethlehem as Our Lady was about to give birth. Pope St. John Paul wrote a wonderful document called Guardian of the Redeemer. It is well worth the effort to download it and use it in discussion groups and for our own spiritual reading.

We Will Remember Them

Patrick David Kissane

I along with my first cousin Patrick now living in Australia were named after my Uncle Patrick, Lance Corporal Patrick Kissane, 41464, 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who was killed in action on the 21st March 1918 aged 19 during the German Spring Offensive.

He was born in Knockbrack Co. Kerry in 1898 and enlisted in the Royal Munster Fusiliers in Perth, Scotland where his family lived, in December 1916. The Royal Munster Fusiliers had a reserve battalion in Scotland so it may have been an obvious choice for Patrick, he later transferred to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Both of Patrick's Regiments are commemorated with plaques in St. Patrick's Chapel, Westminster Cathedral.

He is buried at Ste. Emilie Valley Cemetery, Villers – Faucon which is 15 Kilometres from Peronne. Last year my wife Maggie and I visited his grave and I believe I may have been the first family member to do so. That visit was a sad and moving occasion yet a joyous one just at last to be there. We placed a small wooden cross with a poppy on the grave and the words 'Patrick Kissane Rest In Peace'. Entwined around the cross were Rosary Beads that were given to me many years ago by his Sister, my Aunt Lyla. The cemetery at Ste. Emilie Valley which is immaculately looked after by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, was designed by one of the greatest British architects of his age, Sir Edwin Lutyens who also designed the Cenotaph Whitehall and nearer home St. Martin's Church in Knebworth.

Early this year we were privileged to receive one of the 888,246 ceramic poppies which formed the "Blood Swept Lands" in the moat of the Tower of London, which was beautifully explained by Adele Jackson in a recent edition of the Three Parishes Magazine.

Recently four of us returned to France and on the 97th Anniversary of Patrick's death on the 21st March 2015 we placed the ceramic poppy on his grave.

May his soul and the souls of all who gave their lives, Rest in Peace.



Fifty years for many can be a life-changing milestone as well as a chance to reflect. We have many events planned for this 50th anniversary year and will be taking every opportunity to sing out about 50 Years of glorious Catholic education in Stevenage south. We have much to be proud of and a lot to give thanks for, not least the continual support of a wonderful parish community, fantastic pupils, brilliant staff, committed Governors and great families.

Blessed Margaret Clitherow School as it was then, first welcomed pupils in January 1965 and was blessed not long after by H. E. Cardinal Heenan. Mr John Flannaghan was the first Headteacher, with Sr Alban and our very own Sr Mary Catherine as some of the first teachers. Some of the very few surviving photos of the original school show Sr Alban in her habit, teaching a PE lesson during the visit of the President of Chile in the Summer of 1965!

The school has changed much since 1965 but retains its intimate family atmosphere and its spiritual focus. It is a special place to work and past pupils, myself included, have returned to work here. Indeed some of the school's first pupils can now be found teaching in Year 2 (Mrs Briscoe) and supporting in Year 5 (Mrs Streeter). They have many stories to tell!

The original building was burned to the ground in an arson attack in September 1998 – a day that many of us remember, following a billowing cloud of smoke from Church that Sunday morning. Nevertheless, the phoenix rose from the ashes in our wonderful 'new' building built on the original footprint, opening in September 2000. During this anniversary year, we hope to initiate a digital archive of pictures and documents relating to the school over its 50 years. If you have any photos or documents that we can borrow, a box has been placed in St Hilda's.

During our anniversary year we will also be launching our fundraising campaign to build a new multi-purpose classroom that will enable us to extend all that we do even further – cooking, drama, music, a base for outdoor learning, clubs and so much more. Exciting times, but requiring much financial planning: donations towards this project are welcome of course, but more importantly your prayers are asked, aiming to ensure the very best facilities for Catholic education – just what our children deserve!

Year 5 & 6 launched our 50th anniversary Year during the previous Summer Term with a wonderful trip to York, including the shrine of St Margaret Clitherow, something which we haven't done for many years. The Autumn term began with a History Week where each class reflected on events of the past 50 years. This was followed in January with a 1960s theme day to mark the actual birthday of the school. We all donned our 60s attire for the day: Father Michael commented that he felt he had been transported back in time! Bill and Ben, Paddington, Cat in the Hat and plenty of hippies spent a day in school along with 150 visitors who throughout

the morning joined in with activities. I'm not sure that my outfit will get worn again but it was a fantastic day, culminating in the cutting of our 50th Birthday Cake in a special assembly.

Other events will follow during the Summer term and will culminate in a great outdoor Mass of Thanksgiving at 2pm on 2nd July 2015, celebrated by His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols and concelebrated by local clergy and previous clergy with connections to our school. We hope that many past as well as present pupils, families, staff, governors and friends of the school will join us for this glorious occasion. Please do join us to celebrate if you can – everyone is invited (please rsvp@clitherow.herts.sch.uk to ensure that we have enough seats and refreshments!)

Thank you for all that you do to support Catholic education in Stevenage in our family of three wonderful schools!

St Margaret Clitherow

Researched and written by Marian and Sophia,
Year 5, St Margaret Clitherow School

St Margaret Clitherow, sometimes known as 'The Pearl of York', was born in 1556. In 1571, she married John Clitherow, who worked as a butcher in York. She became mother to three children. She used to hold Masses in her home in the Shambles, York. At this time it was illegal to be a Catholic and Margaret, devoted to her Catholic faith after converting in 1574, risked her life to hide priests. A 'priest hole' enabled priest and worshipers in her house to escape should the house be raided by the authorities. In 1586, she was arrested and was called before the York trials, charged with the crime of hiding Roman Catholic Priests. Margaret refused to deny her belief and was sentenced to be 'pressed to death' on March 25, 1586 (Good Friday). Margaret's death was horrific, crushed to death on a sharp rock under a heavily weighed down door. Margaret refused to plead and remained strong in her faith. She was made a saint (canonised) in 1970 and is a great example to us of being strong in your faith and devoted to the Mass. Her feast day is celebrated on 30th August. The picture above is a beautiful portrait of St Margaret Clitherow hangs in the library of the school, painted for them by Mr Michael Delaney in 2000.



Is for Christians in their middle and later years, and is a support group for the retired. Where were you when we waited and waited at half past one? Oh, you forgot. Ah well, come next Monday then!

We start around one-thirty and finish when the teapot is empty around three o'clock. So what do we do? You don't know? Well come and join us and you will find out. We're a really friendly group and always ready to welcome new members.

Well then, what do we do? Broadly speaking, we start with prayers and a hymn, a decade of the Rosary and then read and discuss the liturgical Readings for the following weekend. That's the standard format which we have set ourselves. After these 'regulars', we move on and attempt to discuss anything religious that has appeared in the Press or TV. We go on then to other religious articles and questions raised in various magazines. These often lead to very interesting discussions with members thoughts being added to the melting pot.

This standard set-up brings us to somewhere approaching 3 o'clock. At this point, we gasp for breath and some kind soul sets about making tea. As with any good meeting, we now proceed to emptying a very full teapot and sorting through an equally full biscuit tin. The meeting then concludes with a prayer. Who pays for the refreshments? To be quite honest, they just seem to arrive! We do make a weekly contribution of 50p but that tends to get accumulated towards our Christmas and Summer dinners.

So where do we meet? In the Transfiguration church, Old Town. But we have members from St Joseph's and St Hilda's parishes. All are very welcome. The Ascent Group (England) movement appears to have started life around 1985, but the movement itself may have roots which go back to about 1950 in Europe. Full marks to many people for the progress the movement has made in the UK. But credit appears to fall firmly on the shoulders of Mrs Paula Conrad. If you would like to know more, come and join us on your next free Monday afternoon.

God Bless and thank you for reading this far!



A bear walks into a bar and says "I'd like a beer.....and some of those peanuts". The bartender say, "sure, but why the big paws?"

Parishioner Story;

Pat Swarbrick

In November 1943, I was five and my brother eleven. My dad was in the RAF based in Gibraltar and he decided to send my mum a food parcel containing six green bananas.

I had never seen a banana before as they were not available in the war years. But my brother remembered that they should be yellow! We waited several days for the bananas to ripen and then mum said we could have one each cut up in milk - they were lovely! At the time, there was an appeal made on the 'wireless' by Mrs Churchill, the wife of Prime Minister Winston Churchill. She asked for money to be raised, particularly by children, for her Red Cross "Aid to Russia" fund. My brother heard this and asked mum if we could raffle the rest of the bananas for a penny a ticket and send the money raised to Mrs Churchill. Mum agreed and we went round all the neighbours with the four bananas in a jar. We collected 254 pennies in 'old money' (just over £1) and sent it to Mrs Churchill.

I still have the personal handwritten reply to my brother from Mrs Churchill headed '10 Downing Street'. "Thank you very much for your gift which I have just received. I am most grateful to you for the trouble you have taken to help the heroic Russians in their terrible but victorious struggle against the wicked invaders of their country". Your sincere friend, Clementine S Churchill.

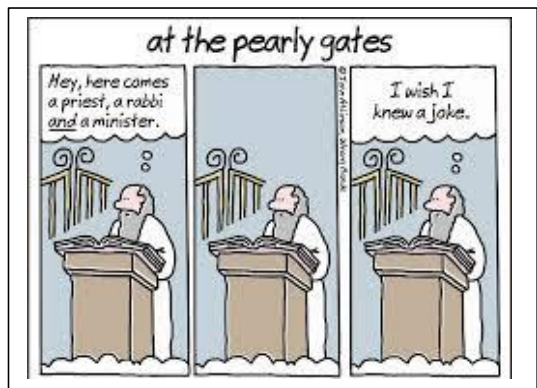
The Pearly Gates

I dreamt death came the other night
And Heaven's gate swinging wide,
With kindly grace an angel came
And ushered me inside

There to my astonishment stood folk
I'd known on Earth
Some I deemed as quite unfit
And some of little worth.

Indignant words rose to my lips, but never were set free
For every face showed stunned surprise, no one expected me!

Colin Blagden



St Joseph's Drama Group



It's very few churches that are transformed once a year into a theatre for a full-scale musical production attracting packed audiences. But that is exactly what has been achieved for the last 20 years by the '*St Joseph's Drama Group*'. It all began in 1995 when Fr Peter Newby was a member of the Stevenage Team Ministry based at the Bedwell church. Before becoming a priest, Fr Peter had trained as an architect and he also had a lot of DIY capability. He was inspired to do something positive to involve the young people of the Parish and give them an opportunity to demonstrate their talents. So he designed and hand-built a portable stage which could be erected temporarily in the church. Then he asked parents to produce a musical involving the young parishioners.

Fortunately, the challenge was accepted by two parents - Margaret Crawley and Anne Francis - and so the *St Joseph's Drama Group* was formed. Both Anne and Margaret have been serving as producers/directors ever since. And lots of other people (too many to name here) have participated in various ways over the years either as lighting and sound operators, as 'back stage' assistants or as 'front of house' staff.

Each production takes nearly a year to achieve. Every summer, the show for the next season is selected and a licence is obtained. This is not always easy because, if there is another group performing the same show at the same time within a 20- mile radius of St Joseph's, a license is refused. Without a licence there is no show!

Once the show has been licensed, the children wanting to perform are given the audition date, which is usually in late September. Every child auditions by singing a song from the show and, so long as they do this, they are guaranteed a place in the show. The production team makes the decision as to who gets what part, but there are so many gifted children it is not an easy job. Decisions take well into the evening. In fact, the standard is so high that, in the last few years, 2 or 3 children have been selected for the same part. It is a credit to them that they are happy to learn all their lines and songs for only 1 or 2 performances!

The amazing costumes for the show are made by Ann Page, assisted by her daughter Kate and supported by a whole host of wonderful mums. The costumes really help to transport the children into their characters and the excitement rises as soon as they start to appear. Rehearsals start in October and, apart from a break for Christmas, continue until Easter. The stage is built in the church on the Sunday evening for dress rehearsal on

Monday and performances on Thursday to Saturday. It has to be taken down after the final performance on the following Saturday night to leave the church ready for the following Sunday's 11am Mass. That really is a late night but there are so many mums and dads who stay to help that it turns into a social with pizzas being ordered at midnight!

The group does not aim to make a profit. After covering costs, any surplus goes to charity. Over the years, donations have gone to cancer charities, SCIMP, our two local primary schools and many other good causes. This year's performance of Aladdin raised £2500 for charity ! But, more than that, there were the audiences who got such great pleasure from the show, the young performers who were able to demonstrate their exceptional talents and who experienced the 'thrill of the applause' and the firm friendships from being part of the group.

So our warmest appreciation goes to Anne and Margaret for their dedication to our young people over many years, and to the many who have worked so hard as part of the St Joseph's Drama Group.

But we do not forget the person who started it all! A big 'Thank You' to Fr Peter for your lasting legacy which has been of such great benefit to so many in Stevenage for the past 20 years.

Cancer Hair Care

In February a local charity Cancer Hair Care was burgled with stock stolen. Cancer Hair Care is a small charity operating for now for 10 years who offer a variety of advice and services to those experiencing hair loss. They aim to make hair loss one less worry and offer ways to help cancer patients look and feel good throughout their illness and into recovery. Not only does their friendly, supportive and experienced team include hairdressers, hair loss consultants and make-up artists but also those who have experienced hair loss, Cancer treatment, hair re-growth and recovery first-hand. Cancer Hair Care offer a range of FREE services including head scarf fittings, wig cutting, specialist hair and scalp products and make-up mornings where you can learn to create eyelashes and brows.

Working with young people as well as adults, you can find out more about them via their website www.cancerhaircare.com or visit them at their Caring Hair Studio, 5A Middle Row, Stevenage, Old Town, SG1 3AN or telephone 01438 311322 (Wed, Thurs, Fri 10am-4pm).

Asked to name a cathedral in Hertfordshire most people would opt for St Albans, that magnificent compound of Gothic and Romanesque architecture set in a town full of historical buildings, although it has been a cathedral for less than two centuries. Many fewer (even among Stevenage residents) would think of St George's Coptic (the word is derived from the ancient Greek term for Egyptian) cathedral church here in Stevenage new town. Although the building is less than 20 years old it belongs to a Christian Church which can trace its origins in Alexandria to at least the 2nd century, and some would say to the evangelist St Mark.

It was the tragic fate of the Coptic and Ethiopian Churches to become separated from their fellow Christians, not just in Catholic Western Europe but also from the Eastern churches following the Islamic conquest of Egypt and neighbouring parts of the Eastern Mediterranean. I have neither the expertise nor the inclination to re-examine the nature of the dispute which led to the break between Rome and the Copts in the 5th century, 600 years before the split with the Greek Church. Like many of the disputes in the early church it was about the nature of the second person of the Trinity and probably seems less significant now than it did a millennium and a half ago.

Today there are about 10 million Coptic Christians in Egypt, along with about half a million Coptic Catholics who combine adherence to the Coptic liturgy with doctrinal loyalty to Rome. They are far the largest of the remaining Christian communities in the Middle East but are having a difficult time surviving in Egypt, as they have throughout most of their history, suffering persecution from their rulers whether labelled Pagan, Christian or Moslem.

We in Stevenage are fortunate that our town was chosen for the site of their British headquarters. We have the opportunity of appreciating their beautiful cathedral by attending concerts, going there for private prayer (it is always open to the public) or going to Mass on Sunday. you may find the duration unusually long (at least 2 hours) but you can be sure of a warm welcome and the knowledge that you are getting to know some of your fellow citizens and expressing solidarity with them.

.....
I'm supposed to respect my elders, but its getting harder and harder for me to find one now!

Coptic Martyrs

This dramatic icon depicts the 21 Coptic Christians beheaded for their faith by ISIS in Syria earlier this year. This event has shocked and saddened us all and we express our deepest empathy with Bishop Angaelos and all the Coptic Christians who worship at St George's Cathedral in Stevenage. This is what Pope Francis said about the Coptic martyrs,



This is what Pope Francis said about the Coptic martyrs,

“The blood of our Christian brothers and sisters is a testimony which cries out to be heard. It makes no difference whether they be Catholics, Orthodox, Copts or Protestants. They are Christians!

Their blood is one and the same. Their blood confesses Christ. This is not to minimise differences, nor to turn a blind eye to them. However, in dying for Christ, do such divisions among Christians retain real relevance? In dying for Christ one has become the perfect disciple and enters a real communion with Christ's Body in heaven”

Pope Francis also asked for prayers for the Coptic Pope “*my brother Tawadros, who is suffering greatly*”

Water – A Matter of Life and Death!

Can you imagine life without safe water to drink? Well that is the reality for over 750 million people around the world and about 500,000 children die every year from intestinal infections caused by drinking unsafe water. That's over 1,400 children a day, or one child **every** minute! We enjoy a sustained supply into our homes of safe high-quality water for drinking, cleaning, cooking, and sanitation. And our wastewater flows away safely for treatment and disposal with no danger to our health. We don't always fully appreciate these great benefits for us provided at relatively small cost! In many countries around the world water supply and sanitation systems simply don't exist. Even where they do, they are often not affordable for the poorest people. Women and girls suffer the most. Having to use their time and energy to collect dirty water, often from far away, they miss out on an

education, lack the opportunity to make a living, and have little chance to change things.

Is anything being done about this situation which ruins lives and holds back development in so many countries? Well, yes, **WaterAid**, a UK-based charity, is doing something positive to transform people's lives. Working with local partners, it invests in low-cost water supply and sanitation systems for poor communities. And it trains local people so that they can continue to run the systems themselves.

The *generosity and commitment* of all its supporters is behind everything **WaterAid** does. Without their help, it would not be able to continue this important work. **WaterAid** raises funds from individuals, governments, companies, trusts, foundations, and community groups and is always looking for more people to get involved. So if you would like more information, or if you would like to get involved, please visit the **WaterAid** website <http://www.wateraid.org/uk>, or contact WaterAid on 020 7793 4594.

Bidding Prayers

Annette Lines

For Carers

We pray and give thanks for all carers may the Holy Spirit guide them, give them understanding, patience and strength to make the best decisions for the good of those in their care. May all who are sick or infirm feel safe and loved. We place them in God's loving care.

For Hospital Staff

We pray for all who work in our hospital in every area of care. May the Holy Spirit guide them in the difficult decisions they have to make each day. For the Chaplains and Volunteers who pray with them and bring comfort to them all.

For the Lonely

Lord we bring before you all who have no-one to pray for them. Those who have lost their way in life, are troubled, homeless and in need of food. May they experience a kind act, May they see and feel your love in action in their lives today.

AN ACCROSTIC PRAYER

Reconcile us to your word,
Empy our lives of all our sin
Comfort us in our sorrow
Open the door to your tomorrow.

Never let us stray from thee:
Challenge our minds that we may see,
If we place our trust in thee,
Let us believe, you'll set us free.

Imaging out lives with you Lord,
Along the path that has no return.
Time can draw us to salvation,
Identify woe and consternation.

Obliterate all sense of fear,
Negative thoughts disappear.



Our Three Parishes Together – A Snapshot in Numbers!

The Diocesan Year Book publishes parish statistics every year. The figures below show the **combined** mass attendance for the three Stevenage parishes at 10-year intervals since 1974. Overall, the attendance has remained fairly steady. The number of marriages has declined significantly while baptisms have increased! Receptions into the Church rarely rise to two figures.

Year:	<u>1974</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2014</u>
Mass count	1645	1775	1448	1395	1609
Marriages.	30	26	13	14	1
Baptisms.	49	67	76	74	104
Receptions.	2	7	5	11	8

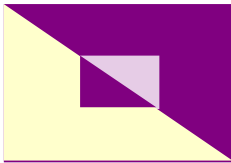
What are your thoughts on these figures? Why has the number of marriages declined so much while baptisms rise? Are we doing enough to attract non-Catholics into the Church? Why not write and give us your views, so we can publish them? Thank you.

Parishioner's Local Businesses

We like to promote local businesses where possible, but we cannot make any personal endorsement so please do contact the businesses themselves.



ASK Physio Private Physiotherapy clinic in Stevenage Old Town (near Waitrose). Chartered and fully HCPC registered Physiotherapists. For the treatment of aches and pains in the body: Back pain and sciatica, neck pain, headaches, arthritis, tendon and ligament problems, muscular problems, joint aches and pains, dysfunction following joint surgery or broken bones, womens health issues. Over 40 years of experience, strong links with local GPs and Consultants and excellent patient feedback. **10% off initial consultations for members of the RC Stevenage Parishes. Please mention when booking.** If you're not sure if we can help you, why not call for some free advice over the phone? Tel: 01438 488579 Website: www.ask-physio.co.uk



Shaun Connolly - Quality Decorating.

Shaun has over 30 years' experience and a long list of clients returning to him year after year. Shaun and his team have worked on projects form minor decorating works to major refurbishment projects. He prides himself on his personal attention and offering a friendly and reliable service, For a quote contact Shaun on: 014389 217961 or 07796 306 136



MCR Studio is a highly versatile practice based in Stevenage Old Town. Offering the following services: Architectural Design, Space Planning, Master Planning, Interior Design, Project Management, Drawings for Planning and Building Control Applications. For enquiries please call Ruth on Tel 01438 352119 Website: www.mcrstudio.co.uk

Competition for under 16-year old's

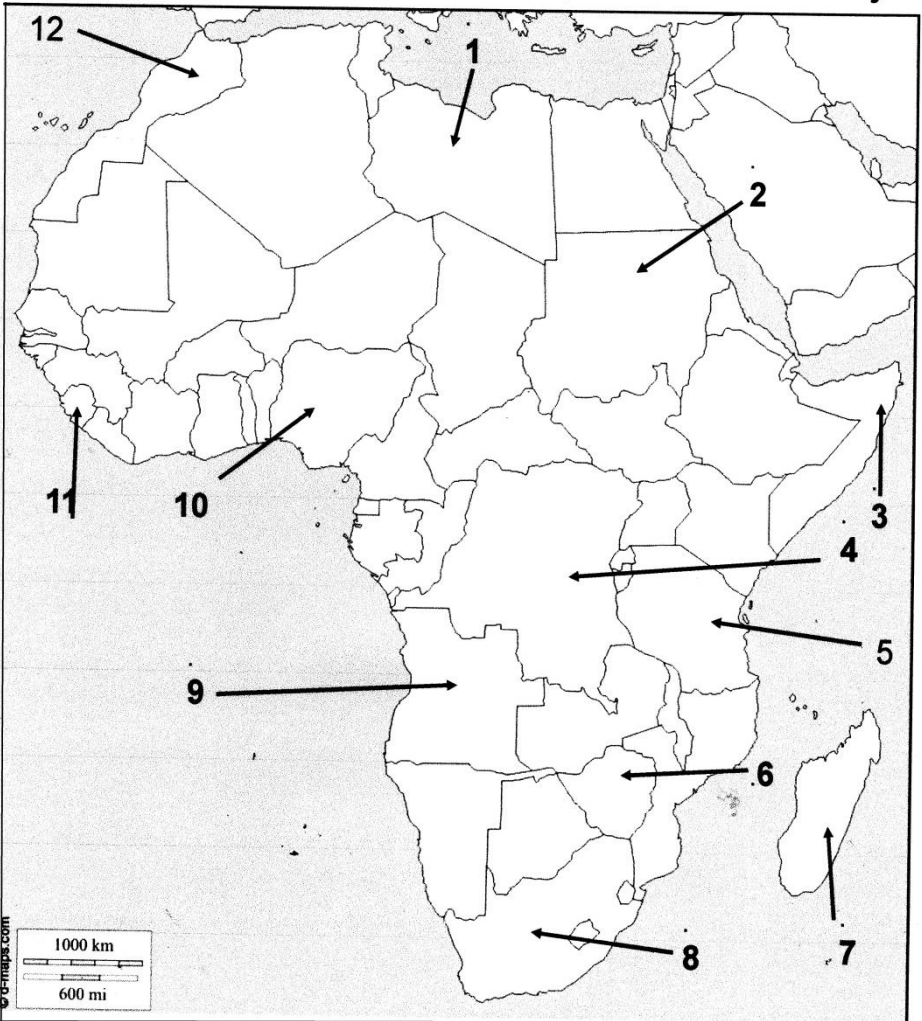
We are grateful to our priests who have come all the way from the African continent to serve us in Stevenage

But Can you Identify these 12 African States and name their Capitals ?

Write your answers on the enclosed sheet and hand-in to your parish office by **12 July**

All full and correct replies will be entered into a draw

Prize of **£25** for first complete correct entry to be drawn on **13 July**



Stevenage Parishes Information

St Joseph's

Fr Michael Doherty SDS (Parish Priest)

Fr Vincent Dike (Priest in residence)

Sunday Mass: (Sat, 6pm), 10am, 12noon, 6pm

Weekday Mass: Mon, Thurs, Fri, 9.15am, Wed; 7.00pm

Holyday Mass: 9.15am

Confession: Sat. 10.00am, 5.30pm

Rosary/Benedicton Fri. 6.00pm

St Hilda's

Fr Michael Doherty SDS Parish Priest (Resident)

Sunday Mass: (Sat 6.30pm), 9.30am (sung), 11.00am

Weekday Mass: Mon, Tues, Fri, Sat 9.30am; Thu 8.0pm

Holyday Mass: 9.30am; 8pm

Exposition: Thurs 7-8pm, Fri 10-11am (with Benediction)

Confession: Sat. 10.00am, 6.00pm

Transfiguration

Fr Michael Doherty SDS (Parish Priest)

Fr Christopher Luoga SDS (Priest in residence)

Sunday Mass; (Sat 6.00pm), 11.00am

Weekday Mass: Tues, Wed, Thurs, Fri 9.30am

Holyday Mass: 9.30am

Confession: Sat. 5.15pm

Contact information

St Joseph's: Bedwell Crescent, SG1 1NJ Tel.01438 351243

Email: stevenagebedwell@rcdow.org.uk

Website: www.rcdow.org.uk/stevenage

St Hilda's: 9 Breakspear, SG2 9SQ Tel.01438 352182

Email: stevenageshephall@rcdow.org.uk

Website: www.rcdow.org.uk/stevenageshephall

Transfiguration: 4 Basils Road, SG1 3PX Tel. 01438 226857

Email: stevenageoldtown@rcdow.org.uk

Website: www.parish.rcdow.org.uk/stevenagetransfiguration