

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



Blessed John Henry Newman 1801-1890

Welcome to this new edition of the 'TPM'. We aim to produce 3 Editions each year but it does depend on receiving articles from yourselves - the parishioners! There must be something you would like to share with everyone. If so, write it down and send in to your parish office! Editorial help can be given if needed.

In the last two editions, we featured our two Catholic Primary Schools. In this edition, we highlight John Henry Newman School which provides secondary education for Catholic students in Stevenage and parts of North Hertfordshire. We offer our congratulations to the school on recently being placed in the '**top 100 schools in England**' for its GCSE and baccalaureate results. A really great achievement.

The motto of Stevenage is "*The Heart of a Town lies in its People*". We also can say that "*The Heart of our Parishes lies in its Parishioners*". So, we have introduced a Section on '**Parish People**' with articles about particular parishioners. Everyone is eligible! So if you would like to tell us about yourself or if you would like to write about another parishioner (with their agreement!) Please inform your parish office.

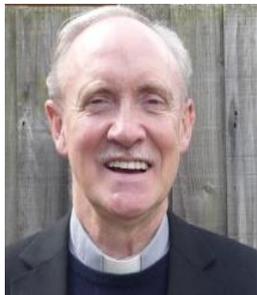
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Stevenage Welcomes Syrian Refugees

Stevenage has now welcomed the two Syrian Refugee families into the town and Stevenage Borough Council have set up a team specifically to work on this to ensure that any resettled refugees will have a smooth transition into the community. If you wish to make a donation there are many international humanitarian aid organisations working in the UK and abroad.

They would benefit from cash donations to allow them to respond quickly and effectively. Some of the agencies responding to the refugee crisis include; British Red Cross Appeal, Oxfam, UNHCR's Emergency Appeal, UNICEF and the World Food Programme. The British Red Cross has set up a Crisis Helpline to triage calls to appropriate organisations: 0800 107 8727.



We have reached our sixth month of the rebuilding of St Joseph's Church and Hall and the work is going very well. It is proceeding on target, indeed, because of the mildest winter on record, it is a little ahead of schedule! The Diocesan Property and Works Department and particularly their Chief Surveyor, are maintaining a very close hands-on weekly supervision of the Contractors and the progress of the project. They are pleased with the work so far but I ask for your continued prayers - there is still a long way to go, but we are confident of re-opening on schedule in October. So I must make the following thanks:-

Thank You to Everyone

For coping so well with the stresses of the arrangements while the Church is closed, but clearly we are all as one in recognising that the benefits of having much greater seating space make this temporary time of inconvenience all worthwhile. The enlarged Church should be capable of seating 500 with the new hall providing a 200 overflow space at large and overcrowded celebrations. The greater space will also increase and enhance the beauty of the Church and its gentle prayerful atmosphere.

So another six months to go. Well done to Fr Vincent and to Parishioners who have managed so patiently and helped so much with the new arrangements since we began in January.

Thank You to St Vincent de Paul School

For your great willingness and cooperation in providing "shelter" for the Parish while the work is going on. My deep gratitude and that of Fr Vincent, to Mr Keane, Mrs Sherry and all the staff for so generously making the School so available to us. We are all very grateful.

Fr Vincent and I are confident that the community will love and benefit from the greater space for worship when the enlargement is completed. We continue to pray to St Joseph, our Patron Saint. As a Carpenter he is more familiar than most Saints with building projects and their problems. God entrusted him with providing a good home for his Son Jesus. May he continue to help us in our endeavours to do likewise in Bedwell.

Bishop Paul McAleenan - Auxiliary Bishop for Hertfordshire



Bishop Paul McAleenan was ordained by Pope Francis on 25 January 2016 as Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster, and Titular Bishop of Mercia, He has pastoral care of the Deaneries of Hertfordshire, He is also Chairman of The Advisory Committee for the work of *Caritas* in the diocese and has several other episcopal responsibilities.

Bishop Paul was born in Belfast in 1951. He attended St Gabriel's school and worked in engineering until 1979. He entered St Patrick's Seminary in Thurles, Ireland in 1979 and was ordained priest for the Westminster Diocese in 1985. Subsequently, he served in several parishes as Assistant Priest, and as Parish Priest in Clapton and Watford. He was appointed a member of the Cathedral Chapter in 2010.

Many Stevenage parishioners will have fond memories of Bishop Paul from his time here as a member of the Stevenage Team Ministry from 1990-94. We were delighted to welcome him back here again in March when he visited St Hilda's in his new capacity as Auxiliary Bishop for the deaneries of Hertfordshire. We trust that will be the first of many future visits by Bishop Paul to our three Stevenage parishes.

Prayer by Cardinal John Henry Newman

May He support us all the day long
'til the shades lengthen
And the evening comes
And the busy world is hushed
And the fever of life is over
And our work is done
Then in his mercy
May He give us a safe lodging
And a Holy Rest
And Peace at last

Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One hat said to the other: 'You stay here; I'll go on a head'

The History of The John Henry Newman School

The John Henry Newman School was created in 1987 from the amalgamation of St Angela's and St Michael's schools.

St Michael's had begun its existence in 1903 having been founded by The Edmundian Fathers and later the Assumptionist Fathers as an Independent Catholic Boys School in Hitchin as St Michael's College. In 1968 the School became a State School and moved to new premises in Sandown Road, Stevenage. St Angela's was founded in 1968 by the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary as a Catholic Girls School. As with St Michael's (and in line with County Policy) the School was a five form entry school resulting in a school population of approximately 650 pupils and students.

As a result of demographic trends, the Governing Bodies of both schools (with the support of the Diocese of Westminster and the Local Authority) amalgamated both schools to form The John Henry Newman School in 1987. The site of St Angela's was chosen largely because of its excellent accessibility; the St Michael's site was sold for housing development and the proceeds returned to the Diocese. In turn, a new science and technology block was constructed on the St Angela's site and a new chapel donated to the school by the Diocese.

In 1999, further new buildings (the Nash Building named after Barry Nash, first Headteacher of The John Henry Newman School) were constructed to enable The John Henry Newman School to expand its intake. The School has continued to grow and currently has approximately 1600 pupils and students (with almost 500 in the Sixth Form).

The School is popular and highly oversubscribed, achieving outstanding exam results and is acknowledged by the Department for Education as being one of the most successful in the country. In the last academic year the John Henry Newman School was ranked the 76th best comprehensive school in the country.

The John Henry Newman School is a Catholic community, not just a Catholic school. Our faith informs every aspect of school life; we strive to build an environment in which children can become that very special person that God intended him or her to be.

The community aspect of life here is incredibly important, there is enormous depth and strength in the school, which means that the incredibly high aspirations and expectations that we have for our children, are achievable.

We also believe in line with the Church's teaching, that parents are the prime educators of their children; we can only build on the values and expectations of your home. Our parents and our children's homes are the school's greatest asset. We strive to create young adults who will become leaders of our community and thus shape our future world.

As a Catholic school we believe that the complete understanding of our world, of ourselves, of our relationships and of our society is only to be found in the wisdom of the word of God-and that word finds flesh in the person of Jesus Christ.

As a distinctly Christian school we strive to develop our pupils' knowledge and understanding of their Faith, both by our teaching and by our example. Our pupils enjoy prayer, reflection and the mass. They are involved in organising, preparing and delivering our liturgy and they do it very well. We do strive each day to live out that aspiration of being a Living Christian Experience.

We want each child to be loved for who they are and not for what they feel pressurised to be. There is an expectation that each pupil will look for and find their unique set of talents, that they will take pride in developing them and that they will use these unique gifts to go on and change our world for the better.

John Henry Newman – His Life

John Henry Newman was born on 21st February 1801, the eldest son of a London banker. His family were ordinary church-going members of the Church of England. They had no strong religious tendencies, but John Henry did develop a love for the Bible. He went to a private boarding school in Ealing for eight years, where he experienced a spiritual conversion which was to determine the rest of his life as a quest for spiritual perfection.

As a young man, he continued his studies at Trinity College, Oxford and came under the influence of other colleagues who taught him to think critically about theology. He was a very successful student and read widely. He was elected to a coveted Fellowship of leading Oriel College. He was ordained and worked as a curate and later a Vicar of the University Church and had a charismatic influence on his parishioners and members of the community. He worked as a College Tutor and later began to research many theological works which put him at the forefront of religious writers. His studies of the Fathers of the Church led him to realise the importance of the resurrection, the incarnation and sacramental nature of

the Christianity and the Church and reinforced his love of the Bible, his experience of personal conversion and the importance of a critical theology. A series of events within the Church of England caused him to question his spiritual path within the Anglican faith. He withdrew from Oxford and for three years led a very strict religious life, praying for light and guidance. In 1845, he knew his path lay within Catholicism and on 9th October of that year, he was received into the Roman Catholic Church.

His choice to convert to Catholicism meant he was ostracized by his family and friends. Undeterred, he set out to study for the priesthood and he was ordained a priest in Rome. He returned to England and founded the first Oratorian Congregation in Birmingham, with a second in London and established the Oratory School in Birmingham. In 1851 the Bishops of Ireland decided that there should be a separate University for Catholic students. John Henry became its founder and first Rector, establishing what is known today as University College Dublin. On his return to England, John Henry faced much opposition, misunderstanding, suspicion and resentment by some in authority, and many of his projects including a Catholic magazine, and a new translation of the Bible met with failure.

In 1879, Pope Leo XIII made John Henry Newman a Cardinal in tribute to his extraordinary work and devotion. At his death in 1890, it was said that he had done more than any other person to change the attitude of non-Catholics to Catholics. Between 15,000 to 20,000 people lined the streets to pay their respects at his funeral. The Cork Examiner noted ‘Cardinal Newman goes to his grave with the singular honour of being by all creeds and classes acknowledged as the just man made perfect’.

A Reflection by John Henry Newman

‘God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission – I never may know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. Somehow I am necessary for His purposes, as necessary in my place as an Archangel in his – if, indeed I fail, He can raise another, as He could make the stones children of Abraham. Yet I have a part in this great work; I am a link in a chain, a bond of connexion between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good. I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it, if I do but keep His commandments and serve Him in my calling.’

Parish People

Peggy Barnacle

St Hilda's veteran



We were warmly welcomed by Peggy Barnacle when we went to see her in her home, in St Hilda's Parish, where she has lived now for 58 years. The first thing she did was to provide us with a cup of tea and biscuits! Then we asked her about her life. We knew that it would be impolite to begin by asking her age! But Peggy herself chose to tell us proudly that she had just celebrated her **98th** Birthday. Remarkably, she is able to recall all the details of her long life very clearly.

Peggy was born Margaret Lysaght in Battersea in 1918, just at the end of the First World War, the only child of Irish parents. She went to Catholic schools including 'St Vincent de Paul' school which is sited next door to Westminster Cathedral. Peggy's mother died when she was 16 and she left school to live with her Godmother in Dulwich. After completing a Secretarial Course, her first job was with a Publisher of school books, but she was made redundant after 2 years. Her next job was in the exports section of the Morgan Crucible Company in Battersea where she stayed for 18 years.

Peggy went through the Second World War in London with its air raids, sirens and bombs. Then came the real 'life changer'! Peggy met a young musician, Jack Barnacle, at a Dance Hall. Jack was in the Air Force and a talented musician. He had converted to Catholicism while on board a ship returning from Syria. Peggy and Jack married in 1941 but, four days later, Jack was called back to the Middle East. On return after 3 years, they lived in two rooms in Dulwich and then in a flat in Brixton. Their son, John, was born in 1953.

After Jack was 'demobbed at the end of the war', he worked in London with Mullard Electronics for some years. In 1958 he got a job with British Aerospace in Stevenage to work in on the 'Bluewater Project'. With the job came the brand new house in St Margaret's where Peggy still lives. St. Hilda's was then still being built, but on its opening in 1958 Peggy was among its first parishioners and became a very active one too. She was immediately involved with the 'Planned Giving' team and helped run the Repository for many years. Husband Jack played the organ. Peggy can

still easily recall the names of all the priests who have served at St Hilda's from the beginning, and in the right order too! - Frs Donovan, Cole, Moore, Moran, Connor, Azzopardi, Abelwhite and Doherty!!

Peggy worked for 18 years as a skilled typist at the Water Research Laboratory in Stevenage, often having to interpret the illegible handwritten reports of scientists to produce a perfect final typescript for publication. There was no 'computer word processing' in those days!

Sadly, husband Jack suffered a sudden heart attack in 1996 and died at the age of 78. Today, Peggy lives a quieter life and suffers from failing eyesight. But she still regularly gets to mass at St Hilda's and is a member of the Ascent Group and the Irish Network. She is frequently visited by her family and by her friends from the parish. Peggy is very proud of her three granddaughters and her great grandson. Another great-grandchild is due soon.

Finally, we asked Peggy about the ***Benemerenti Medal*** awarded to her by Pope John Paul II in 1986 and we persuaded her to wear it for the photograph! "***Benemerenti***" translates to "a *very well deserved person*" It is the highest Order awarded by the Pope to a lay person in recognition of their "***long and exceptional service to the church***". : **Postscript;**

Peggy asked us to mention that Eileen Delany of St. Hilda's is also a recipient of the Benemerenti Medal. We are delighted to do this.

Mark Burns

Knebworth Golf Club Captain



Mark is currently 7 months into his year as captain of Knebworth Golf Club. His chosen 'Captain's Charity' is ***The Children's Burns Trust*** which raises funds and provide support for families of children with severe burns injuries. Mark hosted his charity day at the club on 21st May along with David Croft, also from Stevenage and the current Sky Sports commentator for Formula 1. Mark and his wife Alexandra moved to Stevenage 12 years ago. He is a member of the Transfiguration Finance Committee and both Mark and Alexandra are Eucharistic ministers. He is an avid sports fan and very proud indeed that he is from Leicester and a fan of the Premier League winners, Leicester City.

Mark and Alexandra have two children, Dominic (pupil at John Henry Newman) and Joseph (pupil at St. Margaret Clitherow), both of whom are Altar Servers at Transfiguration.



John Amess came to live in Stevenage from Beckenham, Kent, in 1957 with his wife Betty, and son Ian. Son Keith, and daughter Mary, were to be born later. John had a job at British Aerospace as a Design Draughtsman in the Precision Products Group. He remained with the company until his retirement.

With the new job, came a 'New Town' house in Broadwater. As a result of meeting Betty, John had by that time become a convert to the Church. In those early days, the family travelled by a parish hired-coach to Sunday Mass held in an ex-army hut in Bedwell. When St Joseph's church was eventually opened on that site, the hut was moved to the location of the future St Hilda's church. Several parish men, including John, renovated and repainted the hut so it could be used as the temporary mass centre in Shephall. Who, now, remembers it?!

After retirement, John and Betty moved to a bungalow in the Old Town and became parishioners of Transfiguration. With retirement, came the opportunity for John to devote time to his interest in local history research. To date, he has published **nine** books and several leaflets, each recording some aspect of Stevenage's history. He recently received a prestigious award for his work from the Hertfordshire Association for Local History. **Our warmest Congratulations to John!**

There follows brief reviews of just three histories that John has produced for our interest and benefit. Others are listed at the end.

History of The Transfiguration Church, Stevenage

[http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/stevenagetransfiguration/about the parish](http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/stevenagetransfiguration/about%20the%20parish)

John's history first gives a broad account of the history of the Catholic Church in Stevenage back to the 12th Century. The effect of the Reformation on Roman Catholics is explained including an account of the arrest of, Fr Francis Bell, in Stevenage High Street in 1643, under the suspicion of being a Catholic priest. Fr Bell, a Franciscan, was taken to London, put on trial, found guilty and was '*hung, drawn and quartered*' at Tyburn on 11 December 1643.

The history proceeds to record '*better times*' for Roman Catholics in the 18th century. By 1767, 8 Roman Catholics were living in Watton at Stone. The 1829 Emancipation Act restored the Catholic Hierarchy in the

UK and the first 'post-reformation' Roman Catholic church in Stevenage opened as a 'mission chapel' in Albert Street in 1912. In 1914, the Transfiguration church opened with Belgian refugees, escaping from the war, forming a significant part of the congregation.

The rest of the history gives details of all the major events and developments of the Transfiguration church since 1914, and also records the development of the New Town and the building of St Joseph's and St Hilda's churches.

'Mission 179'***

On 26 August 1944, a few weeks after 'D-Day', two USAF 'Flying Fortress' aircraft, loaded with bombs, collided accidentally at a height of 16,000ft above the north-eastern edge of Stevenage. Some people in the High Street witnessed the collision. The aircraft were part of a very close formation of 40 planes on a major bombing mission to Brest in France. The collision caused both aircraft to crash close to the village of Weston, 3 miles from Stevenage. Fourteen of the aircrew were killed. Two residents of Weston died, one of them an 18-month old boy.

John's book has a full account of the tragedy and subsequent events.

'H.M.S Deodar'***

In 1941, when the UK was at war, the people of Stevenage and nearby villages organised a joint 'Warship Week' savings campaign to raise sufficient money to meet the cost of building a minesweeper trawler. The target was £62,000 (equivalent to about £3 million today!). The money was raised by various means and Stevenage and the villages were allowed to 'adopt' 'H.M.S Deodar', together with its crew.

Read about the ship's war record, and where it ended-up post-war!

Other books on local history by John Amess**

Stevenage at War, 1939-45 (1987)

Stevenage Communications Guide for 1800 -1847 (1990)

Stevenage Town War Memorial (1995)

Call Out the Engine; Stevenage Fires & Firefighting 1700-1945 (1997)

R.J.W.Appleton and the story of the 'Appleton Special' (2009)

The Story of an Avro Bison that landed near Fishers Green, Stevenage (2012)

Captain Robert Redmill RN CB, Saunders Green, Stevenage (2015)

****Available from Stevenage museum or Stevenage Library
Your Unwanted Tools Could Help Someone Earn Their Living!**

"Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man how to fish and you feed him for life" (Chinese Proverb)

It is likely that many of you reading this will have some old unwanted tools lying around either in your house, garage or shed. We mean hammers, pliers, spanners, screwdrivers, chisels, drills, saws, car repair tools etc., or maybe you have a sewing machine, or a knitting machine, which is now never used and just 'gathers dust'. And possibly, you'd be quite pleased to pass on such unwanted items if they would find a really good use elsewhere!

Well, they most definitely would be put to good use if you donated them to **WORKAID**.

WORKAID (<http://www.workaid.org/>) tackles poverty by providing disadvantaged people with the **tools** they need to learn a skilled trade and then earn a living. Since 1986, **WORKAID** has helped over **100,000** people to break the cycle of poverty and build better lives for themselves and their families. The charity is committed to tackling poverty in a practical way by helping people to help themselves by skills training and providing the tools they need to make a living. It works with orphans, street children, unemployed teenagers, disabled people, and people living with HIV/AIDS, widows and refugees, mainly in Africa but elsewhere too. By organising carefully-monitored projects, **WORKAID** is able to make a difference to individuals and families and help communities to build a brighter future together.

How is it organised? If you have some unwanted tools, or a sewing or knitting machine, to offer, they can be collected from you (see below). The items are then taken to the central **WORKAID** 'refurbishment workshop' in Amersham. There, on every weekday, volunteers (mainly retired engineers, teachers, mechanics etc.) refurbish the donated tools, sewing/knitting machines etc. to a professional standard. They are then assembled into complete kits before they are sent to a training centre overseas.

What next! If you would like to have some tools, sewing or knitting machines collected, please write your name, address and Tel. No. on a piece of paper, place in an envelope marked 'WORKAID' and drop it in to the Parish Office. **You will be contacted as soon as possible. Enquiries 01438 351506.**

More about Hymns

Alan Bruce

In a previous edition of the Magazine, we featured a Hymnist, Estelle White, who wrote several well-known hymns while a teacher in Stevenage.

Nowadays, hymns are a regular feature of our ‘Sunday’ masses and at least four are usually sung at appropriate stages of the liturgy. But it was not always the case. Before the 1960s, the traditional Tridentine ‘low mass’ was said quietly in Latin by the priest facing away from the congregation. Hymns were rarely sung. Even at ‘High Mass’, the choir and/or the congregation, would usually sing only the Introit, Gloria, Kyrie, Credo, and Agnus Dei, and all in Latin !

Singing hymns in those days was mainly during other Catholic activities such as outdoor processions, Missions and Festivals. They would usually be traditional ‘Catholic hymns’ such as *Soul of my Saviour* and *Sweet Sacrament Divine*, as well as the Marian hymns ‘*Hail Queen of Heaven*’ and ‘*Immaculate Mary*’ etc. Nowadays, we rarely sing these traditional and much-loved hymns,

Today, we share a lot of hymns with other Christian denominations and this represents a welcome form of ‘unity’. But we might assume that one hymn in particular is exclusively for Catholics – ***Faith of Our Fathers!*** It was composed by a Catholic priest, Frederick William Faber in 1849. We sing of the “***Faith of our Fathers, Holy Faith***” and of ‘***Dungeon, Fire and Death***’, reflecting the times of Catholic persecution in this country. But the same hymn, excluding the third verse (which asks that ‘***Mary’s prayers... shall win our country (England) back to thee***’) is actually also sung by Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, and, even more remarkably, by the Mormons! Can anyone explain that?

Our Catholic Hymnal has over 800 hymns. We sing less than 50 of them regularly. But what are our collective favourites? A poll at Transfiguration showed the ‘top five’ are as shown below. The BBC also recently conducted a UK national survey for *Songs of Praise*. The comparison is interesting:-

‘Transfiguration’ Top Five

- 1. How great thou art***
- 2. Make me a channel of your peace***
- 3. Be thou my vision***
- 4. We are one in the spirit***
- 5. Dear Lord and Father...***

BBC National Top Five

- 1. How great thou art***
- 2. In Christ alone***
- 3. Be still for the presence...***
- 4. Dear Lord and Father....***
- 5. Here I am Lord***

The hymn ‘***Abide with me***’ is not in the Top Five but is in the Top Ten UK National favourites and has been called ‘The People’s Hymn’. It was written in 1847 by an Anglican priest as he lay dying. The verses reflect

his contemplation of death and are sombre, emotional and personal. It has been sung at every FA Cup Final since 1927. Prior To then '*Alexandra's Rag Time Band*' was traditionally sung prior to the match. A real contrast indeed! Last year Alfie Bowe led the singing supported by a specially-formed choir representing various football clubs. But the irreverent chanting from some parts of the crowd again showed that respect for the traditional hymn is not what it was in earlier times. One might say that the disrespect for its deep spiritual sentiments is '*a sign of the times*'. Will '*Abide with me*' survive as a Cup Final Hymn? We wait to see!

What's your favourite hymn? We invite you to nominate your favourite hymn giving the reasons for your choice. Please use the enclosed slip and return to your parish office by the date shown. The best entries, as judged by an independent panel, will be published in our next edition of the magazine. There will be a prize for the best entry as judged by an independent panel.

Fr Frederick de L'Orme R.I.P

Fr Frederick de L'Orme (Fr Fred) served as 'priest-in-residence' at Transfiguration from 2012 to 2014. He was not a well person but he served us with great dedication to meet all our spiritual needs in Old Town. He had a particular devotion to St Joseph and he personally founded the *Apostolate of St Joseph* which is now active in the UK and in some other countries. He wrote an interesting article "*St Joseph the Man*" in the June 2015 edition of the '*Three Parishes Magazine*'

Fr Fred was a man of many parts. He was a talented musician and played his keyboard at some of our social functions. While here, he still ran occasional Sunday afternoon ballroom-dance sessions at his previous parish in Barnet. Some of us will also fondly remember playing 'Scrabble' with him on a Sunday evening - he usually beat us! We also recall regularly enjoying a tasty curry with him at one of the High Street Indian restaurants. Good memories!

Fr Fred died at the Royal Free Hospital on 10 May. A memorial mass was held for him at Transfiguration on 27 May. Fr Fred will be fondly remembered by the many people who benefited from his ministry in the various parishes and the schools he served. *May he rest in Peace.*

Refugees: All at Sea bar the Holy See?

Michael Downing

As I write, at the end of April, the war in Syria seems to be moving into an even more violent phase, with the end of a so called 'cease fire' and the targeted bombing of a hospital bringing rising numbers of dead and injured. No wonder so many people, individuals and family groups, are prepared to undertake the hazardous sea voyage in search of a better future in Europe.

Those who survive and arrive in Europe are not exactly receiving a rapturous welcome from political leaders, many of whom proclaim their loyalty to 'Christian values.' This is not to deny that many non-Government groups, including faith inspired ones, have responded more positively. Pope Francis's dramatic gesture in bringing 6 children to the Vatican has struck many peoples' imagination, but not yet simulated government action, although there is talk of some parliamentary protest about the failure to help more children.

A historical parallel comes to mind. Frequent reference is made to the fate of Jewish people trying to escape from Nazi Germany, and to the role of 'kindertransport', in bringing many to Britain. What is often forgotten is that the Aliens Act was used to turn at least as many away and back to their fate in Germany.

Today in Britain, as a new restrictive Immigration Bill goes through Parliament, CAFOD has joined twelve other agencies in producing a report - 'Safe Haven' - which attacks the creation of 'a humanitarian crisis on Britain's doorstep.' Caritas Social Action Network (the social action arm of the Catholic Church) has backed an amendment to the Immigration Bill to allow asylum seekers the right to work, so that instead of relying on meagre benefits they can contribute to the economy of their proposed host country. Yes there are problems here with access to housing and schools as well as strains on health services (but where would the NHS be without its immigrant workers)? These are not the fault of refugees, but the result of decisions by our elected leaders about resource allocation.

Catholic Social Teaching, if it is to be more than pious word, must demand that , as a CAFOD spokesperson said, the UK should 'take its fair share of refugees and do all it can to ensure protection for people on the move, whatever their legal status.'

What is Hydrotherapy?

Sarah Kinsella

Hydrotherapy is physiotherapy in water. Hydrotherapists know how to use the properties of water in the rehabilitation of a variety of conditions. Primarily, buoyancy is used as the body weighs less in water. This puts less strain on the joints, and in several cases makes it easier for the patient to exercise. The other main principle that is used is drag, which is how we describe the resistance of the water as you move through it. This can be an excellent way to strengthen weak muscles.



A few parishioners from the three churches have found great benefit in hydrotherapy. Fiona Keeley from St Joseph's has been having regular hydrotherapy following her broken arm last summer. We initially used buoyancy to regain movement in her shoulder, and now we are moving onto using drag to strengthen the muscles in the arm again.

Derek Lapham from Transfiguration church has also been attending hydrotherapy for the last few weeks. His arthritis had led him to become less mobile and suffering from pain in various joints. Interestingly, Derek wasn't a fan of water based physiotherapy initially, but decided to give it a go. He's never looked back, and is now reaping the benefits of exercising in water. He reports that he is feeling fitter, stronger and has less pain than before he started treatment. His friends have commented on the improvement too. Derek says, "Since starting hydrotherapy, the pain in my affected joints has reduced and I am now more mobile. I am now able to walk upstairs normally and to rise from chairs without assistance, which was not the case prior to starting treatment".

Annette Lines, another person not particularly keen on the idea of rehabilitation in water, has also had her opinion changed, following sessions to assist her recover from her hip replacement.

Annette says, "Keen to strengthen and improve my mobility after surgery, the additional hydrotherapy which was not top of my list has been very beneficial. I feel strengthened and energised after each session, adding to my confidence of movement".

If you are interested in hydrotherapy, please call **Sarah Kinsella** on **01438 488579** to discuss.

During Lent Transfiguration held a series of short weekday services culminating in a Tenebrae service in Holy Week. I was asked to give short talk on the San Damiano Crucifix. I hope you find this edited version it interesting and thought provoking.

The picture depicted here is a modern rendition of a 12th century cross. The tradition of such crosses began in the Eastern Orthodox and was probably brought to Italy by Syrian monks who are known to have lived in the Umbria region of Italy at the time. The style is known as an "Icon Cross"; because besides the figure of Christ it features images of other Saints and people related to the Crucifixion. Its purpose was to teach the meaning of the Passion and strengthen faith, but the message is as relevant to us as to an illiterate 12th century Italian peasant.



I am no great theologian but the Cross is truly fascinating, and with a view to the events of Holy Week and Easter we see much of the Passion played out in one, simple picture. Let's look at a few particulars.

The large figures around Christ are the witnesses to the crucifixion; the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, St John, Mary the mother of James and the Centurion whose servant Jesus healed. The small figures level with Christ's knees represent the Roman soldiers who pierced Christ's side with a lance, and who offered him the sponge soaked with vinegar on the hyssop stick. The tiny face peering over the shoulder of the standing figure on the extreme right represents the Centurion's servant who was healed by Jesus and then "he and his whole family believed". The small bird number next to Christ's legs recalls St Peter's denial of Jesus.

The main central figure of Christ is most striking, and he looks directly towards us triumphant and strong. The painter has not focussed on the brutality of Good Friday, but rather the glory of Easter Day. Christ looks out to the world he has saved. Finally, at the top we look forward to the Ascension and the welcome by God the Father and the Angels into Heaven. The Easter Season in one picture. It is as St Basil the Great, the 4th century AD Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, Turkey wrote; "with soundless voice the icons teach those who behold them"

But why is this cross so special? Tradition has it that St Francis was praying before this cross in the chapel of San Damiano, just outside Assisi when he miraculously received his call to rebuild the Church.

"Go repair my Church which as you see is falling completely into ruin"

We may not be called to perform such great works, but the message is still relevant to us today Since 1957 the San Damiano crucifix has hung over the altar in San Giorgio's Chapel in the Basilica of St Clare of Assisi and all Franciscans cherish the cross as a symbol of their mission from God to commit their lives and resources to renew and rebuild the Church through the power of Christ.

Parishioner's Recipe

Melanzane Al Forno - (Aubergine Bake)

Ruth McGuckin

1 onion, sliced

6 tbsp olive oil

2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes

2 tbsp tomato purée

4 aubergines, quartered

100g Cheddar or Mozzarella Cheese, sliced into thin strips

85g Parmesan or Mozzarella cheese freshly grated (optional)



1. Heat oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6.
2. In a shallow pan, fry the onion in 5 tbsp of the olive oil. Cook for 3 mins until onions are soft, tip in the chopped tomatoes, then simmer for 10 mins, stirring every now and then. Stir in the tomato purée and leave to simmer for another 5 mins.
3. In the meantime, peel and cut the aubergines in half-length ways and again width ways and sprinkle with salt. Make a few slits in the flesh of the aubergine lengthways. Cut the cheddar cheese into thin slices about 4 cm long and tuck the cheese pieces into the slits.
4. Lay the aubergine quarters in an ovenproof dish season with salt and pepper, then spoon over the tomato sauce, cover with tin foil and bake for 20 mins or until aubergine is soft.
5. Remove from oven and sprinkle Parmesan or Mozzarella cheese on top, then bake for a further 10 mins or until the topping is golden.

"A testimony of love for our neighbour" Pope Francis (2014)

One of our parishioners, Colin Blagden, has got to 103. Another, parishioner, Christine Saint, has reached 89! But those numbers are definitely not their ages. They are both a good deal younger than that!

What are these numbers then? They are, respectively, the total number of separate donations of blood that each has made to the National Blood Transfusion Service over past years. Their generosity represents the "*testimony of love for their neighbour*" that Pope Francis was referring to in the above quotation. And both look very well on it!

We each have about 8 pints of blood in our bodies. Each donation is just under a pint of blood and it can be given without risk to the donor's health. The donation is soon made up by new blood formed naturally in the body. So a donor is fairly soon completely back to normal and can donate again after a few months. But to those in need, that donated blood will literally be "life-saving". Every day, there are planned surgical operations and also accidents leading to significant loss of blood. Without donated blood, many lives would be lost or be at great risk. It is estimated that about 25 percent of us will need donated blood at some time, yet only about 2 percent of us actually donate blood. Most of us, therefore, depend absolutely on the generosity of a few !

Of course, not everyone can donate blood. Some may be excluded by certain health conditions or by being outside the weight and age limits. Details about eligibility are available on the National Blood Transfusion website www.blood.co.uk, or at your Doctor's surgery

If you are eligible, why not do it ? Notices about donor sessions are displayed on at least one of our church notice boards.

It is appropriate to mention here that the Catholic Church is a member of the '*Flesh and blood*' campaign which is a partnership between the NHS and UK Churches to encourage church congregations to donate blood. There are, of course, some forms of religious belief which prohibit blood donations/transfusions but that does not apply to the main Christian Churches.

Other examples of a '*living donation*' are a whole organ or a part of an organ e.g. a kidney, part of the liver or some bone or bone marrow etc. The '*Posthumous donation*' of one's organs is another very charitable act and will perhaps be the subject of a future article !

This poem by G.K. Chesterton has stayed on my memory all my life. I learned it at St. Francis Primary School in London which is situated in a Franciscan Parish. We learned a lot of poetry. At 11 years-old, I had to leave to join another school. On an English exam I got good marks because I was able to identify the animal described in a poem that I had learned at St. Francis school. The title was left out. Hardly any of the girls knew it. Thanks to St. Francis, I had the advantage !
It was **'The Donkey'** by **G.K. Chesterton**.

*When fishes flew and forests walked and figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood.. Then surely I was born.
With monstrous head and sickening cry and ears like errant wings
The Devils walking parody on all four- footed things
The tattered outlaw of the earth, of ancient crooked will
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb, I keep my secret still
Fool's! For I also had my hour, one far fierce hour and sweet
There was a shout about my ear, and palms before my feet.*

Two Prayers

Kathy Dickenson

Praise to my Maker.
I give thanks to my God for all His blessings
I lift up my heart and mind to thy will
Let all mankind evoke my prayer,
For here I am Lord to do your will.

Mary, Our Lady of Zambia.*
Gentle lady meek and mild
You succour the Lord your holy child,
Within your loving arms you give him rest
Holding Him close to your breast,
You lock Him in a gentle holy caress.

**Inspired by looking at a selection of African sculptures*

Parishioner's Local Businesses

We like to promote parishioners local businesses, where appropriate, but we cannot make any formal endorsements. Please do contact the businesses themselves for information. If you have a business you would like to advertise, please contact the Parish Office.



ASK Physio Private Physiotherapy clinic in Stevenage Old Town (near Waitrose). Chartered and HCPC registered Physiotherapists. For the treatment of aches and pains in the body. We treat a wide range of conditions. 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

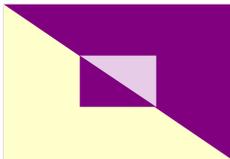
10% off initial consultations for members of the RC Stevenage Parishes. Please mention when booking.



Seasons Interiors opened recently at **57 High Street**. Sited opposite Waitrose, its two floors offer a wide range of homeware, gifts and furniture. Mother and daughter owners, Caroline and Faye Cowen, pride themselves on stocking unique items at affordable prices.

Seasons aims to ensure there is something for everyone! Come in and have a look around!

Seasons is open Mon- Sat 10.00 – 5.30 and Sundays 11.00 – 3.00



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 from 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: 01438 217961 or 07796 306 136

John Henry Newman Competition for Students up to age 14!

The following are anagrams of things to do with John Henry

- 1 LACDRAIN = _____ 2 DUNOATICE = _____
- 3 SHATREAMED = _____ 4 RUCCRUMULI = _____
- 5 MNSVEPHORECIE = _____ 6 SORIDCROR = _____
- 7 CHEATERS = _____ 8 I NO CREEPT = _____
- 9 RM HETAMW = _____ 10 THINHIC ODAR = _____

'Dingbats' Competition

Congratulations to **Rosemary Sherry**, the winner of the 'Dingbats' competition in the last edition of the Three Parishes Magazine. Rosemary kindly donated her winnings to charity!

Answers are below:-

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Nothing new under the sun. | 2. Lone wolf |
| 3. Inside job | 4. Mind over Matter |
| 5. All for One, One for All | 6. Ark of the Covenant |
| 7. Round the Bend | 8. Love at First Sight |
| 9. Double or Quits | 10. Ten Commandments |

Mortal: What is a million years like to you?

God: Like one second.

Mortal: What is a million dollars like to you?

God: Like one penny.

Mortal: Can I have a penny?

God: Just a second.

The Bard and the Bible! How well do you know them?

This year marks the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare ("*The Bard of Avon*"). He lived until the age of just 57, but, over a 24- year period in his life, he wrote **37** full-length Plays and **156** Sonnets or Poems. What an incredible achievement! He didn't have a word processor or a typewriter, but just a quill pen, ink and pieces of parchment to write on. His literary works remain very popular and are still inspiring us today. Shakespeare's parents were almost certainly Catholics but he lived at a time, under Queen Elizabeth I, when it was illegal to be a Catholic. The question of his possible 'secret' allegiance to Catholicism is still debated by scholars.

The Bible is rather older than Shakespeare's Plays! And an even more amazing achievement! The 39 Books of the Old Testament were written "over a long period" dating back to perhaps 1200BC. The 27 Books of the New Testament were written in 50-100 AD. All texts were written using very basic writing materials, including papyrus.

Both Shakespeare's Plays and the Bible contain very many well-known 'sayings' or phrases which we still use regularly today. Below is a list of just 20 of them. **But do you know the origin of each?** The Bible or Shakespeare? And can you give the exact chapter and verse in each case? Answers will be on the Church notice boards in July and in the next edition of the magazine.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>A man after his own heart</i> | 2. <i>Give up the ghost</i> |
| 3. <i>I must be cruel, only to be kind</i> | 4. <i>Holier than thou</i> |
| 5. <i>A ministering angel</i> | 6. <i>The world's my oyster</i> |
| 7. <i>To make a virtue of necessity</i> | 8. <i>The fatted calf</i> |
| 9. <i>The milk of human kindness</i> | 10. <i>Into thin air</i> |
| 11. <i>Tell the truth, and shame the devil</i> | 12. <i>A thorn in the flesh</i> |
| 13. <i>The skin of his teeth</i> | 14. <i>Two-edged sword</i> |
| 15. <i>Green-eyed monster</i> | 16. <i>My heart upon my sleeve</i> |
| 17. <i>In the twinkling of an eye</i> | 18. <i>Tongue tied</i> |
| 19. <i>Neither a borrower nor a lender be</i> | 20. <i>A law unto themselves</i> |

***Why was Noah the best businessman in the Bible?
He floated his stock while everybody else was being liquidated!***

