

NEWSLETTER



This newsletter contains details of the upcoming events of the Advent season, including study groups, the monthly Forum Lunch and a chance to clean the parish centre – together with information about two pilgrimages, Hungarian Christmas traditions, plus all the usual things and more!

Highlights of December

Saturday 2nd December

Parish Centre cleaning day – *come along any time from 10.30am and lend a hand*

Sunday 3rd December

Advent Carol Service

6pm followed by refreshments. *A great event to which to invite non-Churchgoers.*

Thursday 7th December

Advent Group I – 7.30pm in the Parish Centre. Looking at ‘Faith’.

Friday 8th December

Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Low Mass 7.45am; Sung Mass 7pm *followed by Society of Mary AGM.*

Tuesday 12th December

Forum Lunch *for dementia sufferers and their carers*

11.30am-3pm. *New cooks and helpers wanted (training given). See Bob DeWolf for info.*

Wednesday 13th December

Healing Mass – 10am preceded by silent prayer for the sick at 9.45am

Advent Group II – 7.30pm in the Parish Centre. Looking at ‘Hope’.

Sunday 17th December

Nine Lessons & Carols

6pm followed by refreshments. *A great event to which to invite non-Churchgoers.*

Wednesday 20th December

Advent Group III – 7.30pm in the Parish Centre. Looking at ‘Love’.

Sunday 24th December

8am & 10.30am Masses for Advent IV

5pm Children’s Nativity

11.30pm Midnight Mass

Monday 25th December

8am Holy Communion

10.30am High Mass

6pm Evening Prayer & Benediction

From the Vicar

25th November 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

If you use Twitter you'll be aware that you can now use not 140 but 280 characters for each of your tweets – there are now many more words at your disposal. This proliferation of words on line and in social media is not an unmitigated joy; people are inclined to rant more and have less incentive to brevity. As the year closes I wonder what the words of this year will have been? Brexit, I'm sure; but also perhaps snowflake, Trumpism, fake news? The sheer quantity of words now doing the rounds can cause us to lose faith in their meaning and integrity or not to pay attention closely to the meaning of words. We just use them without thought.

This is true in our Christian Faith as well. The power of repeated words – the well-loved phrases of our Liturgy – to register deeply with us and only reveal their meaning and power over time is well-attested; yet in another way familiarity can breed contempt. If not contempt, familiarity can certainly allow us not to subject certain phrases to scrutiny.

Three such words which resonate at the heart of our faith are Faith, Hope and Love. They come, of course, from St Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians where he is speaking of the three things that abide, the better way by which to live as a Christian.

For our Advent course this year we are taking these three words and looking at them more closely. Is Faith any more than a blind belief in the irrational that we need to achieve by our own willpower? Is Hope anything more than optimism, and what is Love but a sentimental willingness to let people walk all over you? I hope our three Advent groups will demonstrate a greater depth and meaning to these words which we use in church so much but sometimes perhaps without quite knowing what we mean. The format of the group will be a talk at 7.30pm followed by an opportunity for questions and discussion and ending with Compline at 9pm. See above for the precise dates.

A lot of these words that fill our public discourse are words of criticism and negativity. ‘Generation Snowflake’ is a term used for young people today who are thought to be more easily offended and less resilient than their predecessors. Anecdotal evidence from college chaplains tells me that there’s something in this, but we ought to ask ourselves why children today feel like this, something that I am convinced cannot be unconnected with social media.

We have moment by moment access to information and to people’s instant responses to things – the news cycle is 24-hour and so never stops. Yet few of us would say that our instant response to things is always our most considered or wise. In the past one had to write a letter and go and post it, providing plenty of opportunity to calm down and think again. Today all I need do is type an instant email or send a tweet expressing my immediate instinct towards disgust or delight. Dealing with a daily avalanche of opinion and protest and exposure to others’ mediated responses unsurprisingly leaves us with a thin skin and absolutely no sense of the long term, when the furore of today will be entirely forgotten. No wonder we melt like a snowflake.

At Advent and then Christmas, however, two things confront us: the importance of waiting, of taking time; and the fact that the Word became flesh. Taking time puts things in perspective and gives us opportunity to reflect and consider. It is why Christmas for Christians comes just as everyone else begins to give up on it and turn to the sales. Secondly, because the Word is made flesh, it reminds us that behind other people’s words lie other people. It is easy to hate someone from the distance of a computer or a newspaper. It is much harder when we meet them face to face. At Christmas we meet God face to face in the form of a defenceless child and we are reminded that those whom we hate are made in His image and behind their infuriating words is also a defenceless child whom the Lord calls us to love and pray for. May we approach these holy seasons of Advent and Christmas then with renewed confidence in the meaning of Faith, Hope and Love, with a sense of the grace of provided by waiting and with a new appreciation for the beloved mystery of every human being.

With my particular love and prayers over these weeks, I am,
yours in the Lord,
Fr Robert.

A Tale of Two Pilgrimages

by Rosanna Moseley Gore

The last few weeks for Charles and me have been rather overtaken by the idea, and practice, of pilgrimage. New for me in terms of using that actual word, but not as such new in terms of feeling it. Not new for him, but very new in how to experience it.

So the first was our recent retreat in Iona. Iona has been calling me since I was six years old, when I had two children's history books that fascinated me, one of which had stories of Important Figures in British History – and I recall included The Venerable Bede, Boadicea, and St Columba founding a base for Christianity on Iona which then spread to the magical place of Lindisfarne.

I was obsessed with illuminated manuscripts at that age (strange child that I was), and from that point on, Iona beckoned to me. 50 years later, this January, two days after Charles and I got married my beloved father died – and while out walking the dog I was stopped in my tracks by an inner call. “Go to Iona”, it said. I caught Charles up, told him, and he said “Right, we’ll go in October – the weather will be better then”.

And thus we came to be driving up, via friends in Lancashire, and an overnight stop in Scotland, and a car ferry to Mull, and a foot ferry across to Iona – shedding, as it seemed to me, along the way the accoutrements of everyday life busy-ness with each stage of the journey. That feeling became more and more palpable during our three days on the island; and noisily, irksomely, palpable in reverse when we made our long journey home.

I went to Iona with no expectations, other than the expectations of a fifty-year call. From Mull it looks like a rather unprepossessing island, with unprepossessing houses and a large range of mixed-age ecclesiastical buildings. But from the moment we walked off the ferry with a relieved dog (Hector doesn't approve of boats), we both experienced filaments of quiet grace spreading through us. Permission not to talk. An invitation to be still. A dropping away of the outside world and a call to the inner world. We walked a great deal in silence, each with our own internal conversations. I sat in my own space, letting the light, the sky, the sun, wind and sea, wash old wounds clean, filter out burdensome debris, show better, kinder ways forward. I collected stones on the beach that spoke to me of loved ones now gone to a better place, of hurts forgiven, and prayers for the wellbeing of my children, of compassion to myself for having done things I should not have done, and not done things I should have done. Wave

upon quiet wave of beneficence. And I took those stones to the “quiet corner” in the abbey with its kindly, tender little shrine and left them alongside offerings from other people who had made their own personal pilgrimage. When the day trippers had caught the last ferry across the sound, I sat there alone and prayed and meditated and listened to the wind and rain and felt very close to the early monks whose chanting you can feel in your soul’s hearing.

I went to a Compline and a Matins and Eucharist in the Scottish Episcopal chapel at The Bishop’s House, in the company of a parish group on retreat there. A kindly group of people who welcomed us in out of the driving rain (the weather wasn’t always better); a liturgy that wasn’t too unfamiliar to one who has only known how it is done at LSM with old comforting memories of things done at my C of E girls’ school (“Lighten our darkness, we beseech Thee O Lord” never fails to bring a lump to my throat); a surprise rush of tears when “The body of Christ” was followed, unexpectedly, by “Given for you” and “The blood of Christ” by “Shed for you”. It felt so personal. For **me**? How could I not bow down my head and be overwhelmed? Charles went to many more services. He did his own inner work in his own way. We both, interestingly, had problems attempting to keep connected via the internet. The call for a quiet mind was not to be ignored. We plan to return. Once a year if we can.

And the second pilgrimage? Well, Charles is coming towards the end of a walking pilgrimage from our home in Reach in Cambridgeshire to Walsingham. Fr Robert told him it was fine to do it in individual stages, diaries being full at this time of year. So he has been walking in day-long chunks the 65 mile route, and is tackling the penultimate leg of the journey as this newsletter goes to press. Charles is very capable of walking fast and pushing himself to achieve goals. He is also very capable of talking at length to anyone who will listen about church architecture, the history of any particular place, the geology and flora and fauna - anything, other than TV soaps or sport, that is. So I have encouraged him to have the courage to take things gently, to walk only as far each day as gives him time to stop and stare and think, to talk as little as possible to people he might meet. I guess he’s doing it his way, in part, and my way, in part. I’m ever so impressed that he’s doing it at all. The final bit, a walk of about six to seven miles, happened on Saturday 25 November. If you would like to hear more about what he’s been doing, please email cwrmdm2@cam.ac.uk or speak to either of us at church.



Calendar and Intentions

for

December 2017

*The list of Thanksgivings and Intercessions offers a focus
for our daily prayer, both at the Offices and Mass,
and in our personal times of prayer.*

*The Vicar would be glad of suggestions or
additions to the list of daily intention*

Calendar for December

Fri 1st S. Eligius, Bishop

Sat 2nd

SUN 3rd FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Mon 4th *Nicholas Ferrar, Deacon*

Tue 5th

Wed 6th S. Nicholas, Bishop

Thu 7th S. Ambrose, Bishop

Fri 8th Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Sat 9th

SUN 10th SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Mon 11th

Tue 12th

Wed 13th S. Lucy, Virgin & Martyr *Ember Day*

Thu 14th S. John of the Cross, Religious & Doctor *Ember Day*

Fri 15th

Sat 16th of the BVM *Ember Day*

SUN 17th THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Gaudete)

Mon 18th *O Adonai*

Tue 19th *O Radix Jesse*

Wed 20th *O Clavis*

Thu 21st *O Oriens*

Fri 22nd *O Rex*

Sat 23rd *O Emmanuel*

SUN 24th FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT & Christmas Eve

MON 25th CHRISTMAS DAY

Tue 26th S. Stephen, Deacon & Martyr

Wed 27th S. John, Apostle & Evangelist

Thu 28th Holy Innocents

Fri 29th S. Thomas Becket, Bishop & Martyr

Sat 30th in the Octave of Christmas

SUN 31st FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Daily Intentions and *Anniversaries of death for December*

Metal workers & engineers *Douglas Bird, Brian Jordan* 1st
Increase in our compassion *Anthony Morcom (pr.)* 2nd

Our Parish & People 3rd
Vocations to the Religious Life *Romo Gorrada* 4th
Thanksgiving for the Prophets of the Old Testament *Michael Fisher (bp)* 5th
The Cambridge Churches Homelessness Project 6th
Academic Theologians *Michael Barnard* 7th
Increase in devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary 8th
The clergy of LSM *Cyril Hankey (pr.), Charles Goodhart* 9th

Our Parish & People 10th
Calcutta Cathedral Relief Service 11th
Retired clergy 12th
The sick *Glyn Daniel, Dennis Peck* 13th
Christian Poets 14th
Cambridge Foodbank *Gladys Stockbridge* 15th
A good keeping of Advent 16th

Our Parish & People *Jack Grist, Diana Galletly* 17th
The unemployed 18th
Increase in the meditative study of Scripture *Eric Lawson* 19th
Vocations to the ordained ministry *Yvonne Mashedor* 20th
Astronomers *Joan Garrett, Irene Gore* 21st
The Sovereign 22nd
Those who give their time to the upkeep of LSM *Ruth Wheatley* 23rd

Our Parish & People 24th
Joy *Nelson Bleackley* 25th
All persecuted for the Faith 26th
Thanksgiving for the Gospels *Muriel Ellis, Leonard Beard* 27th
Young people living in war zones 28th
Anglican Bishops *Leonard Askham (pr.), Peter Walker (bp)* 29th
Those living with feelings of loneliness 30th

Our Parish & People *Muriel Brittain, Rita Ollett* 31st

...so who does bring the Christmas tree?

Fr Gregory writes:

I must have been one of the very few children who never really liked Christmas. I had a very good excuse: Christmas, as far as I can remember it, always confused me. Until I was 4, my world was simple and full of marvellous things. Every Advent meant the *Rorate* Masses: sung High Mass every day, early in the morning (around 6am), in a dark and normally cold church with only the candles giving some light. It is a still cherished tradition in the former Habsburg countries, going back to the 12th century.

On the eve of 6th December I had to clean a shoe or boot (yes, just one), put it out in the window and by the morning S. Nicholas would fill it with chocolates and other sweet things if I was good enough that year. Which, needless to say, I always was.

And finally on the morning of 24th December there was the Christmas tree in the sitting room that stayed with us until 2nd February. I was told that the tree was brought to us by the Baby Jesus. It was shining with lights and decorated with baubles, stars, angels. And of course with *Salonzuckerl*, small sweets covered with chocolate and wrapped in shiny coloured foil, authentic reminders of the peaceful times of Austria-Hungary.

Under the tree there were the nicely decorated boxes, gifts to be opened after supper. The day passed slowly; though the tree and the gifts were within reach, they were strictly out of limit until supper. The supper was always some vegetable soup and fish since fasting was strictly observed on the Vigil. The fish was followed by big, round wafers with honey (reminding us of the sweet Saviour present in the Host) and the *bejgli*, a roll of sweet yeast bread with a dense, rich filling of poppy seed. Once the supper was over, we sang Christmas songs around the tree and opened the gifts. The both exciting and exhausting day finished with Midnight Mass.

In the December of 1983 my brother, while I was choosing a sufficiently capacious boot for S. Nicholas, revealed to me that it was our parents who put chocolates in the boot. And not only: even the Christmas tree was bought and decorated by them. Since I did not believe him, he woke me up the night before Christmas and we sneaked into the sitting room, and indeed there were my parents standing around a simple tree, with decorations in their hands. I was disappointed and confused, while my parents were somewhat relieved: they did not have to

decorate the Christmas tree in silence, during the night any more, and they could ask us to help them!

1985 was reserving another twist for my Christmases: I started school. The Communist regime did not allow anything religious in schools; and since they could not abolish Christmas, they tried to transform it. Instead of Christmas tree, we had “winter trees”; instead of Christmas, we had “celebration of the fir-tree”. No mention of Jesus, of course, and S. Nicholas became the Soviet *Ded Moroz* (Old Man Frost) accompanied by a Snow Maiden who, in all honesty, was always rather underdressed, considering Russian winters. In 1989 the Soviet soldiers finally left, and *Ded Moroz* gave place to the American chubby Santa Claus, further increasing my confusion.

The long sequence of cultural shocks regarding Christmas did not finish with my childhood. After a peaceful period, I was again exposed to new traumas when in 2004 I moved to Italy...

Whenever I talked to my Italian parishioners and friends about Hungarian Christmas traditions, it always aroused horror and amusement. They were shocked by the idea of giving gifts. They thought we were exotic barbarians because we put *Salonzuckerl* on the Christmas tree instead of “proper decorations” such as glass baubles from Murano or designed by Gucci. For them the tree should be decorated on 8th December instead of 24th so there is enough time to enjoy it. The most important meal is Christmas lunch on 25th, with capon broth and tortellini, wild boar stew, panettone and a loud family who refuse to leave the table before 5pm.

But most importantly, they were always keen to point out that Baby Jesus is too small to carry around Christmas trees. This really drove me crazy. As if in Hungary we did not know it! Of course He is too small for that; that is why He is assisted by the Angels. In Italy the Christmas tree is brought by *Babbo Natale* – a certain “Father Christmas” who is a mixture of *Ded Moroz* and Santa Claus, but being Italian, he obviously dresses smarter than the former and is in better shape than the latter.

To cut a long story short, I gave up on having clear ideas about Christmas and I have been simply combining the best of both cultures: now we have a Christmas tree from early December until way after Epiphany, both Christmas dinner and lunch, *bejgli* and panettone, and on our Christmas tree you will find *Salonzuckerl* next to Gucci baubles.

And just when I thought that was it, I find myself again in a new country with new Christmas traditions: decorations on in November, puddings prepared weeks before Christmas, paper crowns and crackers, carol services, meatless mince pies. And while I enjoy it all immensely, I must be honest with you... I still do not have the courage to ask the question: now, who do you think brings the Christmas tree...?

Makeni Ecumenical Centre

This is a project LSM has supported for many years. You may have heard us pray for it and not known what it was all about. On S. Luke's Day we welcomed Anton Dil, the son of its founder, to speak to us about its work. Here is what he said:

When Fr Pierre Dil and Mrs Wenda Dil arrived in Zambia in 1967 they were sponsored by the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and Fr Dil was assistant priest at the Anglican Cathedral in the capital city, Lusaka. Zambia had obtained its independence just three years earlier, and there were many opportunities to support the nation in its growth. Makeni Ecumenical Centre was established as a Christian serving agency in 1971, about 10km from Lusaka. Initially the focus was on agricultural settlement and nutrition work but soon a pre-school and primary school were added, and a general medical clinic was set up. It became clear that many job-seekers did not have the skills required to enter employment and so a variety of skills training projects followed, including farming, electronics, carpentry and sewing and dress design.

Over the years the centre established four agricultural settlement villages, and provided agricultural settlers with training, transport, and initial support in establishing themselves as farmers. At Kafue, 50km away, the farmers are already third generation, and self-supporting. In some locations Makeni Centre continues to provide support for infrastructure to help maintain water supplies and other local services, particularly community schools and clinics, which are also used by the wider community.

The centre became fully accredited for secondary school examinations in 2017, and so it will become a focal point for other local schools that do not have facilities needed for practical work at secondary level. The children's play park and sports field are used by our own pupils and local children, as well as those in our orphanage. We have a well-stocked library of educational and recreational reading, and a computer laboratory, funded by supporters.

S. Nicholas Village for orphans has been running since 2000. It was established in response to the AIDS epidemic, and as people came to our door asking us for help with children whose parents had died or who were unable to support them. Often the children have lost their mothers, and their fathers may have moved away or remarried and the children are not welcomed in the new home. We have on average about 30 children resident in the orphanage buildings, ranging in age from babies to teenagers, with about as many girls as boys.

While they are with us, all the children attend our own schools and receive health care, secure accommodation, meals, counselling and mentoring. Given the length of time the orphanage has been running, we have seen many children grow up and move on already. Several of our original children have gone on to higher education and employment; some of the children of tertiary education age now are studying nursing, pharmacy and car maintenance; some are married and have children of their own, and attend our own Church of the Good Shepherd.

In addition to children living at the centre, we have a large home-based care project, supporting about 50 boys and girls, through which children are given school uniforms and school fees. Sometimes the household receives regular supplies of staple foods.

Local conditions have changed drastically since MEC began. Zambia's population in the last 50 years has quadrupled, and Lusaka's population is 20 times what it was. Makeni Centre is not rural any more, but part of the city, and many of the skills training services that we have provided are now well catered for by the government and local trade schools. For these reasons we now concentrate on the services that remain relevant to our local community – the schools and the orphanage.

While we aim to become more self-sufficient in the long run, our mission remains to the least-privileged members of the community. As such, all the centre's services are offered at the lowest cost we can afford, which means that many projects either break-even or make a loss. We feel that part of our job is to support people to the point that our support is no longer needed, and in many ways we are succeeding, but this would not be possible without the support of many individuals around the world, including in congregations such as Little S. Mary's, Cambridge.

Thank you so much from the staff at the centre, and particularly from Bishop Andrew Mukuyamba (the Chairman) and Mrs Wenda Dil for your continuing support. For more information see our website www.makeni.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 251394

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

is an international campaign to challenge violence against women and girls. The campaign runs every year from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day. The Mothers' Union is just one of more than 3,700 organisations from approximately 164 countries who participate in the campaign annually.

Silent vigil and banner witness at Ely Cathedral, supporting action against gender violence and domestic abuse **Friday 1st December, 11am to 12 noon.**

This year, Mothers' Union is focusing on the issue of stigma, where society responds negatively to, or by blaming those who are, victims of gender-based violence. Find resources at www.mothersunion.org/16-days

Wave of Prayer – 10th, 11th & 12th December

Jo Wibberley writes:

Mothers' Union expresses its Christian identity through its life of prayer and worship. It is this spiritual life together which underpins our work with families and communities. Every day a wave of prayer goes around the world as members pray for the work of Mothers' Union and international issues. These daily prayers follow an annual pattern which means that every Mothers' Union region is prayed for at least once during the year.

The days allotted to Ely diocese are 10th–12th December with their link dioceses of Sokoto and Ika in Nigeria, Lusaka in Zambia, Karimnagar in India and Shyogwe in Rwanda.

In **Nigeria** there are more than 500 ethnic groups having a rich diversity but many problems and over 60,000 Mothers' Union (MU) members. **Sokoto Diocese** is in the Islamic north where MU members face aggression, discrimination and fear, but nevertheless they have a special programme for widows and aim to make education accessible to the youth. **Ika Diocese** in the central area has freedom of religion and MU regular outreach activities include education, support to families, young women and widows, hospital and prison visiting, while last year they opened a 32-bed hostel for girls. The MU in **Lusaka Diocese** in **Zambia** has 1,800 members who are held in high esteem and have to undergo serious training and be tested by the Bishop before they become members and receive their

uniform. Here it is said that the MU is the Social Services, volunteering in community schools, as nurses and birth attendants, organising a savings group, helping the bereaved and preparing a material clinic bag for vulnerable new mothers. The MU is thriving in **Shyogwe Diocese in Rwanda**, though reaching out to the mainly rural communities is difficult as roads are almost non-existent. Basic education for children finishes at around the age of 12 so the MU supplements this by running training centres to teach young girls how to sew, make crafts and use knitting machines. There is also a “Healthy Mums” project in parishes for new mums, teaching them how to stay healthy during pregnancy and how to care for their babies. Many of these new mums are unmarried and although that is regarded as shameful in this country MU members have opened their arms and offered their help. **Karimnagar Diocese in India** is a large diocese with high levels of social inequality and poverty. The Women’s Fellowship for Christian Service has similar aims to MU and has become a part of the MU family. Discrimination and violence against Christians in India is becoming more prevalent but members seek to promote Christian family life, work to empower and support women against gender-based violence which is a great concern in this diocese, provide leadership training, and facilitate income generating projects for members.

In **Ely Diocese** there are around 900 members – men and women of all ages (the name Mothers’ Union is misleading but is so loved and respected all over the world that it would be difficult to change). This year, the MU in conjunction with Ely Diocese, has appointed a Families Worker to work in the Wisbech area. Other diocesan projects include working with the Chaplaincy at Littlehey Prison, providing caravan holidays at Hunstanton for families under stress, supplying toiletries and household items for residents at hostels and refuges, giving boxes of essential items to the Rosie Hospital for parents who have unexpectedly to stay with their child overnight, and providing baby feeding and changing facilities at the County show and several local shows. In addition, members support their clergy and serve their own communities in many different ways.

Please pray for the work and witness of the Mothers’ Union in these dioceses during this time.

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