St. Erconwald's Parish Magazine



Issue No. 50, Christmas 2024

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Cover Design: "The Giving Tree" with some of the gifts for *The Passage*, with Andrew Hollingsworth and Fr. Anthony.



Editorial: “Pilgrims of Hope”



Welcome to the Christmas edition of the magazine. Hope you and your families have been keeping safe and well.

Pope Francis has declared that the year 2025 will be a Holy Year of Jubilee for the Catholic Church. Taking place every 25 years, a Jubilee year is a significant part of the history of our faith. The last Jubilee year took place in 2000, marking an historic moment as the Church entered into her third millennium. The year begins with the well-known custom of the opening of the Holy Door at St. Peter’s Basilica, following the other three papal basilicas in Rome.



We can find an early indication of it in the Bible: a Jubilee year was to be marked every 50 years [Leviticus 25:8-13). Even though it wasn’t easy to organise, it was intended to be marked as a time to re-establish a proper relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation, and involved the forgiveness of debts, the return of misappropriated land, and a fallow period for the fields.

Quoting the prophet Isaiah, the Gospel of Luke describes Jesus’ mission in this way: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord,” (Luke 4:18-19; cf. Isaiah 61:1-2). Jesus lives out these words in his daily life, in his encounters with others and in his relationships, all of which bring about liberation and conversion.

The Jubilee Logo

The logo shows four stylized figures, representing all of humanity, coming from the four corners of the earth. They embrace each other to indicate the solidarity and fraternity which should unite all peoples. The figure at the front is holding onto the cross. It is not only the sign of the faith which this lead figure embraces, but also of hope, which can never be abandoned, because we are always in need of hope, especially in our moments of greatest need.



There are the rough waves under the figures, symbolising the fact that life's pilgrimage does not always go smoothly in calm waters. Often the circumstances of daily life and events in the wider world require a greater call to hope. That is why we should pay special attention to the lower part of the cross which has been elongated and turned into the shape of an anchor which is let down into the waves.

The anchor is well known as a symbol of hope. In maritime jargon the 'anchor of hope' refers to the reserve anchor used by vessels involved in emergency manoeuvres to stabilise the ship during storms. It is worth noting that the image illustrates the pilgrim's journey not as an individual undertaking, but rather as something communal, marked by an increasing dynamism leading one ever closer to the cross. The cross in the logo is by no means static, but it is also dynamic. It bends down towards humanity, not leaving human beings alone, but stretching out to them to offer the certainty of its presence and the security of hope.

At the bottom of the logo is the motto of the 2025 Jubilee Year: Pilgrims of hope, represented in green letters.

During this Jubilee year we are invited to promote the hope of our Christian faith to all people at a time when there is so much suffering from the impact of war, poverty, climate change, and the lasting effects of the COVID pandemic. The "Pilgrims of Hope" Jubilee presents each one of us with an opportunity to reignite the flame of our faith in our own hearts and to share the light of that faith with those in darkness.



Wishing you and all your families
a Happy and Blessed Christmas and
a Peaceful New Year.

Fr. Anthony



From the Parish
Comings and Goings
Please remember in your prayers



We welcome and congratulate those who have been baptised here recently, and their families: Reign and Rome Daramola and Jasmine Debrah.

First Holy Communion 2024



Saturday 25th May was a special day for Rozella Afonso, Leira Cabral, Davian Correia, Dashiell Dias, Angelica Fernandes, Oisin Hehir, Alvaro Leong, Alexis-Mae White and Ava-Madison White as they received Jesus for the first time in Holy Communion. As we congratulate these children and their families, we wish that these children will continue to receive this sacrament regularly. Special thanks go to the catechists Bernie Gillen and Joseph Psaila for their dedication in delivering this programme.

Congratulations…

Congratulations and best wishes to all couples who are celebrating their marriage anniversaries especially to Theresa and Pat O'Brien who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

[for those who have asked to be remembered]

We keep in our thoughts and prayers: Sue McGovern, Cathy Singer, Martin Geary, Susan Bradley, Radwan Naffa, and Yves Remedios. We remember also those in Kenbrook, Birchwood Grange and Brook House.

In case you are admitted to hospital…..

Please indicate *on entering hospital* that your details are to be passed to the RC Chaplain, and that you would like a visit from the RC Chaplain.

May the Lord Jesus bless, console and strengthen all the sick,
and may Mary, health of the sick, intercede for them.



A day trip to Brighton is something I have always enjoyed so when Father Anthony announced it at Mass – this was the first Parish outing since the Pandemic - I had to go and this time took along a friend.

The weather at the start of the day was a bit miserable but on arrival in Brighton the sun was up, the sky was blue and it was pretty warm. On arrival and after a cup of coffee we headed to the Upside Down House.

On entering the house we were both disorientated and felt rather weird as we were standing on the ceiling! We soon got accustomed to the strangeness and wandered around the house which was an unusual experience.

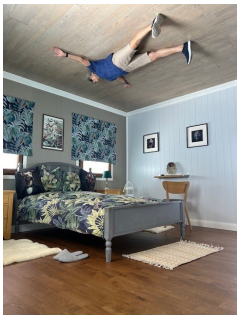
The Hop on Hop Off bus ride cooled us down as we drove through the city and out in the countryside passed the racecourse which is the only one I know that has a road running through it, hence traffic stops during races!

After an hour we were back at the pier thirsty and ravenous. A Seafood Restaurant had caught our eyes earlier so we made our way there. It did not disappoint.

Had to pop over to The Lanes where we had a cup of tea then made our way back to the coach and on to St Erconwald's.

Really enjoyed my day in Brighton.









1. Which one of these is not one of Sant's reindeers?
Dasher, Rasher, Prancer.

2. Name two things that people traditionally put on top of the Christmas tree?



3. What kind of sauce is usually served with turkey and ham to make Christmas dinner even more scrumptious?

4. Can you name one of the gifts the Tree Wise Men brought to the stable when Jesus was born?



5. *Stille Nacht* is the German title for which very famous Christmas carol that we sing every year in English?

6. Which country owns Christmas Island?

7. Who tried to make Christmas illegal in England from 1647 to 1660?



A. How does Jack Frost get to work?

B. How does an Eskimo build a house?

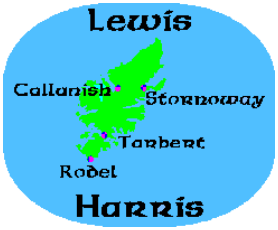
C. What is ploughed but never planted?

D. What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?

E. Why did the turkey play drums in his band?



1. Rasher; 2. A star or an angel; 3. Cranberry Sauce; 4. Gold, Frankincense, and myrrh; 5. Silent Night; 6. Australia; 7. Oliver Cromwell.
A. By icicle; B. Igloos it together; C. Snow; D. Tinsil-it is; E. Because he had the drum sticks.



A trip to the Hebrides was never on my wish list, I preferred a sunny clime, a swim in warm sea-water, a bit of history to learn….. with flights rather than boats, which in the past have been unpleasant.

So when I noticed an email offering a short break by coach to the Hebrides on dates just two weeks later which fitted in to my schedule, why did I book it? Some sort of lucky guess I suppose because it turned out to be absolutely wonderful.



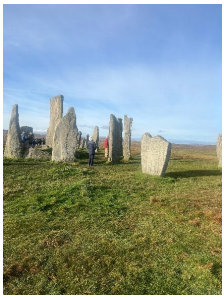
There was a bit of a hurdle getting to the start point, Glasgow, at 7.30 am but trusty Travelodge sorted that one. There was a long coach drive to Uig, a port on the Isle of Skye but the lochs and mountains were suitable distractions. I was dreading the sea crossing, but had a remedy with me and so in the evening the mixed coach party arrived safely at our hotel on Benbecula. I had always thought that Benbecula was a town, it has an airport after all, but no, it is an island separating North and South Uist, more of which later.

Although my arrival was on a Monday, one of the first things I noticed was a sign indicating that the community kept Sunday as a no trading day. It was just after I left that a newspaper article was commenting in Tesco's bid to open their shop in Stornoway on a Sunday, currently there are objections. The southern islands hold the Catholic faith, the Northern islands are Presbyterian. I said I would revisit the north/south division.



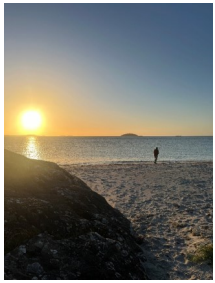
South Uist, being the most Catholic island is home to Our Lady of the Isles. This is a statue erected by the public (through work and donations) at the suggestion of a Canon Morrison in response to the proposed building of a rocket testing range on the island. I'm not sure if it was ever built but there definitely is a radar tracking station. The MOD is a big employer.

Our Lady is surely looking after her people.



Then there are her wonderful beaches, the white sand and the clear waters. It really could be a tropical island, were it not for the weather and sea temperature!

Next Barra, the only place where planes land on the beach. Quite a sight. Most of the islands are community owned apparently and the sense of community is strong. We lunched at a community garden centre on the grounds of St Finbarr's church. Soup and sandwiches were served by those with learning difficulties. I checked just who St Finbar was and he's well travelled it seems. An Irish saint, the patron of Cork. The Christian missionaries travelled well.



We travelled to the northern islands, Harris, well known for Harris Tweed and whisky and Lewis, where we stayed in Stornoway (remember Tesco and the Sunday trading)

There is an ancient stone circle on Lewis, some 5000 years old, predating Stonehenge. And it all looks beautiful with the blue sky, I'm sure you agree.

I said at the beginning that the Hebrides were never on my wish list but they should have been. I'm so glad I acted on that impulse.

All ended well and a little post script….

I travelled back from Glasgow to Euston on the Night-sleeper. It was nothing like the BBC 1 recent thriller!!



This has been a very busy term that is not finished yet!

We have had our first **OFSTED Inspection** for 11 years so we were expecting it! It was a very intensive process but it produced great results for us. The inspectors recognised;

⇒ the wonderful behaviour and personal development for all pupils here

⇒ our excellent curriculum with our Catholic values and ethos sewn throughout it in all subjects, which is something we are very proud of. They recognised that our Catholic Social Teaching elements are not standalone areas but they are lived out by all of community in all subjects and in everyday life

⇒ that our community is morally considerate, independent and resilient and that our pupils are really positive about school, feeling happy and safe here

⇒ a strong leadership team and great leadership at all levels; led by a strong and knowledgeable Governing Body

The report will be published in a month's time when you can read in detail about the strengths and successes of our school.



As part of our health and fitness work we held our **annual Fun Run** in our park at the end of September. It is always a lovely event where so many parents join their children to run the laps around the park. It follows on from the summer holidays when the children completed activity logs so that we could keep them focused on staying fit. The children understand the importance of being healthy as they know the positive effect that this has on their education.









During this term our Y6 children have had their **residential trip to the Gordon Brown Outdoor Educational Centre**. They were blessed with great weather in October and had a wonderful time. They were a pleasure to be with (except for the lack of sleep!) and were great ambassadors for our school. We are now in the process of planning our trip to Lourdes at Easter and to Madrid to visit our link school in May.



Our new children in Nursery and Reception have settled in very well and quickly, adapting to the rigors of school life. They are great fun and sponges for learning, making new friends and developing knowledge for life. The Reception children had their **Welcome Assembly** just before half term where their sweatshirts were blessed and their buddies from Y5 put them on them—this was a lovely event and an emotional one for parents!



We are now entering into the season of Advent and our **Christmas preparations** are in full swing. Our Infants will be performing their own production and the Junior children will be singing at our Carol Concerts. We will also be singing in the Harrow Catholic Schools Carol Service and we will be visiting the sick and elderly in Edgware Hospital singing to them as well. Schools are a great place to be at this time of year (even more so once an OFSTED Inspection is complete!). You are welcome to attend any of our performances and they are listed on our website.



Also on our website we have our **Weekly News** which is always a good watch. These can be seen at; www.st-bernadette.co.uk I hope that you enjoy them.



On behalf of all of us at St Bernadette's I wish you all a very happy and holy Christmas and I hope that the year ahead is a great one for you and your family.

Exploring the Treasures of St. Paul's Bay, Malta Carol Allen



What was initially planned as a tranquil five-day spa retreat to St. Paul's Bay, Malta, in November, turned into an unforgettable cultural and historical journey, all accompanied by the surprising warmth of 24-degree sunshine! Malta's charm began to unfold the moment we arrived, with its blend of rich history, stunning landscapes, and vibrant culture. Our base in St. Paul's Bay (Qawra Palace Spa Resort) offered the perfect balance of relaxation and exploration, with its picturesque harbour views and inviting Mediterranean ambiance.

Historical Wonders and Iconic Sites



No visit to Malta is complete without immersing oneself in its rich religious and cultural history. We toured the island's magnificent churches, including the awe-inspiring Rotunda of Mosta, famous for its massive dome and miraculous survival during World War II. Each step brought stories of resilience and faith, making the experience deeply moving. A highlight of the trip was a visit to the National Archives. It was fascinating to see how Malta meticulously preserves its history, providing a glimpse into centuries of its development and challenges.

The Timeless Beauty of Mdina



The "Silent City" of Mdina was a step back in time. Its narrow, cobblestone streets, surrounded by medieval walls, exude an air of timelessness. While there, we couldn't resist admiring the intricate craftsmanship of Mdina Glass and Mdina Silver filigree jewellery. These beautifully crafted items are a testament to the island's artisanal traditions, and they make perfect keepsakes.

Day Trips to Gozo and Comino



Our adventures extended beyond Malta's main island. A ferry ride to Gozo revealed a slower-paced haven of natural beauty and charming villages. The rugged coastline and iconic Azure Window (sadly now collapsed, but still a revered site) left us in awe. On Comino, the pristine Blue Lagoon welcomed us with its crystal-clear waters and serene setting. It was a slice of paradise, perfect for soaking in the beauty of the Mediterranean.

A Tapestry of Faith and Culture



Malta's rich religious heritage and cultural traditions were ever-present throughout our trip. The narratives of St. Paul's shipwreck, ancient fortifications, and the deep connection between the Maltese people and their faith were inspiring. From the small chapels dotting the countryside to grand cathedrals, every place told a story worth hearing.

A Break to Remember



What began as a planned Spa retreat transformed into a journey of discovery, relaxation, and admiration for Malta's treasures. St. Paul's Bay and its surrounding areas left an indelible mark, and the island's warmth - both in weather and hospitality - beckons for a return visit. For anyone seeking a blend of culture, history, and relaxation, Malta offers it all. It's more than a destination; it's an experience to cherish. Fr. Anthony and his family are blessed to have had such a wonderful upbringing in Malta.



Dementia: Hope for the Future Frank Arrojo,
[Sudbury & Wembley Dementia Carers Support Groups]



This year has been like no other. You may have heard in the media about the approval of two new treatment drugs for Alzheimer's Disease: Lecanemab and Donanemab.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia. Although NICE haven't approved these drugs for use in the NHS, this is a historic moment in that for the very first time we have drugs which have been shown to slow down the disease. Other existing treatments that are available on the NHS (such as donepezil) don't slow down the disease, they merely help people to cope with symptoms.

Although these new drugs are by no means the perfect answer, this is the first time in the 14+ years I've been involved in dementia research whereby the enormous efforts of biomedical researchers are finally being rewarded.

However, what I didn't expect is the small role I would play in their consideration. In January of this year I was contacted out-of-the-blue by the MHRA (UK's medicines licensing authority), because they were looking for someone to consider some questions the Commission on Human Medicines had raised in respect of their deliberations on whether or not to approve the drugs.

The reason they contacted me is because I'm a member of their patient group consultative forum. Initial discussions established I was indeed the most appropriate person to help them with this task, which will become apparent.

I was asked to consider the following questions:

Q1 What value on your daily life would a few months delay in progression provide ?

Q2 What risk(s) would patients accept for just a few months delay in progression ?

Q3 Would patients be prepared to undergo genetic testing to inform on their risks with the treatment, and potential implications for family members?

Q4 Would patients compliance change if any of the side effects emerged?

As you can see from these questions the issue of "risk vs reward" was high, as well as the significant ethical and moral issues raised. How would you begin to answer each one?

One issue I never expected in the work I do was to involve my younger Sister, but I had to for the first and last time. This was because in considering these questions I was transported back to the mid 1970s (when I was 12 years old), and relive our experiences with mum battling for her life with renal failure and the experimental treatments she undertook to simply stay alive.

How did I begin to answer each question? Well for a start what were Mum's motivations to agree to the experimental treatments for her renal failure? There were no guarantees and many setbacks along the way, but Mum's motivation was obviously to see my younger Sister and I grow and develop which drove her on.

For each person their considerations and motivations would be different. What do they have to look forward to in their lives? A birth of a grandchild, a forthcoming anniversary, watching their granddaughter walk down the aisle ....

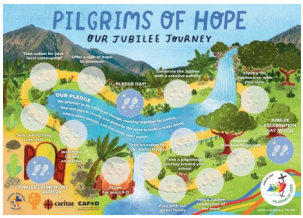
There'll also be some people who decide it's not for them, which is also fine (such as my late dad who decided not to have invasive treatment in respect of his heart disease).

Speaking with the Commission on these questions was one of the most intense, challenging, thought-provoking, and rewarding experiences. What was scheduled to last 10 minutes extended to a 45 minute discussion.

My overall reflection of this experience is they were merely seeking confirmation that people diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's disease are able to consider and decide such questions for themselves, just like someone diagnosed with another disease (such as Cancer).



Whilst NICE haven't approved these drugs for use in the NHS, I'm hoping it's just a matter of time before these and other better treatments come along that will bring hope in the future, if not for my generation, then the next one after. Just like mum and the countless patients who paved the way for researchers to develop much better treatments, so that today people with renal failure can live more or less normal lives (unlike the 1980s and before).



A Jubilee, or Holy Year is celebrated by the Church every 25 years and is a special year of forgiveness and reconciliation, in which people are invited to come back into right relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation. The theme for 2005 is Pilgrims of Hope and Pope Francis has invited Catholics to renew our hope and discover a vision that can "restore access to the fruits of the earth to everyone". and to rediscover a spirituality of God's creation in which we understand ourselves as "pilgrims on the earth" rather than masters of the world.

We now face the most acute global debt crisis in history with 3.3 billion people living in countries that spend more on debt servicing than on health, education or climate measures. Countries are having to make huge repayments on high-interest loans to wealthy banks, institutions and governments, leaving them unable to properly fund essential services.

An important part of the Jubilee tradition was the cancellation of debts. Pope Francis has identified debt cancellation as a vital element of 2025 Jubilee celebrations. CAFOD will be pressing the UK government for action to address the debt crisis throughout 2025. The Jubilee Year is an opportunity to respond to God's call to turn to him and to pursue justice. Today, CAFOD is working with Debt Justice and others, because, as mentioned above, about 3.3 billion people live in countries where debt-related payments are greater than their expenditure on health or education. This debt burden also leaves countries less able to cope with the increasing effects of the climate crisis. In most developing-countries debt is owed to private banks rather than other governments or multinational institutions. If we can use our influence to get these lenders to ease the burden on developing countries, it would give hope to millions of people.

JUBILEE DEBT CAMPAIGN



CAFOD
just one world

Our supporters and volunteers within the Catholic community give us huge hope too with their support and in raising funds and awareness and in praying

This Jubilee year is an opportunity for people to recommit to standing together with our brothers and sisters around the world. The Church, can provide a moment to take a step back and think about the sort of changes we can make, so that all have a fair share in our common home. A better world needs all of us, and there are some very simple things we can do:

- **Make a regular gift to CAFOD in solidarity with people who are doing all they can to overcome poverty and injustice.**
- **Work together to ensure those in power take action on cancelling unfair debt.**
- **Recognise and reflect on the signs of hope in the world around us; praying for a world transformed.**
- **Volunteer with us during the Jubilee Year.**

For more information see

https://cafod.org.uk/news/uk-news/why-is-2025-a-jubilee-year-in-the-catholic-church

https://www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk/a-jubilee-message-from-cafod-for-pilgrims-of-hope/



[CAFOD commissioned the icon by the artist, Mulugeta Araya, to celebrate the Jubilee Year]

St. Joseph's Infant and Junior Schools Amanda Whelan

It has been a very busy term in Saint Joseph's and the children led by our Prayer Leaders, have continued to play an active role in growing the Catholic life of the school and living out our Mission Statement.

Class Saints

The children began the year by researching their class saint and their feast day. Children celebrate their class saint's feast day across the year.

Prayer Bags



Across the year your child will bring the class Prayer Bag home for you to celebrate collective worship as a family. They then share this with the rest of their class. We appreciate your support with this as part of your child's spiritual development.

Monthly Values

Each month we have a value which we focus on. The children are encouraged to think about how they can live out that value in their everyday life. They also think about what the world would be like without that value and where it can be identified in our everyday life. At the end of the month two children from each class are rewarded for living out that value. A value focus sheet is also sent home to you each month with a mission linked to the value for you to work together with your child on. The values for this term have been: September- Kindness, October – Democracy, November - Co-operation, December- Joy.



Parental Prayer Group

The parental prayer group has continued to meet on the first Friday of each month from 8:30 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. Please join with them if you are free.

Catholic Social Justice

The Prayer Leaders have worked very hard to live out our Catholic social justice value of 'Option for the Poor and Vulnerable' and 'Family and Community' across the term. There have been a range of charity collections.



Remembrance Sunday



The Prayer Leaders sold poppies to raise money for the Royal British Legion. Children also made their own poppies and wrote class prayers and held their class liturgy for Remembrance Sunday in the Prayer Garden.

The children took part in special Remembrance Day services across Armistice Day where they went to the Prayer Garden and laid their crosses which they had designed together with their families to remember a special loved one they had lost. The whole school also held a two minutes silence at 11 a.m.

Harvest Collection

The Prayer Leaders second campaign of the term was to support the Brent Food Bank as party of our harvest collection. We had a full van load of donations of food which the foodbank will ensure will go to those that need support.

Anti-Bullying Week



The children participated in activities during 'Anti- Bullying Week' including Odd Sock Day where we wore odd socks to remember how unique we all are. The theme this year was 'Choose Respect'. We released our 'Confetti Canons' to symbolise our class pledges and promises about how we should treat each other.

Carol Service

Year 3 and 4 also took part in a Carol service supported by a choir made up of Year 5 and 6 pupils at Saint Joseph's Church in the evening. It was wonderful for our community to come together during Advent.

Year 2 Nativity

Children in Year 2 performed a beautiful retelling of the Nativity.

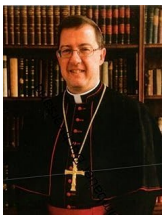
Reindeer Visit



We ended the year with a surprise visit from Santa's reindeers. They were truly magical.

The staff and pupils at Saint Joseph's Infant and Junior Schools wish you all a very Happy Christmas and we look forward to continuing to work together to develop the Catholic Life and Mission of our school in the New Year.

Bishop John Sherrington Parish Visitation



On the 11th and 12th of October, Bishop John came on Parish Visitation as part of his Deanery visits. Bishop John last visit to us was in January 2020. This time Bishop John was able to stay the weekend in the Presbytery.

Bishop John arrived on Saturday, in time for Confessions at 4.30pm. This was followed by the 5.30pm Mass which Bishop John celebrated with Fr. Anthony as co–concelebrant. Mass was followed by refreshments in the hall and a chance to meet and greet with Bishop John. This was well attended. After this Bishop John meet with the Safeguarding Team, Parish Council and Finance Committee and Social Committee. During the Meeting Bishop John discussed safeguarding, the need to encourage young people, choir, outreach, finance, health & safety matters and property maintenance, Bishop John made some suggestions on the way forward.



On Sunday following the Masses there was an opportunity for Parishioners to meet and greet the bishop. With refreshments being offered after the 11.30am Mass. Following the inspection and signing of the Registers, Bishop John and Fr. Anthony went to lunch at the Sisters of La Sainte Union.

We thank Bishop John for his visit and his guidance and look forward to seeing him for the Confirmations next year. Thank you also to Srs. Philomena and Margaret for hosting lunch for the Bishop and Fr. Anthony, to the altar servers, safeguarding team and all the member of the various committees and last but not least all the parishioners who took time to meet and talk with Bishop John.

The Passage Christmas Gifts



The passage is one of the charities we support at Christmas, whilst a lot of Parishioners support the Passage via the Big Give Appeal, they also go the extra mile to provide a personal Christmas touch - ensuring the Passage clients receive a gift bag on Christmas Day. Thank you to all who donated items or money to buy them, knitted, shopped, packed or loaded the van last Sunday. Thanks to the Passage Christmas Gift Committee, two of whom Anne Marie and Chris can be seen in the photo with our bags! Well done everyone.

Mass with anointing of the sick

Yvette Remedios



Mass with anointing of the sick was held on Friday 6th December. I always look forward to this celebration – being a community, meeting friends old and new, and enjoying a home-cooked meal. We were fortunate that Fr Tony was able to join us – it was so nice to see him.

The opening prayer set the tone 'May all who share in Christ's suffering find in these sacraments a source of fresh courage and healing'. In the first reading, St James told us that if anyone is in trouble they should pray, if they are feeling happy, they should sing and praise God and if they are ill, they should call the elders to anoint them. But as Fr Anthony explained, the elders and anointing are not enough to make us well – St James tells us that we need the prayer of the community. So that is what we did – we prayed for one another, sang and received the sacraments of Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick and Holy Communion.

After the service, we went to the hall. Elizabeth and the team had done a fabulous job – it looked like a beautiful restaurant with white tablecloths and napkins. And you could see the care that had gone into it – tables set out for small groups, so that everybody around them could see each other, chat and feel included. The sound of friendly chatter filled the air. The four soups were all homemade and delicious – leek & potato, vegetable, fish and butternut squash, served with fresh bread and butter. I must admit that I had more than one bowl! My favourite was the fish soup made by Fr Anthony – something you can only get at home. This was followed by tea, coffee and biscuits. All put together, it was a feast!



We also had the opportunity to wish Maura all the best as she moves away from Wembley to be with her family. Elizabeth and Fr Anthony presented her with a gift and a card that we had all signed. We will all miss you Maura, it's always a pleasure to talk to you. We send you our love and prayers and hope to see you again soon.

Masses were also celebrated in Brook House; Kenbrook; and Birchwood Grange. We were pleased to be joined by some of the resident's family members and staff. We would like to thank these Nursing Homes and their Activity Co - Ordinator's for facilitating us.

Sisters Philomena and Margaret: We bid a sad goodbye to the Sisters of La Sainte Union, who have been living in the Parish with us for the last 32 years. We also fondly remember previous Sisters: Anna and Mary, Ita and Mary. Thank you to all in the Order who have helped us over the years. We will miss you and keep you in our prayers. [Picture: Sisters Mary and Philomena with Kathleen McMahon]



Maura Murphy: in early December we said goodbye to Maura who has been in the Parish for over 40 years. Maura has helped in so many ways, taking Communion to the Sick and Housebound, Reader, Eucharistic Minister, served on Altar Linen Group, the Prayer Group and very importantly on the Tea/Coffee Tuesdays Group. She served the Parishioners in so many ways, an example to us all. Thank you, Maura. We pray you settle in your new home with your son and his family. We hope you will join us on line.



Danuta Zimmermann: at the end of November we also said goodbye to Danuta who has also been a well-established long-time Parishioner in St. Erconwald's. Danuta will be remembered for her great devotion and work with Misso (Red Boxes) this was a huge and complex task. She organised a team of Parishioners who called on those with the red boxes and counted the contents, recorded and returned the money to Danuta who managed all the banking and dealings with the Mill Hill Fathers. Danuta, is a very determined lady and for years came to Church in her trusty car and used her zimmer-frame or sticks to go the final part of her journey into the Church. True Grit. We really appreciate the dedication Danuta gave to this charity work. Sadly, in later years Danuta was housebound, so with sadness we learnt of her moving, but were pleased to hear after her long years of work, she was going to live and be looked after by her family.



How fortunate, we as a Parish are to have had such wonderful people. We trust in God that he will provide for the future.

November for Catholics Christine Davis



What a time to be thinking of mortality. The days are shorter, colder and generally less pleasant. The time for feeling free and easy has gone, as we hurry home to get warm, to feel safe and secure away from biting winds.

So how fitting that the Church uses this time to bring hope into our lives. We celebrate All Saints, the great and the good, and the very next day All Souls where, personally, the connection is there with those I have loved and lost, for me also the great and the good.

Some less formal traditions secure us in our faith. Visiting a cemetery to bless family graves is one of them. This year a crowd gathered on November !0th - Remembrance Sunday - at Carpenders Park to pray together. The Wembley parishes were joined by the Oxhey parish nearby and several priests were able to cover the ground blessing individual graves and offering comfort to those bereaved, no matter the time since bereavement. My Nanna, my Mum and my Dad are there as well as many friends from over the years. I like to think of this service as a reunion of many members of my extended family of friends and parishioners of St Erconwald's both at rest and those attending the service. It is a comfort to share this time with others, I am grateful to the priests who rushed from Sunday Mass to lead us in the remembrance.





I felt a bit differently about the annual Service for the families of deceased Parishioners. In particular this was for those from the parish who had died in the past year and their families. Invitations were sent to the families of the parishioners who had died during the period 2023-24. On Friday 9th November, Fr Anthony held a lovely memorial Mass for all of the people who had passed away this year in the parish, to which family and friends were invited. Their photos were on display demonstrating that it was a recognition of their lives also. The celebration started with the lighting of candles for those who had died over the past year. Candles representing the Priest and Religious who served our Parish, those in Care Homes: Birchwood Grange, Brook House, and Kenbrook, the relatives and friends of parishioners, and those who follow online were also lit



After the service the families gathered in the parish hall and had an opportunity to share memories with others. Thank you for such a lovely service Fr Anthony and to Elizabeth Patten for organising the reception afterwards.

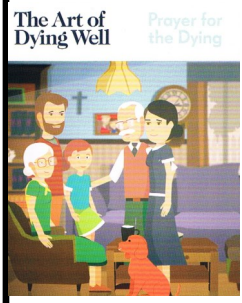


In addition to the Bereavement Mass, we also celebrate another very special and important Mass for the parents who have suffered the loss of a much-wanted child through still birth, miscarriage or other sudden loss of a child. Usually and certainly in the past these losses were quietly borne, generally not spoken about and rarely would a service have been done to mourn their loss. It led to awkward situations both at work and with friends, because no one knew what to say. This left parents with a feeling of loss and not been able to acknowledge a very special and wanted son or daughter. In some cases, more than one loss and sadly for some a dream that was never to happen.

For that reason, it was decided that we would have a Mass of the Angels to acknowledge and to try to help these parents. We held the first Mass for bereaved parents in 2019 and then Covid came and disrupted the next couple of years. This year we held the Mass for Bereaved Parents on Saturday, 26th October at 10.30am.

We lit candles for our loved ones and then Fr. Anthony celebrated Mass which was followed with refreshments in the Hall. People had the opportunity, if they so wished to chat with others who had suffered the loss of a child. There are no questions asked about circumstance regarding the loss of their child. It is just an opportunity to say farewell to a little angel till we meet again.

Please watch the newsletter and website for details about next year's Mass (around the end of October) and pass the word on to family and friends who have experienced this loss.



The Art of Dying Well is a web site of the Church in England and Wales that offers a helping hand to those grappling with issues surrounding death and dying. For more information visit: www.artofdyingwell.org

Our sympathies to the families of those departed: Margaret Beeby; Antonia DeSouza; Patrick Joseph Lydon; Annette Rixon; Laura O'Gorman; Rodolfo Mamar, Christina McHugh, and Gerard Earls.

We also remember those who died in Birchwood Grange, Brook House and Kenbrook care-homes.

Repository Elizabeth Patter



We held the Christmas Card and Gift Fair on the weekend of 19th/20th October. The full Christmas range was displayed in the Hall every table was full with cards, gifts, and candles. We were pleased to see a good number of people over the two days. One of the advantages of visiting the Fair is the facility to have items reserved for later. The display space in the Church is much smaller so only a small number of items can be viewed. This year there has been an increase in the number of visitors to the Repository from other local Christian Churches, so we are serving the wider community. One popular item is cards, as the range of Christian cards in the shops is almost non – existent.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our customers for their support and to wish them a very happy, peaceful and holy Christmas and every blessing and best wish for 2025.



THANK YOU

Things happen in church because people make them happen. We thank the following who made it "happen" this year, [the fear in doing this is leaving people out, so if we leave you out please accept our apologies and above all accept our thanks.]

Parish Council and the Finance Committee

Book-keeper: Penny Donetti [Finances, Yearly Accounts & Gift Aid] and Philip Donetti and Frank Arrojo.

Hall Manager/Repository: Elizabeth Patten and team: Celia Cover, Pauline Lane & Eva O'Connor.

Safeguarding Reps: Rose Yip Heung Win & Maria Rogers.

Stewards: Selwyn Ferrao, Pauline Lane, Patricia O'Reilly, Eva O'Connor.

Eucharistic Ministers - Readers - Altar Servers

Offertory Collectors: Selwyn Ferrao, Pauline Lane, Barbara Hope, Eileen Jozsa, Jenson Santos, Agnieska Torbus.

Choir: Monica Szumilo [Leader] Paula DeSouza, Agatha Ferrao, Yvette Remedios, Maria Morfin, Martin and Stella Murray.

Catechists: Joseph Psaila, Bernie Gillen, Rose Yip, Nancy Chu and Holly Cook.

Communications: David Pearson, Church Services Ltd

Social Committee - St. Patrick's Committee - International Day Committee

Church Cleaning Team: Karen Stiell, Pauline Lane, Eileen O'Connell, Pat and Eva O'Connor.

Flowers: Barbara Hope

Parishioner Contact: to all who keep contact with our housebound parishioners.

CAFOD Team

***The Larder*:** Sr. Philomena, Sr Margaret and Anne Taylor

The Passage: *Passage* Committee, and all who helped source and prepare the gift bags for *The Passage*

General maintenance and church refurbishment: Joseph Psaila, Patricia O'Reilly, Andrew Lafontaine (AMD Plumbing), Iain Hopkins, Pat O'Connor, Maeve and John Cronin, Stuart and *The Chameleons*.

Gardens and Grounds: Coyle family and Creative Gardens.

Sudbury & Wembley Dementia Carers Support Groups: Frank Arrojo

Improvements to Church and Grounds

We have managed to make some much needed improvements during the year.

Church Grounds: *Footpaths* have been repaired [Capital Services]

Lighting: Alley Way [Ian Hopkins]

Fencing: Repairs to Car Park Fence: [McGee and Stangroom Construction]

Buildings: *Roofs:* Church flat roof and tile replacement on Hall roof [Harrow Roofing and Building]

Presbytery: Upgrade Alarm System [Chubb]

Upper Room: Ant invasion and Water Ingress and removal of Asbestos - work to continue into next year.

This year we also had our *Five Yearly Electrical Inspection* - remedial works include replacing fuse boxes to meet current regulations.

Thank you to Roz Freedland, Keith Lidington, Louise McMahon, Dermot Stanley, Sandra Rudge (Westminster Property Dept) and Lynne Kelly (Westminster Parish Support team) Daniel Prasanna & Team (ICT); Mathew D'Souza (Data Protection) & Safeguarding Team.

Thanks also to the following establishments who have been very supportive of St. Erconwald's Church: G. Saville & Son Ltd., Clean Scene, Blue Oyster, Bryan Maher & Co. and *The Chameleon's*

A huge thank you
to all who have supported St. Erconwald's
either in a spiritual, financial or practical manner



Thank you to everyone at St Erconwald's who joined us for the magical weekend of *Cinderella*! Your cheers, laughter, and applause brought the show to life and made it an unforgettable evening.

We are particularly grateful to Elizabeth and to Fr. Anthony for their ongoing support for our organisation week in week out. We are taking a well deserved break now before starting back on a one day review for Feb/March and then our next July main play at The Compass Theatre. We'll keep you posted of course.

Have a wonderfully Merry Christmas and a very happy and healthy new year from all of us at The Chameleons.

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Microsite: https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/wembleyprestonroad/sterconwald

Live-streaming: **https://www.churchservices.tv/wembley3**

MAKING A DONATION VIA OUR WEBSITE
https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/wembleyprestonroad/donate/
Via Dona [the company who supply our card readers].
https://portal.mydona.com/assets/webPay/index.php?cid=268
Donations, Mass Intentions and Repository payments can also be made via new card readers in Church

[If you are a tax payer, please Gift Aid your donation]

This Parish is part of the Westminster Roman Catholic Diocese Trustee
Charity No. 233699

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PARISH OFFICE:
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Maria Rogers wembley3sg2@safeguardrcdow.org.uk

SUNDAY MASSES
Saturday Vigil: 5.30pm; Sunday: 10.00am and 11.30am

WEEKDAY MASSES
Monday, Tuesday ,Wednesday, and Friday: 9.30am.

CONFESSIONS: Saturday 4.30 - 5.00pm

HOLY HOUR AND BENEDICTION: Wednesday 10.00-11.00am